THE EPINICIAN SPEAKER AS PRECEPTOR:

PINDAR'S *PYTHIAN* 2.72-96

J.R. Louw, University of the North

Text

72   γένοι᾽, οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών.
              καλός τοι πίθων παρὰ παισίν, αἰεὶ

       καλός. ὁ δὲ ῾Ραδάμανθυς εὖ πέπραγεν, ὅτι φρενῶν
       ἔλαχε καρπὸν ἀμώμητον, οὐδ᾽ ἀπάταισι θυ-
              μὸν τέρπεται ἔνδοθεν,
75   οἷα ψιθύρων παλάμαις ἕπετ᾽ αἰεὶ βροτῷ.
       ἄμαχον κακὸν ἀμφοτέροις διαβολιᾶν ὑποφάτιες,
       ὀργαῖς ἀτενὲς ἀλωπέκων ἴκελοι.
       κέρδει δὲ τί μάλα τοῦτο κερδαλέον τελέθει;
       ἅτε γὰρ ἐννάλιον πόνον ἐχοίσας βαθύν
80   σκευᾶς ἑτέρας, ἀβάπτιστος εἶμι φελ-
              λὸς ὣς ὑπὲρ ἕρκος ἅλμας.

       ἀδύνατα δ᾽ ἔπος ἐκβαλεῖν κραταιὸν ἐν ἀγαθοῖς
       δόλιον ἀστόν· ὅμως μὰν σαίνων ποτὶ πάντας ἄ-
              ταν πάγχυ διαπλέκει.
       οὔ οἱ μετέχω θράσεος. φίλον εἴη φιλεῖν·
       ποτὶ δ᾽ ἐχθρὸν ἅτ᾽ ἐχθρὸς ἐὼν λύκοιο
              δίκαν ὑποθεύσομαι,
85   ἄλλ᾽ ἄλλοτε πατέων ὁδοῖς σκολιαῖς.
       ἐν πάντα δὲ νόμον εὐθύγλωσσος ἀνὴρ προφέρει,
       παρὰ τυραννίδι, χὠπόταν ὁ λάβρος στρατός,
       χὤταν πόλιν οἱ σοφοὶ τηρέωντι. χρὴ
              δὲ πρὸς θεὸν οὐκ ἐρίζειν,

       ὃς ἀνέχει τοτὲ μὲν τὰ κείνων, τότ᾽ αὖθ᾽ ἑτέροις
              ἔδωκεν μέγα κῦδος. ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ταῦτα νόον
90   ἰαίνει φθονερῶν· στάθμας δέ τινες ἑλκόμενοι
       περισσᾶς ἐνέπαξαν ἕλ-
              κος ὀδυναρὸν ἑᾷ πρόσθε καρδίᾳ,

πρὶν ὅσα φροντίδι μητίονται τυχεῖν.
φέρειν δ᾽ ἐλαφρῶς ἐπαυχένιον λαβόντα ζυγόν
ἀρήγει· ποτὶ κέντρον δέ τοι
95   λακτιζέμεν τελέθει
ὀλισθηρὸς οἶμος· ἀδόν-
      τα δ᾽ εἴη με τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ὁμιλεῖν.

Translation

72   "Be what manner of man you have learned you are.
      Pretty indeed is the ape to children, always

Pretty. But Rhadamanthys has prospered, because he has gained
A blameless harvest of his mind, and does not delight
    in deceit
75   Which, by the cunning of whisperers, always pursues a man.
An irresistible evil to both are the purveyors of slander,
Utterly like foxes in their disposition.
But how then does subterfuge profit the fox?
Likewise the rest of the tackle labours in the depth
80   Of the sea, I am like a cork, unsubmerged
      above the swell of the sea.

But the deceitful citizen fails to voice an effective word
Among the noble: indeed, by fawning in the same way on all,
      he weaves his delusion completely.
I do not share his insolence. May it be to love my friend:
But I, being just like the enemy, shall secretly attack
      the enemy in the wolf's way,
85   But treading at another time my winding paths.
In each state the straightforward man excels,
Whether in a tyranny, or whensoever the noisy commons,
Or the wise, watch over the city. Man
      should not quarrel with god,

Who exalts then one group, then again to others
      gives great honour. But not even glory
90   Cheers the envious' mind: some, straining the measuring line
To the limit stick
    a painful wound to their heart,
Before they can attain what they devise in their mind.
It is better to bear lightly the yoke acquired
On one's neck: but to kick
95   against the pricks is
A slippery road. May it be mine
      to please, and to consort with noble men!"

The aim of this paper is twofold: (a) to employ some insights gained from literary theory on the speaker in a text, and to relate these to a particular controversial passage in Pindar; (b) to present a possible interpretation of the passage cited.

I

The first person in Pindar's victory odes has long been regarded within the parameters of the Biographic Method, with its pursuit of Romanticism, as the personal - often aggravated - expression of the historic poet Pindar. This has led, inevitably, to a situation where the literary merit of the odes was overlooked in favour of a search to reconstruct the life and times of Pindar.

The investigation into the nature and function of literary *personae* has also been a preoccupation of Structuralist poetics, and in particular that of narratology. The first person in a text, within these circles, is viewed as *one* possible manifestation[1] of the *speaker*,[2] viz. the narrating instance created by the author, which generates and produces a text (Genette 1980:212-215). The speaker should never be identified with the historic author, even though he or she might have the appearance of the author's "image" (Bakhtin 1984:90-92).[3]

In the past most studies on the speaker have centred around the question,"who is the intended referent?",[4] and not, "what is his function?" It is only recently that this latter question has arisen. Based on the speech acts, and acts of the epinician speaker (henceforth the E-speaker) Nancy Rubin ascribes certain roles, such as celebrator, commemorator, intercessor and others to this speaker (1984:377-397).[5] Therefore, in *Olympian* 6.1-3, the *communal speaker* - in the first person plural - reveals himself as the *composer*[6] of a victory ode in commemoration of Agesias' chariot victory. In 6.85-87 he again refers to this role: Θήβαν ..., τᾶς ἐρατεινὸν ὕδωρ πίομαι, ἀνδράσιν αἰχματαῖσι πλέκων ποικίλον ὕμνον ("Thebes ..., whose lovely water I drink, plaiting the multisonous song for

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[1]   First person, second person and third person narration presuppose a narrating instance, which can be identified as an "I". First person narration differs from the other voices only insofar as that in first person narration the "I" in the text coincides with the position of the speaker. We know intuitively that the speaker in the sentence, "I see Peter walking down the street" is an "I". Therefore: "(I say) I see Peter walking down the street". For the different signs of the "I" in a text, see Prince 1976.

[2]   Sometimes also called the narrator or enunciator.

[3]   Modern literary theory has, generally speaking, little room for the author when it comes to interpreting texts. Observe the title of one of Roland Barthes most famous essays in *Music-Image-Text*, "The Death of the Author" (1977).

[4]   The Biographic Method views the poet as speaking *in propria persona*; more recent studies emphasise a plurality of referents. Fräenkel (1975:475, note 12), for example, contends that the "I" may refer to the *victor* (*Isthmian* 7.49ff.), the *poet* (*Pythian* 7.18), the *chorus* (*Pythian* 5.75ff.) or an *Impersonal first person* which may pertain to every hearer/reader (*Pythian* 11.50ff.).

[5]   Both her indebtedness to, and differing with Propp's treatment of character analysis in Russian folk-tales are conspicious; whereas Propp (1968) identifies a limited number of actantial roles, a proliferation of speaker roles abound in Rubin.

[6]   Here the speaker compares his role as *composer* to that of architects building a palace.

spearmen").[7] The present paper, therefore, will focus on yet another socially determined role, viz. the speaker as preceptor in Pindar's *Pythian* 2.72-97.

II

Outwardly *Pythian* 2 displays the same thematic development as a Beethoven sonata: the exposition (vv.1-24) highlights the main theme of the ode, viz. the success of Hieron in the chariot race (vv.3-4); the development (vv.21-52) amplifies and contrasts Hieron's success by relating the mythical tale of Ixion, the supreme example of the brevity and frailty of human prosperity. The recapitulation (vv.52-96) again takes up the main theme, notably the laud due to the victor, but always against the setting of the development.[8]

The recapitulation, in turn, may be subdivided into two sections: the first section (vv.52-71; see footnote 8) features the *laud* of the victor, while the second (vv.72-96) focuses on the *actions* of the victor. Controversy exists with regard to the question whether verses 72-96 are even addressed to the victor; Bowra (1937:24) views these verses as a personal monologue, by the historical poet, directed at certain defamators[9] at Hieron's court. Gildersleeve (1885:254) regards verses 72-96 as essentially an "afterpiece", structurally akin to the dramatic dialogue (Δίκαιος Λόγος vs. Ἄδικος Λόγος) of comedy and satire. It is plain, however, that the narration of verses 72-96 takes place within the spatial and temporal confines of the narrator, already introduced at the start of the recapitulation as an "I" (cf. ἐμὲ δὲ χρεών φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν; "I must flee the violent bite of evil-speaking").[10] The fact that the ode is dedicated to Hieron on the occasion of his chariot victory at Pythia (vv.3-8), and that the issues arising from the ode should therefore reflect the primary intent and occasion, should preclude any attempt to equate the textual "I" with the historical poet Pindar.[11]

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[7] It should be observed that these roles are often expressions of the speaker's χρέος (social duty) towards his patron. This social duty arises both from the ancient conception that laudable deeds should be duly compensated, and the fact that commissioned poets such as Pindar were handsomely paid, by their patrons, for a victory ode!

[8] This is expressed in three subsections: verses 52-56: the necessity to praise; verses 57-67: the praise of the victor, and verses 67-71: accepting the praise.

[9] Both Woodbury (1945:11-30) and Burton (1962:111-134) are in agreement with Bowra on this issue, although Burton considers the last triad as addressing ordinary citizens (cf. παρὰ παισίν, v.72), or so-called "agents provocateurs" at the court of Hieron.

[10] This verse is riddled with interpretative questions: to whom does the "I" refer, to someone indefinite, or to the poet?; does the verse allude to any historical events? Bowra (1937:24) identifies the κακαγοριαί with the pernicious activities of slanderers at the court of Hieron, labouring to discredit the poet. Grimm (1962:1-9), following the lead of Bowra, even attempts to interpret δάκος as a metaphor for Bacchylides, who was to have joined others in slandering Pindar. In verse 52, however, the narrator reaffirms his role as commemorator by reiterating his social obligation (χρεός) to praise the victor. The evil-speaker is the negative counterpart of the commemorator, and prefigures Archilochus' invective poetry (vv.54-55).

[11] Sometimes the "I" approximates the historical poet in such an embarrassing way that it almost becomes the "image" of the poet. But as Bakhtin (1984:52) has rightly pointed out, the image is always a product (something produced and manipulated by the poet) and never a producer (the author who writes down a literary work of art).

In verse 72, the narrator addresses the victor now for the fifth time: the other occurrences are τύ ("you", v.57), σέ ("you", v.64), χαῖρε ("greeted", v.67) and ἄθρησον ("look upon!", v.70). The fact that all these apostrophes bear direct reference to the main theme, viz. the praise of the victor, should draw the reader's attention to the fact that the theme, albeit from a different angle, is introduced once more.

Controversy surrounds verse 72, γένοι,οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών, with respect to both its immediate constituents, meaning and translation. Thummer (1972:296) has shown, to worsen matters even further, that agreement on the immediate constituents does not necessarily lead to assent in meaning.

Depending on one's interpretation, the immediate constituents may be determined in three different ways:

(α) γένοι' οἷος ἐσσὶ / μαθών - "Show thyself who thou art, for I have taught it thee" (Gildersleeve 1885:264).

(β) γένοι' / οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών - "Be what you are having learned what you are" (Oats 1963: 382); "learn what you are and become such" (Mullen 1982:131).

(γ) μάθοιο καὶ γένοιο / οἷος ἐσσί - "O find, and be, yourself" (Bowra 1964:136); "learn and become what you are" (Lefkowitz 1976:25-26). So too, Carey (1981:50). The weakness of this proposal is that it accords equal importance to γένοιο and μαθών, while from the emphatic position of γένοιο it is so conspicuous that it is hard to overlook. Equally evident is the loosely connected μαθών, apparently without an object.

This troublesome verse, however, cannot be adequately discussed without observing the context in which it operates. Earlier, in verse 56, the narrator has said the following: τὸ πλουτεῖν δὲ σὺν τύχᾳ πότμου σοφίας ἄριστον ("to be wealthy with success which fate gives, is the finest wisdom").[12] The narrator emphasises not the mere possession of wealth, but a disposition towards wealth (not πλοῦτος, but πλουτεῖν; cf. Rankin 1975:254), *and* the involvement of one's πότμος ("destiny", "fate"; πότμου is here a genitive of source). Clearly, the gnome looks backwards and forwards: backwards, because it furnishes an appropriate conclusion to the Ixion myth; Ixion's γλυκὺν βίοτον ("sweet life", v.26) was clearly not his destiny, because through his own ὕβρις ("hybris") he obtained a ἀνάταν ὑπεράφανον ("overweening doom", v.28). Yet it also looks forward, because, as the narrator painstakingly points out in verses 57-67, destiny has indeed cast its eyes caringly on Hieron. This now leads the narrator to request Hieron himself to gaze favourably upon the present ode as a fair reward (vv.67-71).

Verse 72 now links up with the whole of verses 56-71; in particular the narrator invites the victor to show[13] himself to be the manner of man (= οἷος ἐσσί)[14] he has learned he is. The lessons Hieron has learned thus refer to his high (political) position and status as a stout-hearted soldier clearly emphasised in verses 56-67 (μαθών here connotes "now you have learned"). Clearly, the line is a reaffirmation of the old exhortation, γνῶθι σαυτόν ("know yourself").

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12   The translation rests upon Gerber's interpretation (1960:105). For an exhaustive and cogent treatment, yet offering a different conclusion, see Most 1985:47-71.

13   Observe the use of the aorist optative; the present situation requires a very specific response from the victor (Most 1985:103).

14   Cf. Carey 1981:50.

An analysis of the context therefore seems to favour an interpretation along the lines mentioned in (β). In the ensuing verses the narrator will, from his own perspective, *instruct* the victor in what kind of response (cf. γένοιο, v.72) is required. The *preceptive* intent of the narrator is already conspicuous in verse 72: earlier, rather ominously, the narrator has said of Ixion: ἔμαθε δὲ σαφές ("he learned clearly", v.25), and then continues to describe his ruin. Now, he refers to Hieron who has learned (μαθών).

The narrator's exhortation of the victor towards self-knowledge is reinforced by two examples, one negative (vv.72-73), the other positive (vv.73-74). The introduction of Rhadamanthys (vv.73-74) has a direct relation to the Ixion myth and the victor Hieron: unlike Ixion who has found his own "sweet life" (v.26) to be short-lived, Rhadamanthys receives prosperity without blame (φρενῶν ... καρπὸν ἀμώμητον, v.74). But, just as Hieron has learned about himself, Rhadamanthys is above reproach of deception. Ixion, on the other hand, is an ἄιδρις ἀνήρ ("ignorant man", v.37) who pursues a ψεῦδος γλυκύ ("sweet lie") thinking that he can escape the wrath of Zeus in his attempt to seduce Hera.

The image of the ape (vv.73-74) has elicited much commentary. The ape is often appreciated as an allegorical metaphor, because it apparently exposes some inherent defect[15] in men. The true contrast, however, is not between the ape and Rhadamanthys, but rather between the children and Rhadamanthys (Carey 1981:54). The children, who find the ape amusing (καλός), are utterly deceived in the end. Now compare Ixion, deceived by the δόλος ("trap") Zeus has set him, who also finds it καλός (vv.39-40).

The following unit, verses 76-80, links up and expands the saying of the evil-speakers in verse 52-53 ("I must flee the violent bite of evil-speaking"): "an irresistible evil are purveyors of slander to both, utterly like foxes in their disposition". The evil-speakers now have become διαβολιᾶν ὑποφάτιες ("purveyors of slander"). What is beginning to emerge is a complete contrast between the Honest Man and the Slanderer who defames and deceives. The narrator, Rhadamanthys, and Hieron by implication (observe the narrator's comment in verse 57,[16] following on verse 56), are the Honest Man; Ixion and the gullible children are the Slanderer. Observe also the different *modus operandi* of the narrator versus that of the slanderer: while his praise of the victor is open and unreserved (βουλαὶ δὲ πρεσβύτεραι ἀκίνδυνον ἐμοὶ ἔπος σέ ποτὶ πάντα λόγον ἐπαινεῖν παρέχοντι "your elder councils grant me a fearless word to praise you with regard to every statement", v.66), the slanderer engages himself in whispering (the slanderer is a ψιθύρος, v.75), secrecy[17] and futile cunning.[18] The narrator and his allies, however, stand aloof above the slyness,

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15   Bowra regards the ape as an image for the imitator; the children, delighted by the ape's antics, refer therefore to those admirers of Bacchylides at Hieron's court (1937:9-10). For Burton the ape is the mischief-maker, the deceiver; the children are then Pindar's slanderers (1962:126-127).

16   τὺ δὲ σάφα νιν ἔχεις ἐλευθέρᾳ φρενὶ πεπαρεῖν "you can clearly manifest this with a free mind".

17   The preposition ὑπο- in ὑποφάτιες most likely denotes concealment (Carey 1981:56). See also Most's discussion of the contrast between openness and concealment (1985:109-111).

18   The "purveyors of slander", having the propensity (ὀργή, v.77) of foxes, reckon that their secretive dealings might be "profitable" (κερδαλέος, v.78); yet, their own actions prove to be an "irresistible evil" to themselves and the victim (ἀμφοτέροις include the slanderer and victim; Thummer 1972:299-300). Observe that the ruin of both the διαβολιᾶν ὑποφάτιες and Archilochus (vv.54-56) is self-inflicted; Archilochus, "battening on his own hate vented in words", is "in distress" (ἐν ἀμαχανίᾳ).

underhandedness of the Slanderer: ἀβάπτισμος εἶμι φελλὸς ὣς ὑπὲρ ἕρκος ἅλμας ("I am unsubmerged like a cork above the swell of the sea").

In the next unit, verses 81-88, the narrator advises the victor on the appropriate action to be taken in the political sphere. That we have indeed moved into the discourse of politics is obvious from the narrator's mentioning of the δόλιον ἀστόν ("deceitful citizen", v.82) and the different forms of government (vv.86-88).[19] The true contrast here is between the "deceitful citizen", who is unable to voice an "effective word" (ἔπος κραταιόν, v.81), and the ungullible ἀγαθοί ("the noble", v.81).[20] The "deceitful citizen", unable to impress the "noble", continues on his way of self-deception: "indeed, he weaves his delusion together by fawning in the same way upon all".[21]

The fitting response of the "noble" towards the "deceitful citizen" is phrased within the parameters of archaic morality (vv.83-85): as Adkins (1960:31ff., 46ff., 166ff.) rightly points out, archaic morality, in deciding ethical behaviour, does not take into account the *intention*, but rather the *end result*, of such behaviour. The deceiver is not at fault because he is intent on deceiving, but because he acts in the same way in all circumstances. The ἀγαθός, on the other hand, may use deceptive means and will still be considered as ἀγαθός, if he gives due consideration to the result of his action.

Indeed, because the narrator senses that the exigencies of the present situation call for action that befits his social duty towards his patron, he openly gratifies the claim: "may it be to love my friend: but the enemy, being just like the enemy, I shall secretly attack in the way of a wolf, but at another time treading my winding paths". The narrator's use of the wolf image does not imply that he has lost his head, as Farnell says (1932:131), but that he will act in the direct and open way of the wolf or the εὐθύγλωσσος ἀνήρ (Woodbury 1945:25) in order to fulfil his χρεός. The slanderer and the deceitful citizen, of course, not realising what is expected of them, continue to weave their delusion complete (v.82).

Previously, the narrator instructed the victor on how to act in very specific spheres of life; in the last subsection, verses 88-96, the narrator describes man's place in the cosmos controlled by god. The universal validity of the narrator's warning in verse 88b (χρὴ δὲ πρὸς θεὸν οὐκ ἐρίζειν "man must not quarrel against god") confirms now that the purveyors of slander (v.76) and deceitful citizen were all negative examples of people denying god as the ruler of destinies. The notion god that rules the destiny of man is not only central to the oeuvre of Pindar, but is also built into the structure of *Pythian* 2.[22] Acceptance of this notion (i.e. god as ruler of destinies) should usually "cheer the mind" (νόον ἰαίνειν, v.90),

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[19] Bowra (1964:137) contends that these verses bear witness to a Pindaric preference for a specific form of government, viz. "the aristocratic society of the 'wise', because Pindar describes democracy with ὁ λάβρος στρατός which Bowra translates with "the brute multitude". λάβρος is more likely to refer to the din in the assembly, and, therefore, does not suggest any disparagement of democracy as such (Lloyd-Jones 1973:112, n.17, but contra Carey 1981:60). Moreover, in verse 86, ἐν πάντα νόμον εὐθύγλωσσος ἀνὴρ προφέρει ("in each state the straightforward man excels") the narrator specifically precludes any interpretation inviting contempt for democracy.

[20] We should refrain from taking the narrow view that the "noble" only refer to the aristocracy of Pindar's time. Here the term merely refers to those individuals who oppose the devious ways of the Slanderer.

[21] Most's translation of ὁμῶς μὴν σαίνων ποτὶ πάντας ἄταν πάγχυ διαπλέκει (1985:113-114).

[22] For a detailed discussion of *Pythian* 2's structure, see Louw (1985:24-27).

but (observe the contrastive ἀλλά, v.89) not that of the φθονεροί ("the envious", v.90). Because they strive for what is beyond their state, they destroy themselves (vv.91-92).[23]

Verses 92-94a recall the gist of verse 72: man must accept his τύχη in life. Anything else amounts to rebellion against god's rule. The narrator now concludes the victory ode with a prayer: "may it be mine to consort with noble men, and to please them!" (v.96). It is, however, a petition to the god, not only for the well-being of the narrator, but, most important, for the victor; that he may continue to evince himself as an ἀγαθὸς ἀνήρ.

III

It is thus clear from the aforesaid that verses 72-96 contain specific *instructions* of the narrator to the *laudandus* on how to fulfil his role as victor in the games. These precepts, however, are so generally phrased that they equally apply to the narrator, and, for that matter, to the hearer as well. The principal opposition in verses 72-96 is between the narrator/victor, who present themselves as the Straightforward Ones, and the Deceiver.

Verses 72-74 expound the idea that human prosperity is inextricably linked to man's self-knowledge in respect to the limits of his mortal existence. To strive for what is beyond these limits amounts to self-deception. In verses 76-80 and 81-88 the narrator amplifies the nature of the deceiver. The deceiver, firstly, engages in "whispering" while steering clear of unreserved praise (vv.76-80), and, secondly, fails to recognise the duties imposed on men by the particular circumstances (vv.81-88). The narrator, realising that the failure of the deceiver only leads towards self-destruction (verse 82), gratifies his χρέος towards his patron (vv.83-85).

The last subsection, verses 88-96, recalls and extends the theme expounded in verse 72: knowledge of the limits imposed on men by our mortal existence is not sufficient; man should also recognise the governance of the god in the cosmos. However, verses 88-96 complete, thematically, a ring composition introduced by verse 2 in embryonic form, when the narrator pointed out that the god Ares was instrumental in establishing the glory of Syracuse.

Verses 88-96, in my view, touch upon the main theme of *Pythian* 2: human prosperity is inconceivable without the assistance of the god. Within this theme verses 72ff. provide a necessary corollary: prosperity is equally inconceivable without knowledge of oneself.

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23   Verses 91 and 92 contain two images respectively, that of the measuring line (στάθμη) which is drawn too tight, and of the sword or spear with which the envious destroy themselves (Carey 1981:60-1).

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