This volume deals with orality and literacy in ancient Greece and what consideration of these areas yields for that society, its literature, traditions and practices. Individual chapters focus on art, comedy, historiography, oratory, religion, rhetoric, philosophy, poetry, tragedy, and on orality in contemporary cultures (Greek and South African), which have a bearing on the ancient world.

By considering such factors as oral elements in various genres and practices and how these have shaped the texts we have today, as well as the extent of literacy and the impact of literacy on oral traditions and on singers/writers, the book presents another insight into ancient Greek society and its people.

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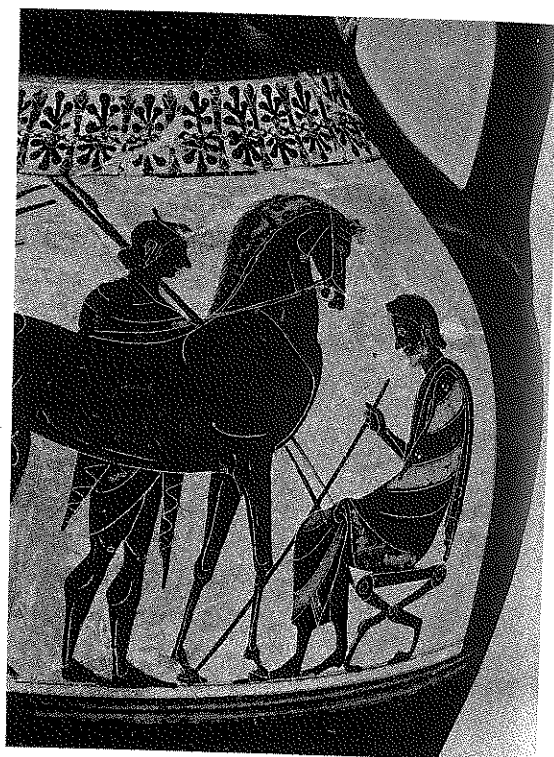
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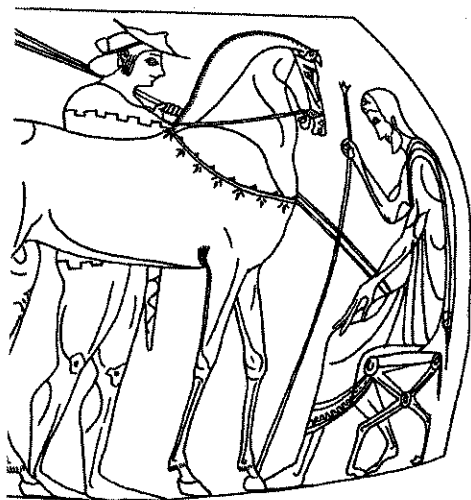
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SELF-CORRECTION, SPONTANEITY, AND ORALITY IN ARCHAIC POETRY

RUTH SCODEL

Until recently, scholars treated orality in archaic poetry mainly as a question of composition, asking whether this or that poet actually used writing. More recently, issues of performance have dominated, as the symposium and the institutional and social background for poetry have become major concerns.[1] There is a lively discussion about whether Pindar's *epinicia* were monodies or choral songs.[2] This debate is fuelled less by interest in the actual performance than by arguments about the identity of the speaker in the Pindaric ode: if the chorus did not sing, the 'I' can never be choral. Nobody, however, doubts the presence of a dancing chorus. The energy scholars have given to this argument, however, concentrates attention on the initial performance and so distracts from other questions about how Pindaric songs were received outside that original context. The recognition that archaic Greek poetry was largely occasional and composed for specific performances, and yet also circulated to wider audiences and survived in written texts, invites further questions: to what extent did the poets and their audience treat poems as unique, repeatable texts? To what extent did poets anticipate the circulation of their works outside the original context of performance, and did they compose with a view to such distant audiences?

Obviously, poetry of different kinds demands a different answer. Pindar is clearly composing for an audience extended in both space and time.[3] I would argue that the difficulty of his language is *prima*

[1] E. Bowie, 'Early Greek Elegy, Symposium, and Public Festival', *JHS* 106 (1986), 13-35.

[2] On one side: M. Lefkowitz, 'Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?', *AJPh* 109 (1988), 1-12 and M. Heath, 'Receiving the κῶμος', *AJPh* 109 (1988), 180-95; on the other, C. Carey, 'The Performance of the Victory Ode', *AJPh* 110 (1989), 545-66.

[3] G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer. The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore, 1990) stresses the Panhellenic claims of Pindaric poetry and its diffusion by means other than writing (107 ff. and 408-9).

facie evidence that he expected individual members of his audience to hear his poems many times (and the same must be true about Aeschylus). Symposiastic poetry is much more difficult. When Rösler asked the question about Alcaeus' expectations of his audience, his method was narrow and his answer probably wrong–that Alcaeus' poetry is directed only at the group of his friends–though Rösler's book points to an important question: how and why does poetry which seems to address itself to a small group of intimate friends become widely popular and indeed survive long after the poet's death?[4] Rösler comments, doubtless truly, that the key must lie in the perceived excellence of the poetry, which caused those who came into contact with it to memorise it, perhaps to copy it, and to reperform it. But he does not really confront the obvious willingness of wider audiences to receive a poetry that is filled with local references and characters, or consider the possibility that the openness of the audience to such poetry implies that it could be composed even by a poet who expected and desired audiences who did not know the people among whom and for whom it was first created.

We have become accustomed to a fairly sophisticated language for thinking about the poetic 'ego'.[5] We also need to consider the connections among various audiences of the kind familiar from narratology: the internal addressees, the implied audience, and the real immediate audience, possible secondary audiences. We might also benefit from a less familiar narratological distinction, that between narrative audiences, who know everything the text seems to presuppose that they know, and authorial audiences, corresponding to the implied author: the perfect imagined real audience. Often modern novelists sharply distinguish these two by speaking as if invented features of a fictional world could be taken for granted.[6] It is worth considering whether an Archilochus or Alcaeus, as his reputation began to spread outside his own circle, might not have continued to address himself only to his friends for generic reasons: one of the particular effects of this poetry for outsiders is precisely the sense of

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[4] W. Rösler, *Dichter und Gruppe. Eine Untersuchung zu den Bedingungen und zur historischen Funktion früher griechischer Lyrik am Beispiel Alkaios* (Munich, 1980).

[5] See S.R. Slings, 'The I in Personal Archaic Lyric', in *The Poet's I in Archaic Greek Lyric. Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam*, ed. S.R. Slings (Amsterdam, 1990), 1-30.

[6] See R. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca, 1987), 94-104 and J. Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* (Chicago, 1989), 29-30.

eavesdropping, of admission to a small, enclosed world.[7] I call this pseudo-intimacy, and if it is possible in monodies whose original performance context was genuinely intimate, it can be very striking in poetry whose claims to a broader audience are explicit.

Pindar, as often, provides the sharpest evidence. Pindaric scholarship tends to concentrate on the immediate context for the poetic performance and not to consider very much how the poetry would accomplish its task of preserving the glory of the the victor forever–how, therefore, it addresses itself to secondary audiences. Yet the *epinicia* are intended, obviously, for reperformance in situations far removed from the original occasions: otherwise they can hardly fulfill their function of preserving the memory of the patron. These poems are fully conscious of secondary audiences; they are supposed to travel, as we all know from the opening of *Nemean 5*.[8] Yet Pindaric poetry, though most of its occasionality is public and accessible–that is, the poem tells us pretty clearly, usually, who the victor was, in what event, and where–is sometimes obscure about matters that would have been familiar to the audience of a first performance. Even when all the necessary information is implicit in the text, it will often require some energetic thought to reconstruct it all. So Pindar's practice can fairly be described as pseudo-intimate: the poet speaks simultaneously in order to make the victor known, and as if the essential facts about him were familiar to all. Other poets may be richer in private allusions, but we should be sceptical about taking them as unequivocal evidence that the poets never considered broader audiences.

Again, although we know from the work of Ruth Finnegan and others that in many cultures performances of oral poetry are carefully prepared,[9] many assume that the Parry-Lord tradition in Homeric studies demands that we believe in pure composition-in-

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[7] B. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, trans. A.T. Cole (Baltimore, 1988), 42-3, suggests that, paradoxically, the allegorical and aphoristic qualities of Alcaeus' poetry, originally intended to be understandable only for his own circle, made it intelligible and relevant in fifth-century Athens.

[8] The reality of reperformance is well stressed by C.J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), 50: 'There is every reason to suppose not merely that all the archaic and early classical poetry that survived into the Hellenistic age was originally performed orally and before audiences, large or small, but also that most of it was often re-performed subsequent to the first performance.' He is not concerned, however, with whether poems were composed for re-performance.

[9] *Literacy and Orality* (Oxford, 1988), especially 95-109.

performance, and attack or defend on that basis. Reality was almost certainly more complicated. It seems very unlikely that writing, in the archaic period, was an important medium for the transmission and reception of poetry on an everyday basis. It may not have been very central to composition either. But it can hardly fail to have had an effect as a way to stabilise and preserve texts, to protect them from tampering and guarantee them. The various stories about early texts being dedicated in temples–Hesiod and the *Theogony*, the book of Heraclitus–point in this direction. Such protection is important where the text is exoteric, where it circulates freely; Theognis associates his desire to seal his poetry with his fame in the world at large, outside his own city (19-24). I would like to look at one question within this whole complex of issues: the habit of self-correction in archaic poetry and what the rhetorical conventions under which poetry was composed and heard imply about how it was actually composed and heard.

Self-correction presents very different issues, depending on whether it occurs within a single text or between texts. For a speaker apparently to change his mind, stop himself, or announce that he has spoken inappropriately, generally implies an extemporaneous situation, since with preparation the speaker could presumably have gotten it right the first time (there is, of course, the special rhetoric of abandoning a prepared text in favour of spontaneous speech, but that is not at issue here). Pindar, of course, often engages in self-correction of this kind. On the other hand, when a speaker corrects what he has said before, on another occasion, the situation is somewhat different. There is no necessary implication of spontaneity, but there must be a previous relationship with the audience, since they must understand what is being corrected. This type appears in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. It may be revealing that both the other famous examples are problematic: there is no agreement about whether Stesichorus' *Palinode* was a single work which included a dramatic self-correction, or a separate poem from the one which offended Helen, and there is no agreement also about whether *Nemean* 7 should be regarded as a self-correction at all.[10] I would

suggest that if we believe that Stesichorus' self-correction was a separate work, we could consider a poet's correction of another of his own works as a procedure conventional in itself, and so move to an understanding of *Nemean* 7 which allows us to relate it to the *Paean* without imagining a Pindar who inappropriately drags his private concerns into his commisions. In any case, both types of self-correction pose questions about poetic authority (how does it survive such shifts?) and about the reception of poetry outside its original context.

There have been two excellent recent studies of self-correction in Pindar by Hayden Pelliccia[11] and Andrew Miller.[12] Pelliccia treats specifically the 'false-start recusatio' in which Pindar pretends to be going in a wrong direction in order to have his poetic cake and eat it too; he can include material he simultaneously wants to reject. Miller discusses more generally the convention that the Pindaric performance is extemporaneous, and so the extent to which the poems are dramatic: Pindar imitates someone spontaneously praising the victor. These articles describe the technique very clearly, but only within narrowly defined parameters. Miller self-consciously avoids treating the relationship between the speaker of the poem and the composer. Pelliccia places together Pindar's explicit self-corrections with the 'false-start' of Gorgias' *Helen* and the opening of Herodotus, where there is abandonment of a theme but no open declaration that it was erroneously chosen. Such passages present pseudo-spontaneity in a real but weaker form. Since both Miller and Pelliccia treat pseudo-spontaneity mainly as a way for the individual authors to include material they also want to reject, the distinction between abandonment of a theme and self-correction is not important for them. They are not concerned with the origins of this technique, with what it might suggest about orality in Greek poetry, or with its implications about the attitudes of poet and audience, but only with its function within the rhetoric of the poet.

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[10] The latest editor, M. Davies, in *Poetareum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1991)–hereafter *PMG*–titles fragments 191-3 ΠΑΛΙΝΩΙΔΙΑΙ. There is a bibliography on the Palinode(s) in E. Degani and G. Buxacchini, *Lirici Greci* (Florence, 1977), 297; more recent articles arguing for two palinodes include F. Martino, 'Un proemio secondo e le due palinodie di Stesichoro', *Belfagor* 35 (1980), 99-107 (*non vidi*) and E. Cingano, 'Quante testimonianze sulle palinodie di Stesichoro?', *QUCC*

41 (1982), 21-33. For bibliography and a summary of the controversy on *Nemean* 7 see C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes Of Pindar* (Salem, NH, 1980), 133-6. The view closest to my own is that of G. Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar's Second Pythian and Seventh Neamean Odes* (*Hypomnemata*: 83) (Göttingen, 1985), 207-10: for those familiar with the Paean, the poem is a defence, but knowledge of the earlier work is not essential, and the revisionism does not violate *Nemean* 7's occasionality.

[11] H. Pelliccia, 'Sappho 16, Gorgias' Helen, and the Preface to Herodotus' Histories', *YCS* 29 (1992), 63-84.

[12] A. Miller, 'Pindaric Mimesis: the Associative Mode', *CJ* 89 (1993), 21-54.

Nor are they concerned with its distribution throughout archaic poetry. In Alcman's *Partheneion*, for instance, the singers interrupt their praise of Agido because they consider Hagesichora, and they interrupt the praise of Hagesichora because it is unnecessary, since the audience can see her (Alcman 1 *PMG*, 39-57). Sappho's *epithalamion* singers misstate why the apple-pickers did not pick the finest apple, and correct themselves. Self-correction, in other words, seems especially prominent in those genres where it is least authentic, since these are obviously compositions taught to the chorus in advance. Still, there is a certain verisimilitude at work here: it is especially appropriate to young girls that their poetic speech is not entirely precise. In epic, Homer's addresses to the Muses are surely a device of pseudo-spontaneity, but he never undercuts his authority by changing his mind either about what he tells or whether he should be telling it. His characters engage in self-correction often, both within soliloquy and in dialogue (as when Helen tells Paris to go fight Menelaus again, and then immediately warns him not to). Hesiod, of course, does, using in his own voice the same break-off device of asking why he is talking about oak or stone that Homer gives to his characters. But Hesiod has also begun the *Theogony* by narrating his own poetic initiation, which includes defining himself as a shepherd, which in the *Works and Days* he does not seem to be. That is, there is an obvious connection between self-correction and the presentation of character. The Homeric narrator generally avoids giving himself a personality, and he certainly does not want to give the impression that he is capable of error.

In genuinely spontaneous speech, self-correction and shifts of direction happen all the time. (Avoiding too much self-correction is an important measure of competence in such everyday oral narration as telling jokes.) Self-correction is the extreme example of pseudo-spontaneity.[13] Pindar, of course, constantly imitates a man who is deciding where his poem shall go, stopping himself from going on too long or treating an inappropriate subject, even though everyone in the audience knew perfectly well that it had already been composed and taught to a chorus, who are dancing if not singing it. Of course, Pindar's *epinicia* make no serious pretence of being genuine spontaneous compositions. Without claiming to have identified

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[13] Carey, 'Performance of the Victory Ode', 5, uses the term 'oral subterfuge' for this phenomenon in Pindar.

every self-correction in archaic and classical literature, I would claim in a rough-and-ready way that self-correction is common in choral lyric, but not in monody. The most spontaneous-seeming Greek poets—Alcaeus, Sappho, and Anacreon—do not correct themselves. The exception is interesting, for Sappho's famous self-correction about the apples is probably from an *epithalamion* (105a *PLF*), that is, from a relatively public genre. This makes excellent sense. The 'I' of personal lyric generates an impression of spontaneity because the poem seems properly carried along by the speaker's thoughts and feelings. The poet's personality as poet, on the other hand, is not especially prominent. Self-correction, whether internal or external, belongs to those forms in which the poet is a figure of authority and demonstrates his anxieties about doing his important job adequately. Sappho's famous priamel is an easy dismissal of the opinions of others; Pindar's are often tortuous selections of theme. Self-correction belongs not only to the presentation of character, but to a particular kind of character: that of the poet in a public role.

Pseudo-spontaneity seems to evoke the Homeric bard, and the evidence is suggestive. In Homer, the poet appears to select a topic according to the need of the moment: at *Odyssey* 8. 73 it is the Muse who incites Demodocus to sing the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus, while at 499 ff. the singer responds to Odysseus' challenge that he sing the Wooden Horse. The second instance certainly claims that the poet can perform spontaneously, which is a special test of his competence. In between, the song of Ares and Aphrodite is accompanied by a dance, and if the dance has any relation to the song, it is almost impossible that it could be extemporaneous, especially since the dancers, unlike Demodocus, are not professionals.[14] So the poet's language does not imply that the song was spontaneous: Demodocus simply begins with a prelude and sings. At the same time, the song does not seem formally different from other epic songs. Spontaneity is not stressed, but its absence is not marked either. So on this evidence we should perhaps imagine a continuum between fully extemporaneous performance, which would be unusual but possible for a skilled singer, and thoroughly rehearsed

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[14] J.B. Hainsworth, in *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 1, edd. A. Heubeck, S. West, and J.B. Hainsworth (Oxford, 1988), on 8. 256, stresses that although many scholars have speculated that the first dance mimes the song, the poem does not imply that the song and dance constitute a unified performance, and that other songs accompanied by simultaneous dance belong to ritual, as this does not.

performance. This is just what common sense would suggest, after all. But the evidence also suggests that the poetry itself tends to emphasise its spontaneous side.

Again, we can see obvious reasons for such a tendency. In Homeric epic, the pretence of spontaneity helps harmonise claims to traditional truth with the reality of continual innovation and invention, since the Muse directs each performance. Not only does the epic stress extemporaneous above rehearsed performance, it deliberately obscures the realistic facts of poetic practice and transmission. Demodocus is praised for his ability to sing the Wooden Horse as if he had been there or heard from one who had: the 'as if' is critical (8. 491), for the poet's source is the Muse, or perhaps Apollo, not the accounts of the participants which would actually have provided whatever was not conventional in the poetic tradition about an event. Similarly, Phemius claims to be 'self-taught', and says that a god has 'planted in my mind all kinds of song-roads' (22. 347-9). Unlike many commentators, I would argue that this should be taken literally though unrealistically.[15] Poetic skill and knowledge come from the individual and from the gods, not from other poets. The proem to the Catalogue of Ships opposes the full knowledge of the Muses with the mere *kleos* available to us (*Iliad* 2. 485-6). If each act of poetic memory is new and inspired, we need not worry that fallible poets have interfered with the tradition. The actual transmission of stories is not reliably accurate enough, and the slow process of private creation and practice might seem too open to individual manipulation. So the epic claim to genuine access to the past demands that epic present itself as spontaneous and always newly inspired. The prevalence of pseudo-spontaneity in later choral performance, where true spontaneity is not possible, suggests that even outside epic there is a strong cultural bias in favour of unprepared song, or song which presents itself as unprepared even if it is not, even where originality may be valued.

So a further reason for pseudo-spontaneity may well be occasionality, and the desire of the audience to feel that they are able to effect performance. Svenbro has analysed Phemius' song in *Odyssey*

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[15] So A. Heubeck, in *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 3, edd. J. Russo, M. Fernandez-Galliano, and A. Heubeck, (Oxford, 1992), argues in his excellent note on 22. 347-9 that Phemius claims the ability to apply the traditional repertory appropriately to each audience. See A. Ford, *Homer: the Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, 1992), 90-2 and 129-30.

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1 in these terms.[16] Phemius' subject, the unhappy return of the Achaeans, might be expected to please the suitors. Penelope attempts to intervene and control the song. It is worth noting that the only control over song we see in the epic is for the dissatisfied audience to stop the performance completely and demand a new beginning with a different subject; we do not have direct evidence for the kind of expansion and contraction of narrative elements for which we tend to assume audience response was decisive in composition-in-performance.[17] Homeric audiences do not interfere with the poet's development of theme, but only with the basic appropriateness of the narrative topic to the occasion. On the other hand, the Intermezzo of *Odyssey* 11 does represent an audience that demands the continuation of a narrative the speaker has tried to end. The apparently spontaneous songs of the *Odyssey* prompt audience interference, while the story of Ares and Aphrodite is sung from beginning to end. This is, in one way, ironic, as if the rehearsed song had a better chance of meeting the audience's present desires, but it suggests a connection between extemporaneous performance and audience involvement.

Yet even given this bias, the oral subterfuge is a peculiar device for choral poetry. On the one hand, it is obvious that spontaneity is a fiction, since the poems have been composed in advance; on the other hand, the poets claim wisdom and authority, and self-correction undercuts these as other devices of pseudo-spontaneity, an opening hesitation for instance, do not. In Alcman's *Partheneion*, the way these dramatic conventions work is fairly straightforward: authority belongs to the poet, who imitates the naiveté that is appropriate to young girls. In choral forms in which the chorus is not so fully characterised, the combination of poetic authority and self-correcting speaker is tricky. For the two to co-exist requires a recognisable gap between the implied author and the speaker, where the speaker of the poem is, in effect, an internal narrator. Pindar can take on the pose of someone who goes on too long with a subject or begins an impious story because his audience will know that it is not really *Pindar* who has made these mistakes. But if these conventions

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[16] J. Svenbro, *La Pierre et le Marbre: Aux Origines de la Poétique Grecque* (Lund, 1976), 18-21.

[17] W.F. Wyatt, 'The Intermezzo of Odyssey 11 and the Poets Homer and Odysseus', *SMEA* 1989, 235-53, argues that Odysseus functions as a bard in the Apologos and that the Intermezzo thus represents an occasion on which the audience demands a longer song.

depend on the audience's awareness that they are fictions, what is their point, and how do they work?

Miller argues that Pindar imitates an extemporaneous speaker. But what exactly could the audience imagine is being enacted, and does this change when the song is performed or read outside the original context? In modern lyric, the poem characteristically pretends to be a faithful record of the poet's thoughts and feelings at the time of composition, which the reader shares at the moment of reading; in archaic Greek poetry, the convention seems to pretend that composition is still in progress at the moment of performance. We can look at the convention backwards through the orators, who may also pretend to be in doubt what to say, or even to be reacting to an audience whose responses they have actually predicted and written into the script. In the assembly or court, there was presumably at least the possibility of real spontaneous speech. In the poetic performance of Pindar or Simonides, the convention of spontaneity coexists with the opposite rule that permits allusion to the actual facts governing composition and performance: commission, payment, and intermediaries. This invites us to think of the convention differently, and complicates it. On the one hand, an audience presented with a performance set in the here-and-now is presumably likely to refer what they hear to the here-and-now: it may have been just as easy to imagine that the performers could change their text in the midst of performance as it is to accept that what one hears is actually the representation of a sets of thoughts in the poet's mind some days ago, or rather, the easiest response is probably not to consider the matter. The immediacy of performance and the familiarity of the rules allowed the distinction to be blurred in favour of the here-and-now, perhaps; if pressed, the archaic audience might have said that the poet was pretending to have made the mistake in the process of composing the poem, but while actually hearing the song, they were under no pressure to worry about such divisions of time or responsibility, and probably would not be tempted to ask why, if the formulation was obviously inadequate, the poet did not begin again instead of recording the process.

When we read Pindar or Simonides, on the other hand, and indeed when we read the orators, we tend, I think, to drift into reading them more or less as we read Wordsworth: we consciously treat them as narrative/dramatic. At the same time, even as we are aware (having all been schooled by New Critics) that the poetic 'I' is not the poet, we also assume that the poetic speaker is somehow

authentic, that the poet crafts the discourse around thoughts and feelings that have their origins in his or her real experiences. Sometimes, in reading ancient choral lyric, we use the text as a script with which we reconstruct an original performance, but often most of us, surely, drift into reading the poem as a drama of the poet's inner experience. When Pindar at the beginning of *Olympian* 10 tells the Muse and Truth to read him the name of the son of Archestratus from the notice written in his mind, we hear a Pindar speaking at the moment he composed the poem, while in allusions to the original ritual contexts, we mentally construct the necessary actions. Are we reading very differently from the ancient audience?

In the ideal spontaneous epic performance, the Muse enables the poet to negotiate the treacherous passage between tradition and the occasion. For encomiastic poets, the problem of truth changes. The main issue is not fidelity to the already-known, for the poet can take a directly antagonistic stand towards mythical tradition if he so desires, but personal sincerity. The business of praising living men is itself difficult and morally ambiguous; praising for money is even more complicated. The 'oral subterfuge' allows the poet to assume an almost romantic persona, one who is prone to say whatever comes into his mind. Like us, Greeks associated spontaneous speech with sincerity and rhetorical preparation with manipulativeness.

The beginning of the Scopas fragment of Simonides (542 *PMG*) still looks like a problem to some people, because the 'speaker' (I use Andrew Miller's neutral term here) begins by quoting Pittacus with approval ('it is hard to be good') and then, a few lines later, denies precisely this, claiming that it is not hard, but impossible:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι
χαλεπὸν χερσίν τε καὶ ποσσὶ καὶ νόωι
  τετράγωνον ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·
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οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-
  ρημένον χαλεπὸν φατ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.

θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ
  ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι
ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέληι.

It is hard to be a truly good man, in hands and feet and
mind made foursquare, without cause for blame . . . But
the saying of Pittacus, though spoken by a wise man, does
not seem to me said 'in tune'. He says it is hard to be
good. Only a god could have this honour, but it is not
possible for a man not to be bad, if a misfortune that can-
not be controlled seizes him.

Plato has successfully prejudiced many scholars against the idea that
the poet has changed his mind. Yet the procedure is quite obvious,
once we abandon this prejudice. Simonides follows his quotation of
Pittacus by an expansion of the single word 'truly': the 'truly' good
man must be foursquare and flawless. The more he thinks about
what is implied by 'truly good', the closer the thought comes that
Pittacus understated the case. So finally the thinker accepts this; only
the gods can be perfect. Wilamowitz came close to understanding
the beginning of the poem this way: 'kommt dem Redenden zum
Bewußtsein, daß er den Spruch gar nicht passend als einen für sich
verbindlich citiert hat', he says of the correction of Pittacus.[18] The
idea that only the gods can be perfect is always appropriate in an
encomiastic context; it makes way for praising an inevitably imper-
fect human being.[19] The poem either implies praise of Scopas, as the
person described near the poem's end, or justifies such praise else-
where. Now obviously Simonides is not really thinking in this pas-
sage—as Wilamowitz again saw, the movement of thought is obvi-
ously planned from the start. So why does a poet imitate a man
thinking? The answer is obvious: Simonides does this because his
conclusion is far more convincing that it would be if he stated it
baldly. We follow him in his journey from acceptance of Pittacus'
saying to rejection of it; we act it out with him. This method of
attracting audience sympathy is still common even among scholars;
many a book or lecture narrates the process of discovery in the hope
that by sharing the experience we will be inclined to share the con-
clusion. But the modern scholar does not pretend to be achieving

18 U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin, 1913), 165-7.
19 See M. Dickie, 'The Argument and Form of Simonides 542 *PMG*', *HSCPh* 82
(1978), 21-33.

insight at the podium. We may narrate how we went down blind
alleys, but we do not enact error.

    This text does not differ much for its original audiences and for
secondary ones, except that the original context may have sharp-
ened the point by providing an occasion on which a mortal was to
be praised. On the other hand, it works rather differently for those
who hear it for the first time and those who are hearing it again (and
this is, of course, a text we know was widely memorised; all those
present in Plato's *Protagoras* are familiar with it). On a first hearing,
the 'truly' is innocent. The hearer has no reason to expect that it will
represent a significant modification of the formula, and its expansion
is therefore a mild surprise; instead the opening *men* creates an
expectation that someone will be contrasted with the 'good man'.
When the sense does not break after *chalepon*, the hearer must make
a slight adjustment. Someone who is already familiar with the course
of the argument, though, should feel the intrusive 'truly' as an imme-
diate invitation to begin thinking about what would be implied by
being 'truly *agathos*', and the meditation should be even more con-
vincing.

    Glenn Most has argued that the key to the poem lies in the ambi-
guity of the word *chalepon*, which, he argues, means not 'hard' but
'impossible' in the opening sentence.[20] Indeed, in many passages the
word is used for actions that are impossible because they would
transgress mortal limits. So, for instance, Meriones says at *Iliad* 16.
620 that it is *chalepon* for Aeneas to kill every warrior who confronts
him, since he is mortal. Yet nobody who hears Simonides' poem for
the first time can understand it this way, because the sense 'impossi-
ble' for *chalepon* is always a deliberate understatement, usually heav-
ily ironic, and nothing in the context could tell the reader to under-
stand the word this way at the very start. Indeed, the familiarity of
Pittacus' saying would make it *chalepon* to perceive Simonides' open-
ing as anything but an expansion of the proverb. Yet the reader who
knows that the correction of Pittacus is to come and recognises the
definition of 'good' as making it equivalent to 'perfect' can also feel
the ironic sense of *chalepon* from the start. This wit is a reward of re-
reading.

20 G.W. Most, 'Simonides' Ode to Scopas in Contexts', in *Modern Critical Theory
and Classical Literature*, edd. I.F. de Jong and J.P. Sullivan (Leiden, 1994), 127-52;
examples include *Odyssey* 10. 305; 23. 281, 184; H. Dem. 11; Pindar, *Nemean* 10. 72;
Bacchylides 5. 94; Solon 16. 1 West; and Theognis 1075. The point about the sense
of *chalepon* was made by P.E. Easterling, 'Alcman 58 and Simonides 37', *PCPhS* 200
(1974), 37-43.

I want to look at one of the most famous extra-textual self-corrections in archaic poetry, line 11 of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which has a peculiarity I do not think has been noticed. Hesiod has just announced his intention of speaking the truth to Perses; he then suddenly begins to meditate on the two goddesses who are called Eris. Now this meditation, as we all know, is introduced by the revelation that there are, in fact, two goddesses (11-26):

Οὐκ ἄρα μοῦνον ἔην Ἐρίδων γένος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ γαῖαν.
εἰσὶ δύω · τὴν μέν κεν ἐπαίνησειε νοήσας.
ἡ δ᾽ ἐπιμωμητή · διὰ δ᾽ ἄνδιχα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλει,
σχετλίη · οὔ τις τήν γε φιλεῖ βρότος, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης
ἀθανάτων βουλῆσιν Ἔρις τιμῶσι βαρεῖαν.
τὴν δ᾽ ἑτέρην προτέρην μὲν ἐγείνατο Νὺξ ἐρεβεννή,
θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης ὑψιζύγος αἰθέρα ναίων
γαίης δ᾽ ἐν ῥίφησι καὶ ἀνδράσι πολλὸν ἀμείνω ·
ἥ τε καὶ ἀπάλαμόν περ ὅμως ἐπὶ ἔργον ἔγειρεν.
εἰς ἕτερον γάρ τις ἰδὼν ἔργοιο χατίζων
πλούσιον, ὃς σπεύδει μὲν ἀρώμεναι ἠδὲ φυτεύειν
οἶκόν τ᾽ εὖ θέσθαι, ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονι γείτων
εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ᾽· ἀγαθὴ δ᾽ Ἔρις ἥδε βροτοῖσιν.
καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,
καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ.

So it turns out that Strife is not a single being, but there are two upon the Earth. A person who notices one would praise it, while the other is blameworthy. They have quite different minds. For one increases cruel war and contention, cruel. No mortal loves her, but by the will of the immortals they honour heavy Strife, through necessity. But the other one dark Night bore first, and the high-throned son of Cronus who lives in the aether settled her in the roots of the earth, and made her much better for men. She rouses even the shiftless man to work. For one who doesn't work, seeing another man who is rich,[21] who moves quickly to plough and sow and put his house in order, neighbour envies his neighbour who moves quickly towards wealth. This Strife is good for mortals. And potter is angry with potter, and carpenter with carpenter, and beggar resents beggar, and bard, bard.

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[21] Text and syntax here are difficult; I am following West's text and basic interpretation.

Hesiod uses the particle *ara* with the imperfect 'of a truth just realised': he used to think there was only one origin and thus one kind of Eris, but he has come to a better knowledge. It is generally thought that Hesiod here refers back to his own *Theogony*, where only a single Eris was born of night. The self-correction seems to presuppose familiarity with the *Theogony*, though such familiarity is not quite essential. If most people would assume that Eris was a single goddess, and most probably would–Homer, after all, presents her too, and she has a celebrated part in the early stages of the Trojan story–Hesiod could be correcting not an earlier song, but the popular opinion he had previously shared. So the self-correction can only be fully recognised as such by audiences who have particular knowledge, but those who do not know the other poem need not be excessively perplexed. But I would like to look at another aspect of this self-correction, namely that it implies a narrative. A speaker who only now realises that his previous belief is false, or that his earlier perception of the world was incomplete, thereby implies that some experience, or at least further significant thought, has intervened. When self-correction appears in a continuous line of thought, the dramatic pretence forms the narrative. When characters in a narrative correct their earlier opinions, the audience uses the narrative to explain their changes of mind if these are not clear. When Achilles says at *Iliad* 9. 361 that it turns out that there is no *charis*, the narrative provides the context: we understand that Achilles is saying that Agamemnon's behaviour has forced him to revise his earlier assumption that appropriate *charis* was always given. When Odysseus tells Eurymachus that it turns out that there is no sense corresponding to his good looks, Eurymachus' immediately preceding behaviour motivates the remark.

Consider the most famous self-correction in archaic poetry, the palinode(s) of Stesichorus. Whether this was one poem or two, it demonstrates the profound need for a narrative explanation of such a change of mind. Because the change was radical–from the traditional story blaming Helen to another, perhaps new story, exonerating her–the narrative had to be equally powerful. Hence the story familiar from Plato (*Phaedrus* 243a), whether based on anything in the palinode or not, that Stesichorus had been blinded by the divine Helen and composed his new version to placate her, whereupon he was healed. Without a story or a representation of the mental process leading to the correction, self-correction is inexplicable. Or

consider Pindar's *Nemean* 7, where modern scholars differ over whether a self-correction is to be found at all. Again, the scholia offer us an outside narrative because the inner one is obscure. Poets may not always explain their changes, but the audience will desire an explanation, and ancient audiences did. The interpreter must always ask why, if the poet has genuinely left such a gap, he could possibly have have sought it. If Pindar is engaging in self-correction in *Nemean* 7, is he assuming that his narrative in *Paean* 6 will be known to all hearers of *Nemean* 7, or is he ignoring the wider audience in favour of an immediate one (as I would argue monody and iambus often do, because the wider audience will accept this)? Hesiod's self-correction presents a similar problem, since it does not provide a hint of what has made him realise that the good Eris exists, but it is an easier one to tackle, since it is explicit in the poem that Hesiod is correcting an earlier false belief of his own, and there is general agreement that this false belief was expressed in the *Theogony* as the genealogy of Eris. On the other hand, the consideration of the two kinds of Eris is completely unlike the casual-seeming internal self-correction of Simonides or of most examples in Pindar. It does not arise 'naturally' from its context. On the contrary, it is introduced abruptly and seems to arise from nowhere. Certainly nothing in the proem prepares for it.

The absence of narrative may be to some extent mitigated by his description of the activities of the good Eris. If we do not learn what has led Hesiod to this perception, as least we know in some detail what he has perceived. After the passage ends, it is, barely, possible to make sense of it. Perses is exhorted to avoid the bad Eris and not allow her to keep him from work; since the good Eris is associated with the desire to work, it is implicit that in abandoning the bad Eris he will follow the good. We could perhaps consider that Hesiod's thinking is simply so bipolar that in considering the bad Eris, which has led Perses to sue him instead of working, he has imagined a good Eris also. But I find it hard to believe that he would have been moved to correct his *Theogony* solely by this tendency to think in parallel pairs.

And, of course, there is an experience narrated in the poem which provides a perfect occasion for Hesiod to have recognised the positive Eris: his victory in the funeral games of Amphidamus, which he mentions at 656-9. His summary of the results of good Eris points clearly in this direction, in his remark that beggar begrudges

beggar and singer, singer. The good Eris acts within the trades as a generator of professional rivalry, and Hesiod's victory in the competition belongs very precisely to her sphere.

This is not, of course, an original observation. Richard Hamilton has recently argued that the poem is generally structured around a first part devoted to bad Eris, set in the court and occupied with justice, and a second devoted to good Eris, set on the farm, and he emphasises Hesiod's poetic victory as an example of good Eris.[22] But I think he rather understates the difficulty for the listener in using such a structure as a guide to experiencing the poem. For the passage on the Erides does not itself really invite us to expect that the good Eris will have her turn after the world of bad Eris has adequately been explored. One might suggest that the hearer accustomed to the technique of branching in narrative poetry could adapt it here. In Homeric narrative, after all, scenes often end with the announcement that two characters are to do different things, and the narrative continues with the actions of one until the narrative line reaches a plausible temporary closure, and then goes to the second. In *Iliad* 14 Iris is to remove Poseidon from battle and Apollo is to heal and encourage Hector. We follow Iris until Poseidon leaves then we turn to Apollo.[23] But such branching is always explicitly announced, whereas Hesiod does not tell his audience that he will now explore bad Eris: how could an audience recognise that the good Eris would return? Or is such guidance unnecessary?

If we consider that the good Eris, as a self-correction, implies a narrative, the audience will be waiting to hear about how Hesiod learned about her. Anyone already familiar with the *Theogony* already has a minimal biographical framework in which to set the question: Hesiod, the poet initiated by the Muses on Helicon, believed in only one Eris, a child of Night, when he composed the earlier poem, but now he has changed his mind. If the allusion is recognised, the present poem immediately defines itself as continuation of the earlier work in a strikingly 'literary' way. The truly original audience familiar not only with the *Theogony*, but with Hesiod himself, would also not actually need the explanation. If Hesiod sang the poem first at Ascra, among people who knew him, they would surely know about his success; and if those who speculate that

22 *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry* (Baltimore and London, 1989), 53-66.
23 T. Krischer, *Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik* (*Zetemata*: 56) (Munich, 1971), 103-30.

the *Theogony* was the poem with which Hesiod was victorious are correct, which does seem likely, the reference back to it would in itself provide a hint. After all, he dedicated the tripod at Helicon and so made his victory public in his own country. For such an audience, Hesiod's failure to explain how he came to understand good Eris may be a mild joke. The moment he referred to singer's envy of singer they would recognise an allusion to the contest, and would be amused, perhaps, that the singer so praises the principle which has allowed him to come out ahead: would he be celebrating the merits of good Eris if he had lost? The example need not be humour at the poet's own expense, though, or not only that. Contests show exceptionally clearly how rivalry serves the pursuit of excellence. None of the other cases is as sharp. Farming for Hesiod is competitive only at one remove, as the manifestation of an underlying competition for wealth. So the audience which makes the biographical connection also has an advantage in thematic understanding.

At the same time, we cannot assume that Hesiod intends his poem only for such an audience. Even apart from the biographical information about the victory, the *Theogony* does not look like a poem composed for a purely local audience; on the contrary, it seems to seek quite deliberately to give wider fame and authority to some local cults–Hecate, the Heliconian Muses–by locating them within a panhellenic vision. The use of the poet's name within the poem suggests a desire to sign the work; a signature is not necessary if the poet does not imagine any performance except among his acquaintance.[24] And the victory established Hesiod as a singer who could win respect in competition with poets from other places, before an audience of strangers. And, of course, the poem is extant, which means that it was transmitted from its composer to somebody else, probably voluntarily and intentionally: it is surely too long to have been memorised casually. For my purpose here it does not matter whether that transmission involved writing or not. It certainly involved the assumption of an audience who might hear the poem in the absence of its creator, and an audience who did not know

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[24] West on 22 denies that naming is a *sphragis*: 'this cannot have been thought necessary at a time when there was no general circulation of written books'. I do not see the logic here, since a poem intended to circulate orally might equally be attached to a name; the issue is whether the poem was imagined to have any circulation without the physical presence of the author. A *sphragis* requires writing only when individual parts of the work sealed are expected to circulate by themselves (like the elegies of Theognis), so that the name would not be attached except in the written book.

Hesiod himself, although Hesiod might have assumed that anyone who heard the second poem would already know the already-famous first one.

This seems to me interesting in several directions. First, the poem would be differently received by its immediate and its wider audience, even though it was probably not composed exclusively for the immediate audience. It is hard to imagine that Hesiod composed the *Works and Days* with a view only to his own neighbours, since it goes out of its way to mention the poet's victory in a competition which demonstrated his ability to please such an audience. In fact, it may be pretending that no wider audience exists, engaging in pseudo-intimacy.

Hesiod shows both similarities and differences to other poets who use this device. Sappho is the greatest master of pseudo-intimacy in Greek. If we know from one fragment that she does look towards enduring fame, and therefore to a future audience for her poetry (55), her poems often give an extraordinarily successful impression of having been composed only for herself and her friends. And sometimes she manipulates this very impression. In Sappho 1, we eavesdrop on her address to Aphrodite through the eavesdroppers of the original audience, as it were: once it strikes us that we never hear the name of the beloved, it can hardly fail to occur to us that the original audience would have known it; avoiding it may seem to be an in-joke. Yet on second thought we have to realise that the name is completely unnecessary in this poem, whose point lies in the ongoing succession of objects of desire for Sappho. Since they are interchangeable, it does not matter which one is in question here.

Lyric poetry, both choral and monodic, public and intimate, often works on its exoteric audience by inviting its members to try to share an original event. In the terms of contemporary narrative theory, one could say that the narrative audience of Pindar's and Sappho's poetry knows in detail facts which the secondary authorial audience must reconstruct from the poetry, and that it is sometimes deliberately made difficult or even impossible for them to do so completely. There is a gap between the essential facts which can be reconstructed and particular details which cannot.

For poetic purposes, Hesiod tells us everything we need to know about the quarrel with Perses. Whatever else the original audience knew would probably only have interfered with the reception of the poem (Perses, after all, may have had a valid case). As far as Hesiod's self-correction is concerned, the *Works and Days* plays with

its audience in a way that is quite different from most other examples of pseudo-intimacy, since Hesiod does ultimately tell the story of his victory. Special privilege is first active, in that the secondary audience is confronted with a riddle that would have been transparent to insiders, but then it is cancelled. The secondary audience, though, can only appreciate the answer to the riddle by contemplating the poem as a whole, or by hearing it again. In the experience of first performance, it is unlikely that anyone would still be wondering about the self-correction so much later in the poem. The narrative of Hesiod's victory is embedded as an apparent digression within a digression. Seafaring is itself a topic set apart from the main argument. Within this section, Hesiod refers to the victory only by way of expansion on the only occasion on which he travelled by sea, and this trip from Aulis to Euboea is in turn a foil for Hesiod's poetic gifts, which compensate for his lack of practical experience. The intelligent auditor would doubtless appreciate the irony that the poet's one tiny voyage can, through the poetic victory, prove his competence to sing on a subject he otherwise does not know, but at this point nobody is likely to refer back to Hesiod's change of mind about Eris at the beginning of the poem.[25] Nor does it seem to be likely that many of those who heard the poem for the first time would think very long about this issue while reflecting on the poem later, given the richness of the poem as a whole. On hearing the poem a second time, though, an auditor who had never heard of Hesiod outside his poem could apply the information about Hesiod's victory as easily as Hesiod's acquaintances could, without even thinking about it. And this opens at least the possibility that Hesiod's failure to explain how he came to change his mind is a deliberate narrative tease for the benefit of such an audience. An immediate narrative of how Hesiod demonstrated the value of Eris by winning a victory might transgress the social limits on self-praise (whereas in its present context the self-praise is demanded by the need to defend the poet's authority to give advice without having personal experience). But it would also destroy the possibility of

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[25] Recently there has been a surge of interest in the possible programmatic suggestions of the contrast between Hesiod's voyage from Aulis and his allusion to the departure of the Achaeans from the same place. W. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Poetry* (Baltimore and London, 1984), 152-3, suggests that Hesiod implicitly compares himself to the epic hero; R. Rosen, 'Poetry and Sailing in Hesiod's *Works and Days*', *Class. Antiq.* 9 (1990), 99-133, argues that it is programmatic for Hesiod's non-heroic poetry.

pseudo-intimacy by making the biographical information an admitted necessity. With the actual arrangement, the outsider who hears the poem again can feel like an insider; and the poem can thus manipulate audience response while appearing to proceed entirely by a spontaneous and thus authentic process of thought.