

capacità di attualizzare; le osservazioni etimologiche e filologiche e, infine, il ricorso al commento "interno" del testo, commentare cioè il *de inventione* col *de inventione* stesso (e, in 7 casi, con la *Rhetorica ad Herennium*). A seguire si trova un esame sistematico della tradizione manoscritta del commento (cap. 3) e un'analisi delle relazioni tra i manoscritti (cap. 4). Nella costituzione del testo B. distingue due *recensiones*, *alpha* (costituita da cinque manoscritti, il cui più importante è l'unico integro: H) e *beta* (sostanzialmente un solo manoscritto: T), ma quella che viene pubblicata in effetti è la *recensio alpha*, l'unica riconducibile integralmente direttamente a M., mentre *beta* è sostanzialmente un collage di più commenti, incluso quello di M. presente in *alpha*.

Questa sezione si conclude con una Bibliografia selezionata e una Nota al testo, nella quale si rende conto dei criteri di presentazione del testo critico. Nella seconda parte del volume si trova il testo critico vero e proprio delle *glose*. Il testo viene presentato da M. in una *facies* continua; inoltre, per agevolare la lettura, è stato formattato con capoversi e paragrafi facendo riferimento alla divisione in libri, capitoli e paragrafi del *de inventione* secondo l'edizione teubneriana di E. Stroebel. Gli apparati in calce al testo sono tre. Il primo è l'apparato critico vero e proprio, di tipo positivo (nel quale cioè viene in primo luogo presentata la variante accolta nel testo critico); nel secondo e nel terzo si trovano soltanto alcuni cenni relativi rispettivamente alle fonti e alla fortuna (entrambi questi aspetti vengono più ampiamente trattati nel cap. 2 dei Prolegomena).

Chiude il volume una doppia serie di indici: quella dei manoscritti e quella dei nomi.

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Mari Lee Mifsud, *Rhetoric and the Gift: Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Contemporary Communication* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2015), 186pp. ISBN: 9780820704852

Mari Lee Mifsud's elegant and illuminating excavation of the Homeric references in Aristotle's rhetorical theory demonstrates the enduring value of the notion of the gift for the study of rhetoric. It compellingly introduces an alternative metaphor to the familiar logics of rhetoric as an economy, a war, or a cheap trick. In so doing, it not only offers contemporary rhetoricians a versatile hermeneutic that connects rhetorical scholarship to other academic projects but also reminds us of rhetoric's centrality in the social choreography of Aristotle's time as well as our own. The present review of *Rhetoric and the Gift* is inspired and informed by a 2016 tribute panel, organized by Marie-Odile Hobeika for the National Communication Association's annual conference, during which panelists Jane S. Sutton, John Poulakos, Nathan A. Crick, and myself offered commentary and critique.

Explicating classical *poiesis* in *rhetorike*, Mifsud traces the concept of the gift (and gifting) in two interdependent registers: the gift of the pre-figuration

call that demands a response, and, second, the gift in the response, articulated through figuration. With attention to the registers' tension, she challenges Marcel Mauss's widely cited sociological study, which characterizes gifting as a hierarchical negotiation of power through "prestations," the meta-institutional practices that compel gift recipients "to make a return." Mifsud asks, "Can we imagine giving, not figured through cycles of obligatory return?" (p. 143). In her response to this question, we have the essence of Mifsud's contribution to rhetorical theory, for she "explores rhetoric not only at the level of the artful response but [also] at the level of the call and response, or said another way, at the level of the gift and rhetoric prior to and in excess of art" (p. 3). To develop the idea of rhetoric as the gift that exceeds art, Mifsud invokes Diane Davis's "preoriginary rhetoricity," the non-relation in which a call to "inessential solidarity" is issued. This call is by definition from an Other; or it may come as a gift from far away and long ago. Like Davis, Mifsud hopes that "the theory of the gift offers a theory of human solidarity" (p. 4), as long as it is able to resist the practices that conventionally define rhetoric: strategy, persuasion, deliberation, and consensus. Homer's gift to rhetoric, to Aristotle in particular, was (or is) our hope for ethical relationality and language. Put in narrative form, Mifsud posits that Homer calls to Aristotle, bestowing upon him a gift. That gesture, of course, authorizes the recipient to do with the gift as he will. Put in visual form, the splendor of Homer's gifts to Aristotle shimmer and sparkle around the matt finish of his civic *techne*.

Responding to Homer's gift-as-call, Aristotle produces a theory of rhetoric. In Mifsud's account, he "carries Homer's name and story forward, honoring the original giver as he theorizes a rhetoric for the polis" (p. 9). In the theory, Homer's poetic scenes and dramas become gifting motifs that dictate certain norms of behavior between human beings (p. 79). These motifs, however, have been so repurposed for the negotiations of the polis that their gifted shimmer has dulled. Human relationships are grounded in the prosaic, where any potential for a more-than-human ethic is compromised (p. 11). In Mifsud's condemning assessment, "Aristotle sacrifices both the poet and poetic style in his circulation of Homer in *Techne Rhetorike*" (p. 100). "Homer gives the sublime to the civic," Mifsud writes (p. 33). And when the civic gets a hold of it, "rhetoric becomes a strategy of achieving desired ends" and "an art of persuasion [. . .] on the path of brutalization" (p. 2). On this point, Mifsud's characterization of her project is significant: "I trace how *techne* sacrifices the gift, so that the gift we get on the other side of the gift's having gone through the technical apparatus is something quite different than the gift had been" (p. 17). As Mifsud puts it, Aristotle translates the *poiesis* that he has been given into a technology.

The "technical apparatus" of rhetoric appears to align with the storehouse of classical *doxa*, the "given beliefs of a people" (p. 9) that, for Aristotle's audience, came largely from Homer. Mifsud writes, "By 'givers,' I mean to call attention to the performance of the Homeric gift transformed into the *doxa* of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*" (p. 69). Here, at the point of contact between publicly viable assumptions and the great gift of the Poet, Mifsud claims, "Aristotle circulated only the thinnest slivers of Homeric *doxa*: in effect he takes scenes from the epics that are otherwise robust and reduces them to sound bites appropriate to the rhetorical *techne* of a *polis* culture" (p. 96). One of the ways in which

I take issue with Mifsud's verdict that Aristotle sacrifices Homer is that, if the project is to "excavate the gift in rhetoric and rhetoric in the gift, [in order to] discover resources for resisting tyranny" (p. 11), then it seems ill-advised to make *doxa* responsible for the loss of the magic inherent in the gift. Indeed, at the 2016 NCA event several panelists focused their commentaries on *doxa* as the gift of inherited stories, transmitted through generations. Stories circulate through private as well as public networks; they are the gifts of rhetorically constituted social formations. Aristotle's *doxa* of prudential rhetoric do in fact have the capacity to resist tyranny, as the history of the polis shows. That tyranny sometimes wins is hardly proof to the contrary.

In gifting theory, a sacrifice is a gift with no obligation or debt. In Mifsud's portrayal, Homer is almost Christ-like insofar as he gives to Aristotle without expectation of return. Mifsud pursues an ostensibly prescriptive analysis of what the gift ought to be, never quite accounting for the move away from the gift as a logic of the relationship between *poiesis* and rhetoric. It is intriguing that the classical focus of Mifsud's investigation of the gift does not direct her toward history's most powerful cautionary tale regarding dangerous gifts. Virgil's fear of the Greeks bearing gifts is nowhere to be found in *Rhetoric and the Gift*, which obscures the possibility that even the gift left at the city gates may bring brutality long before the technical apparatus of rhetoric. (Those who attended the tribute panel will not soon forget John Poulakos's artful present to Mari Lee: a wooden horse with a retractable ribbon in its mouth bearing forty Greek words—one for each warrior hidden inside the Trojan gift—illustrating the continuity of Indo-European etymology.) Mifsud describes how Homer's "song-like speech is his well-recognized gift to the civic world" (p. 33). His call to Aristotle is "imaginative, inventive, and ingenious" (p. 33). In it, all manner of goods—hospitality, friendship, love (p. 86), honor (p. 103), and equity (p. 107)—may be discovered. This view of gifting is irresistibly hopeful. To conclude, I submit that Mifsud's book is a masterful analysis of Homeric traces in the rhetorical tradition that continue to exert influence to this day. I would contend, however, that her reading of the gift, together with its implications for rhetoric, overlooks those aspects of gifting that are inflected with other rhetorical impulses: fear, enmity, and coercion.

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Silvia Gastaldi, *Aristotele. Retorica, Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Roma, Carocci 2014 (ristampa 2017) ISBN: 9788843074198; Maria Fernanda Ferrini, [*Aristotele*]. *Retorica ad Alessandro*, Milano, Bompiani 2015. ISBN: 9788845279249

Nell'ampia messe di studi sulla retorica greca e latina prodotti negli ultimi decenni un posto di rilievo occupano senza dubbio quelli dedicati alle prime *Technai rhetorikai* conservate, la *Retorica* di Aristotele e la *Retorica ad Alessandro*.