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Craft and Cosmogonies: The Reception of Hesiod in Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2023

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Classics

University of Washington

Abstract

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The poems attributed to Hesiod and composed in the 8th century BCE were highly influential in Socrates' and Plato's Athens of the 5th to early 4th centuries BCE. This dissertation examines Plato's reception of the poetry attributed to Hesiod in the *Timaeus-Critias* dialogues. The first chapter examines Plato's engagement with the Hesiodic myth of Pandora in *Timaeus*' etiology for the body. I argue that Plato evokes the myth of Pandora in his audience's minds in order to place his cosmogony, anthropogony, and zoogony in relation to this foundational myth and thereby make his likely story more likely.

The second chapter examines the theme of competition in the Atlantis sections of the *Timaeus-Critias*. This chapter explores destructive and productive forms of competition in Plato and Hesiod. I show how Plato frames the speech competition in the dialogue as song contest through a discussion of the festival settings and the *Certamen of Homer and Hesiod*. Plato thus uses Hesiodic techniques to disrupt canonical etiologies for Athens. The third chapter investigates the themes of written versus oral modes of transmitting stories in the framing narrative for the

myth of Atlantis and oral traditions generally. I demonstrate that Plato imitates the entextualization of oral poetic performance in his framing of the myth. Through a comparative analysis of etiologies in other oral traditions that coincide with the development of literacy, I demonstrate that mythical written texts frequently feature in the backstory for oral epic poetry in order to provide authority, but frequently rely on oral recitations to be transmitted through time.

In the fourth and final chapter I document the process of co-founding and running a cross-disciplinary public Humanities project, UW Textile Studies Graduate Research Cluster (GRC). This project aimed to gather members of the public and researchers at the University of Washington from different disciplines who all shared an interest in the creation and study of textiles. This chapter highlights the goals and achievements of this project in relation to the overall project of the dissertation. Through collaborative efforts, the UW Textile Studies GRC successfully built reciprocal intellectual networks across and beyond the university.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	iii
List of Tables	iv
Chapter 1. The Hesiodic Myth of Pandora in Plato's <i>Timaeus</i>	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 The Myth of Pandora as an Etiology for the Human Condition	2
1.3 The Hesiodic Pandora as a Crafted Creation	4
1.4 Pandora's Absent Presence in Plato's Protagoras.....	7
1.5 Of Likely Stories and Likenesses	20
1.6 An Echo of Pandora in Timaeus' Human Body	24
Chapter 2. Plato vs. Hesiod: Competition in Plato's <i>Timaeus-Critias</i> Atlantis Narrative.....	56
2.1 Introduction.....	56
2.2 Competition and Destructive and Productive Forms of ἔρις	57
2.3 Speech Contest as Song Contest	60
2.4 Etiologies, Genealogies, and Etymologies.....	85
Chapter 3. Oral Texts and The Materiality of Memory in Plato's Atlantis	100
3.1 Introduction.....	100
3.2 Entextualization & Object-like Oral Texts	102
3.3 The Authority of Written Archives	107
3.4 The Materiality of Memory	113

3.5	Lost Texts and “Big Bang” Theories for Oral Traditions	120
Chapter 4. The UW Textile Studies GRC: A Public Humanities Project.....		131
4.1	Introduction.....	131
4.2	What is Public Scholarship?	134
4.3	Metrics for Evaluating the Success of a Public Scholarship Project	138
4.4	What was the UW Textile Studies GRC?	140
4.5	UW Textile Studies Events	146
4.5.1	National Nordic Museum, M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias 147	
4.5.2	Object Lessons	148
4.5.3	On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset	150
4.5.4	Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum	152
4.5.5	Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas in Conversation at the Henry	153
4.5.6	Fast Fingers and Slow Fashion: Crafting Dissertation Research.....	156
4.5.7	Fabric Books and Fashion Plates	161
4.6	Assessing the Success of the UW Textile Studies GRC.....	165
Bibliography		174
Appendix I: A Note on Professionalization		194

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 4.2 An image shared on Jimil’s Instagram account on May 6, 2022, of her presenting her research with images of her Instagram account in the background 160
- Figure 4.3 An Image shared on Caitlin Postal’s Instagram account on May 9, 2022. Jimil Ataman and Caitlin Postal presenting on their dissertation research while wearing garments they each constructed. 161

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 UW Textile Studies GRC Events 2021-2022	146
Table 4.2 Cross-disciplinary Participation in UW Textile Studies GRC Events	166
Table 4.3 Reach While Building Community	167
Table 4.4 Textile Collections and Resources Featured	169
Table 4.5 Budget for the Textile Studies GRC 2021-2022	170

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So many people have contributed to the formation and completion of this project. I am immensely grateful for supportive intellectual community that I have found in Seattle.

I must first thank Olga Levaniouk. I have loved our conversations over the years. I am so grateful for all her contributions to this project, especially her openness and curiosity. As an advisor, Olga has made this project immeasurably better. It has come to completion thanks to her patience and support. I am so grateful to Deb Kamen for her keen-eyed comments and for being so wonderfully organized and encouraging. Chris Waldo provided valued support when I needed it most, and I'm so glad to have had him as a part of my committee. Megan O'Donald, Eunice Kim, and Caitlin Postal went above and beyond in reading various chapters. They each provided insightful comments and much appreciated moral support.

I would never have finished this project without the help of my writing community. Special thanks are due to Sarah Choi, Anna Preus, and Peter O'Donovan. Our standing writing dates got me through the challenges of getting my dissertation to this stage. I am also grateful for the encouragement of my colleagues, especially Nahal Norouzi, Denis Kozhokar, and Jonas Schmidler in support of my completion of this degree. My friends in Seattle, Winnipeg, and Halifax have gotten me through the challenges of pursuing this PhD. My first friend in Seattle, Ari Kirby, set a high bar. I am so glad to have Mary-Dan Johnston as my forever interlocutor and dear friend. The whole community built through the UW Textile Studies GRC got me through the challenging years while pursuing this project in a pandemic. I am particularly grateful to my

collaborators Lauryn Hanley and Caitlin Postal and the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities at the University of Washington for their support of the Textile Studies GRC. Thanks too, to my aunts Cindy Myers, Ilene Duffy, and Hannah DeRousseau for the many strands of inspiration that ran through this project.

I feel so lucky to have been a member of my cohort with Grace Funsten, Sarah Brucia Breitenfeld, and Diana Molkova. Everyone in this cohort is amazing! What a joy it has been to work with you three since 2016. I have learned so much from each of you and so appreciate having you in my life. I am so grateful to have been a part of the Classics department at the University of Washington because of the wonderful community of faculty and graduate students. The support of this department has meant everything over the years as did the financial assistance of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada which made this PhD possible to pursue. Most of all I am grateful for the unconditional support of my family. My parents Sally and Paul Boulding have inspired this work and given me the courage to go to approach challenges with tenacity and an open heart. When I was tired throughout the writing process, I would think of the dedication my dad brings to his swimming practice. When I was anxious, I would think about my mom playing the harp in our living room. My brothers, Josh, Jordan, Seth, and Riley provided the grounding support and love that makes it possible to pursue this research. I am so glad to have Amber and Cass join our family too. It has been a joy to study in Seattle, a place where I could build relationships with my cousins Jessica Vornbrock, Kartik Santhanakrishnan, and their children Asha and Ravi. I am very grateful to the Sullivan's, Tim, Beth, John, and Paul as well as Krista Frank and Solina Beringer, for welcoming me into their family so warmly and encouraging me so enthusiastically.

Last but certainly not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Tom Sullivan, who has supported me in innumerable ways over the last seven years. It is thanks to his patience, love, and cooking, that I have made it to this finish line.

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June 2023

DEDICATION

For Tom Sullivan

Chapter 1. THE HESIODIC MYTH OF PANDORA IN PLATO'S *TIMAEUS*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Plato establishes the new cosmogony he presents in the *Timaeus-Critias* in relation to the contemporary canon of cosmogonies, especially those found in the poetic works attributed to Hesiod. In this chapter, I show that Plato engages with the Hesiodic myth of Prometheus and Pandora found in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* in Timaeus' account of the creation of the human body. Plato embeds a reference to the myth of Pandora at a key point in Timaeus' speech. As Timaeus begins to describe how the demiurge constructs the human body, he makes a subtle reference to Pandora. In this chapter I build upon David Sedley's conclusion that Plato's *Timaeus* "is, if nothing else, very naturally read as his reinterpretation of the Hesiodic etiological myth, modified in light of his own moral psychology."¹ I argue that Plato evokes the myth of Pandora in his audience's mind in order to place his etiology for gender, the human body, and animals in relation to this foundational myth. By incorporating it into Timaeus' etiology for the human body, Plato makes his *eikos muthos*, likely story, all the more likely.

In this chapter I first show how the myth of Pandora in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* functions as an etiology for the human condition. I argue that both poems introduce female gender as a way of initiating the problems connected with mortality for human beings and that Pandora as the prototypical woman is associated with both the stomach and the womb. Next, I show how Plato reworks the myth of Pandora as an etiology for the moral character of human

¹ Sedley 2010, 256. Sedley 2007, 54 also analyses the afterlife of the myth of Pandora in the cosmogonies of Empedocles and Plato.

beings in the *Protagoras*.² The embedded reference to the myth of Pandora in the *Timaeus* is subtle. The overt way that Plato reworks this myth in the *Protagoras*, however, shows how culturally relevant this myth is for Plato's audience. It also introduces a version of the myth wherein an anthropogony is linked with a zoogony. Ultimately, I argue, the *Protagoras* employs the myth of Pandora and Prometheus to introduce themes of morality. After discussing the *Protagoras*, I turn to the *Timaeus-Critias* and show how Plato embeds a reference to the myth of Pandora through the motifs of delegation, the use of keywords in the Pandora episode, and the use of craft imagery. I show, moreover, that Plato revises the Hesiodic association between stomach and womb in Timaeus' account of how the tripartite soul maps onto the human body.

1.2 THE MYTH OF PANDORA AS AN ETIOLOGY FOR THE HUMAN CONDITION

In the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, the poet uses the myth of Pandora as the conclusion in the narrative sequence that begins with the contest of wits between the titan Prometheus and Zeus.³ Although the *Theogony* presents a cosmological narrative that describes the birth of the gods as the birth of the cosmos, the introduction of human beings is almost absent from the poem. Rather than an anthropogony, the myth sequence of Prometheus and Pandora in the *Theogony* presents an etiology for the human condition. At the outset of the myth of Prometheus and Pandora in the *Theogony* human beings exist but have not yet been separated

² Plato, *Protagoras* 320d8-321c3. Sedley 2007, 56 discusses this myth in relation to Hesiod. Vered Lev Kenaan (2005, 96-102; 2010, 157-175) also argues that Plato employs references to the myth in other dialogues, specifically seeing the portrayal of Socrates in the *Symposium* as an inverse of Pandora.

³ Although Pandora is not named as such in the *Theogony*, this episode is close enough in content for scholars to read it in conjunction with the myth of Pandora in the *Works and Days*. As Froma Zeitlin 1996, 54 writes, "despite the important differences in detail and purposed, the two versions have been read together as two halves of a single extended narrative and mutually illuminate the double-sided question of the origin of woman and woman as origin." When they are not specifically comparing the two texts, scholars seem content to read them side by side as arguing for the same points. See Lyons 2003, 37-51, Arthur 1982, Marder 2014. Dora and Erwin Panofsky show Hesiod's two versions of the myth have no ancient rivals. For more on the later depictions of Pandora see Panofsky and Panofsky 1962. How Plato would have viewed the differences between the Pandora episodes in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* is outside of the scope of this dissertation.

from the gods. The poet does not explain how these humans at Mecone come to be. Nor does the poet specify whether humans are differentiated by sex or gender at this stage.⁴

The setting of the narrative described in the opening two lines lays out the overall theme of the myth sequence as an etiology for the human condition. The poet sets the scene by saying, “when gods and mortal men were in the course of distinguishing themselves at Mecone” ὅτ’ ἐκρίνοντο θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ’ ἄνθρωποι / Μηκῶνῃ (535-36). A scholiast on these lines explains: “In Mecone it was decided what is a god and what a human being” ἐκρίνετο τί θεὸς καὶ τί ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῇ Μηκῶνῃ.⁵ This distinction at the core of the mythic sequence also occurs in the genealogy of Iapetos’ children, which leads into the narrative sequence of the myth. The poet juxtaposes Prometheus, whose name means Forethought, with his brother Epimetheus, whose name means Afterthought, by placing their names in the same metrical position at the ends of lines 510 and 511. Additionally, Epimetheus is characterized as “an evil from the beginning for men who live on bread” κακὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γένετ’ ἀνδράσιν ἀλφιστῆσιν because he first accepts Zeus’ fabricated woman.⁶ The epithet ἀλφιστῆσιν indicates the key difference between mortals and immortals that the following mythic sequence explains.⁷ This descriptor links the introduction of the myth of Prometheus and Pandora in the *Theogony* with the thematic setting for the myth in the *Works and Days*. There the poet identifies the myth as an etiology for a key aspect of mortal life: the fact “that the gods hid and keep hidden human sustenance” κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν (42). In both poems, these myths provide etiologies for what makes humans human, rather than the origin of mankind.⁸

⁴ See Loraux 1993, 77.

⁵ Clay 2003, 100.

⁶ Hesiod, *Th.* 513-514.

⁷ Hesiod *Th.* 512; *Op.* 82. See West 1978, 167 who compares this to *Od.* 9. 191.

⁸ Clay 2003, 100. Cf. West 1966, 305-7, who sees the myths as an unsatisfactory synthesis of three disparate etiologies for the practice of dividing the victims in Greek sacrifice, how humans came to possess fire, and the origin of women and how they impact men. He concludes that these three myths “could have been told separately” (307).

This interpretation draws upon Jean-Pierre Vernant's influential structuralist reading of the myths.⁹ Vernant reads the myth as a unified and coherent expression of a truth of the human existence as “characterized by the mixture of good and evil, by ambiguity and duplicity” on account of divine deception.¹⁰ This divine deception occurs in the series of ruses and counter-ruses perpetrated by Zeus and Prometheus. Through the repeated motifs of giving and not-giving, accepting, refusing, and hiding and uncovering, the contest of wits plays out between *mētieta* “counsellor” Zeus and *ankulomētis* “crooked-minded” Prometheus. Each stage of the exchange presents a gift with an attractive exterior and a destructive interior or a human good hidden in a less attractive exterior. Each gift precipitates an equally deceptive counter-gift. Beyond the introduction of Pandora as the first woman, this structural scheme to the overall myth “informs the narrative sequence of the story that defines the human condition, uneasily poised between god and beast.”¹¹ To be human is to have to contend with the results of the gods' skirmishes and deceptions. It is to participate in a series of cyclical hidings and uncoverings, both literally and metaphorically, from birth to death, with the womb as the first hiding place and the tomb and the final one.¹²

1.3 THE HESIODIC PANDORA AS A CRAFTED CREATION

In his treatment of the *Works and Days*, he sees a fourth disparate etiology on the presence of evils in human life (1978, 155). Jean-Pierre Vernant's structuralist interpretation of the myths presents theme as unified and coherent in contrast (1974; 1979). Cf. Robert 1905, 170; Wehrli 1956, 415–18; Reinhardt 1960, 197; Philips 1973.

⁹ Vernant 1974 and 1979. Vernant 1980; 1979, 21-86 and 224-37, Many scholars have built upon Vernant's reading, including Loraux 1981; 1982; 1983, Pucci 1977, Zeitlin 1996, 55, and Clay 2003, 101.

¹⁰ Vernant 1974, 190.

¹¹ Clay 2003, 101. Muellner 1996, 83, n. 73.

¹² Hesiod nests this motif within the context of the series of deceptive suppressions and uncovering in the larger narrative of the succession myth. This episode is tied to the succession myth because the text strongly emphasizes Prometheus' δολίη ἐπὶ τέχνῃ (283) which places Prometheus' trick in line with Gaia's deceptive *dolos* (284) and Zeus' own use of *technē* and force against Kronos (285).

In addition to the structural interpretation of the myth as an etiology for the human condition, the creation of Pandora is an origin story for the introduction of the first woman into the cosmos in the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. The creation of Pandora in the *Theogony* stands alone in Hesiod's cosmogony as the sole episode in which a living being is crafted rather than born. Indeed the main departure that Plato makes in the cosmogony presented in the *Timaeus* in contrast with Hesiod's cosmogony in the *Theogony* is the figure of the craftsman and the process of craft as the driving force behind the coming to be and organization of the cosmos.¹³ As a recompense for Prometheus' theft of fire, a key element necessary for the human craft practices of pottery and metallurgy, Zeus crafts (τεῦξεν) the first woman.¹⁴ After delegating Hephaestus to mold her from earth (γαίης σύμπλασσε), he calls on Athena to girdle and adorn her (ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε) with silvery clothing (ἀργυρέη ἐσθῆτι) and hang with her own hands a highly wrought veil (καλύπτρην δαιδαλέην) from the woman's head.¹⁵

Leopoldo Iribarren argues that craft plays a quasi-cosmological function in the *Theogony*, especially in the Prometheus and Pandora episode.¹⁶ Iribarren's second chapter describes the quasi-cosmological functions of craft and "la ruse technique" in the *Theogony*, with an emphasis on Prometheus and Pandora. The poet emphasizes the importance of Prometheus' δολίην τέχνην, deceptive craft, through a threefold repetition (546, 555, 560).¹⁷

In the *Works and Days* Pandora is not only an object made through craft, but she is also taught craft processes, and adorned with objects made by various crafts. In this version, Hesiod first describes how Zeus asks Hephaestus and the other gods to construct Pandora, and then

¹³ On birth as the driving process of cosmogony in Hesiod's *Theogony* see Muellner 1996, 56ff.

¹⁴ Hesiod, *Th.* 570.

¹⁵ Hesiod, *Th.* 571-5.

¹⁶ Iribarren 2018, 83-129.

¹⁷ Iribarren 2018, 89-98.

relates how this is accomplished, resulting in a repetition of Pandora's attributes. Zeus bids Hephaestus to quickly "mix together earth and water" (γαῖαν ὕδει φύρειν¹⁸) and not only place a human voice and strength within her (ἐν δ' ἀνθρώπου θέμεν αὐδὴν / καὶ σθένοϛ) but also to "fashion a sweet, lovely maiden-shape, similar to the immortal goddesses in face" (ἀθανάτης δὲ θεῆϛ εἰϛ ὧπα εἴσκειν / παρθενικῆϛ καλὸν εἶδος ἐπήρατον).¹⁹ As a result Pandora has a human voice (αὐδὴ) but an immortal countenance, which is both beautiful (καλόν) and virginal.

Not only is Pandora an object produced through the craft processes, part of her creation also involves being taught craft skills. Zeus orders Athena to teach her needlework and the art of weaving intricate webs (ἔργα διδασκῆσαι, πολυδαίδαλον ἰστὸν ὑφαίνειν).²⁰ These ἔργα connote a sexual threat because they are delivered along with Aphrodite's gifts: the ability to spread grace (χάριϛ) and to incite cruel longing (πόθον ἀργαλέον) and "cares that weary the limbs" (γυιοβόρους μελεδῶνας) in the men who look at her.²¹ The trickster and messenger god, Hermes, gives Pandora a bitchy mind (κύνεον νόον) and a deceitful nature (ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος) as well.²²

Each god obeys Zeus' orders and helps to fashion and equip Pandora, in a section nearly identical to the account in the *Theogony*:

αὐτίκα δ' ἐκ γαίης πλάσσειν κλυτὸς Ἄμφιγυήεις
παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἵκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλᾶϛ:
ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπιϛ Ἀθήνη.

¹⁸ Hesiod, *Op.* 61.

¹⁹ Hesiod, *Op.* 61-63.

²⁰ Hesiod, *Op.* 63-64. We see the valuation of weaving in the *Odyssey*, where Athena teaches the Phaeacian women to weave, *Od.* 7.109-11. In Pandora's case, as Lyons 2012, 40 writes, "textiles are part of the deceitful but attractive outer form that makes of Pandora a gift that is both treacherous and irresistible." Patterson 1998, 63 takes the opposite tack and argues that "Hesiod's 'misogyny' is a strong indication of the wife's significant economic role in a household in which she had a vested interest."

²¹ Hesiod, *Op.* 65-66. Aphrodite's abilities are similarly described in the opening of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (2-5) where she is the one "who arouses sweet desire for gods / and who subdues the races of mortal humans, / and birds as well, who fly in the sky, as well as all beasts / all those that grow on both dry land and the sea" ἦτε θεοῖσιν ἐπὶ γλυκὸν ἡμερον ὄρσε / καὶ τ' ἐδαμάσσατο φύλα καταθηνητῶν ἀνθρώπων / οἰωνούϛ τε διυπετέαϛ καὶ θηρία πάντα, / ἡμὲν ὄσ' ἡπειροϛ πολλὰ τρέφει ἠδ' ὄσα πόντοϛ.

²² Hesiod, *Op.* 67. Apart from Hephaestus, Hermes is the only male god to add to Pandora's adornments. It is significant that he is also a trickster god.

Forthwith the famous Lame God molded clay in the likeness of a modest maid, as the son of Cronos purposed. And the goddess bright-eyed Athena girded and clothed her.²³

Along with Athena's gift of clothing, she adorns Pandora with all manner of finery (πάντα δέ οἱ χροῖ κόσμον ἐφήρμοσε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη);²⁴ she also receives necklaces from the Graces (Χάριτες) and queenly Persuasion (πότνια Πειθώ), and the lovely-haired Hours (Ὠραι καλλίκομοι) crown her head with spring flowers (ἄνθεσιν εἰαρνοισιν). Hermes' gift is described as "lies and crafty words and a deceitful nature" (ψεύδεά θ' αἰμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπικλοπον ἦθος).²⁵ Finally, Hesiod concludes the catalogue of Pandora's gifts by repeating that the herald of the gods presents her with a voice (φωνή) and names her Pandora.²⁶

1.4 PANDORA'S ABSENT PRESENCE IN PLATO'S PROTAGORAS

Plato includes references to the myth of Prometheus in multiple dialogues besides the *Timaeus-Critias*. Indeed, the mythic figure has several functions in a variety of dialogues.²⁷ However, Plato's most in-depth use of this myth narrative comes in Protagoras' great speech (320d8-321c3).²⁸ It is helpful to look at Plato's adaptation of this myth in the *Protagoras* in relation to the introduction of the human body in the *Timaeus*, because the reference to the myth

²³ Hesiod, *Op.* 70-72.

²⁴ Hesiod, *Op.* 76.

²⁵ Hesiod, *Op.* 78.

²⁶ Hesiod, *Op.* 79-80.

²⁷ Ferrarin 2000 catalogues them noting, "in the Platonic dialogues, Prometheus also has a remarkable variety of functions. In the *Gorgias* (523e), in the myth of final judgment, Socrates has Prometheus prevent men's foreknowledge of their death, which is the main reason for the ill-judgment of the dead in Kronos' age. In the *Statesman* (274d), Prometheus is invoked but plays a subordinate role: the Eleatic Stranger's mention of the traditional account of his theft of fire and of Hephaestus' crafts has no real bearing on the myth of the reversed cosmos. In the *Philebus*, by contrast, Socrates says that Prometheus, 'or one like him' (16c), gave humans not only fire, but also the most valuable cognition, that all things consist of a one and a many and have in them a combination of limit and unlimitedness."

²⁸ The question about whether to attribute the authorship of this speech to the sophist Protagoras or view it as original to Plato is beyond the scope of this project. Morgan 2000, 136 reads the story as going back to Protagoras himself.

of Pandora in the *Timaeus* is relatively subtle. The fact that Plato reworks this myth so substantially shows his awareness of, and interest in, this myth.²⁹ Moreover, it aligns with the etiology found in Timaeus' speech because it functions as an etiology for the human condition that emphasizes the relationship between humans and animals and introduces particular ethical capacities to human beings. The main difference between this myth in the *Protagoras* and the *Timaeus-Critias*, however, points to the particular way that Plato employs the allusion within Timaeus' speech. In the *Protagoras*, there is no etiology for gender and sex. Thus, in the *Protagoras* Plato rewrites Hesiod's myth of Prometheus and Pandora without Pandora.

Protagoras employs the myth to tell both a zoogony and an etiological story of the introduction of human beings and their development into creatures with rational and social abilities. The story goes that when the gods first created mortal beings (θνητὰ γένη), Epimetheus equipped all animals with suitable means of survival according to their weaknesses, so that they would not become extinct. He forgot about humans, however, who were left naked and unarmed. Prometheus then tried to compensate for his brother's mistake by stealing fire and the arts, but men lived apart from one another because they lacked *politikē technē*, political skill.³⁰ This left human beings vulnerable to attack, and when they faced extinction, Zeus ordered Hermes to distribute *aidōs* (reverence) and *dikē* (justice) among all men so they could form cities and continue to survive.

In this dialogue, Plato has Protagoras not only re-work the myth of Prometheus, but also align himself as a sophist with Homer and Hesiod.³¹ Citing them both as “men who practiced

²⁹ Koning 2010, 219 notes that “It must have been as obvious to an ancient Greek as it is to a modern scholar that Protagoras made use of Hesiodic materials for his own μῦθος. It is also clear that this Hesiodic myth is employed to formulate a politically correct statement: its main point is that everybody is endowed with political skill, a welcome message in democratic Athens.”

³⁰ Plato, *Prt.* 322b.

³¹ Morgan 2000, 138-9 shows how sophists often chose mythological themes and settings in order to avoid suspicion or hostility and instead connect with the discourse traditionally associated with education.

[sophistry] in ancient times,”³² he argues that they disguised their arguments in poetry out of fear of attack.³³ Scholars have analyzed how Plato, or perhaps Protagoras, changes and makes use of the Hesiodic myth in this speech.³⁴ For example, Van Noorden argues that this speech combines elements of the Hesiodic myth of the races and his Prometheus narratives. As a result, Plato’s *Protagoras* overturns “the Hesiodic emphasis on current misery.”³⁵ This is partially achieved by substituting the gift that Zeus orders the gods to convey to mankind. In place of Pandora, Hermes delivers the key social virtues of *dikē* and *aidōs*.³⁶

Indeed, the most striking difference between Protagoras’ account and the Hesiodic myth is the absence of Pandora. Since Plato’s audience would be familiar with this myth and Pandora as the final gift exchanged within it, they would expect that a story beginning with Epimetheus and Prometheus would end with the introduction of Pandora. Pandora becomes an absent presence in Protagoras’ speech. Moreover, in Protagoras’ account, all mortal beings are molded (τυποῦσιν) by the gods “inside the earth” γῆς ἔνδον.³⁷ They are made by “blending together earth and fire and various compounds of earth and fire.”³⁸ This recalls Zeus’ request to the god of the forge, Hephaestus, to create Pandora from the earth (γαίης γὰρ σύμπλασσε)³⁹ in the *Theogony* or to

³² ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν σοφιστικὴν τέχνην φημί μὲν εἶναι παλαιάν, τοὺς δὲ μεταχειριζομένους αὐτὴν τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν, φοβουμένους τὸ ἐπαχθὲς αὐτῆς, πρόσχημα ποιεῖσθαι καὶ προκαλύπτεσθαι, τοὺς μὲν ποιήσιν, οἷον Ὀμηρόν τε καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ Σιμωνίδην ... Plato, *Prt.* 316d.

³³ Plato, *Prt.* 316d-e. Koning 2010, 113-114 argues that for the sophists “in speeches with Hesiodic elements, [...] the traditional values advocated seem to be reinforced by an archaic notion of truthfulness.”

³⁴ Koning 2010, note 219 lists the similarities between this myth and Hesiod’s etiology for human beings. He notes that Aelius Aristides even seems to confuse these two accounts (or. 26.106). Sihvola 1989 also notes several agreements on ideological issues (esp. 148-150); Cf. Ferrarin 2000, who downplays the Hesiodic influence. Sedley 2007, 56 argues that the zoogony of this myth “no doubt had a partial forerunner in the second stage of Empedocles’ zoogony.” Van Noorden 2015, 99-105 also analyzes Plato’s use of Hesiod in the reworked etiology for human beings in Protagoras’ speech.

³⁵ Van Noorden 2015, 99.

³⁶ Van Noorden 2015, 100 notes that these qualities are endangered in the Hesiodic Iron Age.

³⁷ Plato, *Prt.* 320d. Creation within the Earth calls to mind Zeus’ episode in Hesiod’s succession myth and the fact that after he is replaced by a stone, he is hidden by Rhea in a cave, in other words, within Gaia (*Th.* 465-491).

³⁸ Plato, *Prt.* 320d: ἐκ γῆς καὶ πυρὸς μείζαντες καὶ τῶν ὄσα πυρὶ καὶ γῆ κεράννυται.

³⁹ Hesiod, *Th.* 571.

fabricate out of the earth the likeness of a modest maiden (ἐκ γαίης πλάσσειν κλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις / παρθένω αἰδοίῃ ἵκελον) in the *Works and Days*.⁴⁰ Prometheus and Epimetheus are tasked with equipping (κοσμήσαι) the mortal beings and “dispensing to each its appropriate powers and abilities” τε καὶ νεῖμαι δυνάμεις ἐκάστοις ὡς πρέπει.⁴¹ Hesiod assigns this same task to Athena and Hermes, but in relation to Pandora instead of humans in general. Athena equips (κόσμησε) her⁴² and girds her. Similarly, in the *Works and Days*, Athena is said to give her a girdle and ornaments, the Graces and Persuasion place golden jewelry around on her body, the Seasons crown her with spring flowers, and Athena “fitted the whole ornamentation around her body” πάντα δέ οἱ χροῖ κόσμον ἐφήρμοσε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.⁴³

Plato thus inverts the Pandora element of the myth by equipping all the non-human animals with “clothing” and skills, rather than the prototypical human woman. In this version Epimetheus convinces Prometheus to take on the task of distributing abilities and skills to the animals. He takes care to provide for each non-human animal. To this end he

ἐμηχανᾶτο ἀμφιεννὺς αὐτὰ πυκναῖς τε θριξίν καὶ στερεοῖς δέρμασιν, ἱκανοῖς μὲν ἀμῦναι χειμῶνα, δυνατοῖς δὲ καὶ καύματα, καὶ εἰς εὐνὰς ἰοῦσιν ὅπως ὑπάρχοι τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα στρωμνὴ οἰκεία τε καὶ αὐτοφυῆς ἐκάστω· καὶ ὑποδῶν τὰ μὲν ὀπλαῖς, τὰ δὲ θριξίν καὶ δέρμασιν στερεοῖς καὶ ἀναίμοις.

clothed them with thick pelts and tough hides capable of warding off winter storms, effective against heat, and serving also as built-in, natural bedding when they went to sleep. He also shod them, some with hooves, others with thick pads of bloodless skin.⁴⁴

Epimetheus’ preparation (ἐμηχανᾶτο) of these protections for animals, which allow them to weather the elements, mirrors the way that the gods outfit Pandora in both Hesiodic episodes. As

⁴⁰ Hesiod, *Op.* 71-2.

⁴¹ Plato, *Prt.* 320d.

⁴² Hesiod, *Th.* 573. In general the distribution of abilities draws on the theme of distinguishing the characteristics of mortals and immortals present in the opening lines of the myth in the *Theogony*: καὶ γὰρ ὅτ’ ἐκρίνοντο θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ’ ἄνθρωποι / Μηκόνῃ. See Hesiod *Th.* 535-6.

⁴³ Hesiod, *Op.* 76.

⁴⁴ Plato, *Prt.* 321a -321.

a result, Pandora becomes “intractable for human beings” (ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν).⁴⁵ That is, the Hesiodic human beings are unequipped to resist Pandora.

Protagoras’ Epimetheus also provides various kinds of nourishment to animals. To some he gives vegetal nourishment, to others animal nourishment. He then assigns few births to the latter, and many births to the former. Plato preserves Mr. Afterthought’s key trait: forgetfulness. He alters, however, the object of this forgetfulness. Epimetheus uses up all the powers and abilities on the non-reasoning animals (καταναλώσας τὰς δυνάμεις εἰς τὰ ἄλογα) and leaves the human race completely unfurnished (ἀκόσμητον).⁴⁶ The use of the alpha-privative adjectival form of κοσμέω recalls the use of κοσμέω language used to describe the Hesiodic Pandora, as discussed above. Moreover, the alpha-privative adjective recalls how Pandora causes humans to be ἀμήχανον. The Hesiodic Epimetheus, in contrast, forgets to refuse to receive any gifts from Zeus and accepts the gift of Pandora when she is presented,⁴⁷ an exchange that represents the introduction of marriage for human beings. Plato thus replaces Hesiod’s successive gift exchanges between Prometheus and Zeus that explain the key practices of the human experience, namely, how humans sacrifice and marry. Through this narrative shift, the first human beings in Protagoras’ myth are inversions of the first woman in the Hesiodic myth.

Plato also sets up a contrast between the two anthropogenies by having the first human beings created without clothing or adornment. When Prometheus comes to inspect the distribution, he sees that “whereas the other creatures were fully and suitably provided, man was naked, unshod, unbedded, unarmed” τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ζῷα ἐμμελῶς πάντων ἔχοντα, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον

⁴⁵ Hesiod, *Th.* 589.

⁴⁶ This prototypical human race contrasts with Pandora who is equipped (κόσμησε) by Athena. Hesiod, *Th.* 573.

⁴⁷ Hesiod, *Op.* 83-89. In the *Op.* Hermes is the messenger who delivers Pandora to Epimetheus. Plato also uses Hermes in the *Protagoras*.

γυμνόν τε καὶ ἀνυπόδητον καὶ ἄστρωτον καὶ ἄοπλον.⁴⁸ In contrast, the creation of Pandora involves the creation of her body along with the garments and accessories that she wears. Indeed, in the *Works and Days*, Athena clothes and girds her, the Graces and Persuasion put gold necklaces on her, and the Hours crown her with spring flowers, as mentioned above. All these gifts contribute to the fact that she receives the name Pandora, “because all they who dwelt on Olympus gave each a gift” ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντε / δῶρον ἐδώρησαν.⁴⁹ Thus, the external and internal gifts that make up Pandora are inverted in Protagoras’ anthropogony.

As we have seen, this anthropogony in the *Protagoras* combines an anthropogony with a zoogony. Below I discuss how Plato also combines his account of the creation of women with a zoogony in the *Timaeus*. Although the Hesiodic accounts of Pandora do not include zoogonies, Pandora is nevertheless associated with animals in the *Theogony*. In her seminal analysis, Nicole Loraux interprets the Pandora of the *Theogony* as “a mixed creature composed of god, man, and beast.”⁵⁰ Pandora is associated with animals through her final adornment, a golden headband. The poet constructs a short ekphrasis around it, which characterizes Pandora herself as a speaking creation.⁵¹ Hesiod describes how Hephaestus constructs this crown, saying:

ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ στεφάνην χρυσέην κεφαλῆφιν ἔθηκε,
 τὴν αὐτὸς ποίησε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
 ἀσκήσας παλάμησι, χαριζόμενος Διὶ πατρί.
 τῇ δ’ ἐνὶ δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.
 κνώδαλ’, ὅσ’ ἤπειρος πολλὰ τρέφει ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
 τῶν ὅ γε πόλλ’ ἐνέθηκε, — χάρις δ’ ἀπελάμπετο πολλή, —
 θαυμάσια, ζῴοισιν εἰκότα φωνήεσσιν.

⁴⁸ Plato, *Prt.* 321c.

⁴⁹ Hesiod, *Op.* 81-2.

⁵⁰ Loraux 1993, 76. She notes (n. 19) that “Pandora is partly human (61-62), partly divine (62-63), and partly an animal (67); this mixed character, as well as the ‘thievish temperament’ she inherits from her master, Hermes, will destine her to enter into a circuit of exchange (although it happens to be a rigged one).”

⁵¹ Aphrodite also sports a “golden crown” (στεφάνην χρυσέην). See West 1966, 328. Marquardt 1982, 287 notes this similarity. See Potnia 34, LIMC suppl. for a bronze *potnia* with animals sprouting from her head. See Brown 1997 for similarities with Aphrodite. duBois 1988 compares this crown to Homer’s ekphrastic description of Achilles’ shield, both of which are made by Hephaestus: *Il.* 18.541-42, 548-549.

Also, she put upon her head a crown of gold which the very famous Limping God made himself and worked with his own hands as a favor to Zeus his father. On it was much curious work, wonderful to see; for of the many creatures which the land and sea rear up, he put most upon it, wonderful things, like living beings with voices: and great beauty shone out from it.⁵²

What makes this crown amazing is that it is teeming with wild animals (κνώδαλα) of the sea and land, who are so well crafted that they seem to speak. The θαῦμα ιδέσθαι, wonder to behold, here is thus a divinely produced object given a voice, which shines forth χάρις, grace, just like Pandora. This points to her intermediate nature between gods and mortals.⁵³ No other account of the creation of animals occurs in the *Theogony*, so the creation of this crown functions as a *de facto* zoogony.

In the *Theogony*, Pandora is also linked with non-human animals through an extended simile that the poet employs to describe the idleness of women. Extended similes are a rarity in the Hesiodic corpus.⁵⁴ According to the poet, lazy male bees (κηφήνας) stay in the home, just as the women are confined to the *oikos*, while the female bees (μέλισσαι)⁵⁵ go forth to gather pollen and produce honey.⁵⁶ The food collected by the female bees feeds the males who stay at home. They put the other gender's work in their own bellies. The poet compares the race of female human beings to male bees, drones (κηφήνας), whose nature is to do evil (κακῶν ξυνήνας ἔργων).⁵⁷ This use of κακῶν recalls Pandora as an "evil for men" κακὸν ἀνθρώποισιν.⁵⁸ In this

⁵² Hesiod, *Th.* 578-584.

⁵³ Since the poet uses the adjective φωνήεις to describe the golden animals' speech, West argues that they do not only make animal noises, but also have an articulate voice. West 1966, 329 points to *Od.* 9. 456, where ποτιφωνήεις means speaking articulately as opposed to making animal noises. Marquardt 1982, 287 suggests that this headdress associates Pandora with a πότνια θηρῶν, such as Aphrodite in the Homeric Hymn (*H. Ven.* 5. 68-74). See also Lyons 2012, 123, note 82.

⁵⁴ Hesiod, *Th.* 594-602. On beekeeping in Homer and Hesiod see Körner 1929. Hesiod has other extended similes at 702 ff. and 862 ff. and a drone simile in *Op.* 303 ff.

⁵⁵ Hesiod could be somehow playing with his virtuosic pun mastery here, as the word could also refer to the verb μελίζω, which translates as "modulate, sing."

⁵⁶ Hesiod, *Th.* 549-599.

⁵⁷ For an interesting account of gender reversals in Homeric similes see Foley 1984. The reversal in this simile is especially striking anachronistically due to our current biological knowledge of bees.

⁵⁸ Hesiod, *Th.* 570. Zeitlin 1996, 69. See following comparison with Perses, 84-98, also Lyons 2012, 46.

way the poet uses animal imagery to illustrate the problem associated with the race of women. Moreover, this extended simile inverts the gender associated with rapacious hunger from female human beings to male bees. At the same time, it inverts the Ancient Greek commonplace that the female bee (μέλισσα) is “the paradigm for the model wife.”⁵⁹ Even in the *Works and Days*, the male bee, κηφήν, is the lazy man.⁶⁰ This effectively “establishes the idea that women are violating their ‘normal’ status, since it inverts the roles of the sexes.”⁶¹

As I have discussed above, according to the Hesiodic anthropogony, the first woman stands in as the introduction of the whole package of elements that distinguish human beings from the gods. The prototypical woman is introduced in the sequence of exchanges that establish how human beings sacrifice, and how fire and marriage exchange come to be. In the Hesiodic accounts, Pandora is a crafted object, made by Hephaestus, with contributions from Athena, Aphrodite, and Hermes, and other gods. In Protagoras’ account, however, Prometheus tries to rectify Epimetheus’ error by stealing the skills (τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν) of Hephaestus and Athena and delivering these to human beings.⁶² Instead of Prometheus stealing fire from the gods and hiding it in a hollow fennel stalk, in the *Protagoras*, Prometheus steals these arts “with fire” σὺν πυρί. Plato thus makes explicit what is interpreted implicitly from the Hesiodic anthropogony. He states that fire is necessary for human *technē*: “since by no means without fire could it be acquired or helpfully used by any” ἀμήχανον γὰρ ἦν ἄνευ πυρὸς αὐτὴν κτητὴν τῶ ἢ χρησίμην γενέσθαι.⁶³

⁵⁹ Loraux 1993, 78.

⁶⁰ Hesiod, *Op.* 302-5. See Loraux 1993, 78, n. 34. Loraux 1993, 102-5 compares the Hesiodic simile to the final animal-woman in Semonides’ “Iambic satire on Women”: the bee (μέλισσα). In contrast, the μέλισσα woman increases the wealth of the household, the single and only positive depiction of a virtuous wife in his catalogue.

⁶¹ Loraux 1993, 78.

⁶² Plato, *Prt.* 321e. In a structure that mirrors the Hesiodic repetitions, Protagoras sets out this plan at 321c-d, and then reiterates when Prometheus accomplishes it at 321e.

⁶³ Plato, *Prt.* 321d.

Additionally, fire and the arts associated with Athena and Hephaestus situate human beings between the gods and non-human animals. As Protagoras explains, “it is because humans had a share of the divine dispensation that they alone among animals worshipped gods, with whom they had a kind of kinship, and erected altars and sacred images” ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος θείας μετέσχε μοίρας, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ συγγένειαν ζῶων μόνον θεοὺς ἐνόμισεν, καὶ ἐπεχείρει βωμούς τε ἰδρῦεσθαι καὶ ἀγάλματα θεῶν.⁶⁴ The Hesiodic anthropogony functions first as an etiology for how humans sacrifice, an act that requires fire to allow human beings to communicate with the gods. Here the etiologies are reversed, and the anthropogony introduces sacrifice as a consequence. This separates human beings from non-human animals, as the only mortals who worship the gods and as having a kind of kinship with them. The basis for this kinship is having a share in the arts of Hephaestus and Athena as well as access to fire.

In Protagoras’ account, Plato makes one key distinction that is not present in the Hesiodic myth. Protagoras employs this myth in order to show how virtue can be taught and learned by all. In order to make this point, Protagoras distinguishes multiple kinds of *technē*: the arts of Hephaestus and Athena, and the political wisdom (σοφίαν πολιτικὴν) in Zeus’ jurisdiction.⁶⁵ Prometheus’ gift to humans allows them to begin “articulating speech and words” (φωνὴν καὶ ὀνόματα ταχὺ διηρθρώσατο τῇ τέχνῃ) and to invent “houses, clothes, shoes, and blankets” (οἰκῆσεις καὶ ἐσθῆτας καὶ ὑποδέσεις καὶ στρωμνάς) as well as agricultural products.⁶⁶ These skills allow human beings to provide themselves with food and shelter, but not to protect themselves from non-human animals. Protagoras describes how human beings “were being destroyed by wild beasts because they were weaker in every way, and although their technology

⁶⁴ Plato, *Prt.* 322a.

⁶⁵ Plato, *Prt.* 321d.

⁶⁶ Plato, *Prt.* 322b.

was adequate to obtain food, it was deficient when it came to fighting wild animals” ἀπώλλυντο οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων διὰ τὸ πανταχῆ αὐτῶν ἀσθενέστεροι εἶναι, καὶ ἡ δημιουργικὴ τέχνη αὐτοῖς πρὸς μὲν τροφήν ἰκανὴ βοηθὸς ἦν, πρὸς δὲ τὸν τῶν θηρίων πόλεμον ἐνδεής.⁶⁷ Without the art of politics (πολιτικὴν τέχνην), of which war (πολεμικὴ) is a part, human beings were unable to defend themselves from the non-human animals.⁶⁸

The final gift in Protagoras’ sequence is also a gift from Zeus. However, in place of Pandora as a bane for men,⁶⁹ Plato’s Zeus requests that Hermes bring “justice and a sense of shame to humans, so that there would be order within cities and bonds of friendship to unite them” αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην” ἵν’ εἴεν πόλεων κόσμοι τε καὶ δεσμοὶ φιλίας συναγωγοί.⁷⁰ When Hermes asks how these skills should be distributed, Zeus tells him to give them to everyone equally. *Distribution* is the key to Protagoras’ rhetorical aims in the speech. It makes his case that virtue can be taught because *aidōs* and *dikē* have been distributed to all human beings.

Helen Van Noorden argues that Plato combines elements of the myth of Pandora and Prometheus with the Hesiodic myth of the races in Protagoras’ great speech.⁷¹ Ultimately, Van Noorden shows that Protagoras’ version overturns “the Hesiodic emphasis on current misery.”⁷² This is partially achieved by replacing Pandora with the gift of *aidōs* and *dikē*, qualities that are endangered in the Hesiodic Iron Age.⁷³

Aidōs and *dikē* are also packaged together in Hesiod, just as they are in the *Protagoras*. At the end of the myth of the races, justice becomes something taken into one’s hands wherein

⁶⁷ Plato, *Prt.* 322b.

⁶⁸ Logically, one might assume that houses and fire would do more to protect from wild animals.

⁶⁹ Hesiod, *Op.* 82.

⁷⁰ Plato, *Prt.* 322c.

⁷¹ Van Noorden 2015, 100.

⁷² Van Noorden 2015, 99.

⁷³ Van Noorden 2015, 100. *Op.* 192-03, 197-200.

might equals right. The poet emphasized how this version of *dikē* leaves the human race wretched, saying:

χειροδίκαι: ἕτερος δ' ἑτέρου πόλιν ἐξαλαπάξει.
 οὐδέ τις εὐόρκου χάρις ἔσσεται οὔτε δικαίου
 οὔτ' ἀγαθοῦ, μᾶλλον δὲ κακῶν ῥεκτῆρα καὶ ὕβριν
 ἄνερες αἰνήσουσι: δίκη δ' ἐν χερσὶ, καὶ αἰδῶς
 οὐκ ἔσται:

Their hands will be their justice, and one man will destroy another's city. Nor will there be any grace for the man who keeps his oath, nor for the just man or the good one, but they will give more honor to the doer of evil and the outrageous man, Justice will be in their hands, and reverence will not exist.⁷⁴

Justice becomes something taken in hand in the compound word χειροδίκαι (189) and in the full expression of this same concept, δίκη δ' ἐν χερσὶ (192).⁷⁵ Additionally, *dikē* and *aidōs* are paired here as two sides of the coin in lines 192-3: δίκη δ' ἐν χερσὶ, καὶ αἰδῶς / οὐκ ἔσται.⁷⁶ Finally, at the end of Hesiod's description of the Iron Age, a personified *Aidōs* leaves wretched human beings behind to join the gods in Olympus.⁷⁷ In the *Works and Days*, then, these two concepts are already linked. Plato redeploys them in the *Protagoras* as the virtues that allow human beings to possess the key arts of politics (πολιτικὴν τέχνην). Ironically, war (πολεμική) is a part of these skills. In contrast, the Hesiodic Iron Age introduces warfare as one of the key features that

⁷⁴ Hesiod, *Op.* 189-193.

⁷⁵ West 1978, 201 notes that line 189 is often condemned because of the doubling and because fighting amongst states is not mentioned elsewhere. However, he argues that “χειροδίκαι looks like a fine Hesiodic compound, and it is characteristic of such coinages in him that the elements appear uncompounded nearby.” Plato deals with the conception of *dikē* as “nothing other than the advantage of the stronger” (τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον) through Thrasymachus in the *Republic*. Gagarin (1973) argues that *dikē* in the *Works and Days* primarily refers to the process employed in the peaceful settlement of disputes. See also Cairns 1993, 152-3.

⁷⁶ *Op.* 317-19 also famously discusses the ambivalent nature of *aidōs*. See Cairns 1993, 149-152 on this passage and the extensive bibliography. Cairns 1993, 152 argues that lines 317-319 and the further examples of *anaideiē* behavior in 327-32 suggest “a link between *aidōs* and *dikē* (suit, settlement, custom, justice).”

⁷⁷ *Aidōs* is joined by *Nemesis*. Hesiod, *Op.* 197-200.

defines and causes the decline from the previous Heroic age. The Iron Age is an age of misery when “one man will destroy another’s city” ἕτερος δ’ ἑτέρου πόλιν ἐξαλαπάξει.⁷⁸

Plato effectively replaces the gift of Pandora to human beings with the introduction of the social virtues of *aidōs* and *dikē*, as the markers that differentiate gods, humans, and animals. Whereas the Hesiodic Hermes is instructed to “set lies and guileful words and a thievish character” ψεύδεά θ’ αἰμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπικλοπον ἦθος⁷⁹ into the archetypal woman (see above), Plato’s Hermes introduces the social virtues that provide a foundation for the establishment of cities.⁸⁰ Indeed, the Zeus of Protagoras’ myth aims to save human beings from extinction, in contrast with the Hesiodic Zeus who introduces mortality to human beings to keep them from threatening his rule. Plato’s Zeus even orders that anyone who does not partake in *aidōs* and *dikē* be put to death “as a public pest” (ὡς νόσον πόλεως),⁸¹ whereas one of the evils that Pandora introduces into the worlds of man in the famous episode with the *pithos* in the *Works and Days* is νοῦσοι, disease.⁸²

As I have shown, Pandora is replaced in Protagoras’ myth in order to set up the distribution of the social virtues that undergird Protagoras’ rhetorical strategy. But what happens to gender? In this anthropogony is gender and sexual difference introduced into the world of the myth at all? The only hint of sex or gender differentiation comes when Epimetheus introduces different capacities for reproduction to animals in accordance with whether they are treated as prey or hunters. Indeed, as we saw above, Epimetheus gives some animals a “paucity in breeding” (ὀλιγογονίαν) and others “a plenteous brood” (πολυγονίαν), thus “bringing about the

⁷⁸ Hesiod, *Op.* 189.

⁷⁹ Hesiod, *Op.* 78.

⁸⁰ Plato, *Prt.* 322c-d.

⁸¹ Plato, *Prt.* 322d.

⁸² Hesiod, *Op.* 102.

survival of their kind” (σωτηρίαν τῷ γένει πορίζων).⁸³ In the Hesiodic anthropogenies, by contrast, Pandora introduces gender differentiation and marriage exchange, as shown above; this is completely absent from the Protagorean myth.

The Protagorean anthropogony, by contrast, is interested in introducing social virtues that Plato does not associate with gender here. However, one of the Hesiodic Pandora’s deceitful features is her appearance of *aidōs*: in accordance with Zeus’ will, Hephaestus creates Pandora as the “semblance of a respectful maiden” παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἕκλον.⁸⁴ In the *Theogony* the gift of *aidōs* is the “foundation of Pandora’s allure.”⁸⁵ As Gloria Ferrari argues, *aidōs* carries with it a wide range of semantic meanings: it “is neither shame, nor honor, nor fear, nor disgrace, but stands in some relationship to each.”⁸⁶ This virtue is key to social structures because it “keeps those who are incapable of behaving in a wise and responsible manner under control, and it prevents those who have power from using it in an arbitrary and destructive manner.”⁸⁷ Thus, it is both a positive force, such as honor, and a negative one, such as shame or disgrace. Ferrari also shows how *aidōs* is connected with the imagery of an enveloping mantle.⁸⁸ In Hesiod, *Aidōs* is personified as a goddess covered in a white cloak,⁸⁹ like Pandora, who is in draped in an intricately woven or embroidered veil (καλύπτειν δαιδαλέην).⁹⁰ In his revamped myth, Plato therefore replaces the first created woman, who is the image (ἕκλον) of a maiden characterized by *aidōs*, with the gift of *aidōs* itself to human beings.

⁸³ Plato, *Prt.* 321b.

⁸⁴ Hesiod, *Th.* 572.

⁸⁵ Ferrari 1990, 188, citing Hesiod, *Op.* 56-57; *Th.*, 571-72.

⁸⁶ Ferrari 1990, 193.

⁸⁷ Ferrari 1990, 193-4.

⁸⁸ Ferrari 1990, *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Nemesis is similarly dressed. Hesiod *Op.* 197-201.

⁹⁰ Lyons 2012, 26 notes that “the symbolism of textiles becomes part of the marriage ritual, when the new bride lifts her veil in the presence of her husband’s family for the first time, in the gesture known as *anakalyteria*.” See *Il.* 466-70, where Andromache tears off her veil when she learns of Hector’s death.

1.5 OF LIKELY STORIES AND LIKENESSES

Turning to the *Timaeus*, in the following section of this chapter I show that the Hesiodic Pandora is also a relevant intertext in Timaeus' cosmological speech. In general, both the Hesiodic texts and Plato's *Timaeus* are concerned with the question of origins: how does the cosmos as we know it come to be and come to be ordered? These texts must deal with the question not only of the content of the possible answers to this impossible question, but also the manner of answering. In other words, *how* the question of origins is answered is just as important as *what* the answer is. To this end, Timaeus characterizes his speech on how the world comes to be as both an *eikōs muthos*, a "likely story," and an *eikōs logos*, a "likely account."⁹¹

According to Timaeus, the character of the speech that he presents mirrors in quality the subject matter of the speech. He identifies that

ὧδε οὖν περί τε εἰκόνοσ καὶ περί τοῦ παραδείγματος αὐτῆσ διοριστέον, ὡσ ἄρα τοὺσ λόγουσ, ὧσπέρ εἰσιν ἐξηγηταί, τούτων αὐτῶν καὶ συγγενεῖσ ὄντασ: τοῦ μὲν οὖν μονίμου καὶ βεβαίου καὶ μετὰ νοῦ καταφανοῦσ μονίμουσ καὶ ἀμεταπτώτουσ—καθ' ὅσων οἶόν τε καὶ ἀνελέγκτοισ προσήκει λόγοισ εἶναι καὶ ἀνικῆτοισ, τούτου δεῖ μηδὲν ἐλλείπειν—τοὺσ δὲ τοῦ πρὸσ μὲν ἐκεῖνο ἀπεικασθέντοσ, ὄντοσ δὲ εἰκόνοσ εἰκότασ ἀνὰ λόγον τε ἐκείνων ὄντασ: ὅτιπερ πρὸσ γένεσιν οὐσία, τοῦτο πρὸσ πίστιν ἀλήθεια.

when it comes to a likeness and its model, one must determine how the accounts are also akin to those very things of which the accounts are interpreters. Now accounts of what's abiding and unshakable and manifest with the aid of intellect are themselves abiding and unchanging; and to the extent that it's possible and fitting for accounts to be irrefutable and invincible, they must not fall short of this. But as accounts of something made as a likeness of something else's—since it is a likeness—it is fitting that they, in proportion to their objects, be likenesses: just as Being is to Becoming, so is truth to trust.⁹²

⁹¹ The term 'eikōs' occurs ten times in conjunction with *logos* or *muthos*, and another six times on its own with a similar meaning. The bibliography on the interpretation of Timaeus' terms 'eikōs logos' and 'eikōs muthos' is notoriously vast. See McBride 2005, 11-30: "The use of both *logos* and *muthos* to describe Timaeus' speech has prompted an unending debate about the status of the dialogue as either scientific or myth, or some combination of both." See McBride 2005, 11-30 and Zeyl 2000, xx-xxv for a summary of this debate.

⁹² Plato, *Ti.* 29b-c.

Thus, according to Timaeus, the speech he produces has the same character as its subject. The subject of his speech is the cosmos, which is itself a likeness (κόσμον εικόνα τινὸς εἶναι).⁹³ And since the cosmos is a likeness (*eikōn*) of an immutable model, his account will be, at best, likely (*eikōs*).

Therefore, Timaeus delineates a limit on the expectations for accuracy and consistency in his speech. He tells his audience

ἐὰν οὖν ... πολλὰ πολλῶν πέρι, θεῶν καὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως, μὴ δυνατοὶ γινώμεθα πάντα πάντως αὐτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμολογουμένους λόγους καὶ ἀπηκριβωμένους ἀποδοῦναι, μὴ θαυμάσης·

If, in saying many things on many topics concerning gods and the birth of the all, we become incapable of rendering speeches that are always and in all respects in agreement with themselves and drawn with precision, don't wonder.⁹⁴

Timaeus sets his audience's expectations that the best they can expect are μηδενὸς ἧττον ... εικότας "likelihoods inferior to none."⁹⁵ This is due not only to the subject matter of the speech, but also to the nature of the speech's maker and its judges. Timaeus argues that he and his audience should be well pleased with likelihoods (εικότας) because he and his audience have "a human nature" (φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην).⁹⁶ Therefore, "the likely story" (τὸν εικότα μῦθον) is fitting.

In summary, Timaeus lays out that his subject matter is a likeness, and his speech is a likeness of this copy, which will then have, at best, the same quality as its subject matter. Additionally, the nature of Timaeus, the speaker of this speech, is to be human, which is to say he is himself a likeness of a model as a created thing in the cosmos. There is also an element here of wordplay. As a noun, an '*eikōn*' is a likeness.⁹⁷ As an adjective, '*eikōs*' means 'like truth,' i.e.

⁹³ Plato, *Ti.* 29b.

⁹⁴ Plato, *Ti.* 29 c-d.

⁹⁵ Plato, *Ti.* 29c.

⁹⁶ Plato, *Ti.* 29c.

⁹⁷"εἰκῶν, ἦ" LSJ. s.v. I. Plato uses this noun to describe an image in a mirror in the *Republic* (402b).

‘likely,’ ‘probable,’ or ‘reasonable,’ or ‘fair,’ ‘equitable,’ as well as the logical quality of being a probable proposition.⁹⁸ Both the noun and adjective derive from the verb *eoikenai*, which means ‘to be like,’ ‘to be opportune,’ or ‘to seem’ or to ‘beseem.’ So, the likely account is the one that is both reasonable and the one that is similar to its subject matter. It is likely in both senses.

Pandora, too, is a likeness. As noted above, Hephaestus creates Pandora as the *παρθένω αἰδοίη ἴκελον* “semblance of a respectful maiden.”⁹⁹ The adjective ‘ἴκελος’ is a poetic and the Ionic form of ‘εἴκελος,’¹⁰⁰ itself a form of ‘εἰκός.’ As I argued above, Pandora’s status as a likeness has led scholars to see her as a likeness of a maiden characterized as having *aidōs*. However, she is “a copy that does not have an original.”¹⁰¹ The Hesiodic myth does not untie the logical Gordian knot that Pandora introduces. How at this point in the myth can Pandora be both the likeness of a maiden, while also being the first woman, and yet also the paradigm that will lead to the creation of the race of women? Like Timaeus, I too cannot explain this, due to the limits of logical reasoning.¹⁰² However, my main point is that the myth of Pandora and Timaeus’ cosmogony approach the same chicken-or-egg problem.

The question of origins is especially difficult when it comes to human gender and sexuality. What came first, the baby or the woman; what came first, gender or reproduction? The process of generation is entangled with heterosexual sexuality and reproduction. Nicole Loraux’s

⁹⁸ “εἰκός” LSJ. *s.v.* Aristotle *APr.70a4, Rh.1357a34*.

⁹⁹ Hesiod, *Th.* 572. West 1978, 326 expresses uncertainty about recognizing *ikelon* as a neuter that refers to an “object like” status and suggests that it may instead be a masculine gendered word standing in for a feminine gendered word. Loraux 1993, 81, n. 56 argues to accept the neuter.

¹⁰⁰ “ἴκελος [ι^], η, ον” LSJ. *s.v.* I.

¹⁰¹ Loraux 1993, 82. See Pucci 1977 for a summary of the debate on how Pandora can be a copy of a maiden. Marg 1970 talks about “mythic inconsistency.”

¹⁰² Loraux 1993, 82 argues that “the word *ikelos* does not always establish a link of resemblance between two objects, or a relationship of conformity between an image and its model. Instead, at times, it indicates a curious, undoubtedly pre-Platonic kind of mimesis, composed of identity and participation, which characterizes authentic appearance and allows man to orient himself in a world of signs. The woman appears as the image of a virgin, classified as a virgin.” Citing Deleuze 1969, 295, she adds that “woman is a likeness in the same sense that a likeness ‘calls into question the very idea of a copy ... or a model.’”

analysis of the Pandora myth demonstrates that even though the “Pandora” of the *Theogony* is conventionally referred to as “the first woman,” the gender of this creation is not clear cut. This first woman does not receive the name *gynē*. The nameless Pandora in the *Theogony* is the first feminine-gendered mortal in the *Theogony* at line 587, but this gender is seen only in the participle ἀγαλλομένην.¹⁰³ The term *gynē* appears to identify only her offspring; for “from her is the race of female women” ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων.¹⁰⁴ The *genos* that derives from her is marked as female by the noun *gynē* (woman) in the genitive plural and by the adjective *thēlus* (female) in the comparative, which here might indicate opposition to male.¹⁰⁵ In comparison, Pandora is hardly identified as female at all. As Loraux puts it, “the feminine wins a place only after a costly struggle, with extreme difficulty, and gains only a precarious victory.”¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Loraux catalogues this weak gendering, noting that the words referring to Pandora are more often neuter or masculine:

In 572 *ikelon* is neuter; in 573-75, the verbs describing Athena’s actions have no object; in 578, *hoi* remains uncertain; in 585 it is the oxymoron *kalon kakon* that is the object of *teuxen*. The first appearance of the feminine (587) is not at all decisive: *agallomēnē* is caught between the neuter *kakon* and the masculine *dolon* (589). In 590 and 591, *tēs* is a kind of “zero degree” of the feminine, and in 592 *pēma* is inserted between *gynaikōn* and the relative *hai*.¹⁰⁷

As a *kalon kakon*, Pandora is a neuter object. This so-called first woman is characterized next by the metaphor discussed above, namely as a male bee.

¹⁰³ Loraux 1993, 78: “the gods and men—in their admiring stupor—are gazing at a trap rather than a woman.” Hesiod *Th.* 587: ἀγαλλομένην, 589: ὡς εἶδον δόλον αἰπύν.

¹⁰⁴ Hesiod, *Th.* 590.

¹⁰⁵ The LSJ “θηλυς, θήλεια, θήλυ” *s.v.* A. notes that in epic “θηλύτερος indicat[es] opposition rather than comparison (cf. ἀρρέντερος; θηλύτεροι δὲ γυναῖκες” *Il.*8.520; “θηλύτεροι δὲ θεαί” *Od.*8.324).”

¹⁰⁶ Loraux 1993, 78.

¹⁰⁷ Loraux 1993, 78, note 33. Fink, 1958, 7, also recognizes Hesiod’s reluctance to use the word *gynē*. In contrast the Pandora of the *Works and Days* is referred to as feminine from line 74 onwards.

The ambiguity in how gender comes to be in the *Theogony* and how human beings come to be reproductive agents appears again in the *Timaeus*. Timaeus concludes his speech in which he has described the creation of the cosmos and the human body by briefly providing an account for how “the rest of the animals in turn were born” τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶα ἢ γέγονεν αὖ.¹⁰⁸ This rather large category includes human women. He then rather rudely emphasizes the brevity this subject matter requires, saying that this “must be recalled only briefly: there is no necessity for someone to speak at length” διὰ βραχέων ἐπιμνηστέον, ὃ μὴ τις ἀνάγκη μηκύνειν.¹⁰⁹ Timaeus explains that non-human animals and women come about due to a process of reincarnation, or de-evolution. This occurs “according to the likely account” κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα.¹¹⁰ This strange explanation has confused and, at times, embarrassed commentators. However, reading a reference to the myth of Pandora into the context for Timaeus’ introduction of women helps to make his account more likely if not logical.

1.6 AN ECHO OF PANDORA IN TIMAEUS’ HUMAN BODY

Plato’s *Timaeus* contains three passages from which commentators have attempted to construct an account of the origin of sex and gender. One passage occurs in the first section of the speech and two are found in the third. The first appears as the demiurge addresses the created but immortal “gods of gods” θεοὶ θεῶν¹¹¹ and calls for them to construct the three kinds of mortal beings left to be made.¹¹² This passage anticipates the third passage, an etiology for

¹⁰⁸ Plato, *Ti.* 90e.

¹⁰⁹ Plato, *Ti.* 90e. A brief recollection of this rather large topic makes the speaker “more temperate” or “more measured” (ἐμμετρότερός).

¹¹⁰ Plato, *Ti.* 90e.

¹¹¹ Plato, *Ti.* 41b. Cornford 1937, 369 interposes a comma, departing from Burnet’s reading, but there is no dispute over the MS text.

¹¹² Plato, *Ti.* 41d11-42c4. It is unclear as to what these three kinds are. Cornford 1937, 142 assumes this is humans, animals, and plants. However, Timaeus separates human males from females, so those may be two separate kinds.

women and animals that forms Timaeus' conclusion. The second passage occurs in the second half of Timaeus' speech and functions as part of his explanation for how and why fingernails are created for human beings.¹¹³ The third passage introduces an explicit account of the origins of sexual differentiation and the organs and processes of reproduction.¹¹⁴ This passage occurs at the very end of Timaeus' speech and the end of the dialogue as a whole, if considered without the *Critias*.

Within the dialogue, Timaeus aims to provide an account of the origin and nature of human beings that Critias can employ in his speech. Critias will follow Timaeus' speech by "taking over from him mankind, as it were created by his speech, and taking over from [Socrates] a select number of men superlatively well trained" δεδεγμένον ἀνθρώπους τῷ λόγῳ γεγονότας, παρὰ σοῦ δὲ πεπαιδευμένους διαφερόντως αὐτῶν τινας.¹¹⁵ However, the introduction of an etiology for human reproduction and gender at the conclusion of the dialogue has confused commentators. They ask how these etiologies fit into Timaeus' stated aim. How does gender and sex relate to what is considered in this dialogue to be the nature of human beings? And does the origin of human nature encompass these aspects of humanity?¹¹⁶

Before turning to show how these passages reflect the Hesiodic Pandora, I first outline the primary scholarly approaches and interpretations on these passages. There are three main commentaries in English language scholarship on the *Timaeus*: R.D. Archer-Hind (1888), A.E. Taylor (1928), and F.M. Cornford (1937).¹¹⁷ Archer-Hind hardly comments on the three

¹¹³ Plato, *Ti.* 76d5-e8.

¹¹⁴ Plato, *Ti.* 90e1-5.

¹¹⁵ Plato, *Ti.* 27a-b. This summary refers to a truncated summary of Plato's *Republic*, but one that misses many of the most important parts of that dialogue, including the tripartite structure of the soul and the structure of justice in the soul and the city.

¹¹⁶ One of the questions that surfaces is whether women or other genders beyond a binary are considered within the scope of human nature.

¹¹⁷ Archer-Hind, 1888; Taylor, 1928, and Cornford, 1937.

passages introducing gender differentiation in the text. He dismisses the first passage, calling it a hopelessly confused “piece of questionable metaphysic.”¹¹⁸ He goes on to explain that

the distinction of sex cannot possibly stand on the same logical footing as the generic differences between various animals; and in the other forms of animal life the distinction is ignored. It is somewhat curious that Plato, who in his views about women’s position was immeasurably advanced of his age, has here yielded to Athenian prejudice so far as to introduce a discordant element into his theory.¹¹⁹

Thus, Archer-Hind identifies a common-sense difference between the introduction of genders and the introduction of animal species. Similarly, he states that the second passage is “a very singular declaration”¹²⁰ and, finally, passes over the third passage with only a two-line gloss.¹²¹ He interprets the third passage as an explanation that “in the first generation the gods made men, and in the second women: and they caused love to arise between men and women and a desire of continuing their race.”¹²²

Taylor devotes much more space in his commentaries to a discussion of the passages on the distinction between the sexes and the production of animals.¹²³ However, he does not think they should be interpreted seriously. According to Taylor these passages are “unmistakably playful” and he notes, “that Plato is mainly in fun is quite certain and we can be sure that Plato is not in earnest.”¹²⁴ Altogether, Taylor suggests that “it is best not to be too serious” and that “it is wholly wrong to suppose that Plato is in deadly earnest, and to raise the question whether there

¹¹⁸ Archer-Hind 1888, 144.

¹¹⁹ Archer-Hind 1888, 144.

¹²⁰ Archer-Hind 1888, 283.

¹²¹ Archer-Hind 1888, 338. Archer-Hind does not address the implications for women in the second passage and only mentions the fact that nails are formed for the latter use of lower animals.

¹²² Archer-Hind 1888, 338 on Plato, *Ti.* 903-92c.

¹²³ Taylor 1928 devotes a full seven pages to discussing sexual difference and sexual reproduction in 90e1-91d6, the longest of any English-language commentaries.

¹²⁴ Taylor 1928, 635.

really is an ‘ontological significance’ in difference of sex.”¹²⁵ Overall, Taylor reads the *Timaeus* as an amalgamation of Empedoclean biology and Pythagorean mathematics, rather than containing “any distinctly Platonic doctrines.” This interpretation allows Taylor to analyze the passages without a seriousness that would condemn the character of Timaeus as Plato’s mouthpiece to illogical reasoning. He sees the passages describing the introduction of women and animals as a humorous myth, saying:

[w]e must not moralize here on the ‘inadequate ideal of womanhood’ in the ancient world. That women are more timid than men and less scrupulously fair in their dealings may or may not be true, but it is the average man’s opinion all the world over as the modern novel and comic paper are enough to prove. As such the assumption is good enough to build a humorous fairy-tale on.¹²⁶

Taylor also compares *Ti.* 90e1-92c3 to Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*, arguing that since only “earnest-minded dullards have found a profound ‘metaphysic of sexual love’ in this Rabelaisian jest one may presume that only they, too, will find a metaphysical meaning in Timaeus’ comments here.”¹²⁷ Taylor does not go any further with attempting to interpret why Plato may have crafted these myths to tell stories of the introduction of gender and sexuality.

In contrast, both Archer-Hind and Cornford express embarrassment over these sections of the dialogue. Cornford interprets the *Timaeus* as an expression of Plato’s own thought,¹²⁸ and for the first passage, he disagrees with Taylor’s interpretation over a few pages. He largely passes over the second passage in embarrassment and briefly reiterates his discussion of the first

¹²⁵ Taylor 1928, 636. According to Taylor (*ibid.*), Proclus’ extended discussion of 42b just goes to show that he was a man “among whose great gifts a sense of humour was not included.”

¹²⁶ Taylor 1928, 635. Great to see misogyny in 1920s scholarship laid out so plainly.

¹²⁷ Taylor 1928, 635. Sallis 1999, 136-8 also reads the introduction of gender as “some kind of sex comedy!” and argues that the *Timaeus* concludes with comedy to “interrupt the high-minded ascent” and bring the audience back down to the abyss. However, Taylor and Sallis find different elements comical. For Taylor, the joke lies in the idea that generation before sex is modified to produce men and women. He reads this as similar to Aristophanes’ speech. For Sallis the joke is that woman and animals come to be as derivations of men.

¹²⁸ Cornford 1997, vi-ix.

passage in his commentary on the third. Cornford sees the discussion of nails as useful for future women and beasts as “one of the places where the mythical machinery becomes embarrassing and entails the use of rather vague language.”¹²⁹ Overall, Cornford argues that the discussion of “the physical differences between men and women are postponed to the same context (90E ff.), because they are irrelevant to the whole account of our common human nature which fills most of the remaining discourse.” Thus, he does not read gender and sexuality as inherently important to human nature. He does not take this part of this speech seriously, stating that “Plato does not mean that men ever existed without women and the lower animals.”¹³⁰

Unlike Archer-Hinds, Taylor, and Cornford, Proclus takes seriously these passages within Timaeus’ speech. In his commentary on 41e-42d he devotes attention to the questions of whether human beings were always sexed within the narrative of the speech or whether sex only came about in the “second generation,” and whether men and women were created simultaneously or whether women were created after men.¹³¹ Proclus also aims to read the *Timaeus* as Plato’s own thought. He takes pains to interpret these sections of the speech as consistent with Plato’s position on women in the *Republic*.¹³² This poses a challenge, since in both the *Republic* and the summary of similar arguments at the beginning of the *Timaeus*, Socrates espouses an apparently progressive position on women compared to the denigrating comments on women in Timaeus’ speech.¹³³ Proclus interprets Plato as believing that men and women “both have one human form,” which is to say that they are the “same in species.”¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Cornford 1997, 295. As if the rest of Timaeus’ likely story has not been mythical and vague?

¹³⁰ Cornford 1997, 142.

¹³¹ Proclus 1998.

¹³² Proclus 1998, 975, 989 takes these passages seriously and works to make his interpretation both internally consistent and consistent with Platonic metaphysics in the myth of Er in the *Republic* and Aristophanes’ speech in the *Symposium*.

¹³³ Archer-Hinds 1888, 144 notes this contradiction. See also Taylor 1928, 636.

¹³⁴ Proclus 1998, 51.

Things that are the same in form or species have the same virtues and perfections. Thus, to Proclus' mind "the virtues of men and women are common" and they should share the same employments. However, this does not result in gender equality because the female "is more imbecile in all things than the male," and "whatever proceeds from the male, this the female also can produce [but] in diminished degree."¹³⁵ For Proclus the creation of the human species is made before the first birth and descent of the souls.¹³⁶ The male and female elements are created co-originally: "if the Demiurgus, by connecting each soul with a vehicle, produces a certain animal, i.e. a certain species, it is entirely necessary that the difference of male and female in the soul should at the same time be apparent. For this is the division of animal."¹³⁷ If the male and female of humans are the same species, Proclus reasons, then they must be created at the same time, as other animals are.

Proclus' interpretation brings to the fore the difficulty of reading these passages in the *Timaeus* with a focus on their logical coherence. How can women *be generated* in the second generation? How can men be reborn as women if there are no women to bear them? As Stella Sandford notes, "the elaborate metaphysical apparatus brought in to explain sex difference finds that sex difference is precisely the thing that it cannot explain."¹³⁸ Catherine Joubard answers this question by reading the passage seriously but skirting this issue entirely. Joubard argues that the first generation of human beings are devoid of sexual differentiation. According to Joubard

Platon utilise le terme aner (90e) comme terme générique de l'espèce de la première generation. Un vivant sans aucune détermination de sexe apparaît c'est une entité humaine au sujet de laquelle une question de cet ordre n'est pas pertinente, comme s'il

¹³⁵ Proclus 1998, 51, 53. Proclus carries through this claim about the similarity in species in his discussion of *Ti.* 41e-42d.

¹³⁶ Proclus argues that the soul goes on an intellectual journey in the heavens before becoming embodied. See Fortier, 2018.

¹³⁷ Proclus 1998, 980.

¹³⁸ Sandford, 2010, 138-9.

*s'agissait d'une sorte d'être hybride ou d'un Homme avec un "H" majuscule représentant d'une humanité originelle.*¹³⁹

Joubard develops Luc Brisson's position that the male sex was formed at the same time as the female. For him the usage of 'man' is understood as avoiding the word *gunē*, which would be inappropriate for the first generation.¹⁴⁰ For both Brisson and Joubard, the first body of the *Timaeus* is a sexually undifferentiated body without sex organs, and thus without gender too. However, Joubard reads the creation of sex as a necessary precondition for the cycle of retribution. It is subjection to this cycle of retribution that differentiates the "divine" human soul from the world soul. For retribution to exist, there must be generation, and for generation, there must be sexual difference.¹⁴¹

Contemporary feminist readings of the *Timaeus*, and Plato more generally, have either employed these passages on the introduction of women as evidence of Plato's misogyny¹⁴² or

¹³⁹ Joubard 1991, 141: "Plato uses the term *anēr* (90e) as a generic term for the species of the first generation. A sexually undetermined living being appears, a human being in relation to whom the questions of sex is not pertinent, as if we are dealing with a sort of hybrid being, or with a Man with a capital 'M' representing an original humanity."

¹⁴⁰ Brisson 1974, 456. Neither Joubard nor Brisson explain why *anēr* is palatable here when *gunē* is not. Brisson approves of Joubard's interpretation so much that he summarized it in the preface to her book, saying, *Lors de la toute première incarnation, l'âme humaine se retrouve dans un corps qui est sexuellement indifférencié, même si Platon le qualifie de "male", car ce corps n'est pas encore doté d'organe sexuel.* "At the time of the first incarnation the human soul finds itself in a sexually undifferentiated body, despite the fact that Plato describes this body as 'male', because the body is not yet endowed with a sexual organ."

¹⁴¹ Joubard 1991, 140, 142.

¹⁴² See, for example: Saxonhouse 1976, 203; duBois 1988, 172 cites *Ti.* 901a-d to show Plato's misogyny; Annas 1976, 316 uses Timaeus' account of evil men's rebirth as women as an example of Plato's "conventional contempt for women" and argues that "if the *Timaeus* was written at roughly the same time as the *Republic*, this embarrasses those who want to see Plato in the *Republic* as a feminist." Cantarella 2002, 580 cites the rebirth of bad men to demonstrate Plato's profound conviction of the inferiority of women.

have focused primarily on the idea of the *chōra*,¹⁴³ reclaiming it as a feminist principle¹⁴⁴ or criticizing the degradation of the female through its identification with the *chōra*.¹⁴⁵ Stella Sandford, in contrast, engages in the most in-depth analysis of the philosophical arguments in the introduction of sex and gender in these sections of the *Timaeus*. Overall, she argues that the natural-biological categories ‘male’ and ‘female’ that refer to functions in sexual reproduction are neither mentioned nor at issue in the dialogue. Instead, Timaeus distinguishes between ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as *moral* categories that “refer to moral differences between souls.”¹⁴⁶ In his explanation of how moral differences come to be he “makes use of an ancient Greek

¹⁴³ Sandford 2010, 193-4 states that “Feminist comment on the *Timaeus* has tended to focus [...] on the notion of *chora*. The tripartite ontology of the second part of Timaeus’ speech, in which *chora* is introduced, is an answer to a problem fundamental to Timaeus’ discourse and to Platonic metaphysics more generally: the problem of explaining the relation between that which always is and has no becoming and that which becomes but never is, or of explaining the generation of the world of becoming from the intelligible, unchanging source. *Chora* is a name for the third kind that in which what comes to be comes to be (50d2) – standing as some sort of mediatrix between being and becoming. But far from solving the problem the introduction of the third introduces another, the problem of *chora* itself. Timaeus begins to speak of the third kind by explaining how difficult it is to speak of it. It is a thing that does not itself have any qualities or determinations; it is totally devoid of any characteristics (50e6). This must be the case if it is to perform its role: ‘Its nature is to be available for anything to make its impression upon, and it is modified, shaped, and reshaped by the things that enter it. These are the things that make it appear different at different times’ (50c3-6). And yet it is itself, and is not identical with these things: ‘We must always refer to it by the same term, for it does not depart from its own character in any way’ (50b9-10). This ‘receiving thing’, upon which other things imprint themselves, may not ‘show its own face in any of its receptions or imprimatur’ (50e). Difficult, if not impossible to characterize, because characterless, Timaeus nevertheless suggests that ‘If we speak of it as an invisible and characterless sort of thing, one that receives all things and shares in a most perplexing way in what is intelligible, a thing extremely difficult to comprehend, we shall not be misled’ (51a9-b2).”

¹⁴⁴ Emanuela Bianchi (2006, 126) reads the *chōra* as “fecund and generative philosophical terrain in which a feminist rethinking of corporeality, spatiality, figurality, temporality and life may take (its) place.”

¹⁴⁵ David Ferrell Krell (1975, 400) sees the introduction of the female *chōra* as an attempt to fix the fundamental ontological problem in *Timaeus*, how the visible world can come to be from Being (*to on*) itself. Ferrell Krell argues that the *chōra* as a *feminine* principle explains how the world of becoming is “other than a perfect image of its father... Timaeus can account for the slippage between paradigm and copy, which prevents that which is generated from perfectly matching that of which it is a copy, only by blaming that in which the copy is generated.” Kristin Sampson (2006, 19-21) argues similarly.

¹⁴⁶ Sandford 2010, 152 builds on Carlos Steel’s (2001, 171-2) argument that that “the *Timaeus* is not primarily a dialogue about physics or biology, but an attempt to explain from a moral perspective the constitution of the world and the creation of the human animal in it. The foreordained laws described to the souls mounted in their carriages are not cosmological laws but the moral laws that establish a correspondence (‘retribution’) between the diverse grades of moral behaviour and the (happy or unhappy) conditions of life.” However, Sandford comes to a different interpretation of the moral meaning of the text. Whereas Steel 2001, 109 defines ‘moral perspectives’ as “a teleological explanation of biological processes from the viewpoint of the ‘best’ [which] must show how these processes are organized in such a way that they make it possible for the human being to attain a good life,” Sandford 2010, 153 only makes the limited “claim that ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are moral categories [which] means that they are differentiated only according to a moral criterion or through a moral judgement.”

commonplace – the moral inferiority of women – and justifies it cosmo-theologically.”¹⁴⁷ She argues that these

three passages thus explain two different but intimately related things: the moral differences between souls and the natural-biological phenomenon of sexual reproduction from a moral point of view, that is, in the service of the retributive cycle of the reincarnation of souls.¹⁴⁸

This reading allows Sanford to resolve the logical puzzle of what defines the difference between ‘men’ and ‘women’ before the introduction of organs responsible for sexual reproduction.

Timaeus reduces this to “one defining characteristic, or metonymically substitutes one defining distinction for the whole collection of defining characteristics: the being-superior or being-inferior of souls.”¹⁴⁹ This, for Sanford, maps onto the contemporary idea of *gender*, rather than that of sex.

The issue of the origin of procreation remains. Ultimately, Sanford sides with Proclus in looking for the “natural beginning of sex” beyond the introduction of human beings.¹⁵⁰ It occurs rather “in the cosmo-ontological principle that conditions [the] possibility” of existence.¹⁵¹ She sees that “the procreative categories of male and female are presupposed as cosmic or ontological principles before they are specifications of human beings.”¹⁵² Thus for Sanford,

If the cosmo-ontological principle of the procreative male-female distinction is modelled, like everything else in the universe, after “that which is changeless” must we look for the natural beginning of sex in the changeless intelligible realm, in the “source” (*hothen*) (50d5) of becoming, the beginning from which the universe began? But the unchanging realm of that which always is, is itself called father or source, identifying it with just one

¹⁴⁷ Sanford 2010, 152.

¹⁴⁸ Sanford 2010, 152.

¹⁴⁹ Sanford 2010, 151.

¹⁵⁰ “In the intelligible, in the intellectual, and in the supermundane Gods,” Proclus 1998, 52 affirms “the harmonious conjunction of the male with the female.” Thus, due to the connascence of male and female in the universe and in the gods, Proclus argues that one that we must affirm the connascence of male and female in the human.

¹⁵¹ Sanford 2010, 155.

¹⁵² Sanford 2010, 155.

of the terms of sex, as if the other lay elsewhere.¹⁵³

Ultimately, Sandford is left with only questions in her search for the natural beginning of sex in the *Timaeus*. For answers she sees that the Timaeus “only leads us in circles.”¹⁵⁴ But perhaps this follows from the methodological limitations that Timaeus sets out, namely that the explanations given must have the same character as their subjects.¹⁵⁵ Thus, as Sandford notes, “when the subject is sex, the discourse cannot find its natural beginning. Sex itself leads us in circles. There is no natural beginning of sex.”¹⁵⁶ Timaeus cannot get beyond the chicken-or-egg problem in his etiology for reproduction.

Reading the Hesiodic myth of Pandora as a backdrop for Timaeus’ introduction of gender and sexuality helps explain why Timaeus may have made such a strange argument at key stages of his dialogue. A few scholars have made passing reference to the myth of Pandora in relation to Timaeus’ etiology for women and animals. For example, Page duBois compares Pandora as Prometheus’ punishment to the de-evolution that occurs at the dialogue’s conclusion, saying “as Pandora was sent to punish Prometheus, for his deception of Zeus, so women are the result of men’s inability to behave philosophically.”¹⁵⁷

In addition, Sara Brill notes that “comparison with Hesiod on Pandora and the birth of the ‘race’ of women is invited” when Timaeus states that this is “how women and the whole female sex have come into existence” γυναικες μὲν οὖν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ πᾶν οὕτω γέγονεν.¹⁵⁸ David Sedley makes the most in-depth argument that Plato builds upon the myth of Pandora in the *Timaeus*.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ Sandford 2010, 155. On the discourses of procreation and production in the *Timaeus* see Sallis 1999, 52; 57-63; 77-8; 85-8.

¹⁵⁴ Sandford 2010, 155.

¹⁵⁵ Plato, *Ti.* 29b5-6.

¹⁵⁶ Sandford 2010, 156.

¹⁵⁷ duBois 1988, 172.

¹⁵⁸ Brill 2015, 174, note 20 on Plato, *Ti.* 91d.

¹⁵⁹ Sedley 2010, 256-7.

Sedley argues that “the creation of women very directly represents the planned (cf. 42d3-4) intrusion of moral badness into the world” in the dialogue, mirroring the dual Hesiodic narratives.¹⁶⁰ He also sees the multiplicity of Pandora and her jar of evils mirrored in the need for Timaeus’ world to contain all the kinds of animal within it (39e3-40a2) and concludes that “Plato’s story is, if nothing else, very naturally read as his reinterpretation of the Hesiodic etiological myth, modified in light of his own moral psychology.”¹⁶¹ However, Sedley does not expand his argument to encompass the etiologies for gender and sexuality in the *Timaeus*.

Indeed, a reading of the *Timaeus* as building upon the myth of Pandora is compatible with interpretations such as Sandford’s and Joubard’s. I argue that this addition even strengthens their points. Specifically, we can read the myth of Pandora as a parallel to Joubard’s argument that the introduction of sexual difference introduces a cycle of retribution that differentiates the divine from the mortal. Sandford, who builds on this idea of the cycle of retribution as dependent upon birth and re-birth, also introduces the idea that gendered differences map onto moral categories. Where does the “Greek commonplace”¹⁶² of the inferiority of women come to the fore more strongly than the myth of Pandora? There is a thematic similarity here between an introduction of retribution and the Hesiodic myth in which gender and retribution play large roles. A close reading of the *Timaeus*, however, reveals more parallels. I argue that this allusion functions in tandem with Plato’s overall engagement with Hesiod to make a more culturally persuasive argument to his audience.

Ultimately, Plato’s *Timaeus* introduces a new cosmogony to replace the canonical mythology crystalized in Hesiod’s *Theogony*. The radical change that Timaeus’ speech makes is

¹⁶⁰ Sedley 2010, 256.

¹⁶¹ Sedley 2010, 256. Sedley 2007, 54 also analyses the afterlife of the myth of Pandora in the cosmogonies of Empedocles and Plato.

¹⁶² Sandford 2010, 152.

to change the method of creation in this story from birth to craft.¹⁶³ In the *Theogony*, the cosmos comes to be and comes to be ordered through the birth of the gods. Timaeus even embeds a version of this cosmogony into his speech.¹⁶⁴ As I have shown, however, *craft* is a method of creation in the *Theogony*. It only occurs, however, with the creation of the progenitor of the race of women, Pandora. Additionally, as seen above, Plato re-writes this myth in the *Protagoras*, in which he replaces Pandora with the introduction of *aidōs* and *dikē*. The myth of Pandora is especially thematically relevant to the third section of Timaeus' account because it is here that he tells a new story about the creation of human beings through the process of craft.

As Timaeus introduces his account of the creation of the human body through craft, he uses several keywords that recall the myth of Pandora. He describes how the demiurge creates the diversity of existence needed to fill out the cosmos, saying: “all these things he first put in array and only afterwards constructed out of them this very all—one animal that holds within itself all animals both mortal and immortal” πάντα ταῦτα πρῶτον διεκόσμησεν, ἔπειτ' ἐκ τούτων πᾶν τόδε συνεστήσατο, ζῶον ἐν ζῶα ἔχον τὰ πάντα ἐν ἑαυτῷ θνητὰ ἀθάνατά τε.¹⁶⁵ Not only does Plato repeat πάντα, “all things,” conjuring the *pan* in Pandora, but he also describes the demiurge's actions using the verb διεκόσμησεν, recalling the Hesiodic description of how Zeus

¹⁶³ See Sedley 2007, *passim* on other cosmogonies prior to the *Timaeus* that employ a craft methodology.

¹⁶⁴ Timaeus basically summarizes this story at 40d6-41a6. See Regali 2010, 261ff.

¹⁶⁵ Plato, *Ti.* 69c. Sedley 2010, 256-7 argues that these word choices call to mind Pandora. At the conclusion of Timaeus' discussion of color and how the multitude of colors come to be, he also introduces a similar phrasing. In this case it also relates to what Timaeus claims distinguishes gods from men, a key theme of the Hesiodic Pandora episode as seen above. Timaeus (Plato, *Ti.* 68d) concludes this section by commenting on the difficulty of obtaining secure knowledge in these matters, saying, εἰ δέ τις τούτων ἔργω σκοπούμενος βάσανον λαμβάνοι, τὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης καὶ θείας φύσεως ἡγνοηκῶς ἂν εἶη διάφορον, ὅτι θεὸς μὲν τὰ πολλὰ εἰς ἓν συγκεραννύναι καὶ πάλιν ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς πολλὰ διαλύειν ἰκανῶς ἐπιστάμενος ἅμα καὶ δυνατός, ἀνθρώπων δὲ οὐδεὶς οὐδέτερον τούτων ἰκανὸς οὔτε ἔστι νῦν οὔτε εἰς αὐθίς ποτε ἔσται. “But if, in investigating these matters, someone were to make a test of all this through experiment, he would only show his ignorance of the difference between the human and the divine nature: that it is god who is sufficiently knowledgeable, and also able to blend together the many into a one and again in turn to dissolve a one into a many, but no one among humans either is now or ever will be in the future sufficient for either of these.” The difference between human beings and gods according to this formulation is that gods are able “to blend together the many into a one and again in turn to dissolve a one into a many” θεὸς μὲν τὰ πολλὰ εἰς ἓν συγκεραννύναι καὶ πάλιν ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς πολλὰ διαλύειν ἰκανῶς ἐπιστάμενος ἅμα καὶ δυνατός.

orders Aphrodite to dress Pandora using the verb κόσμησε (see above).¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the description of the mortal and immortal animals (ζῷα ... θνητὰ ἀθάνατά) brings to mind the creation of Pandora as representative of introducing mortality to human beings along with the myriad animals teaming on her crown.

Timaeus' account of the creation of the human body employs various instances of craft imagery. Most famously, Timaeus calls the god primarily responsible for the creation a *dēmiourgos*, a word that combines *dēmos* (the people) and *ergon* (work), and primarily refers to a worker or craftsman, i.e. “anyone who has a method for making something.”¹⁶⁷ The noun and the corresponding verbal form δημιουργεῖν occur frequently throughout the dialogue including calling Earth the *dēmiourgos* of Night and Day (40C), and fire the *dēmiourgos* of non-uniformity (59A). Beyond the name of the ‘craftsman,’ this section of the speech employs analogies to various kinds of crafts. For example, Timaeus opens the section of his speech in which he discusses the creation of the moral ‘elements’ in the *psychē* and of the bodily organs which are their immediate seat by employing a craft analogy. He compares the kinds of causes that have been organized and prepared to τέκτοσιν ... ὕλη “wood for builders” ἐξ ὧν τὸν ἐπίλοιπον λόγον δεῖ συνυφανθῆναι “out of which it is necessary to weave together the account that remains.”¹⁶⁸ This analogy both recalls the earlier section in Timaeus' speech where the created gods were assigned their work and materials and employs two different craft images.¹⁶⁹ The first is a *tektōn*, a builder or artificer, here a carpenter.¹⁷⁰ The second craft alluded to here is weaving, συνυφανθῆναι. Weaving, which is itself a method of joining together fibers, seems to join the

¹⁶⁶ Hesiod, *Th.* 571-5.

¹⁶⁷ Kalkavage 2001, 136.

¹⁶⁸ Plato, *Ti.* 69a6-8.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor 1962, 493; Plato *Ti.* 42e.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor 1962, 493 suggests this verb possibly refers specifically to a ship builder.

carpenter analogy to Timaeus' speech. He will weave together the *logos* that remains out of the materials that have been arranged thus.

Finally, Timaeus suggests recapitulating what has come before and finally putting (ἐπιθεῖναι) a "head" (κεφαλήν) on this *muthos*. This too may call to mind two craft-related metaphors. As Taylor suggests, Plato may be alluding to other dialogues in which he has discussed the "head" of a speech.¹⁷¹ In these dialogues the speech is compared to a painting of an animal.¹⁷² However, the use of ἐπιθεῖναι may suggest putting on a column's capital (κεφαλή).¹⁷³ This craft imagery continues throughout the section of Timaeus' speech detailing the creation of the body.

Similar analogies of construction continue throughout this section of the speech. Timaeus describes the craftsman as building (τεκταινόμενος) all the good in the things that are born.¹⁷⁴ In addition, before the demiurge orders the created gods to craft the body, he "put things in array" or "ordered" (διεκόσμησεν) the elements.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, the causes imitate (μιμούμενοι) the Demiurge, a word Plato associates with the craft of poetry.¹⁷⁶ Finally, the causes sculpt (περιετόρνουσιν) the mortal body as a chariot (ὄχημα) for the soul.¹⁷⁷ The verb here, τορνεύω, can apply to sculpting or working a lathe or auger as a sculptor or carpenter. It is also used to describe rounding off poetic verses neatly.¹⁷⁸ One of the ways that Timaeus' account of the

¹⁷¹ Taylor 1962, 494. See *Gorgias* 505 c 10, *Phaedrus* 264 c 2 and *Philebus* 66d 1.

¹⁷² This also calls to mind the opening of the *Timaeus* 19b-c.

¹⁷³ Taylor 1962, 494 suggests that Plato may be using these two metaphors in this passage, saying "the ἐπιθεῖναι suggests also the notion of putting the κεφαλήν or 'capital' on a column; *apodounai*, as in the words from the *Philebus* would perhaps be the more appropriate expression if the image of the painted *zwion* were the only one in view."

¹⁷⁴ Plato, *Ti.* 68e.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor 1962, 495 suggests that this may allude to Anaxagoras (Fr. 12 = R. P. 155), where he suggests that *nous* "set in order whatever was to be and whatever was, all that now is not and all that is."

¹⁷⁶ Plato, *Rep.* 393c.

¹⁷⁷ Plato, *Ti.* 69c7. τορνεύω also occurs in Plato, *Criti.* 113d. Taylor 1962, 496 notes that the chariot this may refer to a Pythagorean image about the soul.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Aristophanes, *Thes.* 54.

creation of the body can be read as a re-interpretation of the myth of Pandora is through the use of craft processes in both accounts.

In his introduction of the human body, Timaeus mirrors the Hesiodic myth through not only craft, but also the motif of delegation, the human body as a way of distinguishing humans from gods, and the introduction of illnesses. Timaeus faces a logical puzzle in the third section of his account. The demiurge cannot create anything mortal. He cannot create anything that comes into being and passes away. As the divine principle, he is ὁ τοῦ καλλίστου τε καὶ ἀρίστου δημιουργὸς ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις “the craftsman of the most beautiful and best within things born.”¹⁷⁹ The demiurge builds “the good in all things born” (τὸ δὲ εὖ τεκταινόμενος ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς γιγνομένοις αὐτός).¹⁸⁰ How, then, can the human body come into existence? To solve this problem, Timaeus distinguishes between necessary (*to anagkaion*) and divine causes (*to theion*).¹⁸¹ The demiurge is a divine cause but he can create necessary causes. To these necessary causes (*to anagkaion*), he can delegate the creation of the mortal human body that comes to be and passes away. Thus, the demiurge employs the necessary causes as his servants (ταῖς περὶ ταῦτα αἰτίαις ὑπηρετούσαις) to create the mortal body of human beings.¹⁸² The creation of Pandora mirrors the same structure of delegation in both the *Works and Days* and the *Theogony*. Yet, Zeus, on whom the demiurge is modeled, has no part in the direct creation of Pandora.

According to Timaeus’ logic, the divine craftsman cannot create anything bad, or liable to die, such as a mortal body. For this reason, the god must employ necessary causes to create the

¹⁷⁹ Plato, *Ti.* 68e.

¹⁸⁰ Plato, *Ti.* 68e

¹⁸¹ Plato, *Ti.* 68e-69a. Timaeus advises that “for this very reason one should mark off two forms of cause—the necessary and the divine—and seek the divine in all things for the sake of gaining a happy life, to the extent that our nature allows, and the necessary for the sake of those divine things.” διὸ δὴ χρὴ δὴ αἰτίας εἶδη διορίζεσθαι, τὸ μὲν ἀναγκαῖον, τὸ δὲ θεῖον, καὶ τὸ μὲν θεῖον ἐν ἅπασιν ζητεῖν κτήσεως ἕνεκα εὐδαίμονος βίου, καθ’ ὅσον ἡμῶν ἢ φύσις ἐνδέχεται, τὸ δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐκείνων χάριν.

¹⁸² Plato, *Ti.* 68e.

body and it is through this “mortal form” (τὸ θνητὸν γένος) that human beings are exposed to evils. In his description of the evils that this body houses, Timaeus employs keywords that remind the audience of the Hesiodic myth of Pandora, especially the episode in which Pandora opens the famous *pithos*. According to Timaeus, the body houses

δεινὰ καὶ ἀναγκαῖα ... παθήματα ... , πρῶτον μὲν ἡδονήν, μέγιστον κακοῦ δέλεαρ, ἔπειτα λύπας, ἀγαθῶν φυγὰς, ἔτι δ’ αὖ θάρρος καὶ φόβον, ἄφρονε συμβούλω, θυμὸν δὲ δυσπαραμύθητον, ἐλπίδα δ’ εὐπαραγωγόν.

[a]ffectations terrible and necessary: first **pleasure**, **evil’s greatest lure**; then, **pains**, deserters of goods; and yet again, **rashness** and **fear**, thoughtless counselors the pair of them; and **anger**, **difficult to appease**; and **hope**, easy to seduce.¹⁸³

Timaeus describes how these evils are blended together αἰσθήσει δὲ ἀλόγῳ καὶ ἐπιχειρητῇ παντὸς ἔρωτι “with irrational sensation and all venturing love” to form “the mortal kind” (τὸ θνητὸν γένος).¹⁸⁴ At the very introduction of the formation of the body, therefore, Timaeus shows how the body introduces that which differentiates mortal life from immortal life. This is common sense. The body makes mortals mortal. And specifically, it is pleasure, pains, rashness, fear, anger, anticipation, irrational sensation, and love that the body allows into the mortal experience. These traits align with what Pandora introduces, both symbolically, through her as a representation of desire, and literally, through the episode of her opening the *pithos*. In the *Timaeus* pleasure (ἡδονήν) is the greatest bait (μέγιστον δέλεαρ) for evils (κακοῦ),¹⁸⁵ whereas the καλὸν κακὸν Pandora is a “sheer hopeless snare” (δόλον αἰπὺν, ἀμήχανον).¹⁸⁶ In the *Works and Days*, this quality of entrapping humans is further expanded upon when Pandora opens the storage jar. A drastic change occurs for human beings from before Pandora opens this jar to after.

The poet describes how

¹⁸³ Plato, *Ti.* 69d.

¹⁸⁴ Plato, *Ti.* 69d.

¹⁸⁵ Plato, *Ti.* 69d.

¹⁸⁶ Hesiod, *Op.* 83-89. Hesiod, *Th.* 589, repeated.

Πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων
 νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κακῶν καὶ ἄτερ χαλεποῖο πόνοιο
 νόσων τ' ἀργαλέων, αἶ τ' ἀνδράσι Κῆρας ἔδωκαν.
 αἴψα γὰρ ἐν κακότητι βροτοὶ καταγηράσκουσιν.¹⁸⁷

previously the tribes of men used to live upon the earth entirely apart from evils, and without grievous toil and distressful diseases, which give death to men. For in misery mortals grow old at once.¹⁸⁸

Human beings live away from evils (κακῶν). They live without diseases (νόσων) or toil (ἀργαλέων) and, thus, they live apart from doom and death (Κῆρας). This maps onto the pains and death introduced by the human body in the *Timaeus*. When Pandora opens the lid of the storage jar, she scatters its contents abroad. This dispersal is how Pandora “wrought baneful evils for human beings” ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἐμήσατο κήδεα λυγρά.¹⁸⁹ Famously, only *elpis* remains “in its unbreakable home under the mouth of the storage jar, and [does] not fly out” ἐν ἀρρήκτοισι δόμοισιν / ἔνδον ἔμιμνε πίθου ὑπὸ χεῖλεσιν, οὐδὲ θύραζε / ἐξέπτῃ.¹⁹⁰ Thus, through this action the first woman is blamed for introducing the evils of illness and mortality to human beings. Plato even plays on the famous keyword *elpis* in this section of the *Timaeus*. The “easily-led- astray anticipations” (ἐλπίδα εὐπαραγωνον) would call to Plato’s audience’s minds the *elpis* that remains under the lid of the storage jar according to Zeus’ orders.

¹⁸⁷ Note that “this line is found in the margin or text of very few manuscripts; it is identical to *Od.* 19.360 and is generally rejected here as an intrusive gloss” (Most 2018, 95).

¹⁸⁸ Hesiod, *Op.* 90-93.

¹⁸⁹ Hesiod, *Op.* 94-5.

¹⁹⁰ Hesiod, *Op.* 96-99. This passage has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. See Vernant 1979, 121-32, who reads *elpis* as “an ambiguous quality with both negative and positive aspects (like *Eris*, *Zēlos*, *Aidōs*, and *Nemesis*). Hesiod leaves ambiguous the jar’s origins, exact contents, and Pandora’s motivation in opening it; the mysteriousness of Pandora’s *pithos* calls to mind Achilles’ jars (*Hom. Il.* 24. 527-533) from which mortals derive their mixed fates.” See West (1978, 168-70) on the *pithos* as a motif in Near Eastern poetry symbolizing fate and death.

The question of how to interpret *elpis* and the episode with the jar as a whole has plagued interpreters since antiquity.¹⁹¹ What does it mean that *elpis* stays under the lid of the jar? Does that mean that it is not present to human beings, whereas illnesses and evils are? Or does its presence within the jar mean that it is stored and ready for humans? Another challenge lies in the meaning of *elpis* itself, since it can have both positive and negative connotations depending on whether one is hoping for a positive event to come about, or whether one is dreading a negative one.¹⁹² Luckily for me, this is a knot I do not need to or want to untie.¹⁹³ My main point is that *elpis* is one of the keywords that ties these texts together and that it is a trait that defines humans in contrast to the gods, especially Zeus. Although the commentators fight about how exactly to interpret this episode, they argue that *elpis* is a human trait rather than a divine one. As West notes, “this is certainly something that exists among men [...] No one ever says otherwise.”¹⁹⁴

Moreover, Plato himself hints at his own understanding of *elpis* when an unnamed Athenian in the *Laws* defines *elpis* as δόξας μελλόντων “opinion about the future,”¹⁹⁵ which he subdivides into “rashness” (θάρρος) and “fear” (φόβος).¹⁹⁶ As in Timaeus’ speech, again in the

¹⁹¹ See Leiniecks 1984 for a thorough presentation of *elpis* in early Greek literature, Warman 2004 provides an overview of the approaches to interpreting this word and scene. For the ancient debate, see sch. vet. 97, Proclus 94.

¹⁹² West 1978, 170 generally translates *elpis* as “Hope,” interpreting it as a comfort given to human beings to alleviate the pains introduced from the jar, explaining that “its detention in the jar . . . cannot mean that it was withheld from us, but on the contrary that it remained with us instead of being lost. To this extent, at least, the jar serves for the storage of what nourishes us. Not that hope is always good for us. It is often vain, and sometimes leads us into disaster. [...] But it is comforting, and we are thankful for this antidote to present ills.” Following Vernant, Warman 2004, 107 defines *elpis* as “emotion-tinged uncertainty about the future.”

¹⁹³ I do like that West (1978, 170) says “we are in a myth, not a grocer’s shop.”

¹⁹⁴ West 1978, 170, citing Sem. 1. 6 Sol. 13. 33 ff., ‘Sim.’ *eleg.* 8. 4 ff., Pind. *N. I.* 45, fr. 214, A. *PT* 250, S. fr. 948, E. *Tro.* 633, Theoc. 4. 42, Thales’ ap. Stob. 4. 46. 24.

¹⁹⁵ Plato, *Laws* 644c.

¹⁹⁶ Plato, *Laws* 644c-d. The Athenian stranger states, “And that, besides these two, each man possesses opinions about the future, which go by the general name of ‘expectations’; and of these, that which precedes pain bears the special name of ‘fear,’ and that which precedes pleasure the special name of ‘confidence’; and in addition to all these there is ‘calculation,’ pronouncing which of them is good, which bad; and ‘calculation,’ when it has become the public decree of the State, is named ‘law’.” πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἀμφοῖν αὖ δόξας μελλόντων, οἷν κοινὸν μὲν ὄνομα ἐλπίς, ἴδιον δὲ, φόβος μὲν ἢ πρὸ λύπης ἐλπίς, θάρρος δὲ ἢ πρὸ τοῦ ἐναντίου: ἐπὶ δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις λογισμὸς ὅτι ποτ’ αὐτῶν ἄμεινον ἢ χειρὸν, ὃς γενόμενος δόγμα πόλεως κοινὸν νόμος ἐπωνόμασται. Vernant 1989, 81, followed by Clay 2003, 124 and Warman 2004, 108, cites Plato’s definition in the *Laws* as crucial to any discussion of *elpis*.

Laws, we again find *elpis* paired with θάρρος καὶ φόβον “boldness and fear.”¹⁹⁷ In the *Republic*, Socrates defines *doxa* as “more shadowy than knowledge, but clearer than ignorance.”¹⁹⁸ These words are therefore similar insofar as neither are “identical with secure insight.”¹⁹⁹ *Elpis* differs, however, from *doxa* because it carries with it the necessity of “emotional coloring”²⁰⁰ and because is necessarily tied to a future event.²⁰¹

For human beings, the hope, fear, and anxiety that characterizes *elpis* are directly related to the evils of sickness and mortality that come into the world when Pandora opens the *pithos*. As the poet goes on to describe them,

ἄλλα δὲ μυρία λυγρὰ κατ’ ἀνθρώπους ἀλάληται:
 πλείη μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα:
 νοῦσοι δ’ ἀνθρώποισιν ἐφ’ ἡμέρη, αἱ δ’ ἐπὶ νυκτὶ
 αὐτόματοι φοιτῶσι κακὰ θνητοῖσι φέρουσαι
 σιγῇ, ἐπεὶ φωνὴν ἐξείλετο μητίετα Ζεὺς.
 οὕτως οὔτι πη ἔστι Διὸς νόον ἐξαλέασθαι.

But countless other miseries roam among mankind; for the earth is full of evils, and the sea is full; and some **sicknesses** come upon men by day, others by night, of their own accord, bearing evils to mortals in silence, since the counselor Zeus took their voice away.²⁰²

For *Timaeus*, the body explains the existences of “distressful diseases” νούσων ἀργαλέων.²⁰³ In the *Works and Days*, “diseases” (νοῦσοι) enter into the human world through the actions of the first woman.²⁰⁴ These sicknesses are even more closely associated with *elpis*, because Zeus takes away their voices and makes their approach silent.²⁰⁵ Humans cannot hear illnesses approaching.

¹⁹⁷ Plato, *Ti.* 69d.

¹⁹⁸ Plato, *Rep.* 478c.

¹⁹⁹ Warman 2004, 109.

²⁰⁰ Warman 2004, 109, citing Plato, *Rep.* 331a1 and Solon 13.36.

²⁰¹ Warman 2004, 109 argues, “So Semonides can contrast the *nous* ‘mind’ of Zeus, which sees and knows the *telos* ‘end’ of everything, with the *elpis* of men, “who know nothing of how god will accomplish each thing.” cf. Solon 13.17.

²⁰² Hesiod, *Op.* 100-105.

²⁰³ Plato, *Ti.* 69d.

²⁰⁴ Hesiod, *Op.* 101.

²⁰⁵ West 1978, 172.

In other words, you never know when you might become fatally ill—a lesson we have all been living with—and equally, when you might recover. This increases the power of anticipation and anxiety for the world of mortals.

After Timaeus introduces the body as the vehicle through which mortality comes into the world of mortals, he still has to solve the problem of how mortal and immortal parts can co-exist for humans. To describe how both these parts can reside in the body, Timaeus employs an image of an *oikos* divided according to gender. He explains how the necessary causes,

διὰ ταῦτα δὴ σεβόμενοι μαίειν τὸ θεῖον, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἦν ἀνάγκη, χωρὶς ἐκείνου **κατοικίζουσιν** εἰς ἄλλην **τοῦ σώματος οἴκησιν** τὸ θνητόν, ἰσθμὸν καὶ ὄρον διοικοδομήσαντες τῆς τε κεφαλῆς καὶ τοῦ στήθους, ἀνχένα μεταξὺ τιθέντες, ἵν' εἴη χωρὶς, ἐν δὴ τοῖς στήθεσιν καὶ τῷ καλουμένῳ θώρακι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς θνητὸν γένος ἐνέδουν. καὶ ἐπειδὴ τὸ μὲν ἄμεινον αὐτῆς, τὸ δὲ χεῖρον ἐπεφύκει, **διοικοδομοῦσι** τοῦ θώρακος αὐτὸ τὸ κύτος, **διορίζοντες οἶον γυναικῶν, τὴν δὲ ἀνδρῶν χωρὶς οἴκησιν**, τὰς φρένας διάφραγμα εἰς τὸ μέσον αὐτῶν τιθέντες.

for these very reasons, in reverential fear of defiling the divine, and doing so only if this was an utter necessity, go about **settling** the mortal kind separate from it and in another **dwelling of the body**, having walled off an isthmus and boundary for the head and the chest region or so-called thorax they proceeded to bind the mortal kind of soul. And since **one part of it is by nature better and another worse**, they **wall off** a cavity of the thorax in turn in sections, as **though marking off one dwelling for women and a separate one for men**, by putting the midriff between them as a partition.²⁰⁶

Timaeus employs the analogy of a house divided in accordance with gender to illustrate the creation of the head as separated from the rest of the body by a neck. In this analogy Timaeus maps the male gender onto the immortal part of the body which is associated with reason. In contrast, female gender maps onto the lower mortal part of the body. This passage, however, occurs early on in Timaeus' description of the creation of the body, much before he has introduced gender or reproductive organs to the body.

²⁰⁶ Plato, *Ti.* 69d-70a

The association between mortality and the female gender echoes the Hesiodic myth of Pandora. Indeed, this analogy perfectly encapsulates the “Greek commonplace” that women are inferior to men. Both Hesiodic Pandoras are characterized by a dual threat of desire: the desiring and desired object. Her exterior, enhanced by the adornments of the gods, makes her into a “hopeless trap.”²⁰⁷ This trap comes about due to her character as a rapacious belly that fills up on men’s substance.²⁰⁸ The stomach (*gastēr*) is also a main theme in the myth of Pandora because Pandora is ultimately the final recompense for the sequence of deceptions that begins with Prometheus’ trick of presenting a stomach that conceals a portion of meat and bones concealed in gleaming fat. Consequent upon the introduction of fire to man, Pandora introduces the fact of appetite, decay, and mortality to man. Pandora is a disguised stomach who appears to bring wealth and satiety to her recipients, but in fact only increases their hunger. Thus, in the Hesiodic anthropogony, various hungers are gendered as feminine. Hunger and desire becomes a female threat that needs to be guarded against. We see the reverberation of this gendering in Timaeus’ analogy.

In Timaeus’ speech on the creation of the body, he also discusses the creation of the stomach in relation to hunger and desire. Rather than mapping them onto a gendered division, however, Plato introduces the stomach and intestine as a solution to the threat to philosophy that desire for food poses. Following the same schema for the soul as Plato explains in the *Republic*, in the *Timaeus* the human soul is composed of three parts: reason, will, and desire. In the *Timaeus*, however, these parts are associated with specific places in the body.²⁰⁹ Timaeus

²⁰⁷ Hesiod, *Th.* 589; *Op.* 83.

²⁰⁸ Froma Zeitlin (1996, 65) among other scholars interprets the *pithos* as a symbol for the womb, since later medical texts picture the womb as an upside-down jar. Both the jar and the womb share the vocabulary associated with alimentary consumption. They have a mouth (στόμα), lips (χείλη), and a neck (αὐχίην, τράχηλος).

²⁰⁹ Nutton 2012, 118.

describes how τὸ μετέχον ... τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνδρείας καὶ θυμοῦ, φιλόνικον ὄν “the part of the soul ... that partakes of courage and spirit, because it’s a lover of victory” is settled (κατόκισαν) in the upper chest between the midriff and the neck in order that it might be closer to the reasoning part of the soul and “so that it might hearken to reason and, making common cause with it, forcibly keep down the class of desires, whenever they might in no way wish to give willing obedience to the command and word from the citadel” ἵνα τοῦ λόγου κατήκοον ὄν κοινῇ μετ’ ἐκείνου βία τὸ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν κατέχει γένος, ὁπότ’ ἐκ τῆς ἀκροπόλεως τῷ τ’ ἐπιτάγματι καὶ λόγῳ μηδαμῇ πείθεσθαι ἐκὸν ἐθέλοι.²¹⁰

In contrast, the part of the soul associated with desire for food and drink and “and all those things it needs because of the nature of the body” (καὶ ὅσων ἔνδειαν διὰ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἴσχει φύσιν) is situated lower in the body. This part of the soul, which, on the *oikos* analogy, is aligned with the feminine rather than the masculine, is described by Timaeus as a “wild animal” (θρέμμα ἄγριον). To appease this wild animal, the creators of the human body introduce a manger (φάτνην) to allow the body to feed. Timaeus describes how this intestine is necessary for the functioning of the human as a whole, saying that those constructing the body were

οἷον φάτνην ἐν ἅπαντι τούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ τῆ τοῦ σώματος τροφῆ τεκτηνόμενοι: καὶ κατέδησαν δὴ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐνταῦθα ὡς θρέμμα ἄγριον, τρέφειν δὲ συνημμένον ἀναγκαῖον, εἴπερ τι μέλλοι ποτὲ θνητὸν ἔσεσθαι γένος. ἴν’ οὖν ἀεὶ νεμόμενον πρὸς φάτνην καὶ ὅτι πορρωτάτῳ τοῦ βουλευομένου κατοικοῦν, θόρυβον καὶ βοὴν ὡς ἐλαχίστην παρέχον, τὸ κράτιστον καθ’ ἡσυχίαν περὶ τοῦ πᾶσι κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ συμφέροντος ἐῶ βουλεύεσθαι, διὰ ταῦτα ἐνταῦθ’ ἔδωσαν αὐτῷ τὴν τάξιν.

building a sort of manger in that entire region for the feeding of the body; and as though it were a wild beast which, because it had been tied to the rest, they were compelled to feed if indeed the mortal kind was ever going to *be* at all. In order, then, that this part, while grazing at its trough and settling as far away as possible from the counseling part, and offering the least possible clamor and roar, might let the more masterful part take counsel in peace concerning what’s beneficial to all in common and to each privately— for these reasons, it was here that they gave it its post.²¹¹

²¹⁰ Plato, *Ti.* 70a.

²¹¹ Plato, *Ti.* 70e-71a.

Additionally, when Timaeus goes on to describe the stomach itself, he describes it again as a place that protects the rest of the body from material desires for food and drink. Timaeus reasons that the stomach is created not as a source of gluttony, but as an answer to it, arguing that “those who were putting our kind together knew of the incontinence that was going to be in us over food and drink, and because of our gluttony we would use much more than was temperate and necessary” τὴν ἐσομένην ἐν ἡμῖν ποτῶν καὶ ἐδεστῶν ἀκολασίαν ἤδεσαν οἱ συντιθέντες ἡμῶν τὸ γένος, καὶ ὅτι τοῦ μετρίου καὶ ἀναγκαίου διὰ μαργότητα πολλῶ χρησοίμεθα πλέονι.²¹²

Thus, the gods constructing the body act similarly to Prometheus in the *Protagoras* to save the newly formed race of human beings. Timaeus explains that

ἴν' οὖν μὴ φθορὰ διὰ νόσους ὀξεῖα γίγνοιτο καὶ ἀτελὲς τὸ γένος εὐθὺς τὸ θνητὸν τελευτῶ, ταῦτα προορώμενοι τῇ τοῦ περιγενησομένου **πώματος** ἐδέσματός τε ἕξει τὴν ὀνομαζομένην κάτω κοιλίαν ὑποδοχὴν ἔθεσαν, εἴλιξάν τε περίξ τὴν τῶν ἐντέρων γένεσιν, ὅπως μὴ ταχὺ διεκπερῶσα ἢ τροφή ταχὺ πάλιν τροφῆς ἐτέρας δεῖσθαι τὸ σῶμα ἀναγκάζοι, καὶ παρέχουσα ἀπληστίαν, διὰ γαστριμαργίαν ἀφιλόσοφον καὶ ἄμουσον πᾶν ἀποτελοῖ τὸ γένος, ἀνυπήκοον τοῦ θειοτάτου τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν.

In order that quick destruction through diseases might not arise, and an immediate end to the still imperfect mortal kind—foreseeing this, they put in place the “lower belly” as it is named, as a receptacle for the holding of superfluous food and drink; and round about they coiled the growth of the intestines, so that the nourishment might not pass through swiftly and swiftly again compel the body to need other nourishment, and, by producing insatiableness through gut-gluttony, fashion the entire kind unphilosophical and uncultured—disobedient to the most divine of the things within us.²¹³

The aim of introducing the stomach is counterintuitively to avoid “gut-gluttony”

(γαστριμαργίαν²¹⁴) in order to protect the human race from becoming both unphilosophical and

²¹² Plato, *Ti.* 72e.

²¹³ Plato, *Ti.* 72e-73a.

²¹⁴ Kalkavage 2001, 109 note 134 draws a comparison between the description of the belly in the *Timaeus* and the belly as a force of necessity in the *Odyssey*, saying, “‘Compel’ here is *anankazoi*. The belly, perhaps more than any other organ, reminds us that to be mortal is to be subject to the cause and power of *anankē*, necessity. In the *Odyssey*, a poem filled with eating and being eaten, Odysseus tells King Alkinoos that ‘there is no other thing more dog-like than the loathsome belly, and she urges me with necessity [*anakēi*] to remember her’ (7.216-17). And later in the story, Odysseus speaks of his ‘wretched belly, that accursed thing, who bestows many evils on humans’ (17.473-4). In Timaeus’ poem, the belly and intestines are providentially devised as a means of safeguarding man

“uncultured” (ἄμουσον), i.e. without the Muses.²¹⁵ Timaeus’ explanation for the creation of these body parts highlights how the associations between bodily desires and gender found in the Hesiodic myth of Pandora also permeate this Platonic dialogue, even before Timaeus discusses body parts associated with sexual difference. Timaeus located such desire in the “female” part of the human body.

I hope to have convincingly laid out the parallels between the Hesiodic Pandora texts and these sections of Timaeus’ speech. So far none of these passages, however, discusses how gendered differences come to be for human beings. Let’s return now to the three passages that discuss the introduction of women into Timaeus’ cosmos that have so perplexed and embarrassed Plato’s commentators. In re-reading these passages, I aim to show that reading the myth of Pandora as an intertext for the creation of women and animals in the *Timaeus* helps to explain the cultural context for this extra bizarre section of an already strange dialogue.

from infinite desire. The anger Odysseus shows toward his lower nature in these passages is characteristic of *thymos*. To live according to the demands of necessity is to be a slave.” There is a vast literature on the meaning of the belly in Archaic and Classical Greek literature. Specifically in relation to this passage, Cornford 1937, 291 notes that “Aristotle similarly explains the gluttonous appetite of fishes by the of their intestine, which allows the food to pass through too rapidly for complete digestion.” Much has been written about the stomach in relation to the *Dichterweihe* in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (26) when the Muses address the poet(s) as “field dwelling shepherds, ignoble disgraces, mere bellies” ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες. For example, Svenbro 1979, 50-9, 70 argues that *gastēr* refers to laziness and dependence upon others for those who live outside of society, rather than a comparison between intellectual and material desire. Svenbro 1979, 50-9 says that “the notions of laziness (*paresse*), symbolically represented by the drone (*frelon*), of the beggar’s condition of dependency (*dépendence*), together with his consequent inability to defend himself against shame and insult (*humilité*), and his disposition to resort to lies (*mesonge*) to procure food for himself, are the beggar’s defining characteristics.” Including a detailed analysis of the word *gastēr* in Greek epic, he bases his argument on an analysis of numerous passages in the *Odyssey* in which the demands of the *gastēr* dominant the disguised Odysseus (see *Od.* 6.133-6; 7.215-21; 15.344-5; 17.226-8, 286-9, 473-4 and 558-9; and 18.53-4, 362-4 and 380). Arthur 1983, Thalmann 1984, Nagy 1990b; Nagy 1979, 261 note 4 accept Svenbro’s analysis; cf. Vernant 1979, 95. Svenbro 1976, 59 can be criticized for his inept interpretation of *Th.* 25-7, in which he argues for a dualistic position wherein Hesiod criticizes other poets of being useless societal sponges in contrast to his independent state. This view assumes that Hesiod is a poet before his inspiration. Verdenius 1972, 234; Judet de La Combe 1993, 26-30, and Katz and Volk 2000, 124, attack this kind of reasoning. Katz and Volk 2000, 123, citing *Σ Th.* 26b, show that the scholia recognize that Hesiod draws a connection in this insult between the station and activity of the shepherd living in the fields and caring for beasts, who both have no other desires than filling their bellies, and the general character of humanity, glossing the words “mere bellies” (*gastēres oion*) with *περὶ τὴν γαστέρα μόνην ἀσχολούμενοι καὶ μόνα τὰ τῆς γαστρὸς φρονοῦντες*, and as Hesychius paraphrases, *τροφῆς μόνης ἐπιμελούμενοι*.

²¹⁵ The juxtaposition of stomachs and Muses, or lack thereof, may remind Plato’s audience of Hesiod’s encounter with the Muses in the *Theogony* 26, as discussed in the footnote above.

After discussing the creation of the body at length, Timaeus employs the doctrine of reincarnation as a way of explaining how non-human animals come into the cosmos. There are both moral and gendered dimension to the process of reincarnation. Timaeus explains that “among those who were born men, all that were cowardly and lived an unjust life were, according to the likely account, transplanted in their second birth as women” τῶν γενομένων ἀνδρῶν ὅσοι δειλοὶ καὶ τὸν βίον ἀδίκως διήλθον, κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα γυναῖκες μετεφύοντο ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ γενέσει.²¹⁶ This explanation for how women come to be recalls the fact that in place of Pandora in Protagoras’ speech, Zeus presents *dikē* to human beings. In the *Timaeus* men who live unjustly (*adikōs*) become women.²¹⁷

In the Pandora episode in the *Theogony*, Pandora is associated with animals through her crown and bee imagery. In the *Protagoras* the creation of animals is parallel to the anthropogony. In the *Timaeus*, a zoogony that follows the same ethical schema of reincarnation is linked with the explanation of the introduction of the female gender. However, instead of focusing on the process of reproduction as a vehicle for the introduction of a new race, Timaeus describes physical metamorphoses that align with the qualities each man had during their life. Birds are “a result of remodeling” (τὸ δὲ τῶν ὀρνέων φύλον μετερρυθμίζετο). This species “comes from men harmless but light-minded, and studious of the heavenly bodies yet believing, in their naivete, that the firmest demonstrations about such things come through sight” ἐκ τῶν ἀκάκων ἀνδρῶν, κούφων δέ, καὶ μετεωρολογικῶν μὲν, ἡγουμένων δὲ δι’ ὄψεως.²¹⁸ Timaeus uses

²¹⁶ Plato, *Ti.* 90e-91a.

²¹⁷ In addition, “cowardliness” or the quality of being wretched (ὅσοι δειλοί) causes this transformation from male to female, according to Timaeus. This adjective describes old age in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*: δειλὸν γῆρας (*Op.* 113-4).

²¹⁸ Plato, *Ti.* 90e.

a similar logic of metamorphosis to describe how animals that walk on foot (πεζὸν καὶ θηριῶδες) are born

ἐκ τῶν μηδὲν προσχρωμένων φιλοσοφία μηδὲ ἀθρούντων τῆς περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν φύσεως πέρι μηδὲν, διὰ τὸ μηκέτι ταῖς ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ χρῆσθαι περιόδοις, ἀλλὰ τοῖς περὶ τὰ στήθη τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόσιν ἔπεσθαι μέρεσιν.

from those who neither applied themselves at all to philosophy nor at all pondered the nature of the heavens, because they no longer made use of the circuits in their head but followed as their leaders those parts of the soul that are in the area of the chest.²¹⁹

Timaeus argues that these animals' heads have a kinship with the earth and are thus dragged down towards it. The differing shapes of animal heads is “based on whichever orbits of each has been squeezed together by idleness” ὅπη συνεθλίφθησαν ὑπὸ ἀργίας ἐκάστων αἱ περιφοραί.²²⁰

The same logic holds for the introduction of sets of feet to non-human animals.

The final stage of the introduction of animals follows the same hierarchy associated with intellect and where the non-human animal dwells. Timaeus argues that the creatures living in the water are born

ἐκ τῶν μάλιστα ἀνοητοτάτων καὶ ἀμαθεστάτων, οὓς οὐδ' ἀναπνοῆς καθαρᾶς ἔτι ἠξίωσαν οἱ μεταπλάττοντες, ὡς τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὸ πλημμυλείας πάσης ἀκαθάρτως ἐχόντων, ἀλλ' ἀντὶ λεπτῆς καὶ καθαρᾶς ἀναπνοῆς ἀέρος εἰς ὕδατος θολερὰν καὶ βαθεῖαν ἔωσαν ἀνάπνευσιν.

from the absolutely most unintelligent and stupidest men of all, whom their remodelers considered no longer worthy of pure breathing, since their soul was in an impure condition because of her total lack of musicality, so instead of letting them have a fine and pure breathing of air, they pushed them down into water for a breathing murky and deep.²²¹

Fish and shellfish are given “the most extreme dwellings as retribution for their extreme stupidity” δίκην ἀμαθίας ἐσχάτης ἐσχάτας οἰκήσεις.²²² Timaeus explains that “all animals turn into one another as they change through the shedding and gaining of intellect and folly” πάντα

²¹⁹ Plato, *Ti.* 90e.

²²⁰ Plato, *Ti.* 91e-92a.

²²¹ Plato, *Ti.* 92b.

²²² Plato, *Ti.* 92b. A nice play on words!

τότε καὶ νῦν διαμείβεται τὰ ζῷα εἰς ἄλληλα, νοῦ καὶ ἀνοίας ἀποβολῆ καὶ κτήσει μεταβαλλόμενα.²²³ Thus, the presence or absence of reason (*nous*) determines where a non-human animal is categorized on the hierarchy. Timaeus describes the process of producing each tier of non-human animal in both the language of craft, i.e., it is through “remodeling” (μεταρρυθμίζω), and with the language of birth or reincarnation.

The reincarnation and remodeling zoogony that concludes Timaeus’ speech is anticipated by his etiology for fingernails, the second passage in which the women are discussed in the dialogue.²²⁴ Timaeus describes the creation of fingernails as a combination of “sinew and skin and bone [which] were woven together around the fingers” περιὶ τοὺς δακτύλους καταπλοκῆ τοῦ νεύρου καὶ τοῦ δέρματος ὀστοῦ τε²²⁵ Fingernails are “crafted by the accompanying causes” τοῖς μὲν συναιτίοις τούτοις δημιουργηθέν, i.e., the causes to whom the work of constructing the changeable body is delegated.²²⁶ However, they are “fashioned by thought, the superlative cause, for the sake of those who were to come afterwards” τῇ δὲ αἰτιωτάτῃ διανοίᾳ τῶν ἔπειτα ἐσομένων ἔνεκα εἰργασμένον.²²⁷ The superlative cause is involved in the construction of fingernails but not mentioned in relation to any other body part.

According to Timaeus the superlative cause is involved because of the foresight needed to produce not only the human body, but also the creation of all animals. According to this *logos*, non-human animals (θηρία) come to be by the process of reincarnation. The first stage of this process is the introduction of a human being gendered as female. Timaeus explains how this relates to fingernails, saying,

²²³ Plato, *Ti.* 92b.

²²⁴ See above.

²²⁵ Plato, *Ti.* 76d.

²²⁶ Plato, *Ti.* 76d.

²²⁷ Plato, *Ti.* 76d.

ὡς γάρ ποτε ἐξ ἀνδρῶν γυναῖκες καὶ τᾶλλα θηρία γενήσονται, ἠπίσταντο οἱ συνιστάντες ἡμᾶς, καὶ δὴ καὶ τῆς τῶν ὀνύχων χρείας ὅτι πολλὰ τῶν θρεμμάτων καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰ δεήσοιτο ἦδεσαν, ὅθεν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐθύς γιγνομένοις ὑπετυπώσαντο τὴν τῶν ὀνύχων γένεσιν.

For they who were constructing us knew that out of men someday women and the rest of the wild animals would be born; and they saw, in particular, that many of these nurslings would, for many reasons, require the use of nails; whence they sketched out the origin of the nails in human beings right from their birth.²²⁸

The association between fingernails and the claws of animals is easy to understand. The connection between women and fingernails is less clear. Timaeus combines the two primary modes of anthropogony: creation via craft and creation via birth. Those constructing (οἱ συνιστάντες) “us,” i.e. human male animals, know that women they will come to be (γενήσονται) from men.

As the reader may expect, the introduction of gender also shows up very clearly in Timaeus’ description of the creation of the genitals. As mentioned above, Timaeus introduces gender because of a moral failing at the beginning of introducing the body parts that allow for human reproduction. To describe the difference between women and men, Timaeus explains how when unjust men were “transplanted in their second birth as women” then the gods “built the love of sexual intercourse by constructing one sort of ensouled animal in us and another sort in women” θεοὶ τὸν τῆς συνουσίας ἔρωτα ἐτεκτῆναντο, ζῷον τὸ μὲν ἐν ἡμῖν, τὸ δ’ ἐν ταῖς γυναιξὶν συστήσαντες ἔμψυχον.²²⁹ Timaeus thusly describes sexual desire as an animal (ζῷον) that is ensouled (ἔμψυχον) in human beings. However, this animal differs in women and men.

The difference between female and male sexual desire is apparent in Timaeus’ description of their genitals. According to Timaeus, male sexual desire comes about due to the ensouled nature of sperm. Timaeus describes how the gods created the male genitals, saying:

²²⁸ Plato, *Ti.* 76d-e.

²²⁹ Plato, *Ti.* 91a.

τὴν τοῦ ποτοῦ διέξοδον, ἣ δια τοῦ πλεύμονος τὸ πῶμα ὑπὸ τοὺς νεφροὺς εἰς τὴν κύστιν ἐλθὼν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι θλιφθὲν συνεκπέμπει δεχομένη, συνέτρησαν εἰς τὸν ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς κατὰ τὸν αὐχένα καὶ διὰ τῆς ῥάχεως μυελὸν συμπεπηγότα, ὃν δὴ σπέρμα ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν λόγοις εἶπομεν: ὁ δέ, ἅτ' ἔμψυχος ὢν καὶ λαβὼν ἀναπνοήν, τοῦθ' ἤπερ ἀνέπνευσεν, τῆς ἐκροῆς ζωτικὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἐμποίησας αὐτῷ, τοῦ γεννᾶν ἔρωτα ἀπετέλεσεν.

From the passageway by which drink goes out, where it receives the liquid that comes through the lungs down into the kidneys and on into the bladder and ejects it with the air that presses on it, they bored a hole into the compacted marrow that extends from the head down along the neck and through the spine (what in our previous accounts we called seed); and since this marrow was ensouled and had found a vent, it instilled in that very part where it found a vent a lively desire for emission and thus produced a love of begetting.²³⁰

Thus, according to Timaeus, the ensouled marrow finds a vent in the male genitals and because of its ensouled nature, this causes a “lively desire” (ζωτικὴν ἐπιθυμίαν) for ejaculation in that area. This is the cause of the male desire for begetting. There is a link on this account, therefore, between the place in the body that Timaeus has assigned the seat of reason, the head, and male sexual desire as expressed through the passage of sperm. According to Timaeus sperm are brains?!

Timaeus goes on to argue that this is the reason for the autocratic nature of male sexual desire. He says, this is

exactly why the nature of the genitals in men has grown unpersuadable and autocratic, like an animal that won't listen to reason, and attempts to master all things through its stinging desires.

διὸ δὴ τῶν μὲν ἀνδρῶν τὸ περὶ τὴν τῶν αἰδοίων φύσιν ἀπειθές τε καὶ αὐτοκρατέες γεγονός, οἷον ζῷον ἀνυπήκοον τοῦ λόγου, πάντων δι' ἐπιθυμίας οἰστρώδεις ἐπιχειρεῖ κρατεῖν.²³¹

The autocratic and unpersuadable nature of the male genitals is compared to an animal (ζῷον) that does not obey (ἀνυπήκοον). The male genitals then try to master all things (πάντων) through

²³⁰ Plato, *Ti.* 91a-b.

²³¹ Plato, *Ti.* 91b.

stinging desires (ἐπιθυμίας οἰστροδέεις).²³² The male genitals are characterized in a similar way to the stomach as a wild animal that needs to be tamed or contained. Both body parts symbolize appetites, one for food and the other for sexual intercourse.

Timaeus also characterizes female sexual desire in relation to an animal. However, Timaeus marks a difference between male and female sexual desire regarding sexual intercourse and reproduction. The male animal is characterized by a desire for intercourse and specifically ejaculation, whereas the female animal is characterized by a desire for reproduction (ἐπιθυμητικὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας). Timaeus describes how

αἱ δ' ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν αὖ μῆτραί τε καὶ ὑστέραι λεγόμεναι διὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα, ζῷον ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐνὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας, ὅταν ἄκαρπον παρὰ τὴν ὥραν χρόνον πολὺν γίγνηται, χαλεπῶς ἀγανακτοῦν φέρει, καὶ πλανώμενον πάντη κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, τὰς τοῦ πνεύματος διεξόδους ἀποφράττον, ἀναπνεῖν οὐκ ἔδῳ εἰς ἀπορίας τὰς ἐσχάτας ἐμβάλλει καὶ νόσους παντοδαπὰς ἄλλας παρέχει, μέγχιπερ ἂν ἐκατέρων ἢ ἐπιθυμία καὶ ὁ ἔρωσ συναγαγόντες, οἷον ἀπὸ δένδρων καρπὸν καταδρέψαντες, ὡς εἰς ἄρουραν τὴν μῆτραν ἀόρατα ὑπὸ σμικρότητος καὶ ἀδιάπλαστα ζῶα κατασπείραντες καὶ πάλιν διακρίναντες μεγάλα ἐντὸς ἐκθρέψονται καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο εἰς φῶς ἀγαγόντες ζῶων ἀποτελέσωσι γένεσιν.²³³

there's the matrix or so-called womb in women, which is an indwelling animal desirous of childbearing; and whenever this comes to be fruitless long beyond its due season, it grows difficult and irritable; and wandering everywhere throughout the body, it blocks up the breathing passages, and by not allowing breathing, throws one into other most extreme frustrations and brings on all sorts of other diseases until the desire of the one and the love of the other bring the sexes together; and, as if plucking fruit from trees, they sow in the womb, as though in a field, animals invisible for their smallness and not yet formed; and these animals they again make distinct in their parts; and they nourish them to great size within the womb and afterwards, by bringing them into the light of day, complete their birth as animals.

Timaeus describes the womb (ὑστέραι) as an animal (ζῷον) that has a strong desire for childbearing. For Timaeus, therefore, sexual desire is distinctly gendered; there is a difference

²³² Plato also characterizes eros as stinging at *Rep.* 9.573b, where it “has of old been called a tyrant.”

²³³ Plato, *Ti.* 91c-e.

between male and female desire. This maps onto the grammatical gender of the words describing desire. Timaeus attributes *erōs* to male desire but *epithumia* to female desire.²³⁴

In contrast to the political imagery used to describe male sexual desire, Timaeus employs agricultural imagery, including describing the womb that does not bear children as “without fruit” (ἄκαρπον) and describing the process of conception and pregnancy both as plucking fruit from trees (οἶον ἀπὸ δένδρων καρπὸν καταδρέψαντες) and as “sowing” (κατασπεύραντες). Fetuses are also described as “animals” (ζῷα) when they are both invisible due to their size and not yet formed, and also when they come to light after being born.

Timaeus defines the term “animal” after introducing the doctrine of reincarnation. He explains that “everything that partakes of living may justly and most correctly be called an animal” πᾶν γὰρ οὖν ὅτιπερ ἂν μετάσχη τοῦ ζῆν, ζῷον μὲν ἂν ἐν δίκη λέγοιτο ὀρθότατα.²³⁵ This includes plants. The difference between humans, non-human animals, and plants, therefore, is not the fact that they partake in living, but the quality of soul that they hold. Plants differ from other living beings because as things that

μετέχει γε μὴν τοῦτο ὃ νῦν λέγομεν τοῦ τρίτου ψυχῆς εἶδους, ὃ μεταξὺ φρενῶν ὀμφαλοῦ τε ἰδρῦσθαι λόγος, ᾧ δόξης μὲν λογισμοῦ τε καὶ νοῦ μέτεστιν τὸ μηδὲν, αἰσθήσεως δὲ ἡδεΐας καὶ ἀλγεῖνης μετὰ ἐπιθυμιῶν.

partake of the third form of soul, that which the account has seated between midriff and navel, and which shares in no way at all in opinion and reasoning and intellect, but only in sensation, pleasant and painful, accompanied by desires.²³⁶

Timaeus sees plants as being entirely passive and without the ability to reason about their own thoughts. They do have desires (ἐπιθυμιῶν), however. Timaeus’ introduction of gender, non-

²³⁴ Cornford (1937, 357) describes this gendered division of desire as personified where “the two cooperate, Eros sowing the seed [and] *Epithumia* nursing and bringing it to birth.”

²³⁵ Timaeus reiterates this at 77c, saying of plants, “for this reason, it lives indeed and is none other than an animal” (διὸ δὴ ζῆ μὲν ἔστιν τε οὐχ ἕτερον ζῷου).

²³⁶ Plato, *Ti.* 77b.

human animals, and plants establishes a hierarchy based on degrees of intellect or reason that he assigns to each stage of this hierarchy, with male human beings at the top and plants at the bottom.²³⁷

In conclusion, I have demonstrated that Plato makes Timaeus' likely story more likely through a Hesiodic intertext. Timaeus' speech presents a new cosmogony to rival Hesiod's *Theogony*. Plato evokes the myth of Pandora in his anthropogony and zoogony in order to recall the Hesiodic etiologies that this new story replaces. The Hesiodic etiology connects the introduction of gender with the beginning and end of human life: birth and death. The etiology serves to explain what it means to be human. Plato plays with this myth in various dialogues, most explicitly in the *Protagoras*, where Pandora is replaced by *aidōs* and *dikē* as a gift to human beings. This exchange delivers morality to human beings and sets them apart from other animals. In the *Timaeus*, Plato uses craft imagery, delegation, and keywords to call to mind the myth of Pandora. The reference to Pandora helps explain the truly bizarre gynogony and zoogony of the *Timaeus*. Rather than interpreting these passages as part of a logical argument or a joke, I suggest that they build on a cultural commonplace illustrated by the Hesiodic myth of Pandora.

²³⁷ Sara Brill (2015, 170 citing Zeitlin 1995, 53-86) notes that Timaeus aligns women with other animals whereas "the male is the more quintessentially human." Brill further draws a parallel between Timaeus' gender divisions the critique Zeitlin develops of Hesiod's Pandora.

Chapter 2. PLATO VS. HESIOD: COMPETITION IN PLATO'S *TIMAEUS-CRITIAS* ATLANTIS NARRATIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how Plato engages with Hesiod in the *Timaeus-Critias*. I specifically discussed Timaeus' cosmogony in relation to the myth of Pandora in Hesiodic poetry. In this chapter, I argue that Plato sets his philosophical dialogue in competition with Hesiod through his presentation of the myth of Atlantis and the framing narrative that introduces this myth in the *Critias* sections of the unfinished dialogue. In this chapter I examine the theme of competition in the *Timaeus-Critias* and Hesiodic poetry more generally. The next section examines the themes of written and oral sources for the transmission of knowledge within the *Timaeus-Critias*.

In the *Works and Days* Hesiod presents two types of ἔρις, "strife," where one form of strife is destructive and the other is productive for human beings. As I will demonstrate, this dichotomy also plays out in the competitions in Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*. The form in which the audience encounters the story of Atlantis is a song contest. Although song contests are productive competitions, the stories within *Critias*' section of the song contest deal with warfare, destructive conflict that leaves all participants with less than they brought in. Both forms of competition, however, are essential for defining the identity of a city state.

In this chapter I show how Plato presents the speech contest as a song contest through Socrates' opening request at the beginning of the dialogue and the competition in praise of Athena that follows. I demonstrate how the festival settings for the speech contest and for

Critias' acquisition of the Atlantis tale add to the song contest framing. The festival setting of the Panathenaea in particular provides a strong impetus for reading the dialogue in relation to Homer, and I argue that Hesiod is also a vital intertext in this section of the *Timaeus-Critias* due to the overall Hesiodic nature of the dialogues. Moreover, the *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi* (*Certamen*) and the *Works and Days* show how the personae of Hesiod and Homer participate in a song contest in the cultural imagination of Plato's Athens. In the *Certamen* the figure of Hesiod is aligned with agriculture, peace, and judgment based on wisdom, whereas Homer is aligned with seafaring, warfare, and the popular vote. Broadly, these characterizations map onto Critias' descriptions of proto-Athens and Atlantis, respectively. Finally, I show how Plato uses the Hesiodic techniques of genealogies, etymologies, and etiologies to disrupt the canonical story of Athens' and the Athenians' origins.

2.2 COMPETITION AND DESTRUCTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE FORMS OF ἔΠΙΣ

The myth of Atlantis and the demiurge's cosmogony are both told as entries in a speech contest that Socrates establishes at the opening of the truncated trilogy. The theme of competition occurs throughout the dialogues, but especially in relation to Critias' tale of Atlantis. The container for the speeches is a competition and the subject matter for Critias' speech is also a competition. There is a significant difference, however, between these two kinds of competition, despite conventional scholarly wisdom about the nature of Greek competition.

Previous scholars have viewed the culture of ancient Greece as highly competitive, as seen in their "zero-sum" game-style competitions.²³⁸ Griffith describes this approach, saying,

²³⁸ , 57 ff.) surveys the approaches to this theory, citing Mark Griffith (1990, 188) among other scholars. See also Lloyd (1966), Cartledge (2002), and Gouldner (1965), who argues that competition in the world of the Ancient Greeks was viewed as a winner-take-all system.

The pervasive Greek impulse towards competition, with its attendant psychological and social effects, has been well documented and studied. Their “contest-system,” in its purest forms (*e.g.*, war or athletics), is a “zero-sum” game, in which one person can only win if another, or several others, lose. [...] All societies contain some measure of this impulse towards individual self-assertion and competition; but among the Greeks from the earliest times it seems to have been exceptionally strong.²³⁹

Graziosi, in contrast, makes the argument that neither war nor athletic competitions are zero-sum games, for “in the case of war, both sides tend to lose more than they gain in terms of human lives and, usually, economic resources, so that it would be wrong to claim that one side gains what the other one loses: the *Iliad* makes this point most poignantly.”²⁴⁰ In the case of athletics, on the other hand, the opposite is true. Broadly speaking, therefore, there are destructive forms of competition (like war) and productive forms of competition (like athletics and song contests). The speech contest is a non-zero-sum game because all participants and their audience gain from this competition. Warfare, the subject matter of the myth of Atlantis, is also not a zero-sum game because all parties leave the contest with less than they brought in.

The distinction between these two forms of competition maps onto the two forms of human strife, ἔρις, that Hesiod describes at the beginning of the *Works and Days*. The poet relates that

οὐκ ἄρα μοῦνον ἔην Ἐρίδων γένος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν
εἰσὶ δὺω: τὴν μὲν κεν **ἐπαινέσσειε** νοήσας,
 ἢ δ' ἐπιμωμητή: διὰ δ' ἄνδιχα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν.
ἢ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλει,
σχετλίη: οὔτις τὴν γε φιλεῖ βροτός, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκης
 ἀθανάτων βουλῆσιν Ἔριν τιμῶσι βαρεῖαν.
 τὴν δ' ἑτέρην προτέρην μὲν ἐγείνατο Νυξ ἑρεβεννή,
 θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης ὑψίζυγος, αἰθέρι ναίων,
 γαίης ἐν ρίζησι, καὶ ἀνδράσι πολλὸν ἀμείνω·
 ἦτε καὶ ἀπάλαμόν περ ὁμῶς ἐπὶ ἔργον ἔγειρεν.
 εἰς ἕτερον γὰρ τίς τε ἰδὼν ἔργοιο χατίζει
 πλούσιον, ὃς σπεύδει μὲν ἀρώμεναι ἠδὲ φυτεύειν
 οἰκόν τ' εὖ θέσθαι· ζηλοῖ δὲ τε γείτονα γείτων

²³⁹ Griffith 1990, 188.

²⁴⁰ Graziosi 2001, 58.

εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ'· ἀγαθὴ δ' Ἔρις ἦδε βροτοῖσιν.
καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,
καὶ πτωχῶ πτωχῶ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῶ.

there was not just one birth of Strifes after all, but upon the earth **there are two Strifes**. One of these a man **would praise** once he got to know it, but the other is **blameworthy**; and they have thoroughly opposed spirits. For the **one fosters evil war and conflict—cruel one, no mortal loves that one**, but it is by necessity that they honor the oppressive Strife, by the plans of the immortals. But the other one gloomy Night bore first; and Cronus' high-throned son, who dwells in the aether, set in the roots of the earth, and it is much better for men. **It rouses even the helpless man to work**. For a man who is not working but who looks at some other man, a rich one who is hastening to plow and plant and set his house in order, he envies him, one neighbor envying his neighbor who is hastening toward wealth: and this Strife is good for mortals. And potter is angry with potter, and builder with builder, and beggar begrudges beggar, and **poet poet**.²⁴¹

That is, the poet distinguishes between ἔρις as a potentially positive force for humans and the destructive ἔρις whose genealogy is presented in the *Theogony*.

In the *Theogony* deadly Night gives birth to hard-hearted Eris, a sibling to Nemesis, Deceit, Fondness, and baneful Old Age (τίκτε δὲ καὶ Νέμεσιν, πῆμα θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσι, /Νὺξ ὀλοή· μετὰ τὴν δ' Ἀπάτην τέκε καὶ Φιλότητα /Γῆράς τ' οὐλόμενον, καὶ Ἔριν τέκε καρτερόθυμον).²⁴² Strife is then genealogically linked with a set of experiences that make human life painful and challenging. The poet describes how

αὐτὰρ Ἔρις στυγερὴ τέκε μὲν Πόνον ἀλγινόεντα
Λήθην τε Λιμόν τε καὶ Ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα
Ἵσμίνας τε Μάχας τε Φόνους τ' Ἀνδροκτασίας τε
Νεϊκέα τε ψευδέας τε Λόγους Ἀμφιλλογίας τε
Δυσνομίην τ' Ἄτην τε, συνήθεας ἀλλήλησιν,
Ὅρκον θ', ὃς δὴ πλεῖστον ἐπιχθονίους ἀνθρώπους
πημαίνει, ὅτε κέν τις ἐκῶν ἐπίορκον ὁμόσση.

loathsome Strife bore painful Toil and Forgetfulness and Hunger and tearful Pains, and Combats and Battles and Murders and Slaughters, and Strifes and Lies and Tales and Disputes, and Lawlessness and Recklessness, much like one another, and Oath, who indeed brings the most woe upon human beings on the earth, whenever someone willfully swears a false oath.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Hesiod, *Op.* 11-26.

²⁴² Hesiod, *Th.* 223-5.

²⁴³ Hesiod, *Th.* 226-233.

Ἔρις στουγερή, loathsome Strife, is the parent of pain, grief, battles, quarrels, lies, lawlessness, and oaths liable to be broken. This Ἔρις is the blameworthy sibling in the *Works and Days* who is hateful because it fosters evil war and conflict (πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλει).²⁴⁴ This form of ἔρις thus maps onto destructive competition.

In contrast, the other ἔρις lies at the root of competitive emulation. This one “is much better for men” because “it rouses even the helpless man to work” (ἀνδράσι πολλὸν ἀμείνω· / ἦτε καὶ ἀπάλαμόν περ ὁμῶς ἐπὶ ἔργον ἔγειρεν). This kind of Eris is good for mortals (ἀγαθὴ δ’ Ἔρις ἦδε βροτοῖσιν) because emulation inspires humans to accomplish the work necessary to sustain their lives.²⁴⁵ This form of Eris causes humans to up their game: potters inspire potters, builders inspire builders, beggars inspire beggars, and, most relevantly, bards emulate bards.²⁴⁶ Hesiod makes a distinction between warfare and the productive form of competition that motivates work and performance. Turning to the *Timaeus-Critias*, we can see that the speech competition is the productive form of competition, and the subject matter of Critias’ speech is the destructive form of competition.

2.3 SPEECH CONTEST AS SONG CONTEST

²⁴⁴ Hesiod, *Op.* 16. Similarly, Homer (*Il.* 4.441–5) depicts Ἔρις as Ares’ sister and companion. As Vergados (2020, 151, n.2) notes, this implies “a different genealogy and understanding of this concept from Hesiod’s: Homer’s Eris brings νεῖκος to the armies which then engage in battle; Hesiod expresses this effect through a genealogical logic, by making Νείκεα and Μάχαι the children of Eris.” Cf. also *Il.* 11.3–12 and 73–7, 20.48 for Eris’ role on the Homeric battlefield.

²⁴⁵ West (142, 1978) notes that ἔρις can entail the positive attribute of emulation, e.g., in *Od.* 6.92, 18.366.

²⁴⁶ West (147, 1978) notes that “κότος and φθόνος are not in the spirit of the good Eris, but the idea of rivalry makes the lines relevant enough for Hesiod. They are presumably proverbs that already existed. [...] Lewy (1899, 85) refers to similar Egyptian and Midrashic sayings. The verbs alliterate with nouns: *k- k- k-*, *pt- pt- phth-* ‘Potter is piqued with potter, beggar begrudges beggar.’ [...] This is the only place in Hesiod where the ending *-eei* a or *-eein* is uncontracted [...] This may be another sign that the lines were traditional.”

Throughout Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*, Socrates' interlocutors compete in a speech contest presented as a song contest. Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates are not only competing with each other's speeches, but they are also fulfilling an obligation to Socrates. These speeches repay a debt of hospitality that they incurred the previous day. As the text opens Plato positions the dialogue in relation to the culture of hospitality wherein guests are provided with gifts and are expected to repay this debt of hospitality to their hosts. Socrates greets his interlocutors by calling them yesterday's feasters (δαιτυμόνων) and hosts (έστιατόρων) of today.²⁴⁷ When Socrates sees that one of the previous day's four speech-feasters is missing today, he asks the remaining participants who they plan to have make up for the hospitality debt that is owed. The guest-gifts given and received are thus the speeches performed and consumed.

Within the dialogue the host-guest relationship overlays the speaker-audience one. Through this overlay, there is a multidimensional competition at play. The hosts of today (Timaeus, Hermocrates, and Critias) compete with those of yesterday (Socrates) to provide the best gift, which is to say the best speech, while at the same time today's speakers compete amongst one another in their own speech gifts.

At Timaeus' request, Socrates sets the bar for this competition in speech by summarizing his speech from the previous day. This summary is strikingly similar to, but also strikingly different from, Socrates' city-in-speech in the *Republic*.²⁴⁸ When Socrates finishes his description of this ideal city, Socrates tells his interlocutors how he happens to be affected by it, saying,

προσέοικεν δὲ δὴ τινὶ μοι τοῖωδε τὸ πάθος, οἷον εἴ τις ζῶα καλὰ που θεασάμενος, εἴτε ὑπὸ γραφῆς εἰργασμένα εἴτε καὶ ζῶντα ἀληθινῶς ἡσυχίαν δὲ ἄγοντα, εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν

²⁴⁷ Plato, *Tim.* 17a. Socrates opens the dialogue by asking, εἰς, δύο, τρεῖς: ὁ δὲ δὴ τέταρτος ἡμῖν, ὃ φίλε Τίμαιε, ποῦ τῶν χθὲς μὲν δαιτυμόνων, τὰ νῦν δὲ ἐστιατόρων; "One, two, three: but where's the fourth, my dear Timaeus, of yesterday's feasters and hosts of today?"

²⁴⁸ Plato, *Tim.* 21d1-3.

ἀφίκοιτο θεάσασθαι κινούμενά τε αὐτὰ καὶ τι τῶν τοῖς σώμασιν δοκούντων προσήκειν κατὰ τὴν ἀγωνίαν ἀθλοῦντα· ταῦτόν καὶ ἐγὼ πέπονθα πρὸς τὴν πόλιν ἣν διήλθομεν. ἡδέως γὰρ ἂν του λόγῳ διεξιόντος ἀκούσαιμ' ἂν ἄθλους οὓς πόλις ἀθλεῖ, τούτους αὐτὴν ἀγωνιζομένην πρὸς πόλεις ἄλλας, πρεπόντως εἰς τε πόλεμον ἀφικομένην καὶ ἐν τῷ πολεμεῖν τὰ προσήκοντα ἀποδιδούσαν τῇ παιδείᾳ καὶ τροφῇ κατὰ τε τὰς ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις πράξεις καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις διερμηνεύσεις πρὸς ἐκάστας τῶν πόλεων.

My affection seems to be something like this: it's as if someone who gazed upon beautiful animals somewhere, either produced by the art of painting or truly living but keeping their peace, were to get **a desire to gaze upon them moving and contending in some struggle that seemed appropriate to their bodies**. I too am affected in the same way toward the city we went through. **For with pleasure would I hear someone giving a full account of her struggling against other cities in those contests in which cities contend—going to war and fighting in a fitting way** and expressing qualities that reflect its education and upbringing in achievements in action and negotiations in words with each of the other cities.²⁴⁹

Plato emphasizes Socrates' desire to view the city he described in speech as active in a competition. His desire is like that of a viewer looking upon a painting of animals and wishing to see them in motion (κινούμενα) and struggling in a contest (ἀγωνίαν ἀθλοῦντα) that is suitable to their bodies. Likewise, he wishes to hear about his ideal city engaged in the contests in which cities contend (ἄθλους οὓς πόλις ἀθλεῖ), struggling (ἀγωνιζομένην). Socrates asks to see this city engaged in the destructive competition of warfare, but there are other kinds of contests in which cities contend: the Panhellenic festival setting of the *Timaeus-Critias* and the framing speech contest demonstrate that there are indeed productive competitions in which cities engage in fitting words and deeds. Put another way, although destructive competition is the subject matter of Critias' speech, productive conflict is the form in which this story is told.

As he continues this speech, however, Socrates also moves this competition from within the speeches that he asks to receive to a competition of praise between himself, the poets of the past and present, and his interlocutors today. He thus sets up a competition between Critias,

²⁴⁹ Emphasis added. Plato, *Tim.* 19b-c. At *Republic* 472d-e Socrates also compares the city-in-speech to a pattern produced by an artist for people to use as a standard. See also *Rep.* 592a-b.

Timaeus, and Hermocrates on one hand, and the class of poets and the class of sophists on the other hand.²⁵⁰ Socrates also includes himself as a participant in this speech competition.

Addressing Critias and Hermocrates specifically, he tells them,

ἐμαυτοῦ μὲν αὐτὸς κατέγνωκα μή ποτ' ἂν δυνατὸς γενέσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἱκανῶς ἐγκωμιάσαι. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐμὸν οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν: ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν δόξαν εἴληφα καὶ περὶ τῶν πάλαι γεγονότων καὶ περὶ τῶν νῦν ὄντων ποιητῶν.

I myself have accused myself of never becoming capable of **praising our men and our city adequately**. Of course there's nothing wonderous in this inability of mine, but I've gotten hold of the **same opinion about the poets, those born long ago as well as the ones that are around now**.²⁵¹

Socrates tells his interlocutors that he has never adequately praised (ἐγκωμιάσαι) Athens. This links the idea of competition with both the verbal form of the song of praise for a victor, the ἐγκώμιον,²⁵² and the revelry of bacchic festivals through association with the κῶμος, which is also an ode sung at these festival processions.²⁵³ Further, Socrates sets up a challenge to both his contemporary poets and the ancient poets, such as Homer and Hesiod, though he does not name them here.²⁵⁴ Socrates continues, saying,

οὔτι τὸ ποιητικὸν ἀτιμάζων γένος, ἀλλὰ παντὶ δῆλον ὡς τὸ μιμητικὸν ἔθνος, οἷς ἂν ἐντραφῆ, ταῦτα μιμήσεται ῥᾶστα καὶ ἄριστα, τὸ δ' ἐκτὸς τῆς τροφῆς ἐκάστοις γιγνόμενον χαλεπὸν μὲν ἔργοις, ἔτι δὲ χαλεπώτερον λόγοις εὖ μιμεῖσθαι.

not that I dishonor the poetic class, but it's plain to everyone that the imitative tribe will imitate easiest and best what it's been brought up on, and it's difficult for them individually to be good at imitating what arises outside their upbringing—difficult in deeds and still more difficult in speeches.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰ As Pender (2010, 220) notes, these “introductory discussions of *Timaeus* evince Plato’s complex response to the Greek poetic tradition.” Socrates develops the complaint about poets being merely imitators at *Republic* 596d-598c. Gill (2017, 100) states “the claim that poets (like sophists) lack the required combination of philosophical understanding and practical experiences of politics and warfare (*Timaeus* 19d-e) matches similar criticisms of Poets in *Republic* 600a-e.” See also Gill 1979b, 72-73.

²⁵¹ Plato, *Tim.* 19d.

²⁵² s.v. “ἐγκώμιον, οὐ, τό” 2.2. “a song in honour of a conqueror, an eulogy, Ar., Plat.”

²⁵³ s.v. κῶμος.

²⁵⁴ This aligns with Critias’ criticism of Homer and Hesiod in relation to Solon at *Tim.* 21c-d, discussed in detail below.

²⁵⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 19d-e. Gill (2017, 100 citing Proclus *Commentary on the Timaeus* 1.65.4-66.8) suggests that ἔργοις may refer to works of art, but likely means “actions.” He notes that “the remark is perhaps surprising (and runs counter to a related comment in *Republic* 473a). However, Proclus [...] suggests that representation of actions can

Socrates thusly establishes a contest between his interlocutors today, and the μιμητικόν (“imitative”) tribe of poets who, he argues, are skilled at imitating only what they have experienced in their upbringings. Socrates argues that the poetic class is not capable of producing the sort of praise of the city he has described, especially not through a successful competition, because they have not lived through an experience of this city. I suggest that this criticism logically extends to other subjects that the poetic class cannot have experienced, such as the origin of the cosmos, or the origin of their *polis*.

Socrates continues his setup of this competition by stating that the “sophistic class” (τῶν σοφιστῶν γένος) is not capable of the speeches he requests due to their nomadic nature. He argues that they would not be able to describe “how men at once philosophers and statesmen might act and speak when, in war and battles, they acted in deed and engaged each adversary in speech” (ἅμα φιλοσόφων ἀνδρῶν ἢ καὶ πολιτικῶν, ὅσ’ ἂν οἶά τε ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ μάχαις πράττοντες ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ προσομιλοῦντες ἑκάστοις πράττειεν καὶ λέγοιεν).²⁵⁶ In comparison with these groups, Socrates sees his current interlocutors as the most capable speakers to “render the account next in order” (τὸν ἐξῆς λόγον ... ἀποδοῖεν) and by so doing, to describe the city engaged in a fitting war.²⁵⁷

Plato further aligns the speech contest of the *Timaeus-Critias* with a song contest through invocations to the gods. Before Timaeus begins his cosmogony, he states how important it is to invoke the gods because of the subject matter of his speech. He tells Socrates,

ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς περὶ τοῦ παντὸς λόγους ποιῆσθαι πῆ μέλλοντας, ἢ γέγονεν ἢ καὶ ἀγενές ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ παντάπασι παραλλάττομεν, ἀνάγκη θεοῦς τε καὶ θεᾶς ἐπικαλουμένους

be merely external whereas representation of words requires an engaged understanding of the character of the person speaking.”

²⁵⁶ Plato, *Tim.* 19e

²⁵⁷ Plato, *Tim.* 20b. Socrates here specifies that his interlocutors would be the best people to render this city in a fitting war.

εὔχεσθαι πάντα κατὰ νοῦν ἐκείνοις μὲν μάλιστα, ἐπομένως δὲ ἡμῖν εἰπεῖν. καὶ τὰ μὲν περὶ θεῶν ταύτη παρακεκλήσθω: τὸ δ' ἡμέτερον παρακλητέον, ἧ ῥᾶστ' ἂν ὑμεῖς μὲν μάθοιτε, ἐγὼ δὲ ἧ διανοοῦμαι μάλιστ' ἂν περὶ τῶν προκειμένων ἐνδειξαίμην.

For us who somehow intend to make speeches about the all—telling in what way it was born, or even whether it was without birth—it's a necessity, unless we're utterly deranged, after we've called upon both gods and goddesses, to pray that all we say be to their mind above all and, following that, to our own. And let that be our invocation as it relates to gods; but we must also invoke what has to do with ourselves, so that all of you might most easily learn and I, for my part, most clearly display what I have in mind about the topics before us.²⁵⁸

Timaeus thus combines an invocation of the divine with an invocation of his own and his audiences' intellectual powers.

When Timaeus concludes his speech at the beginning of the *Critias*, he again calls upon the gods, this time focusing on the god who both existed before his speech and was created in his words. He asks that this god “grant the preservation of all that has been spoken properly” (ὄν ῥηθέντων ὅσα μὲν ἐρρήθη μετρίως, σωτηρίαν ἡμῖν αὐτὸν αὐτῶν διδόναι)²⁵⁹ and impose the proper penalty if he has “spoken any discordant note” (παρὰ μέλος δὲ εἴ τι περὶ αὐτῶν ἄκοντες εἵπομεν).²⁶⁰ He continues to explain that “for the musician who strikes the wrong note the proper penalty is to bring him back into harmony” (δίκη δὲ ὀρθή τὸν πλημμελοῦντα ἐμμελῆ ποιεῖν).²⁶¹ This request both recalls the role that harmony plays in Timaeus' cosmology and emphasizes how the dialogue as a whole is presented as a hymn of praise for Athena.²⁶² Nagy notes that in the *Timaeus* Athena is “the primary designated subject of the narration, which takes the form of ‘hymn,’ *humnos* (21a: τὴν θεὸν... ὑμνοῦντας).”²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Plato *Tim.* 27c-d.

²⁵⁹ Plato, *Crit.* 106a-b.

²⁶⁰ Plato, *Crit.* 106b.

²⁶¹ Plato, *Crit.* 106b.

²⁶² Plato, *Tim.* 21a.

²⁶³ Nagy 2002, 83 n. 44.

The narration of the *Critias* also takes the form of “hymn,” *hymnos*, but, Nagy observes, “the gods of the *Critias* are Apollo/Paeon and the Muses, who are invoked to preside over the next designated subject, ‘the ancient and noble citizens’ of prehistoric Athens.”²⁶⁴ As Gill recognizes,

Critias’ long prelude implied that he saw his role as like that of a poet or orator in a competition, aiming to make a good impression on his audience (106b8-107a7, 107d8-108a4); orators typically preceded their speeches with carefully phrased introductions (see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.14). Socrates seems to echo this characterization, referring to Critias’ role as a poet in a theatrical competition, like the one held at the Dionysiac Festival at Athens (b4-5).²⁶⁵

Socrates makes the analogy between the speech contest and a song contest explicit when he tells Critias that he will need a good deal of sympathy from the audience if he is going to be successful in competing against the first poet, Timaeus. Socrates tells him,

προλέγω γε μὴν, ὦ φίλε Κριτία, σοὶ τὴν τοῦ θεάτρου διάνοιαν, ὅτι θαυμαστῶς ὁ πρότερος ἠὺδοκίμηκεν ἐν αὐτῷ ποιητής, ὥστε τῆς συγγνώμης δεήσει τινός σοι παμπόλλης, εἰ μέλλεις αὐτὰ δυνατὸς γενέσθαι παραλαβεῖν.

my dear Critias, I must caution you about the attitude of your audience in this theatre: the first of the poets to compete in it put on such a glorious performance that you will need a great measure of sympathy if you are going to be able to compete after him.²⁶⁶

Timaeus is the first poet to compete at this festival. Critias will be next in order and Hermocrates will follow in this contest. Critias complains to his interlocutors about the level of difficulty associated with his task compared to Timaeus’ cosmogony, arguing that critics judge stories about humans much more harshly than stories about gods.²⁶⁷

In response, Hermocrates exhorts Critias to invoke Apollo and the Muses, gods associated with divine poetic inspiration and success in song contests. Invoking Apollo and the Muses is a

²⁶⁴ Nagy 2002, 83 n. 44 citing *Critias* 108c.

²⁶⁵ Gill 2017, 133-4.

²⁶⁶ Plato, *Crit.* 108b.

²⁶⁷ Plato, *Crit.* 106b-108a.

commonplace in Greek epic poetry. Indeed, in the *Theogony* Hesiod attributes his knowledge of the divine cosmogony to a visitation by the Muses.²⁶⁸ Hermocrates' exhortation, moreover, uses warfare as the vehicle for metaphor about this song contest, telling Critias, "You must march bravely forward to encounter your speech, and as you **invoke Paeon and the Muses**, display in your hymn of praise the bravery of your ancient civilizations" (προϊέναι τε οὖν ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον ἀνδρείως χρή, καὶ τὸν **Παίωνα** τε καὶ **τὰς μούσας ἐπικαλούμενον** τοὺς παλαιοὺς πολίτας ἀγαθοὺς ὄντας ἀναφαίνειν τε καὶ ὕμνεῖν).²⁶⁹ Hermocrates thus tells Critias to invoke Apollo Paeon ('Healer')²⁷⁰ and the Muses, to sing his hymn of praise for the ancient Athenians, and thus to fulfill his promise to praise Athena through a song performance and contest on her feast day. These gods are fitting for both poets and soldiers, who also "sang paeans at the start of a campaign."²⁷¹

Plato establishes the theme of competition, specifically of song contests, at one further level of the dialogue, the dramatic setting. The speech contest occurs during "the *thusia* of the goddess,"²⁷² in other words the Panathenaea. The festival setting evokes the bloodless productive competitions in which cities contend, including, as in the case of the Panathenaea, rhapsodic competitions. This Panathenaea also established Athenian identity through inter-*polis* and intra-*polis* competitions, as will be shown below.

²⁶⁸ Hesiod, *Th.* 22-34.

²⁶⁹ Plato, *Crit.* 108b-c.

²⁷⁰ The reference to Apollo as a healer recalls Timaeus' earlier claim that the god he created in speech will impose the proper penalty if they have spoken discordantly because he describes the audience's understanding of his speech as the "best medicine" (ἄριστον φαρμάκων). After he tells the interlocutors that he hopes the god will grant preservation to his speech he adds that he hopes "that [Apollo] will impose the proper penalty if we have, despite our best intentions, spoken any discordant note. For the musician who strikes the wrong note the proper penalty is to bring him back into harmony. To assure, then, that in the future we will speak as we should concerning the origin of the gods we pray that he will grant the best and most perfect remedy—understanding" (δίκη δὲ ὀρθὴ τὸν πλημμελοῦντα ἐμμελῆ ποιεῖν: ἴν' οὖν τὸ λοιπὸν τοὺς περὶ θεῶν γενέσεως ὀρθῶς λέγωμεν λόγους, φάρμακον ἡμῖν αὐτὸν τελεώτατον καὶ ἄριστον φαρμάκων ἐπιστήμην εὐχόμεθα διδόναι, προσευξάμενοι δὲ παραδίδομεν κατὰ τὰς ὁμολογίας Κριτία τὸν ἐξῆς λόγον).

²⁷¹ Gill 2017, 134, citing Thucydides 7.75.7.

²⁷² Plato, *Tim.* 26e3.

Plato establishes the festival setting when Critias describes his speech as an entry into a poetic contest. He defines this story as one fitting “to render our debt of thanks to [Socrates] and at the same time to **praise** the goddess on her feast-day by **singing**, as it were, in a manner both just and true” (πρέπον ἂν ἡμῖν εἶη σοί τε ἀποδοῦναι χάριν καὶ τὴν θεὸν ἅμα ἐν τῇ πανηγύρει δικαίως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς οἷόνπερ ὑμνοῦντας ἐγκωμιάζειν).²⁷³ Critias concludes his first speech by returning to this motif, declaring, “we will not sing out of tune” (οὐκ ἀπασόμεθα) to say that the people of Atlantis were the true ancestors of the Athenians.²⁷⁴ Returning to Socrates’ opening extended metaphor, we see that he places himself in the position of a spectator or audience member for a song contest, using the words θεασάμενος and θεάσασθαι.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, Socrates emphasizes the fact that this is a special occasion when he describes himself as dressed up, saying, *πάρειμί τε οὖν δὴ κεκοσμημένος ἐπ’ αὐτὰ καὶ πάντων ἐτοιμότητος ὧν δέχεσθαι*, “so here I am—arrayed for the occasion and readiest of all men to do my receiving.”²⁷⁶

The text of the unfinished trilogy thus sets the conversation at the Panathenaea, but it is unclear whether this refers to the Greater or Lesser Panathenaea.²⁷⁷ Sourvinou-Inwood describes how both festivals

consisted of a *pannychis*, the procession and sacrifices, the offering of the peplos as well as a crown as an excellence award, and competitions, including the torch race. Though the Lesser Panathenaea included some competitions it was, of course, the Great Panathenaea that had a very large agonistic part, with many competitions in a variety of fields; some were confined to Athenians, and were often tribally organized, some open. An act that appears to have been performed at the Lesser, and undoubtedly also at the Great, Panathenaea that echoes aspects of the Kallynteria is a *kosmesis*, adorning, of the great altar.²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Plato, *Tim.* 21a.

²⁷⁴ Plato, *Tim.* 26d.

²⁷⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 19b.

²⁷⁶ Plato, *Tim.* 20c. The only other dialogue where Socrates is uncharacteristically dressed up is the *Symposium*, where he is wearing foppish slippers (174a).

²⁷⁷ The Greater Panathenaea occurred every fourth year, whereas the Lesser Panathenaea occurred on the intervening three years and, as Sourvinou-Inwood (2011, 268) states, “the Lesser Panathenaea were, in brief, the Greater Panathenaea shorn of their panhellenic dimension.”

²⁷⁸ Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 267.

This setting, therefore, adds to the theme of competition. It also presents a distinctly Athenian context. It is a distinctly Athenian event, however, that also involved Panhellenic participation and set Athens, so to speak, on the world stage.

Parker argues that the festival was uniquely visible in Ancient Greece, stating, “for the competitive programme the Athenians sought, and to some extent achieved, a panhellenic prestige comparable to that of the four great festivals of the circuit.”²⁷⁹ At the same time it was “a great domestic showcase” in which “Athenians strutted their wares before Athenians.”²⁸⁰ Victors famously received amphorae and other visitors brought home smaller vessels that evoked the famous shapes and decorations of the amphorae as souvenirs.²⁸¹ Some events were confined to Athenian participation, whereas others were open to all competitors.²⁸² The competitions at the Panathenaea also had a strong tribal quality, because “no other festival [had] anything like so many tribal events. The prizes in these events (usually cattle) [went] not to the victorious team but to the victorious tribe: more meat, therefore, at the tribal banquet which occurred during the festival.”²⁸³

In the fifth century Athens’ allies were required to send delegations only to the Panathenaea and one other festival. In the year of the Greater Panathenaea, the tribute required from Athens’ allies was reassessed and ten days before the Panathenaea ambassadors were required to travel to Athens to renew their treaties.²⁸⁴ Individual visitors came from all over

²⁷⁹ Parker 2005, 253. Parker argues that “concrete symbols of [this festival were] obligingly taken home by visitors, not just the famous amphorae received by victors, but also smaller vessels evoking the larger in shape and decoration and probably sold as souvenirs.”

²⁸⁰ Parker 2005, 253. Parker (253 note 56), citing evidence from the *Timaeus*, among other sources, notes that “abundant evidence attests the festival’s emotional and imaginative importance for the society in which it occurred.”

²⁸¹ Parker 2005, 253.

²⁸² Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 267.

²⁸³ Parker 2005, 256.

²⁸⁴ Parker 2005, 254. Parker also notes that “in casual speech too, the festival was a natural point of reference to fix an event in time.”

Greece. Thus, the Panathenaea was a defining event for Athens in relation to itself and politically in relation to the empire over which it held sway in the fifth century.

Moreover, Plato's setting for a dialogue that introduces both a new cosmogony and an etiology for the Athenians is a festival that was associated with Athenian origin stories featuring Erichthonius, Theseus, and Athena.²⁸⁵ There are three distinct myths about the origin of the festival. The earliest is that the festival celebrated "Erichthonius the son of Hephaestus," the autochthonic ancestor of the Athenians.²⁸⁶ Erichthonius was said to be the inventor of the chariot and the story goes that it was at the Panathenaea that he first drove this invention. This myth "associates the festival with primeval, authentic, autochthonous Athenian-ness."²⁸⁷

According to a second tradition Theseus founded this festival at the time of the synoecism of Attica. Although the accounts likely originated separately, this account was made compatible with the first through a name change. The festival was merely the Athenaea before Theseus, so the theory goes. After it became the *Panathenaea*. This myth "emphasizes the idea of inclusiveness inherent in the festival's name by associating it with the author of Attic unity, Theseus."²⁸⁸

The third *aition* for the festival was that it celebrated the death of a giant named Aster at Athena's hands.²⁸⁹ This origin myth aligns with the origin stories of many other Greek games which were said to have been set up as funeral games for a dead person. It is uncertain that this

²⁸⁵ Shear (2021, 39-82) discusses how these etiologies relate to each other and the formation of the Athenian identity.

²⁸⁶ Parker 2005, 253, citing [Eratosth]. *Cat.* 13. See also Shear, 2001, 45.

²⁸⁷ Parker 2005, 255.

²⁸⁸ Parker 2005, 255. It is possible that this story goes back to the Atthidographers. For the debate on the actual etymology see Parker 2005, 255 note 2. See also Shear 2021, 72-76.

²⁸⁹ Parker 2005, 255 note 11.

version of the story was current in Attica.²⁹⁰ One rendition of this story imagines Erichthonius as having founded the festival, his “foster-mother’s ancient feast,” to celebrate Athena’s success in this defeat. Considering all these stories together, “the three *aitia* linked the festival with an autochthonous Athenian king, with the unifier of Attica, and with Athena triumphant over the forces of chaos.”²⁹¹ Even if only one of these origin stories was current at the time that Plato sets the dialogue and at the time of his first readers, his first audience would have the context of these etiologies in mind when first learning of the myth of Atlantis.

The Greater Panathenaea was famously not just the site of athletic competitions, but also performances of *mousikē*. Indeed, the high point for “*mousikē* in the civic calendar of Athens was the Festival of the Panathenaea.”²⁹² As Nagy identifies, the art of *mousikē* is “an agonistic art: those who practice this *tekhnē* must compete with each other in formal and institutionalized competitions called *agōnes*.”²⁹³ Successful competitors won prizes of significant value.²⁹⁴ The Panathenaea featured *mousikē* competitions for *kitharōidoi*, cithara-singers, *aulōidoi*, aulos-singers, cithara-players, aulos-players, and rhapsodes.²⁹⁵ Rhapsodes performed poetry in the “non-lyric” meters of elegiac, iambic, and dactylic hexameter without instrumental

²⁹⁰ The version of this story presented on the scholia on Aelius Aristeides’ Panathenaikos combines this story with the first, having the festival founded in the time of Erichthonius son of Amphictyon for the death of Asterios. Schol. Aristeid. Or. 1.362 (Lenz and Behr) = Dindorf III: 323 = Jebb 189, 4. See Shear 2021, 41-2.

²⁹¹ Parker 2005, 255-6.

²⁹² Nagy (2002, 36) notes that “this term *mousikē* included the ‘music’ of (1) rhapsodes, (2) citharodes = cithara-singers = singers self-accompanied by the cithara or ‘lyre’, (3) *aulodes* = aulos-singers = singers accompanied by the aulos or ‘reed’, (4) cithara-players, and (5) aulos-players.”

²⁹³ Nagy 2002, 37.

²⁹⁴ Nagy 2002, 38-39; West (1992, 368) calculates that some rhapsodes commanded sizable fees in addition to the prizes.

²⁹⁵ Nagy 2002, 37 citing IG II² 2311, an Athenian inscription dated to around 380 BCE, recording the winners of prizes at the Panathenaea. He also notes these categories of “musical” competition appear in Plato *Laws* VI 764d-e. Nagy (2002, 40) also cites Aristotle, who mentions the *agōn* ‘competition’ in *mousikē* (τὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς μουσικῆς) with prizes in gold and silver in his brief outline of the Panathenaea in the *Constitution of the Athenians* 60.1-3 and in Isocrates (*Panegyricus* 159), who specifies that “in *athloi* [contests] of *mousikē*” (ἐν... τοῖς τῆς μουσικοῦς ἄθλοισι) Homeric competitions were taking place.

accompaniment,²⁹⁶ and there is significant evidence for competitive performances of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by rhapsodes at the Panathenaia.²⁹⁷

Part of the evidence for the performance of Homer at the Panathenaia comes from two stories about famous Athenian lawmakers initiating the so-called “Panathenaic Rule.” According to Nagy, the Pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus* evinces that “there existed in Athens a custom of maintaining a fixed narrative sequence of Homeric performance at the Panathenaia, with each performing rhapsode taking up the narration where the previous rhapsode left off.”²⁹⁸ Pseudo-Plato states that this custom was initiated in the era of tyrants by Hipparchus, the son of Peisistratus. In another story, Solon initiates the custom of relay performances of Homer by rhapsodes at the Panathenaia. Dieuchidas of Megara is quoted by Diogenes Laertius as having said that Solon the Lawgiver

τά τε Ὀμήρου ἐξ ὑποβολῆς γέγραφε ραψοδεῖσθαι, οἷον ὅπου ὁ πρῶτος ἔληξεν, ἐκεῖθεν ἄρχεσθαι τὸν ἐχόμενον

has written a law that the works of Homer are to be performed **rhapsodically by relay** so that wherever the first person left off, from that point the next person should start.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Nagy 2002, 55 n. 38. The lyric meters were performed by citharodes or aulodes.

²⁹⁷ Nagy (2002, 55) presents the evidence for Homeric performances at the Panathenaia, stating, “the rhapsode Ion, who is about to compete in the Panathenaia (530b), is potentially a grand master in performing Hesiod and even Archilochus, not just Homer (531a); he tells Socrates that he specializes in Homer only because Homer is the best poet and, by implication, the only poet whose poetry is performed by rhapsodes at the Panathenaia (531a-532c). The rhapsode is a master performer—without musical accompaniment (533b5-7)—of dactylic hexameter (Homer and Hesiod) as also of elegiac and iambic meters (both these meters were primary compositional media of Archilochus).” Nagy (2002, 55) also cites Lycurgus’ *Against Leocrates* 102.

²⁹⁸ Nagy 2002, 9-12.

²⁹⁹ Dieuchidas of Megara FGH 485 F 6 via Diogenes Laertius 1.57 20, cited by Nagy 2002, 13. Nagy (2002, 13) interprets this as representing “a post-sixth-century political reapplication of the mythology that motivates the Panathenaic Rule. This time, the political perspective is that of democratic Athens in the era after the tyrants, and thus the ‘lawgiver’ credited with the ongoing custom of performing Homeric poetry at the Panathenaia of Athens is no longer Hipparchus (or Peisistratus) but Solon, the culture hero of the Athenian democracy.”

In the *Timaeus-Critias* Plato assigns Solon the poetic authority for transmitting the myth of Atlantis from Egypt. Additionally, Diogenes Laertius associates Solon with instituting the cyclical performance of Homer at the Panathenaea.³⁰⁰

The bulk of our evidence for rhapsodic competitions at the Panathenaea points to the performance of Homer, not Hesiod. But it also makes sense to consider Hesiod in relation to Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*. Besides the fact that Timaeus' speech introduces a new cosmogony, one in direct competition with Hesiod's *Theogony*, Bakker argues that our evidence for the performance of the Hesiodic corpus in the classical period places it alongside the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the rhapsodes' repertoire. Bakker suggests that "since Homer was performed at the large public religious festivals, such as the Panathenaia in Athens ... we may infer that Hesiod was also."³⁰¹ After all, Athenians would associate Hesiod with rhapsodic performances just as much as Homer.³⁰² As Graziosi notes,

When considering the question of how the Athenians came into contact with the poetry of Hesiod, we must, in the first place, consider the impact of rhapsodic performances. We know that professional rhapsodes recited poetry for a fee, both at public festivals and in private venues. Several sources mention public performances at festivals like the Panathenaea and the Brauronia, or in the agora, as well as more intimate recitals in the private homes of wealthy citizens like Nicias.³⁰³

Additionally, Plato himself sets both Homer *and* Hesiod in competition with the fictional Solon in the *Timaeus-Critias*. After the elder Critias' friend praises this fictional Solon, Critias' grandfather laments

‘εἴ γε, ὦ Ἀμύνανδρε, μὴ παρέργω τῆ ποιήσει κατεχρήσατο, ἀλλ’ ἐσπουδάκει καθάπερ ἄλλοι, τόν τε λόγον ὃν ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου δεῦρο ἠνέγκατο ἀπετέλεσεν, καὶ μὴ διὰ τὰς στάσεις ὑπὸ κακῶν τε ἄλλων ὅσα ἦνεν ἐνθάδε ἤκων ἠναγκάσθη καταμελῆσαι, κατὰ γε ἐμὴν

³⁰⁰ I discuss this tradition further in the next chapter.

³⁰¹ Bakker 2018, 143.

³⁰² Graziosi 2010, 111.

³⁰³ Graziosi 2010, 111-112, citing Kotsidu 1991 for evidence of public performances, and for private, Xenophon *Symposium* 3.5. Graziosi (2010, 112) notes that "it is difficult to determine exactly what works by which authors were performed by rhapsodes, but Hesiod certainly featured in their repertoire." See Plato, *Ion* 531a1-2, mentioned above, where Socrates asks Ion whether Hesiod and Archilochus are in his repertoire, or only Homer.

δόξαν οὔτε Ἡσίοδος οὔτε Ὅμηρος οὔτε ἄλλος οὐδείς ποιητῆς εὐδοκιμώτερος ἐγένετο ἂν ποτε αὐτοῦ.’

“If only, Amynder, he hadn’t misused his poetry by treating it as a side job but pursued it seriously like the others, and if he had finished off the account he brought here from Egypt and wasn’t compelled to neglect it because of the factions and all the other evils he discovered when he came back here, then, in my opinion at least, **neither Hesiod nor Homer nor any other poet would ever have become more highly reputed than he.**”³⁰⁴

Does the reference to Hesiod matter at all or is it just a cultural convention to mention Hesiod in the same breath as Homer?³⁰⁵ Yamagata’s survey of the references to Homer and Hesiod throughout the Platonic corpus shows that this is not just a convention.³⁰⁶ Although “Plato often mentions [Hesiod] in tandem with Homer, apparently without implying a hierarchy,”³⁰⁷ there are far more references to Homer than Hesiod in the Platonic corpus.³⁰⁸ Yamagata’s survey of Homeric and Hesiodic references shows that the *Timaeus*, however, includes the most references to Hesiod per textual volume of any dialogue. The *Timaeus* includes 11 references to Hesiodic texts and Hesiod himself, matching the *Laws* and only surpassed by the *Republic*, with 18 references. But the *Laws* and the *Republic* are both far longer dialogues. Overall, Yamagata argues that “although Plato often refers to Homer and Hesiod as a pair throughout the dialogues without judgement between them, Hesiod is frequently added—and manipulated—in order to

³⁰⁴ Plato, *Tim.* 21c-d.

³⁰⁵ Koning (2010 26-46), drawing upon the cultural memory theorist Zerubavel (2003, 87)’s concepts of “intra-periodic lumping,” i.e. assimilation, and “inter-periodic splitting,” i.e. differentiation, argues that the same terms can be applied to the reception of Homer and Hesiod in both antiquity and modern scholarship. Koning (2010, 28) argues that “in our sources, Homer and Hesiod are sometimes differentiated or ‘split’; the differences between them are highlighted in order to present them as separate. Far more often, on the other hand, differences are downplayed or ignored altogether, and the poets appear as one ‘block.’”

³⁰⁶ Yamagata 2010, 68-88.

³⁰⁷ Cf. *Apology* 41a6-7, *Protagoras* 316d7, *Ion* 532a5, *Republic* 363a8, 377d4, 600d5-6, *Timaeus* 21d1-2, and *Laws* 658d6-8.

³⁰⁸ Yamagata 2010, 70. In response to *Tim.* 21c-d Yamagata (2010, 70) notes, “the obvious implication of the passage is that Hesiod and Homer are seen as yardsticks for poetic excellence,” but she does not note that their mention here must be considered in relation to Solon.

cast Homer in a specific light.”³⁰⁹ Specifically, she sees that “there is a marked tendency in some dialogues to contrast the ‘sophistic’ use of Hesiod with a more Socratic use of Homer.”³¹⁰

If it is the case that “at the most important city festival, the Greater Panathenaea, rhapsodes were allowed to perform ‘Homer only,’”³¹¹ why would Plato refer to Hesiod as well? Critias argues that if Solon had composed this epic poem about Atlantis “neither Hesiod, nor Homer, nor any other poet” (οὔτε Ἡσίοδος οὔτε Ὅμηρος οὔτε ἄλλος οὐδεὶς ποιητής) would have a better reputation than Solon.³¹² This formulation showcases that Hesiod is as important a figure in the minds of Plato’s audience as Homer. Moreover, it calls to mind the mythical contest between Homer and Hesiod. Plato also groups Hesiod and Homer together in a competitive pairing in the *Laws*.³¹³ According to the Athenian stranger, the type of audience influences the how people vote. Younger children prefer puppet shows, older children prefer comedy, young men and educated women prefer tragedy: “but we old men have the greatest pleasure in hearing a rhapsode recite well the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or one of the Hesiodic poems” (ῥαψοδὸν δέ, καλῶς Ἰλιάδα καὶ Ὀδύσειαν ἢ τι τῶν Ἡσιοδείων διατιθέντα, τάχ’ ἂν ἡμεῖς οἱ γέροντες ἤδιστα ἀκούσαντες).³¹⁴ Hesiod here “is closely associated with Homer (though typically treated as second best) and is backed by the sound moral judgement and the authority of ‘old men.’”³¹⁵

The Contest of Homer and Hesiod, also known as the *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi*,³¹⁶ provides insights into the way a competition between these two poetic personae may have been conceptualized at the time that Plato composed the *Timaeus-Critias*. The text of the *Certamen* is

³⁰⁹ Yamagata 2010, 87.

³¹⁰ Yamagata 2010, 87. She argues for this portrayal in the *Lysis* and *Protagoras*.

³¹¹ Graziosi 2010, 112, citing Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 102. See also Graziosi 2002, 196.

³¹² Plato, *Tim.* 21c-d. Yamagata (2010, 72) notes “the 4th-century reception of Solon is also closely intertwined with that of Homer and Hesiod.”

³¹³ Plato, *Laws* 658d6-9. See Graziosi 2010, 112; Yamagata 2010, 71-2.

³¹⁴ Plato, *Laws* 658d6-9.

³¹⁵ Graziosi 2010, 112

³¹⁶ Koning 2010, 249.

notoriously uncertain.³¹⁷ The text is an amalgam with sections that arguably derive from the *Museum* written by Alcidamas, a fourth-century sophist and student of Gorgias. Graziosi traces the background of the text and notes that “it is now agreed that the sections of the manuscript text which relate the oracle to Homer, the contest, the oracle to Hesiod, and the death of the two poets, are taken from Alcidamas.”³¹⁸ The text of the *Museum*, however, may also have been an assemblage of earlier works.³¹⁹ Ultimately, “various considerations suggest that the story of the contest between Homer and Hesiod was well known in the fifth century and, according to Richardson, also in the sixth.”³²⁰

Following Haubold’s suggestion that Critias’ recollection illustrates “the influence of the tradition of a rhapsodic contest between Homer and Hesiod,”³²¹ an analysis of the contest portion of this poetic amalgam provides evidence for how this competition was perceived by Plato and his contemporaries.³²² This text shows that it is worthwhile to consider how Plato is engaging with not just Homer but also Hesiod because the poetic personae of Homer and Hesiod are the

³¹⁷ Koning 2010, 248-249 outlines the debate.

³¹⁸ Nietzsche (1870), who first discovered the single manuscript that preserves the text of the *Certamen*, set forth this theory first. Cf. West (1967) 444.

³¹⁹ Graziosi (2001, 59) notes that “it is unclear to what extent Alcidamas assembled earlier stories and traditions about the poets. The death of Homer, resulting from his inability to solve a children’s riddle, was already known to Heraclitus (fr.22 B 56 DK), and the legend about the death of Hesiod was current by Thucydides’ time (3.96) so, in these two cases, we know that Alcidamas did not invent the stories he relates. Individual lines which appear in the ‘contest section’ also circulated before the fourth century: verses 78f., for example, appear in the Theognidea as lines 425 and 427, while 107f. are identical to 1282f. of Aristophanes’ *Peace*.” West (1967) argues that Alcidamas incorporated famous lines of poetry into an original composition telling the story of the contest between Homer and Hesiod. Richardson (1981) critiques this view, arguing that anecdotes about Homer and Hesiod were common already in the sixth century: Xenophanes envisions a contest in wisdom, and the contests of riddles and verses is a very early form. Additionally, Richardson (2ff.) argues that the *Certamen* echoes not just a few lines from Aristophanes’ *Peace*, but the main themes of rejecting war poetry and praising feasting.

³²⁰ Graziosi 2001, 60. See Koning 2010, 245 note 18 on the scholars that push the origin back to the sixth century.

³²¹ Haubold qtd. in Yamagata (2010, 72, n. 11).

³²² The contest section of the poem occurs from lines 62-214. Graziosi (2001, 59) summarizes the rest of the poem, saying the poem “begins with an account of the place of origin, genealogy and relative chronology of it then relates an oracle about Homer’s death, the story of the contest, and an oracle about Hesiod’s death followed by his actual death; it continues by relating the rest of Homer’s life; and finishes with his death on Ios.” All quotations of the *Certamen* refer to the text in Allen (1912).

quintessential rhapsodic competitors.³²³ Moreover, if it was the case that only the poems assigned to Homer were performed at the most important festival for Athens, a fourth-century BCE audience would likely have assumed that this was a result of an earlier competition between Homer and Hesiod. But how did it come to be that Homer won this contest to become the only repertoire for the Greater Panathenaea? Critias sets up a competition for poetic repertoire between Homer, Hesiod, and Solon, which shows that even at the repertoire level of the competition there is an *agōn*. As I will argue below, the *Certamen*, along with the depiction of Hesiod winning a song contest in the *Works and Days*, presents evidence for reading Homer and Hesiod as mapping onto mythical ancient Athens and Atlantis in the *Timaeus-Critias*.

The contest section of the *Certamen*, beginning at line 62, occurs when Homer and Hesiod are said to have met by chance and travelled together to Chalcis where they competed in *sophia* at the funeral games of the king Amphidamas. The deceased king's brother, Panedes, was the judge of the contest. This setting is based on *Works and Days* 648-59, where Hesiod relates his only journey across the sea, boasts about his ability to give sage advice, and relates how he won a tripod at these funeral games:

δείξω δὴ τοι μέτρα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
οὔτε τι ναυτιλίας σεσοφισμένος οὔτε τι νηῶν.
οὐ γάρ πώ ποτε νηί γ' ἐπέπλων εὐρέα πόντον,
εἰ μὴ ἐς Εὐβοίαν ἐξ Αὐλίδος, ἧ ποτ' Ἀχαιοὶ
μείναντες χειμῶνα πολὺν σὺν λαὸν ἄγειραν
Ἑλλάδος ἐξ ἱερῆς Τροίην ἐς καλλιγύναϊκα.
ἔνθα δ' ἐγὼν ἐπ' ἄεθλα δαΐφρονος Ἀμφιδάμαντος
Χαλκίδα τ' εἰς ἐπέρησα: τὰ δὲ προπεφραδμένα πολλὰ
ἄεθλ' ἔθεσαν παῖδες μεγαλήτορος: ἔνθα μέ φημι
ὔμνω νικήσαντα φέρειν τρίποδ' ὠτώεντα.
τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ Μούσης Ἑλικωνιάδεσσι ἀνέθηκα,
ἔνθα με τὸ πρῶτον λιγυρῆς ἐπέβησαν ἀοιδῆς.

³²³ Koning 2010, 245; See Nagy (2009a, 298-304) for the belief in “a tradition of rhapsodic competition involving rival performances of Hesiodic and Homeric poetry” (298).

I will show you the measure of the resounding sea—quite without instruction as I am either in seafaring or in ships; for as to ships, I have never yet sailed the broad sea, except to Euboea from Aulis, the way the Achaeans once came when they waited through the winter and gathered a great army from holy Greece against Troy of the fair women. There to the funeral games for warlike Amphidamas and to Chalcis I crossed, and many were the prizes announced and displayed by his valiant sons; where I may say that **I was victorious in poetry and won a tripod with ring handles**. That I dedicated to the Muses of Helicon, in the original place where they set me on the path of fine singing.³²⁴

Although he never mentions Homer or epic poetry by name, the way the poet describes his journey sets the stage for an *agōn* against Homeric epic.³²⁵

Firstly, Hesiod is explicitly anti-seafaring, in contrast to the seafaring-friendly Homer, whose *Iliad* and *Odyssey* both involve significant sailing. Aulis, as the poet indicates, is the origin point for the Achaeans before they sailed to Troy. This is where they waited (μείναντες) out the winter, but “unlike Hesiod, the Achaeans did not know when the right time for sailing was.”³²⁶ Graziosi argues that Hesiod’s agonistic stance can also be detected in the following ways:

The entire Trojan expedition is summarized in less than three lines, and the summary is extremely pointed. In the *Iliad* the epithet *καλλιγύναιξ* is invariably attached to Greece, while *ἱερή* is typically used of Troy: Hesiod reverses the convention. His usage of *καλλιγύναιξ* to describe Troy, the city where Helen lives, and of *ἱερή* to describe Greece, is unparalleled, but not meaningless. Unlike Homer’s Greeks who sail after a woman, Hesiod, the well-known misogynist, stays in holy Greece.³²⁷ His journey, which he

³²⁴ Hesiod *Op.* 648-59. Trans. West 1988, 56.

³²⁵ Graziosi (2001, 61) makes this argument following Griffith (1983, 62), who argues that *Op.* 646-62 aims to establish Hesiod’s poetic credentials in relation to both divine inspiration and mortal competitions and notes the significance of Aulis in this context: “[his journey to the poetic contest] began and ended at Aulis, famous as the starting point of the great epic expedition to Troy.” See also Koning 2010, 246. Additionally, Koning (2010, 246 n. 23; 303-304) points to the Muses’ enigmatic claim to speak both truth and falsity (*Th.* 27-28) as another reference to rhapsodic rivalries. See also Rousseau 1996, 166 on the “*polémique*” between Homeric and Hesiodic traditions present in the proem of the *Op.* Cf. Heldmann 1982, 18 who is skeptical because Homer is not explicitly named. However, there are several references to the *Iliad* in this passage (the so-called *nautilia*) of the *Op.* that are potentially polemical. See on these Nagy 1990b, 77-78, Rosen 1997, 477-479, Steiner 2007, 182-185, Koning 2010, 246 n. 25, who cites “the obviously Hesiodic reference in Thgn. 1.1197-1202 who opposes *nautilia* to agriculture.” Cf. Notopoulos 1960 who believes that the song Hesiod performed in Chalcis is Homer-like both in style and subject.

³²⁶ Graziosi 2001, 61.

³²⁷ We need not assign misogyny to an individual “Hesiod” for this argument to be compelling.

epically describes with the expression, ἐπέπλων εὐρέα πόντον involves crossing just a strait from Aulis to Euboea. Hesiod knows better than Homer.³²⁸

That is, the poet uses epic language (ἐπέπλων εὐρέα πόντον) to describe a piddly ferry across a mere strait from Aulis to Euboea. The subtext is “Hesiod knows better than Homer.”³²⁹

The poet of the *Works and Days* thus describes his win and reminds the audience of his poetic authority through divine inspiration by dedicating his prize tripod at the place where the Heliconian Muses first transformed him from shepherd into bard.³³⁰ As noted above, the poet does not identify his competitor at the funeral games of Amphidamus. Like contemporary fanfiction, the *Certamen* fills this gap by envisioning how this contest occurred and imagining that it was between Hesiod and Homer.³³¹

The *Certamen* provides evidence for how participating in a song contest provided honor to both contestants involved. It complicates the common assumption, noted above, about the ancient Greeks’ competition culture. That is, this competition in *sophia* is not a zero-sum game, in which a winner takes all the spoils, and the loser is left with nothing.³³² The competition section of the poem has two main sections. In the first Hesiod confronts Homer with riddles that test his wit and wisdom. In the second the judge has both poets recite the best passage from their poems. In one part of the wisdom competition, Hesiod confronts Homer with non-sensical or improper lines (107-37). The challenge for Homer is adding a second line to solve the impasse

³²⁸ Graziosi 2001, 61; Graziosi 2002, 69-70 makes a similar argument. Cf. Edwards 1971, 80, who does not see this switch as significant but rather states, “one is tempted to see Hesiod’s sense of humour at work here, deliberately choosing the ‘wrong’ epithets, for he could easily have said, Ἴλιον εἰς ἱερὴν ἐξ Ἑλλάδος εὐρυχόπροτο (cf. *H 20, I 478*). On the other hand, the explanation may simply be that Hesiod’s choice of epithets has been influenced less by their meaning than by phrases familiar to him.” This argument for humor or incompetence is much less interesting than Graziosi’s.

³²⁹ Graziosi 2001, 61.

³³⁰ Hesiod, *Th.* 22-34.

³³¹ *Certamen* 213-4. Hesiod *Op.* 657-8. Graziosi (2001, 61 note 23) notes: “A measure of the power of the tradition according to which Hesiod beat Homer is that it finds its way into the text itself, as a variant of line 657. The scholia ad *Op.* 657 tell us: ἄλλοι γράφουσιν· ὕμνω νικήσαντ' ἐν Χαλκίδι θεῖον Ὅμηρον.

³³² See above.

presented by the first. This challenge plays on the tradition of Homeric enjambment. For example, Hesiod states: δεῖπνον ἔπειθ' εἵλοντο βοῶν κρέα καὺχένας ἵππων (“Then they had a meal: beef and horse necks”).³³³ Here Hesiod is threatening Homer with an improper suggestion. The diet of heroes did not include horses’ necks. Homer solves the riddle by completing the line, saying:

δεῖπνον ἔπειθ' εἵλοντο βοῶν κρέα καὺχένας ἵππων
ἔκλυον ἰδρώοντας, ἐπεὶ πολέμου ἐκορέσθη.

After unyoking the horses’ necks, which were covered in sweat, they had a meal, beef meat, because they were sated with war.³³⁴

Reflecting on the added value of competition, Graziosi notes that this way of competing demonstrates that the competition is not a zero-sum model functioning to distribute already available goods. In contrast,

[a]t the end of a competition like this, both participants have gained more glory, and relied on one another’s abilities in order to display their own. In fact, occasionally we encounter double riddles, in which both speakers have to solve a puzzle: these instances further emphasize the mutual dependence established by this kind of competition.³³⁵

There is, moreover, a benefit both to the performers and to the audience. For if one poet wins the contest by stumping the other, then the audience is “deprived of some possible lines of poetry, and instances of *sophia*. Thus, the success of the competition depends on the ability of both participants to carry on for longer. In effect Homer and Hesiod both contribute to the creation of meaningful lines of poetry.”³³⁶ As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this view of

³³³ *Certamen* 107.

³³⁴ *Certamen* 107-8.

³³⁵ Graziosi 2001, 69, citing *Certamen* 121-3; 124-6 and 133-7.

³³⁶ Graziosi 2001, 69. The more evenly matched the competitors are, the more their wisdom can be displayed, for the benefit of the silent audience. In this respect, the competition described here is quite similar not only to exchanges between prophets in archaic Greece, but also to contests described in the older *Upanisads*, where wise men question one another and the winner is the person who has the last word. The form of the contest in riddles is an old one. See Lloyd 1979 60f. for further discussion on the *Upanisads*.

competition is also presented in Hesiod's *Works and Days* through the poet's depiction of the positive kind of ἔρις.

In the biographical tradition, "Hesiod" becomes known as the poet of peace and agricultural production, in contrast to "Homer," who becomes synonymous with warfare and seafaring. These characterizations of Homer and Hesiod come to the fore in the final section of the contest in the *Certamen*. Since Hesiod is unable to stump Homer through his riddles, the audience members wish to crown Homer, but the king and judge, Panedes, steps in and commands that the poets recite the most beautiful passages from their respective poems. The judge prevents an audience choice award and shifts the contest to a poetic performance. Each bard chooses a passage from their repertoire, Hesiod going for the so-called farmer's calendar, *Works and Days* 383-92, and Homer reciting two excerpts from *Iliad* 13, lines 126-33 and 339-44, which appear to anachronistically describe hoplite warfare. The choice of these passages has puzzled many scholars.³³⁷ They have considered Hesiod's preference for the *Works and Days* over the *Theogony* odd and wondered about Homer's choice of lines "deemed spurious by some modern editors on the grounds that the Homeric poems glorify single combat and ought to know nothing of hoplite tactics."³³⁸

These choices, however, highlight the characterization of "Homer" and "Hesiod" in the cultural memory of antiquity. On the level of content, as noted above, Hesiod is associated with agriculture and peace, whereas Homer is associated with warfare and sailing.³³⁹ We see this characterization also play out in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. Aristophanes has "Aeschylus" describe

³³⁷ E.g., Arrighetti 1996, 168; cf. Dover 1997 *ad* 1033 and 1036.

³³⁸ Graziosi 2001, 70. Graziosi, on the other hand, sees the passage choices as representative of each poets' personae.

³³⁹ Koning (2010, 267), investigating not only the *Certamen*, but also the other texts that reference a competition between Homer and Hesiod (focusing on Plutarch's *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* and Dio Chrysostom's *Second Oration on Kingship*), also identifies these three main differences.

Hesiod's poetry as instructive of γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους “working of the land, harvest seasons, plowing” and divine Homer's poetry as instructive of τάξεις ἀρετὰς ὀπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν “battle lines, courageous deeds, men's armory.”³⁴⁰

The way that Hesiod wins the contest again reinforces the characterization of his persona as symbolizing agriculture and peace, in contrast to Homer's sailing and warfare. Additionally, Homer wins the popularity contest, but Hesiod wins the moral one. We know from the beginning that Hesiod will win the *Certamen*. Yet he wins not by a popular vote, but because of the king's judgement. After Homer finishes his performance, we hear that

θαυμάσαντες δὲ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὸν Ὅμηρον οἱ Ἕλληνας ἐπήνουν, ὡς παρὰ τὸ προσῆκον γεγονότων τῶν ἐπῶν, καὶ ἐκέλευον δίδοναι τὴν νίκην. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τὸν Ἡσίοδον ἐστεφάνωσεν εἰπὼν δίκαιον εἶναι τὸν ἐπὶ γεωργίαν καὶ εἰρήνην προκαλούμενον νικᾶν, οὐ τὸν πολέμους καὶ σφαγὰς διεξιόντα.

full of wonder, the Greeks praised Homer also in this case, and asked that he should be granted victory, because the verses were even better than had been expected. But the king crowned Hesiod, saying that it was just to win by recommending agriculture and peace, rather than by describing wars and slaughter.³⁴¹

That is, Homer evokes *thauma*, wonder. Hesiodic poetry, in contrast, is known for *dikē*.³⁴² The audience is swayed by admiration for Homer but the judge is more concerned with what is right (δίκαιον).³⁴³ This harkens back to Hesiod's complaint about an unjust verdict issued by kings at the opening of the *Works and Day*.³⁴⁴ Graziosi interprets Panedes' judgement as an addition to the wisdom competition. He is “equal to the challenge and solves the contest between the two

³⁴⁰ Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1034-6. A similar view of Homer and Hesiod is expressed by Xenophon in *Memorabilia* 1.2.56-58, in which he cites Hes. *WD* 309 and Hom. *Il.* 2.188.

³⁴¹ *Certamen* 205-210.

³⁴² Graziosi 2002, 174. Koning 2010, 268 notes that “traces of such a dichotomy can be detected throughout the tradition of the contest (e.g., Philostratus' vine-dresser calling Hesiod “simpler” φαυλότερος, Her. 43.9; and Tzetzes' remarks on the judges being completely insensitive to poetry). But occasionally, Hesiod too can achieve wonder. Plutarch says he was “admired” for his reply to Homer's question (μάλιστα θαυμασθείς), which he answers “quite offhand” (ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος). In Plutarch's version, both recitals were prepared in advance and the *Certamen* states that both contestants contended “in a wonderful way” (θαυμαστῶς).

³⁴³ *Certamen* 205. Graziosi 2001, 71.

³⁴⁴ Hesiod, *Op.* 36-40.

wise men with an expression of his own wisdom: peace is better than war.”³⁴⁵ In terms of ethics and politics, in the *Certamen* Hesiod is associated with the individual judgement of the king, whereas Homer is associated with the opinion of a crowd.³⁴⁶ Hesiod’s victory comes through moral reasoning, whereas Homer “inspires an immediate and universal reaction of wonder and admiration.”³⁴⁷

This assessment of Hesiod in the *Certamen* informs my analysis of the Atlantis narrative in three ways. First, in both the *Works and Days* and the biographical tradition, “Hesiod” wins the poetic competition. This provides more evidence for why it makes sense to consider both Hesiod and Homer in relation to the *Timaeus-Critias*. Second, the *Certamen* demonstrates how poetic competition is a productive competition, in contrast to the destructive competitions of warfare. Finally, “Hesiod” is seen as a poet of peace, agriculture, and reason, in contrast to “Homer” as a poet of warfare, seafaring, and popular entertainment in the cultural memory evinced in the *Certamen*.

In what follows, I argue that Critias’ story of proto-Athens’ war with Atlantis presents a similar dichotomy. Proto-Athens is characterized by abundant agricultural production in contrast to Atlantis’ seafaring.³⁴⁸ Critias describes the cultivated abundance of primeval Athens, saying,

³⁴⁵ Graziosi 2001, 71. In contrast, Vogt (1959, 199, 201) interprets this decision as arbitrary and capricious. West (1967) 443, however, points out that Panedes offers “an original and by no means contemptible analysis of the situation” and this analysis attempts to solve a difficult problem, that of judging between Hesiod and Homer.

³⁴⁶ Koning (2010, 267) notes that “in some stories the judge is a king (*Certamen*, Philostratus, Tzetzes’ *Vita*) and it is essential for the narrative of the *Certamen* that this king counters the opinion of the crowd; other versions, however, explicitly stated that the judge was not a king (Dio) and ascribe the decision to (someone from) the common people (Dio, Philostratus, Tzetzes’ scholia). Hesiod thus sometimes owes his victory to a king, and sometimes to the lowest rabble; and this means that Homer too is alternately associated with either the king or the people.”

³⁴⁷ Graziosi 2002, 174. See note 106 above.

³⁴⁸ Edith Hall (forthcoming), following Vidal-Naquet’s (1964 and 1992) interpretation of the myth of Atlantis as a description of two potential trajectories for Athens, argues that “primeval Athens represents Plato’s ideal republic, a land-based agricultural society resistant to change, with a hoplite army, where classes are separated, sober and virtuous; the doomed island-state of Atlantis, however, represents the Athens of Plato’s young adulthood, a maritime imperial power spoilt by passion, greed, and excessive interaction through seafaring with other communities.”

διεκεκόσμητο ὡς εἰκὸς ὑπὸ γεωργῶν μὲν ἀληθινῶν καὶ πραττόντων αὐτὸ τοῦτο, φιλοκάλων δὲ καὶ εὐφυῶν, γῆν δὲ ἀρίστην καὶ ὕδωρ ἀφθονώτατον ἐχόντων καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς γῆς ὥρας μετριώτατα κεκραμένας: τὸ δ' ἄστὺ κατωκισμένον ᾧδ' ἦν ἐν τῷ τότε χρόνῳ.

It was cultivated as you might expect of those who were truly farmers, and who just did one thing, who wanted to create fine crops and were naturally suited to their role, and who also had the best land and the most abundant supply of water, and, besides the land, a climate that was moderately blended.³⁴⁹

The water supply in proto-Athens is described as “abundant,” or more precisely, “without envy” (ἄφθονος)³⁵⁰ multiple times.³⁵¹ ἄφθονον “is a key term”³⁵² in Hesiod’s picture of the golden race of human beings at the beginning of the ages of man myth. There human beings “had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bore them fruit **abundantly** and without stint” (ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα / τοῖσιν ἔην: καρπὸν δ’ ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα / αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον).³⁵³ Moreover, Athena and Hephaestus’ close association with proto-Athens produces wise citizens.³⁵⁴ Atlantis is as abundant as primeval Athens, but this abundance comes without human agricultural cultivation and instead derives from Poseidon.³⁵⁵ In contrast to agricultural proto-Athens, Atlantis is a city of seafaring, which allows for opulent trade.³⁵⁶

This analogy breaks down on the level of peace and warfare, for both mythical populations go to war. Their motivations, however, set each city apart. Primeval Athens demonstrates valor through defending itself and other city-states against the threat of Atlantis, ultimately freeing those already enslaved.³⁵⁷ This story, if we had the actual description of the

³⁴⁹ Plato, *Crit.* 111e. Gill 2017, 147 suggests that the farmers’ desire to grow fine crops hints at the ideal city in the *Republic* “united by common aspirations to an ideal standard of goodness or beauty (e.g. *Republic* 401b-d).” On Proto-Athens’ agricultural production, see Plato *Crit.* 111d.

³⁵⁰ LSJ *S.v.* ἄφθονος

³⁵¹ Plato *Crit.* 111e4, 111d6, 112d2. At 111d6 the storage capacity of the land is compared to the lack thereof in contemporary Athens.

³⁵² Gill 2017, 147.

³⁵³ Hesiod, *Op.* 117-8.

³⁵⁴ Plato, *Crit.* 109d, 112e.

³⁵⁵ Plato *Crit.* 113e, 115b.

³⁵⁶ Plato, *Crit.* 117d-e.

³⁵⁷ Plato, *Tim.* 25d.

conflict, would describe how Athens stopped Atlantis, which “in its insolence, was advancing against all of Europe together with Asia, having set out from somewhere far out in the Atlantic Ocean” (ὕβρει πορευομένην ἅμα ἐπὶ πᾶσαν Εὐρώπην καὶ Ἀσίαν, ἔξωθεν ὀρμηθεῖσαν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀτλαντικοῦ πελάγους).³⁵⁸

Returning to the Atlantis narrative, the characterizations of Homer and Hesiod nuance our understanding of what ‘competition’ means within the trilogy. As I have shown, warfare, the subject matter of Critias’ speech, is a destructive competition, in contrast to the constructive competitions of poetry and wisdom seen on the level of the dialogue as a whole. In the next section, I demonstrate how Plato uses specifically Hesiodic techniques of genealogies and etymologies while challenging the canonical origin myths known to his contemporaries. Ultimately, Plato sets his dialogue in competition with the contemporary origin stories for Athens and how the world comes to be. This competition is a constructive one, in which Plato builds on the poetic techniques of the past to define and question contemporary Athenian identity.

2.4 ETIOLOGIES, GENEALOGIES, AND ETYMOLOGIES

The myth of Atlantis in the *Timaeus-Critias* introduces a new etiology for the Athenians, one set out in contrast to canonical anthropogony myths and etiologies. As a Platonic fiction, the Atlantis narrative is brand new, but within Critias’ framing narrative, the canonical myths are presented as young in relation to the “myth” of Atlantis. Solon attempts to tell the Egyptian priest stories that reach as far back into the past as possible. Critias describes how Solon,

³⁵⁸ Plato, *Tim.* 24e.

ποτε προαγαγεῖν βουληθεῖς αὐτοὺς περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων εἰς λόγους, τῶν τῆδε τὰ ἀρχαιότατα λέγειν ἐπιχειρεῖν, περὶ Φορωνέως τε τοῦ πρώτου λεχθέντος καὶ Νιόβης, καὶ μετὰ τὸν κατακλυσμὸν αὖ περὶ Δευκαλίωνος καὶ Πύρρας ὡς διεγένοντο μυθολογεῖν, καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν γενεαλογεῖν, καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐτῶν ὅσα ἦν οἷς ἔλεγεν πειρᾶσθαι διαμνημονεύων τοὺς χρόνους ἀριθμεῖν.

when he wished to lead them on to give speeches about antiquities, attempted to speak of the most ancient things of all in the accounts given here—about Phoroneus, said to be the first man, and about Niobe—and he proceeded to tell stories about Deucalion and Pyrrha after the flood, and about how they survived it, and to give the genealogy of their descendants; and by recalling how many years it took for the events he was speaking about, he tried to number the periods of time.³⁵⁹

That is, Solon attempts to speak about the first man, about Niobe, and about Deucalion and Pyrrha, who repopulate the world after the great flood. He also includes genealogies of their descendants and the number of years between these events and his day. The Egyptian priest, however, is not impressed. He replies by telling Solon, “You Greeks are always children, and there’s no such thing as an old Greek” (“Ἕλληνες ἀεὶ παῖδες ἐστε, γέρον δὲ Ἕλλην οὐκ ἔστιν”).³⁶⁰ He claims that the Greeks “don’t have a single old opinion derived from ancient hearsay or any study hoary with time” (οὐδεμίαν γὰρ ἐν αὐταῖς ἔχετε δι’ ἀρχαίαν ἀκοὴν παλαιὰν δόξαν οὐδὲ μάθημα χρόνῳ πολιὸν οὐδέν).³⁶¹ The priest tells Solon that these genealogies (γενεαλογηθέντα) “aren’t much different from children’s stories” (παίδων βραχὺ τι διαφέρει μύθων).³⁶² This framing narrative thusly calls into question canonical mythological origin stories by questioning the true age of these stories.

In place of these canonical etiologies and genealogies, Critias presents the story of Atlantis. The mythical proto-Athens in this story connects contemporary Athenians to Athena, their divine ancestor. When the Egyptian priest begins to tell Solon the story of Atlantis—as

³⁵⁹ Plato, *Tim.* 22a-b.

³⁶⁰ Plato, *Tim.* 22b.

³⁶¹ Plato, *Tim.* 22b.

³⁶² Plato, *Tim.* 24b.

Critias recollects—he states that he is motivated by Athena, the patron goddess of both his city and Athens. He tells Solon,

‘φθόνος οὐδεὶς, ὦ Σόλων, ἀλλὰ σοῦ τε ἔνεκα ἐρῶ καὶ τῆς πόλεως ὑμῶν, μάλιστα δὲ τῆς θεοῦ χάριν, ἣ τὴν τε ὑμετέραν καὶ τήνδε ἔλαχεν καὶ ἔθρεψεν καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν, προτέραν μὲν τὴν παρ’ ὑμῖν ἔτεσιν χιλίοις, ἐκ Γῆς τε καὶ Ἡφαίστου τὸ σπέρμα παραλαβοῦσα ὑμῶν, τήνδε δὲ ὑστέραν.’

“No grudge do I bear you, Solon; but on the contrary, for your sake I shall speak and for the sake of your city, and most of all for the sake of the goddess, who took as her lot both your city and this one here and brought them up and educated them—the city in your land first by the span of a thousand years, when she took over your seed from Ge and Hephaestus, and the one here at a later point.”³⁶³

That is, Athena receives (παραλαβοῦσα) the seed that becomes the ancient Athenians from Hephaestus and Gaia and raises and educates them (ἔθρεψεν καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν).³⁶⁴ This people therefore has both an autochthonic origin and a divine education.

The land of primeval Athens is chosen for its potential to raise the proto-Athenians best. The priest describes how Athena decided to settle what would become Athens. He tells Solon that she separated the classes, priests from craftsmen from the military, who were also the first to adopt specific weapons, and she taught the proto-Athenians the arts of divination and medicine. The land upon which this autochthonic people is raised is itself ideal. Athena chooses this region because it had “a good blending of seasons, one that would bear the most prudent men” (τὴν εὐκρασίαν τῶν ὥρων ἐν αὐτῷ κατιδοῦσα, ὅτι φρονιμωτάτους ἄνδρας οἴσοι).³⁶⁵ The priest describes how,

ἄτε οὖν φιλοπόλεμός τε καὶ φιλόσοφος ἡ θεὸς οὔσα **τὸν προσφερεστάτους αὐτῇ μέλλοντα οἴσειν τόπον ἄνδρας**, τοῦτον ἐκλεξαμένη πρῶτον κατώκισεν. ὠκεῖτε δὴ οὖν νόμοις τε τοιοῦτοις χρώμενοι καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον εὐνομούμενοι πάση τε παρὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὑπερβεβληκότες ἀρετῇ, **καθόπερ εἰκὸς γεννήματα καὶ παιδεύματα θεῶν ὄντας.**

³⁶³ Plato, *Tim.* 23d-e.

³⁶⁴ Plato, *Tim.* 23d-e. Cf. 31 B. In Homer *Il.* 2.547 Gaia and Hephaestus are the parents of Erechtheus.

³⁶⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 24c.

inasmuch as she's both a lover of war and a lover of wisdom, the goddess singled out this region as **the one likely to bear men who most resembled her**, and settled it first. And you dwelled in the observance of such laws as these—indeed, laws that were still better—and you surpassed all mankind in every virtue, **as was suitable for those who were the offspring and pupils of gods.**³⁶⁶

This story establishes a divine origin for the Athenian citizens, which also includes a link to the land of Athens itself. Additionally, in this fictional account the climate and geography of Athens is as ideal as its proto-citizens will become. This is combined with the divine origin and pedagogy that leads to the production of virtue and excellence in the ancient Athenians.

Through the speeches in the *Timaeus-Critias* Plato introduces etiologies for the cosmos as a whole and the Athenian citizens. Moreover, in his telling of the myth of Atlantis, Critias includes a catalogue of names, a key feature of a genealogy, a myth that illustrates links in the chain from this past origin to the present. When he reprises the story of the ancient Athenians in the *Critias* he describes how the names of the proto-Athenians are preserved despite their deeds being forgotten in their homeland. For

ὧν τὰ μὲν ὀνόματα σέσωται, τὰ δὲ ἔργα διὰ τὰς τῶν παραλαμβανόντων φθορὰς καὶ τὰ μήκη τῶν χρόνων ἠφανίσθη.

the names of these first inhabitants have been preserved, but their deeds have perished on account of the catastrophes that befell those who succeeded them and the long passage of time intervening.³⁶⁷

The surviving peoples became illiterate (ἀγράμματον) and “only heard the tradition of the names of the rulers of their country and beyond these only little of their deeds” (τῶν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ δυναστῶν τὰ ὀνόματα ἀκηκοὸς μόνον καὶ βραχέα πρὸς αὐτοῖς τῶν ἔργων).³⁶⁸ According to this story, the people who survive the passage of time and the environmental disasters that befall their land are the intermediate link between the proto-Athenians and contemporary Athenians.

³⁶⁶ Plato, *Tim.* 24c.-d.

³⁶⁷ Plato, *Crit.* 109d.

³⁶⁸ Plato, *Crit.* 109d.

The evidence for the continuity between these peoples comes from the names that are passed down. The Athenians were

τὰ μὲν οὖν ὀνόματα τοῖς ἐκγόνοις ἐτίθεντο ἀγαπῶντες, τὰς δὲ ἀρετὰς καὶ τοὺς νόμους τῶν ἔμπροσθεν οὐκ εἰδότες εἰ μὴ σκοτεινὰς περὶ ἐκάστων τινὰς ἀκοάς

pleased to give their descendants the names of these rulers, even though they were unaware of their ancestors' virtues and institutions—except for some dim legends concerning each of them.³⁶⁹

The names of the first race survive, but the story of Atlantis' battle with primeval Athens is transmitted only through shadowy hearsay (σκοτεινὰς ἀκοάς). Critias claims that the stories were lost because the intermediate mountain peoples lacked the leisure necessary to concern themselves with legends. According to Critias, names are durable in a way that stories are not at this time. Critias' proof is that the Egyptian priest refers to Greek names. Ironically, however, the preserved names, according to this account, refer to the canonical origin stories that Plato's "myth" of Atlantis disrupts. The Egyptian priest tells Solon a list of names including

Κέκροπος τε καὶ Ἐρεχθέως καὶ Ἐριχθονίου καὶ Ἐρυσίχθονος τῶν τε ἄλλων τὰ πλεῖστα ὅσα περὶ καὶ Θησέως τῶν ἄνω περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐκάστων ἀπομνημονεύεται.

Cecrops and Erechtheus, and Erichthonius, and Erysichthon, and the names of most of the others which have come down in tradition before the generation of Theseus.³⁷⁰

Not only are these names distinctly Greek rather than Egyptian, but they are also distinctly Athenian. Cecrops is the founder and king of Athens and the mythical king of Attica, which then receives the name Cecropia from him. He is preceded in Attica by the autochthonic king Actaeus. Erysichthon, an early Athenian prince, is a son of Cecrops who dies childless during his

³⁶⁹ Plato, *Crit.* 109d-e.

³⁷⁰ Plato, *Crit.* 110a-b. Gill 2017, 142 states that "Plato's choice of pre-Theseus heroes seems designed to give prominence to the idea of autochthony [...] and of 'land' itself, a dominant theme in Plato's picture of primeval Athens (see 30). Erechtheus and Erichthonius are traditionally regarded as autochthonous, while the names Erichthonius and Erysichthon include the word *χθων* 'land.'" See also Rivaud 1925, 234-7; Brisson 1970, 409-10.

father's reign. Erechtheus is also an archaic Athenian king and a founder of the *polis*.³⁷¹ The Athenians call themselves *Erechtheidai*, the children of Erechtheus. This genealogical connection allows the Athenians to argue for an autochthonic origin and a land-based connection to their ancestral homeland since Erechtheus is born of ζείδωρος ἄρουρα “life-giving arable land” and raised by Athena.³⁷² Erichthonius is Erechtheus' son and the next king in this mythical line.³⁷³ While early Greek texts do not distinguish Erichthonius from Erechtheus, by the fourth century BCE they are distinct mythical figures. As noted above, according to one of the Panathenaea's origin myths, Erichthonius is credited with founding the most important festival in Athens to honor Athena.³⁷⁴ In citing these four names, Critias refers to the dominant Athenian etiology. This brings to the fore, however, a contrast between the common mythology and the way Critias presents it.

In the myth known by Plato's contemporaries, Athena goes to see Hephaestus to ask him for weapons, but he tries to rape her, and she fights him off. The semen that falls to the ground after being wiped from Athena's thigh with a piece of wool becomes Erichthonius. Athena wishes to raise the child in secret, so hides him in a small box.³⁷⁵ Athena gives the box to the daughters of Cecrops but makes them swear an oath not to open it. One of them does, and the sisters go insane and jump from a cliff.

In contrast to the attempted rape and the deaths of the sisters, no ἔρις is involved in the conception of the first Athenians according to Critias' description of the relations between

³⁷¹ For a fuller version of this myth and the conflation of Erechtheus and Erichthonius, see Mikalson (2010, 58–59). Accounts of the rape include Eur. *Ion* 267 and fr. 925; Amelesagoras FGrHist 330 F 1; Callim. *Hec.* fr.260.19 ff.; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.14.6. For other versions of the birth of Erechtheus/Erichthonius from the Earth, see Hom. *Il.* 2.546–551; Hdt. 8.55; Soph. *Aj.* 202; Pind. Fr. 253, Danaïd fr.2; Eur. *Ion* 20–25. Euripides fuses together the divine Erechtheus with the king in his lost tragedy *Erechtheus*.

³⁷² *Iliad* 2.546–51.

³⁷³ Plutarch conflates the two names in the myth of the begetting of Erechtheus.

³⁷⁴ Parker 2005, 255.

³⁷⁵ Apollodorus *Bibl.* 3.14.6.

Hephaestus and Athena. Critias emphasizes the lack of strife, and indeed the moral imperative not to slander the divine by assigning strife to them. He describes how the gods peacefully divided up the governance of the world, saying,

θεοὶ γὰρ ἅπασαν γῆν ποτε κατὰ τοὺς τόπους διελάγχανον—οὐ κατ' ἔριν: οὐ γὰρ ἂν ὀρθὸν ἔχοι λόγον θεοὺς ἀγνοεῖν τὰ πρέποντα ἐκάστοις αὐτῶν, οὐδ' αὖ γινώσκοντας τὸ μᾶλλον ἄλλοις προσήκον τοῦτο ἐτέρους αὐτοῖς δι' ἐρίδων ἐπιχειρεῖν κτᾶσθαι—δίκης δὴ κλήροις τὸ φίλον λαγχάνοντες κατώκιζον τὰς χώρας.

At one time, the gods received their due portions over the entire earth region by region—and **without strife. To claim that gods did not recognize what was proper to each would not be fitting, nor would it be right to say that, although they recognized what belonged by just title to others, some would attempt to take possession of this for themselves—in open strife.** But, as they received what was naturally theirs in the allotment of justice, they began to settle their lands.³⁷⁶

There are lands that naturally accrue to one god or another. This directly contradicts the myth of Athena and Poseidon's contest for possession of Athens.³⁷⁷ Plato himself contradicts Critias' version in the *Menexenus*: in Aspasia's purported funeral oration, the strife between Athena and Poseidon is used to prove that Athens is loved by the gods.³⁷⁸

Genealogies and names in relation to etymologies for places also feature in Critias' telling of the origin of Atlantis. Indeed, Critias anticipates a question that may prompt skepticism about the factual quality of his tale: Why are the names of proto-non-Greeks Greek? He preempts this

³⁷⁶ Plato, *Crit.* 109b.

³⁷⁷ The most famous classical account is carved on the west pediment of the Parthenon. On this myth see Mikalson, 2010, 56–57; W. B. Tyrell and F. S. Brown, 1991, 180. Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.10 relates how Cecrops presided over the contest between Athena and Poseidon, deciding in favor of the former. Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.14.1 rejects this view in favor of Olympian intervention but describes the contest in greater detail. Garvey (2008, 386) sees this change as a displacement of the conflict between Poseidon and Athena, “transferring it instead to the war between Atlantis and Athens, over which the two divinities preside respectively as chief deities. In this way, Plato is able to glorify Athena without abandoning his ideology: the quarrel is removed from the divine to the mortal level, allowing both gods to maintain their justness and Athena to achieve her victory over Poseidon, albeit indirectly through her people. In a prose hymnic style, then, Plato, through Critias, sings Athena's praises.”

³⁷⁸ Plato, *Menex.* 237c-d. Socrates reports Aspasia as saying “Our country deserves to be praised by all mankind, not only by us, and for many other reasons, but first and foremost because it happens to be loved by the gods. The strife and judgment of the gods who contended over her bears witness to our argument” (ἔστι δὲ ἀξία ἡ χώρα καὶ ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐπαινεῖσθαι, οὐ μόνον ὑφ' ἡμῶν, πολλαχῆ μὲν καὶ ἄλλῃ, πρῶτον δὲ καὶ μέγιστον ὅτι τυγχάνει οὐσα θεοφιλής. μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμῶν τῷ λόγῳ ἡ τῶν ἀμφισβητησάντων περὶ αὐτῆς θεῶν ἔρις τε καὶ κρίσις).

point so that his audience “will not be astonished as [they] hear Greek names frequently used for people who are not Greek” (μη πολλάκις ἀκούοντες Ἑλληνικὰ βαρβάρων ἀνδρῶν ὀνόματα θαυμάζητε).³⁷⁹ Solon had inquired about the meaning of these names. When he discovered that the Egyptians had translated the original names of the Atlanteans to Egyptian, he “recovered the meaning of each of these names and recorded it as he translated them into Greek” (αὐτός τε αὖ πάλιν ἐκάστου τὴν διάνοιαν ὀνόματος ἀναλαμβάνων εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἄγων φωνὴν ἀπεγράφετο).³⁸⁰ The etymology of the names that Solon uncovered and translated increases the audience’s trust in this account. In this way, Plato here employs folk etymology, a fictional technique commonly found in Hesiodic poetry.

The prominence of etymology in Hesiod’s poetry, especially in his treatment of proper names in the *Theogony*, has been much discussed.³⁸¹ Hesiod uses etymology as what Ineke Sluiter terms a *denkform*. Sluiter argues that for ancient authors and poets, etymologies rely upon a shared awareness of language that

makes language itself readily available as a topic of joint reflection and a source of arguments: it becomes a ‘tool for thinking’, not in the sense that language offers various possibilities to express our thoughts, ... but as a shared object of thought and a common focus of attention: the words we use become ‘intuition pumps’ for how the world they represent functions.

³⁷⁹ Plato, *Crit.* 113a.

³⁸⁰ Plato, *Crit.* 113a-b. “These very manuscripts were in the possession of my grandfather and they now remain in my possession. When I was a boy, I studied them carefully. Consequently, do not be astonished if you hear names that sound like Greek names; you now know their explanation” (καὶ ταῦτά γε δὴ τὰ γράμματα παρὰ τῷ πάππῳ τ’ ἦν καὶ ἔτ’ ἐστὶν παρ’ ἐμοὶ νῦν, διαμεμελέτηται τε ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος. ἂν οὖν ἀκούητε τοιαῦτα οἷα καὶ τῆδε ὀνόματα, μηδὲν ὑμῖν ἔστω θαῦμα: τὸ γὰρ αἴτιον αὐτῶν ἔχετε. μακροῦ δὲ δὴ λόγου τοιάδε τις ἦν ἀρχὴ τότε).

³⁸¹ As Vergados 2020, 11 n. 43 cites: Fischer 1934: 3: ‘*Wir kennen Hesiods Hang zum Etymologisieren*’; further treatments of this issue in archaic epic: see Sulzberger 1926; Risch 1947; Rank 1951; Ferrante 1965; Gambarara 1984; Curiazi 1994; O’Hara 2015: 7–13; Schmitter 2000: 347–50; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos 2007; Skempis & Ziogas 2009. On Homeric names, see now Kanavou 2015. More generally on Homer’s and Hesiod’s reflection on language, see Arrighetti 1996: 15–36, and Louden 1995 on Homeric wordplay; on the question of the representational force of names, see Salvatore 1987 and Kraus 1987. Further on etymology, esp. of proper names, in classical poetry, see the older study by Woodhead 1928; and Stanford 1972: 97–108; Kanavou 2011, 2015; Michalopoulos 1996, 1998, 2001; O’Hara 2015; Paschalis 1997; Peradotto 1990; Snyder 1980; Vergados 2014a; broader scope in Ahl 1985; Belayache et al. 2005; Chambon & Lüdi 1991; Kwapisz et al. 2013; Mitsis & Ziogas 2016; Nifadopoulos 2003.

In Sluiter’s analysis etymologies function as bridges linking concepts and ideas through similarities in sound.³⁸²

Vergados builds on this theory to argue that Hesiodic etymologies allow the poets and their audiences to reflect on language “in analogical or associative terms, rather than according to strict laws.”³⁸³ In contrast to the study of etymological relationships in contemporary linguistic systems, Vergados argues that folk etymology

thrives in the tension between the apparent arbitrariness of the linguistic sign and the need of language users to detect significance in the words they use. Etymological wordplay and puns activate the sonic aspect of language and forge links on the basis of the sound in its aesthetic rather than semantic dimension.³⁸⁴

These aesthetic connections allow poets and philosophers to explore aspects of myth, character, and narrative. These connections do not preclude ancient etymologists from perceiving language as a system, but rather reveal an “origin conceived not in the historic dimension but as a *relational* mode.”³⁸⁵ Vergados goes on to argue that poets use etymologies in similar ways to genealogies or etiological narratives to manipulate time, saying that

on the basis of similarities of sounds (perceived synchronically), conceptual links are established between two or more ideas on the synchronic plane which are then often recast as ‘historical’ relations on the diachronic plane.³⁸⁶

³⁸² Sluiter 2015, 903.

³⁸³ Vergados 2020, 9.

³⁸⁴ Vergados 2020, 10, citing Baldinger 1973, 18. Vergados (2020, 12) strongly rejects the terms ‘folk etymology’ and ‘popular etymology,’ arguing that they “obfuscate something fundamental: namely, that these etymologies are created not by illiterate folk but by language users who reflect on language in analogical or associative terms, rather than according to strict laws.” Vergados argues that Hesiod is a single, literate author and literacy is a key to his claims about the legitimacy of this author’s linguistic philosophical argumentation. This debate extends beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I employ the term ‘folk etymology’ partially with the hypothesis that semi- or fully illiterate societies can and do engage in philosophical inquiry, word-play, and linguistic reflection. See also Zamboni 1976, 102–4; Olschansky 1996, 154–60.

³⁸⁵ Vergados 2020, 10–11 quoting Zumthor 1975, 147.

³⁸⁶ Vergados 2020, 10. Vergados draws on Robert Fowler’s analysis of genealogies that “recast synchronic concerns in diachronic terms (e.g., by supporting an aristocratic family’s claim to power through the invention of a divine or heroic ancestor).”

In what follows, I argue that in both the Hesiodic corpus and Plato's dialogues etymologies are used to create and play with meaning in this way.

The description of Aphrodite's birth in *Theogony* 176-200 illustrates how Hesiodic poetry employs etymologies as *denkform*.³⁸⁷ Aphrodite's birth occurs as one of the outcomes of Kronos castrating his father, Ouranos. When Kronos casts his father's genitals (μήδεα) into the air the drops of blood that fall upon the land impregnate Gaia and produce several kinds of offspring.³⁸⁸ The genitals finally fall into the waters of the sea and after a while Aphrodite is born from a white foam (λευκὸς ἀφρός). She travels in the sea from Cythera to sea-girt Cyprus. This etiology explains Aphrodite's name and epithets. The poet explains that

τὴν δ' Ἀφροδίτην
 ἀφρογενέα τε θεὰν καὶ εὐστέφανον Κυθήρειαν
 κικλήσκουσι θεοὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες, οὐνεκ' ἐν ἀφρῶ
 θρέφθη· ἀτὰρ Κυθήρειαν, ὅτι προσέκυρσε Κυθήροις·
 Κυπρογενέα δ', ὅτι γέντο πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ·
 ἦ δὲ φιλομμηδέα, ὅτι μηδέων ἐξεφαάνθη.

gods and men call her 'Aphrodite,' the foam-born goddess and the well-garlanded 'Cytherea,' since she grew in foam, and also 'Cytherea,' since she arrived at Cythera, and 'Cyprogenes' since she was born on sea-girt Cyprus and 'genial' since she came forth from the genitals.³⁸⁹

Aphrodite's name and epithets are thus explained in four ways. She is named after the "foam" (ἀφρός) from which she is born. ἀφρός, however, translates to both sea-foam and semen,³⁹⁰ a dual meaning that combines Aphrodite's origin from Ouranos' genitals with the sea in which she is born. Moreover, her epithet "smile-loving," φιλομμηδέα, is said to come about because she is born from genitals (μηδός). This links the meaning of the end of Aphrodite's epithet, derived

³⁸⁷ Boedeker (1974, 6-14) discusses the etymologies in Aphrodite's origin story.

³⁸⁸ The drops of blood sire the Erinyes, Giants, and Melian Nymphs. This account contrasts Aphrodite's parentage of Zeus and Dione in the *Iliad*. In Plato's *Symposium* (180e) Pausanias presents the argument that these two origin stories refer to separate versions of Aphrodite: Aphrodite Ourania, the Heavenly Aphrodite, and Aphrodite Pandemos, Aphrodite common to all the people.

³⁸⁹ Hesiod, *Th.* 195-200.

³⁹⁰ s.v. ἀφρός LSJ A.2.

from μειδάω, “to smile,” with the similar-sounding μῆδος, “genitals.” There is a further pun with μῆδεα, meaning “counsels, plans, arts” and thus linking Aphrodite to “crooked-cunning” Kronos and Zeus.³⁹¹ Finally, Aphrodite’s etiology also introduces a geographical connection to two places to explain Aphrodite’s two epithets, Cytherea and Cyprogenes. On this account, she is Cyprogenes, “Cyprus-born,” since that is where she was born, but she is also Cytherea, because that is where she arrives after a lengthy sea journey.³⁹² Aphrodite’s etiology demonstrates how folk etymologies can connect proper names and epithets with key features of an etiology and key geographical places.

Plato employs folk etymologies similarly. Most famously Plato plays with folk etymologies in the *Cratylus*.³⁹³ Additionally, Plato uses etymologies in Timaeus’ cosmogony.³⁹⁴ Further, in the myth of Atlantis, folk etymologies form a link between the fictional names in the myth and both fictional and real geography. The names of the earliest generation of Atlanteans relate etymologically to the places they inhabit. Poseidon names each of his sons, with the eldest son providing

τοῦτο οὐ δὴ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ νῆσος τό τε πέλαγος ἔσχεν ἐπωνυμίαν, Ἀτλαντικὸν λεχθέν, ὅτι τοῦνομι’ ἦν τῷ πρώτῳ βασιλεύσαντι τότε Ἄτλας.

the name from which the entire island and its surrounding sea derive their names, because he was the first of the kings of that time. **His name was Atlas; the island is called Atlantis and the sea Atlantic after him.**³⁹⁵

Moreover, the name Atlas recalls the Atlas of Hesiod’s *Theogony*. There Atlas is the son of the Titan Iapetus and the Oceanid Clymene and the brother of Menoetius, Prometheus, and

³⁹¹ *s.v.* μῆδεα LSJ.

³⁹² Morgan 1978 discusses later etymologies.

³⁹³ See Vergados 2020, 253-288 on Plato’s engagement with Hesiod in the *Cratylus*.

³⁹⁴ For example, Plato, *Tim.* 43c5-7A full exploration of the etymologies in Timaeus’ speech is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

³⁹⁵ Plato, *Crit.* 114a.

Epimetheus. In contrast to the account in the *Critias*, this Hesiodic myth features strife between the gods, with all the brothers joining the revolt against Zeus. Zeus responds by throwing Menoetius into Erebus after striking him with a thunderbolt. Zeus also has an eagle eternally eat Prometheus' liver while keeping him in bondage, and delivers Pandora to Epimetheus as a punishment. Atlas' epithet is "strong-hearted" (κρατερόφρων). According to Zeus' punishment

Ἄτλας δ' οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχει κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης
 πείρασιν ἐν γαίης, πρόπαρ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων,
 ἔστηώς κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ἀκαμάτησι χέρεσσιν·
 ταύτην γάρ οἱ μοῖραν ἐδάσσατο μητίετα Ζεύς.

by mighty necessity Atlas holds up the broad sky with his head and tireless hands, standing at the limits of the earth in front of the clear-voiced Hesperides; for this is the portion which the counselor Zeus assigned him.

This Atlas is characterized much differently than the one in the *Critias*. In the *Theogony* "apparaît-il comme le symbole à la fois de la subversion et de la violence."³⁹⁶ By contrast, Plato's characterization of peace amongst the gods in place of conflict aligns with the overall project of the myth of Atlantis. Plato's use of the name Atlas, however, builds in a geographic allusion. In the *Theogony*, Atlas ends up placed at the limits of the earth, close to the Hesperides, which mirrors the location of Plato's Atlantis.³⁹⁷

In a less straightforward manner, the region of Gadira derives its name from Eumelos, whose name is Gadirus in the language of Atlantis.³⁹⁸ Critias explains that

τῶ δὲ διδύμῳ μετ' ἐκεῖνόν τε γενομένῳ, λῆξιεν δὲ ἄκρας τῆς νήσου πρὸς Ἡρακλείων
 στηλῶν εἰληχότι ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς Γαδειρικῆς νῦν χώρας κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν τόπον ὀνομαζομένης,
 Ἑλληνιστὶ μὲν Εὐμηλον, τὸ δ' ἐπιχώριον Γάδειρον, ὅπερ τ' ἦν ἐπὶ κλην ταύτη ὄνομα
 ἂν παράσχοι

To the twin born after that one who had received as his portion the cap of the island facing the pillars of Heracles opposite what is now called the territory of Gadira after this

³⁹⁶ Brisson 1970, 422.

³⁹⁷ Brisson 1970, 422.

³⁹⁸ Plato, *Crit.* 114b-c. Brisson 1970, 422-24 demonstrates how the names of the rest of the brothers describe the traits that make the island and citizens of Atlantis prosperous.

region, he gave the name that **translates in Greek as Eumelos, but in the language of Atlantis, it is Gadirus.** It would seem that **he gave his name to the region of Cadiz.**³⁹⁹

The island of Atlantis is fictional,⁴⁰⁰ but Gadir, i.e., Cadiz, located on the southwest coast of Spain west of the so-called Pillars of Hercules, is not. The derivation of the name Atlantis from the first king, Atlas, uses the technique of folk etymology to increase the audience's trust in this account. This trust is further built through the folk etymology for Gadir. This is one example of the way that Plato uses techniques from the poetic tradition in order to disrupt the canonical origin stories such as those found in the Hesiodic opus. In this way Plato behaves exactly as a Hesiodic poet would.

Finally, Plato employs references to song contests to demonstrate a genealogical connection through the chain of transmission of the myth of Atlantis. Plato embeds his own lineage into the framing narrative that describes how Critias comes to learn the myth of Atlantis. Critias first learns this story at another distinctly Athenian festival, the Apaturia. During the day of Koureotis, at the children's portion of the festival, fathers set up contests in the recitation of epic poetry (ἄθλα γὰρ ἡμῖν οἱ πατέρες ἔθεσαν ῥαψωδίας).⁴⁰¹ Critias notes that Solon's poems were especially popular for children to chant because they were new at the time. This festival sets the scene for Critias' recollection of his grandfather's telling of how Solon learned the story of Atlantis. In this memory, Critias at 10 years old was playing at a game of being a rhapsode.

On the Koureotis day, young men (*kouroi*) were initiated into their clans. As Pender notes, the Apaturia celebrated the 'Brotherhoods' (*Phratriai*) of Athenian society, communities which claimed long descent from a common male ancestor. Children's Day was the time when Athenian children were inscribed on the register of their clan and so introduced to their *Phratria*. Critias remembers the 'usual ceremonies'—the competitions in reciting traditional poetry—by which the Athenians sought to preserve their literary inheritance

³⁹⁹ Plato, *Crit.* 113a-b. Εὐμηλος: Eumelus, son of Admetus and Alcestis, *Il.* 23.288.

⁴⁰⁰ Sorry to disappoint. There may have been an island located in this area that disappeared due to sea-level rise.

⁴⁰¹ Plato, *Tim.* 21b.

alongside their family lines. Since the Critias portrayed here is Plato's own great-grandfather, Plato is here preserving and paying respect to his own noble family line, reaching back to Solon and beyond.⁴⁰²

There are multiple layers of genealogical connections at play. Plato employs a festival setting for Critias' recollection that covertly celebrates his own lineage and demonstrates the cultural importance of reinscribing these ancestral connections in Plato's Athens.

Plato thus presents both a novel cosmogony and a novel etiology for Athens in the *Timaeus-Critias* dialogues. In this chapter, I have demonstrated how Plato engages in a constructive competition with the poetic tradition in order to both make his new origin stories more compelling and to place them within the canonical tradition. The framing narrative of the myth of Atlantis makes a speech competition into a particularly Athenian song contest. The festival settings in the dialogue, along with the use of etymologies and genealogies in this myth, further allows Plato to present the myth of Atlantis as a cousin of the myths found in the Hesiodic corpus. Further, the *Certamen* of Homer and Hesiod provides evidence for how Plato and his contemporaries characterized Hesiod as a persona representing peace, agriculture, and wisdom, in contrast to Homer's representation of warfare, seafaring, and popular entertainment. This division maps onto primeval Athens and Atlantis respectively.

In the second part of this chapter, I investigate how Plato employs the themes of written versus oral traditions for transmitting knowledge in the myth of Atlantis and its framing narrative. I demonstrate the how both oral and written modes play distinct roles within Critias' explanation to Socrates, Timaeus, and Hermocrates for how this story comes to be. At first, it

⁴⁰² Pender (2010, 222) identifies that "in these various ways the prologue of *Timaeus* brings into sharp focus the issues of family tradition, genealogies, and the transmission of cultural knowledge from the distant past to the present. The lineage motif therefore not only sets the scene for a new account of the divine birth of the universe but also indicates that Plato as author is keenly aware of his own myth's place in the Greek genealogy of creation stories." See also Pender 2007.

appears that oral modes of transmitting stories are inferior to written ones, but this is complicated by the dialogues themselves. Indeed, Plato situates the myth of Atlantis as if it were an oral text in his written dialogues. Moreover, I demonstrate how mythical written texts play a key role in oral traditions of storytelling. Ultimately, the mediums through which Plato's pseudo-myth come down through generations are shown to be fragile.

Chapter 3. ORAL TEXTS AND THE MATERIALITY OF MEMORY IN PLATO'S ATLANTIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous section of this chapter, I demonstrated how Plato sets up the story of Atlantis in relation to the Hesiodic poetic corpus. He makes this “myth” simultaneously a descendant of the panhellenic tradition, and fictionally, an ancestor and progenitor of the same tradition. In this section, I analyze the themes of written vs. oral modes of transmitting stories across time in the framing narrative of the myth of Atlantis and in other oral traditions. In this section, I zoom out from considering the reception of Hesiod in the *Timaeus-Critias* to investigate the relationship between the origin stories of oral poetry more generally and Plato's framing narrative for the Atlantis myth.

Plato presents the myth of Atlantis and its framing narratives in the form of a written philosophical dialogue. He writes the Atlantis narrative in the first two sections of a trilogy of philosophical dialogues, of which the third section was either lost or never completed. Building on Jonathan Ready's theoretical framework for entextualization as applied to Homeric texts, I demonstrate that Plato imitates the entextualization of an oral poetic performance in Critias' speech.⁴⁰³ Developed by linguistic anthropologists, entextualization is “the process of rendering a given instance of discourse a text, detachable from its local context.”⁴⁰⁴ It is “what performers engage in when they give an utterance the ability to endure.”⁴⁰⁵ Within the framing narrative and

⁴⁰³ Ready 2019.

⁴⁰⁴ Urban 1996, 21; Ready 2019, 17 cf. Bauman and Briggs 1990, 73; Wilce 2009a, 32–3.

⁴⁰⁵ Ready 2019, 17. As Ready notes, “Entextualization differs from textualization: the latter refers to the recording of the verbal component of an oral text in written form.” As Barber (2005, 267) observes some scholars, e.g., A.-L. Siikala 2000b; McCall 2011: 23, conflate the terms.

the “myth” of Atlantis itself, Plato sets up a competitive dichotomy between written and oral sources for the transmission of information across time. These two media are compared, and to a certain extent judged, in relation to memory and age. Age is a key metric in the competition Plato establishes because older sources of information are treated as being closer to the truth for origin stories. Memory, on the other hand, relates to the security of transmission over time and therefore the durability of the tale.

The oral poetry assigned to Hesiod and Homer was among the oldest sources of information available to Plato’s contemporaries. In the Atlantis framing narrative, however, it becomes comparatively young. As noted above (Ch. 2), Plato and his contemporaries would have encountered the poetry of Hesiod in a variety of performances, and thus, even if it was not considered “oral poetry” in the same way that academics of the twenty-first century use that term, it would still have fallen into the camp of “oral” sources in contrast to “written” sources. Accordingly, Plato places the narrative of Atlantis in competition with Hesiodic poetry in relation to the medium of transmission: that is, written in contrast to the inferior format of oral performance for Homeric and Hesiodic poetry.

At first glance, it appears both that Plato aligns the myth of Atlantis with written sources and that these sources are better at transmitting information over a much longer extent of time and preserving information with greater stability and security compared with oral sources. Historically, oral sources precede the development of writing and, thus, tend to be older than written sources. However, Plato’s presentation of the Atlantis narrative complicates the conclusion that written sources are the clear winner in this contest. Through a comparative

analysis of etiologies in other oral traditions that coincide with the development of widely literate cultures, I demonstrate that mythical written texts frequently feature in the backstory for the transmission of epic poetry. A written text provides authority in these stories, but frequently relies on oral recitations to be transmitted through time. The loss of the written texts in these myths demonstrates how material properties impact the preservation of archives.

The material of written sources changes the properties of their permanence; a letter written on a fired clay tablet has less permanence than laws engraved in stone. Likewise, a story told and re-told by a single person has a very different potential for permanence than the repertoire recited at annual panhellenic festivals. The audience is, of course, qualitatively and quantitatively different in each of these examples: from a private letter to publicly erected legal inscriptions, from private storytelling to public performances. Audience is also a key factor in the permanence of information transmitted across time.

3.2 ENTEXTUALIZATION & OBJECT-LIKE ORAL TEXTS

Below I argue that Plato positions the myth of Atlantis as if it were an oral text. Before turning to Critias' framing narrative itself, I first outline the features that demarcate an oral text.⁴⁰⁶ An oral text differs from other kinds of speech in terms of its performance and durability. Richard Bauman defines performance as “a mode of spoken verbal communication [that] consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence.”⁴⁰⁷ An oral text is not the same as the ephemeral performance, or a transcript of that

⁴⁰⁶ The term ‘oral text’ as defined below is used by scholars from a range of disciplines including Barber 2007, 1–2; cf. Doane 1991, 78; Sears and Flueckiger 1991, 1–2; Elman 1999, 76–7, 92–3; Ramanujan 1999, 535; Joubert 2004, 6 n. 5, 89–90; Blackburn 2005; Assmann 2006, 42, 121; Horsley 2010, 96; Thatcher 2011, 38–41; Müller 2012, 298 n. 8; Reichl 2015, 28, 34–5; *pace* Ong 1990: 7, 10; Ready 2019.

⁴⁰⁷ Bauman 1977, 11. Cf 2004, 9.

performance. The anthropologist Karin Barber explains the distinction between an oral text and a performance, saying:

In oral traditions, the co-presence of performance and text is of course more difficult to see, because there is no visible, tangible document to contrast with the evanescent utterance. Nonetheless, it is clear that what happens in most oral performances is not pure instantaneity, pure evanescence, pure emergence and disappearance into the vanishing moment. The exact contrary is usually the case. There is a performance—but it is a performance *of* something. Something identifiable is understood to have pre-existed the moment of utterance. Or, alternatively, something is understood to be constituted in utterance that can be abstracted or detached from the immediate context and re-embodied in a future performance. Even if the only place this “something” can be held to exist is in people’s minds or memories, still it is surely distinguishable from immediate, and immediately-disappearing, actual utterance. It can be referred to. People may speak of “the story of Sunjata” or “the praises of Dingaan” rather than speaking of a particular narrator’s or praise-singer’s performance on a particular occasion. And this capacity to be abstracted, to transcend the moment, and to be identified independently of particular instantiations, is the whole point of oral traditions. They are “traditions” because they are known to be shared and to have been handed down; they can be shared and handed down because they have been constituted precisely in order to be detachable from the immediate context, and capable of being transmitted in time and disseminated in space. Creators and transmitters of oral genres use every resource at their disposal to consolidate utterance into quasi-autonomous texts.⁴⁰⁸

As defined above, entextulization is a process that storytellers engage in to produce a text that is semi-autonomous, in other words a tale that “is felt to exist independently of any one enunciation.”⁴⁰⁹ Oral performers craft something “that is woven together in order to attract attention and outlast the moment.”⁴¹⁰

In Bauman’s formulation in order to become an oral text an utterance needs to be “bounded off to a degree from its discursive surround (its co-text), internally cohesive (tied together by various formal devices), and coherent (semantically intelligible).”⁴¹¹ A bounded

⁴⁰⁸ Barber 2005, 265–6, emphasis in original ≈ 2003, 325, cited by Ready 2019, 17.

⁴⁰⁹ Ready 2019, 17. Cf. Finnegan 2011, 162, 2015, 102–3; Frog 2011, 10–11. Some scholars, such as Pietro Pucci (1987, 27, 30; cf. Tsagalis 2004, 11) describe this process as oral performers “writing” in Jacques Derrida’s sense. Others, such as Haun Saussy (1996, e.g. 307), describe this process as “oral writing” in order to speak of oral performers producing texts. In contrast, Barber argues that “Writing is not what confers textuality” (2007, 1; cf. 101; Tsagalis 2011, 211). Rather, oral performers produce oral texts.

⁴¹⁰ Barber 2007, 2.

⁴¹¹ Bauman 2004, 4.

utterance has a beginning and ending demarcated by culturally understandable performative language and codes.⁴¹² An utterance is cohesive when it holds together and has a discrete identity.⁴¹³ It is coherent when it is understandable to its intended audience.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, Barber highlights how performers frame and interact with their utterances through quotation and exegesis in order to show how they have endured through time and to set them up for future permanence.⁴¹⁵ An example of casting a verbal act as a quotation is to use phrases such as “As the elders say” or “Listen/how this hero must be lamented.”⁴¹⁶ A quotation introduces a spatial dimension to the oral text where “presenting text as a quotation means insisting that it has an independent identity outside the context of utterance . . . Quotation implies that what is quoted was already there before the present speaker used it.”⁴¹⁷ This is to say that the utterance is portable. In temporal terms quotation “foreground[s] the perception that these words pre-existed their present moment of utterance and could also continue to exist after it.”⁴¹⁸ Exegesis, which

⁴¹²As Ready (2019, 18 citing Bauman 1977, 16 and 2004, 148) notes, “special codes; figurative language; parallelism; special paralinguistic features; special formulas; appeal to tradition; and disclaimer of performance [...]—are perhaps the most obvious ways to signal a beginning because they by definition herald the beginning of a performance. Falling silent is an obvious way to signal the end [...], but performers can do so with any number of verbal cues.” Ready (2019, 23-25) elaborates on gestures as keys to the beginning, middle, and end of a performance. In his discussion of “Serbo Croatian women’s songs” from the nineteenth century Albert Lord (1995, 353-58) has a more restricted definition of textuality for each song where only a verse repeated with more or less the same words can be said to possess textuality. He does find some songs “whose textuality embraces the whole song” (56), but only those that are mostly repeated in various performances.

⁴¹³ Ready 2019, 18. Cf. Scheub 2002, 95.

⁴¹⁴ According to Seitel (2012, 83) “coherence [...] is created through understandings shared by performer and audience. These shared understandings consist of, among other things, indexical grounding, or references to the local cultural universe, and intertextuality, or references to related texts in that universe.” Thus, by filling in gaps the audience establishes a text’s coherence. Seitel argues that oral texts depend on their audience and therefore have “non-autonomy.” Ready 2019, 21 shifts the perspective to the performers and argues that “performers make an utterance coherent by only offering gaps that they assume their audience can fill in [...] or will not be bothered by if they remain.” Cf. Shuman 1986, 52, 72–3, 153, 170–2, Scheub 2002, 18; Scodel 2002, 64.

⁴¹⁵ Barber 2007, 77

⁴¹⁶ Barber 2007, 77.

⁴¹⁷ Barber 1999, 19. Citing *oriki*, Yoruba praise poetry, Barber (2007, 78–9, emphasis in the original) also demonstrates that “quotation also takes place *between* genres, when one genre incorporates chunks of other genres and subsumes them to its own project—but in such a way that they retain recognizable features. In this way the performer highlights them as a resource that already existed and was available for use when he/she undertook the performance.”

⁴¹⁸ Barber 2005, 268.

can take place either within the space of a given utterance, or as a form of explaining a different utterance, makes the oral text “the focus of sustained attention and discussion.”⁴¹⁹ Exegesis demonstrates that the oral text exists as an object for contemplation and analysis, which therefore shows how it endures in the world. Ready adds that “presenting the utterance as capable of enduring is one way to make it capable of enduring.”⁴²⁰

The result of entextualization is that an utterance exists differently in the world. It becomes a text. A key difference is the memorability, and therefore endurance. As Saussy puts it “oral tradition is an inscription on human minds,”⁴²¹ noting that “the more densely the text is packed with pattern, the more securely it takes up residence in the prepared mind.”⁴²² This quality of endurance beyond a single performer or performance relates to the oral text’s potential for retrieval. Jan Assmann links “the quality of textuality to the act of retrieval.”⁴²³ The oral text “is a retrieved communication, the recourse to a linguistic utterance through the hiatus of a temporal or a spatial distance.”⁴²⁴ Retrieval refers not to a repetition of mostly the same words, but rather the “deep structure,” i.e., “the stored deep meaning that is reproduced and filled out through improvisation.”⁴²⁵

As a result, an oral text “can acquire an object-like status.”⁴²⁶ Barber illustrates the practice of attaching oral texts to objects, noting that

oral texts in Africa are often actually attached to or secreted in material objects. The Luba *lukasa* board, Zulu bead messages, Dahomeyan *récales* or message-staffs, Asante *adinkra* symbols, gold weights and umbrella finials, and a host of other material

⁴¹⁹ Barber 2005, 272.

⁴²⁰ Ready 2019, 22.

⁴²¹ Saussy 2016, 159, cf. 59. Similarly, Jan-Dirk Müller (2012, 298–301) demonstrates how verse structure, rhyme, assonance, and the use of formulas make “oral texts more permanent” in medieval German literature (quotation from 300); cf. Assmann 2002, 241; Fabb 2015, 185–7.

⁴²² Saussy 2016, 158.

⁴²³ Assmann 2006, 105.

⁴²⁴ Assmann 2006, 106.

⁴²⁵ Assmann 2006, 108.

⁴²⁶ Ready 2019, 16; 31.

repositories and memory-prompts operate in different ways to transcend time, to fix or trap text in a material form.⁴²⁷

Ready demonstrates that the object-like status of oral texts crops up repeatedly in Homeric poems.⁴²⁸ He draws a further parallel with the alignment of utterance and objects in the oral performances of Gbaya tale-tellers in Cameroon.⁴²⁹ Moreover, Ready “connect[s] the objectification of utterances with the fact that characters envision songs and tales as preexisting entities that can be passed around and down. Both phenomena suggest the Homeric characters live in a world of enduring oral texts.”⁴³⁰ Oral texts are object-like in that they are handled and passed from person to person. Just like other objects which decay or can be broken, the object-like status of an oral text does not mean it lasts forever.⁴³¹

Returning to the *Timaeus-Critias*, I demonstrate how the framework of entextualization can be applied to Critias’ Atlantis tale. Of course, the *Timaeus-Critias* is a written text. However, in Critias’ speech Plato mimics the features of an oral text. Critias’ speeches include the features that demarcate entextualization: a clear beginning and end, coherence, cohesion, quotation, and exegesis. And therefore, the tale takes on an object-like status that allows it to obtain a certain degree of durability. Indeed, the whole framing narrative is an exegesis of the tale of Atlantis that makes the story the subject of sustained attention and examination. It is passed through various hands through retrieval of its deep structure. Even the fact that the story is told both in the

⁴²⁷ Barber 2007, 75-6.

⁴²⁸ Ready 2019, 16; 31, Similarly Worman 2002, 44–5. In contrast, Tsagalis (2004, 4) states that the noun *oidē* “is an action noun and therefore describes poetry not as something completed and stable, but as something in progress, . . . It consequently refers to something that is closer to activity and performance than to a text or an aesthetic object” (cf. Ford 1992, 15; Bakker 2013, 2; González 2013, 190). Ready 2019 (31–34) discusses the vast bibliography on this concept.

⁴²⁹ Citing Philp Noss (1970, 42) Ready (2019, 31) notes that in the formulaic introduction “Here it comes with a crash!” and conclusion, “My tale is set right under the *kolo* tree *gbat!*,” of these tales the story is likened to a heavy object. Similarly, Sophie McCall (2011, 26) demonstrates that “many First Nations [in the Americas] view their songs as cultural property that can be exchanged and traded as a form of wealth.”

⁴³⁰ Ready 2019, 34

⁴³¹ Ready 2019, 34.

Timaeus (20d–25d) and again in the *Critias* (108d–121c) shows how it continues to exist in an object-like status through the process of retrieval. This framing makes it all the more persuasive to view the framing narrative in relation to framing narratives for other oral poems. Before showing how Plato mimics entextualization in Critias’ speech, I first establish that a fictional written archive provides an authority for Critias’ fictional tale.

3.3 THE AUTHORITY OF WRITTEN ARCHIVES

The city of Atlantis is constructed in a series of concentric circles, and the narrative structure that Plato employs to describe how this story comes to be told on the eve of the Panathenaea is similarly constructed. As noted above, the story is first told in the *Timaeus* (20d–25d) and then repeated in the *Critias* (108d–121c). The framing narrative in which Critias explains how he came to learn the story has four sections in the *Timaeus*: Critias introduces the story in relation to Socrates’ speech the day before, then he explains how he learned the story as a child, before recounting how Solon learned the story from an Egyptian priest. After a brief recounting of the outline of the story, Critias concludes by reflecting on re-telling this story and his memory of it. In the *Critias*, there are six main sections: Timaeus’ prayer concluding his speech, the hand-over to Critias, Critias’ introduction to the Atlantis narrative, the description of proto-Athens, the description of proto-Atlantis, and finally, the story of Atlantis itself which breaks off before it gets to the main action of the tale.

In the framing narrative, Critias describes how he comes to learn the story of Atlantis through a chain of transmission that stretches back through his progenitors to Solon, and finally, to an Egyptian priest. Written records and literacy play a role in placing the story of Atlantis further back in time compared to the panhellenic mythological etiologies found in Hesiod’s

Theogony, among other texts. In Critias' telling, the Egyptian priest sets up a dichotomy between the Greeks who have cyclically lost the ability to read and write, and the Egyptians who have preserved written archives along with their literacy. The Egyptian priest tells Solon that “the things preserved here are said to be the oldest” (τὰνθάδε σφρζόμενα λέγεται παλαιότατα)⁴³²

because

ὄσα δὲ ἢ παρ' ὑμῖν ἢ τῆδε ἢ καὶ κατ' ἄλλον τόπον ὧν ἀκοῆ ἴσμεν, εἴ ποῦ τι καλὸν ἢ μέγα γέγονεν ἢ καὶ τινα διαφορὰν ἄλλην ἔχον, πάντα γεγραμμένα ἐκ παλαιοῦ τῆδ' ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς καὶ σεσωσμένα.

if anything beautiful or great or that also has something distinctive about it has come to pass somewhere, either near you or here or even in another region that we know by hearsay—all such things have been written down from olden times and preserved here in our temples.⁴³³

According to the priest, writing plays a factor in collecting these stories and preserving them.

The priest emphasizes the extent of time during which these stories are preserved, the diversity of subject matter, and the geographical extent covered in these archives.

The Greeks, in contrast, do not have the same unbroken chain of archival preservation and literacy. As the priest explains to Solon,

τὰ δὲ παρ' ὑμῖν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄρτι κατεσκευασμένα ἐκάστοτε τυγχάνει γράμμασι καὶ ἅπασιν ὁπόσων πόλεις δέονται, καὶ πάλιν δι' εἰωθότων ἐτῶν ὥσπερ νόσημα ἦκει φερόμενον αὐτοῖς ῥεῦμα οὐράνιον καὶ τοὺς ἀγραμμάτους τε καὶ ἀμούσους ἔλιπεν ὑμῶν, ὥστε πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἷον νέοι γίνεσθε, οὐδὲν εἰδότες οὔτε τῶν τῆδε οὔτε τῶν παρ' ὑμῖν, ὅσα ἦν ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς χρόνοις.

it happens that at any given time your lands and those of other people **have only just been equipped with writing and all the things** that cities need; and after the usual span of years, the heavenly stream comes back again like a plague to sweep your people away, and **leaves only the illiterate and uneducated among you, so that all over again from the beginning, you become young, as it were, knowing nothing either of things here or of whatever was in your own land in olden times.**⁴³⁴

⁴³³ Plato, *Tim.* 23a.

⁴³⁴ Plato, *Tim.* 23a-b.

The difference between the Egyptians and other groups of people is primarily climatological.⁴³⁵

A series of floods and fires wiped out successive Greek civilizations, leaving behind people without the leisure to gain the literacy needed to write, archive, and read their own histories.

Compared to the Egyptians, others have only recently acquired the technology of writing.⁴³⁶

This destruction continues cyclically. In fact, the priest tells Solon that the myths that he believes to be the oldest describe these cyclical destructions. After he tells Solon that all Greeks are merely children, he explains that the Greek story of the god Phaethon, who burns the earth because he is unable to drive his father's chariot along its path and dies when struck by a thunderbolt, "is told in such a way that it has the figure of a story" (τοῦτο μύθου μὲν σχῆμα ἔχον λέγεται).⁴³⁷ The *truth* (ἀληθές), however, is a matter of forest fires that destroy the lives and livelihoods of peoples who dwell on mountains.⁴³⁸ Likewise, Solon relates the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha surviving the great flood, thinking that this is one of the oldest stories known to mankind.⁴³⁹ But the priest tells him,

τὰ τὰ γοῦν νυνδὴ γενεαλογηθέντα, ὃ Σόλων, περὶ τῶν παρ' ὑμῖν ἃ διήλθες, **παίδων βραχύ τι διαφέρει μύθων**, οἱ πρῶτον μὲν ἓνα γῆς κατακλυσμὸν μέμνησθε πολλῶν ἔμπροσθεν γεγονότων, ἔτι δὲ τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ ἄριστον γένος ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ

⁴³⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 22c. The Egyptian priest tells Solon that "many destructions of mankind in many ways have come to be and will be—the greatest by fire and water, but different and lesser ones by thousands of other means" (πολλὰ κατὰ πολλὰ φθοραὶ γέγονασιν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἔσονται, πυρὶ μὲν καὶ ὕδατι μέγιστα, μυρίοις δὲ ἄλλοις ἕτεροι βραχύτεραι). The Egyptians, however, are protected from fires and floods by the Nile because (Plato, *Tim.* 22e) "along this place here, neither then nor at any other time does water stream down on the fields from above: on the contrary, it all tends by nature to come up from below" (κατὰ δὲ τήνδε χώραν οὔτε τότε οὔτε ἄλλοτε ἄνωθεν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρούρας ὕδωρ ἐπιρρεῖ, τὸ δ' ἐναντίον κάτωθεν πᾶν ἐπανιέναι πέφυκεν).

⁴³⁶ Plato draws a stark contrast with the abundance of the lands of ancient Athens and Atlantis (*Tim.* 111b-c). This abundance allows for literacy, as evinced by the laws of Poseidon cut into *oreichalkos* and displayed in the sanctuary to Poseidon in the middle of the island (119c-d).

⁴³⁷ Plato, *Tim.* 23c.

⁴³⁸ Plato, *Tim.* 23c-e.

⁴³⁹ Plato, *Tim.* 22a-b: "And once when he wished to lead them on to give speeches about antiquities, he attempted to speak of the most ancient things of all in the accounts given here—about Phoroneus, said to be the first man, and about Niobe—and he proceeded to tell stories about Deucalion and Pyrrha after the flood, and about how they survived it, and to give the genealogy of their descendants; and by recalling how many years it took for the events he was speaking about, he tried to number the periods of time" (καὶ ποτε προαγαγεῖν βουλευθεὶς αὐτοὺς περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων εἰς λόγους, τῶν τῆδε τὰ ἀρχαιότατα λέγειν ἐπιχειρεῖν, περὶ Φορωνέως τε τοῦ πρώτου λεχθέντος καὶ Νιόβης, καὶ μετὰ τὸν κατακλυσμὸν αὐτῶν περὶ Δευκαλίωνος καὶ Πύρρας ὡς διεγένοντο μυθολογεῖν, καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν γενεαλογεῖν, καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐτῶν ὅσα ἦν οἷς ἔλεγεν πειρᾶσθαι διαμνημονεύων τοὺς χρόνους ἀριθμεῖν).

παρ' ὑμῖν οὐκ ἴστε γεγονός, ἐξ ὧν σύ τε καὶ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἔστιν τὰ νῦν ὑμῶν, περιλειφθέντος ποτὲ σπέρματος βραχέος, ἀλλ' ὑμᾶς λέληθεν διὰ τὸ τοὺς περιγενομένους ἐπὶ πολλὰς γενεὰς γράμμασιν τελευτᾶν ἀφώνους.

At any rate, Solon, the genealogies you went through just now about the events in your land **aren't much different from children's stories**. You all remember only one flooding of the earth, whereas many have come to pass before this and furthermore, you don't know that the most beautiful and best race among men was born in the place where you live, from whose little bit of seed that was left over there exists both you and the entire city that is now yours; **but you've forgotten all this because for many generations the survivors met their end without giving voice to themselves in writing.**⁴⁴⁰

The Egyptian priest replaces the etiologies that Solon recounts with the myth of proto-Athens and Atlantis. The reason that the Athenians themselves do not know this important story about their own origins is due to the loss of literacy. According to the priest, the few survivors of the fires and floods died without writing about themselves. The age of the Greeks' etiologies is much younger, therefore, than the Egyptians' records. The Egyptians have archives of this story “written down in the sacred texts” (ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν).⁴⁴¹

The Egyptian priest emphasizes these written records again in his introduction to the story that best describes the power of proto-Athens:

πολλὰ μὲν οὖν ὑμῶν καὶ μεγάλα ἔργα τῆς πόλεως τῆδε γεγραμμένα θαυμάζεται, πάντων μὴν ἐν ὑπερέχει μεγέθει καὶ ἀρετῇ: λέγει γὰρ τὰ γεγραμμένα ὅσην ἡ πόλις ὑμῶν ἔπαυσέν ποτε δύναμιν ὕβρει πορευομένην ἅμα ἐπὶ πᾶσαν Εὐρώπην καὶ Ἀσίαν, ἔξωθεν ὀρμηθεῖσαν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀτλαντικοῦ πελάγους.

Many and great are the deeds of your city that are written down here and that strike people with wonder, yet there is one that rises above them all in magnitude and virtue; **for our writings tell of how great a power your city once stopped**, which, in its insolence, was advancing against all of Europe together with Asia, having set out from somewhere far out in the Atlantic Ocean.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ Plato, *Tim.* 23b-c.

⁴⁴¹ Plato, *Tim.* 23e.

⁴⁴² Plato, *Tim.* 24d-e.

The priest claims that the Egyptians have a large and varied archive of writings (τὰ γεγραμμένα) about the ancient Athenians. Out of this written archive, the story of Athens' battle with Atlantis rises to the top. Critias later refers to the proto-Athenians as revealed “by the oracular voice of the sacred texts” (ἢ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων φήμη).⁴⁴³

Likewise, Critias emphasizes that written sources play a key role in the transmission of this story from the Egyptians via Solon and into his own possession. These written sources give more credibility to Critias' tale. They augment the truth quality applied to this fiction. As noted above, Critias anticipates that his audience will question the truth of his tale because of the Greek names that they will hear.⁴⁴⁴ To counter this possible threat to credibility, Critias explains that the Egyptians translated these names into their language and were the first to record them (γραψαμένους). Solon in turn recovers the meaning of these names and then records (ἀπεγράφετο) his translation. In fact, Critias has physical proof. His grandfather had these very manuscripts and he studied them (διαμεμελέτηται) as a boy.⁴⁴⁵

Critias thus employs references to written artifacts as a rhetorical strategy, to bolster the credibility of his story. In this way, written sources, and the history of literacy as a means of transmitting information, are a key factor in the backstory of the myth of Atlantis. On first glance, therefore, it appears that Plato places oral storytelling, as a means of information transmission over time, firmly in second place compared to writing. A close reading of the *Timaeus-Critias*, however, demonstrates that speech is just as important as writing in how the story of Atlantis is actually transmitted from the past to the future. In fact, the only way that any of the characters in the fictional narrative come to learn the story of Atlantis in the multi-layered

⁴⁴³ Plato, *Tim.* 27b.

⁴⁴⁴ Plato, *Crit.* 113a-b.

⁴⁴⁵ Plato, *Crit.* 113a-b. Plato (*Phaedrus* 228b) uses a version of this verb to describe Phaedrus practicing a speech: “He was going outside the walls to practice it” (ἐπορεύετο δ’ ἐκτὸς τείχους ἵνα μελετῶη).

backstory is through hearing the story, not reading it. Oral retellings provide durability in the framing narrative.

Returning to the entextualization framework discussed above, I argue that one way Plato sets Critias' narrative up as an oral text is through the technique of quotation.⁴⁴⁶ He does this by linking the story of Atlantis to “hearsay” (ἀκοή) frequently throughout the dialogues. It is through hearsay that the Egyptians come to know the information that they then preserve in writing.⁴⁴⁷ This is an account that “comes from old hearsay” (ἐκ παλαιᾶς ἀκοῆς).⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, the story comes from the Egyptians' archives and is “derived from ancient hearsay” (δι' ἀρχαίαν ἀκοήν).⁴⁴⁹ Indeed, the Egyptians claim to preserve a story that occurred 9,000 years ago, though it has been in written archives for only 8,000 years, leaving a 1,000 year gap for oral transmission of this tale.⁴⁵⁰ Whereas written archives are linked to the truth status and credibility of the account, reciting and hearing the story is linked with learning and memory. Quotation, therefore, makes the text portable.

Storytelling and hearsay as a means for transmitting the story comes to the fore in Critias' description of how the myth of Atlantis was transmitted throughout his family's generations. He describes how

⁴⁴⁶ See section 2.2.2 above.

⁴⁴⁷ Plato, *Tim.* 23a.

⁴⁴⁸ Plato, *Tim.* 20d. The myth of Atlantis is “an account most strange—and yet altogether true, as Solon, the wisest of the Seven, **once claimed**” (ὄγου μάλα μὲν ἀτόπου, παντάπασί γε μὴν ἀληθοῦς, ὡς ὁ τῶν ἑπτὰ σοφώτατος Σόλων **ποτ' ἔφη**; Plato, *Tim.* 20 d-e). Socrates asks Critias what sort of story this is “according to the hearsay from Solon” (κατὰ τὴν Σόλωνος ἀκοήν). In this same line, Socrates asks whether this deed was **just spoken of** or actually done. (ἀλλὰ δὴ ποῖον ἔργον τοῦτο Κριτίας **οὐ λεγόμενον μὲν**, ὡς δὲ πραχθὲν ὄντως ὑπὸ τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως ἀρχαῖον διηγείτο; Plato, *Tim.* 21a). See also Plato, *Tim.* 26a.

⁴⁴⁹ Plato, *Tim.* 23a.

⁴⁵⁰ Plato, *Tim.* 23e. Critias is also not consistent across the two dialogues, *cf.* 108e. See Gill 2017, 136, and Hall (forthcoming), who notes that “the priest fails to acknowledge that this means that Egyptian written records were not being made at the time that the Athenian utopia flourished; anything he says about it, the reader must assume, will have depended on oral tradition over the centuries between 9,000 and 8,000 years previously [...] its memory therefore did need to be preserved orally for nearly a millennium before being recorded on Egyptian temple walls, and there can have been no Atlantean evidence since it had disappeared entirely (108e).”

ἦν μὲν οὖν οἰκεῖος καὶ σφόδρα φίλος ἡμῖν Δρωπίδου τοῦ προπάππου, καθάπερ λέγει πολλαχοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ ποιήσει: πρὸς δὲ Κριτίαν τὸν ἡμέτερον πάππον εἶπεν, ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευεν αὐτὸν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ γέρων, ὅτι μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστά τῆσδ' εἶη παλαιὰ ἔργα τῆς πόλεως ὑπὸ χρόνου καὶ φθορᾶς ἀνθρώπων ἠφανισμένα, πάντων δὲ ἐν μέγιστον, οὗ νῦν ἐπιμνησθεῖσιν πρέπον ἂν ἡμῖν εἶη σοὶ τε ἀποδοῦναι χάριν καὶ τὴν θεὸν ἅμα ἐν τῇ πανηγύρει δικαίως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς οἶόνπερ ὑμνοῦντας ἐγκωμιάζειν.

Solon was a relative and really close friend of our great-grandfather Dropides—just as he himself often says in his poetry; and Dropides **told** our grandfather Critias, as the man **in turn related to us from memory**, that great and wonderous were the old deeds of this city here, deeds that have disappeared as a result of time and the destruction of mankind; but one was the greatest of them all—a deed that **would be fitting for us to remember** now, so as to render our debt of thanks to you and at the same time **to praise the goddess on her feast-day by singing**, as it were, in a manner both just and true.⁴⁵¹

That is, Critias' relatives learned this story through it being told (εἶπεν) and through it being related from memory (ἀπεμνημόνευεν). Solon told the story to Dropides who in turn related the story from memory. The dramatic setting of this dialogue, of course, is the last layer in this onion of layered tellings and re-tellings. Critias states, "I shall proclaim it—having heard an old account from a man not young" (ἐγὼ φράσω, παλαιὸν ἀκηκοὼς λόγον οὐ νέου ἀνδρός).⁴⁵² Therefore, while the written text provides authority, it never becomes the main avenue for transmission.

3.4 THE MATERIALITY OF MEMORY

As I demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter (Ch. 2.1), the speeches that are performed are equated to songs performed at a festival song-contest praising Athena.⁴⁵³ Critias

⁴⁵¹ Plato *Tim.* 20e-21a. See also Plato, *Crit.* 108b-d.

⁴⁵² Plato, *Tim.* 21b. Likewise, Socrates requests Critias to produce this story in speech, saying, "**Say** from the beginning ... what **Solon went on to say** and how and from whom **he heard** these things held as true!" (λέγε ἐξ ἀρχῆς [...] τί τε καὶ πῶς καὶ παρὰ τίνων ὡς ἀληθῆ διακηκοὼς ἔλεγεν ὁ Σόλων'; Plato, *Tim.* 21d).

⁴⁵³ Plato *Tim.* 21a, 27a. Moreover, Plato employs the image of another cultural area [arena?] for speech contests in the *Timaeus-Critias*, the lawcourt. At *Tim.* 27b Critias tells his interlocutors, "Then in accordance with that very word and law of Solon, I am to bring them before us, **as before a court of judges**, and make them citizens of this city of ours, on the grounds that they are indeed the Athenians of that former time, who, in being hidden, were revealed by the oracular voice of the sacred texts, and, in what remains, to make speeches as though about men who are already citizens and Athenians" (αὐτῶν τινας, κατὰ δὲ τὸν Σόλωνος λόγον τε καὶ νόμον εἰσαγαγόντα αὐτοὺς ὡς

describes how he learned the Atlantis tale while playing at being a rhapsode during another festival long ago. Critias' discussion of his memory of this tale demonstrates another key outcome of entextualization, the durability of an oral text.⁴⁵⁴ He emphasizes that this account is indelible in his memory, telling Socrates,

ἦν μὲν οὖν μετὰ πολλῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ παιδιᾶς τότε ἀκούμενα, καὶ τοῦ πρεσβύτου προθύμως με διδάσκοντος, ἅτ' ἐμοῦ πολλάκις ἐπανερωτῶντος, ὥστε οἷον ἐγκαύματα ἀνεκπλύτου γραφῆς ἔμμονά μοι γέγονεν

It certainly was all heard then with a great deal of pleasure and boyish delight, and the old man taught it to me heartily, since **I kept asking him question after question**, so that the account has become fixed in me like the burned-in markings of an indelible painting.⁴⁵⁵

As Critias reveals, a questioning process is critical to his reception of the tale. The questioning process allows Critias to retrieve the oral text from his memory, another key outcome of entextualization.⁴⁵⁶

Critias uses the image of burning in an encaustic painting (ἐγκαύματα ἀνεκπλύτου γραφῆς) to describe the permanence of this memory. This image illustrates the object-like status of the oral text.⁴⁵⁷ Hall identifies the importance of the encaustic technique in this metaphor, noting,

Ordinary paintings were considered anything but permanent. The Athenian says in Plato's *Laws* a painting is ephemeral; the colours must be touched up constantly to prevent deterioration (6.769c 3-8). In *Theaetetus* Socrates likens memories to imprints made on blocks of wax bestowed by Mnemosyne on our souls, but that these imprints can be rubbed out (191c-e). Critias however points to the one form of visual art that the ancient Greeks believed effectively invulnerable to change. The story that Critias is about to tell, he claims, relies on a fixed and unalterable set of memories baked into his memory banks like colours on beeswax transformed by heat and resin—crystallised tree sap—into vivid and enduring varnish.⁴⁵⁸

εἰς δικαστᾶς ἡμᾶς ποιῆσαι πολίτας τῆς πόλεως τῆσδε ὡς ὄντας τοὺς τότε Ἀθηναίους, οὓς ἐμήνυσεν ἀφανεῖς ὄντας ἢ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων φήμη, τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ ὡς περὶ πολιτῶν καὶ Ἀθηναίων ὄντων ἤδη ποιεῖσθαι τοὺς λόγους). In Hesiod's *Works and Days* (39), the image of a court of judges is also used in relation to an audience of gift-eating kings. This is beyond the scope of this dissertation but could introduce an avenue of further scholarship.

⁴⁵⁴ See section 2.2.2 above.

⁴⁵⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 26b-c.

⁴⁵⁶ See section 2.2.2 above.

⁴⁵⁷ See section 2.2.2 above.

⁴⁵⁸ Hall, forthcoming.

The medium is not the message here, but rather the message's ability to last. How does this story become indelible? Through the process of telling and re-telling it.

As discussed above in Ch. 2.1, one of the key ways that Plato mimics song competitions in the *Timaeus-Critias* is through invocations to the gods. These invocations demarcate the beginning and ending of Critias' speech, another key for Bauman's formulation of what distinguishes an utterance from an oral text.⁴⁵⁹ In the exchange that follows Timaeus' invocation in the transition between his speech and Critias' entry into this contest, Critias emphasizes how essential memory is to his ability to re-tell this story. Critias invokes Apollo Paeon and the Muses, the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) in Hesiod's *Theogony*.⁴⁶⁰ In the *Critias*, Critias also links these gods and the concepts of poetic composition and performance and memory. He tells his interlocutors,

παραμυθουμένω δ' οὖν καὶ παραθαρρύνοντί σοι πειστέον, καὶ πρὸς οἷς θεοῖς εἶπες τοὺς τε ἄλλους κλητέον καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα Μνημοσύνην. σχεδὸν γὰρ τὰ μέγιστα ἡμῶν τῶν λόγων ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ θεῷ πάντ' ἐστίν: μνησθέντες γὰρ ἰκανῶς καὶ ἀπαγγείλαντες τὰ ποτε ῥηθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν ἱερέων καὶ δεῦρο ὑπὸ Σόλωνος κομισθέντα σχεδὸν οἶδ' ὅτι τῷδε τῷ θεάτρῳ δόξομεν τὰ προσήκοντα μετρίως ἀποτετελεκέναί. τοῦτ' οὖν αὐτ' ἤδη δραστέον, καὶ μελλητέον οὐδὲν ἔτι.

I must pay attention to your exhortation and encouragement, and, **in addition to the gods you just named, invoke the other gods and make a special prayer to Mnemosyne. The success or failure of just about everything that is most important in our speech lies in the lap of this goddess.** For, if we can sufficiently recall and relate what was said long ago by the priests and brought here to Athens by Solon, you the audience in our theatre will find, I am confident, that we have put on a worthy performance and acquitted ourselves of our task. This, then, I must do now, and procrastinate no longer.⁴⁶¹

Critias thus adds Memory to Apollo Paeon and the Muses as the gods necessary for this undertaking.⁴⁶² He emphasizes that Memory will be responsible for the success or the failure of

⁴⁵⁹ Bauman 2004, 4.

⁴⁶⁰ Hesiod, *Th.* 53-56.

⁴⁶¹ Plato, *Crit.* 108c-d.

⁴⁶² Gill 1017, 135 links Critias' calling on Memory with him "reassum[ing] the role of historian, who has memorized a factual account (Ti. 26b-c), while still maintaining his role as a poet."

the most important parts of this speech. This is the key to recalling and relating the story of Atlantis, and thus the key to a successful entry into this song contest.

Recitation of the story even features in the very first stage of the long backstory for how the ‘myth’ comes to be told to Socrates. Here again we see the object-like status of the tale. The Egyptian priest tells Solon that he will tell the story of the ancient Athenians and Atlantis in brief but will go over the story again once they have “gotten hold of the writings themselves” (αὐτὰ τὰ γράμματα λαβόντες).⁴⁶³ This sequence of repeated recitations mirrors the structure of the story in the *Timaeus-Critias*. Critias recites the story of Atlantis twice in the text of the (unfinished) trilogy, once in the *Timaeus* before Timaeus’ speech and once in the *Critias*.⁴⁶⁴

Moreover, Critias reports reciting the story as a means of bringing it back to his memory. This once more demonstrates retrieval of the oral text. He tells Socrates that he did not immediately want to tell the story of Atlantis the day before since, despite being certain about the truth and aptness of the story, he was uncertain about his memory, saying,

διὰ χρόνου γὰρ οὐχ ἰκανῶς ἐμνημόνην. ἐνενόησα οὖν ὅτι χρεὼν εἶη με πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν πρῶτον ἰκανῶς πάντα ἀναλαβόντα λέγειν οὕτως. [...] οὕτω δὴ, καθάπερ ὄδ’ εἶπεν, χθές τε εὐθύς ἐνθένδε ἀπιὼν πρὸς τοῦσδε ἀνέφερον αὐτὰ ἀναμνησκόμενος, ἀπελθὼν τε σχεδόν τι πάντα ἐπισκοπῶν τῆς νυκτὸς ἀνέλαβον. ὡς δὴ τοι, τὸ λεγόμενον, τὰ παιδῶν μαθήματα θαυμαστὸν ἔχει τι μνημεῖον.

so much time had passed that I didn’t remember memory it adequately. So I thought it would be expedient for me to speak up like this only after I had first recovered it all adequately for myself. [...] Thus it was, just as this fellow here was saying, that the very moment I took off from here yesterday, **I brought back the account for these men by recollecting it**; and when I left them and went over it during the night, I recovered pretty much everything. Ah, yes, as the saying goes: “How wondrously memorable are the lessons of childhood!”⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Plato, *Tim.* 23e-24a: “I shall make plain to you in brief their laws as well as the most beautiful of deeds enacted by them; but the precise sequence of all this we’ll go through at another time at our leisure, once we’ve gotten hold of the writings themselves” (περὶ δὴ τῶν ἐνακισχίλια γεγονότων ἔτη πολιτῶν σοι δηλώσω διὰ βραχέων νόμους, καὶ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῖς ὁ κάλλιστον ἐπράχθη: τὸ δ’ ἀκριβὲς περὶ πάντων ἐφεξῆς εἰς αὐθις κατὰ σχολὴν αὐτὰ τὰ γράμματα λαβόντες διέξιμεν).

⁴⁶⁴ Plato, *Tim.* 26a.

⁴⁶⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 26a-b. Immediately prior, Critias tells Socrates, “When you spoke yesterday about the regime and the men you were describing, I was struck with wonder as I recollected the things I’m telling you now, since I realized

We see here that Critias uses recitation as a means of recovering the story. The quality of his memory presents a paradox, however. He states that the lessons of childhood stick with permanence in memory, but at the same time, that so much time has passed since he learned the story that he is unsure whether he remembers it accurately. Critias further illustrates this paradox when he tells Socrates,

ὥς δὴ τοι, τὸ λεγόμενον, τὰ παίδων μαθήματα θαυμαστὸν ἔχει τι μνημεῖον. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂ μὲν χθὲς ἤκουσα, οὐκ ἂν οἶδ' εἰ δυναίμην ἅπαντα ἐν μνήμῃ πάλιν λαβεῖν: ταῦτα δὲ ἂ πάμπολυν χρόνον διακήκοα, παντάπασι θαυμάσαιμ' ἂν εἴ τί με αὐτῶν διαπέφευγεν.

For my part, I don't know if I'd be able to recapture in memory all the things I heard yesterday; but as for what I thoroughly heard a long, long time ago, I'd be utterly struck with wonder if any bit of it has escaped me.⁴⁶⁶

The solution to this problem is to re-tell the story in order to bring it back to his mind. In the fourth century, the works of Hesiod, along with other canonical texts, would have been first learned in childhood.⁴⁶⁷ The memory of these texts would have been reinforced by listening to and performing recitations.

Critias emphasizes how recitation and repetition allow for the transmission and security of this story. He tells Socrates, “What’s more, right from the break of dawn I kept telling it to these fellows here so that they, along with me, would be well-provided with speeches” (καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῖσδε εὐθὺς ἔλεγον ἔωθεν αὐτὰ ταῦτα, ἵνα εὐποροῖεν λόγων μετ' ἐμοῦ).⁴⁶⁸ Moreover, at the opening of the dialogue, Socrates’ recitation of his speech from the day before restores his interlocutors’ memories. When Socrates asks whether the interlocutors remember what they are to speak about today in response to his speech from the day prior, Timaeus responds,

that by some divine quirk of chance, your speech wasn't far off the mark from agreeing for the most part with what Solon said.”

⁴⁶⁶Plato, *Tim.* 26b.

⁴⁶⁷ Graziosi 2010, 113.

⁴⁶⁸ Plato, *Tim.* 26c.

τὰ μὲν μεμνήμεθα, ὅσα δὲ μή, σὺ παρὼν ὑπομνήσεις: μᾶλλον δέ, εἰ μή τί σοι χαλεπὸν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς διὰ βραχέων πάλιν ἐπάνελθε αὐτά, ἵνα βεβαιωθῆ μᾶλλον παρ' ἡμῖν.

Some of it we remember; and as for what we don't, you're here to remind us—or rather, unless there's some difficulty for you, go through it again briefly from the beginning, just to make it more secure for us.⁴⁶⁹

Thus, even beyond the myth of Atlantis, recitation and repetition are related to shoring up memory.

Recitation and repetition play key roles in preserving the memory of the myth of Atlantis in the framing narrative. The written textual archives play a key role in providing credibility to the narrative, and the permanence of a given written source depends upon its materiality.⁴⁷⁰ In Critias' story the first kings of Atlantis inscribe the laws of Poseidon on a stele of *oreichalkos* (ἐν στήλῃ γεγραμμένα ὀρειχαλκίνη), a material that is renowned for its permanence.⁴⁷¹ These laws are said to be handed down from Poseidon, the divine father of the first kings of Atlantis, and placed in his sanctuary in the center of the island. The people of Atlantis host a festival every fifth and sixth year to visit this inscription and re-animate their connection to Poseidon and his laws through the sacrifice of a bull over this inscription.⁴⁷² Solon's laws, too, were inscribed on

⁴⁶⁹ Plato, *Tim.* 17b.

⁴⁷⁰ I demonstrate below that these are also features of the framing narratives of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and *The Book of Kings*.

⁴⁷¹ Plato, *Crit.* 119c-d.

⁴⁷² Plato, *Crit.* 119d-120c. Brisson 1970, 432-35 discusses Plato's sources for this ritual. Gill 2017, 174 notes that "the main object of this ritual seems to be for the kings to reanimate in themselves the spirit of their divine ancestor, Poseidon, before judging each other by Poseidon's laws. The spirit of Poseidon is embodied in his special animal, the bull; and the kings leave it to Poseidon (by refraining from using metal weapons to determine which bull he wants them to catch, as his substitute. The blood of the bull sanctifies the column containing Poseidon's laws, as well as the kings, who drink it before passing judgement. Identification with Poseidon is heightened by dressing in robes whose color (dark blue) resembles the sea, and by sitting over the embers of a fire mingled with the bull's blood." See also Pradeau 1997, 163-5. Gill (2017, 174) continues to note "the general situation is strongly reminiscent of an incident in early Egyptian history described in Herodotus 2.147 and 151. A group monarchy was established whose 12 members met to sanctify their compact (based on strict regulations governing their mutual relations) by a ritual involving sacrifice, libation and solemn drinking. This group monarchy also created an astonishing architectural and engineering complex (2.148-150). The subsequent sequence of events described by Herodotus, in which this compact was destroyed (2.152-54), may also indicate the way Plato intended to continue his unfinished story."

monuments and displayed in the center of the city of Athens.⁴⁷³ In contrast to Solon's laws, however, the permanence of the inscribed laws of Atlantis outlasted the people's adherence to them. In their descent from lawful order into lawlessness, the people of Atlantis illustrate a contrast to people of proto-Athens. The more diluted the divine bloodline of the citizens of Atlantis becomes, the more the people of Atlantis are prone to overindulging in luxury and losing their connection to the laws that Poseidon established for them, despite their inscriptions and festival. This is one example of how a written text can become lost and demonstrates the role the intellectual infrastructure of festival cultures plays in maintaining an audience for a text.

The potential continuity for the myth of Atlantis is threatened in Critias' framing narrative in one further way. When Solon returns from Egypt, he is unable to turn the story he collected in Egypt into an epic poem that will put Homer and Hesiod out of work "because of the factions and all the other evils" (διὰ τὰς στάσεις ὑπὸ κακῶν τε ἄλλων) he encounters upon his return.⁴⁷⁴ Critias makes this claim to show why this ancient and fundamental story is not known by his audience. According to Critias, he happens to recover this story from his own childhood memories and perform it in the speech contest of the *Timaeus-Critias* because of the story's thematic relevance to Socrates' speech the previous day. On this account, the story is supposedly unknown, or at least it does not become the subject matter of an epic poem.⁴⁷⁵ This fact in the backstory does not negate the tale's status as an oral text within Plato's dialogue. For, as Barber notes, "The process of entextualisation is ubiquitous in everyday life. It is not reserved for the production of monumental works of art."⁴⁷⁶ The story of Atlantis does not become a part of the

⁴⁷³ Leão and Rhodes 2016, 5.

⁴⁷⁴ Plato, *Tim.* 21c. Gill 2017, 107 notes that "the 'political conflicts' (στάσεις) referred to are those which Solon tried to address in his role as archon [...] in 594/593 by making changes to the constitution."

⁴⁷⁵ Plato, *Tim.* 20e, 21b-d, 25e-26c. Broadie 201, 164-66. See also Gill 2017, 15, 18.

⁴⁷⁶ Barber 2007, 209; cf. Karanika 2014, 114.

public repertoire for the Panathenaea, like the poetry of Homer and Hesiod,⁴⁷⁷ but, at least fictionally, it does become a “an utterance capable of outlasting the moment.”⁴⁷⁸

3.5 LOST TEXTS AND “BIG BANG” THEORIES FOR ORAL TRADITIONS

The way that Plato’s framing narrative employs a written textual archive alongside oral storytelling aligns with a common etiology for mature oral poetic traditions that concur with the development of literacy. The fact that Plato presents the Atlantis myth as an oral text in the *Timaeus-Critias* makes it even more important to consider this text alongside origin myths for other oral texts. Various poetic traditions explain the origin of an epic poem through the existence of a lost archetypal written text. This occurs when an oral poetic tradition has reached a relatively static phase and a story develops about a single incident that causes the development, recovery, or regeneration of a lost text. Nagy describes this scenario, saying, “myth can make its own ‘big bang’ theory for the origins of epic, and it can even feature in its scenario the concept of writing.”⁴⁷⁹ I demonstrate that three of the main features of these *written* etiologies for oral poems concur in Plato’s framing narrative for the myth of Atlantis. First, there is a lost written text. Second, this lost text provides unique authority for the story it purports to relate. Finally, the text is recovered or brought back together by a wise lawgiver.

One example of a written-text etiology comes from the *Shāhnāma* (*Book of Kings*) in the Persian epic tradition. Nagy describes this origin myth, saying,

According to Ferdowsi’s *Shāhnāma* (I 21.126-136), a noble vizier assembles *mōbad*-s, wise men who are experts in the Law of Zoroaster, from all over the Empire, and each of these *mōbad*-s brings with him a “fragment” of a long-lost Book of Kings that had been scattered to the winds; each of the experts is called upon to recite, in turn, his respective

⁴⁷⁷ This point is discussed at length in Ch. 2.1.

⁴⁷⁸ Ready 2019, 34.

⁴⁷⁹ Nagy 1996a, 70.

“fragment,” and the vizier composes a book out of these recitations. [...] The vizier reassembles the old book that had been disassembled, which in turn becomes the model for the *Shāhnāma* “Book of Kings” of Ferdowsi (*Shāhnāma* I 21.156-161).⁴⁸⁰

Paradoxically, the synthesis of oral traditions is described as if it were a synthesis of written traditions. Wise men, who are lawgivers, are responsible for bringing together fragments of a text. Moreover, just as the story of Atlantis is assigned a written textual source but is actually transmitted through recitation, so too the wise *mōbad*-s recite the fragments that they bring to the vizier.

There are comparable etiological myths in Old French traditions, such as in the *Guiron le Courtois* (1235 CE), which “lays the foundation for its authority by telling of the many French books that were produced from what is pictured as an archetypal translation of a mythical Latin book of the Holy Grail.”⁴⁸¹ In Old Irish traditions, there is a similar myth concerning the recovery of the “lost” Cattle Raid of Cúailnge in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. In this account, a book is traded away and the story is lost until an apparition of a hero from the tale is summoned. This ghost performs the story, which is recorded on a cow hide that in turn becomes a mythical textual artifact.⁴⁸²

Moreover, the myth of the origin for the Sanskrit epic the *Mahābhārata* likewise includes a key mythical written text.⁴⁸³ The backstory for how the *Mahābhārata* comes to be passed down through an oral tradition is complex. The authorship of the *Mahābhārata* is attributed to Vyāsa, a

⁴⁸⁰ Nagy 1990a, 74 n. 110, following Davidson 1985, 111-127; cf. Davidson 1994, 29-53.

⁴⁸¹ Nagy 1996b, 71 citing Lathuillère 1966: 176-177 and Huot 1991, 218-221.

⁴⁸² J. Nagy 2018, 307-17. See also Nagy 1990a, 74 n. 110, following J. F. Nagy 1985, 292-293; cf. J. F. Nagy 1986, 284 and 298.

⁴⁸³ Sullivan 1999, Appendix 1, 118-120 presents a translation from the text *Adi Parvan* 1.55-87 of Nīlakantha’s text. See also the *Mahābhārata* (hereafter *Mbh*) Critical Edition’s vol. I, Appendix I, passage no. 1. Sullivan, 1999, 11 n. 37 discusses the provenance of this myth, stating, “The passage containing this myth is found in manuscripts from South India and some in Kashmir. In a review of the critical edition’s first few pages, Henrich Lüders maintained that this passage is an interpolation from South India, basing his argument on the fact that it occurs in almost every southern manuscript and that it makes reference to the Pāśupata philosophy.”

legendary sage.⁴⁸⁴ Like the vizier who assembles the model that becomes the *Shāhnāma*, Vyāsa is primarily a compiler of sacred hymns. In fact, “Vyāsa means ‘arranger’, ‘division’ or ‘divider’; Vyāsa is a noun derived from the preverb *vi-* ‘apart’ and *√as* ‘throw.’⁴⁸⁵ He is known as ‘the arranger of the Vedas’.”⁴⁸⁶ The story goes that the god of creation, Brahmā, imparts knowledge to ancient sages. This knowledge is then scattered and lost and Vyāsa needs to collect the fragments. He organizes this collection into the Vedas but realizes that these pieces of knowledge are so difficult that only few can understand them. Therefore, he decides to compose a story that will illustrate the difficult truths contained in the Vedas. This story becomes the *Mahābhārata*.

When Vyāsa asks Brahmā for a scribe, he suggests the god Ganesha. Ganesha agrees to take Vyāsa’s dictation as long as he never has to cease from writing and Vyāsa agrees as long as Ganesha does not write anything he does not understand. Vyāsa narrates the story to Ganesha for three years.⁴⁸⁷ Then the written text is lost! Only a portion is preserved by Vyāsa’s student Vaishampāyana through an oral re-telling.⁴⁸⁸ The extant *Mahābhārata* is depicted as Vaishampāyana’s recitation.⁴⁸⁹ Vaishampāyana relates the story to the grandson of one of the story’s protagonists and this is overheard by a poet, Sauti, who teaches it to his son. Sauti’s son in turn relates it to the sages in Naimisha Forest.⁴⁹⁰ It is through this chain of transmission that

⁴⁸⁴ Sullivan 1999, 1; Sukthankar 1933-59, 1:ciii.

⁴⁸⁵ Sullivan 1999, 1.

⁴⁸⁶ Van Buitenen, *MBh*, I.54.3-6 and I.57.72-75.

⁴⁸⁷ Sullivan 1999, citing the *Adi Parvan* 1.55-87, notes that Vyāsa, “for the sake of diversion, mysteriously wove knots into the composition.” Sauti the bard commented that these knotty verses meant that “even the omniscient Ganesha would ponder for a moment, and all the while Vyāsa created many more verses.” As a result, he said, “even today, no one is able to penetrate that closely woven mass of verses because of the profundity of their hidden meaning.” Other sources add that Vyāsa tells the story to a disciple named Jaimini and he learns further details from the birds that happened to hatch on the battlefield and overheard some of the events.

⁴⁸⁸ Sullivan, 1999, 9. *Adi Parvan* Book 1, Section 1.

⁴⁸⁹ Sullivan, 1999, 7.

⁴⁹⁰ *Adi Parvan* Book 1, Section 1.

we supposedly get our version of the *Mahābhārata*. The *Mahābhārata*'s backstory, therefore, includes a collection of lost fragments, a mythical written text that is lost and restored through a series of tellings and re-tellings.

The living oral traditions of India produce further comparanda. There is an etiological myth in Telugu society that explains why the Palnadu epic is sung by untouchable Malas, a lower caste: "The epic, it is claimed, was first written by a Brahmin poet, torn into shreds, discarded, and then picked up by the present performers."⁴⁹¹ The Pābūji oral epic tradition of Rajasthan provides another example. Smith observes that "A *bhopo* [bhopā or medium, folk-priest] of Pābūji like Parbu will insist that the epic he performs 'really' derives from a big book composed by high-caste Caran poets and kept in Pābūji's native village of Kolū: for him it is the *written* word that carries authority."⁴⁹² These two examples make use of a lost written text to provide greater authority for a story transmitted through oral storytelling, but do not involve a wise lawgiver figure as part of a mythical process of reconstruction.

Finally, there are two examples of a written-archetype etiology in Ancient Greece. Both these myths tell the story of how the Homeric epic poems are collected and brought to a city by a wise lawgiver figure. Additionally, both these myths appear to describe a historical fact, but are in actuality fictional stories, told and re-told, that allow a city to become more closely associated with the cultural cachet of Homeric epic poetry.⁴⁹³ Plutarch reports that the lawgiver and wise-

⁴⁹¹ Blackburn 1989, 32 n. 25, cited by Nagy 1996a, 71.

⁴⁹² J. D. Smith (1990, 18). Smith (1990, 17-18) notes that "it may be that the orality of these traditions is a strength rather than a weakness, for Hindu worship—including Vedic ritual—has always emphasized oral skills: books may be used for learning from, but they are not for use in ritual performance, and there is no 'holy book' in Hinduism to compare with the Bible, the Koran, or the *Gurū granth sāhib*. The Vedas are holy of course, but they are holy in performance, not as a manuscript or printed volume." Smith (190, 18) further contrasts the "primary" orality of the Rajasthani epic traditions with the "secondary oral ability of the literate Brahmin who learns texts from a book," and concludes that "it is an intriguing paradox that the two widely-separated worlds of orality and literacy should each seek legitimacy by claiming characteristics belonging to the other."

⁴⁹³ Nagy 1996a, 72-3.

man Lycurgus brings the Homeric poems to Sparta after acquiring them on Samos from the Kreophyleioi, a lineage of epic performers descended from Kreophylos of Samos.⁴⁹⁴ According to Plutarch, having received the Homeric poems Lycurgus “had them written down” (ἐγράψατο) and then “assembled” (συνήγαγεν) them.⁴⁹⁵ This story explains how Lycurgus made the Homeric epics well-known in their entirety, since before his transcription and transmission of the text, only some portions were in the possession of the Greeks.⁴⁹⁶

A similar story featuring Peisistratus and Athens demonstrates how myths featuring a written archive explain the transmission of an oral epic tradition over time. Although this story seems to be an account of a historical event, it is in fact a myth that “reinterprets the evolution of a poetic tradition as if it resulted from a single incident, pictured as the dramatic recovery of a lost text,” i.e., a big bang theory for this oral tradition.⁴⁹⁷ According to Tzetzes, in the reign of Peisistratus, Onomakritos and three other men were commissioned to supervise the arranging of the previously “scattered about” Homeric poems (διέθηκαν οὕτως ἰσποράδην οὔσας τὸ πρῖν).⁴⁹⁸ In Aelian’s *Varia historia* (13.14), Lycurgus’ introduction of the Homeric poems to Sparta is directly compared to Peisistratus’ subsequent introduction of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to Athens.⁴⁹⁹ Cicero presents the most explicit version of Peisistratus’ role in bringing together the Homeric poems. In *de Oratore*, Cicero states that Peisistratus was so learned and eloquent that “he is said to be the first person ever to arrange the books of Homer, previously scattered about, in the order

⁴⁹⁴ Aristotle reports that the Kreophyleioi of Samos were more authoritative in archaic Sparta than the Homeridai of Chios, the epic performers elsewhere credited with the transmission of Homeric poetry (F 611.10 Rose, cited by Nagy 1996b, 72).

⁴⁹⁵ Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 4.4

⁴⁹⁶ Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 4.4

⁴⁹⁷ Nagy 1996a, 73.

⁴⁹⁸ Tzetzes, *Anecdota Graeca* 1.6 ed. Cramer. T. W. Allen (1924, 233) suggests that Athenodorus is the source for Tzetzes here. See also *Greek Anthology* 11.442 and Pausanias 7.26.13. Herodotus (7.6.3) describes Onomakritos as a διαθέτης (‘arranger’) of oracular poetry.

⁴⁹⁹ Nagy 1996a, 73.

that we have today” (*qui primus Homeri libros confuses antea sic disposuisse dicitur, ut nunc habemus*).⁵⁰⁰ Cicero emphasizes Peisistratus’ status as a wise man by describing him as one of the Seven Sages (*septem fuisse dicuntur uno tempore, qui sapientes et haberentur et vocarentur*).⁵⁰¹ This story is reinforced in the Pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus*, where “Plato” claims that it was Peisistratus’ son, Hipparchus, who introduced the Homeric poems to Athens.⁵⁰² This story is at the root of the theory known among classicists as the “Peisistratean recension.”⁵⁰³

Nagy argues that there is a political component to this myth, stating,

On the basis of the other narrative traditions that we have examined concerning the topic of an archetypal text that disintegrates in the distant past only to become reintegrated at a later point by a sage who then gives it as a gift to his community, the story of a “Peisistratean recension” can be explained as a myth that bears clear signs of political appropriation by the Peisistratidai.⁵⁰⁴

Cicero presents in parallel Lycurgus and Peisistratus as wise lawgivers who bring the Homeric poems to their city-states. This parallel is even more striking because “the distinction between historical tyrants on the one hand and mythical lawgivers or sages on the other is oftentimes blurred.”⁵⁰⁵ Both these myths, then, feature a written artifact that is assembled by a wise lawgiver figure and provides unique authority for the transmission of an oral poetic tradition.

There is one final layer to the myths about the collation of Homeric poetry that demonstrates how political figures and movements influence these stories. Nagy suggests that the parallelism between Lycurgus and Peisistratus, as both responsible for the transport of

⁵⁰⁰ Cicero, *de Oratore* 3.137. On Cicero’s own reinterpretation of this myth, see Boyd 1996.

⁵⁰¹ Cicero, *de Oratore* 3.137.

⁵⁰² Pseudo-Plato, *Hipparchus* 228b. Nagy 1996a, 74.

⁵⁰³ Nagy 1996, 74 note 32. Janko (1992, 29) provides a bibliography. His own position is that “the text existed before [Peisistratus’] time.” Allen (1924, 225-238) provides a brief restatement and survey of primary information about the concept of a “Peisistratean recension.” See also Nagy 1990a, 21-22 n. 20. Davison (1955, 10-13) provides a compelling defense of the reliability of the actual information provided by “Plato,” *Hipparchus* 228b.

⁵⁰⁴ Nagy 1996a, 73.

⁵⁰⁵ Nagy 1996a, 74. Aelian also draws a direct parallel between Lycurgus and Peisistratus.

Homeric poetry to their respective city-states, may be extended. He argues that “just as Lycurgus is reputed to have brought the Homer performed by the Kreophyleioi of Samos to Sparta (Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 4), so also the Peisistratidai seem to have taken credit for bringing the Homer performed by the Homeridai of Chios to Athens.”⁵⁰⁶ In the Athenian version of the story, the so-called “Panathenaic rule” influenced how the Homeric poems took shape. According to this rule, rhapsodes performing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* at the Panathenaea were forced to perform the poems in sequence one after another and thus were unable to favor one part of the epics over another.⁵⁰⁷

In the *Hipparchus* the “Panathenaic rule” is attributed to the sons of Peisistratus but in Diogenes Laertius 1.57 this rule is traced back to Solon.⁵⁰⁸ The Peisistratidai gain political authority through their affiliation with poetic authority. Moreover, as Nagy suggests, it is to be expected that

this attribution to the tyrants would in time be ousted by an attribution to Solon, once the tyrants themselves were ousted: it makes sense for the credit that they once could claim as would-be lawgivers to be retrojected to an earlier figure, Solon, whose status as primary culture hero of the State, originator of a wide variety of institutions, makes him the ideal recipient of any credit taken away from others who came after him.⁵⁰⁹

Indeed, “the possession of poetry was a primary sign of the tyrant’s wealth, power, and prestige.”⁵¹⁰ The winds of political favor come to the fore in the change of personage responsible for this poetic rule. The story of the “Panathenaic Rule” is not exactly the same as the other written-archive myths for oral poetic traditions, discussed above. However, the two authorities

⁵⁰⁶ Nagy 1996a, 75.

⁵⁰⁷ Nagy 1996a, 75; Davison 1955, 7; cf. Sealey 1957, 342-351. “Plato,” *Hipparchus* 228b and Diogenes Laertius 1.57, Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 159; Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates* 102; Plutarch, *Pericles* 13.

⁵⁰⁸ “Plato,” *Hipparchus* 228b, Diogenes Laertius 1.57.

⁵⁰⁹ Nagy, 1996a, 75.

⁵¹⁰ Nagy 1990, 158.

that are associated with this poetic rule demonstrate how the lawgiver and wise-man figured in these myths can represent various political systems or structures.

I suggest that these comparanda of origin stories for oral myths can inform our understanding of the framing narrative in the *Timaeus-Critias*. Firstly, in the *Timaeus-Critias*, we also find a written archival text that is recovered by a wise lawgiver figure and transported back to Athens as the germ for an oral epic poem. Moreover, the two Greek figures responsible for the transmission of this story are Solon, the lawgiver whose political contributions to Athens are associated with the establishment of (proto-)democratic systems of governance, and Critias, a member of the Thirty Tyrants.⁵¹¹ We see, therefore, the same key features for framing narratives of other oral poems that coincide with a developed written tradition. In all these stories a written text builds the truth-status of the following story. The law-givers responsible for recovering, piecing together, and transmitting the story from a mythical written source add a further layer of authority. The fact that these political figures are used for their authority reflects the political positioning of the larger society at that time.

Solon and Critias, the two political figures who transmit the story of Atlantis, represent one of the key political changes that took place in Plato's lived experience, from democratic Athens to the rule of the Thirty Tyrants in 404 BCE. This change was both brutal and short lived. Athens quickly returned to democracy in 403 BCE. Indeed, Athens went through a number of harrowing changes between the time when the conversation of the *Timaeus-Critias* takes place and when Plato composed the *Timaeus-Critias*. Athens and Sparta together with their respective

⁵¹¹ I develop this argument further below. Gill 2017, 19 notes that "Solon was a contested figure, and those reviving democracy after the regime of the '30 tyrants' in 404-403 claimed to be recovering the laws of Solon." See Finley 1971, 1, 11-14; Morgan 1998, 111-14.

⁵¹¹ Plato, *Tim.* 20e, 21b-d, 25e-26c. Broadie 2013, 164-66 stresses the incongruity between the claim to the importance of this story and the fact that it is not shared until this dialogue. See also Gill 2017, 15, 18.

allies waged the Peloponnesian War from 431-404 BCE to gain hegemony of the Greek world. As other scholars have noted, there are many connections between the *Timaeus-Critias* and this monumentally important event in the history of Plato's city.⁵¹²

Not least of all, the characters that Plato chooses to tell this story have significant connections to the Peloponnesian War. Hermocrates is the third interlocutor in the *Timaeus-Critias* and his entry into the song contest is either lost or was never composed. Historically, he was one of Syracuse's three *strategoï* during the Athenians' Sicilian expedition.⁵¹³ As Cornford notes, "Hermocrates would be remembered by the Athenians as the man who had repulsed their own greatest effort at imperialist expansion," in contrast to Critias' story of how prehistoric Athens repelled the invasion of Atlantis and saved the Mediterranean peoples from slavery.⁵¹⁴ Hermocrates was eventually killed in a street fight in 407 BCE after riots broke out along political lines between his supporters and detractors.

Critias is likewise a figure who would have loomed large in the imagination of the first audience of the *Timaeus-Critias*. There is a long debate about which Critias Plato depicts in the dialogue.⁵¹⁵ It is chronologically more likely that the Critias in the dialogue is the grandfather of

⁵¹² There is also a connection between the war waged by proto-Athens and Atlantis and the Persian War. For example, as Broadie 2013, 250 n. 3 notes, "in the Athens-Atlantis story the heroic feat of Athens is remarkably similar to that whereby historical Athens fended off the Persians at Marathon in 490 BCE." Plato, *Ti.* 25b-c. Compare with Herodotus 7.139.5-6; Plato, *Menexenus* 240 d-e; Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 52, 66-68. See also Gill 2017, 17, Loraux 1986, 302-03; Morgan 1998, 104-06; Stegman 2017, and Hall forthcoming.

⁵¹³ Hermocrates first appears in Thucydides (4.58-65) at the congress of Gela (424 BCE) to give a speech demanding that the Sicilian Greeks unite against the Athenians and cease quarrelling. Hermocrates called for the prisoners of war to be treated kindly after the defeat of the Athenian force, but this is ignored. Hermocrates also appears in Xenophon, *Hellenika* I 1, 27; Plutarch, *Nicias* 16, 28; and Polyaeus I 43.

⁵¹⁴ Cornford 1937, 2. See also Nails 2002, 161-2.

⁵¹⁵ There are two options main theories about Critias' identity. Cornford (1935, 1-2) and Taylor (1928, 23- 25) argue that this Critias is one generation older than the Critias in the regime of the Thirty. This argument is supported by Zeyl (2000, xxv), Guthrie (1978, 244), Welliver (1977, Appendix A) and Slaveva-Griffin (2005, 313); Nails (2002, 106-108) uses archaeological data from the Agora to support this theory. In contrast, Vidal-Naquet (1986, 277, n. 2), Arieti (1991, 19, and Davies (1971) 325-326 argue that this is the Critias of the Thirty.

Critias the Younger (460-403 BCE), who was much more well-known.⁵¹⁶ As Gill notes, “even if [...] the speaker is taken to be the grandfather of Critias the tyrant, the reputation of the young Critias may still color—or stain—the characterization of Plato’s interlocutor, especially since the older man seems to have been little more than a name for most Athenians.”⁵¹⁷ The younger Critias was Plato’s mother’s cousin. He was also associated with Socrates and later quarreled with and did what he could to harm Socrates.⁵¹⁸ He was, moreover, a member of the Thirty Tyrants, a pro-Spartan junta established to run Athens following the Peloponnesian War, and was possibly its most brutal member.⁵¹⁹

In conclusion, the etiologies for oral poems discussed above suggest that Plato chooses these historical figures to introduce a new etiology for Athens because they represent one of the political changes undergone by Athens between the setting and the writing of the dialogue. The framing myth that introduces the story of Atlantis is on its face an explanation for how this story survives. It sets up the story of Atlantis as an oral text. On the other hand, the narrative also describes how information becomes lost when not preserved by written archives and oral traditions. I demonstrated how the written archives in the Atlantis framing narrative provide a

⁵¹⁶ Nesselrath 2006, 43-50 presents the extensive and inconclusive scholarly debate. Davis 1971, 325-26, makes the argument that Plato telescoped the time between Solon and Critias the Younger, reducing five generations to three. See also Nails 1992.

⁵¹⁷ Gill, 2017, 19. “If the speaker ‘Critias’ is Critias the tyrant, it gives an added (dark) resonance to his evident concern to link himself and his aristocratic family to Solon and to the ‘ancestral constitution’ associated in his story with *primaeva* Athens (and Egypt). Since idealization of Marathonian Athens (as distinct from later, more fully democratic, Athens) formed a part of this complex of political attitude, the presentation of the victory of *primaeva* Athens as a yet more splendid ‘pre-Marathon’ fits in with this viewpoint.”

⁵¹⁸ Gill 2017, 18, citing Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.29-31 and Plato, *Apology* 32c-d, notes that “as one of the 30 tyrants in 404-403, he tried to incriminate Socrates by ordering him to arrest a citizen, Leon, with a view to seizing his property (Socrates ignored his order). He also passed a law prohibiting ‘teaching the art of *logoi*’ which seems to have been primarily directed at Socrates. His earlier association with Critias, and also with Alcibiades, was highly damaging to Socrates’ reputation and seems to have been instrumental in leading to his trial and execution in 399.”

⁵¹⁹ Gill 2017, 18 notes that “Critias represented an extreme position in the long-standing movement by aristocratic Athenians from the late fifth century onwards to modify or subvert the fully democratic systems set up by Pericles. A recurrent theme in this movement, which extended into the mid-fourth century, was that Athens should go back to its ‘ancestral’ (pre-democratic) constitution, which was sometimes identified with the framework set up by Solon, and which provided the basis, with further modifications by Cleisthenes (late sixth century), for the Athenian constitution at the time of the battle of Marathon (490).”

greater credibility to Critias' tale. These written sources combine with oral performances in the framing narrative to bring it to the storyteller's memory and to transmit it to new audiences. Moreover, the loss or fragmentation of a written text plays a key role in many etiologies for oral poems that coincide with the development of written cultures. In these various comparanda, a wise lawgiver figure is frequently responsible for re-assembling the text. In Plato's *Timaeus-Critias* Solon hands this role over to Critias. The interlocutors that Plato chooses to tell the story of Atlantis introduce an anxiety about the ultimate threat to the transmission of information, the loss of an audience. No matter the medium, the dissolution of civic and religious institutions presents the threat of losing an audience entirely.

Chapter 4. THE UW TEXTILE STUDIES GRC: A PUBLIC HUMANITIES PROJECT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I demonstrated how Plato engages with Hesiod in the *Timaeus-Critias* dialogues. I explored how Plato engages with the Hesiodic myth of Pandora in chapter one, and the myth of Atlantis as it relates to oral poetics generally and Hesiodic poetry specifically. Throughout the process of writing this dissertation, I also co-founded and ran a public Humanities project from June 2021 until June 2022: the UW Textile Studies Graduate Research Cluster (GRC). This project aimed to gather members of the public and researchers at the University of Washington from different disciplines who all shared an interest in the creation and study of textiles. This chapter documents the various goals of the UW Textile Studies GRC and how successful we were at achieving them.

A chapter documenting a public Humanities project as the final chapter in this Classics dissertation may at first seem incongruous. How does the Textile Studies crossdisciplinary public Humanities project relate to the main objective of this dissertation? The most straightforward answer is that the relationship is a diagonal. As a sewist might say, it is cut on the bias.⁵²⁰ My goal in founding the Textile Studies GRC was not to investigate the intertextual relationship between Plato's dialogues and works of Hesiod; it was to rebuild the cross-disciplinary intellectual community that was lost in the COVID-19 pandemic. But in the end, the Textile Studies GRC engaged with two themes at the heart of my first two dissertation chapters: craft

⁵²⁰ Bias cut is a technique used in sewing where fabric is cut on a diagonal against across the weave of the fabric to give a garment more stretch and a softer drape.

production and intellectual transmission. Overall, I aim to uncover the context that would be obvious to Plato's contemporaries but is missing for modern readers in 2022, and the Textile Studies GRC furthered this aim in two ways. My first chapter on Plato's reception of the Hesiodic Pandora myth investigates the role that textiles and other crafts play in the Hesiodic and Platonic cosmogonies. Whereas in the contemporary North American context, textile crafts such as spinning, dyeing, and weaving are not very visible, Plato's contemporaries would have seen and experienced the production of textiles all around them. Learning more about textiles from a variety of perspectives allowed me to bring a more nuanced perspective to my study of craft in the ancient world. Moreover, how information is shared, believed, and trusted is central to my reading of the myth of Atlantis in relation to Hesiodic poetry in my second chapter. This is, of course, the primary concern of the field of public scholarship: namely, to build communities of research beyond the university and construct the foundations for future traditions of intellectual history.

These highest-level goals for my dissertation map onto the Textile Studies GRC in two primary ways. First, I experientially learned about the difficult project of building the infrastructure necessary to set the stage for sharing knowledge and information. This experience relates to the second chapter of the dissertation in which I identify how Plato sets the *Timaeus-Critias* at a festival in order to evoke the competitive culture of oral poetic competitions in Ancient Greece. Second, living through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the way I think about Platonic scholarship. Experiencing the dissolution of many forms of intellectual infrastructure during an ongoing global pandemic changed how I thought about Plato composing his dialogues in relation to the Peloponnesian War and especially the plague of Athens. As I demonstrate in the previous chapter, the myth of Atlantis engages with the anxiety these kinds of

events produce through the question of the permanence of cultural and intellectual history. Most crucially, the Textile Studies GRC allowed me to engage in collaborative cross-disciplinary work.⁵²¹ It set the stage to build collaborative and intellectually invigorating relationships with scholars and artists across and beyond the University of Washington.

I approach this chapter, therefore, as a means of archiving the process of founding and running this project. It thus serves as a case study for other graduate students and faculty to learn from and follow as is most useful to them. Additionally, I aim to present a model of evaluating the Textile Studies GRC project based on the latest methods in the field of the public Humanities and, more importantly, the overall goals my collaborators and I collectively identified. The UW Textile Studies GRC project could never have come to fruition without collaboration. I co-founded this project with Lauryn Hanley, my fellow Classics PhD student, in the Spring of 2021. Over the summer of 2021, Caitlin Postal, a PhD candidate in the English department, joined the team. Amelia Ketzler, an intrepid undergraduate in the departments of Classics and Art History, joined the team in the Spring of 2022. Beyond the immediate UW Textile Studies team, the project invited the participation of community members, artists, curators, faculty, and graduate students across the University of Washington. Finally, this project would not exist without the financial support and guidance from the Simpson Center for the Humanities. I am especially indebted to Rachel Arteaga's and C.R. Grimmer's advice and guidance throughout this endeavor.

This chapter is divided into six major sections, including this introduction. The second part of the chapter frames my public Humanities project in two ways. I first introduce definitions

⁵²¹ I use the term 'cross-disciplinary' in distinction from 'interdisciplinary'. In this use, I follow the lead of the Simpson Center for the Humanities and how they articulate their overall goals. 'Interdisciplinary' connotes the melding of multiple disciplines to form a new scholarly field. In contrast, 'cross-disciplinary' keeps field distinctions intact and recognizes a form of scholarship that draws upon approaches from multiple disciplines to reach new conclusions. 'Cross-disciplinary' programming, therefore, seeks to bring people with different frameworks and areas of expertise together to scaffold an exchange of knowledge and understanding.

of public scholarship and the public Humanities. Since there are various genres within this field, I situate the UW Textile Studies GRC within the most fitting public scholarship genre as a project that aimed to build community across and beyond the university through hosting events. Secondly, I outline the metrics and considerations by which the MLA suggests public scholarship projects may be evaluated and present an argument for why public scholarship is vital to the present and future of Humanities disciplines. In the third section of this chapter, I describe the UW Textile Studies project as I developed it. I also introduce the specific goals I had for this project. The fourth section of the chapter briefly outlines the process of developing this project and presents an overview of the seven events the UW Textile Studies GRC facilitated over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year.

In the fifth section of this chapter, I return to the metrics and goals presented and assess how successful this project was at meeting these goals. I identify how many people we reached, the level of cross-disciplinarity we were able to achieve, and how many members of the public attended our programming. Finally, I conclude this chapter with an appendix that addresses how influential this project has been so far for transitioning into an “alt-ac” career. Although I did not set out to pursue this project as part of my overall dissertation project, it has been a valuable addition to the rest of my scholarly project.

4.2 WHAT IS PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP?

What is public scholarship? What are the public Humanities?⁵²² The field of the public Humanities has recently undergone a project of re-definition. Judith Butler identifies three phases in this re-definition.⁵²³ In the first phase, public scholarship was framed as the work undertaken by public intellectuals. A few individuals from the most elite institutions would present their ideas to the public through large-scale venues such as public lecture circuits, documentaries, or non-fiction publications. This conceptualization of public scholarship “assumes a generally nonporous wall between the academy and its publics.”⁵²⁴ In the next phase, the field shifted from ‘public intellectuals’ to the ‘public Humanities.’ In place of a rarified project for only a few exceptional individuals who leave behind their lives in the academy to address an undefined public, the public Humanities aim to explain what Humanities scholars do to wider and more defined audiences.⁵²⁵ Indeed, the main goal of public Humanities scholarship is to demonstrate that “the Humanities are themselves a public exercise, a defining and even invaluable feature of public life.”⁵²⁶ The first part of this transition, therefore, is to acknowledge that the work of the Humanities is not the exclusive territory of institutions of higher education. The third and seemingly final phase of this shift involves a further breakdown of the divisions between the public and the academy. After the phase of public intellectuals, which centered the identity of elite individuals, public Humanities were defined as “programs providing goods and services [...] to all members of a society” without seeking to turn a profit.⁵²⁷ In this definition,

⁵²² The public Humanities are a subset of public scholarship generally that encompass the fields subsumed within the category of the Humanities. Fields beyond the Humanities engage in public scholarship projects similar to and disparate from the public Humanities.

⁵²³ Butler 2022.

⁵²⁴ Butler 2022, 46.

⁵²⁵ Butler 2022, 46.

⁵²⁶ Butler 2022, 46. See also Postal 2020; Liu 2023.

⁵²⁷ Butler 2022, 46 citing U Michigan.

“public Humanities practitioners emerge from the university and then enter the public to undertake such services, but the wall between the university and the public is kept intact.”⁵²⁸

The final stage of redefining ‘public scholarship’ has two important consequences. First, it acknowledges that there is no monolithic unitary public. There are diverse communities that have previously been excluded from the dominant idea of who ‘the public’ is.⁵²⁹ Second, the pluralization of ‘public’ to ‘publics’ recognizes that scholars are also members of various publics. As Butler puts it,

public worlds are not over there, beyond the walls, into which scholars occasionally enter to provide goods and services; rather, those various publics frame the way scholarship and teaching is undertaken, the questions asked, the hypotheticals with which we begin, the purpose for which we undertake our various projects. Those publics are in the university from the beginning, and include students, staff, administrators, and faculty.⁵³⁰

So, with this new definition, the divisions are permeable. Scholars such as myself are members of various publics, and equally, people beyond the academy undertake creative and critical projects under the umbrella of the Humanities. This is not to collapse categories entirely. Rather, the aim is to bring into focus the reciprocal value of the public Humanities.

The project of the university needs the public, just as much as, if not more than, the public needs the academy. The MLA Guidelines note, “public Humanities scholarship that engages multiple and diverse audiences beyond the university in literature, modern languages, translation and interpretation studies, history, the arts, and cultural heritage has the potential to demonstrate the powerful impact of the Humanities in the world.”⁵³¹ Conversely, the value of the public Humanities to the academy is to allow Humanities scholars to think differently about the projects that they undertake, which can occur at the level of the individual researcher. For

⁵²⁸ Butler 2022, 46.

⁵²⁹ Butler 2022, 46, Warner 2005, *ibid.*

⁵³⁰ Butler 2022, 47.

⁵³¹ MLA 2022, 2.

example, Caitlin Postal identifies that presenting her research at pop cultural conventions allows her to “build a more capacious community around [her] interests and thereby a deeper understanding of and investment in them.”⁵³² For this individual researcher, engaging in public scholarship keeps at bay the isolation and intellectual stagnation that threatens every scholar. It allows for an orientation towards building knowledge of reciprocal value for various communities. The public Humanities exist within an ecosystem of broader Humanities scholarship focusing on the goals of creating and sharing knowledge, but also exist among and within public communities.

One key aspect of this value proposition is to break down the silos present in the current form of the university. Currently, “the ‘arts’ are sequestered in programs and projects that do not recognize that the Humanities could not exist without the arts, including the language arts, performance, theater, and oral histories.”⁵³³ Butler sees value for the future of the Humanities in breaking down artificial barriers between the public and the intellectuals. Equally, she argues for building bridges between the subject matter investigated in the various Humanities fields and the scholarship that derives from these investigations. As Butler puts it,

the future of the Humanities may well depend on realizing that the best case for art, poetry, literature, visual culture, digital art, and performance can only be made if we maintain the connection between the arts and the Humanities. The case for the Humanities can only be made if we start with the love for the Humanities that exists outside the university, in the various publics who depend on art and literature to live and flourish, and then rebuild our institutions to respond to that love, that life call, to foster a critical imagination that helps us rethink the settled version of reality.⁵³⁴

⁵³² Postal 2020.

⁵³³ Butler 2022, 51. Butler argues that academia writ large enforces these divisions with a view towards shoring up an elitist sense of value built “through differentiating itself from public cultures.” I posit that Butler depicts “academia” here unfairly as a monolith. It is clear, however, that the overall system of the academic Humanities as a whole places the highest value on scholarly publications.

⁵³⁴ Butler 2022, 52.

The project of the public Humanities is not only to bring scholarship to various publics, but to explore and experiment with bringing together fields that are separated into a hierarchical structure within the academy.⁵³⁵ This view extends beyond the arts and Humanities to the fields encompassed under the umbrella of STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Butler published her framing of the value of public Humanities in August 2022. I started the Textile Studies GRC a year earlier in 2021. Her framing, however, maps well onto two of the highest-level goals of the GRC. The first goal was to build intellectual community across disciplines with the goal of cross-pollinating innovative ideas about the study of textiles. Relatedly, the second goal was to bring textile practitioners into conversation with academics seeking to investigate the history and meaning of textiles. Before elaborating upon the goals I sought to accomplish through the UW Textile Studies GRC, I first introduce external metrics for successful public Humanities projects.

4.3 METRICS FOR EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF A PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT

Although public scholarship has a long history in the Humanities, only recently have national Humanities associations such as the Modern Language Association produced guidelines

⁵³⁵ It is also possible to develop cross-disciplinary collaborations towards traditional scholarly aims. These projects differ from public scholarship approaches due to having different aims, depending upon the specifics of the project. The public aspect of public scholarship allows for collaborative reciprocal access with groups of people who may not be encountered in other forms of collaborative scholarship. For example, in a project focused on the study of textiles, a collaborative approach between the fields of Classics, English, and Film Studies excludes professional textile artists from being part of building the collaborative knowledge and from the results. But if a member of this collaboration were to join as, for example, both English graduate student and hobby seamstress, would this example break apart? Even scholars exist within a variety of ‘publics’ not limited to the academy. Depending on the perspective, all collaborative projects can be public scholarship projects, because scholars are members of various groups that may be seen as publics. The emphasis in public scholarship projects is on producing knowledge with and for public audiences.

for evaluating public scholarship projects. This effort builds towards the aim of valuing public scholarly output for tenure and promotion. In the field of Classics, the Society for Classical Studies (SCS) has increased funding for public scholarship projects through the “Ancient Worlds, Modern Communities” initiative, originally called “Classics Everywhere.” This program began in 2019 when the SCS Board of Directors designated \$25,000 to fund public events, with up to \$2000 per project.⁵³⁶ The SCS defines the goal of this initiative as “engag[ing] individuals, groups, and communities in critical discussion of and creative expression related to the ancient Mediterranean, the global reception of Greek and Roman culture, and the history of teaching and scholarship in the field of classical studies.”⁵³⁷ The SCS also offers three prizes for excellence in public engagement. These prizes and funding opportunities show that the field of Classics values public scholarship. However, the SCS has yet to publish clear guidelines for how public scholarship projects can be evaluated for promotion. For this reason, I draw upon the MLA’s recent guidelines to provide a professionally recognized framework.

The Modern Language Association’s published *Guidelines for Evaluating Publicly Engaged Humanities Scholarship in Language and Literature Programs* identifies that evaluating public Humanities projects is challenging partially because the forms these projects take “evolve regularly and change more rapidly than traditional forms of scholarship.”⁵³⁸ The MLA describes the form that public scholarship projects may take as

expansive in nature and includes, but is not limited to, print and digital forms of individual and collective scholarship published in venues that reach broad audiences, such as op-eds; community events, such as speaker series or community reading events; analog projects, like exhibits in public spaces, interpretive material, and cultural heritage sites; and digital projects like podcasts, websites, or apps—and some projects may appear in more than one of these iterations.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁶ The Society for Classical Studies (2022a) provides a complete list of funded projects.

⁵³⁷ The Society for Classical Studies 2022b.

⁵³⁸ Modern Languages Association 2022, 3.

⁵³⁹ Modern Languages Association 2022, 3.

The Textile Studies project took the form of a series of community events. However, to this end, the GRC also involved designing and producing a website, setting up and administering multiple social media accounts, and publishing a blog.

The MLA introduces four main guidelines for evaluating public Humanities scholarship:

1. the scope and impact of the project (How substantial is the work undertaken? What are its effects in the geographic and intellectual communities in which it participates? How does it change what we know or what we do?);
2. the form and dissemination of the project (How is the project shared with its audience? How is its form—print, digital, participatory, or otherwise—adapted to the specific needs of its public?);
3. the extent of existing deliverables and, where relevant, the future trajectory of the project (How has the project—if, like many digital or oral projects, it is a work perennially in progress—achieved some portions of its aims to date? How does it lay the groundwork for future development? How will such future development be evaluated?); and
4. the nature and extent of collaboration where applicable (How, for projects that involve collaboration among scholars or with a wider community, is collaboration structured? How are ethical relationships with the community or collaborators secured and assured?).⁵⁴⁰

Moreover, since public Humanities projects that take different forms will have different metrics for success, the MLA guidelines highlight the necessity of evaluating public Humanities projects based on the specific aims of individual projects. A podcast series will have different goals than a walking tour. At the conclusion of this chapter, I return to the MLA guidelines. First, however, I outline the overall structure and goals of the Textile Studies GRC.

4.4 WHAT WAS THE UW TEXTILE STUDIES GRC?

The Textile Studies Graduate Research Cluster (GRC) was an experimental cross-disciplinary community building project that I led from the summer of 2021 until the summer of

⁵⁴⁰ Modern Languages Association 2022, 2.

2022.⁵⁴¹ The Textile Studies GRC aimed to examine textile history diachronically and transculturally with a specific focus on the textile research and collection resources at the University of Washington. This project focused on bringing researchers, artists, crafters, curators, and textile enthusiasts together to discuss textiles from our various vantage points. One of the emergent questions addressed by the Textile Studies project is how to categorize artifacts created with fibers. What differentiates some textiles as art, while others are fashion? How are other textiles constructed into the categories of culturally significant artifacts? How does the display and care of these objects change when they are categorized differently? How do curators decide which textiles should be preserved over others? And how do they communicate with the communities that create, consume, and maintain these objects?

My collaborators and I recognized that the subject of textiles offers a unique opportunity for cross-disciplinary and public conversations; textiles are both ubiquitous and unique. Moreover, many fields approach the study of textiles. Fine arts and design programs involve the construction of textiles. Humanities fields study the relationship between textiles, texts, art, and history. The material production, reuse, and disposal of textiles feature in Environmental Studies and Anthropology. The field of Economics is interested in textiles as a commodity. Even computer scientists and engineers study textiles in relation to programming knitting machines and soft robotics. And this is just within the university. Various publics care about textiles in relation to textile crafts such as knitting, embroidery, crochet, spinning, dyeing, or sewing. Others are interested in fashion as a mode of expression. Textiles are also incorporated into interior design and religious customs. This is a big list and provided us with a rich basis for

⁵⁴¹ The GRC is continuing under the direction of Lauryn Hanley. For the sake of this chapter, I only address my term of leadership from June 2021 to June 2022.

exploring how we could build programming that would allow people to come together and engage in reciprocal conversations about textiles.

This project was born out of two funding opportunities offered through the University of Washington's Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities (Simpson Center): a grant for running a Graduate Research Cluster (GRC) and a summer fellowship to participate in the inaugural cohort of the Barclay Simpson Scholars in Public Program. The Simpson Center offers \$1000 of funding each year to each GRC in order to

foster crossdisciplinary collaboration and inquiry among graduate students in the form of cross-departmental reading, screening, and/or discussion groups, dissertation working groups, and other activities. Research clusters may organize activities that draw on local intellectual and cultural resources, including faculty and community leaders.⁵⁴²

The Barclay Simpson Scholars Program supports doctoral students pursuing public-facing projects.⁵⁴³ When we first applied for funding for the GRC, Lauryn Hanley and I were not thinking of the project as a work of public scholarship. Indeed, I initially applied for the Barclay Simpson Scholars in Public fellowship cohort to digitize a tour that I had given at the Smithsonian Museum the previous year. For me, however, the Textile Studies GRC project was born this opportunity and out of a need. Lauryn and I had secured the funding for the GRC and I had a summer to dedicate to a public scholarship project. When I joined this cohort of Scholars in Public, I learned that a fellow member, Caitlin Postal, was working on a textile-based public Humanities project. In her summer fellowship, Caitlin recreated a medieval hood as a material means of studying the fourteenth-century Middle English poem, *Awynters off Arthure*. When I learned about Caitlin's project, I started to imagine what the Textile Studies GRC could become. At first, I hoped to develop an exhibit to display Caitlin's work, which aligned with my

⁵⁴² Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities. 2023a.

⁵⁴³ Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities. 2023b.

understanding of digital exhibitions from my initial proposal. Then, I decided to pivot from the audio tour project that I had proposed to a new and as-yet unstructured community-building project that might incorporate work being done by my fellow scholars. Ultimately, the plan to develop an exhibit metamorphosed into a series of events offered over the 2021-2022 year.

The Scholars in Public Fellowship occurred during the summer of 2021, after a year and a quarter of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁴⁴ I was desperately isolated. Before the pandemic, I had not realized how motivating and energizing the community of cross-disciplinary work on campus at the University of Washington was for me. Without the physical and intellectual infrastructure of the campus, I was making very little progress on my dissertation. The value that I found in being a graduate student was erased by living and working alone in my small apartment. I was certain that this isolation and loneliness was not specific to my experience. I realized that I would not be able to complete my PhD without making a change. Although I was still interested in the project that I had initially proposed for my fellowship, I was much more motivated to work on something that tapped into my identity as a member of various publics.

Even two years on, it is hard to remember the optimism of the summer of 2021. After a year of lockdown, Zoom classes, and general COVID-19 uncertainty, there was a false feeling that things would get back to normal for the 2021-2022 academic year. Vaccinations were available starting in the spring of 2021. COVID-19 variants like Delta and Omicron were as yet unknown. Classes were still online that summer but there was an optimism that in-person events would be possible in the fall. So we first started to dream about how to bring people together around threads of connection. Textiles are inherently material. No matter the angle of approach,

⁵⁴⁴ I hesitate to write about the challenges of this period because I recognize my privilege in securing employment that did not require risking in-person interaction. However, the mental and emotional toll impacted my work and thus requires that I acknowledge it.

the texture and materiality of textiles plays a key role in what makes fibers fiber. This ground truth inspired one of the main tenets of the Textile Studies GRC: make each event as hands-on as possible. After a year of life mediated by screens, we wanted to both bring people together to cross-pollinate ideas and to allow people to uncover the rich textile collections at the University of Washington.

Planning events during the 2021-2022 year became an exercise in uncertainty management. Once the foolish optimism of the summer burned off, we were left with the challenge of planning events in an ongoing pandemic. We aimed to make these events as accessible as possible. Life was still, in part, mediated by screens, so we sought to make connection via the means available to us. To balance this desire with the aim of hands-on programming, we planned some in-person, some hybrid, and some fully remote events.

I began to consider what truly mattered to me in the work that I was undertaking. At the same time, I felt cut off from my family as travel across the border to Canada became impossible. One reason I have been drawn to the study of textiles in the ancient world is how it enables me to connect with my family members, especially my mother and my aunts. My mother has always been involved in textile crafting projects, from making intricate cathedral quilts, to sewing my dance costumes, to knitting. My aunts on my mother's side all have their own crafting practices with some based on my aunt's alpaca ranch in Oregon. They spin, knit, crochet, and sew bathing suits. I wanted my public scholarship project to help me connect with my family over distance. As I worked on this project, I thought about a scarf I frequently wear that my mother knit. It is made with undyed alpaca fleece that my aunt spun and sent to my mom. Did my mom make this *for* me? No. But I have a habit of adopting things she makes if I especially like them. Having this scarf present with me while I was far from my family served as

a connecting thread, both literally and metaphorically, that ties me to my family. Connection over distance is one aspect of what textiles do. My mother and aunts became my guiding lights in developing programming. With each event, I asked myself whether this would be something that they would want to go to. They were the model public that I aimed to reach. And when we planned online and hybrid programming, they were able to come! This is a very personal aspect of this project, one that in my scholarly work is usually edited out of the final drafts. But the point of public scholarship, for me, was to sew together the fragmented aspects of my academic and personal identity. Moreover, this motivation allowed for a more focused and authentic approach to developing public Humanities scholarship.

The context in which this project developed refined the overall goals for the GRC.

Ultimately, we identified six central goals:

- 1) Cross-disciplinarity. Our programming would be as diverse as possible across and beyond the university campus.
- 2) Reaching the greatest number of participants while building community. Our events would be as accessible as possible with a goal of reaching the widest audience possible and building true connections between community members.
- 3) Hands-on programming. Each event would be as tactile and engaged as possible with material culture.
- 4) Spotighting the resources available. We aimed to showcase of the textile collections and experts available in our pre-existing networks, our city, and the University of Washington campus.
- 5) Providing a platform for graduate student research. As much as possible, we aimed to highlight and promote graduate research at and beyond the University of Washington.
- 6) Frugality. We wanted to use our small budget as effectively as possible while providing a variety of events.

In addition to these goals, we wanted to be collaborative in our planning of the project.

Collaboration is a part of most forms of textile production in one way or another and one of the

main themes that came out of the programming was how various creators and academics engaged in collaboration. As I discuss the process and overall schedule of the Textile Studies project, I will show our level of success at achieving each of these goals.

Over the course of the 2021-2022 year, the GRC ran seven events. During the summer of 2021, I investigated the textile resources available to us in order to identify what kinds of events would be possible. This process involved discussions with curators at the Burke Museum, the Henry Art Gallery, and professors in fields across the university. My goal for the end of the summer was to generate a list and tentative schedule of potential event offerings, to build a website, and to launch social media accounts on Instagram and Twitter. We successfully launched the social media accounts and the website in September of 2021. These platforms allowed us to publicize our events, keep an archive of what we did, reach new publics, and find textile practitioners.

4.5 UW TEXTILE STUDIES EVENTS

Over the course of 2021-2022, we planned and executed seven events.

Table 4.1 UW Textile Studies GRC Events 2021-2022

Quarter	Event	Date
Fall 2021	Field Trip: National Nordic Museum, M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias	11/06/21
Fall 2021	Object Lessons Lightning Talks	12/03/21
Winter 2022	Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum	02/25/22
Winter 2022	On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset	03/10/22
Spring 2022	Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas	04/08/22
Spring 2022	Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion	05/06/22
Spring 2022	Fabric Books and Fashion Plates: UW Libraries Special Collections	05/19/22

4.5.1 *National Nordic Museum, M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias*

For our first event, we organized a visit to the National Nordic Museum to see their exhibit *M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias*, curated by Leslie Anne Anderson.⁵⁴⁵ We were drawn to visiting this exhibition not only due to the hand-knit and woven artwork in the exhibition, but also because of the themes of collaboration and cultural exchange in the show. Anderson emphasizes that family and cultural conversation through materiality is infused throughout this exhibit, saying,

the works in *M(other) Tongues* communicate a dialogic call and response between the family members, a back and forth visual conversation where abstract motifs are translated from one medium into another. The exhibition features an installation of hand-knit and woven works inspired by familial traditions—Bodhild’s mother’s rag rugs (*matte*), and the drawings and weavings of Anni Albers—who many consider the mother of modern textiles. Displayed on an architectural frame that can be seen from multiple angles, the intergenerational team privilege different visual perspectives, and highlight the process through which the works are made.⁵⁴⁶

The exhibit itself focused on many of the themes relevant to the Textile Studies GRC. It is rare to find knitted works exhibited in a fine arts venue. This exhibit used wood frames to display the canvases in the center of the space. Visitors circulated around the works to view the knotted backs and the finished fronts. This builds on the question of the genre of textiles. Are they art or craft? How does an exhibition at the Nordic Museum differ from one at an anthropology-focused museum such as the Burke Museum, or at a fine arts institution such as the Seattle Asian Art Museum?

Additionally, our Textile Studies GRC event occurred during a reception for the Nordic Museum’s biennial knitting conference. Graduate students from the departments of Classics, 3D

⁵⁴⁵ National Nordic Museum, 2021.

⁵⁴⁶ National Nordic Museum, 2021.

4M and Photo/Media Fine Arts, English, the Jackson School of International Studies, Computer Science, Cinema and Media Studies, and Architecture joined local artists to view the exhibit and participate in a crafting happy hour. Participants made collaborative textile crafts, ate, drank, and chatted. One of the best responses I heard at this event was from a Computer Science PhD student who expressed how happy she was to talk with people who know how to knit. We were thrilled to accomplish the aim of bringing scholars, artists, and members of the public together at the inaugural Textile Studies GRC event.

4.5.2 *Object Lessons*

The Textile Studies GRC also aimed to provide a venue and platform for graduate students to share their research with a cross-disciplinary and public audience. Our second event, *Object Lessons: Lightning Talks*, invited graduate students from various departments to present their research in short talks. We planned this event to be fully remote through the Zoom platform, which allowed us to invite speakers and audience members from outside of Seattle to join us. We even had one video submission from a Classics PhD studying abroad in Rome. There were six speakers from the departments of Human Centered Design and Engineering, Computer Science, Classics, Civil Engineering, and Anthropology. Brett Halperin (PhD student, Human Centered Design and Engineering) shared his project AIRBRUSH: Hyperfabric. Brett used AR/VR/3D technology to create an innovative and interactive storytelling fabric to amplify countercultural voices via clothing. Grace Funsten (PhD candidate, Classics) illuminated how the Temple of Minerva in Nerva's Roman Forum depicts the weaving contest between Arachne and Minerva. Megan Kelly Hofmann (PhD candidate at Carnegie Mellon Human Computer Interaction Institute and visiting researcher at the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science)

presented her research on machine-knit objects, which were created with artificial intelligence. Kate Hallstead (graduate student, Civil Engineering-Supply Chain, Transportation and Logistics) examined Raphael's grand tapestries, which were commissioned by Pope Leo X and survive only in later-commissioned reproductions, in drawings, or in legend. Lauryn Hanley (PhD student, Classics) demonstrated how the Liber Linteus Zagrabensis, an Etruscan linen book, first functioned as a liturgical calendar inscribed on fabric and was later repurposed for mummification. Finally, Jimil Ataman (PhD candidate, Education and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania) discussed how garment construction provides ethnographic reflexivity for her research on Slow Fashion communities. The Slow Fashion movement is modelled on the goals of the Slow Food movement and advocates for environmental and social justice in the fashion industry by focusing on the problems of overproduction and overconsumption of garments. Jimil focused on a pair of olive twill trousers, designed by pattern maker Vivian Shao Chen and which multiple participants in her research study had made. By making her own pair, Jimil shared that the time-intensive process and multiple mock-ups helped her better understand the Slow Fashion movement.

Presenters spoke about how one object can reveal the history, materials, labor, and relationships involved in textiles. From the threads of each talk emerged a discussion on the variable meanings of "materiality" that cross disciplinary boundaries. Interestingly, four of the presenters discussed textiles that feature as part of their primary research interests. Two presenters, however, discussed textiles that are not their current primary research interests. For example, Kate Hallstead is a graduate student in the Supply Chain, Transportation, and Logistics department but discussed Raphael's tapestries. These moments highlight how the graduate student experience can be improved by reaching across disciplinary boundaries. When graduate

students can come together from various departments, they can hold onto research topics that are part of their interests but are not their primary area of focus.

4.5.3 *On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset*

For our third event, *On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset*, we invited Daniela Rosner (Human Centered Design and Engineering) and Afroditi Psarra (Digital Arts and Experimental Media) to lead a workshop that was inspired by a class they co-taught. ‘On The Bias: Understanding Error, Skew, and Systemic Harm in Machine Learning Algorithms’ was a project-based course offered jointly by the HCDE and DXARTs departments. They describe the goal of this course as examining “the merging of data science and arts and design practices.”⁵⁴⁷ The structure of the course is motivated by Ruha Benjamin’s assertion that the key to rooting out the injustice built into systems of data analysis begins with reclaiming agency to remake these systems. As Benjamin puts it,

If it is the case that inequity and injustice [are] woven into the very fabric of our societies, then that means each twist, coil, and code is a chance for us to weave new patterns, practices, and politics. The vastness of the problem will be its undoing once we accept that we are pattern makers.⁵⁴⁸

Rosner and Psarra take this stance as a building block for designing a course that integrates design practices with examining bias. They state,

we believe that arts and design practice offer an important and uniquely critical perspective on bias in our everyday encounters with data. We see these practices as integral to data science education—offering vital tools for grappling with the structural impacts, limitations, and opportunities around AI systems.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ Rosner and Psarra 2021a.

⁵⁴⁸ Rosner and Psarra 2021a.citing Benjamin, 2020 (ICLR keynote).

⁵⁴⁹ Rosner and Psarra 2021a.

The course uses hands-on experiments to unpack “some of the world views and assumptions baked into our everyday data-driven environments.”⁵⁵⁰

For the Textile Studies GRC event, Rosner and Psarra led a workshop on ‘Crafting a Dataset.’ They describe this project thus:

Using a piece of cloth (or multiple pieces of cloth), cut on the bias to create a data set of at least 20 different instances. Your data set could be visual (made of pictures or sketches of the cloth), sonic (made of sound recordings connected with the cloth, action of cutting, cloth manipulation, or spoken text of the actions), audiovisual (in the form of video or another time-based media), or could be text-based.⁵⁵¹

Although we hoped to offer this workshop in person, we transitioned to an online format to accommodate community needs. However, participants were still able to have a hands-on experience by making their own data sets through cutting on the bias.

Bias cut is a technique that changes a non-stretch woven fabric into one with some stretch. In sewing and garment construction,

Bias cut means to ‘be cut on the grain’. Rather than following the straight line of the weave, the bias cut places the pattern at a 45° angle on the woven fabric. At this angle, the ‘warp’ and ‘weft’ threads give the fabric more of an elastic ‘stretch.’ The bias cut is popular for accentuating body-lines and creating more fluid curves or soft drapes. It was championed in the 1920s by Madeleine Vionnet and later became one of John Galliano’s signature styles.⁵⁵²

There is a linguistic relationship between ‘bias’ in relation to statistics and data science and ‘bias cuts.’ The former means “distortion of a statistical result arising from the method of sampling, measurement, analysis,”⁵⁵³ and the latter comes from ‘bias’ meaning “a slanting or sloping line, a diagonal; *spec.* a (notional) line running diagonally or at an angle to the warp or weft of a woven

⁵⁵⁰ Rosner and Psarra 2021a.

⁵⁵¹ Rosner and Psarra 2021b.

⁵⁵² Morton 2023.

⁵⁵³ OED ‘bias’ *s.v.* 6.

fabric; (also) an edge, cut, seam, etc., of a fabric following such a line.”⁵⁵⁴ This cut is not as simple as it sounds. It takes specific tools and training to achieve mastery of the cut. This workshop, therefore, involved learning this technique, learning about data sets, and reflecting on how human processes build in or reduce bias. Rosner and Psarra asked their students to reflect on the datasets constructed in this workshop with questions such as “How could a machine learning system use this data set? What kinds of cultural biases (assumptions, stereotypes, harms, exclusions) might it perpetuate or challenge?”⁵⁵⁵ Thus, this event allowed us to consider many of the themes animating the Textile Studies GRC while providing a remote yet hands-on workshop.

4.5.4 *Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum*

For our fourth event, we organized a visit to the University of Washington’s Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture. Kathy Dougherty (Collections Manager of Oceanic and Asian Culture) and Dr. Holly M. Barker (UW Anthropology and Curator of Oceanic and Asian Culture) led a tour of textile collections not currently on display. This event prioritized getting up close to a rich collection of textiles. Though we could only bring ten participants, that small capacity enabled participants greater access to the collection, such as a close-up view of the woolly dog blanket, a woven blanket made from the fibers of a Coast Salish wool dog.⁵⁵⁶ This intimate setting also allowed us to discuss the preservation process for textile collections and the particular relationship that natural history museums such as the Burke have with members of various publics who wish to donate textiles or to see culturally relevant textiles. One key goal of our group was learning more about how curators build and maintain relationships with various

⁵⁵⁴ OED ‘bias’ s.v. 1.a.

⁵⁵⁵ Rosner and Psarra 2021b.

⁵⁵⁶ Al-Samarrai 2019.

publics. The directors of the Burke Museum see this communitarian goal as integral to their work, noting,

Relationships maintained between communities and the Burke Museum preserve the ingenuity, creativity, science, and complex knowledge of these cultural resources. Community members are the experts in these areas, and we are the caretakers.⁵⁵⁷

This change in positioning from being the instructors of cultural knowledge to the caretakers of cultural artifacts is key to the success of the museum. In visiting the textile collection at the Burke Museum, we opened up a space to bring artists, scholars, and members of the public together to learn more about how and why the curators maintain their collections.

4.5.5 *Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas in Conversation at the Henry*

For our fifth event, we invited the Seattle-based artist Barbara Earl Thomas to give a talk at and about her exhibit, *Packaged Black*. Curated by Shamim M. Momin, the exhibit *Packaged Black* was a collaborative, multi-media installation that brought together the work of Derrick Adams (b. 1970, Baltimore, MD) and Barbara Earl Thomas (b. 1948, Seattle, WA) at the Henry Art Gallery from October 02, 2021 to May 01, 2022. The synthesis of a multi-year and cross-coastal exchange between New York-based Adams and Seattle-based Thomas resulted in a “shared dialogue about representation, Black identity and practices of cultural resistance” that “celebrates the creative imagination, adaptation, and resilience of Black communities.”⁵⁵⁸ A shared dialogue was thus likewise present in the Textile Studies event with Thomas.

When I reached out to Thomas, she suggested holding a discussion rather than a talk.⁵⁵⁹ She was emphatic that this discussion should take place at the exhibit and that she was not an

⁵⁵⁷Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture 2023.

⁵⁵⁸ Bozicnik and Momin 2021, 4.

⁵⁵⁹ Personal communication with Barbara Earl Thomas, 2021.

academic. She asked me why I wanted to invite *her* to this event? What was it about the *Packaged Black* exhibit that prompted interest? This conversation set the tone for us as we planned the event. Rather than putting the onus on a guest speaker to come in and deliver information to the audience who would show up to receive it, we changed how we envision partnerships with guest artists. To facilitate a conversation, we invited participants to explore the exhibit first, then engage in a discussion with Thomas, and finally to re-experience the exhibit with Thomas as a member of the group. This approach allowed participants to engage more deeply with the works in the exhibit and to get to know Thomas in a way that is not as possible in the lecture/question-and-answer event format.

The exhibit invoked textile themes without using fabric or fibers as materials. Adams' work in the exhibit focused on the relationship between adornment and Black culture, especially as fashion, self-styling, and commerce play a role in the formation and expression of Black identities. Of special interest from a textile perspective were Adams' large colorful collages and sculpture that came out of his research into the life and legacy of Patrick Kelly (1954-1990), the influential African American designer.⁵⁶⁰ Thomas' work is likewise interested in Black adornment and fashion practices. She frequently works in "printmaking, glass, drawing, and monumental sculptures made from intricately cut Tyvek and paper [and] translates contemporary realities and lived experience through the visual language of myth and archetypal stories."⁵⁶¹

For the *Packaged Black* exhibit, Thomas created a royal court of her own through a series of cut-paper portraits of friends and colleagues, an immersive installation conceived of as a 'transformation room,' and a monumental dress sculpture made from intricately cut Tyvek that

⁵⁶⁰ Adams and Earl Thomas 2021, 4.

⁵⁶¹ Adams and Earl Thomas 2021, 4.

riffs on the theme of Cinderella’s finery. Sarah Choi describes the contrasts imbued in this ballgown-sculpture, writing,

Cinderella Redressed (2021), an intricately constructed Tyvek dress, is a literal play of juxtapositions: flimsy versus strong, ephemeral against timeless. The garment’s seemingly delicate materiality is accentuated by Thomas’ detailed carving that is illuminated by a light source within; the featherlight work paradoxically appears invincible as it stands dignified, surrounded by a “royal court” of the artist’s papercut portraits of esteemed colleagues and loved ones.⁵⁶²

Thomas paired this monumental dress with a poem stenciled onto the bright yellow gallery wall. She begins this poem by situating the ballgown as a rewriting of a fairytale, writing “Cinderella is my gateway dream / the every person’s story I’ve fashioned black.”⁵⁶³ As Choi notes,

against the history of mis- and under-representation, Thomas’ poem speaks of equity and dignity as she “fashion[s the Cinderella story] black.” At this royal ball, not only is the “courtly stage populated in our image,” per Thomas, but “all are primed to make a mark[:] dapper, elegant, dope.”⁵⁶⁴

The themes of equity and dignity are intricately tied to fashion and fashioning in this exhibit.

Thomas uses the image of silk fabric in relation to dance in the final lines of her poem, saying “I imagine them as they step onto the dance floor / moving like silk / untouchable.”⁵⁶⁵ During the event, Thomas spoke about her experience making clothes and the power it gave her.

Throughout the exhibit, adornment was paired with transformation. One of the most striking features of the exhibit was Thomas’ *Transformation Room* (2021) installation. Passing through a curtain next to the monumental ballgown, participants moved into a room draped in

⁵⁶² Choi 2022, 16. One of the interesting aspects of this project is how it has impacted the work and scholarship of the participants who attended each event. Sarah Choi, a graduate student in the department of Cinema and Media Studies, and a member of the inaugural cohort of Barclay Simpson Scholars in Public, attended many of our events. As a member of the Black Embodiment Studio, she had independently planned to write a review of Thomas’ work in the *Packaged Black* exhibit. Attending our event allowed Choi to gain further insight into this exhibit while walking through the art with the artist.

⁵⁶³ Adams and Earl Thomas 2021, 9.

⁵⁶⁴ Choi 2022, 17.

⁵⁶⁵ Adams and Earl Thomas 2021, 9.

Thomas' papercut lace. Soft lighting suffused through the intricately cut Tyvek and projected patterns along the ceiling. Thomas placed *Beauty in the Vines* (2021), a single papercut portrait of a young Black girl above a vanity table in the center of one wall, as if it were a reflection in the vanity mirror of a powder room. As Choi notes, "in this regal room of light and magic, the young girl is a princess like Cinderella, nobility in a fairytale world reconceived by Thomas."⁵⁶⁶

If I had to choose only one event from the year to plan again, it would be Thomas' visit. It was truly magical to learn about Thomas' process of collaboration with Adams and with the community members who helped her cut her Tyvek installations. After Thomas' conversation with the audience, participants walked through the exhibit together to examine the details in each room of *Packaged Black*. After passing through Thomas' room-sized installation, *Transformation Room*, participants entered a room empty of artwork on the walls with a cut paper disco-ball projecting shapes from Adams' and Thomas' work. Music played as Thomas and I first chatted, then danced together.

4.5.6 *Fast Fingers and Slow Fashion: Crafting Dissertation Research*

For our fifth event, we invited Caitlin Postal (PhD candidate in the University of Washington English department)⁵⁶⁷ and Jimil Ataman (PhD candidate in the departments of Education and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania) to discuss incorporating garment construction into their Humanities and social science dissertation projects. At this event, both Postal and Ataman presented their work, connecting the experiential practice of making as a

⁵⁶⁶ Choi 2022, 17.

⁵⁶⁷ Caitlin Postal has since completed her degree and now holds a PhD in English from the University of Washington.

critical component for their research: for Postal, medieval literary studies; for Ataman, ethnographic research into communities of practice.

As stated earlier, I began planning the UW Textile Studies GRC project as an inaugural Barclay Simpson Scholar in Public fellow in the same cohort as Caitlin Postal. Part of what motivated me to pursue this project was Caitlin Postal's public scholarship project, *Stitching Time: A Making Project*.⁵⁶⁸ For her project, Postal used the processes of historical garment construction to better interpret and understand the opening of the fourteenth-century Middle English poem, *Awynters off Arthure*. This project was documented online in an Omeka exhibition <<https://caitlinpostal.ds.lib.uw.edu/stitchingtime>> and became "Making a Medieval Hood," the fourth chapter in Postal's dissertation, "Stitching Time: Transtemporal Labor and Middle English Literature."⁵⁶⁹ As I learned about the shared themes in our projects, I wanted to plan an event with Postal that would showcase her research and allow her to connect with the community brought together by the Textile Studies GRC. Moreover, Postal became an integral Textile Studies GRC collaborator and assisted in planning events and bringing them to fruition. Our fifth event, therefore, was a collaborative effort that enabled Postal to talk about her innovative dissertation research in a hybrid format.

Postal argues that the value of her project lies in the first-hand knowledge she was able to experience by participating in craft practices involved in constructing a medieval garment. She notes,

integrating the insights supplied by modern practitioners presents an opportunity to recover a simulacrum of the material and textile literacies presumed by authors of medieval texts. Reproductions of historic garments can provide object biographies and

⁵⁶⁸ Postal, 2021.

⁵⁶⁹ Postal (2021) created a medieval hood based on "London hood no. 246 with an extended shoulder mantle to mimic the length of the woman's hood on folio 171r of MS Bodley 264. The creative details and embellishments are inspired by the description of Guinevere's clothing at the opening to the fourteenth century *Awynters off Arthure*."

historical craft labor, as well as an embodied experience in both making and wearing historical garments across time.⁵⁷⁰

Through her sewing project, Postal uses craft “to create a physical iteration of literary close reading.”⁵⁷¹ She uses the process of garment construction to glean the embodied sensory knowledge that may have been relevant to the medieval audiences of the text, arguing that “materiality is not simply accessible as a historical artifact to be examined but as a meaning-laden, interactive experience. What we learn from making the past may come to bear on how we understand the past.”⁵⁷²

As I started my research into textile practitioners and academics, I came across Jimil Ataman’s work.⁵⁷³ Her dissertation is an ethnographical and auto-ethnographical investigation of the Slow Fashion Movement. She follows a group of people in the Pacific Northwest who participate in the Slow Fashion Movement by constructing their own clothing, mending, or otherwise participating in Slow Fashion clothing. Her research also involves sewing a complete wardrobe and documenting the process on Instagram. Ataman’s research “examines how everyday practices, alternative models of fashion production, and online coalition are becoming a site for negotiating broader issues of ethical consumption, sustainability, anti-capitalism.”⁵⁷⁴

Although Postal and Ataman research different subject matter in diverse time periods, their work shares two significant aspects. First, from spinning, to dyeing, to sewing, they both incorporate textile processes into their research methodologies; and second, they are both committed to sharing their research with public audiences beyond the traditional academic

⁵⁷⁰ Postal 2022, 1.

⁵⁷¹ Postal 2022, 1.

⁵⁷² Postal 2022, 1-2.

⁵⁷³ I believe Caitlin Postal first directed me to check out Jimil’s work! See Ataman 2021 on Ataman’s dissertation project; Textile Society of America (2022, October 3) for an interview with Ataman; and Slone (2022, April 5) for an article featuring an interview with Ataman.

⁵⁷⁴ Ataman, 2021.

venues. Ataman shares her research process while building ties to the community that she researches through her Instagram account @jimil.goes.slow.⁵⁷⁵ Postal similarly shares her practice of constructing historical garments on Instagram on her account @goingpostale as she participates in historical reenactment and costuming communities. In her reflection on the public scholarship aspects of *Stitching Time*, she notes the value of participating in these communities, writing,

While medievalists often dismiss when cultures of the past might be invoked in recreation, the exclusion of hobbyist medievalists limits the ability for conversations beyond the academy. *Stitching Time* provides an opportunity to move laterally between traditional scholarly discourse and public communities which remake the past. The popularity of historic reenactment indicates that there are many people who make and find meaning in material objects of the past, even those which must be remade for personal use.⁵⁷⁶

Postal rebukes an academic instinct to look down upon reenactment communities. Her project shows the value of engaging in the materiality that fashions the past.

After the event, both Postal and Ataman documented the event on their respective Instagram accounts. In her post on May 6, 2022, which is part of a larger “Me Made May” series on Instagram, Ataman wrote,

On this [#memademay2022](#) day 6, I had the pleasure to join [@goingpostale](#) and [@uwtextilestudies](#) for an in-person talk! As a mostly pandemic phd, it has been one of the greatest gifts of my fieldwork that to find a community of scholars who support my work. And I simply loved this opportunity to share a bit about my dissertation research. Thanks to all the folks who joined us!

I made this [#antheablousehack](#) for the occasion. It’s in a gorgeous cotton that I got from Elfridas Fine Fabrics, in Boulder.

[#memademay](#) [#memadewardrobe](#) [#antheablouse](#) [#sewistsofinstagram](#) [#slowfashionmovement](#) [#slowfashionethnography](#)⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ Ataman, 2022 May 6.

⁵⁷⁶ Postal 2022.

⁵⁷⁷ Ataman 2022, May 6.



Figure 4.1 An image shared on Jimil’s Instagram account on May 6, 2022, of her presenting her research with images of her Instagram account in the background

Postal shared a similar sentiment, writing on May 9, 2022:

feeling very fortunate to have shared the stage with @jimil.goes.slow last week! we both spoke about craft as a crucial element for our qualitative dissertation work, and we shared how sewing garments allows us to connect with varied communities across time & place!! [...]

my entire dissertation has been written during the pandemic, and it was very affirming to share aspects of that work in person. to the friends and family who joined in the virtual stream, thank you for showing up to watch our talks (and sorry again for the tech issues at the start).

p.s. @jimil.goes.slow made her dress & I made my hood and top.

#phdresearch #medievalhood #handsewing #memade⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁸ Postal, 2022 May 9. See Figure 3.2



Figure 4.2 An Image shared on Caitlin Postal’s Instagram account on May 9, 2022. Jimil Ataman and Caitlin Postal presenting on their dissertation research while wearing garments they each constructed.

As both Ataman and Postal note, the experience of dissertating during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in feelings of isolation. This event allowed Postal and Ataman to share their work with each other and a larger audience of community members. In addition to our in-person audience, we streamed the talks live over Zoom. Initially, we had planned to have only an in-person event, but we gauged community and family interest to assess the merits of livestreaming the event. My mom really wanted to come, as did Postal’s mother. At this prompting, we opened the event to a hybrid audience. The result of this was that family members and long-distance friends of both speakers were able to watch Ataman and Postal discuss their research.

4.5.7 *Fabric Books and Fashion Plates*

For our final event, we visited the University of Washington's Special Collections to view textile-related objects in UW's collections. Kat Lewis, the assistant Book Arts and Rare Books curator at the University of Washington Libraries, curated a collection of fashion plates, illustrations of fashionable styles of clothing, and artist's books that are made with textiles or deal with textile themes. One of the aims of this event was to explore textile collections held by the University of Washington. This visit also allowed us to learn more about the history of textile research at the University of Washington.

The current lack of a Textile or Costume department at the University of Washington was a motivating factor for the Textile Studies GRC. But this has not always been the case. When I began the UW Textile Studies project, I started to learn more about the textile resources housed at the University of Washington and the history of these pieces. Through conversations with professors across the campus and curators at the Burke Museum, the Henry Art Gallery and University of Washington Libraries, I learned that the University of Washington once had a renowned School of Home Economics. In 1909, the Home Economics department was founded. This department became the School of Home Economics in 1930. In 1916, the Home Economics building was completed. In 1946, this building was renamed Raitt Hall in honor of Effie Isobel Raitt, the director of the Home Economics unit for more than 30 years. With sub-units in Textile Science, Costume Studies, Human Nutrition, Dietetics, and Foods, the School of Home Economics became the School of Nutritional Sciences and Textiles in 1978. At this time, students could earn a B.S. or M.S. in Textile Science and B.A. or M.A. in Costume Studies. In the 1930s, the faculty in the Home Economics department and the School of Drama started collecting textiles and costumes. These items became the Costume and Textile Study Center in

1958. The collection, now numbering more than 18,000 pieces, was transferred to the Henry Art Gallery in 1982, just before the School of Nutritional Sciences and Textiles closed in 1983.⁵⁷⁹

When the costumes and clothes were transferred to the Henry, the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections and Archives received the books and texts from the Textile Study Center. During our visit, we learned about the Fashion Plate Collection that currently resides in the UW Special Collections and the online database for this collection.⁵⁸⁰

Fashion plates began to appear in ladies' fashion magazines during the last decades of the eighteenth century.⁵⁸¹ They were traditionally rendered through etching, line engraving, or lithograph with hand coloring. These plates would be used by tailors, dressmakers, stores, and their customers to demonstrate and communicate the styles that they could make or sell. The plates housed at the University of Washington's Special Collections were first collected by Blanche Payne, a professor of historic costume and apparel design in the School of Home Economics at the University of Washington from 1927-1966. The Fashion Plate Collection database describes how Payne engaged in intensive research on historic costumes and clothing:

As part of her studies of non-Western folk dress and embroidery technique, she traveled extensively in Europe, collecting original ethnic costumes, textile and embroidery examples. Her primary interest was Eastern Europe. She considered the Balkan countries a valuable source for studying ethnic dress in its original context and wanted to provide her students with primary source material for the study of modern costume construction and fine craftsmanship.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁹ Henry Art Gallery, 2023; Nutritional Sciences Program, 2023

⁵⁸⁰ UW Libraries Special Collections and Cataloging, 2002.

⁵⁸¹ Many of the plates in the University of Washington's Special Collections are from "the leading French, British, American, and other continental fashion journals of the 19th century and early 20th century: *Belle assemblée*; *Le bon ton*; *Le Follet*, *courrier des salons*; *Journal des dames et des modes*; *Godey's lady's book and magazine*, and others." UW Libraries Special Collections and Cataloging, 2002.

⁵⁸² UW Libraries Special Collections and Cataloging, 2002. On Payne's life and career, see also Ryesky 1986; the visual material (photographs, pattern drawings, watercolor paintings, and postcards) from Payne's travels through Central Europe and the Balkans surveying folk costume in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Albania, and Yugoslavia are archived by Whitney, E. and J. Falk, 2013. See also Henry Art Gallery, 2013, December 12. Unfortunately, her Yugoslavian research failed to result in a full-length publication because of the prohibitive costs of publishing and destruction of some of the color plates during the war years.

In 1965, Payne published what was considered the definitive textbook on the history of costumes. Her *History of Costume: from the ancient Egyptians to the twentieth century* became the primary textbook used nationally for this field.⁵⁸³ Many of the illustrations for this book came from the collection of fashion plates housed in the University of Washington Special Collections.

Fashion plates, along with other textual artifacts from Payne's collections, comprised half of the objects we explored. Artists' books related to textiles or clothing comprised the other half. An artist's book can be defined as "a medium of artistic expression that uses the structure or function of 'book' as inspiration—a work of art in book form."⁵⁸⁴ Lewis curated a selection of artist's books from the UW Libraries Special Collections that were either made of fabric, related to fashion, or in some way depicted textile themes. Selections included *Girdled* by Jessica Spring, *Tapestry* by Tamara Somerfield, among others.⁵⁸⁵

This final event allowed us to explore the textile-related collections in the University of Washington Libraries' Special Collections. Viewing the artifacts during this event allowed members of the GRC to explore how textiles relate to texts. The etymology of 'text' goes back to the Latin *textus*, which carries the literal meaning of 'thing woven' and comes to define a literary style, i.e., the texture of a work. Textile creation is a common vehicle in metaphors for story creation and transmission in the ancient Greek and Roman traditions. Many of the art books that we were able to view played with this theme. Others brought to the fore themes of intimacy and gender. Some used embroidered garments as pages. Others were shaped as a small bed, using the bedsheets as pages to tell a story that is read by unmaking the bed form. Questions of curation

⁵⁸³ Payne, B., & Curtis, E. 1965.

⁵⁸⁴ Smithsonian Libraries, 2023.

⁵⁸⁵ Spring, J., A. Mayor, S. Moore, and G. Cooksey, 2016 and Somerfield cited in Huntington *et al.* 2016.

and collections again arose when thinking about how the university's textile archives were split between the Library Special Collections and the Henry Art Gallery.

4.6 ASSESSING THE SUCCESS OF THE UW TEXTILE STUDIES GRC

Returning to the Textile Studies GRC's goals, I demonstrate how we achieved these aims based on our tracked data. To reiterate the goals stated above, the six main goals we developed for the project were to 1) make our programming as cross-disciplinary as possible, 2) make our events as accessible as possible and reach the widest academic and non-academic participants as possible while still making our events conducive to building community, 3) have our events be tactile and engaged in a hands-on way in material culture, 4) showcase the textile collections and experts at the University of Washington, 5) provide a platform for graduate student research, and finally 6) to use our small budget as efficiently as possible. Ultimately, we found that it was impossible to achieve all our aims with each event. However, by balancing the programming, we were able to work towards our overall goals based on the programming we developed over the course of the year.

Our first goal was to make our programming as diverse as possible across and beyond the university campus. It is always easiest to reach people in one's own immediate field. We did end up with most of our attendees coming from the department of Classics, but we also had attendees from across the university. In the following chart, events are listed in the first row on the upper x-axis with attendance numbers in the second row. Subsequent rows are organized by disciplinary area on the y-axis, color-coded to broad area and then defined by specific field of inquiry. The number of total attendees in each event is listed in the second row.

Table 4.2 Cross-disciplinary Participation in UW Textile Studies GRC Events

		Nordic Museum	Object Lessons	Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum	On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset	Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas	Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion	Fabric Books and Fashion Plates	Total
Total	Attendees	17	33	10	18	29	42	7	156
Humanities	Classics	5	7	4	2	5	3	4	30
	English		2			2	2	1	7
	DXARTS		1						1
	Film and Media	2	1			1			4
	NELC	2	1						3
	Fine Art: 3D4M	4	0			1			5
	Art History + Design			1				1	2
	Drama					1			1
	Scandinavian Studies					1			1
	French and Italian Studies						1		1
STEM	Human Centered Design and Engineering		2	1	3	1	1	1	9
	Computer Science	2	2						4
	Civil Engineering- Supply Chain, Transportation and Logistics,		1						1
	College of the Environment					1			1
Information Science	iSchool		1						1
Social Science	Jackson School	1	0						1
	Geography						1		1
Public	Public/other institution	3	17	4	2	15	34	0	75
Unknown	Unknown		1		1	1			3

Overall, this chart demonstrates the total reach of the UW Textile Studies GRC with 156 total attendees. It also illustrates how much reach we had across the University of Washington, showing that we had participants from 17 different departments. Moreover, most of the attendees came from Humanities departments, though we were also able to attract participants from the Social Sciences, STEM, and Informational Science departments.

Our second goal was to make our events as accessible as possible and to balance the goal of reaching the widest audience possible with the goal of building true connections between community members. The following chart the events are listed in the first row of the Y-axis. The chart compares the date of the event with the capacity, number of tickets reserved, number of attendees, departments represented, and total number of members of “the public.”

Table 4.3 Reach While Building Community

Event	Date	Capacity	Tickets Reserved	# of Attendees	Departments represented	Number of members of “the public”
Field Trip: National Nordic Museum, M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias	11/06/21	30	29	17	5	3
Object Lessons Lightning Talks	12/03/21	Aimed for 30	36	33	9	17
Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum	02/25/22	10	10	10	3	4
On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset	03/10/22	30	26	18	6	6
Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas	04/08/22	30	29	29	7	15
Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion	05/06/22	35 (in person); 30 (online)	30 (in person); 21 (online)	42	5	34
Fabric Books and Fashion Plates: UW Libraries Special Collections	05/19/22	15	8	7	4	0

This chart demonstrates that the *Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion* event had the greatest share of attendees coming from outside of the University of Washington, with 81% of attendees being

members of the public or other institutions. This event was the only hybrid event we planned, which allowed for both in-person and online attendees. The *Fabric Books and Fashion Plates* had the fewest public attendees and was also the event with the lowest attendance rate in relation to the event capacity. For all the other events we either reached full capacity in reserved tickets or came very close to reaching the full capacity for reserved tickets. We may question, however, whether these numbers prove that we were able to truly build community. Many attendees that came to events only came to one event over the course of the year and did not return for further programming.

Our third goal was to offer hands-on programming. We defined an event as being “hands-on” if participants were involved in visually exploring textile objects during the event or created an object classified as a textile during the event. Events were not considered “hands-on” if they involved listening to textile research solely. The only event that did not include a textile activity was the *Object Lessons Lightning Talks*. Some of the hands-on events involved making textile crafts, such as the National Nordic Museum field trip. Others involved examining textile artifacts in person, such as the Fabric Books and Fashion Plates event at the UW Libraries Special Collections and the visit to the Burke Museum’s collections. Unsurprisingly, texture and the tactile experience is a key characteristic of textile objects. My collaborators and I were most interested in planning events where we could include tactile experiences.

Fourth, we aimed to spotlight the textile resources available to students and members of the public at the University of Washington and in the broader Seattle area. Three of the events we hosted featured a textile collection, exhibit, or amenity on the University of Washington campus. Three events also featured textile collections, exhibits, or amenities open to the public in

Seattle. The following chart identifies which events included visits to textile collections or exhibits at the University of Washington or elsewhere in Seattle.

Table 4.4 Textile Collections and Resources Featured

Event	Did this event feature a textile collection/amenity on the UW campus?	Did this event feature a textile collection or amenity in Seattle open to the public?
Field Trip: National Nordic Museum, M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias	No	Yes
Object Lessons Lightning Talks	No	No
Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum	Yes	Yes
On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset	No	No
Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas	Yes	Yes
Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion	No	No
Fabric Books and Fashion Plates: UW Libraries Special Collections	Yes	No

Out of the seven events planned, only two did not feature a textile collection or exhibit. Through working to highlight available textile resources, we also built relationships with curators and museum staff who were thrilled to partner with us to reach a mutually beneficial goal.

Our fifth goal was to provide a platform to showcase graduate student research to a greater community. Only two out of the seven events ended up fulfilling this goal. However, the *Object Lessons Lightning Talks* showcased eight graduate students' research and the *Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion* featured two additional graduate students' research. One lesson we learned from organizing both these events is that there is a lot more labor required to plan an event that features multiple students, especially when the event requires writing a call for presentations. It took much more work to plan the *Object Lessons Lightning Talks* than any of the other events. These two events, however, provided an important precedent and model for future opportunities to showcase graduate student work. After hosting the first set of lightning talks we developed a larger group of students interested in participating in similar events in the

future. Moreover, we featured the research of faculty at the University of Washington in the *On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset* event and the work of curators at the University of Washington's art and natural history museums during the *Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas* and *Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum* events respectively. These events allowed graduate students and members of the public to learn more about the work of staff, faculty, and students working with textiles at the University of Washington.

Our sixth and final goal was to use our small budget of \$1000 to the best of our ability. As a group, my collaborators and I discussed how best to allocate the funds we received from the Simpson Center for the Humanities. We chose to take advantage of free local events such as the *M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias* exhibit. Additionally, we made use of the available resources at the University of Washington. It was most important to us to be able to fairly compensate speakers. We spent 70% of our budget to compensate Barbara Earl Thomas and Jimil Ataman for their labor. The following chart displays how we allocated our budget for the year, breaking down our expenses into costs for venues, supplies, speakers, and food.

Table 4.5 Budget for the Textile Studies GRC 2021-2022

Event	Venue	Supplies	Speaker	Food	Total
Field Trip: National Nordic Museum, M(other) Tongues: Bodhild and Las Hermanas Iglesias	0	0	0	0	FREE!
Object Lessons Lightning Talks	0	0	0	0	FREE!
Behind the Scenes at the Burke Museum	0		0	0	FREE!
On the Bias: Crafting a Dataset	0	\$17		0	\$17
Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas	0	0	\$400	0	\$400
Fast Fingers & Slow Fashion	0	\$0	\$300	\$100	\$400
Fabric Books and Fashion Plates: UW Libraries Special Collections	0	0	0	0	FREE!
Website Costs					\$129
Final Total					\$946
Remaining					\$54

Prior to the events we also used our financial resources to fund a website. In the end our financial budget was less restrictive than our time budget. Planning and facilitating the events required a relatively large time commitment from my collaborators and myself. We also found that our participants' time was limited.

Altogether, we accomplished the goals we had set by balancing them throughout the seven events. For example, the *Paper Dresses: Barbara Earl Thomas* event allowed us to reach a large public and cross-disciplinary audience, showcase a resource at the University of Washington, and offer hands-on programming, but it was also our most expensive event. In contrast, the *Object Lessons Lightning Talks* did not cost anything and allowed us to showcase graduate student research, but it was not a hands-on event.

In conclusion, I will address the MLA's main guidelines for evaluating public Humanities scholarship stated above, beginning with the second to fourth guidelines before returning to the first one. I hope to have addressed the second guideline which asks about the form of the project and how it was shared with its audience in describing each event above. We adapted to the needs of our various publics by offering in-person, hybrid, and online events. Moreover, this project was mainly disseminated in a participatory model due to the material themes that it addresses and the goal of building intellectual community. For this reason, we offered as much hands-on programming as possible. The third guideline suggests evaluating "the extent of existing deliverables and, where relevant, the future trajectory of the project."⁵⁸⁶ I led the first year of the Textile Studies GRC project and handed off leadership for the 2022-2023 school year to Lauryn Hanley. Part of my aim in including an archive of this project as a dissertation chapter is the hope that this will lay the groundwork for future graduate students to

⁵⁸⁶ MLA 2022, 2.

receive recognition for their public Humanities projects. The fourth guideline is to consider “the nature and extent of collaboration where applicable.” When I began this project, I had underestimated how hard it is to reconcile collaboration with efficient program management. As a team of four we worked together to prioritize which events to plan. Initially, however, we had grand ideals about building in collaboration with the wider community that we hoped to reach. We sent out surveys to graduate students across the university and as much as possible used the information we gathered to guide our decision making.⁵⁸⁷

Finally, to the first guideline:

1. the scope and impact of the project (How substantial is the work undertaken? What are its effects in the geographic and intellectual communities in which it participates? How does it change what we know or what we do?)⁵⁸⁸

The number and the diversity of attendees demonstrates the scope and the impact of the project undertaken. The numbers in the table of *Cross-disciplinary Participation in UW Textile Studies GRC Events* clearly demonstrate the scope of the project. The impact of these events is much more intangible. One piece of qualitative evidence of the impact this project had was when a participant in the Computer Science department who researches knitting machines remarked that it was wonderful to be able to talk about the knitting aspect of her work with people who understand the process.

The true impact in terms of how it changes what we collectively know and how we act is not captured in the data we collected while conducting this project. I speculate that to a variety of degrees the participants in the project learned what I did: that the study of textiles is more varied than we had at first anticipated. Focusing on textiles allows for conversations across a myriad

⁵⁸⁷ MLA 2022, 2.

⁵⁸⁸ MLA 2022, 2.

number of scholarly disciplines, from Environmental Studies, to History, to Computer Science. The fact that textiles are ubiquitous across human societies but paradoxically unique and ephemeral markers of time, place, and culture makes them the perfect theme for a cross-disciplinary project. Moreover, textiles offer a unique opportunity to build reciprocal relationships for knowledge sharing between textile practitioners, with their store of experiential knowledge, and scholars in various fields. The GRC changed “what we do” by providing cross-disciplinary intellectual exchange and bringing members of the public into the conversation.

The space for intellectual exchange was partially limited by the resources that my collaborators and I had in terms of time and money, but mostly by the length of the project. We were more successful at planning and hosting events that reached cross-disciplinary audiences than I expected when I began the project. One of the key things that I learned, however, is how difficult it is to build a space for sustained cultural and intellectual exchange. I became aware of how much collective work is required to maintain cultural and intellectual institutions. A key way that the Textile Studies GRC relates to the larger themes of my dissertation is that it was an experience of scaffolding intellectual exchange. This was extremely difficult. The difficulty and the limits that I reached, however, made me aware of how fragile cultural institutions are and how much collective work is required to maintain them. By investigating Plato’s *Timaeus-Critias* in parallel with directing the research cluster, I became more sensitive to the threats to cultural and intellectual exchange that would have been present in Plato’s world.

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APPENDIX I: A NOTE ON PROFESSIONALIZATION

One argument for supporting public scholarship projects in the Humanities is practical. The job market in the field of Classics is notoriously competitive and, to be frank, quite bleak. This story is no different in most other fields in the Humanities. There is an open question about how to train graduate students in such a way that they will receive the rigorous training necessary to be competitive on the academic job market, while also providing them other avenues of professional success. In their recent *Daedalus* article, “The Case for Bringing Experiential Learning into the Humanities,” Edward J. Balleisen and Rita Chin advocate for incorporating public scholarship projects into Humanities PhD programs as a way to “build intellectual confidence, expand horizons, and foster motivation to pursue additional research challenges” in addition to “cultivating teamwork, leadership, and communications skills.”⁵⁸⁹ They elaborate further, arguing,

training in the Humanities at all levels continues to emphasize the cultivation of intellectual expertise far more than other capacities that matter greatly in the twenty-first-century world of work, such as leadership, collaboration with diverse colleagues, and versatility in communication. These latter “soft skills” facilitate effectiveness across economic sectors and types of organizations, including those in higher education, and they rank highly among the qualities that employers say they look for in job applicants.

While I complete my dissertation, I am currently employed at a large tech company. Leading the Textile Studies GRC project helped me directly and indirectly land a job outside of academia. I argue that it is not just that I was able to develop the “soft skills” that Balleisen and Chin cite, but importantly, that I was able to build experiences that were legible to audiences beyond academia. Although pursuing and finishing my dissertation project is seen as valuable to external

⁵⁸⁹ Balleisen and Chin 2022, 138.

audiences, building a website and functioning as a program manager in organizing and promoting the Textile Studies GRC allowed me space to gain diverse experiences that showcased my skills to hiring committees beyond academia.

The most valuable professional development that I did not anticipate was being able to learn more about the roles and jobs that I enjoyed and the duties that did not suit me. I loved the process of talking to curators and researchers across the campus about the kind of events that we could put on, whereas I found the work of writing and publishing social media posts to promote events highly undesirable. Successfully running the UW Textile Studies GRC allowed me to gain confidence in facilitating non-traditional academic projects. This confidence helped immensely with pursuing a professional path beyond the academy.

