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International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa - Contra Eunomium III

Contra Eunomium III 10 – Who is Eunomius?¹

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This paper will first give an overview of the contents of *CE* III 10, before commenting in more detail on Gregory's characterisation of his opponent, Eunomius. I hope to show that an understanding of this feature in particular helps one to understand the structure and purpose of this concluding part of *CE* III.

I. Summary of the arguments of Book 10

In book 10, Gregory of Nyssa deals with two main arguments or challenges presented by Eunomius: the first (1) concerns the question of whether the Father can truly be called the Son's 'God' (§§1-17); the second (2) discusses the various meanings of 'light' as applied to Father and Son in the Bible (§§18-49). Gregory responds to the latter by accusing Eunomius of (i) failing to correctly understand Scripture's use of the word 'light' (§§18-25); (ii) having a doctrine of the incarnation which implied that either the Son was evil or the Father was inferior to the Son (§§26-44), and (iii) succumbing to precisely that heresy which he accuses the Cappadocians of holding, that is, the idea that God is composite (§§46-9).

1. The Father is 'not only the Father of the Only-begotten, but... his God'.

As Ekkehard Mühlenberg notes,² the only place in *CE* where Gregory not only accuses Eunomius of blasphemy, but also calls him the Antichrist is the close of book 9 (*CE* III 9.64), shortly after Gregory quotes Eunomius' claim that the Father is 'not only the Father of the Only-begotten, but... his God' (*CE* III 9,61). Perhaps Gregory took this to be the Eunomius' most blunt assertion of the inequality between

¹ I am grateful for the comments of the participants of the Leuven colloquium on this paper, particularly the suggestions for improvement made by Michel Barnes, Matthieu Cassin and S. G. Hall.

² See E. Mühlenberg, "Gregor von Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* III, Tomus IX", ***386***.

the Father and the Son. In any case, he picks up the claim in *CE III 10*, announcing that he will discuss the argument Eunomius uses to support it, an argument which Gregory calls the ‘chief point (τὸ κεφάλαιον) in support of their doctrine’ (*CE III 10,1*).

What was this argument? It appears that Eunomius quoted John 10:17 (‘Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ”’) in order to claim that ‘either the disciples are of one essence with the Father’ (which is clearly ludicrous) ‘or the Son is not of the same essence with the Father but serves his “God” in the same sense as the disciples do’.³ In *CE III 10,1-17* Gregory discusses the interpretation of this (and related) verses; his exegesis is framed by his contrast of Eunomius’ blasphemous and futile theology with what Gregory claims to be the ‘truly religious’ and traditional interpretation of the verse (§§1 and 17).⁴ This pious and traditional approach consists in interpreting the phrases ‘my father and your father’ and ‘my God and your God’ in the light of the divine οἰκονομία.⁵ Consequently, Gregory gives his reader a potted summary of the history of salvation from creation and the Fall (§10), to the incarnation and Christ’s saving work (§11-12) and finally the resurrection after which Jesus proclaims the glad news of the divine economy to Mary (§13-14). Whereas Eunomius applied Christ’s words ‘my God and your God’ to his non-human nature and thus allegedly intended ‘to demolish the glory of the Only-Begotten’,⁶ Gregory’s exegesis applies them to Christ’s *human* nature (§§9 and 17).

This pattern of interpreting descriptions of Christ according to the economy of salvation fits with Gregory’s strategy throughout *CE III*, as other contributors to this volume have noted.⁷ But Gregory implies that this is no mere grammatical point. Christ, in becoming human, became the first-fruits of a salvation which will apply to all; not only was the incarnation itself part of God’s economy of salvation, but the particular way in which it was announced had a purpose too: ‘when we hear that the true God and Father has become Father and God of our First-fruits, we no longer doubt that the same one has

³ Gregory quotes Eunomius’ argument at *CE III 1,8*, but the passage is wordy and not very easy to understand out of context (possibly this is one of Gregory’s reasons for quoting it). Here I use the paraphrase by Richard Vaggione: *Eunomius, The Extant Works* Richard Paul Vaggione, ed. and tr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p.126; see also n.56.

⁴ *CE III 10,1*: τῆ βλασφημίας.*CE III 10,2*: τὴν... εὐσεβῆ... διάνοιαν which is πρόδηλον... τοῖς παραδεξαμένοις ἐν ἀληθείᾳ τὴν πίστιν. *CE III 10, 17*: every pious person (πάντα... τὸν εὐσεβοῦντα) will agree that compared to Gregory’s interpretation Eunomius’ is completely futile (πάντως ἀργεῖν).

⁵ He describes his interpretation as containing ‘the purpose of the human economy’ (i.e. of Jesus Christ): κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπων οἰκονομίας τὸν σκοπὸν.

⁶ *CE III 10,17*: ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς δόξης. C.f. *CE III 10,1*, where Gregory refers to his opponents as ‘those who reduce the majestic glory of the Only-begotten to mean and servile ideas’ (οἱ τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς δόξης εἰς ταπεινάς καὶ δουλοπρεπεῖς ὑπολήψεις κατάγοντες).

⁷ Compare, for example, Volker Drecoll’s comments on Gregory’s interpretation according to the economy in *CE III 1, 131-8* and *CE III 1,41-56* (especially references to the divine economy in §§46 and 48). [p.8 and p.17 of the draft communication presented to the conference].

become our Father and God too, *when we learn* that we shall enter the same place, where Christ has entered for our sake as forerunner' (§15, my emphasis). According to Gregory, even the announcement of this to a woman was appropriate to God's economic scheme (§16). The stress that Gregory puts on the fittingness of the particular words Christ spoke and the appropriateness of his particular addressee suggests a relation in Gregory's mind between the general divine economy of salvation and the particular economy of Christ's teaching. This connection might reflect the use of the term οἰκονομία in rhetoric. 'At the core of οἰκονομία is the notion of accommodation to circumstance, whether in the daily management of an estate... or in God's providential concern for his creatures as seen in the Incarnation'. From this core meaning came the application of the term οἰκονομία to the accommodation of words to a specific purpose, context and audience.⁸ For Gregory, therefore, the effectiveness of Jesus' discourse stands for the effectiveness of his whole role in the divine economy.

A second, less obvious, but no less significant result of Gregory's exegesis of John 10:17 is that it implicitly distinguishes different senses of the word 'son': Son of God, Only-Begotten of the Father; humans as sons of God by virtue of their creation by God; that sonship rejected in favour of becoming adoptive sons of the devil; humans newly-adopted by God as his sons.⁹ The one who was truly Son of God, and thus God too, took on himself that sonship which all humans once had but lost and restored it back to them. It is *that* sense of shared human sonship under God that Jesus Christ evokes when he refers to his 'God' and 'Father'. Again, this technique of distinguishing several different meanings of a word (often according to his understanding of the divine economy) is typical of Gregory.¹⁰

2. 'As much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light'.

That Eunomius himself used a similar technique is evident from Gregory's second challenge in which he discusses Eunomius' distinction of different kinds of light (§§18-25). Gregory first quotes Eunomius' words: 'as much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light' (§18). This is a passage from Eunomius' *Apology*, which had already been

⁸ George L. Kustas, 'Saint Basil and the Rhetorical Tradition', in Paul J. Fedwick, *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1981), pp.223-8; quotation from p.227-8. cf. Malcolm Heath, *Menander. A Rhetor in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 17.

⁹ See §10 on the Fall which uses the language of adoption (by the devil) and disinheritance: humanity was given in adoption [εἰσέποιήθη]... into an evil kinship with the father of sin', so that 'he who was disinherited [ἀποκηρυκθέντος] through his own wickedness no longer had the Good and the True as his Father and God' and §13 humankind 'is no longer disinherited [ἐν ἀποκηρύκτοις] or cast out of the Kingdom of God, but is again a son...'. Translations adapted slightly from that of S. G. Hall: for the specific meaning of the Greek words, see Liddle and Scott pp.497 and 202.

¹⁰ See, in this volume, Volker Drecoll on CE III 1 (see footnote 6 above) and Morwenna Ludlow, *In illud: tunc et ipse filius* in Volker Drecoll (ed.) *Gregory of Nyssa, Opera Minora* (Leuven: Brill, 2011), pp.413-25.

addressed in Basil of Caesarea's *Against Eunomius*.¹¹ Eunomius seems to have adopted the idea of a sliding scale of divinity in which the Begotten is less than the Unbegotten and the Light of the Son is consequently less than that of the Father. In reply, Basil used a *reductio ad absurdum*: logically, he argued, Begotten is the *opposite* of Unbegotten; so if Eunomius were to be consistent, then the Light of the Son would be *opposed* to the Light of the Father – in other words it would not be light at all, but darkness.¹²

We know that Eunomius reported Basil's *reductio ad absurdum* in his *Apology for the Apology*, for Gregory quotes it right at the end of *CE III*:

'Yes', [Eunomius] says, 'but if, since "begotten" is the opposite of "unbegotten", the begotten Light meets the unbegotten Light on equal terms, the one will be light, the other darkness.'¹³

At that point, Gregory merely laughs at Eunomius. He seemingly praises him for his 'sharpness and accuracy',¹⁴ but immediately undercuts that by pointing out that this quotation is in fact a paraphrase of Basil's own words.¹⁵ Eunomius can only be logical, Gregory implies, when he is citing someone else.

We will return later to the rhetorical effect of that tactic. Here we focus on *CE III 10,18-25*, where Gregory describes how Eunomius actually responded to the challenge posed by Basil's *reductio ad absurdum*. Apparently, in his subsequent *Apology for the Apology*, Eunomius tried to avoid the absurd conclusion set out by Basil by asserting that there are different senses of the word 'light' in the Bible: Gregory quotes him as distinguishing the 'true light' (Christ, *John 1,9*); the light created in the beginning (*Gen 1,3*); the disciples who are the 'light of the world' (*Matt 5,14*); and the 'unapproachable light' (the Father, *1 Tim 6,16: §19*). With this focus on several kind of light, Eunomius seems to have tried to avoid the dilemma that Basil constantly tried to force on him (either the Son is truly light, or not at all; either the Son is fully divine, or not at all). Rather, Eunomius claims that the Son is light *to the extent that* he 'illuminate[s] people' so that they can know the transcendent light.¹⁶

¹¹ See *Eunomius, The Extant Works* Richard Paul Vaggione (ed. and tr.), *Apology* 19.12-14 and Basil, *Against Eunomius II*, PG 29, 629C – 633A.

¹² Gregory of Nyssa *CE III 10,18*; see Basil, *Adversus Eunomium II* (PG29, 632B14-25: Κατὰ δὴ οὖν τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον πρὸς τὸ γεννητὸν τῶ ἀγεννήτῳ τῆς ἀντιθέσεως οὐσης, ὁ τὸν Πατέρα φῶς ὀνομάζων, φῶς δὲ καὶ τὸν Υἱόν, τοσοῦτον δὲ τοῦτο τὸ φῶς ἐκείνου τοῦ φωτὸς διωρίσθαι λέγων, ὅσον τὸ γεννητὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου διώρισται, οὐχὶ δηλὸς ἐστὶ, κἂν τῶ ῥήματι προσποιῆται φιλανθρωπευεσθαι, φῶς ὀνομάζων δηθεν καὶ τὸν Υἱόν, ἀλλὰ τῇ γε δυνάμει τῶν λεγομένων πρὸς τὸ ἐναντίον ἀπάγων τὴν ἐννοίαν; Σκοπεῖτε γὰρ τί ἀντίκειται τῶ ἀγεννήτῳ, ἄλλο ἀγέννητον, ἢ τὸ γεννητόν; Τὸ γεννητὸν δηλονότι. Τί δὲ ἀντίκειται τῶ φωτί; φῶς ἕτερον, ἢ τὸ σκότος; Τὸ σκότος πάντως).

¹³ *CE III 10,51*: ναί, φησίν, ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦ γεννητοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἐναντίως ἔχοντος κατ'ἴσον ὑποβαίνοι τὸ γεννητὸν φῶς πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον φῶς, τὸ μὲν γενήσεται φῶς, τὸ δὲ σκότος.

¹⁴ *CE III 10,51*: τὸ μὲν οὖν ὄξυ καὶ εὐστοχον.

¹⁵ *CE III 10,51*.

¹⁶ See Eunomius quoted at *CE III 8.5* and *Apology for the Apology* (Vaggione's paraphrase), in *Eunomius, The Extant Works* Richard Paul Vaggione (ed. and tr.), p.123. Eunomius anticipated the problem that the Bible refers to both Father and Son as light in his *Apology* (§19): there, however, he simply claimed that one was begotten and the other unbegotten light.

i. Operations.

One way of attacking Eunomius here would be to remind him of an argument he used in relation to the words *genetos* and *agennetos*: that is, that things with different names must be different things.¹⁷ If the converse were true (the same name indicates same things), then ‘light’ would identify some identical property shared by both Father and Son. In fact, Gregory returns to this kind of argument later (§46). Here, however, such an argument would be weak, because clearly both Gregory and Eunomius in fact *agree* that there is a fundamental difference between created and uncreated light. Consequently, Gregory focuses on the idea (also espoused by Eunomius) that things with the same *operation* must be the same; things with different operations are different.¹⁸ Gregory asserts that Eunomius implicitly distinguishes created light from the disciples’ light by their means of operation (κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας τρόπον, §21): the former is material and the latter intellectual. He then challenges his opponent to distinguish the light of the Father and the Son by their operations (Gregory, of course, thinks that this is impossible: §21). Next, however, he develops his own variation of Basil’s *reductio ad absurdum*, challenging Eunomius to explain how, if Begotten is the opposite of Unbegotten, ‘true’ (light) can be opposed to ‘unapproachable’ (light). ‘True’ is not the opposite of ‘unapproachable’, unless ‘unapproachable’ means ‘unapproachable by the truth’, i.e. false – which would deny everything that Eunomius claims about the Father. According, to Eunomius’ concept of God, the Father must be ‘unapproachable by falsehood’, in which case the Father is ‘true’. Thus ‘true’ and ‘unapproachable’ in fact mean the same thing and indicate the same quality in the Father and the Son (§§22-4).

ii. The incarnation and divine power.

Next, Gregory reports Eunomius’ claim about John’s prologue: if the ‘light’ of verses 4-5 was the Word that became flesh, how could that light be the same light as the light of the Father, given that the incarnate ‘lived by human laws, or was crucified’? (§§26-9, quoting Eunomius’ words in §29). Gregory’s reply is to accuse Eunomius of thinking that the incarnation itself was an absurdity and he presents his opponent with a dilemma. If, as Eunomius apparently claims, it was in the nature of the Son but not of the Father to become incarnate, then either the Father was powerless to become incarnate (which destroys Eunomius’ claims about the superiority of the Father); or the Son shares the weaknesses, even the evils, of the world in which he became incarnate (§§30-4). Gregory plays with Eunomius’ argument that the Son ‘acted’ (ἐνήργησεν), while the Father was ‘inactive’ (ἀνευέγητον) with regard to this operation (ἐνεργεία - i.e. the incarnation), twisting and stretching Eunomius’ vocabulary to imply that

¹⁷ See e.g. Eunomius, *Apology* §18; also quoted in Basil *Adversus Eunomium* II:24 (PG29, 629a1-3: “Ὅτι ἐχρῆν, εἴπερ αὐτοῖς ἦν τῆς ἀληθείας φροντῖς, παρηλλαγμένων τῶν ὀνομάτων, παρηλλαγμένης ὁμολογεῖν καὶ τὰς οὐσίας.)

¹⁸ See Eunomius, *Apology* §20, in *Eunomius, The Extant Works* Richard Paul Vaggione (ed. and tr.), 58-60.

the Father's lack of involvement in one particular operation makes him generally powerless (see the quotation of Eunomius' words at §36). After a brief attack on the inconsistency of Eunomius' use of the word 'true' (§34-5),¹⁹ Gregory plays variations on the theme of this argument in §§36-8 and again in §§42-2, in both cases implying that if the Son, but not the Father, could become incarnate then the Son is to be ranked higher or praised more than the Father. These variations are separated by interludes, which will be discussed later in this paper.

iii. Is God composite?

Finally, Gregory deals with Eunomius' claim that if God is a Trinity in the sense that the Cappadocians hold, then their God is composite (§§46-9).²⁰ Gregory quotes Eunomius attack on Basil from *Apology for the Apology*:

[Basil] also makes God composite for us, by suggesting that the Light is common, but that [the Father and the Son] are distinct one from another by certain characteristics and various differences, for what coincides in one shared aspect, but distinguished by certain differences and sets of characteristics, is no less composite.²¹

Gregory, somewhat tendentiously, takes Eunomius seems to have conceded, for the sake of argument, that 'light' indicated something in common to Father and Son. Eunomius argues: *if* that were so and *if* the light of the Father and the Son were differentiated by the terms 'true' and 'unapproachable', then Basil's God would be composite. That is, Basil's God would be a composite of that which is held in common (κοινότης) and the distinguishing particularities (τὰ ἰδιωμάτα).

Gregory seizes on Eunomius' alleged 'concession' that light might refer to something in common. He claims that since Eunomius 'stipulates in many places' that 'names are attached to realities', then Eunomius is at last admitting that light refers to some 'underlying reality' (τινος ὑποκειμένου) in common to both Father and Son (§47). Put more forcefully: if things have the same name, they have the same nature (φύσις): there is identity (ταύτοτης) between the two (§47). Gregory next argues that commonality (κοινότης) and individuality (ἰδιότης) do not come together to form a composite. Rather, the essence (οὐσία) of a thing remains what it is, and its commonality (κοινότης) and individuality (ἰδιότης) vis-à-vis other things are attributes (things which are 'perceived and understood to apply to them'); they are not things in themselves (§48). An illustration of this is the way in which Scripture says

¹⁹ Gregory argues that while the phrase 'true light' for Eunomius signifies a lesser light than the 'unapproachable light', the phrase 'true God' indicates the very highest rank of divinity.

²⁰ In the *Apology*, the accusation of a composite divinity arises in the context of Eunomius justifying why 'light' and 'light' do not refer to the same underlying essence in Father and Son. 'Light' must mean the same thing as 'unbegotten' in the case of the former, or else the Unbegotten would be composite; as 'light' cannot mean 'unbegotten' when referred to the Son, it must mean 'begotten' (Eunomius *Apology* §19, Vaggione (tr.) p.57).

²¹ CE III 10,46.

that God and humans are good, but distinguishes their goodness by the use of qualifiers: there is, therefore, something in common (ἔστι τι κοινὸν) to both God and humans (goodness), but they relate to goodness in different ways (God is its fount; humans merely participate in it) and their possession of goodness in common is not to be confused with the possession of a common essence (that is to say, κοινότης between two things does not amount to their being ὁμοουσίος). Furthermore, Gregory states, one cannot conclude that God is composite from that facts that he is both God and good.

II. *Ēthos and pathos*

None of these arguments in fact add very much of substance to what Gregory has already argued in *CE* III – or, indeed, to what Basil argued in his *Adversus Eunomium*. What, then, can we learn from *CE* III 10? This paper will suggest that it is a fascinating example of Gregory’s rhetorical approach to theology. Certain aspects which seem somewhat puzzling from a theological and historical point-of-view can be illuminated by a deeper understanding of his literary style.²² Besides asserting that Eunomius’ theology is wrong, Gregory is also clearly conveying the idea that it is *dangerously* wrong. For example, he follows a long heresiological tradition by associating Eunomius with the kind of language and imagery standardly used by the fathers for demons – thus giving the impression that Eunomius is responsible for, or is an agent of, a kind of demonic deception. But, as scholars of heresiology have pointed out, the association of one’s opponent with the demonic is as much a rhetorical strategy as a theological claim.²³ Throughout *CE* III, but particularly in book 1, the climax of book 9, and book 10, Gregory seeks to alienate Eunomius from Gregory’s audience and to encourage waverers to side with himself. The most obvious tactic he employs is consistently to label Eunomius’ views as ‘heretical’ or ‘blasphemous’.²⁴ Sometimes this kind of appellation is pointedly contrasted with the ‘piety’ of the pro-Nicene party or Eunomius’ words are contrasted with the words of ‘the Apostle’.²⁵ But there is more to this than simple name-calling. It was an assumption of classical and later rhetoric that the speaker

²² In my analysis of Gregory’s literary style I am indebted to Matthieu Cassin, both in conversation and from his published work: see ‘L’écriture de la polémique à la fin du IVe siècle : Grégoire de Nysse, *Contre Eunome III*’ (Thèse de doctorat; Université Paris IV – Sorbonne, 2009); ‘“Plumer Isocrate”: usage polémique du vocabulaire comique chez Grégoire de Nysse’, *Revue des études grecques*, 121 (2008), 783–96 and ‘Text and Context: The Importance of Scholarly Reading. Gregory of Nyssa, *CONTRA EUNOMIUM*’, in Morwenna Ludlow and Scot Douglass (eds) *Reading the Church Fathers* (London: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2011).

²³ In a wide literature, see e.g. Rebecca Lyman, ‘2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy’, in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11:2 (2003), 209–222, especially 218, emphasising the *complexity* of such a strategy in its cultural context: ‘The demonized and apocalyptic opposition is between truth and falsity, not Christianity and culture or “Hellenism” and “Judaism.”’

²⁴ blasphemy: e.g. *CE* III 10,1, 8, 37; heresy *CE* III 10,36, 37, 47.

²⁵ See e.g. *CE* III 10,1-2: Eunomius’ ‘blasphemy’ contrasted with the ‘truly religious understanding of these words’; *CE* III 10,8: ‘the argument of the blasphemy’ contrasted with ‘the proclamation of the Apostle’ (c.f. *CE*.III 5, where the method of Eunomius and his followers is contrasted with that of ‘the Apostle’).

would seek to convey to his audience, either directly or indirectly, the untrustworthiness or bad will (κακονοία) of his opponent, whilst affirming his own character as honest and good (establishing his ἠθος) in order to secure the good will (εὐνοία) of the audience.²⁶ Because disposing the audience well towards oneself as speaker [*ēthos*] was understood as being closely connected to disposing them against one's opponent by stirring up emotion [*pathos*] against him, *ēthos* and *pathos* are often discussed together in guides to rhetoric.²⁷ In what follows I shall explain how Gregory seeks to alienate Eunomius from his audience, first by following the heresiological tradition of associating his opponent with the demonic, secondly by suggesting that Eunomius is a bad philosopher (specifically, a bad logician) and thirdly by alleging that he has bad literary style.

1. Eunomius and the demonic

Perhaps the most obvious of Gregory's strategies is the association of Eunomius with the demonic. References to the demonic and to idolatry (which was closely associated with the demonic) are absent in *CE I*, are sparing in *CE II*, but are found scattered throughout *CE III*.²⁸ Rebecca Lyman suggests that Gregory 'approached heresy as a matter of sickness or poor education rather than [demonic] pollution' (in contrast to, for example, Athanasius and Gregory's own brother Peter).²⁹ She is right to stress both the rhetorical manner in which Gregory uses various categories to characterise his opponent and his use of slurs about Eunomius' health and training for this purpose. However, I would argue that the traditional Christian association of heresy with the demonic remains and that demonic

²⁶ On the focus on ἠθος as a mode of persuasion see e.g. Aristotle *Ars rhetorica* 1.2.3-4 (1356a): 'Of the *pisteis* [forms of persuasion] provided through speech there are three species: for some are in the character [*ēthos*] of the speaker, and some are disposing the listener in some way, and some in the argument [*logos*] itself... [There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly...' The *ēthos* required to make an orator trustworthy consists of practical wisdom [*phronēsis*], virtue [*arētē*] and good will [*eunoia*] (*ibid.* II.1,5). This article will focus on Gregory's use of *ēthos* and *pathos*, but it seems that Eunomius may well have pursued a similar tactic: while I accept Vaggione's theological interpretation of Eunomius' use of the terms *eunoia* and *kakonoia*, it seems to be me possible that they may have had a rhetorical application too: *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 87-8.

²⁷ See *ibid.* II.1-11 and Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* VI.II (especially VI.II.13 and 18-19: 'the excellence of [the orator's] own character will make his pleading all the more convincing') and Cicero *De oratore* II: winning favour of audience §§178-84; inducing emotions in audience: §§185-216 (see esp. §178: 'nothing in oratory is more important than to win for the orator the favour of his hearer and to have the latter so affected as to be swayed by something resembling a mental impulse or emotion, rather than by judgment or deliberation). See also Gunderson, Erik 'The rhetoric of rhetorical theory', in Erik Gunderson (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 121: ' "Ethos" matters. And a complex interrelationship between morals and passions lies at the heart of the issue of moving one's audience'. On *ēthos* in *CE III*, see Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, e.g. 268.

²⁸ A search by means of the the TLG on-line for the root δαίμ— reveals the following: *CE I*: no hits ; *CE II*: 2 hits; *CE III*: 8 hits. A search for the root εἰδωλ— revealed: *CE I*: no hits ; *CE II*: 7 hits; *CE III*: 19 hits.

²⁹ Rebecca Lyman, 'A topography of heresy: mapping the rhetorical creation of Arianism', in Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (eds) *Arianism after Arius. Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 59. Lyman's analysis comes in the course of a wider survey of the 'rhetorical creation' of later Arianism and is of necessity very brief; she also focusses almost entirely on *CE I*, which may explain the absence of references to the demonic.

language remains as part of the ‘rhetorical creation’ of Eunomius as an Arian heretic, regardless of whether Gregory actually believes Eunomius’ errors are *caused* by demonic pollution.³⁰ Indeed, as we shall see, in Gregory’s polemic the accusations about Eunomius’ training and demonic beliefs are mutually supporting.

Firstly, Eunomius is associated with pagan religious practice, particularly idolatry. Gregory here follows a long-established Christian tradition which argued that phenomena associated with pagan religious practices such as divination were due to the evil and deceptive workings of demons.³¹ Even though prayers addressed to gods appeared to be answered, they were answered by demons who did not have the petitioners’ good in mind.³² By Gregory of Nyssa’s day, the accusation of idolatry seems to be particularly aimed at those educated people who practised theurgy: devotees think that they can move gods to do what they want, but they have in fact become enslaved to demons.³³ A clear theme running through this kind of accusation is that of deception (a word commonly associated with the demons is ἡ ἀπάτη): demons deceive people into thinking that idols were gods, that gods answer prayers, that divination work.³⁴

This theme is given a very particular spin in *CE* III 10: a few paragraphs before directly accusing Eunomius of deceit (the word ἀπάτη or its plural is repeated three times in three lines in §20), Gregory recounts the story of the fall – for Christians the archetypal story of deceit (§§10-15). Strikingly, Gregory’s commentary on the narrative (§16) contrasts Satan’s *words* to Eve with those of Christ to Mary:

³⁰ In fact I think that the dichotomy implied by this sentence is a false one (demonic heresy as a rhetorical construction vs heresy ‘really’ caused by demons); see my ‘Not completely evil: the place of demons in Cappadocian theology’, in *Journal for Early Christian Studies*, forthcoming.

³¹ See, e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra fatum* [*Fat.*] GNO 3.2 59,15. For the earlier tradition, see e.g. Justin Martyr e.g. 2 *Apologia* 5.4 (see Annette Yoshiko Reed, ‘The trickery of the fallen angels and the demonic mimesis of the divine: aetiology, demonology, and polemics in the writings of Justin Martyr’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12/2 (2004), pp.141-71., passim, especially p.144); Origen e.g. *Contra Celsum* 3.2; 3.25; 5.46; 7.65, as cited by Dale B. Martin, *Inventing superstition : from the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, Mass.; London : Harvard University Press, 2004), p.178. See also Julien Ries, ‘Cultes païens et démons dans l’apologétique chrétienne de Justin à Augustin’, in Julien Ries (ed.), *anges et démons. Actes du colloque de Liège et de Louvain-la-Neuve 25-26 novembre 1987* *Homo religiosus*, 14 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d’histoire des religions, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989), pp.339-341.

³² See, for example, the story related in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Thaum*: responding to a crowd which prays for more space in the theatre the local demon causes a plague PG 46, 956,22-48; tr. Maraval §87-88, http://www.gregoiredenysse.com/?page_id=86 accessed 10.3.2011.

³³ See, perhaps most famously, Gregory of Nazianzus’ account of Julian’s supposed enslavement to demons in Or. 4 he is deluded by them (77,20); [#39]; they make him unstable (85,4) and inconsistent (101,6) and ultimately – unsated by the animal sacrifices he offers them - they demand to be fed with Julian’s own blood (87,14-19).

³⁴ See e.g. Basil *Epistula* 233:15: the mind deceived by a demon ‘even thinks that wood is not wood but god’ (see also the reference to deceptions - τοῖς ἀπατώσιν - in line 13); Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. cat.* XVIII (esp. line 8: ἡ τῶν δαιμόνων ἀπάτη); Gregory of Nyssa, *Fat.* repeats the phrase the ‘deceptive power of the demons’ twice in 10 lines (GNO 3.2 59,14: ἡ ἀπατηλὴ τῶν δαιμόνων δύναμις) (GNO 3.2 59,24: τὴν ἀπατηλὴν τῶν δαιμόνων ἐνέργειαν).

just as, having become at the start minister and advocate of the serpent's words (τῶν τοῦ ὄφεως λόγων... διάκονός τε καὶ σύμβουλος), she consequently brought a beginning of evil upon the world, so, by bearing to the disciples the words of him who had slain the rebellious dragon (τοῦ θανατώσαντος τὸν ἀποστάτην δράκοντα τοὺς λόγους τοῖς μαθηταῖς διακομίσασα), she might become a pioneer of faith for mankind...³⁵

Thus Gregory firmly establishes a contrast not only between devilish deceit and Christian truth, but between the *mode* of the deception/salvation: words. This continues a theme Gregory had established at the end of *CE* III 9, where again Eunomius' deceit is described in very verbal terms:

63. Do you see and understand, you who are dragged off by deceit to destruction (δι' ἀπάτης), who it is you have set over your souls as instructor? — he debases the holy scriptures (τὰς ἁγίας γραφάς), he changes the divine words (τὰς θείας φωνάς)... he not only barbs his own tongue (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶσσαν) against us, but also tries to make alterations in the holy words themselves (τὰς ἁγίας φωνάς)... Do you not yet perceive that he lifts himself up against the name we adore (τῷ ὀνόματι), so that in time the name (τὸ ὄνομα) of the Lord will not be heard, but there will be brought into the churches, instead of Christ, Eunomius? **64.** Do you not yet consider that this godless proclamation (τὸ ἄθεον τοῦτο... κήρυγμα) has been published in advance by the Devil as a contemplation, preparation, preface (προοίμιον), for the coming of the Antichrist? One who strives to prove that his own words (τὰς ἰδίας φωνάς) are more authoritative than the sayings of Christ (τῶν... λόγων) and to alter the faith away from the divine names (τῶν θείων ὀνομάτων) and the sacramental ceremonies and symbols towards his own deceit (εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν ἀπάτην), what else will he be rightly called, if not Antichrist?

Gregory develops other variations on this theme of verbal deception, including using the imagery of the theatre and masks: hence in *CE* III 9,1-2 he ironically commends Eunomius for having finally 'removed every mask of disguise from the lie'³⁶ and at the end of the work he chides Eunomius for being like an actor, not speaking in his own voice but Basil's (and not doing that very well): 'I would like to ask him who acts our part (τὸν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὑποκριτὴν) either to use our words, or to present his imitation (τὴν μίμησιν) of our speech as closely as possible, or else as he has learnt and is able, to use his book to argue for himself (ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου προσώπου) and not for us.'³⁷

³⁵ *CE* III 10 16,8-12

³⁶ *CE* III 9,2 ἐπεὶ δὲ παντὸς ἀπατηλοῦ προσωπείου τὸ ψεῦδος ἀπογυμνώσας.

³⁷ *CE* III 10,51 (a play on πρόσωπον – person, character, mask – surely being intended here).

Secondly, Eunomius' theology is demonic in that, according to Gregory, it mixes the divine and human – just like the Egyptian idolaters (§§40-2). Here Gregory moves beyond the common ploy of associating a heretic with idolatry (and foreign idolatry at that): his focus is not so much on 'their outlandish idol-making, when they attach certain animal forms to human bodies', but on what those idols symbolise (§41). In other words, it perhaps reflects not Egyptian religion as such, but various Greek philosophical attempts to understand it.³⁸ Gregory suggests that Eunomius' Christology, according to which Christ is 'ambiguous in nature (ἐπαμφοτερίζειν κατὰ τὴν φύσιν)' and has its 'being combined and commingled with opposites (τινα συμμιγῆ τε καὶ σύγκρατον ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων τὴν οὐσίαν)' recalls the explanation given for the Egyptians' composite idols: they symbolise 'their mixed nature (τῆς συμμίκτου φύσεως), which they call a *daemon*' which 'does not have divinity unmixed or undiluted (οὐκ ἀμιγῆς οὐδὲ ἄκρατον)'.³⁹ Like Eunomius' Begotten one, who 'both yearns for participation in the Good and is diverted towards a disposition subject to passion', the *daemon* surpasses human nature, but is susceptible to pleasure and pain.⁴⁰

Again, however, Gregory seems to attempt a typically verbal construal of the situation. Eunomius clearly does not worship idols – but Gregory alleges that he is as bad as those who do. He is someone who holds the symbolic interpretations of Anubis, Isis or Osiris, 'while avoiding the names' (τῶν δὲ ὀνομάτων φειδόμενος).⁴¹ At one level, this is just accusing a heretic of holding, but not admitting to, views which are tantamount to paganism (specifically, the idea of a cosmic intermediary). More profoundly, it may be that Gregory is referring to contemporary philosophical debates about the status of the Egyptian gods: were they different gods from the Greek pantheon or the same gods worshipped under different titles? Tied up with that debate was the issue of the particular status of divine names: it was difficult for many Platonists to argue that the Egyptian gods were the same gods with different names, for their philosophy of language committed them to the idea that names 'belonged naturally to their referents'.⁴² This debate is of course familiar from Basil and Gregory's arguments with Eunomius – so in suggesting that Eunomius in effect worships Egyptian gods but under the name of 'the Begotten', Gregory is not only accusing his opponent of paganism and idolatry, he is

³⁸ Plutarch, for example, uses allegory to understand both images of and myths about the Egyptian gods: Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* §75; see also Fritz Graf, 'Plutarch und die Götterbilder', in Rainer Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder – Gottesbilder – Weltbilder*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, Band 54 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 251-266, especially 261. On Porphyry and Iamblichus disagreeing on the question of cult statues see, Mark J. Edwards *Culture and Philosophy in the Age of Plotinus* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 137.

³⁹ Quotations CE III 10 40,5; 7-8 and 10 41,3; 6; see also line 7.

⁴⁰ CE III 10 40,8-9; and 10 41,8: ἡδονὴν τε καὶ πόνον ἀναδεχόμενον

⁴¹ CE III 10 41,15-16.

⁴² Edwards *Culture and Philosophy*, 142, citing Iamblichus *On the Egyptian Mysteries* 7.4 (see Iamblichus *On the Mysteries* Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell (trr.) (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p.298-303).

also accusing him of being inconsistent in his view that particular names denoted particular things or beings.

2. Logic and rhetoric

So, Gregory implies that Eunomius is demonic because he deceives and because he is secretly idolatrous. Furthermore, he gives both accusations a ‘spin’ which focuses on Eunomius’ use of language: either Eunomius uses it as a technique to deceive or he is inconsistent in his use of it. It is at this point that claims about demonic thought overlap with those about Eunomius’ training. In particular, Gregory draws attention to Eunomius’ claim to precision in theological language (ἀκρίβεια) – a claim which seems to be grounded in Eunomius’ own self-presentation, but which Gregory characterises as both obsessive and specious.⁴³ Gregory himself uses the term ἀκριβεία fairly frequently in *CE III*, sometimes he undermines Eunomius’ claim to theological precision, by saying that it is empty or childish; often he implies that it is something he and not Eunomius has.⁴⁴ Most pointedly, he claims that Isaiah had ἀκριβεία and that only those inspired by the Holy Spirit can interpret Scripture ἀκριβῶς (clearly implying that Eunomius is uninspired).⁴⁵

Gregory connects Eunomius’ claim to ‘precision’ with his alleged tendency to use ‘logic’ or ‘syllogisms’ or to be ‘technical’.⁴⁶ In turn, these latter accusations are treated by Gregory as evidence of Eunomius’ ‘Aristotelianism’.⁴⁷ Here Gregory describes Eunomius’ use of Aristotle, not as cool rational logic, but as ‘nonsense’ (λῆρον, line 2): ‘he laboriously makes a lot of noise about the Aristotelian classification of beings, and in what we have written elaborates on the kinds and species and distinctions and indivisibles, and deploys all the rest of the technical logic (τὴν τεχνολογίαν) of the *Categories* to insult our doctrines’.⁴⁸ Fourth century opponents drew attention to the role of Aristotle in Aetius’ and Eunomius’ education⁴⁹ and consequently modern commentators have tried ascertain to

⁴³ At *CE III* 9,54 Gregory quotes Eunomius as claiming that ‘We ourselves, relying on the saints and blessed men, say that the “mystery of godliness” (1 Tim 3.16) is not constituted either by the solemnity of the names or by peculiarities of ceremonies and sacramental symbols, but by correctness of doctrines (τῶν δογμάτων ἀκριβεία)’. On the role of Eunomius’ claim to ἀκριβεία in theological language, see Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 46, 253-4, 264.

⁴⁴ Empty: *CE III* 8,63; childish *CE III* 5,20; Gregory’s ἀκριβεία: e.g. *CE III* 1,87; 1,113; 2,72; 3,1; 3,13 etc.

⁴⁵ *CE III* 3,9; 1,42; 10,9.

⁴⁶ See e.g. *CE III* 10,19: ‘Eunomius tries to refute them by formal logical demonstrations’ (ταῖς τεχνικαῖς ἐφόδοις τῶν ἀποδείξεων); 10,20: ‘the elementary flaw in the logic’ (τὸν παιδιώδη παραλογισμόν τοῦ σοφίσματος).

⁴⁷ *CE III* 10,50

⁴⁸ φιλοπόνως τὴν Ἀριστοτελικὴν τῶν ὄντων διαίρεσιν ἐπιθρυλῶν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ λόγῳ ἐξείργασται γένη καὶ εἶδη καὶ διαφορὰς καὶ ἄτομα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν ταῖς κατηγορίαις τεχνολογίαν ἐπὶ διαβολῇ τῶν ἡμετέρων δογμάτων προεχειρίσατο.

⁴⁹ Especially with regard to Aetius: Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 16; Lim, *Public Disputation*, 116.

what extent Eunomius is in fact using Aristotelian logic.⁵⁰ However, whilst not doubting that they had read Aristotle, it is difficult to conclude that Aristotelianism was uniformly *characteristic* or distinctive of Aetius, Eunomius and their followers (notably, Eunomius accused his opponents of being ‘Aristotelian’ too!).⁵¹ But if the accusations of Aristotelianism and an obsession with ἀκρίβεια are the result of hostile rhetoric, what is their point? I will suggest that Gregory plays with the notions of Eunomius being a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ arguer. On the one hand, Gregory suggests throughout *CE III* that actually Eunomius is not very expert in that in which he claims expertise: in fact Eunomius is too *lax* (or inconsistent) about his use of language. For example, as we saw above, Gregory criticises Eunomius’ analysis of the word light in the Bible: if Eunomius agrees that the same word (φῶς) denotes the two kinds of light (uncreated, intelligible and created, visible light) then he agrees that two things can share a word, but not a meaning in common, which – Gregory claims – undermines Eunomius’ wider theory of language (§20). Again, Eunomius is allegedly inconsistent in his use of words which should have the same meaning: in the phrase ‘true light’ Eunomius thinks ‘true’ *lowers* the conception of the Son below the Father (who is ‘unapproachable light’), while in the phrase ‘true God’, he assumes that ‘true’ *raises* the conception of God to its highest extent (§35). Furthermore, Gregory argues, Eunomius makes an error about the logical status of words like ‘true’ and ‘unapproachable’: according to Gregory, these words are absolute terms which admit of no degrees.⁵² If the Father is unapproachable, he is completely so. Similarly, the true admits no contamination of the false, or it is not true (§22). Even more so, Gregory contends, *genetos* and *agennetos* are logical opposites, so it is nonsense to suggest that ‘as much as the Begotten is separate from the Unbegotten, so is the Light distinguished from the Light’ (§18).⁵³

In addition to accusing Eunomius of bad logic, Gregory implies that Eunomius’ logic reflects his theology: he fails to make the right kind of distinctions: he divides (the meaning of ‘true’; the Father from Son) where he should admit similarity and he confuses (‘light’ and ‘light’; the Son and creation) where he should admit distinction. Gregory sometimes uses Basil’s tactic of arguing that Eunomius’

⁵⁰ For useful surveys, see Michel R. Barnes, *The power of God : Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 5-6 and Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 122-6.

⁵¹ For example, Lim connects Aetius’ training in Aristotle with his medical training in Alexandria, but denies that the use of Aristotle’s *Categories* were widely read in Eunomius’ circle (Lim, *Public Disputation*, 116, 131). For Gregory of Nyssa reporting that Eunomius accused Basil of Aristotelianism (with regard to ἐπίνοια) see *CE II* 403-12, especially 411, cited by e.g. Lim, *Public Disputation*, 123 and Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 92.

⁵² §22 ‘The true and the unapproachable are equally repellent of contrary concepts. As truth admits no admixture of falsehood, so the unapproachable does not allow anything contrary to come near.’

⁵³ *CE III* 10 52: ‘So just as living is not a declining from not living, but total opposition, so we reckon that having been begotten is not a decline from not having been begotten, but its contradiction and absolute antithesis, so that what is signified in each has nothing in common with the other in any way whether small or large.’

'Begotten' is either fully God or not God at all (i.e. Basil accuses Eunomius of worshipping a created being or setting the Son against the Father in a quasi-Manichaean theology)⁵⁴; however, his main tactic – in *CE* III at least – is to argue that Eunomius' 'Begotten' is an in-between being, or a mixed being. He is heavy with his sarcasm in noting that Eunomius, in order to 'protect' the Father from *pathos*, has described a Son who is divine, but is himself somehow sullied with the passion of the world.⁵⁵ Again, Gregory 'verbalises' this accusation: just as Eunomius' theology presents a mixed-up Son, so his logic is tainted: 'why do you link incompatible things in your books? Why do you soil what is pure with your sordid argument?' (*CE* III 2 24).

Gregory's focus on Eunomius' sloppy logic helps to define Eunomius' character: it undermines his much-vaunted claim to precision or ἀκρίβεια in theology and it paints him as a bad pupil of Aristotle. But it also paints him as a bad arguer in another sense. The aim of a rhetorician – especially in a law-court – is to persuade his audience of a certain case and in order to persuade them, he needs to make clear distinctions between things: between guilt and innocence, between intended and unintended actions, between events which could be foreseen and those which could not. Therefore, a substantial part of the rhetorician's training was a training in how to argue by making proper distinctions (such as those achievable through Aristotelian logic).⁵⁶ A rhetorician who could not make these clearly was simply a bad rhetorician.

So, as we have seen, Gregory accuses Eunomius of being a sloppy, and thus a bad, arguer. On the other hand, however, Gregory often admits that his opponents' arguments are effective: in that sense he can argue well. Thus, Gregory associates himself with a long tradition of accusing rhetoricians with sophistry – a kind of intellectual enquiry which had abandoned the love of wisdom (*philosophia*) for techniques of persuasion:

Is he by these efforts deliberately putting forward such propositions against the truth, or using tricks (τᾶς ἀπάταις) to test the insensitivity of his followers, whether they can detect the elementary flaw in the logic (τὸν παιδιώδη παραλογισμὸν τοῦ σοφίσματος), or whether they are unaware of such an obvious trick (ἀπάτην)? I do not think any one is so stupid that he does not see the trick (ἀπάτην) over the use of the same word, by which Eunomius deceived (παρὰ κρούεται) himself and those who think like him.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Lyman, 'A topography of heresy, 59-61

⁵⁵ Note that Gregory's accusation is that this mixing happens in the one semi-divine nature of the Son, not between the human and divine natures (as in Gregory's Christology: cross-reference to Andrew Radde-Gallwitz paper on *CE* III 3?)

⁵⁶ On the importance of learning to argue (over stylistic refinement) see Heath, *Menander*, e.g. xiii, xvi.

⁵⁷ *CE* III 10 20

Compare this with a similar passage from *CE III 2*:

That is how our clever wordsmith (ὁ σοφὸς λογογράφος) has somewhere laid to rest his famous dialectical skill (τὴν πολυθύλητον διαλεκτικὴν), and before demonstrating the matter in question, tells his fairy tale as if it were to children, this fraudulent (ἄπατηλὴν) and unreasoned (ἀκατάσκευον) nonsense of his version of doctrine; he tells it like a story at a drunken party.⁵⁸

In both passages Gregory associates bad logic with deception, and – moreover – the deception of followers who are described as having childlike innocence. Here, rhetoric does not represent the fair and manly competition between two advocates in a law-court nor a contest between two athletes; rather, here rhetoric is a tool for deception used by someone who knows exactly to prey on its power to deceive the weak. Furthermore, in both passages, Eunomius' logic is agreed to be effective (i.e. persuasive) even though it is imperfect: in the first it is said to have 'an elementary flaw', in the second it is associated with the telling of myths or fairy-story stories and is described as ἀκατάσκευον, which can mean having an 'unelaborate' or style, or 'unprepared' or 'disordered' in argumental structure. Similarly, when Gregory compares Eunomius' argument to Circe's potion in the *Odyssey* (*CE III 2 77*), the remarkable thing is that Eunomius is persuasive *despite* the fact that he contradicts himself. Unlike Odysseus' men Eunomius' victims do not even know they have been duped, so total is Eunomius' deception.

In order to explain how Eunomius is 'good' rhetorician in the sense that he succeeds in his deception, even though he argues badly according to the strict rules of logic, I suggest that Gregory implies that Eunomius dominates his opponents by technique (τέχνη).⁵⁹ The accusation of τέχνη or τεχνολογία was a common rhetorical device used by one speaker to establish his superiority over another: in a tradition stemming from Plato, it was common for speakers to portray their opponents as using speech that was effectively persuasive, but which was not appropriately subordinated to more fundamental ethical concerns. Plato argued that sophists failed to guide their arguments by dialectical wisdom and self-knowledge; Athenian orators claimed their opponents failed to subordinate τέχνη to

⁵⁸ *CE III 2,92*

⁵⁹ Lim ?? First, Gregory is arguing that Eunomius' theology is technical, and ascriptural – a 'Christianity for "experts" '. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, p.94, citing *CE I 14*.

civic virtues.⁶⁰ For Quintilian the ideal orator was the *bonus vir dicendi peritus* ('the good man skilled in speech').⁶¹ Τέχνη was thus deceptive (indeed, the word had resonances with the practice of magic).⁶²

In their most blunt form, accusations of τεχνολογία opposed the 'philosopher' (speaker) to the 'rhetorician' (opponent); usually, however, the opposition was more subtle. Writers, for example, might admit their own rhetorical training but accuse their opponents of a particularly instrumentalised focus on the techniques of argument (often called sophistry or *logographia*).⁶³ This is why the Cappadocians accuse Eunomius of being a *logographos*, obsessed with technique, but themselves accept and own Eunomius' accusation that they attempt 'writing without training in logic' (*CE* III 10,54).⁶⁴ Against this, they portray themselves as men of broad education (*paideia*) and accuse Eunomius of suffering from ἀμαθία and being ἀπαιδευτός. Both Lim and Vaggione see this rhetorical construction of different forms of education as prominent in the debates between Eunomius on the one side and Basil and the two Gregories on the other: although they interpret the opposition in rather different ways, both agree that the Cappadocians try to contrast their preference for plain speech, broad education and honest intent with Eunomius' verbal complexity, technical education and dubious motives.⁶⁵

This general point about τέχνη is important for our understanding of *CE* III, because it shows that underlying Gregory's assessment of Eunomius' argument is this ancient contrast between 'good' (plain, honest, truthful) speech and 'bad' (technical, tricky) speech. This is *not* the same as Gregory contrasting his 'philosophy' against Eunomius' 'rhetoric' for, as we have seen, he critiques Eunomius' use of *both* philosophy and rhetoric. Rather, Gregory is claiming that Eunomius is a *bad* philosopher and a *bad* rhetorician – despite the apparent success of his arguments. It is in order to explain that success that Gregory has to turn to Eunomius' argumentative *technique* and claim that it is that by which he persuades his followers, not by any deeper merit in his argument.⁶⁶ This explains why a good

⁶⁰ Hesk, J. 'The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric in Athenian oratory', in Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (ed) *Performance culture and Athenian democracy* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999), 217.

⁶¹ See Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* I praef. 8; II 15,1; II 16,1; XII 1,1; c.f. 'Introduction' Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, vols. I-V, Donald Russell (tr.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 5. Cicero, although he reports various point-of-view in *De oratore* also inclines to the view that the good orator must have a good grasp of philosophy, including ethics.

⁶² Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 93.

⁶³ Hesk, J. 'The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric', 217; Lim, *Public Disputation*, 127.

⁶⁴ Although λογογράφος could be a neutral term simply distinguishing a writer of prose from a poet or dramatist, in *CE* III Gregory very often uses the term in contexts where he is emphasising Eunomius' bad literary style (see e.g. 1,83; 5,18; 5,25; 9,31; 9,42) or claiming that he is engaged in deceit (see e.g. 1,1; 2,92; 2,100; 2,152; 5,16; 7,8; 8,13,32). Tellingly, the other work in Gregory's corpus in which the term λογογράφος is used most often is also an anti-heretical writing: the *Antirr.* Λογογράφος is used as a term of abuse, imply over-reliance on technique, in the exchange of insults between Demosthenes and Aeschines. See e.g. Aeschines, *In Ctesiphontem* 173; Demosthenes, *De falsa legatione*, 246 (Aeschines calls people sophists and λογογράφοι, but he is guilty of his own charge). See Hesk, J. 'The rhetoric of anti-rhetoric', 213ff.

⁶⁵ ref. to relevant chapters

⁶⁶ *Contra* Vaggione, if one understands Gregory's comments about Eunomius' use of τέχνη as referring to rhetorical techniques of persuasion, as well as philosophical τεχνολογία, this makes Eunomius' popularity easier, not harder, to explain: Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 99-100.

part of *CE* III is concerned with the issue of literary style. These sections are not, I would argue, peripheral to Gregory's argument, but help him establish fundamentally what is wrong with Eunomius – but also why he is dangerous.

3. Eunomius' literary style in *CE* III.10 and related passages

In this section I will suggest that Gregory's critique of Eunomius' literary style goes beyond the mere suggestion that it is bad. Rather, I will argue that the *particular kind* of faults that Gregory draws to our attention, help him simultaneously to explain how Eunomius wins over his audience and to construct an unflattering portrait of his opponent. In order to investigate this, I will compare Gregory's comments with some passages in Longinus' *On the Sublime*. I am using this to illustrate the *kind* of context in which Gregory's comments should be understood: I am interested less in Gregory's actual sources than in how the prose of *CE* III 10 functions. Nevertheless it is a good text to use for at least three reasons: first it is possible, even probable, that Gregory knew this text;⁶⁷ second, it provides a useful complement to the very wide range of sources discussed by Matthieu Cassin,⁶⁸ thirdly, Longinus' emphasis on sublimity in the *ideas* as well as the *style* of the treatise provides a useful example of how ancient literary criticism was *not* simply limited to matter of form: rather, Longinus and other philosophising literary critics seem to imply that defects in style reflect defects at a deeper level (much as nineteenth century physiognomists would attempt to trace moral defects in someone's face).⁶⁹

The most obvious literary reference comes right at the end of *CE* III 10, where Gregory ridicules Eunomius for his 'Demosthenic intensity':

This is what we, who "set our hands to writing without training in logic", as our abuser says, offer rustically in our local dialect (διὰ τῆς ἐπιχωρίου γλώττης ὑπαγροικίζομεν) to the new Paianeus. As to why he has struggled against this contradiction, shooting at us hot and fire-breathing words with the force of a Demosthenes, let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings. Our own is not too difficult to put into action for refuting the doctrines of the impious, but for poking fun at the ignorance of the uneducated it is quite unsuitable.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ I assume in what follows that Gregory of Nyssa was aware of some contemporary literary debates. See e.g. Malcolm Heath's detailed argument that he had read the treatise *On the Sublime*, conventionally ascribed to Longinus: Heath, Malcolm, 'Echoes of Longinus in Gregory of Nyssa', in *Vigiliae Christianae* 53 (1999), 395-400;

⁶⁸ *L'écriture de la polémique*.

⁶⁹ Another classic example, in rather a different context, of ethicising literary criticism is Horace, *Ars Poetica* and *Epistulae*.

⁷⁰ ταῦτα ἡμεῖς οἱ δίχα λογικῆς ἐν τρεχείας ἐπιχειροῦντες τῶ γράφειν, καθὼς φησιν ὁ διαβάλλων ἡμᾶς, πρὸς τὸν νέον Παιανιέα διὰ τῆς ἐπιχωρίου γλώττης ὑπαγροικίζομεν. πῶς δὲ πρὸς τὴν

Here and elsewhere in *CE III*, Gregory compares his opponent to Demosthenes: Eunomius is said to utter his words with ‘the fury of a Demosthenes’ (Δημοσθενικῶ γὰρ θυμῶ) or ‘with the force of a Demosthenes’ (κατὰ τὴν Δημοσθενικὴν εὐτονίαν) and he is described as ‘another’ or ‘a new Paianian’ (ἄλλος τις... Παιανιεύς, τὸν νέον Παιανιέα: Paianeus being the family name of Demosthenes, according to the *Suda*).⁷¹ But in what does the alleged similarity between Eunomius and Demosthenes lie? And why might Gregory want to make such a comparison?⁷²

In the extract quoted above, the quality of being ‘Demosthenic’ seems to consist in two things: first, emotional intensity and secondly a more strictly literary quality of his language which is associated with being heavy or distended. These qualities are alleged against Eunomius in *CE III 10* and implicitly or explicitly contrasted with Gregory’s own supposed style. For example, with regard to the emotional level of his language, Eunomius is described as speaking with ‘fervour’ (θυμῶ: §50) and his words are described as ‘hot and fire-breathing’ (τοὺς θερμούς ἐκείνους καὶ πῦρ πνέοντας λόγους: §54). This recalls Longinus’ description of Demosthenes’ rhetoric as having ‘abundant warmth and passionate glow’ (πολὺ τὸ διάπυρον ἔχει καὶ θυμικῶς ἐκφλεγόμενον); it is ‘more emotional’ (παθητικώτερος) than Plato’s prose.⁷³ While a rhetorician, as we have seen, was expected to engage his hearers’ emotions in order to persuade them, the emotional tone had to be well-judged. Therefore, Longinus, like other literary critics, criticises emotion which is ‘misplaced’ (ἄκαιρον) or ‘unrestrained’ (ἄμετρον).⁷⁴ Furthermore he makes a connection between out-of-control emotion and out-of-control prose:

Writers often behave as if they were drunk and give way to outbursts of emotion which the subject no longer warrants, but which are private to themselves and consequently tedious, so that to an audience which feels none of it their behaviour looks unseemly.⁷⁵

As we have seen, Gregory compares Eunomius’ speech to story-telling at a drunken party (*CE III 2,92*); drunkenness is often associated with excessive or inappropriate emotion and Gregory certainly uses the image to indicate an inappropriate and probably excessive mode of speech. Elsewhere, Gregory makes

ἀντίθεσιν ταύτην διηγωνίσαστο τοὺς θερμούς ἐκείνους καὶ πῦρ πνέοντας λόγους κατὰ τὴν Δημοσθενικὴν εὐτονίαν καθ’ ἡμῶν προβαλλόμενος, ὅσοις καθ’ ἡδονὴν ἐστὶ τὸ γελᾶν, αὐτοῖς ἐπερχέσθωσαν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις τῷ ῥήτορι. τὸ γὰρ ἡμέτερον πρὸς μὲν ἔλεγχον τῶν τῆς ἀσεβείας δογμάτων οὐ λίαν δυσκίνητον, πρὸς δὲ τὸ κωμωδεῖν τὴν ἀμαθίαν τῶν ἀπαιδεύτων παντελῶς ἐστὶν ἀνεπιτήδειον.

⁷¹ All quotations from *CE III 10,50* and *54*. See *Suda* d454 [see www.stoa.org/sol] For similar expressions for Demosthenes, see e.g. Plato *Euthydemus* 273a7; Libanius, *Orations*, 55:16:1.

⁷² On this theme see Cassin, *L’écriture de la polémique*, 289-92: Cassin argues that the comparison with Demosthenes serves to disparage Eunomius; I want to make a more specific point about the *particular* way in which Eunomius mimics, but fails to achieve Demosthenic greatness.

⁷³ Longinus *De sublimitate* 12.3: πολὺ τὸ διάπυρον ἔχει καὶ θυμικῶς ἐκφλεγόμενον (Longinus, *De Sublimitate in Poetics*, Aristotle. *On the Sublime*, Longinus. *On Style*, Demetrius (Stephen Halliwell, Donald Russell, Doreen C. Innes and W. R. Roberts (trans); Loeb Classical Library, 199; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁷⁴ Longinus *De sublimitate* 3.5

⁷⁵ Longinus 3.5

the connection between emotion and style more explicitly (CE III 10,45) – but, surprisingly, he appears to apply it to himself:

However, I am aware that my book is getting somewhat disorderly (ὑπατακτοῦντος τοῦ λόγου). It does not stay in its correct course (τῶ καθήκοντι δρόμῳ), but like a hot and headstrong foal (κατὰ τοὺς θερμοὺς τε καὶ θυμώδεις τῶν πώλων) is being carried away by the arguments of our adversaries towards the absurdities (ἄτοπα) of their position. It must therefore be allowed to defy the rein immoderately (πέρα τοῦ μέτρου... ἀφηνιάζοντα) in order to deal with absurdities (τῶν ἀτόπων). The kindly hearer will pardon the things said, not attributing the absurdity (τὴν ἀτοπίαν) arising from the study to us, but to those who lay down bad principles.⁷⁶

The metaphor of the chariot in the hippodrome and the description of the ‘hot’ and ‘spirited’ colts threatening to pull the chariot in the wrong direction, surely recalls Plato’s chariot motif, which was a favourite with Gregory.⁷⁷ If so, the implication might be that Gregory’s composition (λόγος) is running away with him, because his emotions are running away with him – perhaps because he is angry with his opponent? If he does not keep his words in check, Gregory’s λόγος will not demonstrate the admirable rhetorical quality of moderation (it will be πέρα τοῦ μέτρου – compare ἄμετρον in Longinus 3.5). The image of the chariot running off course not only describes Gregory’s own λόγος, but mimics Eunomius’ arguments which are ἄτοπα, nonsense – literally ‘out of place’. This perhaps alerts the audience to the fact that Gregory is excusing himself on the grounds that it is not his own emotions, but *Eunomius argument* which has caused him to go off the rails. Gregory *has* to go πέρα τοῦ μέτρου in order to counter Eunomius’ ἀτοπίαι; arguments which go beyond the bounds of normal dialectic, require an answer which similarly goes beyond the bounds. Thus, in a typical example of rhetorical reversal, Gregory apparently portrays himself as the speaker whose prose is out of control, while all the time he is in fact imputing that fault to Eunomius.⁷⁸ Note that the faults in his own prose in §45 – being like the ‘hot’ (θερμοὺς) and ‘spirited’ (θυμώδεις) horses – are faults which he actually blames on the influence of Eunomius and are precisely the qualities he then attributes to Eunomius in §54 (θυμῶ; τοὺς θερμοὺς λόγους).

Secondly, Eunomius’ prose is alleged to be Demosthenic, because of its intensity and its weightiness. Thus, Eunomius is said to ‘stretch’ or ‘tense’ his argument with Demosthenic fervour

⁷⁶CE III 10,45

⁷⁷e.g. *An et res* PG 46 49,44 and 61,44; *Virg* XXII.

⁷⁸Gregory’s comments on out-of-control prose in §45 may refer back to the previous paragraph, which does contain a rather long and ungainly sentence: CE III 10.45 (GNO II 306,27-307,7). Aristotle compares an over-long sentence to a race track (δρόμος): if runners cannot see the end of it they pant and become out of breath (Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1409a).

(Δημοσθενικῶ γὰρ θυμῶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον τονώσας: §50). As Stuart Hall makes clear in his translation, the context is agonistic (ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμῶν ἀγῶνι: §50) and with the word τονώσας Gregory seems to be alluding to the tensing of a bow, an image which is reinforced with a reference to the 'sharpness of the rhetor' (τὸ δριμύ τοῦ ῥήτορος §50). I suggest, however, that there is also a second range of reference in play. In Greek literary criticism, words compounded from the root τον— were used to describe the quality of writing – specifically, the intensity of prose or its lack. Generally, εὐτονία denoted a quality appropriate to weighty or serious subject-matter: the opposite of informality. Hence, when Menander Rhetor describes two possible levels at which one could write a marriage-hymn, the more formal composition is described as συντόνωσ (and the other συγγραφικώτερον - 'closer to non-oratorical prose').⁷⁹ In his *Epithalamium for Severus*, Himerius rejects 'serious music' (σύντονον ἄρμονίαν) in favour of a more relaxed style.⁸⁰ In one of his orations, the orator Themistius contrasts Platonic harmony (Πλατωνικὴν ἄρμονίαν) with Demosthenic intensity (Δημοστένειον τονον).⁸¹ One can see that, although the subject-matter is equally serious, the pace and structure of Plato's sentences are rather different from those of Demosthenes' speeches: in particular, Plato's prose is more conversational. Consequently when, in *CE* III 10,54 Gregory says that Eunomius' discourse has τὴν Δημοσθενικὴν εὐτονίαν, I suggest that he is not just saying that Eunomius is being forceful: rather, he is also suggesting that Eunomius is aiming at quality of 'intensity' which is appropriate for self-consciously serious prose. This is confirmed, I think, by the fact that Gregory refers to Eunomius in *CE* III 4,35 as 'the excessive wordsmith and his intense oratory against us' (τὸν σφοδρὸν λογογράφον καὶ τὴν σύντονον ἐκείνην καθ' ἡμῶν ῥητορείαν).⁸²

Finally, Gregory describing Eunomius' speech as being 'heavy and hard to resist' (βαρὺ καὶ δυσανταγώνιστον: §50) and having ὄγκος (bulk). To understand these terms in a literary-critical context, one needs to look more closely at Longinus' analysis of ὕψος – usually translated 'sublimity' in English. He tries to identify not only which authors achieve this key quality of great writing, but how it is achieved. His analysis is quite subtle, for he argues that sublimity of thought (we might say content), should be distinguished from sublime style (or form): 'and so even without being spoken the bare idea often of itself wins admiration for its inherent grandeur. How grand, for instance, is the silence of Ajax's

⁷⁹ Menander Rhetor, *On the division of Eipideictic Speeches* II 6 (399,17-18): The Epithalamium (*Menander Rhetor. A commentary*, Malcolm Heath (tr and comm.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 134).

⁸⁰ Himerius Or. 9.32; see: Himerius, *Man and the Word, The Orations of Himerius* tr. Robert J. Penella (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 146 (Or. 9 §3).

⁸¹ Themistius, *Περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν τοῖς τόποις ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσι προσέχειν*, Harduin 336a5; Themistius, *The Private Orations of Themistius*, Robert J. Penella (tr.) (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), Oration 27, On the need to give thought not where [we study] but to the men [who will teach us], 169.

⁸² My translation, heightening the literary-critical sense of Gregory's words: note the very emphatic combination of the words λογογράφον and σύντονον and ῥητορείαν with the adjective σφοδρὸν.

in the Summoning of the ghosts, more sublime than any speech!⁸³ Longinus also asserts that ὑψος is a mean between two poles. If one aims for a sublime *style* but fails to reach it, then one's writing exhibits weakness (ἀσθενεία), aridity (ξηρότης) and frigidity (τοῦ ψυχροῦ).⁸⁴ If one aims at a sublime *content* but fails, one's writing has 'puerility' (μειρακιῶδες); it is 'utterly abject, mean-spirited and... the most ignoble of faults' (ταπεινὸν ἐξ ὅλων καὶ μικρόψυχον καὶ... κακὸν ἀγεννέστατον).⁸⁵ On the other hand, if one over-achieves and exceeds the mean of sublimity, one's writing has turgidity (ὄγκος): 'Tumours are bad things whether in books or bodies, those empty inflations, void of sincerity, as likely as not producing the opposite of the effect intended.'⁸⁶ The contention that Gregory is himself using ὄγκος as a literary-critical term is strengthened by the fact that he consistently uses it in places where he is criticising Eunomius' style, as well as his ideas. In *CE* III 3,28, for example, Eunomius adds a specious mass to his arguments by piling on mere insults; 'perhaps such a verbal assault is customary for *rhetoricians following some professional principle*, invented to add weight to the charge'.⁸⁷ A similar accusation – and a similarly literary context – underlies Gregory's use of ὄγκος at the beginning of *CE* III 7, where Gregory imagines Eunomius almost sailing up to heaven, with his 'high-flown language' (τοὺς ὑψηλοτέρους λόγους) and swelling with 'hollow pride' (ὄγκώσας ἐν διακένῳ φυσήματι). In sharp contrast to Gregory's motif of the soul rising to God, this is an undesirable ascent: what is required is some intellectual weight: Eunomius is 'like a ship without ballast'.⁸⁸ But the best example is *CE* III 5,25, where Gregory compares Eunomius' words to patched-together rags, to bubbles which rise then disappear into thin air and to a 'foamy mass' (τις ἀφρώδης ὄγκος) which is carried down-stream but disappears when it strikes something solid. The point here is that Eunomius' prose has a *specious* substantiality to it: it appears to have body and weight, until it is challenged.⁸⁹ In this context, one can see that Gregory's description of Eunomius' argument being 'heavy and hard to resist' (βαρὺ καὶ δυσανταγώνιστον: §50) is very sarcastic.

⁸³ Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 9.2; One of Longinus' examples of a sublime thought is the words spoken by God in creation in Gen. 1: 'So, too, the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man, having formed a worthy conception of divine power and given expression to it, writes at the very beginning of his *Laws*: "God said" – what? "Let there be light," and there was light; "Let there be earth" and there was earth.' Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 9.9

⁸⁴ Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 3.3-4

⁸⁵ Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 3.4. Heath detects a resonance of Longinus' discussion of puerility in *CE* II 128-9: Heath, 'Echoes of Longinus', 399.

⁸⁶ Longinus *De Sublimitate*, 3.4: κακοὶ δὲ ὄγκοι καὶ ἐπὶ σωμάτων καὶ λόγων οἱ χαῦνοι καὶ ἀναλήθεις καὶ μήποτε περισσάντες ἡμᾶς εἰς τοῦναντίον.

⁸⁷ *CE* III 3,28: τάχα γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη τῶν λόγων καταφορὰ κατὰ τινὰ τεχνικὴν θεωρίαν συνήθης ἐστὶ τοῖς ῥητορεύουσι, πρὸς μείζονα κατηγορίας ὄγκον ἐξευρημένη. My emphasis.

⁸⁸ *CE* III 7,1.

⁸⁹ This passage is analysed in fascinating detail by Matthieu Cassin: "'Plumer Isocrate": usage polémique du vocabulaire comique chez Grégoire de Nysse', *Revue des études grecques*, 121 (2008), 783–96 and *L'écriture de la polémique à la fin du IVe siècle: Grégoire de Nysse, Contre Eunome III* (Thèse de doctorat; Université Paris IV – Sorbonne, 2009), 277-84.

It is worth staying a little while longer with Longinus' analysis of ὕψος in order to see how it relates to his reading of Demosthenes. Firstly, as we have briefly mentioned above, Longinus, like Themistius, compared Plato with Demosthenes:

the orator, being more emotional, has abundant warmth and passionate glow, whereas Plato, steady in his majestic and stately dignity, is less intense, though of course in no way frigid.⁹⁰

So Plato is less intense than Demosthenes (οὐκ ἐπέστραπτται); but Longinus' point is that they *both* achieve the sublime, albeit in different ways. Longinus expands on Demosthenes' style later on, in comparison with the orator Hyperides. The latter, Longinus argues, has more good qualities than Demosthenes: like a pentathlete, Hyperides always comes second in everything, but comes out first on points. His particular virtues are: simplicity, variety of tone, pleasing characterisation; his urbanity is demonstrated in his well-judged and sophisticated use of humour and satire. He can excite pity appropriately. He narrates myths with appropriate fullness and poetic style and is a fluent orator on other more prosaic themes. Demosthenes, however, although *technically inferior* to Hyperides, has the grandeur which Hyperides lacks:

But Demosthenes no sooner 'takes up the tale' than he shows the merits of great genius in their most consummate form, sublime intensity (ὕψηγορία τούον), living emotion (ἔμψυχα πάθη), redundance, readiness, speed – where speed is in season (καίριον) – and his own unapproachable vehemence and power (ἀπρόσιτον δεινότητα καὶ δύναμιν): concentrating in himself all these heaven-sent gifts - it would be impious to call then human – he thus uses the beauties he possesses to win a victory over all others that even compensates for his weaknesses, and out-thunders, as it were, and out-shines orators of every age. You could sooner open your eyes to the descent of a thunderbolt than face his repeated outbursts of emotion (τοῖς ἐπαλλήλοις... πάθεισιν) without blinking.⁹¹

Three conclusions can be drawn from Longinus' analysis of Demosthenes. First, that great orator tends towards the copious use of emotion in his speech; secondly, the *effect* of Demosthenes' speech matches its emotional intensity: it is powerful, like a lightning bolt (it has δεινότης), and in style it is intense (τούος); thirdly, Demosthenes has ὕψος. Somehow, however, despite the danger of over-doing it, and despite his lack of precise technique (compared to someone like Hyperides), Demosthenes judges the use of his grandeur and power so that he achieves ὕψος. As Longinus consistently emphasises throughout *On the Sublime*, ὕψος is *not* just a matter of style: no amount of style will help if you are not

⁹⁰ Longinus 12.3

⁹¹ Longinus *De sublimitate* 34 (the quotation in the first line is Homeric, *Odyssey* 8.500, Fyfe and Russell trr. page 275). See also sublimity and passion (16.2; 17.2).

high-minded: ‘Sublimity is the echo of a noble mind (μεγαλοφροσύνης)... It is impossible that those whose thoughts and habits all their lives are petty and servile should produce anything wonderful, worthy of immortal life. No, a grand style is the natural product of those whose ideas are weighty’.⁹² The clear implication of Longinus’ analysis is that without such nobility of thought, Demosthenes’ prose would be turgid, like the swollen and unhealthy tumour. The impression given is that Demosthenes’ prose is balanced on a knife-edge: any more emotional power, any more stylistic bombast or any less sublimity of thought and it would over-balance. While Plato’s writing – consistently magnificent, solemn and grand – is easy to accommodate to Longinus’ notion of the literary golden mean, Demosthenes’ prose challenges it. Somehow, just somehow, he manages to be excessive, but get away with it.

The contrast with Eunomius, however, should be clear: Eunomius mimics Demosthenes’ intensity of emotion and his powerful style,⁹³ but he completely lacks sublimity of thought because his theology is in error. If ‘a grand style is the natural product of those whose ideas are weighty’, Gregory has shown repeatedly in *CE III* that Eunomius’ ideas are precisely not that: they rise like bubbles and burst in the air. Therefore, while Demosthenes attains to ὑψος, Eunomius only manages ὄγκος.

This point seems to be emphasised by the way in which Gregory contrasts Eunomius with the writers of Scripture: it seems that they have sublime thoughts, by definition because they are inspired by God. We have already noted Longinus’ use of ὑψος to denote the sublime. As Longinus uses μεγαλοφροσύνη and related compounds to describe those who have sublime thoughts so a similar kind of vocabulary is used by Gregory to describe Scriptural writers: David is ‘great’ (τοῦ μεγάλου Δαβὶδ);⁹⁴ Paul possesses ἀποστολικῆς μεγαλοφωνίας;⁹⁵ John is ὁ ὑψηλὸς Ἰωάννης⁹⁶ who has a thundering voice (ἡ βρονταία φωνή).⁹⁷ These are all in profound contrast with Eunomius, whose attempts at sublimity, even in mere style rather than content, are risible:

for indeed to be within hearing, and to remain unmoved, is an impossibility, when he says with such sublime and magnificent verbosity (ἐκ τῆς ὑψηλῆς ἐκείνης καὶ μεγαλοφυοῦς εὐγλωττίας), “Where additional words amount to additional blasphemy, it is by half as much more tranquillizing to be silent than to speak.” Let those laugh at these expressions who know which of them are fit to be believed, and which only to be laughed at while we scrutinize the

⁹² Longinus *De sublimitate* 9.2-3

⁹³ *CE III* 10,50: τὸ δριμύ τοῦ ῥήτορος ἐν τῷ καθ’ ἡμῶν ἀγῶνι μιμούμενος; see Cassin, *L’écriture de la polémique*, 289.

⁹⁴ *CE II* 151

⁹⁵ *CE III* 1,108

⁹⁶ See also *CE II.9*: ‘the sublime John’ NPNF II.9; NPNF III p.218; p.223; p.361

⁹⁷ *CE III* 2. (NPNF p.245)

keenness of those syllogisms (τὸ δριμύ τῶν συλλογισμῶν) with which he tries to tear our system to pieces...⁹⁸

Here ὑψηλός and μεγαλοφυής are used sarcastically. Equally sarcastic is the reference to the keenness (τὸ δριμύ) of Eunomius' argument – a quality which as we have seen Gregory again sarcastically attributes to Eunomius in *CE* III 10,50. Finally, we have the idea that Eunomius' words are only to be laughed at. This perhaps invites a further comparison with Demosthenes, whom Longinus argued was incapable of wit ('When he is forced into attempting a jest or a witty passage, he rather raises the laugh against himself') and calls to mind Gregory's closing invitation in *CE* III 10,54 to laugh at the rest of what Eunomius wrote.⁹⁹

By contrast, Gregory, implicitly presents himself as the true interpreter of the great voices of Scripture: he, therefore, is able to pass on their ὑψος by quoting it and by his interpretation which is accurate (ἀκριβῶς), because inspired by the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁰ But he is quick to claim that he has no pretensions to high-flown style. Rather, he admits to his 'rustic dialect' in the passage from *CE* III 54 quoted above. But even this, I suggest, must be taken not just with a pinch of salt, but taken in its context.¹⁰¹ Firstly, the accusation of being rustic (ἀγροϊκός) was a mutual one, thrown back and forth between the Cappadocians and Eunomius.¹⁰² Secondly, it was Plato himself, who jokingly apologised for his rustic and somewhat childish means of expression in the *Thaetetus*: 'Why are you silent? I hope, Theodorus, I am not rude (ἀγροϊκίζομαι), through my love of discussion and my eagerness to make us converse and show ourselves friends and ready to talk to one another'.¹⁰³ Finally, being ἀγροϊκός was connected to a plain or middle rhetorical style (not necessarily a bad thing).¹⁰⁴ Could it be, then, that Gregory is setting himself against Eunomius, as the 'less intense', but 'steady and majestic' Plato? In any case, in these final sections of book 10 Gregory is implying that Eunomius wins over his audience, not by carefully-prepared argument, nor by great theology, but with forceful and emotional speech – and that nothing of substance underlies it.

Conclusion

⁹⁸ *CE* I 551

⁹⁹ Longinus 34:3: ἔνθα μὲν γελοῖος εἶναι βιάζεται καὶ ἀστεῖος, οὐ γέλωτα κινεῖ μάλλον ἢ καταγελάται; *CE* III 10,54: 'let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings. Our own is not too difficult to put into action for refuting the doctrines of the impious, but for poking fun at the ignorance of the uneducated it is quite unsuitable.'

¹⁰⁰ See *CE* III 10,9; III 1,42.

¹⁰¹ On this theme, see also Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 291-2.

¹⁰² Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 3; for a variety of examples, relating to this and other debates, see also John A. McGuckin, *Gregory of Nazianzus, an intellectual biography* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001) 124, 223, 261, 315, 365.

¹⁰³ Plato *Thaetetus*, 146a.

¹⁰⁴ e.g. Hermogenes *On types of style* II 3,32

One effect of Gregory's rhetorical techniques is to give the *CE* a strong agonistic tone. Gregory heightens this with the use of various images all of which emphasize the *public* nature of their rivalry. Some are taken from Scripture, such as his use of the story of David and Goliath to representing himself and Eunomius in *CE* II.1-11, Others are classical or contemporary images. For example, *CE* III begins with Gregory announcing:

at the games, it is the rule that either the opponent refuses altogether to go on and voluntarily concedes victory to the winner, or else he is thrown three times in accordance with the rules of the competition, and thus on the verdict of the umpires (τῆ κρίσει τῶν βραβεύόντων) the winner receives by triumphal proclamation the honour of a crown.¹⁰⁵

Then in *CE* III 3 Gregory uses the image of the law-court:

Those of you who sit in judgment (δικάζοντες) for the truth by reading this, 'Judge true judgment' (Zech 7.9), not awarding the prize (δόντες τὰ νικητήρια) to contention for previously held opinion, but to the truth demonstrated by careful argument. Let the accuser of our position [i.e. Eunomius] be called first, reading out his words as in a court of law.¹⁰⁶

As we have seen, Gregory appears to reprise some of this agonistic imagery in book 10, for example evoking a chariot-race in *CE* III 10,45. The point that I would like to stress, however, is that this imagery not only sets Gregory against Eunomius, but clearly calls on his audience to decide the victory of one side or the other. In other words, it demands of its audience an *active* role and Gregory implies that important consequences (for themselves, for the church, for the truth), hang on their choice.

In Aristotle's classic distinction, the kind of speech is said to depend on the audience and the 'time' of the subject-matter.¹⁰⁷ Thus, forensic and deliberative speeches are delivered to those who are to make a decision about something. In the former case they are called to decide about an event in the past (is the accused guilty?); in the latter, about future action (what should we do?). Epideictic oratory, however, is delivered to 'spectators' (I 3,2), who listen to speeches about the present and are not called to make a decision about the subject-matter of the speech (although they may be asked to give a prize for the best speaker¹⁰⁸). It is tempting to think that Gregory's rhetorical strategy in *CE* is a form of epideictic, specifically the kind that directed blame (*psogos*) on to someone. Perhaps the wrestling motif heightens this sense that he is performing before an audience of spectators whose only choice is

¹⁰⁵ *CE* III 1,1

¹⁰⁶ *CE* III 3,14 [cross-reference to chapter by Scot Douglass?].

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetorica* I 3,1-6

¹⁰⁸ See the note on this: Aristotle, *On Rhetoric. A Theory of Civic Discourse* George Kennedy (tr. and comm.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 48, n.77.

whether he convincingly disparages his subject. However, the references to the law-court and the use of the kind of polemic suited to political oratory suggest otherwise: Gregory seems to be drawing his audience in closer to the subject-matter: they are not spectators, but decision-makers and their choice of loyalty will determine the direction of the church community. As such, he is asking them to judge Eunomius' actions in the past, but make a commitment about their own loyalties in the future.¹⁰⁹

A second effect of Gregory's use of *ēthos* and *pathos* in *CE* is to isolate Eunomius. While he focuses directly on Eunomius' character, Gregory is rather more silent with regard to his own *ēthos*, often contrasting Eunomius either with Basil (most famously at the beginning of *CEI*), or with the orthodox church as a whole. In general his strategy in *CE III* is to isolate Eunomius by portraying him as a lone figure distinct from the wider body of truly religious Christians.¹¹⁰ Not only does this undermine Eunomius' credibility (if he is right, why is he on his own?), but it fits the polemical strategy which Michel Barnes identifies in his paper on *CE III 6*. Barnes argues that Gregory of Nyssa refutes homoian theology in general by launching a direct attack on Eunomius in particular. He contrasts Gregory's strategy with that of Athanasius, who tends to assume that anyone who was against him was 'Arian', thus reducing a range of opposing views to a homogenous party. Consequently, Athanasius often presents himself as a lone heroic figure defending the faith against a phalanx dressed against him. Gregory, by contrast, places himself in a crowd of orthodoxy and isolates Eunomius. There may well have been some in his audience who had their suspicions about pro-Nicene theology; but by demonising the lone figure of Eunomius, Gregory invites any waverers to side with himself. In short, while Athanasius assumes that anyone who is not for him is against him (and is an Arian), Gregory's rhetorical move is to assert that anyone who is not for Eunomius can be part of the true church.¹¹¹ But Gregory has several ways of persuading his audience that Eunomius is not truly 'one of us', referring to Eunomius' errors in logic and literary style as well as theology: the problem is not that that Aristotle and Demosthenes are bad, but that Eunomius mimics, whilst being unable to attain their level.

Finally, Gregory's emphasis on *ēthos* and *pathos* in *CE III*, might help one to understand the work's structure. It is clear that Gregory closes before he has dealt with all of Eunomius' *Apology for the Apology*.¹¹² Yet he indicates that *CE III 10,54* is the end of his own work: 'let those who enjoy a laugh go to our orator's actual writings', he writes, implying that he has gone as far as he can. Thus *CE III* closes

¹⁰⁹ I am here making explicit a view which seems to be implicit in Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*: he comments that *CE's* purpose (with regard to part of its audience) is to detach Eunomius' pupils from him (298). The blurring of the three kinds of speech was not unusual in late antiquity and underlies, for example, a lot of Christian preaching which calls on the congregation to repent of their past, be affirmed in their present faith and change their behaviour in the future.

¹¹⁰ Gregory does sometimes refer to Eunomius and his followers in the plural (see e.g. *CE.III 10,5*), but the main impression which he conveys is of one man set against the church.

¹¹¹ [Cross-reference to Michel Barnes' chapter.]

¹¹² Cross-reference to Cassin's opening paper.

on a curiously personal and literary note, instead of with a summing-up of Eunomius' arguments.¹¹³ However, even though one might question whether Gregory ends his treatise *well*, there are clear signs throughout *CE III 10* that it is a planned end: for example, in *CE III 10,1* he says that the argument he discusses is the 'chief point' of Eunomius' doctrine, which signals that book 10 should be read as some kind of 'summing up' or *anakephalaiōsis* – the question is, what kind of closing is it?

Some teachers of rhetoric, such as Quintilian, suggested that a strong emotional tone was appropriate for the end of a speech. Quintilian remarks that there are two kinds of epilogue,¹¹⁴ one focusing on the facts (*in rebus*), the other on emotions (*in adfectis*).¹¹⁵ The former 'which is called in Greek the *anakephalaiōsis*', consists of the repetition and collection of the facts or arguments. It must be as brief as possible (*brevissime*), delivered with *gravitas* (*pondere*) and 'enlivened with appropriate opinions and varied with figures', lest it should become repetitive.¹¹⁶ The former kind of ending put more weight on the emotions. Although he says that Athenian law-courts forbade and philosophers were suspicious about appeals to the emotions, Quintilian argues that they 'are necessary if there are no other means for securing the victory of truth, justice and the public interest'.¹¹⁷ Indeed, he asserts that the close of a case is a particularly appropriate point for the use of appeals to emotion:

For, if we have spoken well in the rest of our speech, we shall now have the judges on our side, and shall be in a position, now that we have emerged from the reefs and the shoals, to spread all our canvas, while since the chief task of the peroration consists of amplification, we may legitimately make free use of words and reflexions that are magnificent and ornate. It is at the close of our drama that we must really stir the theatre, when we have reached the place for the phrase with which the old tragedies and comedies used to end, 'Friends give us your applause'.¹¹⁸

Without making any claims that Gregory was directly influenced by Quintilian, in this paper I have suggested Gregory that is doing precisely what Quintilian recommended. Viewed as theology or philosophy his arguments in book 10 are not clearly-developed and repeat material that has been used before; viewed as passages which support and sum up Gregory's character-assassination of Eunomius they make much more sense. Thus, the argument against Eunomius' alleged claim that the Father was 'God' to the Son began with the highly emotional labelling of Eunomius as Anti-Christ; the history of

¹¹³ Cassin, *L'écriture de la polémique*, 288.

¹¹⁴ *Peroratio, cumulus, conclusio*: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,1

¹¹⁵ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,1

¹¹⁶ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,2

¹¹⁷ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,8: 'necessarios tamen adfectus fatebuntur, si aliter obtineri vera et iusta et ira commune profutura non possint.'

¹¹⁸ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI 1,52; c.f. VI 1,51 at the close of the speech 'one can open up all the fountains of our oratory' (*totos eloquentiae aperire fontes*).

salvation was designed to evoke two emotions: gratitude for redemption and anger at Eunomius' alleged Satan-like deceptive powers. Similarly, arguments about Eunomius' use of words such as 'true' or 'light' focus on the claims that his logical technique is futile and lax, rather than really engaging deeply with Eunomius' arguments. Finally, Gregory's focus on literary criticism not only provides the audience with a welcome 'purple patch' of entertaining prose, but seals the case against his enemy. If you do persuade, Gregory says to his opponent, it is certainly not because of your theology (which is untraditional, ascriptural and demonic), nor your logic (which is very suspect). In fact, it is not really because you are a good rhetorician: you may be effective in a minimalist sense, but at a more profound level yours is bad rhetoric, nothing more than immoral bombast. And actually it makes me laugh. After this vigorous three-fold attack on Eunomius' theology, logic and rhetoric, Gregory retires from the fight.

Consequently, although I am in agreement with Matthieu Cassin's argument that one needs to read the *CE* with full alertness to Gregory's broad literary context and not treat it just as a technical theological treatise, I would like to push the argument further.¹¹⁹ Cassin has shown with great care and scholarship how fruitful it is to read Gregory as an 'orateur' as well as a 'théologien'. However, in suggesting, for example, that the passages of invective structure the work as a whole and prepare the audience with an attack on Eunomius' character before attacking his ideas he still seems to assume a distinction between the two forms of attack: theology and invective.¹²⁰ Where I would press Cassin's argument further still is to suggest even more unity between the two kinds of attack: firstly, because the passages commenting on Eunomius' method (his use of logic and style) treat his failings not just a failings of technique, but of *ēthos* and, secondly, because Gregory colours his theological arguments in such a way that they become part of his mode of rousing the passions of his audience. Precisely because Gregory does not compartmentalise intellect and emotion in his thought (for example, in his account of the soul's ascent to God), we should not compartmentalise them when it comes to analysing his writing – even if that leaves us with the uncomfortable thought that we too are liable to be moved by the power of his words.

¹¹⁹ Developing an argument by Cassin, but pressing it further: *L'écriture de la polémique*, 299: 'Loin d'être un traité de théologie systématique et positif, le *Contre Eunome* de Grégoire de Nysse est construit comme une réfutation totale des positions d'Eunome et une attaque contra sa personne. L'argumentation rationnelle constitue une part de l'ouvrage, mais la réfutation de l'adversaire s'appuie tout autant sur des moyens qui relèvent des passions, non de la démonstration proprement dite.'

¹²⁰ Cassin, e.g. *L'écriture de la polémique*, 299-300. This assessment is made partly on Cassin's reading of Gregory's *Ep.* 29.