

PINDAR'S NEMEAN XI

PINDAR, perhaps more than any other ancient poet, seems to demand from his interpreters declarations of their critical premises. In recent years scholars customarily have made initial acknowledgment to the work of E. R. Bundy, as psychoanalysts must to Freud, before they begin to offer their own modifications to and expansions of his fundamental work. Much contemporary scholarship has concentrated on the identification and classification in the odes of the elements whose function Bundy labelled and explained. But useful as this type of analysis has been for exorcising the demon of biographical interpretation, it has, like all orthodoxies, prevented perception of other equally important truths.¹ It constitutes no radical heterodoxy to try to account for the fact that each individual ode, for all its dependence on common conventions of structure and of content, makes a different impression. Nor is it unreasonable to try to explain what makes Pindar's style and approach distinctive.²

In my own work I have argued, though perhaps not always convincingly, that language as well as structure contributes to an ode's coherence.³ Scholars trained in America are more willing to assume that repetition of phrase or theme within a poem has significance, and that metaphors can simultaneously bear more than one connotation. The issues at stake have most recently been delineated by Michael Silk, in his discussion of the effect of metaphor in archaic poetry: 'By "patent", I mean effects whose existence is not in doubt, though their character may be disputed; by "latent", those whose effective significance is so tenuous or marginal that one resents the impression of solidity that even mentioning them produces. Such insensitivity is more common than it should be among American classicists, many of whom have also been influenced by the "New Criticism" . . .' As illustration of the erroneous American approach Silk cites Cedric Whitman's description of the thematic relation of fires in the *Iliad*.⁴ Silk himself avoids the trap Whitman falls into by considering only 'patent' metaphors, and these consistently *out of context*, so that there is no necessity to comment on the existence or non-existence of thematic connections among them. But it is possible—at least logically—to frame the question differently, and to ask whether a metaphor cannot have patent and latent associations at the same time.⁵

To illustrate with one of Silk's own examples, *Pyth.* viii 92ff:

ἐν δ' ὀλίγῳ βροτῶν
τὸ τερπνὸν αὖξεται· οὕτω δὲ καὶ πίτνει χαμαί,
ἀποτρόπῳ γνώμῃ σεσεισμένον.

'In a short time men's joy grows strong. In a short time too it falls to the ground, shaken by a remorseless intention.' Silk here observes that 'the subject, τὸ τερπνόν, is shaken and falls like a plant, perhaps specifically a tree', and he cites examples of the use of πίπτω and σείω of trees in the *Iliad*.⁶ αὖξεται he designates as 'pivotal', a word that some critics might call 'ambiguous', since it can denote intellectual growth, or physical growth, as of a tree.⁷ But I believe it could also be said,

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¹ See esp. M. R. Lefkowitz, 'Pindar's Lives' in *Classica et Iberica* (Festschrift Marique: Worcester, Mass. 1975) 87–90.

² Acknowledging the existence in a poem of logical argument and recognizable structure does not necessarily preclude the simultaneous appreciation in the poem of significant language. But cf. W. J. Slater. 'Doubts about Pindaric Interpretation' in *CJ* lxxii (1977) 195, who brands as 'eccentric' and 'Procrustean' critics who consider the function of imagery in the odes. Yet his own approach is equally Procrustean and certainly unhistorical: 'more scholars (should) begin to ask whether the genre is not more important than the poem' (207–8). This is to forget that Pindar's audiences heard *individual* odes, and did not have access, as we do, to the corpus as a whole.

³ E.g. 'Bacchylides' *Ode* 5: Imitation and Originality'

in *HSCP* lxxiii (1969) 45–96, but cf. D. E. Gerber, 'Studies in Greek Lyric Poetry' in *CW* lxx (1976) 128; *The Victory Ode: An Introduction* (Park Ridge N.J. 1976), but cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, *TLS* 8th April 1977 438; D. E. Gerber, *Phoenix* xxxi (1977) 181–3.

⁴ *Interaction in Poetic Imagery* (Cambridge 1974) 63–4.

⁵ Allowing only the alternatives of patent and latent sets up a false dichotomy, as e.g. also in J. A. Richmond, 'Symbolism in Virgil: Skeleton Key or Will-o'-the-Wisp?' in *G&R* xxiii (1976) 142–58; see D. H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies* (New York 1970) 9–12.

⁶ *Op. cit.* (n. 4) 90.

⁷ Describing a tree's swift growth with a verb of motion creates a similar fusion of the life of man and of plants in *Nem.* viii 40–1: αἴσσει δ' ἀπερά, χλωραῖς ἔεραῖς ὡς ὄτε δένδρον . . . ἀερθεῖσ'. But the dramatic αἴσσει is emended to αὖξεται by some edd.; see D. E. Gerber, *Emendations in Pindar 1513–1972* (Amsterdam 1976); C.

particularly if one heard the ode recited through from the beginning as the ancients would, that in context the generality of the terms *πίπτει χάμαι* and *ἀποτρόπῳ γνώμα σσεισμένον* enables the simile to bear more than one specific connotation. In the previous stanza *πίπτω* denoted a wrestling fall, also in conjunction with a description of mental attitude, *τέτρασι δ' ἔμπετες ὑψόθεν σωματέσσι κακὰ φρονέων* (81–82). *αὔξων* earlier in the ode connoted the effect of the victor's success in games (38).⁸ That *σειώ* denotes not uprooting or detaching but a back-and-forth movement brings the simile to conclusion without precise definition.⁹ It is important to observe that making a traditional comparison does not prevent the poet from saying something new. A primary function of Homeric tree similes is to link the fate of men and nature. But note the difference between Pindar and Homer. Pindar in *Pyth.* viii is talking about feelings; 'joy', not man, falls to the ground. His interest in emotions and motivations is far greater (and more in the mainstream of mid-fifth-century thought) than is often believed.

Further to illustrate Pindar's reworking of traditional terminology and, in the process, his new concentration on the human forces that lead to success or failure, I would like to look closely at *Nemean* xi, an ode that has not received much critical attention recently, and that presents considerable interpretative challenge. First of all, it is not a standard victory ode. Instead of commemorating victory in an athletic competition, it celebrates an inauguration of a magistracy. The distinction matters because occasion sets the tone of so many odes. For example, the horse Pherenicus' winning run in 476 merits special superlatives from Pindar in *Ol.* i, and elicits a narrative of extraordinary depth and intensity from Bacchylides in *Ode* v.¹⁰ In the case of *Nem.* xi, critics invariably comment on the ode's negativity: the new magistrate is praised for his beauty and then reminded that his ultimate clothing will be earth (11–16).¹¹ In the final stanzas human achievement is described as intermittent and human expectations as destructive: 'for our limbs are bound by shameless expectation, and the streams of foresight lie far off' (46). Certainly Greek religion, as Professor Lloyd-Jones has observed in regard to the puzzlingly negative *Pyth.* ii, demands apotropaic comments at the moment of success.¹² All odes have them, but the concentration of these warnings and their intensity varies. If we compare *Nem.* xi to standard victory odes which talk about a victor's failure to win, distinctive (and, I would argue, post-archaic) emphasis appears to be placed on this ode on human judgment (as opposed to chance or divine intervention). Did the nature of the occasion of *Nem.* xi permit the poet to comment on limitations of mind and initiative in greater detail than he could in odes where magnitude of achievement required reference to glories of the past, and to other significant heroic or athletic accomplishments by family and community?

The absence of extended mythical narrative in *Nem.* xi presents a further difficulty. I have suggested in *The Victory Ode*, on the basis of analysis of the diction of six long odes, that the myths (or in *Pyth.* i, a long narrative prologue) determine the selection of words and metaphors that ultimately gives each ode its distinctive character. But what (if anything) can be said about the metaphors in *Nem.* xi? It has no myth, and thus it may have no dominant themes to set the tone of routine praise and warnings. The process of reading through the ode, even though it may not answer these questions completely, will at least help focus discussion on the critical issues of interpretation.

Παῖ Πέας, ἃ τε πρυτανεία λέλογχας, Ἐστία,
Ζητὸς ὑψίστου κασιγνήτα καὶ ὁμοθρόνου Ἥρας,
εὖ μὲν Ἀρισταγόραν δέξει τεὸν ἐς θάλαμον,

Carey, 'Pindar's Eighth Nemean Ode' in *PCPS* xciii (1976) 41 n. 42. On multiple implications, see W. No-wottny, *The Language Poets Use* (London 1962) 146 ff.

⁸ On the passage, see M. R. Lefkowitz, 'Pindar's *Pythian* 8' in *CJ* lxxii (1977) 216. Silk (n. 4) in fact notes the existence of a thematic link between *πρύμνη* ('stern') in Aesch. *Sept.* 2, and *πρυμνόθεν* ('from the roots'), *Sept.* 71 (p. 183). Intentionality on the poet's part is a false issue, since covert structures exist whether or not they are openly recognized; see J. P. Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris 1974) 128. On plant terminology in *Nem.* viii, see Carey (n. 7) 35.

⁹ On the delicacy of Pindar's metaphors, see Silk (n. 4) 97, 101; and J. M. Mueller, 'Living Imagery, a Dead Tongue, etc.' in *CPh* lxxii (1977) 156–8.

¹⁰ *The Victory Ode* (n. 3) 42–103.

¹¹ E.g. U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 429–32; L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* (London 1930) i 234; J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) 218.

¹² 'Modern Interpretation of Pindar' in *JHS* xciii (1973) 136; *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley 1971) 69–70, 213; *The Victory Ode* (n. 3) 41 n. 43.

εὖ δ' ἑταίρους ἀγλαῶ σκάπτω πέλας
οἷ σε γεραίροντες ὀρθὰν φυλάσσοισιν Τένεδον,
πολλὰ μὲν λοιβαῖσιν ἀγαζόμενοι πρῶταν θεῶν,
πολλὰ δὲ κνίσῃ· λύρα δὲ σφι βρέμεται καὶ ἀοιδά·
καὶ ξενίου Διὸς ἀσκέεται θέμις αἰενάοις
ἐν τραπέζαις· ἀλλὰ σὺν δόξῃ τέλος
δωδεκάμηνον περᾶσαι νιν ἀτρώτῳ κραδίῃ. (1-10)

The ode opens in traditional hymnic form: 'Daughter of Rhea, you who have allotted to you the chief men's hall, Hestia, sister of highest Zeus and of Hera who shares his throne, welcome Aristagoras kindly to your chamber' (1-2). The poet states first Hestia's genealogy, and then, completing the prayer, describes her chamber, the hall where the new magistracy is being inaugurated: 'welcome Aristagoras kindly to your chamber, (receive) kindly beside your glorious sceptre his companions who, honouring you, guard Tenedos on a straight path, often worshipping you first of the gods with libations, often with burnt sacrifice. For you the lyre resounds, and song, and the order of Zeus (god of) guests is observed on tables ever abundant. But in glory send him through his twelve-month office with unwounded heart' (3-10).¹³ It is interesting to compare the opening of *Pyth.* viii, where honour also must be given first to divinity: 'kind-thinking Calm, who hold the highest keys of plans and wars' (1-3).¹⁴ But note the difference in scope. In *Nem.* xi the prayer is closely limited to a description of the celebration in the *prytaneion* of Hestia's rites, and directed to Aristagoras' specific term of office.¹⁵

The final words of the prayer in *Nem.* xi, 'send him through his twelve-month office with unwounded heart' (10), warn of dangers yet unspecified, again with stress on emotion. ἄτρωτος, replacing a more customary epithet like ἀτειρή (Il. iii 60) or σιδηρή (Od. iv 293) suggests a soldier's vulnerability.¹⁶ Pindar uses the same word dramatically in *Isthm.* iii, ἄτρωτοί γε μὴν παῖδες θεῶν ('only the children of gods are without wounds', 18b), contrasting god's immortality with man's lifespan that changes 'in whirling days'.

The opening strophes describe the ritual of sacrifice, 'worshipping you first of the gods with libations, often with burnt offerings'. Rituals involving burnt sacrifice (as opposed to blood-offerings to the king in the palace shrine in Mycenaean practice) are characteristic of the communal organization of the *polis*: men stand around the altar, celebrating death and the gods' gift to them of life.¹⁷ The ancients were explicitly aware of the presence of death in celebration.¹⁸ The connection is directly stated in the epode:

ἄνδρα δ' ἐγὼ μακαρίζω μὲν πατέρ' Ἀρκεσίλαν,
καὶ τὸ θαητὸν δέμας ἀτρεμίαν τε σύγγονον·
εἰ δέ τις ὄλβον ἔχων μορφῇ παραμένυσεται ἄλλους,
ἐν τ' ἀέθλοισιν ἀριστεύων ἐπέδειξεν βίαν,
θνατὰ μεμνάσθω περιστέλλων μέλη,
καὶ τελευτὰν ἀπάντων γᾶν ἐπιεσσόμενος. (11-16)

'I congratulate the man on his father Arcesilas, and on his wondrous body and his inborn fearlessness. If then a man has wealth too and surpasses others in beauty, and excelling in contests shows his power, let him remember that the limbs he is decking out are mortal, and that he will clothe himself in earth, the end of all' (11-16).¹⁹

¹³ Vernant (n. 8) 142; H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Three Notes on Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*' in *RhM* ciii (1960) 78-9; S. G. Miller, *The Prytaneion* (Berkeley 1978) 14.

¹⁴ Lefkowitz, 'Pyth. 8' (n. 8) 211.

¹⁵ On Hestia as patroness of human concerns, see Vernant (n. 10) 126.

¹⁶ E.g. the description of the giant Asteros in the prose summary of the Coan epic *Meropis*: μάχιμόν τινα καὶ δυνατόν, ἔτι δὲ ἄτρωτον (P. Col. inv. 5604 ll. 23-25); see A. Henrichs, 'Zur Meropis' in *ZPE* xxvii (1977) 72. Cf. Aesch. *Ch.* 532, of Clytemnestra's breast left ἄτρωτος by the snake in her dream.

¹⁷ Vernant (n. 8) 142; W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berlin 1972) 158-9. On the importance of a ceremonial hearth for a guild or group of men with common interests, see Burkert, 'Die Leistung eines Kreophylus' in *MH* xxix (1972) 79.

¹⁸ E.g. Hor. *Carm.* i 4, iii 13; M. R. Lefkowitz, 'The Ilex in *O Fons Bandusiae*' in *CJ* lviii (1962) 65.

¹⁹ Two accusatives in 11, instead of the usual acc. pers. and gen. rei with μακαρίζω led the ancient commentators to translate: 'the man I congratulate is Arcesilas your father and his courage and his handsome body'. But most modern commentators agree that ἄνδρα must be Arist-

Warnings about mortal limitations regularly follow statements of human success, e.g., 'if because he is handsome and his accomplishments match his beauty, Aristophanes' son embarks on highest manliness, it is no longer possible to cross the impassable sea beyond the pillars of Heracles' (*Nem.* iii 19–21). But it is important to be aware of nuances in the tone of this standard advice in different odes.²⁰ *Nem.* vi, for example, begins with a statement that men and gods are the same race, and draw breath from the same mother, but are vastly different in strength. Men resemble the gods in mind or body though 'we (men) do not know toward what marker in day or by night fate has described that we run' (1–7). This famous passage from *Nem.* vi stresses the similarities between gods and extraordinary men, while describing life as an athletic contest (*δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν*), and thus characterizing it as an opportunity for achievement. But *Nem.* xi keeps strictly to the human sphere: the first word of the first epode is *ἄνδρα*. Aristagoras' beauty, courage, and athletic successes are compared to other *men's*. No metaphor or euphemism (like 'toward what marker we run' in *Nem.* vi 7) obscures the reference to death. Aristagoras' limbs are mortal (*θνατά*). *περιστέλλω* can denote decking out a corpse (Laertes says about Odysseus *οὐδέ ἐ μήτηρ / κλαύσει περιστέιλασα πατήρ θ'*, *Od.* xxiv 293).²¹ The idea is restated in the last line of the triad, in the phrase *καὶ τελευτὰν ἀπάντων γὰν ἐπιεσσόμενος. ἐπιέννυμι* in Pindar (*Nem.* x 44) and in Homer primarily denotes clothing, though in epic it already is used metaphorically with abstract nouns, as here 'he will clothe himself in the end of all, earth'.²² The new magistracy has a stated term (*τέλος δωδεκάμηρον*, 9–10). So all Aristagoras' athletic achievements will be wrapped in everything's termination (*τελευτάν*, 16).

In the next triad, the requisite statement of the poet's obligation to praise is expressed with unusual simplicity:

ἐν λόγοις ἀστῶν ἀγαθοῖσιν ἐπαινέισθαι χρέων
καὶ μελιγδούποισι δαιδαλθέντα μέλειν ἐν αἰοδαῖς.
ἐκ δὲ περικτιόνων ἐκκαίδεκ' Ἀρισταγόραν
ἀγλααὶ νίκαι πάτραν τ' εὐώνυμον
ἔστεφάνωσαν πάλα καὶ μεγαυχεῖ παγκρατίῳ. (17–21)

'He must be praised in the good speeches of citizens and adorned in sweet-sounding song to be the subject of their care' (17–18).²³ There is no reference here to the transcendence of poetry in space or in time, with its characteristic metaphor of flying (as, e.g., *Pyth.* viii 34, *ἐμᾶ ποτανὸν ἀμφὶ μαχανᾶ*). In the opening prayer to Hestia, the music accompanying the inaugural rites merited a similarly literal description, 'for you the lyre resounds and song' (7). *δαιδαλθέντα* emphasizes the poet's craftsmanship, not Aristagoras' achievement.²⁴

This relatively restrained introduction would lead us to anticipate a modest list of achievements: 'from his neighbours sixteen glorious victories have crowned him and his famous clan in wrestling and the proud pancration' (19–21). But further accomplishment was prevented not by

agoras, e.g., Metzger, who observes that *ἀτρεμία* does not describe the father whose 'too hesitant expectations' held his son back from competition (22), *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig 1880) 482. Syntactically, *πατέρα*, *δέμας*, and *ἀτρεμίαν* appear to be accusatives of respect. Cf. the use of two accusatives with *τιμωρέομαι* in Eurip *Cyc.* 595, *Alc.* 733; see D. M. MacDowell, ed., *Aristophanes' Wasps* (Oxford 1971) 212–13. In any case, exchange of partitive genitive for accusative appears to have been readily comprehensible. E.g., in the case of verbs with meanings analogous to *μακαρίζω*: *αἰτιόομαι* with acc. pers. gen. rei in *Hdt.* v 27, but two accs. in *Ar. Ach.* 514; *ἐπαινέω* with two accs. in *Aesch.*, but acc. pers. gen. rei in *Plut.* and *Lucian*; *θαυμάζω* with acc. pers. gen. rei in *Thuc.* vi 36, but with two gens. in *Lys.* Occurrence of gen. pers. acc. rei, dat. pers. acc. rei with *μέμφομαι* (all in the fifth century) indicates that sense was determined by context and expectations. In victory odes audiences would expect praise of the *victor*. Relatives are praised only in conjunction with the victor's accomplishments, e.g., *Pyth.* x 23–6, *Isthm.* viii 1–4, *Nem.* vii 58–60; cf. the commemorative

epigram for an Aeginetan victor (first half of the fifth century), *παῖδα . . . κάλλιστον μὲν ἰδεῖν, ἀθλεῖν δ' οὐ χείρονα μορφῆς, / ὅς πατέρων ἀγαθῶν ἐκστεφάνωσε πόλιω*; J. Ebert, *Griechische Epigramme auf Sieger*, etc. (*Abh. Sachs. Akad. der Wiss. zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Kl.* lxiii. 2: Berlin 1972) no. 12.

²⁰ See n. 12.

²¹ E.g., also *Soph., Ant.* 903, *Aj.* 1170; cf. 821, of Ajax setting his sword in the earth and 'decking it out well' (*εὖ περιστέιλας*).

²² E.g. the formulaic *ἀναιδείην ἐπιεμίεμε* (*Il.* i 149, ix 372), *ἐπιεμίεμοι ἀλκῆν* (*Il.* vii 164, viii 263, xviii 157; cf. *Δῖον ἔσσο χιτῶνα*, *Il.* iii 57). The metaphor *θανόντες γὰν ἐπιεμίεμοι* first occurs in *Alc. G* 1. 17 L; cf. *Simon.* 6. 4 W, *AP* vii 480.

²³ Cf. the formulaic *δοῦπησεν δὲ πεσῶν* (*Il.* iv 504, etc.). On *βρέμεται* see R. Kannicht, *Euripides Helena* (Heidelberg 1969) on l. 1350.

²⁴ Cf. *δαιδαλωσέμεν ὕμνων πτυχαῖς*, 'adorn in folds of song' in *Ol.* i 105. On the text, see G. Hermann, *Opuscula* (Leipzig 1827–39) i 260, vii 172.

the fact of his mortality, but by his *parents'* inaccurate estimation of his ability, as the antistrophe indicates:

ἐλπίδες δ' ὀκνηρότεραι γονέων παιδὸς βίαν
ἔσχον ἐν Πυθῶνι πειρᾶσθαι καὶ Ὀλυμπία ἀέθλων.
ναὶ μὰ γὰρ ὄρκον, ἐμὴν δόξαν παρὰ Κασταλία
καὶ παρ' εὐδένδρῳ μολῶν ὄχθῳ Κρόνου
κάλλιον ἂν δηριῶντων ἐνόστησ' ἀντιπάλων,

(22–26)

'His parents' too hesitant expectations held back the son's power from attempting the contests at Pytho and Olympia. For by the god of oaths, in my opinion, had he come to Castalia or to the well-wooded hill of Cronus, he would have returned home more honourably than his contending opponents' (22–26). This apology for non-accomplishment of deeds never attempted is unique. Victory odes (as opposed to a special encomium like *Nem.* xi) mark successes, or blame luck or unfair judgments by umpires for failures. Bacchylides in *Ode* xi, also on oath (24), says of the victor Alexidamus' failure to win at Olympia: 'either a god is responsible or the far-wandering intentions (*γνώμαι*) of men removed the highest prize from his hands' (34–36). In *Nem.* vi Pindar puts the blame on bad luck, i.e., that the victor Alcimidas and his relative Polytimidas did not draw byes on the first round, and thus were comparatively more tired when they got to the final heat of the wrestling competition: 'two times at the sanctuary of Cronion, child, a lot that fell too soon deprived both you and Polytimidas of an Olympiad's garlands' (61–63). But in *Nem.* xi the blame rests squarely on human emotion. Aristagoras was praised earlier in the ode for his inborn fearlessness (13) and because excelling in contests (*ἀέθλοισιν*) he showed his power (*βίαν*, 14). Now 'the parents' too hesitant *expectations* held back the son's power (*βίαν*, 22) from attempting the contests (*ἀέθλων*) at Pytho and at Olympia' (23).

The epode elaborates on the limits of human judgment, continuing the speculation that Aristagoras could have won an Olympian victory:

πενταετηρίδ' ἑορτὰν Ἡρακλέος τέθμιον
κωμάσαις ἀνδησάμενός τε κόμαν ἐν πορφυρέοις
ἔρνεσιν. ἀλλὰ βροτῶν τὸν μὲν κενεόφρονες αὐχαι
ἐξ ἀγαθῶν ἔβαλον· τὸν δ' αὖ καταμεμφθέντ' ἄγαν
ἰσχὺν οἰκείων παρέσφαλεν καλῶν
χειρὸς ἔλκων ὀπίσσω θυμὸς ἄτολμος ἑών.

(27–32)

'... had he celebrated the quadrennial established festival of Heracles and bound his hair in purple branches' (27–29). ἀνδησάμενός τε κόμαν ἐν πορφυρέοις ἔρνεσιν denotes the ceremonial crowning of the victor with branches bound by purple fillets.²⁵ The reference to binding, like the description of Aristagoras' power in the first epode ('let him remember that he is decking out mortal limbs and will clothe himself in earth the end of all', 15–16), again leads into a statement of human limitations and failure: 'but among mortals one man's empty-minded boasts hurl him from his possessions, another man's heart—excessively disparaging his strength, because it is unadventurous—drags him back by the hand and makes him fall from his own achievements' (27–32). As in the antistrophe, blame is put on human emotions. It is interesting to compare Bacchylides' treatment in *Ode* xi of the case of Alexidamus who lost at Olympia. He externalizes the blame, first suggesting (as Agamemnon blames ἄτη for his quarrel with Achilles in *Il.* xix 78 ff.) that a god is responsible, then offering as an alternative 'men's much-wandering intentions' (34–36) and then describing both these causes for failure more fully by telling the story of how Hera drove Proetus' daughters mad, and of Proetus' destructive quarrel with his brother Acrisius. In *Nem.* vi Pindar also puts the blame on an external cause, the fall of the lots (62–63). But in *Nem.* xi, where the wrestling competition never took place, the contest is in the athlete's mind, and the prize is 'his own achievements' (*οἰκείων καλῶν*, 31). As in the antistrophe, where 'his parents' too hesitant expectations held him back' (22–23), the opponents are emotions, 'empty-minded boasts which hurl him from his possessions' (29) and an 'unadventurous heart', which, like a flesh-and-

²⁵ P. von der Mühl, 'Bermerkungen zu Pindars Nemeen, etc.' in *MH* xiv (1957) 127–8 = *Kl. Schriften* 194–6.

blood adversary, 'drags him back by the hand and makes him fall' (31–32). Reference to defeat brings a natural sense of closure to the stanza: the first triad ended with a statement about death.²⁶

The third triad provides a final variation on the theme of human limitations. Again the strophe concentrates on accomplishment:

συμβαλεῖν μὰν εὐμαρὲς ἦν τό τε Πεισάνδρου πάλαι
 αἶμ' ἀπὸ Σπάρτας, — Ἀμύκλαθεν γὰρ ἔβα σὺν Ὀρέστα,
 Αἰολέων στρατιὰν χαλκεντέα δεῦρ' ἀνάγων, —
 καὶ παρ' Ἴσμηνοῦ ῥοᾶν κεκραμένον
 ἐκ Μελανίπποιο μάτρωος· ἀρχαῖαι δ' ἀρεταί
 . . . (33–37)

In the family's origins, Theban and Spartan ancestry combine: on Aristagoras' father's side, Pisander, who brought an army of Aeolians to Tenedos after fighting in the battle of Amyclae; on his mother's side, Melanippus, who died in the battle against the Epigonoι. Though Pindar says nothing explicit about it, his own descent from the Aegidae who also fought at Amyclae with Orestes may account in part for his special reference to that battle and serve as an elegant compliment to this aristocratic family in Tenedos; in *Pyth.* i he refers to the fortunate Dorians who 'took Amyclae, setting out from Pindos' in Thessaly, from which Pindar's own name derives.²⁷

But the antistrophe supplies the full explanation for the reference to Pisander and Orestes. Their 'ancient excellences' (ἀρχαῖαι ἀρεταί, 37) can be seen again in Aristagoras' achievements:²⁸

ἀμφέροντ' ἀλλασσόμεναι γενεαῖς ἀνδρῶν σθένος·
 ἐν σχερῶ δ' οὐτ' ὦν μέλαιναί καρπὸν ἔδωκαν ἄρουραι,
 δένδρεά τ' οὐκ ἐθέλει πάσαις ἐτέων περόδοις
 ἄνθος εὐῶδες φέρειν πλούτῳ ἴσον,
 ἄνθος εὐῶδες φέρειν πλούτῳ ἴσον,
 ἀλλ' ἐν ἀμείβοντι. καὶ θνατὸν οὕτως ἔθνος ἄγει
 . . . (38–42)

'(ancient excellences) bring forth men's strength, alternating in generations. The dark fields do not give fruit continuously and the trees do not wish in cycles of years to bring out scented flowers equal in wealth, but in alternation' (38–42).²⁹ The distinction between this passage and the proem to *Nem.* vi is enlightening. There Pindar, adapting Homer's influential simile to the special circumstances of the victory ode, also compares the generations of men to the fields and their fruit: 'Alcimidas too now witnesses of his inborn nature that he has seen it like the fruit-bearing fields which in turn at one time give men yearly means of life from the plains, at another again rest and seize their strength' (8–11). Here success and failure are part of the natural order. The poet has just said that men and gods are one race, though mortals differ from their divine counterparts in power. Later in the ode he will speak of poets as 'the Pierides' ploughmen' (ἀρόταις, 32), of the branches of Pytho (ἔρνεσι, 37), the lion's 'pasture' at Nemea (βοτάνα, 42), and the flowers of Olympia (ἄνθεα, 63). In *Nem.* xi a similar natural connection is drawn between the crowning of the victor ('he would have bound his hair in purple branches', ἔρνεσι, rather than στεφάνοις, 28) and the flowering of the trees. But in the *Nem.* xi simile there is a special emphasis on intention: 'the trees do not wish (ἐθέλει) on all cycles of years to bring out scented flowers equal in wealth, but in alternation' (41–42). In the preceding triad also, emotion prevented accomplishment: 'the parents' too hesitant expectations held back' (22), 'empty-minded boasts hurl down' (29); 'a disparaging, unadventurous heart drags (the would-be competitor) back by the hand and makes him fall from his own achievements' (30–32). In *Nem.* vi it is important to note that Pindar

²⁶ On the technique, see Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure* (Chicago 1968) 172–82.

²⁷ *The Victory Ode* (n. 3) 158 n. 10.

²⁸ Bury (n. 11) 225.

²⁹ The MS. reading ἐναμείβοντι (plural) seems incon-

sistent with ἐθέλει (sing.). ἐθελεῖ, as in *Ol.* ii 97, *Ol.* xi 9, can denote customary behaviour (see LSJ s.v. ἐθέλω, II. 2). But English 'tend' does not adequately convey the verb's sense of volition; cf. φιλέω in *Pyth.* iii 18, which means at once 'like to' and 'are accustomed to'.

describes the physical similarities of men and nature but says nothing about an emotional similarity between them: 'the fields in turn at one time give men yearly means of life from the plains, at another again they rest and seize their strength' (σθένος ἔμαρψαν, 10–11). Later in the same ode death and failure strike with equal suddenness: 'a heavy strife fell upon them (ἔμπεσε), Achilles leaping down from his chariot' (50b–51), and 'a lot that fell too soon' (προπετής, 63).

The last lines of *Nem.* xi apply the simile of the trees and Aristagoras' family to human life in general:

μοῖρα. τὸ δ' ἐκ Διὸς ἀνθρώποις σαφὲς οὐχ ἔπεται
τέκμαρ· ἀλλ' ἔμπαν μεγαλανορίας ἐμβαίνομεν,
ἔργα τε πολλὰ μενοιῶντες· δέδεται γὰρ ἀναιδεῖ
ἐλπίδι γνῖα, προμαθείας δ' ἀπόκεινται ῥοαί.
κερδέων δὲ χρῆ μέτρον θηρευέμεν·
ἀπροσίκτων δ' ἐρώτων ὀξύτεραι μανίαι. (43–48)

'... From Zeus no clear sign attends men, but nonetheless we embark on ambitions, desiring many deeds. For our limbs are bound by shameless expectation, the streams of forethought lie far off. It is necessary to hunt for moderation in profit. The frenzies of inaccessible passions are too sharp' (43–48). The last strophes of victory odes provide advice for the present, though here, as in *Pyth.* viii or *Pyth.* iii the advice given concerns moral conduct. I have tried to show in *The Victory Ode* that the endings of each ode are integrated closely in content and diction with the rest of the ode, no matter how traditional or general they may seem.³⁰ In *Pyth.* viii 98, for example, the famous reflection 'what is anyone? what is no one? man is a shadow's dream' has specific application to the ode's myth, which tells of Amphiaraus' vision of the Epigonoι and of the poet's own encounter with the dead hero on the way to Delphi.³¹

So in *Nem.* xi, as we would expect from the previous descriptions of success and failure in the ode, the poet's general observations about human life concentrate on the action of the human mind: 'thus (like the changing trees that do not wish in all cycles of years to bring out their flowers) fate leads the mortal race'—the subject *μοῖρα* is dramatically postponed till the beginning of the epode. 'No clear sign from Zeus attends men', and men, in their inability to understand the deliberate alternation of success and failure, 'embark on ambitions, desiring many deeds, for our limbs are bound by shameless expectation, and the streams of forethought lie far off' (44–46). The mental journey to ambitions (as opposed to a victor's physically 'setting out in his father's footsteps' to win at Olympia, ἐμβέβακεν ἵχρσιω πατρός, *Pyth.* x 12) can never be completed because of lack of knowledge. Human limitations are explicitly internalized: ambitions exceed capabilities; expectation is 'shameless', like death in *Ol.* x 105, where it lacks *αἰδώς*, the ability to respect one's own person or another's rights.³²

It is significant that at the end of *Nem.* xi human limitations are described by a metaphor of binding: 'our limbs are bound (δέδεται) by shameless expectation'. Aristagoras, because he has wealth and surpasses others in beauty, was asked to remember that he was 'decking out mortal limbs' and would 'clothe himself in earth the end of all' (15–16). In the victory Aristagoras could have won, but did not attempt, at Olympia, he would have 'bound (ἀνδησάμενος) his hair in purple branches' (28–29). Restraint connotes failure: 'his parents' too hesitant expectations held back' (23), 'the dark fields do not give' (39), 'the trees do not wish to bring out' (40–41). In the course of the ode, Pindar has elaborated the traditional connotation of binding, which in Homer regularly describes the effect of death and delusion, into a characterization of mental action.³³ The conclusion of the sentence, 'and the streams of forethought lie far off', also sets the journey in the geography of the imagination, where 'we embark on ambitions'.³⁴ Earlier in the ode the would-be victor was defeated by competition in the form of *thoughts*, 'his parents' too hesitant expectations' (22), 'empty-minded boasts' (29), 'his heart, disparaging his strength, because it is unadventurous' (30–32).

The traditional concluding warning about the need for due measure is again stated as an

³⁰ *The Victory Ode* (n. 3) 31–2, 34.

³¹ Lefkowitz, 'Pyth. 8' (n. 8) 216–17.

³² F. J. Nisetich, 'The Leaves of Triumph and Morality' in *TAPA* cvii (1977) 246–7.

³³ R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge 1951) 327–9.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 229–36, 242–53.

internal quest: 'one must hunt moderation in gain; the frenzies of inaccessible passions are too sharp' (47–48). The picture of this anguished, doomed search provides a climactic antithesis to the prayer that begins the ode, with its communal song, ritual sacrifice, and request that Aristagoras complete a limited term of office 'with heart unwounded' (10). Aristagoras' present magistracy at home in Tenedos, his sixteen victories won 'from his neighbours' (19–20) appear even more impressive when set against the painful alternative of 'inaccessible passions' and 'too sharp frenzies'. As in *Pyth.* iii, the near and attainable are contrasted favourably with the distant, impossible, and excessive.³⁵ But in *Nem.* xi the negative illustrations are not drawn from myth; they are rather present generalities, metaphors, and abstractions. The ode's metrical pattern gives its last words, *δξύτεραι μανίαι* ('too sharp frenzies', 48) special impact. Word end coincides with colon ending in the last line of each epode, stressing the final phrases, *γᾶν ἐπιεσσόμενος* ('will clothe himself in earth', 16), *θυμὸς ἄτολμος ἐών* ('a heart that is unadventurous', 32), each time stating an important theme, death, and the causes of failure to achieve.

Stating the problem with such finality and from the human point of view gives this ode its special poignancy. One cannot find in *Nem.* xi the optimistic comparison between gods and men that brings excitement to the opening lines of *Nem.* vi, or the portrayal of god as healer that offers consolation to the boy who did not win at Olympia in Bacchylides' *Ode* xi. *Nem.* xi, like *Pyth.* viii, concentrates on how it feels *not* to win, in games and ultimately in life: 'the man who has won a beautiful new prize by his expectation flies on great luxury, with winged ambitions, having thoughts stronger than wealth. Men's joy grows in a short time. In a short time too it falls to the ground, shaken by a remorseless intention. Creatures of a day, what is anyone? what is no one? man is a dream of a shadow' (*Pyth.* viii 88–96). It could be inferred from the emphasis in the concluding lines of both these odes that *Nem.* xi was composed around the same time as *Pyth.* viii, toward the end of Pindar's life.³⁶ But Pindar, unlike poets today, was writing not so much to express his own feelings as to entertain and to instruct the people who hired him. In *Nem.* xi, the temporary nature of the occasion itself, election to a political office, gives special emphasis to the topics of the limits of achievement, ignorance of the future, mortality, and change.³⁷

But whatever its date, the ode is of particular interest because of its distinctively mid-fifth-century emphasis on motivations. Not that *Nem.* xi or any victory ode says as much about the force of emotion or the limits of understanding as a play of Sophocles, or speaks with the kind of power that dialogue and dramatic conflict can produce. But we give Pindar far less than his due when we regard him as an unquestioning transmitter of archaic values.³⁸ We also miss a great deal when we ignore the delicacy with which he recasts a Homeric simile (as in the comparison of men to trees in 38–42), or if we fail to notice how he picks from the stock of traditional metaphor the word or phrase that can recall within the ode itself, by repetition or contrast, an earlier context (e.g., *περιστέλλων*, 15; *ἐπιεσσόμενος*, 16; *ἀνδησάμενος*, 28; *δέδεται*, 45). The conventions of performance did not limit him (as they have some of his recent commentators) to a fixed vocabulary or a single technique of praise.³⁹

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³⁵ David C. Young, *Three Odes* (Leiden 1968) 35; *The Victory Ode* (n. 3) 145. Cf. *Pyth.* viii 78, where god (as opposed to man) 'throwing one man up high, another underhand, enters the contest at the measure', i.e. with control and balance; see Lefkowitz, '*Pyth.* 8' (n. 8) 215 n. 18.

³⁶ Lefkowitz, '*Pyth.* 8' (n. 8) 218.

³⁷ Cf. inscriptions commemorating athletes, which list only their successes; Ebert (n. 19) 19, 267 on no. 40.

³⁸ Cf. J. H. Finley, *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1955) 189: 'Pindar lingered in the untroubled view which lost the self in the surrounding world.' On the relation of Pindar's poetry to contemporary and subsequent literature, see *The Victory Ode* (n. 3) 34, 172–3.

³⁹ E.g. *κατεφυλλορόσηε*, *Ol.* xii 15; Nisetich (n. 32) 257–61. Cf. E. K. Borthwick, 'Zoologica Pindarica' in *CQ* xxvi (1976) 198–9.