The Classical Quarterly (2021) 71.1 34–51
doi:10.1017/S0009838821000471

SEMANTIC SATIATION FOR POETIC EFFECT*

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the defamiliarization caused by extensive repetition, termed 'semantic satiation' in psychology, was used by ancient poets for specific effects. Five categories of repetition are identified. First, words undergo auditory deformation through syllable and sound repetition, as commonly in ancient etymologies. Second, a tradition of emphatic proper-name repetition is identified, in which the final instance of the name is given special emphasis; this tradition spans Greek and Latin poetry, and ultimately goes back to the Nireus entry in the Catalogue of Ships. Third, repetition is used for word-play, where the final instance of the repeated term not only is emphasized but also incurs some change to its meaning or shape. Fourth, the incantatory repetition of divine names in hymns and cultic invocations amplifies a sense of divine presence behind and beyond the repetend. Fifth, repetition of half and full lines by different speakers in Old Comedy serves to undercut and parody the original sense of the repeated words. Extensive repetition in ancient literature was never merely ornamental but was used for a range of specific auditory and semantic effects with distinct and identifiable structures.

Keywords: semantic satiation; repetition; etymology; proper names; Nireus; wordplay; hymnic invocation; Old Comedy

Extensive repetition of words can lead to a sense of defamiliarization, a phenomenon known as 'semantic satiation' in cognitive psychology:

> 'Semantic' or 'verbal satiation' refers to a loss of meaning or a reduction in the effectiveness of verbal material following its continued overt repetition or its prolonged visual fixation.[1]

While a number of studies in the 1990s and 2000s argued over whether satiation occurs at a lexical or semantic level,[2] X. Tian and D.E. Huber are no doubt correct to explain the phenomenon rather in terms of 'association loss' between these two levels.[3] An evocative description along these lines is given in an early account:[4]

* Thanks to Christian Keime and Robert Rohland for helpful discussion early on in this paper's development, and to the anonymous reviewer for helpful comments at the final stage of revision.

[1] R. Kanungo and W.E. Lambert, 'Semantic satiation and meaningfulness', *The American Journal of Psychology* 76 (1963), 421–8, at 421. Much of the current terminology and the approach to the topic was established through articles from the early 1960s by researchers at McGill University, beginning with W.E. Lambert and L.A. Jakobovits, 'Verbal satiation and changes in the intensity of meaning', *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 60 (1960), 376–83. Earlier terminology is discussed by L. Jakobovits, 'Effects of repeated stimulation on cognitive aspects of behaviour: some experiments on the phenomenon of semantic satiation' (Diss., McGill University, 1962), 3; see also S.R. Black, 'Review of semantic satiation', in S.P. Shokov (ed.), *Advances in Psychology Research* 26 (New York, 2003), 62–74.

[2] e.g. Black (n. 1), 65, 67–9. This distinction was investigated largely through experiments on the association of homonyms with given lexical contexts after repetition.

[3] X. Tian and D.E. Huber, 'Testing an associative account of semantic satiation', *Cognitive Psychology* 60 (2010), 267–90.

[4] E. Titchener, *A Beginner's Psychology* (New York, 1916), 26, 118–19, cited in Tian and Huber (n. 3), 269–70.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838821000471 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> Repeat aloud some word—the first word that occurs to you; house for instance—over and over again; presently the sound of the word becomes meaningless and blank; you are puzzled and a morsel frightened as you hear it … When the word 'house' becomes meaningless with repetition, it is because the bare sound grows more and more vivid and dominant; like the nestling cuckoo, it drives out its normal associates; and these associates, the carriers of its meaning, sink lower and lower into the obscurity of the background. So the meaning, almost literally, drops off, falls away.

A word becomes dissociated from its meaning as its perceptual (acoustic or visual) characteristics are emphasized through repetition; conversely, the word becomes more closely associated with its spoken sound or written shapes, rather than with that to which those sounds or shapes refer.

What does not appear to have been sufficiently investigated is how this phenomenon might occasionally be used for positive ends. This paper helps close this gap by discussing the use of semantic satiation for specific effects in ancient literature. Five categories of repetition are identified: (a) reconfigurations of words through syllable and sound repetitions, a basic principle of ancient etymology; (b) a tradition of allusive repetition using proper names, in which the final instance of a repeated name is given particular emphasis; (c) repetition for wordplay, including antanaclasis; (d) incantatory repetition, as in the hymnic and cultic repetition of divine names; and (e) the extensive repetition of lines and half-lines by alternating characters in Old Comedy. As this summary suggests, the degree of dissociation caused by frequent repetition and the ends to which this could be used varied widely. Yet in every category, the extent of repetition suggests a purpose beyond that of mere stylistic embellishment.

REPETITION OF SYLLABLES AND SOUNDS

In the opening scene of Aristophanes' *Knights*, two slaves while away the time bemoaning the 'domestic tyranny' of the newly bought slave Paphlagon over the rest of the hired help.[5] They play verbal games that belie deeper poetic and cultural notions, parodying the aulos music of the mythical Olympus by wailing (Ar. *Eq.* 10 μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ) and stuttering the word for 'cult statue' or 'idol' (βρέτας) in a hesitant profession of atheism (32 ποῖον βρετέτετας; ἐτεὸν ἡγεῖ γὰρ θεούς; 'What do you mean idododol? Do you really believe in the gods?').[6] Among these activities, the slaves play a game of repeating a set of sounds in a given order, with an increasingly quick tempo that is compared to masturbation, and in so doing translate meaningless syllables into a first-person subjunctive verb (21–9):

[B.] λέγε δὴ μο λω μεν ξυνεχὲς ὠδὶ ξυλλαβών.
[A.] καὶ δὴ λέγω μο λω μεν.
[B.] ἐξόπισθε νῦν
αὐ το φάθι τοῦ μο λω μεν.
[A.] αὐ το.

[5] The expression is taken from D.J. Littlefield, 'Metaphor and myth: the unity of Aristophanes' "Knights"', *SPh* 65 (1968), 1–22, at 4.

[6] For the meaning of βρέτας, see T.S. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild. Untersuchungen zur Funktion griechischer Kultbilder in Religion und Politik* (Munich, 2000), 24–33, who emphasizes the strong affective force of this word.

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[B.] πάνυ καλῶς.
ὥσπερ δεφόμενος νῦν ἀτρέμα πρῶτον λέγε
τὸ μο λω μεν, εἶτα δ' αὐ το, κᾆτ' ἐπάγων πυκνόν.
[A.] μο λω μεν αὐ το μο λω μεν αὐτομολῶμεν.
[B.] ἤν, οὐχ ἡδύ;
[A.] νὴ Δία· πλήν γε περὶ τῷ δέρματι
δέδοικα τουτονὶ τὸν οἰωνόν.
[B.] τί δαί;
[A.] ὁτιὴ τὸ δέρμα δεφομένων ἀπέρχεται.

Slave B Say 'ru naw ay', evenly emphasizing the syllables like I did.
Slave A OK here goes: 'ru naw ay'
Slave B Now say 'le ts' after 'ru naw ay'.
Slave A 'le ts'
Slave B Well done! Now start by saying 'ru naw ay' calmly,
then 'le ts', then up the intensity, as if you're masturbating.
Slave A ru naw ay le ts ru naw ay let's run away!
Slave B There, wasn't that nice?
Slave A Yes, but with an omen like that, I'm afraid for my skin.
Slave B How's that?
Slave A Because the skin of the one who's jerking gets rubbed off.

As with the other games, there is a serious underlying message; the slaves wish that by running away they might escape servitude. Indeed, the comparison to masturbation suggests that the possibility of absconding has an orgasmic level of desirability.[7] The repetition game allows for the one slave, sometimes considered a travesty of the general and politician Nicias, to bring the other slave, sometimes considered a travesty of Demosthenes, to speak a verb and express an idea he was not expecting to have done, through the mere repetition of a set of syllables.[8] For what it is worth, this unspeakable call for desertion (αὐτομολῶμεν) works better for military men than it does for slaves, where the appropriate verb would be δραπετεύω. For our purposes, what is important is that the linguistic effect underpinning the joke uses repetition to slur adjacent sounds. Technically this repetition merely inverts and recombines two given words (μόλωμεν 'let's go' and αὐτό 'itself') into an unexpected new compound (αὐτομολῶμεν 'let's run away'). It is therefore notable that Slave B or Nicias gives the injunctions to pronounce syllables rather than words (ξυλλαβών), and to do so persistently (ξυνεχές),[9] which together imply a lack of intonation. These instructions

[7] This use of δέρμα to refer to the male genitals is reinforced by the apparent use of this same word of a dildo at Plato Comicus, fr. 188.18 K.–A., as suggested by F.C.W. Jacobs *apud* J. Schweighaeuser, *Animadversiones in Athenaei Deipnosophistas* (Strasbourg, 1801–7), 5.468; cf. J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* (Oxford, 1991[2]), 15 §19.

[8] These names are given in our manuscripts, but will have been absent from the Aristophanic autograph. It is therefore unclear whether we ought to see an association of the unnamed slaves with specific generals or politicians, rather than with the whole political establishment threatened by Cleon. The allusions in the text are ambiguous, but in performance the question might have been settled by the use of portrait masks. The argument for the association of the slaves with these generals is given by A.H. Sommerstein, 'Notes on Aristophanes' *Knights*', *CQ* 30 (1980), 46–56, at 46–8; the argument against by J. Henderson, 'The portrayal of the slaves in the prologue of Aristophanes' *Knights*', in J.A. López Ferez (ed.), *La comedia griega en sus textos* (Madrid, 2013), 17–30 (slightly expanded version in G.W. Bakewell and J.P. Sickinger [edd.], *Gestures: Essays in Ancient History, Literature, and Philosophy Presented to Alan L. Boegehold* [Oxford, 2002], 63–73).

[9] When used in reference to speech, adverbial συνεχές appears to indicate continuity rather than sequentiality, as is suggested by the implicit distinction between the adverbs ξυνεχῶς and ἐφεξῆς at Ar. *Ran*. 915; cf. Lucian, *Somn*. 4 συνεχὲς ἀναλύζων.

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suggest not a conceptual transposition but a verbal effect, occurring through the act of repetition alone.

A remarkably similar instance of sound recombination through repetition is found in one of the etymologies in Plato's *Cratylus*. Here the difference between the visual reordering and the acoustic effect that brings it about is even more clearly accentuated (Pl. *Cra.* 404b–c):

> Ἥρα δὲ ἐρατή τις, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ λέγεται ὁ Ζεὺς αὐτῆς ἐρασθεὶς ἔχειν. ἴσως δὲ μετεωρολογῶν ὁ νομοθέτης τὸν ἀέρα Ἥραν ὠνόμασεν ἐπικρυπτόμενος, θεὶς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπὶ τελευτήν· γνοίης δ' ἄν, εἰ πολλάκις λέγοις τὸ τῆς Ἥρας ὄνομα.
>
> Hera is someone lovely, as indeed Zeus is also said to have married her for love. But perhaps the lawmaker was playing the meteorologist and called the air 'Hera', hiding it in the name by placing the beginning at the end. You would understand this, if you were to say the name Hera many times over.

The connection of Hera with air is conventional, as is the use of juxtaposition to imply an etymological connection between the two words (Hom. *Il.* 21.6–7 ἠέρα δ' Ἥρη, Theagenes DK 8A2 = Schol. [b] Hom. *Il.* 20.67). When Plato speaks of placing the beginning at the end, he is referring to the nominative forms ἀήρ and Ἥρα, or as he would have written them AHP and HPA, which are the same but for the position of the alpha. Remarkably, he goes on to suggest that this visual connection manifests audibly when repeating the word multiple times (πολλάκις). As in the Aristophanic prologue, Plato's etymology points to some degree of recognition that words undergo acoustic distortion when repeated a sufficient number of times; this recognition is tampered, however, by an implicit, neat rationalization of this phenomenon as a conceptual or visual reordering of words or letters.

In both of the above examples, words are conceived of as syllable-length sets of sounds, whose reconfiguration through repetition not only dissociates those words from given meanings but changes them into new ones.[10] The same effect is much more commonly seen in the juxtaposition of semantically unrelated words, where the repetition of sounds suggests etymological resonances between words with shared perceptual features.[11] The repetition of similar sounds in ancient etymologies is not mundane or trivial, but reflects the dulling effect of repetition, which momentarily collapses the denotative value of words, and with this the boundary between one word and another.

A TRADITION OF ALLUSIVE PROPER-NAME REPETITION

Semantic satiation was also used as a poetic effect in its own right. In a handful of related poems from antiquity, repetition was exploited to call attention to the material features, or otherwise disrupt the normal denotation of proper names. The two most

[10] Although the distorting effect of semantic satiation on sensory data is not a point of focus in the scholarship, this feature is reflected in some early accounts, e.g. G.K. Chesterton, *Alarms and Discursions* (New York, 1911), 30–1: 'Have you ever tried the experiments of saying some plain word, such as "dog," thirty times? By the thirtieth time it has become a word like "snark" or "pobble." It does not become tame, it becomes wild, by repetition. In the end a dog walks about as startling and undecipherable as Leviathan or Croquemitaine.'

[11] e.g. Pl. *Cra.* 397d ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς φύσεως τῆς τοῦ θεῖν θεοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐπονομάσαι 'from this natural proclivity to run they are called gods'; further examples can be found throughout the etymologies (390e–427d).

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telling examples of this tradition were collected already in an ancient rhetorical handbook, as part of a discussion of polyptoton, or the repetition of a given word in different cases. After citing Cleochares' use of the name Demosthenes in all five cases, the author turns to two further examples of polyptoton, which he treats as a group, as though part of a distinct tradition (Ps.-Herodian, *De figuris* §40 Hajdú):

πολύπτωτον δέ, ὅταν ἤτοι τὰς ἀντονομασίας ἢ τὰ ὀνόματα εἰς πάσας τὰς πτώσεις μεταβάλλοντες διατιθώμεθα τὸν λόγον, ὡς παρὰ Κλεοχάρει … ἔστι δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον σχῆμα καὶ παρά τισι τῶν ποιητῶν, ὡς παρ' Ἀρχιλόχῳ καὶ Ἀνακρέοντι. παρὰ μὲν οὖν Ἀρχιλόχῳ (fr. 115 West)·[12]

νῦν δὲ Λεώφιλος μὲν ἄρχει, Λεωφίλου δ' ἐπικρατεῖν,
Λεωφίλῳ δὲ πάντα κεῖται, Λεώφιλον δ' ἄκουε ‹πᾶς›.

παρὰ δὲ Ἀνακρέοντι ἐπὶ τριῶν (*PMG* 359 = 5 Gentili)

Κλεοβούλου μὲν ἔγωγ' ἐρέω,
Κλεοβούλῳ δ' ἐπιμαίνομαι,
Κλεόβουλον δὲ διοσκέω.

Polyptoton occurs whenever we arrange a passage by altering the pronouns or words using all of their cases, as in Cleochares … This same figure also exists among some of the poets, as in Archilochus and Anacreon. Thus in Archilochus:

Now Leophilus rules, Leophilus holds power,
Everything rests with Leophilus, let ‹everyone› hear 'Leophilus'!

And in Anacreon, using three cases:

I love Cleobulus;
I'm crazy for Cleobulus;
I stare at Cleobulus.

The pieces are remarkably similar in structure. The polyptoton is articulated by μέν and δέ particles, and new clauses are built around each new case of the name. In spite of considerable variety among manuscript readings for the name Leophilus, the cases must originally have followed the same sequence in both poems: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative.[13] The piece by Anacreon significantly lacks a nominative Κλεόβουλος, which adds weight to the contrast between the name of the lover and the emphatic ἔγωγε of the poem's first line.[14] This poem's speaker is always at a distance from the object of his affection, who is a changing lexical object, never the 'real' uninflected Κλεόβουλος.[15]

[12] As in the recent commentary by L. Swift (*Archilochus: The Poems. Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary* [Oxford, 2019], 124–5, 297–8), this text of the Archilochus fragment prints Martin West's supplement ‹πᾶς›, which he had left in the apparatus criticus; justification for this choice is given in n. 16 below.

[13] The cases of the repeated proper name in Anacreon and in the passage by Cleochares follow the same order, suggesting that the citing authority has chosen his examples on account of the order of the cases, and this makes the readings in Archilochus all but certain, as first argued by E. Lobel, 'Questions without answers', *CQ* 22 (1928), 115–16; cf. M.L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin, 1974), 130–1; F. Murru, 'Le πολύπτωτον de Léophile', *Eos* 67 (1979), 183–9, at 185; Swift (n. 12), 297.

[14] This is not to discount C.M. Bowra's important suggestion (*Greek Lyric Poetry from Alcman to Simonides* [Oxford, 1961], 284) that the polyptoton allows for a degree of levity alongside the strong emotions expressed by the verbs ἐρέω and ἐπιμαίνομαι.

[15] Aristotle calls nominatives 'the names of words' (*An. pr.* 48b42 τὰς κλήσεις τῶν ὀνομάτων), and contrasts this against 'the case of a word' (48b40 τὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος πτῶσιν), followed by examples of words in the genitive, dative and accusative. Ancient evidence for the notion that nominatives represent the uninflected names of words is collected by J. Thorp, 'On cases: standing up falling down', *Échos du monde classique / Classical Views* 33 (1989), 315–31. Modern grammar also recognizes the extra-grammatical nature of root nominatives, discussed below, n. 30.

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Yet more connects these two passages than the polyptoton or other shared formal features. In both poems, special emphasis is placed on the final instance of the repeated name, which emphasizes its material features over its point of reference. The final instance of the name Leophilus does not use the word denotatively but cites it as a heard sound, as Martin West recognized: 'If some part of ἀκούω is correct, and has Λεώφιλον as its object, the sense will be "hear the name Leophilus".'[16] By explicitly referring to the name Leophilus as a unit of sound, the final words parody repeated naming as a feature of political advertisement and self-promotion.[17] More specifically, these lines both point to a reduction in a name's meaningfulness, when persistently repeated, and themselves reproduce the effect. The piece by Anacreon, by contrast, uses repetition of the name to activate the visual. The rare verb διοσκέω, with which this poem ends, is explained by Hesychius to mean 'gaze at repeatedly, pretending to look elsewhere' (Hsch. δ 1926 Latte–Cunningham διοσκεῖν· διαβλέπειν συνεχῶς τὴν ὅρασιν μεταβάλλοντα).[18] Just as, in the narrative world of the poem, the authorial persona looks to his lover, so too in a moment of performance, the poem's speaker picks out and makes eyes at a fellow symposiast, forcing an individual audience member into the role of Cleobulus. The name Cleobulus thus takes on an unexpected new referent in the final line, as the immediacy of sight is made to foreground the pining incantation of the lover's name.

The resonance of these poems in later literature confirms this reading of the final instance of the repeated name as a moment of emphasis on its material qualities as heard sound. The earliest allusion is found in a comic parody of Archilochus' piece on Leophilus, an anonymous fragment that possibly goes back to a play by Cratinus

[16] West (n. 13), 130–1. The reading ἄκουε is consistent across all manuscripts, but the line as it stands is too short. West suggested πᾶς, noting Aesch. fr. 78a.4 Radt ἄκουε δὴ πᾶς. The collective noun πᾶς is regularly so used to exhort a group of soldiers, cf. Kannicht and Snell's note to *TrGF* Adesp. fr. 654.26, and this would suit Archilochus' poem extremely well. Other proposed supplements require the name Leophilus in a case other than the accusative, and so they break the expected order of the polyptoton (see n. 13 above). West's suggestion is further developed by K. Tsantsanoglou, "Ο Αρχίλοχος και ο λαός του: αποσπάσματα 115, 93a, 94 (W.)", in G.M. Sifakis, F.I. Kakridis, I.S. Touloumakos and O. Tsagkarakis (edd.), *Κτερίσματα. Φιλολογικά μελετήματα αφιερωμένα στον Ιωάννη Σ. Καμπίτση* (Heraclion, 2000), 369–93, at 373: "Η πρόταση είναι πολύ πιθανή. Όσο για την ερμηνεία, μπορεί να είναι ορθή, αν το όνομα του Λεωφίλου περιλαμβανόταν σ' αυτά τα διαγγέλματα: π.χ. *Λεώφιλος λέγει τάδε*."

[17] The piece fits into Archilochus' larger œuvre as an example of 'raillery among comrades' (A.P. Burnett, *Three Archaic Poets: Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho* [London, 1983], 43 n. 30), alongside poems such as frr. 114, 115, 124, 158, 167 and possibly 113 W. In a moment of performance, such poems might be used to mock a fellow symposiast. The name looks like a speaking name (λεώς + φίλος 'lover of the people') and might not refer to a historical individual. For other puns on names in Archilochus, see Swift (n. 12), 38–9.

[18] E. Bowie, 'The sympotic tease', in J. Kwapisz, D. Petrain and M. Szymański (edd.), *The Muse at Play: Riddles and Wordplay in Greek and Latin Poetry* (Berlin, 2013), 38–9 suggests that this intentionally difficult word, with which the poem ends, provides a linguistic puzzle to stimulate discussion in a sympotic environment. He further suggests that the best translation for διοσκέω among those offered by Hesychius is 'I corrupt' rather than 'I stare at', and this fits well with his own immediately preceding discussion of our only other extant poem to mention Cleobulus (*PMG* 357 = 14 Gentili, discussed at Bowie [this note], 36–8; cf. Max. Tyr. 18.9 = *PMG* 402). However, Bowie also leaves open the interesting possibility that all of Hesychius' options are guesses: 'perhaps Anacreon uses not a rare word but a nonsense word, and wants to leave his audience guessing what the third limb of his polyptoton involves' ([this note], 39). If this appears something of a stretch, the final verb is undeniably rare, and its relative obscurity marks out the final instance of the lover's repeated name.

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(*Archilochoi*?),[19] for whom Archilochus was a literary role model (Com. adesp. fr. *741 K.–A.):[20]

> Μητίοχος μὲν ‹——› στρατηγεῖ, Μητίοχος δὲ τὰς ὁδούς,
> Μητίοχος δ' ἄρτους ἐποπτῷ, Μητίοχος δὲ τἄλφιτα,
> Μητίοχος †δὲ πάντα κεῖται†, Μητίοχος δ' οἰμώξεται.
>
> Metiochus is commander, and Metiochus the roads,
> Metiochus inspects the loaves, and Metiochus the flour,
> Metiochus does everything (?), but Metiochus will wail.

The author of these lines lambastes a contemporary associate of Pericles, roughly imitating his Archilochean model. Lack of polyptoton flattens the effect, as does the use of zeugma in the first two lines, and repetition of the name twice more than the original. The parody also emphasizes the final instance of the repeated name, confirming this feature in the source text. The final use of Metiochus' name breaks with any reference to or qualification of Metiochus' status as leader, switches verb tenses to the future, and predicts his suffering. The concatenation of 'o' sounds also transforms the name Metiochus into a groan or wail (Μητί**οχος δ' οἰμώ**ξεται); this mirrors the sense of the verb even as it emphasizes the material features of the repeated name.

Imitations of Anacreon's triple anaphora of the name of his lover are much more widespread, appearing frequently in Latin literature.[21] Ovid's grieving Cephalus recalls his lost wife Procris in what is in turn a recollection of Anacreon's Cleobulus (*Met.* 7.707–8):

> ego Procrin amabam.
> pectore Procris erat, Procris mihi semper in ore.
>
> I loved Procris.
> Procris was in my heart; 'Procris' was always on my lips.

The allusion is seen in the tripartite repetition of the name, the expression of love, the emphatic first person pronoun (ἔγωγ' ~ *ego*) and the order of the sequence in which the final element cites the name of the lover as a spoken word. Statius is even more explicit as to the name of the game in describing the army's love for Achilles (*Achil.* 1.473–5):

[19] Ascription to Cratinus' play was first suggested by T. Bergk, *Commentationes de reliquiis comoediae Atticae antiquae libri duo* (Leipzig, 1838), 11–12 and is followed by J. Schwarze, *Die Beurteilung des Perikles durch die attische Komödie und ihre historische und historiographische Bedeutung* (Munich, 1971), 167 and by R. Rosen, *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (Atlanta, 1988), 47–8. While impossible to prove, this ascription remains likely, given (1) the specificity of Cratinean allusion to Archilochus in other fragments from the *Archilochoi*, (2) the reference to an associate of Pericles, who was a regular Cratinean target, and (3) the lateness of the fragment's citation by Plutarch (*Prae. ger. reip.* 15.811E), since Cratinus continued to be read in the original as late as the second century C.E., as reflected in papyri finds (e.g. *PSI* 11.1212 = Cratinus, fr. 171 K.–A.).

[20] The text printed here deviates from Kassel and Austin in not including the nominative form Μητίοχος at the beginning of the third line within the cruces, since the pervasive use of this same case in all five other clauses suggests that the nominative was retained throughout.

[21] This phenomenon has been recognized by D. Fehling, *Die Wiederholungsfiguren und ihr Gebrauch bei den Griechen vor Gorgias* (Berlin, 1969), 203 n. 12. The major treatment of repetition in Latin poetry is J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion* (Oxford, 1996).

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> omnis in absentem belli manus ardet Achillem,
> nomen Achillis amant et in Hectora solus Achilles
> poscitur.
>
> The whole of the warring host longs for absent Achilles,
> They love Achilles' name, and against Hector only 'Achilles'
> Will do.

The Anacreontic model is seen in the triple repetition, the polyptoton and, most of all, the references to Achilles as an object of love (*ardet*, *amant*). This polyptoton ends with the nominative, the form of the name that would actually have been chanted by the soldiers. This repetition of the name also dissociates it from the person to whom it properly refers, an idea highlighted in the passage: it is not Achilles himself the warriors come to love, but 'the name "Achilles"' (*nomen Achillis*). Anacreon's minuscule poem resonated throughout Latin literature; later authors were in on the joke and reproduced it, aware that repetition could be used to emphasize the proper name as a spoken word, only tendentiously connected to the person for whom it stands.

The poems by Archilochus and Anacreon can also be traced back to a common source.[22] Although structurally different from them in certain respects (no μέν/δέ particles, no polyptoton), the invocation of Nireus is our only triple anaphora of a proper name in Homer,[23] and it combines the notions of failed military commander and object of desire (*Il.* 2.671–5):

> Νιρεὺς αὖ Σύμηθεν ἄγε τρεῖς νῆας ἐΐσας,
> Νιρεὺς Ἀγλαΐης υἱὸς Χαρόποιό τ' ἄνακτος,
> Νιρεύς, ὃς κάλλιστος ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε
> τῶν ἄλλων Δαναῶν μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλεΐωνα
> ἀλλ' ἀλαπαδνὸς ἔην, παῦρος δέ οἱ εἵπετο λαός.
>
> Nireus from Syme in turn led three even-keeled ships,
> Nireus son of Aglaie and lord Charops,
> Nireus, who was the most beautiful man to come to Troy
> Among the other Daanans, after the blameless son of Peleus;
> But he was easily exhausted, and a small army followed him.

It has been recognized since at least Aristotle (*Rh.* 1413b31–1414a7; cf. Demetr. *Eloc.* 61–2) that the repetition of Nireus' name is bathetic, ironically trumping up a minor character within the extensive catalogue of heroes in which it is found.[24] Indeed, scholars often interpret these lines as a lead-in to the subsequent entry on Achilles.[25]

[22] Against R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), 12–14, who in discussing these two poems concluded that 'such figures arise from the spontaneous pleasure of the poet in playing on the various forms of the same word' (at 13).

[23] For other triple anaphoras in early Greek poetry, employing verbs, adverbs and the like, see Wills (n. 21), 397–405, with possible positional allusions to the Nireus passage at 404. Our other triple repetition of a proper name in Homer is found at *Il.* 5.30–1 (προσηύδα θοῦρον Ἄρηα. | Ἄρες Ἄρες βροτολοιγέ, μιαιφόνε, τειχεσιπλῆτα), involving 'the rare combination of three adjacent forms of the same word and the repetition across the line-boundary' (Wills [n. 21], 394). Here repetition is probably to be understood in terms of other multiple invocations of divine names (see further pages 45–7 below).

[24] J. Crossett, 'The art of Homer's Catalogue of Ships', *CJ* 64 (1969), 241–5, at 243.

[25] B. Sammons, *The Art and Rhetoric of the Homeric Catalogue* (Oxford, 2010), 161–2. By extension, for Sammons, Nireus 'stand[s] outside the frame of traditional heroic values and on the outskirts of heroic society' (at 163), much like Leophilus.

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The triple repetition of this general's name contrasts with his command over a mere three ships. The same effect is found in Archilochus: repetition of the name ironically downplays Leophilus' virtues as a leader. Indeed, Archilochus' use of the verb ἄρχω may recall the Homeric catalogue of ἀρχοὺς αὖ νηῶν (*Il.* 2.92),[26] much as the expression πάντα κεῖται recalls the polyptoton of πᾶς in Agamemnon's claim that Achilles' obstinacy couches a hidden desire to rule.[27] Anacreon by contrast draws on Nireus' great beauty, rather than on his laughable career as military commander. Nireus is 'the most beautiful man' (κάλλιστος ἀνήρ) after Achilles, an idea further reflected in the speaking names of his parents, 'Splendour' and 'Brighteyes'.[28] Nireus' repeated name is thus also that of the beloved, where his designation as most beautiful perhaps recalls naming in καλός inscriptions.[29] In this way, Archilochus and Anacreon provide competing interpretations of a shared Homeric model.

Arguably, the final repetition of Nireus' name also stands out, as in our other examples. The first line is a full clause, to whose nominative the second line stands in apposition; but the final instance of the name floats a-syntactically before a relative clause, a pronounced example of the root nominative.[30] Repetition often reverts words to an extra-grammatical, 'default' nominative position, one coded as nominative but understood as standing outside any given syntactical relation.[31] The name in the default nominative comes to stand more directly for the person it names, so that the signified dissolves into the signifier, and we are left with nothing but 'Nireus'.

One apparent allusion to the Nireus passage does not appear filtered through readings of Archilochus or Anacreon, and in this case the repeated proper name becomes dissociated from its point of reference, but without the distinctive final flourish (Aesch. *Pers.* 550–4):

νῦν γὰρ πρόπασα δὴ στένει
γαῖ' Ἀσὶς ἐκκενουμένα.
Ξέρξης μὲν ἄγαγεν ποποῖ
Ξέρξης δ' ἀπώλεσεν τοτοῖ
Ξέρξης δὲ πάντ' ἐπέσπε δυσφρόνως
βαρίδες τε πόντιαι.

For now the whole emptied-out land
Of Asia groans.
Xerxes led them away, alas!
Xerxes destroyed them, alas!
Xerxes ill-advisedly sent all to their fate
And the deep-sea ships.

[26] The verb ἄρχω recurs throughout the Catalogue of Ships (Hom. *Il.* 2.494, 512, 517, 576, 586, 609, 622, 623, 636). More generally, Archilochean parody of Homeric source material has long been known, for which see especially D. Page, 'Archilochus and the oral tradition', in *Archiloque* (Vandoeuvres, 1964), 117–64.

[27] Hom. *Il.* 1.287–9 ἀλλ' ὅδ' ἀνὴρ ἐθέλει περὶ πάντων ἔμμεναι ἄλλων, | πάντων μὲν κρατέειν ἐθέλει, πάντεσσι δ' ἀνάσσειν, | πᾶσι δὲ σημαίνειν, ἅ τιν' οὐ πείσεσθαι οἴω 'But this man desires to be above all others; he wants to hold power over them all, to rule them all, and to command all, among whom I for one am minded not to obey.'

[28] K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer: Narrative Structure in the* Iliad (Princeton, 1993), 19, 313–14.

[29] If καλός inscriptions are relevant to Anacreon's implicit reading of the Nireus passage, we might consider the possibility that staring at Cleobulus doubles as an ancient reader staring at the written name 'Cleobulus'.

[30] The most thorough discussion of the root nominative remains that of W. Havers, 'Zur Syntax des Nominativs', *Glotta* 16 (1927), 94–127. For the concept in antiquity, see n. 15 above.

[31] Root nominatives include any syntactically unnecessary repetition of a noun. Repetition of the name Eetion at Hom. *Il.* 6.395–6 is widely recognized as the most significant example, since the proper name first appears in the genitive, but reverts to the nominative when repeated. For other root nominatives in Homeric anaphoras, see Fehling (n. 21), 184 with n. 30.

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Xerxes led oh oh
Xerxes lost ah ah
Xerxes decided everything poorly
and the ocean boats.

Xerxes' name is given three times, and the anaphoric recollection of Nireus appears to function as a trope for the inept and, in this case, defeated and disgraced commander.[32] A connection to the Catalogue of Ships is reinforced by the triple repetition of 'ships' (νῆες) at the corresponding point in the antistrophe (560–4), recalling an earlier Asian catastrophe caused by a Greek fleet. As in the comic parody of Archilochus, repetition is again framed as groaning or sobbing, an idea reinforced by the replacement of an anticipated direct object by the onomatopoeic effects ποποῖ and τοτοῖ.[33] The name Xerxes takes on an increasingly sound-like quality when repeated.

The passages discussed in this section are not all alike in every way, but they bear a family resemblance, whose primary characteristic is the repetition of a proper name. Archilochus and Anacreon share a playful polyptoton, but, while structurally similar, they use the trope of repeated naming to vastly different effect. Most of our Greek examples go back to Homer's Nireus and parody military leaders, whereas most of our Latin examples are in imitation of Anacreon's Cleobulus and repeat the name of a beloved. In either case, persistent unnecessary repetition of the proper name marks out the disreputable, unremarkable or inaccessible characters of this tradition of parodic repetition.

REPETITION AS WORDPLAY

One prominent feature of the tradition described in the previous section is an emphasis on the final instance of the repeated proper name. An analogous repetition effect, in which the final instance of a repeated term reveals a surprise new meaning, occurs in an old interpretative chestnut from Archilochus (fr. 2 West):

ἐν δορὶ μέν μοι μᾶζα μεμαγμένη, ἐν δορὶ δ' οἶνος
Ἰσμαρικός· πίνω δ' ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος.

In my spear I have kneaded barley bread, in my spear
Ismarikan wine. I drink, leaning into my spear.

It is a misapplication of an otherwise useful philological rule to assume that it would be necessary, in a playful sympotic poem such as this, for all three instances of the repeated expression (ἐν δορί) to carry the same meaning.[34] Indeed, a certain playfulness is

[32] Triple anaphora of a proper name is not common and may in itself be sufficient to recall Nireus. Wills (n. 21), 397: 'Of these [*sc.* triple-line anaphoras], most repetends are prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, and adverbs which authors inevitably multiply at a more frequent rate than nominal or verbal forms.'

[33] On the extensive use of sound effects throughout this play, see S. Gurd, 'Resonance: Aeschylus' "Persae" and the poetics of sound', *Ramus* 42 (2013), 122–37, who recognizes that 'repetition empties even signifying language of its semantic reference' (at 134), but overlooks the defamiliarizing effect of repetition on the otherwise familiar name Xerxes (at 124). Note too R. Seaford, 'Aeschylus and the unity of opposites', *JHS* 123 (2003), 141–63, at 142–3 (repr. in id., *Tragedy, Ritual and Money in Ancient Greece: Selected Essays* [Cambridge, 2018], 111–42, at 111–14), who sees the juxtaposition of formally similar sentences with opposite content in these lines as a feature of ritual lamentation.

[34] A thorough and useful summary of previous scholarship, with a justification of the traditional

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reflected in this couplet's other verbal effects, most notably the alliteration of *mu*s in the first line, which is both a *figura etymologica* and an onomatopoeia for the sound of chewing tough, unrisen bread.[35] The final repetition of ἐν δορί replaces a non-spatial locative meaning 'in my spear' (that is, 'by means of my spear')[36] with a new, unanticipated meaning, articulated by the verb κλίνω and reinforced in performance as the reclining sympotic speaker momentarily doubles as a war mercenary leaning on a spear. Fictional and performance worlds blend in the levity of a pun. Archilochus appears to redeploy a repetition pattern he had previously taken from Homer's passage on Nireus to mock Leophilus. The final instance of a repeated term was made to stand out not as a sound effect but as antanaclasis, by giving it a surprise new meaning.

Repetition again leads into a striking wordplay in a Hellenistic epigram by Callimachus (*Epigr*. 2.5–6 Gow–Page = 28.5–6 Pfeiffer):[37]

> Λυσανίη, σὺ δὲ ναίχι καλὸς καλός· ἀλλὰ πρὶν εἰπεῖν
> τοῦτο σαφῶς ἠχώ, φησί τις 'ἄλλος ἔχει'.
>
> Lysanias, you are very beautiful, beautiful. But before
> Echo has said this clearly, someone goes 'another has him'.

Most scholars have seen ἄλλος ἔχει as an echoing inversion of ναίχι καλός, while less has been made of the fact that the word καλός is repeated once before it returns as the half-echo ἄλλος, with elision of the initial consonant.[38] On this traditional reading of the line, τοῦτο refers to some part of the repeated phrase-end ναίχι καλὸς καλός, and ἠχώ τις is subject of the main clause that follows. The translation would thus run: 'But before I have finished saying this, an echo is clearly heard: "another has him".' However, it is

account of δόρυ meaning 'spear', is given by C. Santaniello, 'A soldier's destiny: Archilochus fr. 2 West', *Chaos e Kosmos* 15 (2014), 1–36. The traditional account is made particularly transparent from Hybrias the Cretan's highly allusive *PMG* 909.1–5; cf. Santaniello (this note), 11–12. An argument for breakdown between signifier and signified in this fragment has previously been made on analogy with the use of θυμός in Archil. fr. 128 West by N.F. Rubin, 'Radical semantic shifts in Archilochus', *CJ* 77 (1981), 1–8, at 6–7; cf. H.D. Rankin, 'Archilochus fg. 2D', *Emerita* 40 (1972), 469–74, who adds, among other things, that the position of ἐν δορί changes in the final clause. The most recent discussion by Anika Nicolosi begins from but ultimately (and in my view incorrectly) rejects the possibility of a 'formal convergence with an apparently disconcerting semantic divergence' ('Archilochus' elegiac fragments', in L. Swift and C. Carey [edd.], *Iambus and Elegy: New Approaches* [Oxford, 2016], 180, repeating the arguments from ead., 'La frustrazione del guerriero in armi, ovvero il simposio negato [Archil. fr. 2 W.2]', *Prometheus* 31 [2005], 35–40).

[35] W. Allan, *Greek Elegy and Iambus: A Selection* (Cambridge, 2019), 59–60; Swift (n. 12), 207. The effect, if not the interpretation, was previously noted by D.E. Gerber, *Euterpe: An Anthology of Early Greek Lyric, Elegiac, and Iambic Poetry* (Amsterdam, 1970), 12. Note also the alliteration in δορὶ δ' οἶνος. For onomatopoeia more generally, see E. Tichy, *Onomatopoetische Verbalbindungen des Griechischen* (Vienna, 1983).

[36] The Homeric meaning 'under arms' (e.g. *Il*. 13.594, 13.608, 18.521), though argued for in many readings of this poem, is not required and has less interpretative upside.

[37] For other precise Callimachean allusions to earlier patterns of repetition, see e.g. Wills (n. 21), 285–6, 394, 398.

[38] The sound effect is discussed in greatest detail by P. Krafft, 'Zu Kallimachos' Echo-Epigramm (28 Pf.)', *RhM* 120 (1977), 1–29, at 1–16, who sides with a minority in seeing the echo in the repetition of the word καλός, rather than in the closing words. The traditional view is given, for example, by A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1965), 2.156–7 and E.R. Schwinge, 'Poetik als praktizierte Poetik: Kallimachos' Echo-Epigramm (28 Pf.)', *WJA* 6 (1980), 101–5, at 103. On echoes as repetition effects generally, see Wills (n. 21), 346–7.

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syntactically easier to take ἠχώ, rather than an implied με, as the accusative subject of the πρίν-clause, and this has the added benefit of restricting the reference of τοῦτο to the repetition of the word καλός. The traditional argument against this view has been that it obscures the purpose of the adverb σαφῶς,[39] yet in fact it arguably helps clarify that adverb as in reference to the idea that ἄλλος is an unclear echo of καλός. Echo is herself pre-empted by the unidentified voice that intrudes in a number of Callimachean epigrams (for example *Epigr*. 1.3 Gow–Page = 31.3 Pfeiffer), including one in which he is forestalled from voicing his opinion on another boy the authorial persona finds beautiful (*Epigr*. 5.3–4 Gow–Page = 41.3–4 Pfeiffer):

καλὸς ὁ παῖς, Ἀχελῷε, λίην καλός· εἰ δέ τις οὐχί
φησίν, ἐπισταίμην μοῦνος ἐγὼ τὰ καλά.

The boy is beautiful, Achelous, very beautiful. If someone says
He is not, may I be the only one to know what is beautiful.

The resonances between these two epigrams suggest that they once formed a matching pair: same scenario (lover, boy, confidant), similar structure (assertion followed by prevarication) and in both cases repetition of the word καλός leading into a pun.[40] Indeed, the move from an individual beauty to the Platonic idea of beauty (καλὸς … καλός … τὰ καλά) casts the one poem's wishful speaker as misguided, much as the false echo of καλὸς καλός in ἄλλος ἔχει dissociates that poem's infatuated speaker from his own speech, mirroring his sense of lost possession over Lysanias. In this latter case, one word not only becomes another but becomes the word 'other', naming the verbal game.

INCANTATORY REPETITION OF DIVINE NAMES

We can often still identify semantic satiation at work as an effect in cases of repetition where no particular emphasis is placed on the final instance of the repeated word or name. The most extensive examples of multiple repetition are invocations of divinity, and in such cases the extent of repetition both assures semantic satiation as an effect and diminishes the potential for emphasis on any individual repetition of the divine name. Examples are commonly found in literary texts from the earliest periods onwards (Hom. *Il.* 5.30–1, Hes. *Op.* 1–4), yet even among literary texts some passages stand out for the extent of repetition (Aesch. fr. 70 Radt [*Daughters of the Sun*]):

Ζεύς ἐστιν αἰθήρ, Ζεὺς δὲ γῆ, Ζεὺς δ' οὐρανός,
Ζεύς τοι τὰ πάντα χὤ τι τῶνδ' ὑπέρτερον.

Zeus is air, Zeus is earth, Zeus is sky,
Zeus is indeed all things and whatever may be beyond that.

[39] e.g. Gow and Page (n. 38), 2.156: 'This solution has some attraction, but σαφῶς then seems to lack point.'

[40] On epigram pairs, see R. Kirstein, 'Companion pieces in the Hellenistic epigram (Call. 21 and 35 Pf.; Theoc. 7 and 15 Gow; Mart. 2.91 and 2.92; Ammianos *AP* 11.230 and 11.231)', in R.F. Regtuit and G.C. Wakker (edd.), *Hellenistic Epigrams* (Groningen, 2002), 113–35, together with his citation of earlier literature on the subject at 114–16. For paired epigrams on *stēlai*, perhaps the conceptual basis for the literary convention, see M. Fantuzzi, 'La doppia gloria di Menas (e di Filostrato)', in A.M. Morelli (ed.), *Epigramma longum: Da Marziale alla tarda antichità* (Cassino, 2008), 2.603–22.

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Here repetition of the god's name gives emphasis to the notion of omnipresence: the god, like the god's name, is everywhere.[41] Zeus's equivalence to so many different and indeed opposed geographical coordinates reflects the progressively less clear denotation of his repeated name (traditionally Zeus may be air and sky, but he is not normally earth). Cult hymns tend to be even more repetitive, as becomes clear in another hymn to Zeus cited in the Derveni papyrus, later expanded versions of which have long been independently known (*Orph.* 14F Bernabé; cf. 31F, 243F):

> Ζεὺς πρῶτος ‹γένετο, Ζεὺς› ὕστατος ‹ἀργικέραυνος›
> Ζεὺς κεφα‹λή, Ζεὺς μέσ›σα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ ‹π›άντα τέτ‹υκται,›
> ‹Ζεὺς πνοιὴ πάντων, Ζεὺς πάντων ἔπλετο› μοῖρα,
> Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς δ' ἀρχὸς ἁπάντων ἀργικέραυνος.
>
> Zeus was born first, Zeus of flashing lightning was last,
> Zeus is the head, Zeus the centre, all things are made from Zeus,
> Zeus is the breath of all, Zeus the fate of all,
> Zeus is king, Zeus of flashing lightning is lord of all.

As in the previous example, stress falls on the ubiquity of Zeus, who unites spatial and temporal extremes of beginning and end, head and centre; who is creator, life, ruler and endpoint to all things.[42] The recurrence of the epithet (ἀργικέραυνος) provides a ring structure to the four lines, while the repetition of the totalizing πᾶς (πάντα, πάντων, πάντων, ἁπάντων) matches that of the divine name.

From a later period, we have a Latin cult hymn to the Sun, whose outrageously repetitious second half indicates that this effect is not diminished by extension (the name *Sol* recurs thirty-one times over twenty-three verses). It is no coincidence that the final lines of this hymn once again emphasize the god's universality (*Anth. Lat.* 385 Shackleton Bailey):

> Sol mundi caelique decus, Sol omnibus unus, 58
> Sol noctis lucisque decus, Sol finis et ortus. 60
>
> The Sun is the glory of world and heaven, the Sun is one for all,
> The Sun is the glory of night and light, the Sun is the end and the beginning.

An analogous usage is seen in the repetition of names in magical formulae to evoke divine presences,[43] for example two metrical repetitions of cult names for Dionysus preserved at the beginning of Caesius Bassus' metrical treatise (*Gramm. Lat.* 6.255 Keil):

[41] A related effect is found in some close-succession repetitions in tragedy, such as Soph. *Aj.* 866 πόνος πόνῳ πόνον φέρει 'toil brings toil upon toil', where the triplet reproduces the idea of an accumulation (cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 905).

[42] For a discussion of this poem and its relation to other versions of an early hymn to Zeus attributed to Orpheus, see A. Bernabé, 'El himno a Zeus Órfico. Vicisitudes literarias, ideológicas y religiosas', in A. Bernabé, F. Casadesús and M.A. Santamaría (edd.), *Orfeo y el orfismo: nuevas perspectivas* (Alicante, 2010), 67–97, with an analysis of the poem at 72–6 (a similar analysis appears in A. Bernabé, 'The Derveni theogony: many questions and some answers', *HSPh* 103 [2007], 99–133, at 116–18). The Orphic Hymns of later date, while less emphatically repetitive, do regularly name the god addressed multiple times (e.g. *Hymn. Orph.* 15 Quandt).

[43] Note more generally the prominence of sound repetition in magical incantations, e.g. ***aski***, *kat**aski***, which Bernabé compares with English 'abra-cadabra' ('The *Ephesia Grammata*: genesis of a magical formula', in C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink [edd.], *The Getty Hexameters: Poetry, Magic, and Mystery in Ancient Selinous* [Oxford, 2013], 71–95, at 85), reflecting 'a deliberate preference for phonic play over semantic meaning' (at 93).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838821000471 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Bacche Bacche Bacche Bacche Bacche Bacche Bacche.
Bacche Bromie Bacche Bromie Bacche Bromie Bacche.

The author follows up what are presumably intercessional rosary-like repetitions of the names Bacchus and Bromius with an example of how such repetitions could be used at the close of a cletic invocation (Caesius Bassus 2.8–9 Blänsdorf):[44]

placidus ades ad aras
Bacche Bacche Bacche.

May you stand benevolent before the altars,
Bacchus Bacchus Bacchus.

In both hymnic and cultic contexts, semantic satiation is incantatory: the resultant loss of meaning encourages a change in the internal state and sensibilities of the speaker, even as it amplifies a sense of divine presence.

The extent of repetition in hymns, especially those used in cult, often far outweighs that seen in literary representations of divine invocation or in any literary type of repetition at all.[45] The apparent exception is itself a transparent parody of this sort of religious procedure, Martial's epigram on a gladiator named Hermes, each of whose fourteen lines begins with this name (Mart. 5.24; cf. Wills [n. 21], 398). Historical gladiators are known to have used Hermes as a stage name, chosen to recall Hermes' function as conductor of souls to Hades, and Martial's epigram exploits the divine associations of the homonym.[46] The epigram closes with a remarkable oxymoron of the kind already discussed in the hymns to Zeus and Sol (Mart. 5.24.15):

Hermes omnia solus et ter unus.

Hermes, all himself and thrice one.

Even as the epigram mocks hymnic repetition, it recreates an analogous effect, in this case not one filled with meaning but emptied of it. As Wills ([n. 21], 398) notes, repetition at such length has a 'dulling effect' in this case because the reality behind its comic hyperbole is mundane.

REPETITION OF LINES IN OLD COMEDY

Our other particularly extensive examples of multiple repetition are found in Old Comedy and involve the ostensibly arbitrary repetition of mundane words and phrases

[44] The poem is briefly discussed from a metrical standpoint by J. Dangel, *Le poète architecte: arts métriques et art poétique latins* (Leuven, 2001), 272; cf. E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993), 464.

[45] In some literary manifestations, incantatory repetition of a religious sort shades into other types of repetition, as, for example, in Aesch. *Ag.* 1080–2 Ἄπολλον· Ἄπολλον· | ἀγυιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός. | ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον 'Apollo, Apollo, God of the Streets, my destroyer. For you have utterly destroyed me a second time'. What begins as religious invocation turns into *figura etymologica*.

[46] H.S. Versnel, 'A parody on hymns in Martial V 24 and some Trinitarian problems', *Mnemosyne* 27 (1974), 365–405.

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for laughs.[47] As with the repeated naming of a deity, the extent of repetition makes semantic satiation likely, and content helps confirm the presence of this effect. Take, for example, the repeated insertion of the line-end 'lost his oil bottle' (ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν) into Euripides' onstage recitation of prologues in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1198–248). The character Aeschylus explains that he has selected this oil bottle from among a variety of possible items (1202–4):

> [Αἰ.] ποιεῖς γὰρ οὕτως ὥστ' ἐναρμόζειν ἅπαν,
> καὶ κῳδάριον καὶ ληκύθιον καὶ θυλάκιον,
> ἐν τοῖς ἰαμβείοισι.
>
> [Aesch.] You compose in such a way that anything
> Can be slotted into your iambics,
> Whether 'tuft of wool' or 'oil bottle' or 'little sack'.

Aeschylus' selection is emphatically arbitrary; anything at all (ἅπαν), even mundane household objects, can be made to fit into a Euripidean line. The criticism is explicitly about lack of compositional integrity at the level of the individual line, but the insertion of such everyday items into tragic prologues is also bathetic and rewrites Euripidean tragedy as comedy. Moreover, the joke is played out a whole seven times, suggesting that the humour is only partly connected to the semantic content of the repeated phrase, which comes to serve as a placeholder. Aeschylus' capacity to insert the same arbitrary line-end repeatedly and indiscriminately into each new prologue highlights the monotony of Euripides' versification.[48] A second example of extensive epistrophe similarly uses the repetition of an arbitrary phrase to mark a tonal shift. Over nine sequential lines, Praxagora in her guise as a man repeats the same line-end 'just as they have always done' (ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ) to itemize behaviour she claims reveals the fundamentally conservative nature of women (Ar. *Eccl.* 221–9). The list pairs everyday domestic actions and religious conservatism (221–4) with well-worn comic stereotypes about the infidelity, prodigality and alcoholism of women (225–9). The structural similarity of the repeated line-end provides formal continuity to an otherwise radical shift of focus. Repetition has a structural function in these passages.

Another comic use of semantic satiation is seen in the immediate repetition of words or lines by different speakers, where repetition has a dulling effect on the vivid semantic content of the words initially spoken. This is the case, for example, with the oath administered by Lysistrata to Calonice on behalf of all Greek women (Ar. *Lys.* 209–39), which ends with the description of increasingly over-the-top sexual activity (223–32):

> [Λυ.] κοὐδέποθ' ἑκοῦσα τἀνδρὶ τὠμῷ πείσομαι.
> [Κα.] κοὐδέποθ' ἑκοῦσα τἀνδρὶ τὠμῷ πείσομαι.
> [Λυ.] ἐὰν δέ μ' ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βίᾳ— 225
> [Κα.] ἐὰν δέ μ' ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βίᾳ—

[47] Many shorter examples are collected in H.W. Miller, 'Repetition of lines in Aristophanes', *AJPh* 65 (1944), 26–36 and id., 'Comic iteration in Aristophanes', *AJPh* 66 (1945), 398–408.

[48] An interesting variation occurs with the epistrophe λαβὲ τὸ βυβλίον 'take the book' (Ar. *Av.* 974, 976, 980, 986, 989). Both the oracle-salesman and Peisetaerus use the line to mean 'look for yourself', relying on the illiteracy of their opponent, who cannot check the written content. In the final instance of repetition, the phrase takes on a new meaning, that of receiving a blow from the wrapped-up scroll used as a baton ('take this!'); cf. C.A. Anderson and K.T. Dix, 'λάβε [*sic*] τὸ βυβλίον: orality and literacy in Aristophanes', in R. Scodel (ed.), *Between Orality and Literacy: Communication and Adaptation in Antiquity* (Leiden, 2014), 77–86, at 77–9.

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[Λυ.] κακῶς παρέξω κοὐχὶ προσκινήσομαι.
[Κα.] κακῶς παρέξω κοὐχὶ προσκινήσομαι.
[Λυ.] οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὼ Περσικά.
[Κα.] οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὼ Περσικά.
[Λυ.] οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν᾽ ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.
[Κα.] οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν᾽ ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.

[Lys.] I will never give in willingly to my husband.
[Cal.] I will never give in willingly to my husband.
[Lys.] And even if he forces me unwilling—
[Cal.] And even if he forces me unwilling—
[Lys.] I will not make it pleasant, nor thrust my hips.
[Cal.] I will not make it pleasant, nor thrust my hips.
[Lys.] I will not raise my Persian slippers to the ceiling.
[Cal.] I will not raise my Persian slippers to the ceiling.
[Lys.] I will not stand a lioness on a cheese-grater.
[Cal.] I will not stand a lioness on a cheese-grater.

The bold imagery evoking sexual acts stands in tension with the promise not to perform such acts and with the vocal monotony of the oath's repetition.[49] Similar are Echo's indiscriminate echoes of the Relative's tragic discourse, meta-commentary and increasingly abusive threats in a scene parodying Euripides' *Andromeda* (Ar. *Thesm.* 1056–97).[50] What begins as a tragic recitation with occasional interruptions is quickly reduced to single, repeated words and cries, as the Relative attempts to halt Echo's child-like echolalia (1070–81):

[Κη.] τί ποτ᾽ Ἀνδρομέδα περίαλλα κακῶν μέρος ἐξέλαχον—
[Ἠχώ] μέρος ἐξέλαχον.
[Κη.] θανάτου τλήμων—
[Ἠχώ] θανάτου τλήμων.
[Κη.] ἀπολεῖς μ᾽, ὦ γραῦ, στωμυλλομένη.
[Ἠχώ] στωμυλλομένη.
[Κη.] νὴ Δί᾽ ὀχληρά γ᾽ εἰσήρρηκας λίαν.
[Ἠχώ] λίαν.
[Κη.] ὤγάθ᾽, ἔασόν με μονῳδῆσαι, καὶ χαριεῖ μοι. παῦσαι.
[Ἠχώ] παῦσαι.
[Κη.] βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας.
[Ἠχώ] βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας.
[Κη.] τί κακόν;
[Ἠχώ] τί κακόν;
[Κη.] ληρεῖς.
[Ἠχώ] ληρεῖς.
[Κη.] οἴμωζ᾽.

[49] On the scene in general, see S.C. Stroup, 'Designing women: Aristophanes' "Lysistrata" and the "hetairization" of the Greek wife', *Arethusa* 37 (2004), 37–73, at 46–56. C.K. Prince is right to criticize the traditional explanation of 'stand a lioness on a cheese-grater' as a reference to sexual penetration from behind ('The lioness & the cheese-grater [Ar. *Lys.* 231–232]', *SIFC* 7 [2009], 149–75), yet the meaning of the phrase remains obscure and may not be intended to recall a specific sexual position, so much as to suggest certain images and associations.

[50] Wills (n. 21), 347 calls this reuse of Echo as a character 'the simultaneous use of internal and intertextual Echo'. The character of Echo is indeed portrayed as the very same one to have performed in Euripides' original play at *Thesm.* 1059–61, following A. Hartwig, 'A double Echo? Problems in the Echo scene of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*', *SemRom* 12 (2009), 61–84. The passage has been recently discussed at M. Farmer, *Tragedy on the Comic Stage* (Oxford, 2017), 182–5.

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[Ἠχώ] οἴμωζ’.
[Κη.] ὀτότυζ’.
[Ἠχώ] ὀτότυζ’.

[Rel.] Why have I, Andromeda, received so many more Than my fair share of ills? 1070
[Echo] Share of ills!
[Rel.] Wretched in death—
[Echo] Wretched in death!
[Rel.] You’re killing me, old hag, with your babbling!
[Echo] With your babbling!
[Rel.] My god, your intrusions are annoying indeed. 1075
[Echo] Indeed!
[Rel.] My good man, let me finish my monodizing, And I’d be grateful. Do stop!
[Echo] Do stop!
[Rel.] Go to hell!
[Echo] Go to hell!
[Rel.] What’s wrong with you?
[Echo] What’s wrong with you?
[Rel.] You’re mad!
[Echo] You’re mad! 1080
[Rel.] Damn you!
[Echo] Damn you!
[Rel.] Piss off!
[Echo] Piss off!

The process of repetition comes to outweigh the semantic content of the words initially spoken.[51] The Relative qualifies Echo’s repetitions as talkative chatter (στωμυλλομένη), interruption (εἰσήρρηκας) and meaningless speech (ληρεῖς);[52] yet he himself, increasingly exasperated, comes to speak in a remarkably similar way to her, using short syntactic units that can be reproduced in their entirety. This moment before the re-entry of the Scythian Archer ends with a series of imprecations, verbal cognates of the sounds of wailing in tragedy (οἴμωζ[ε, ‘wail οἴμοι’, ὀτότυζ[ε, ‘wail ὀτοτοῖ’). The Relative attempts to halt Echo’s duplication of his words using a diverse range of styles, from the tragic to the metatheatrical, pairing gentle requests with harsh abuse, but he is ineffectual; repetition has a deadening effect on every type of language.

Taking stock, we can outline some general patterns. In a wide range of poetic texts from antiquity, semantic satiation was used for specific effects. The most extensive shared characteristic across our various examples is a tendency to mark out the final instance of a repeated term, more often than not a proper name.[53] In a number of cases, the

[51] The dynamics between Echo, the Relative and the Archer recall Dionysus’ attempts to halt the croaking refrain of the frog-chorus, which he eventually takes up himself (209–68). The repeated line βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ differs from our other examples in that these words are mere onomatopoeia, devoid of semantic content.

[52] A connection between nonsensical speech and the idea of repetition is argued for by S. Kidd, *Nonsense and Meaning in Ancient Greek Comedy* (Cambridge, 2014), 36–7, citing Plut. *De garr.* 504C, an anecdote in which one of Lysias’ clients complains that reading his speech over two or three times in succession rendered it ‘dull and ineffective’ (ἀμβλὺν καὶ ἄπρακτον).

[53] It is possible that the semantic content of names is more easily undercut through repetition than common nouns, since names do not have generic application but appear to refer only selectively to individuals, and so have less semantic content to begin with. For a more complicated picture of

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loss of semantic content in the repeated term is signalled by a reference to it as heard sound. Yet loss of semantic content is not always experienced as an effect in its own right. When the religious minister repeats a divine name, satiation is not experienced as loss but paradoxically as a fullness of potential reference akin to the omnipresence and mystery of religious experience. So too, outside a hymnic frame, multiple repetition becomes an especially pronounced effect, and is used for parody from its earliest instantiations, even as it is itself parodied as an effect not long after.

Semantic satiation in ancient poetry occurs principally at an acoustic level, rather than at a visual one, as confirmed by ancient theories of repetition. When Aristotle speaks of multiple anaphoras, he notes that repetition is not effective in writing, and should be reserved for speech; he suggests that orators vary the tone between one use of a repeated word and the next.[54] It is therefore unsurprising that satiation is often marked in poetry by a sound effect: multiple repetition translates a name into the sound of weeping, or literally elides a word in its echo. The acoustic dimension is not always primary, but it is always present; in sympotic monody, for example, satiation encourages forms of wordplay that highlight the performance environment over against the narrative world of the poem.

Specific ways of using repetition for loss of semantic content came to exist in ancient poetry, as one poet recognized and copied the effect from another, but there was also a tendency to innovate, as traditions developed, and to layer new, bolder acoustic games overtop inherited patterns of repetition. If the idea of semantic satiation was never fully conceptualized by an ancient authority, it had a long and complex life as a repetition effect in classical poetry.

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this topic in contemporary philosophy, see S. Cumming, 'Names', in E.N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2019 edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/names/>.

[54] Arist. *Rh.* 1413b19–22 οἷον τά τε ἀσύνδετα καὶ τὸ πολλάκις τὸ αὐτὸ εἰπεῖν ἐν τῇ γραφικῇ ὀρθῶς ἀποδοκιμάζεται, ἐν δὲ ἀγωνιστικῇ καὶ οἱ ῥήτορες χρῶνται· ἔστι γὰρ ὑποκριτικά. ἀνάγκη δὲ μεταβάλλειν τὸ αὐτὸ λέγοντας 'For example asyndeta and saying the same thing many times are rightly rejected in writing, but orators make use of them in debates; for they are theatrical. It is necessary to introduce variation when repeating the same thing.'

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