Using AI to Generate Homeric Poetry

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Introduction

What happens when the oldest literature meets the newest technology? That's what I wanted to know when I built an Open AI workspace, Sing O Muse, to generate Homeric poetry. Today I'll share what I learned from these experiments, and more importantly, some of the questions they pose for the interplay between *tekhnē* and *poiēsis* in classical reception, which I hope the conference discussion will help to answer.

My presentation will have three parts. I'll begin with a non-technical discussion of the experiment's design. Then I'll describe my results, and discuss some possible implications for the digital humanities. I'll conclude by considering, at some length, how Homeric AI might refresh our concepts of classical reception.

Of course, AI is just the latest *tekhnē* with which reception theory has had to reckon. This context invites humility and caution.[2] As Graziosi and Greenwood note, digital *tekhnai* have a history of confounding reception theorists.[3] The practice of receiving Homeric epic tends to run ahead of the theory,[4] which finds itself somewhat in the predicament of Menelaus wrestling with

[2] Cf. Hardwick 2003, 10.
[3] Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 9; cf. Stray 2011, 8.
[4] Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 17.

Proteus. This wrestling match has gone through several rounds since the late 1970s and early 1980s, when personal computer and electronic databases produced, first, Janko's landmark redating of Homeric poetry,[5] and then Mueller's magisterial and searchable Chicago Homer site.[6] The storage-and-retrieval aspects of those early breakthroughs proved easier to parse and process than what came after. Noting the rise of Homeric fan fiction on the Internet in 2007, Graziosi and Greenwood found these writings "hard to assess as acts of reception."[7] Five years later, John Miles Foley wrote a book-length encomium on the similarity of Internet hypertext and oral tradition,[8] which now seems as naïvely overstated as mid-1990s hyperbole about CD-ROMs. In this situation, one can only hope to be guardedly provocative, and to reduce rather than increase the confusion. Along these lines, I'll venture to argue that AI's intractably hybrid, human-machine nature means that Sing O Muse both *is* and *is not* classical reception, helping us to map the difference.

Experimental Design

In building Sing O Muse, I was inspired by some striking similarities between Homeric poesis and the *tekhnē* of AI. Both use phrase-generating formulae: The bard and the bot don't "author" works so much as *perform* within a tradition, telling stories competently but without necessarily performing acts of literary creation.[9] The oral theorists Millman Parry and Albert Lord reconceived Homeric creation as what we now call reception, making composition a form of recomposition, which in turn becomes tradition for later reception;[10] and this too is like AI,

[5]Janko 1982.
[6]https://homer.library.northwestern.edu; cf. Mueller 2009, vii-viii.
[7]Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 6.
[8]Foley 2012, 7, xi.
[9]Haubold 2007, 32.
[10]Haubold 2007, 39.

which, as it trawls the web every millisecond to refresh its large-language model, ingests its own content, which it churns out at the rate of 100 billion new words per day, creating an eternal feedback loop.[11] Anonymity marks both AI and Homeric poetry, which do not privilege any readers or listeners:[12] Nagy's famous formulation of Homeric tradition applies with equal force to AI, which synthesizes diverse traditions into a unified model that suits most traditions but "corresponds exactly to none."[13]

Perhaps these and other correspondences should not surprise us, since the *Iliad* offers the earliest depiction of AI, in the form of *automata,* machines created by Hephaistos that move like living beings with internal energy.[14] But beyond Olympus, the relation between humans and technology has always proved, in fact, problematic, and AI is no exception to this rule. In a provocative forthcoming paper, Richard Cole, co-director of the Game Lab at the University of Bristol, notes both the promise and limitations of an encounter between AI and Homeric poetry, but mostly the limitations. When Cole asks AI to write a new book of the *Odyssey* in Homeric style, he finds a striking paradox: The more advanced the AI, the less creative the outputs.[15]

Intrigued by Cole's findings, I've built on his research but adjusted his approach. My working hypothesis is simple. *Using AI to produce Homeric poetry requires modeling the constraints of Homeric composition*. Asking AI to write "new" content means asking it to do what Homeric poets themselves did not do. They did not create poems *ex nihilo*, weaving

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[11]Bhatia 2024.

[12]Graziosi 2011, 28; cf. Graziosi and Haubold 2005, 18; Budelmann and Haubold 2008, 19; Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 10; Graziosi 2011, 28.

[13]Nagy 1999, 7.

[14]*Iliad* 5.749.

[15]"The most advanced AI, ChatGPT, "arguably produced the least 'creative' outputs. … As soon as writing is fully automated, creative potential dissipates, with ChatGPT unable to truly engage in collaborative authorship. … To put it another way, one struggles to prompt creative outputs from ChatGPT" (Cole 2025).

substance from ideals of style.[16] Instead they stitched material from extant folktale and myth.[17] So, I customized a ChatGPT-4o workspace to replicate this kind of tradition-based literary production. I aimed, specifically, to reconstruct text from one of the lost poems in the Epic Cycle, the *Cypria*, based on surviving plot summaries and fragments in Proclus, Apollodorus, and others.[18]

I did not use Python or any other programming language. There were two reasons for this. First, I don't know any of these languages. Second, I decided not to partner with any programmers, because I wanted some baseline for comparison with Cole's research, which had used natural-language commands. Additionally, I wanted to test the AI's "I," its intelligence, and specifically its generativity. I did not want to just get back what I programmed into the AI, modulating GIGO into HIHO – Homer in, Homer Out. I wanted to see what the AI itself could do – to measure, in the terms of the trade, how "agentic" it could be.[19]

Yet there were things I did *not* want the AI to do. I did not want it to randomly regurgitate whatever passed for Homeric on the Internet. I sought instead to logically restrict and structure the language to what Homeric scholars call a *Kunstsprache,* an artificial poetic language of formulaic and variable terms. I used three methods to restrict this expressive domain.

First, Data Collection and Preparation. I identified what Homeric scholars call type scenes, standardized episodes containing a high proportion of formulaic language.[20] I compiled example-text from supplication and feast scenes from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, using the

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[16]Haubold 2007, 37.
[17]Parry 1971; Lord 1960; Hardwick 2003, 12-13.
[18]I judged the *Cypria* a promising site for such efforts, because its plot is known in sufficient detail to allow the reconstruction of type-scenes at particular points in the narrative.
[19]Griffith 2024.
[20]The task of generating type scenes was made easier because previous scholarship has templated these scenes; cf. Arend 1933, Edwards 1992, Jong 1991.

translations of Richmond Lattimore. I also collected type-scene language from *Homeric Hymns*, and receptions of the *Cypria* by Euripides, Sophocles, and Ovid.

Second, Data Structuring. This was the tedious part. I broke scene-example text into core elements, and assigned example text from dozens of scenes to each element. For supplication scenes, for instance, this involved the supplicant's approach, the gesture of supplication, the supplicant's speech (including a vocative, request, and offer), and the response from the person receiving the plea. Essentially, this created a scene-template with the full range of Homeric and receptive expression as a language model.

Finally, model selection and training. I prompted the AI to generate a scene from the *Cypria* based on the template. Through an iterative process, I refined the AI's output, removing non-Homeric language and clichés, to achieve a more precise rendering of Homeric language and themes.

Results

Using these methods, I put Sing O Muse through three rounds of testing.

In the first round, I asked the Muse to sing of Iphigenia supplicating her father, Agamemnon, on Aulis, begging not to be sacrificed. The result was not convincingly Homeric, but the AI showed improvement through training. With human refinement, Sing O Muse produced lines such as:

> Sing O Muse of Iphigenia's plea to her father
> On the twelfth day after the seer spoke
> As dawn cast long shadows on the sands
> Where the Achaeans' ships waited in rows
> To sail toward the towers of Ilium.

But the process was hit or miss. The AI correctly used stock epithets like "swift-footed Achilles" or "rosy-fingered dawn," but kept trying to use the characters' eyes as a way of indicating

emotion, something which archaic epic does not do. Instead of saying that Agamemnon has a cold glare, for instance, Homeric poetry will say that he has an iron heart.

The second round, using enhanced data structuring, generated a feast type-scene that was judged passably Homeric. In this round I used a wider range of source text, generating a larger Homeric-language model. The elements in the scene template, further, were primarily physical, describing discrete actions such as the slaughter of animals, the sharing of food, and the mixing of wine. Asked to sing a feast-scene from the *Cypria,* the AI generated lines like these:

> They kindled fires with dry wood, split by bronze, bright flames leaping
> And the scent of roasting meats filled the hall.
> A handmaid brought water for washing in a fine golden pitcher
> Pouring above a silver basin so hands were cleansed and pure.

While the scene followed the traditional elements of a feast, certain lines still felt stilted or illogical, requiring iterative editorial refinement.

In the third round, I tested Sing O Muse against Open AI's untrained default GPT-4. I wanted to determine whether my customizations of the AI model resulted in a more Homeric output than the unmodified version. In this round, I also sought to see how the AIs fared when tasked to Sing Homerically, without reliance on a preloaded template. I found that the customized AI produced text that was far more Homeric in style, structure, and content than the default GPT-4 model. For example, when asked to generate a description of Helen of Troy, Sing O Muse produced these lines:

> Sing O Muse of Helen, fairest of mortals
> Golden-haired with gleaming eyes,
> Graceful as the swaying willow she walked
> Beloved by gods and men, the cause of great wars.

In contrast, he untrained AI tended toward vague and abstract phrasing, telling instead of showing, after the manner of low-grade popular fiction:

> Helen, the fairest of mortals with beauty unmatched and beguiling
> Radiant daughter of Zeus, a divine light that dazzles the heavens
> Wielder of chaos and love, her face launched a thousand proud vessels.

This genericizing was a tendency which even the trained AI exhibited, although to a lesser degree. When the AI went wrong, it went wrong in this way characteristically, by trying to average from the Internet. Along these lines, GPT-4o does a competent job when prompted to rewrite its results in hexameter, perhaps because it is modeling from the hexameter part of the Internet, and so its idiom is more appropriate and less anachronistic.

Discussion

From the results of these three rounds, I drew some preliminary conclusions. Sing O Muse provides proof-of-concept that AI, when guided by detailed human inputs, can generate quasi-Homeric poetry. Challenges remain, however, in maintaining creative fidelity and eliminating non-Homeric language. The larger the Homeric-language model – the more Homeric text it contains – the richer and more nuanced and Homeric the AI's response. Once the scene templates are populated, the AI can be trained with simple user prompts. The task then is all the time and effort required to line up the right Homeric lines in the right narrative places for emulation.

Where does this leave us? I do think that Sing O Muse, given world enough and time, could reconstruct a very Homeric version of *a* whole *Cypria*, although not *the* whole *Cypria*. But I cannot see how it could do so entirely on its own, without a human bard to invoke and channel this digital Muse. If current trends hold, Generative AI will turn out to be one more form of digital assistance – we might call it concept processing, instead of word processing, even as it

gets bundled into Microsoft Word. In any case, this AI will be what McLuhan called a crutchlike extension of the human mind, and will not have a mind of its own.[21]

These findings highlight the importance of human involvement in guiding AI to produce creative outputs that align with traditional literary styles. The more bespoke the inputs to AI, the more traditional the outputs will be.

Is it Reception?

I'll come back to that point at the end, but for now I want to consider what Sing O Muse means, and doesn't mean, for classical-reception theory. I'm going to run my results through two different models of reception, to capture the full spectrum of possible meanings.

First, what I call the broad model. This is the construal offered by the Oxford *Classical Receptions Journal*, which defines classical reception as the "transmission, interpretation, translation, transplantation, rewriting, redesigning, and rethinking of Greek and Roman material in other contexts and cultures."[22] By this expansive definition, any interaction with classical content, including AI, would seem to qualify as reception. In fact, we might argue that AI-generated poetry embodies quintessentially the *omnimetic* nature of reception: If we believe Martindale, reception is in a strong sense all there is.[23] Everything is a reception of something; and AI, with the Internet as its brain, is the reception of everything. Indeed, we might even say that AI is reception to a fault. It is not only *reception* – it is *only* reception.

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[21]McLuhan 1964.

[22]"About the Journal," https://academic.oup.com/crj/pages/About. This definition essentially rewords the inclusive conception of Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (2008), who define classical reception as "the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imaged and represented." The Open University's Classical Receptions in Drama and Poetry in English project offers a similarly broad definition, including "translation, scholarship, cultural narratives (oral, written and performed) and the artistic and literary practices that create these" (https://fass.open.ac.uk/classical-studies/research/classical-reception-studies).

[23]Martindale 2007; cf. Porter 2011, 476.

Yet in practice, reception theorists emphasize or weight particular praxes, which the broad model tends to blur and submerge. Under these weighted models, reception is a mediated, postmodern,[24] and political[25] form of engagement. Political, in this context, often means postcolonial,[26] anti-conservative,[27] anti-universalist,[28] and concerned with relations of power.[29] Mediated means that human subjectivity plays an active role in receiving or constructing the classical text, through a process of creative or scholarly interaction or refraction.[30] One corollary to this emphasis on mediation is that the classical text itself is not an object or measure of intrinsic worth, contrary to what traditionalists like T. S. Eliot are said to have presumed.[31] Another corollary is that classical texts, insofar as they can be said to exist at all, are not static: Each generation transforms and molds them with new meanings.[32] To paraphrase Heraclitus, we can't step into the same river of text twice.[33]

Less commonly, but still importantly, there is reception in the ancient context, as commonly practiced if rarely theorized by the ancients themselves. As Graziosi, Haubold, Hunter and Nagy have shown, the Ancient Greek idea of reception stressed continuity but resonated with other nuanced emphases.[34] Discussing the staging of Homeric festivals, the

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[24]Collins 1998, 6, 13; Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 14, 16, 23; Hardwick 2003, 3; Haubold 2007, 27, 35; Hexter 2006, KL 270, 372; Martindale 2006, KL 103, 130, 206; Porter 2011, 478; Stray 2011, 3.

[25]Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 10; Morley 2018, 88, 92, 97, 98; Wilson 2009.

[26]Hardwick 2003, 6, 99, 50, 111; Haubold 2007, 27; Martindale 2006, KL 241; Porter 2011, 477; Stray 2011, 3.

[27]Broder 2009; Broder 2013; Budelmann and Haubold 2008, 14; Collins 1998, 12; Hardwick 2003, 3; Morley 2018, 90-92, 97; Porter 2011, 481; Stray 2011, 6.

[28]Budelmann and Haubold 2008, 18; Graziosi 2007, 123; Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 23; Morley 2018, 92; Schein 2007, 282.

[29]Hardwick, e.g., contends that "reception is and always has been a field for the practice and study of contest about values and their relationship to knowledge and power" (2003, 11) .

[30]Jauss 1967; Goffman 1967; Iser 1974; Gaisser 1993; Collins 1998, 21; Martindale 2006, KL 129, 135, 137; Hexter 2006, KL 262, 266; Kennedy 2006, KL 3712, 3717, 3738; Porter 2011, 478; Greenwood 2016.

[31]Hardwick 2003, 10.

[32]Eliot 1920, Gaisser 1993, Greenwood 2016.

[33]Heraclitus, Frag. B 12.

[34]Graziosi 2002; Haubold 2007; Nagy 2002, 2009; Hunter 2018.

Athenian statesman Lycurgus[35] uses the word *hupolambanein*, which Nagy translates as both "reception" and "continuation."[36] In Herodotus, *hupolambanein* means "to take up by getting under, as the dolphin did Arion," or to bear up, support, or continue. In Plato it means to take by the hand; in Thucydides, to reply, rejoin, or retort to a discourse; in the New Testament, to take something into the breast.[37]

It's when we assess Homeric AI against these various weighted models, ancient and postmodern, that things get interesting. Given these weighted conceptions, in at least five ways Sing O Muse does *not* seem to constitute reception.

One, AI-generated poetry lacks essential humane elements of the process. By any recognized definition, reception means not the automatic generation of text, but the interpretation and creative reimagining of ancient material. An AI has no subjectivity. Lacking consciousness, it cannot *understand* what it receives and (re)creates.[38] The AI processes and regenerates words, but does not engage critically or reflectively with content. It does not make value-judgements because it does not have values.

Two, Sing O Muse is not mediation and it is not political. Because AI does not have values, it does not evaluate, and therefore cannot mediate. And because it is not conscious, it is not socially conscious.

Three, using AI to reconstruct ancient texts is digital classics, not reception. Rebuilding the *Epic of Gilgamesh* from cuneiform tablets, as German Assyriologists are now using AI to do, is important and exciting.[39] But unless one accepts the most radically expansive definitions,

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[35]Fl. 330 BCE; not the much-earlier Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus.
[36]Nagy 2002, glossing Pseud-Plato, *Hipparchus* 228b5f.
[37]Lidell and Scott 1988, s.v. hupolambanein.
[38]In other words, reception cannot occur at the point of meaning, because there is no meaning.
[39]Ofgang 2024.

textual reconstruction is not reception – and neither, *ex extensio*, is the use of AI to rebuild the lost Homeric *Cypria.*

Four, Sing O Muse *does* imply that the source, in this case original Homeric poetry, is a "yardstick of value."[40] For if one is trying to generate Homeric poetry, the Homericity of the result is valued tautologically.

Five, using AI to generate Homeric poetry does *not* seem to me to satisfy the criterion that reception "is and always has been a field for the practice and study of contest about values and their relationship to knowledge and power."[41]

In other important ways, however, Sing O Muse *does* qualify as reception – even if we *do* adopt one or more weighted construals.

First, it's creative. Generating Homeric text where it did not previously exist means dynamically, creatively engaging with the classical past. Sing O Muse transmits, translates, and reimagines classical material in new contexts. The AI is simply a new tool for engaging with old content. Although the AI does not *produce* new insights into Homeric poetry, we ourselves can gain those insights by building the AI's Homeric language models, structuring their data, and analyzing their outputs.

Second, Homeric AI is refractive. Sing O Muse generates new content that, while not authentically ancient, reflects the structure, style, and themes of the Homeric texts used to train it. This process replicates digitally what classical poets like Vergil did manually and mnemonically, reworking Homer for their own ends.[42] In a parallel sense, Homeric poetry itself is a reception of oral folklore and myth.[43] Using Homeric language models and type-scene

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[40]Hardwick 2003, 10.
[41]Hardwick 2003, 11.
[42]Broder 2013.
[43]Nagy 2002, Greenwood 2016.

templates to reconstruct lost texts, like the *Cypria*, continues this receptive tradition. According to Graziosi, Virgil's approach was meant as a challenge: He wanted to show that he could fashion a poem equal to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* out of the cyclic material.[44] If what Virgil was doing is reception, than Sing O Muse is, too. Homeric AI is the reception of earlier receptions, and like all texts, its output is a pastiche of other texts in words that are not its own.[45]

Third, it's scholarly – and under some mediative-refractive models, all classical scholarship is reception.[46] Programming and training Sing O Muse to reconstruct the *Cypria* requires a broad and deep understanding of Homeric poetry and its sources, and entails deducing contents of the lost text from later reception. In this way, using AI to rebuild the *Cypria* (or *Gilgamesh*), even if it's digital classics in one sense, is also reception, insofar as it requires scholarly engagement with the ancient past.

Fourth, it's classical. Sing O Muse is reception in the ancient sense of the concept. It's *hupolambanein* – a continuation of Homeric poetry. It's a digital form of the dolphin that brought Arion home.

Fifth, it's interactive. Hardwick posits that reception involves "a necessary interplay between invention and critique,"[47] and I did not find this interplay lacking as I critiqued what the GPT generated, often resorting to bad-dog reprimands when the AI did something un-Homeric.

Sixth, and perhaps most importantly, Sing O Muse is fundamentally humane. If the project has proven anything, it's that AI cannot (yet) produce Homeric poetry without human programming, training, editing and feedback. While AI does not interpret and creatively

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[44]Graziosi 2011, 35.
[45]Hexter 2006, KL 273.
[46]E.g., Martindale 2006, and Greenwood 2016, and the Open University (https://fass.open.ac.uk/classical-studies/research/classical-reception-studies).
[47]Hardwick 1992, 248.

reimagine ancient material, its human partners can and must. Humans can and do understand what the AI receives and recreates. We engage critically and reflectively with the words the AI processes and regenerates. We make value-judgments about the meanings of those words because we have values. Because we have values, we evaluate and therefore mediate. And because we are conscious, we are socially conscious, or anti-socially conscious, and our mediation is ineluctably political. In this way, AI is classical reception – and many other things besides – because AI is just another way of *being us.*

Conclusions

Classical reception, too, is just another way of being us. But who are *we*, then? To answer this question with a thought-experiment, I wonder what questions we would be asking about Sing O Muse if reception theory did not exist. If Homeric AI were invented a hundred years ago, when T.S. Eliot wrote his famous essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent," would he be asking himself: Is this new thing part of the Classical Tradition? I don't think so. I think he'd see in AI the very "depersonalization" and "extinction of personality" which he called the soul of the artist, leading him to ask of the output: Is this *Homeric*? Is this *poetry*? Is this *art*?

I don't know what answers he'd give, but I feel these would be Eliot's questions. And I think it's worth asking why these questions are not our own. Perhaps this is because reception theory is our way of ensuring that we aren't Eliot. This may be a good thing, a bad thing, or a mixed thing, but it's definitely a thing. Martindale reflects that when he went to university in 1968, the ghosts of Eliot and the New Criticism at least provided alternative protocols of reading to the then dominant combination of historicism and philology, but those protocols are "now excoriated by all."[48] Why excoriated, and not just disagreed with? Because of the cultural

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[48]Martindale 2006, KL 113.

chauvinism associated with Eliot and other champions of the Classical Tradition.[49] Indeed,

classical reception provides a conveniently expedient way for Classicists to answer charges that

our discipline is inherently elitist. The upshot of reception theory, and perhaps the reason for its

existence, is that it allows Classicists to say: Don't mind us, we're not Western chauvinists,

we're just navel gazing. We're not studying the texts, we're studying our reception of them. The

texts don't have value, but our receptions of them do, maybe, sometimes.

Are these distinctions with real differences? After all, as Budelmann and Haubold note,

"almost anything that we might wish to study under the heading of reception in Homer can also,

with almost equal justification, be called tradition."[50] The danger of reception studies, then, is

"replication, with subtle differences, of precisely the kind of cultural chauvinism that critics of

canonical literature aimed to contest."[51] Perhaps, in fact, reception is one mode in which, as

Critical Classicists like Dan-el Padilla-Peralta have argued, "even (and especially) for many of

the progressively well intentioned, the shuffling of items on curricula takes precedence over the

struggle for material redistribution."[52]

I do not mean to conclude by taking a stance on redistribution of wealth as the telos of

Classics. Of course, I may feel differently when all my student loans come due. But I said a few

minutes ago that I wanted to come back to inputs and outputs. The more bespoke the inputs to

AI, the more Homeric the outputs will be. That is my rather tautological theorem, and I want to

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[49]Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 14. It is perhaps worth nothing that, ever since Plato attacked Homer and the sophists as unphilosophical, academics have boosted their own positions by describing them as orthodox and undermining the positions of others by categorizing them as heterodox. Tell (2011, ch. 1, no. 72) notes in this connection that the literal meaning of the Greek word for "to categorize" (κατηγορεῖν) means "to accuse publicly."

[50]Budelmann and Haubold 2008, 23.

[51]"In this way, reception studies, for all that they are intended to free up readers to read texts on their own terms, in fact run the risk of confirming what the most conservative of classicists have always claimed: that Homeric poetry is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and insight" (Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 16).

[52]Peralta 2023, 65. Gilroy (2004) similarly argues that apparently progressive notions of multiculturalism merely replicate a model of cultures of difference and need to be replaced by a concept of shared experiences and aspirations (cf. Hardwick in Graziosi and Greenwood 2007, 51, and Greenwood 2016).

relate it to what I propose to call Cole's Paradox. The more advanced the AI, Cole found, the less creative the outputs.[53] How are both findings possible? Does more bespoke mean less advanced? Does more *tekhnē* mean less *poiēsis*?

In the AI context, yes. Because Cole's paradox is really a parable. In Greek terms, all *poiēsis* is *tekhnē*, but not all *tekhnē* is *poiēsis*. In modern terms, all art is craft, but not all craft is art. In Turing terms, All intelligence is artificial, but not all artifice is intelligent. In Eliot's terms, "tradition cannot be inherited," or merely generated, "and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour," indeed "a ridiculous amount of erudition."[54] In Sing O Muse terms, you have to know what is Homeric and you have to curate and template your language models like a linguist. Developing a "feel" for this seam between automation and artistry is important if AI is to mean, as Cole hopes, "a humanities-led approach to the digital, rather than a triumph of data over the arts."[55]

What is a humanities-led approach to the digital? I'll end with this thought. Here as elsewhere, we can do worse than to take a clue from Socrates. A text dies if we can't engage with it; and that's why, as he drinks the hemlock, Socrates tells his friends, "Don't feel sorry for me. Cry only if the word dies on us."[56] Using Homeric AI to generate a *Cypria* is, I think, one more way of keeping the word alive. Sing O Muse is reception as continuation, as *hupolambanein*. It's taking up by getting under, bearing up, and taking into the breast. It's the latest way, but surely not the last way, in which Classics is intergenerational, intercultural, and, best of all, potentially eternal.

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[53]Cole 2023.

[54]Eliot 1924, 28.

[55]Cole 2024.

[56]Nagy 2023's reading of Socrates telling his disciples to mourn for him only "if our argument dies and we cannot bring it to life again" (ἐάνπερ γε ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος τελευτήσῃ καὶ μὴ δυνώμεθα αὐτὸν ἀναβιώσασθαι, *Phadeo* 89b).

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