

Introduction

As an Athenian statesman in the sixth century B.C., Solon enacted legislative reforms which ended the exclusive political control of the aristocracy in Athens. His legislation began a process which culminated in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century. As a poet, Solon is the first Athenian (and the *only* Athenian until Aeschylus) whose compositions have survived from antiquity. His poetry marks a starting point on both a political and a literary level, and, at the same time, a starting point that must be understood in the context of the intense poetic activity elsewhere in Greece which both preceded and coincided with his own efforts. There is a need, therefore—although Solon's verses have certainly not suffered from scholarly neglect—for a re-examination of his poetry in the context of archaic ethical and political thought. Neither his position nor his contribution has been sufficiently determined.

Solon was appointed Chief Archon at Athens for the year 594/593 B.C. during a period of acute conflict between the noble ruling families and the impoverished peasants, many of whom had already been reduced to debt slavery. Fearing the possibility of a general uprising and the installation of a popular tyrant, the nobles appear to have been willing to make certain concessions. Although Solon was born into a noble family, he was not himself wealthy. He was perceived as a moderate, and yet, remarkably, each faction apparently expected him to protect its interests.

Solon was not a revolutionary. He did not redistribute the land, as many of the populace undoubtedly wished, nor did he make himself tyrant, as might have been expected. Instead, he instituted an unprecedented set of economic and political reforms. The former, called the *Seisachtheia* 'shaking off of burdens', cancelled existing debts (either all debts, or only those secured by the person of the borrower), abolished the use of personal security for debts, and freed those already

enslaved under such contracts. The *Seisachtheia* further abolished the terms of serfdom under which peasants were obligated to pay landowners one sixth (or, possibly, five sixths) of their annual produce. Solon combined these reforms with others intended to ease Athens' economic troubles by promoting trade and industry.

His constitutional reforms were even more innovative. He divided the citizenry into four classes based on yearly income and ascribed political responsibilities accordingly, with the two highest classes entitled to hold the highest political offices. The lowest class gained voting power in the general assembly (*Ekklesia*), whose activities Solon was probably the first to delineate. It is also likely that Solon established a Council of Four Hundred with probouleutic functions. By substituting wealth for birth as the criterion for political office, Solon ended the nobles' exclusive control of political power. In addition, he granted to all citizens the right of appeal to popular courts (*Heliaia*), thus freeing them from the arbitrary decisions of noble magistrates. He also created a new, more humane law code to replace the severe code of Draco except in cases of homicide.

Although democracy was as yet unimagined, Solon's reforms must be seen as the first pre-requisites for it. How did he come to these ideas? On what understanding of human nature and of the problems of communal existence must he have based his decisions? Our knowledge of the details of Solon's life and work is sketchy and open to various interpretations. The earliest biographical accounts were probably not written until the fourth century B.C. Later ancient accounts, based upon these, are riddled with puzzling inconsistencies and frustrating omissions.¹ Thus, our best source of information about Solon's thought remains Solon's own poetry. Only his own verses can reveal the way in which he took traditional forms and ideas and transformed them into the novel bases for radically new political structures, thus setting the stage for democracy.

1. The earliest accounts were based upon Solon's poems, surviving fragments of his law code, and on oral tradition. Surviving are extended (often conflicting) accounts drawn from these earliest sources. These were written by Aristotle, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, and Diogenes Laertius. Solon is also mentioned by Herodotus, Plato, Demosthenes, Aristides, and others.

For detailed modern studies of Solon's life and work, see: K. Freeman, *The Life and Work of Solon* (London, 1926); I. Linforth, *Solon the Athenian* (Berkeley, 1919); W. J. Woodhouse, *Solon the Liberator* (London, 1938).

The problems which confront the literary and intellectual historian exist on three levels. They derive, first, from Solon's general uninformative about his political program, second, from the continued uncertainty as to where to place him in an assessment of the Greek moral consciousness, and, third, from the difficulty of adequately evaluating his poetic achievement. The persistence of scholarly disagreement in spite of extensive examination testifies to the difficulty of finding a practicable approach to Solon's poetry. A more unified, thematic approach is needed, one that resists creating artificial distinctions between poems and seeks not simply to understand Solon as a moralist but to examine his general position as an Athenian politician and poet.

As political history or as treatises of political theory, Solon's poems are decidedly cryptic and uninformative, at least to the modern reader. But since, as a statesman, Solon is a figure of considerable historical importance, scholars have, understandably, sought to find in his poetry descriptions, explanations, and clarifications of his political actions and views. The results of such inquiries have been dissatisfying. Solon's statements seem straightforward on the surface but perplexing when examined more closely. One critic comments that Solon's verses "speak to us in terms that seem to bear their meaning on their face, but prove on closer scrutiny to carry no really intelligible, certainly no indubitable, significance."² If, as seems probable, the lack of specificity is due neither to accident nor to deliberate selection by later authors, one might well conclude that Solon employed generalities because his verses were designed for his contemporaries.³ Yet, granted that the details of Solon's legislative achievements are likely to remain forever disputable, one may still ask why Solon would choose to address his contemporaries in generalities, and whether the modern reader should be so reluctant to suspect that Solon had a desire to address posterity as well.

If Solon's poems are frustrating to the historian, they are not less so to the literary critic. Little of his poetic achievement survives, and the surviving sample is sadly fragmentary. One consequence of this is that in comparison with the work of other poets whose work has been better preserved, Solon's poetic efforts tend to be overshadowed. Often, in studies of archaic thought, his verses come to provide a context for

2. Woodhouse, *Solon the Liberator*, pp. 9-10.

3. Woodhouse, *Solon the Liberator*, pp. 12-13.

examination of other poets, rather than a focus for examination in their own right. Not surprisingly, there is as little consensus of opinion about the significance of his poetic activity as there is about the interpretation of his ethical and political theories.

The lack of agreement as to the substance of Solon's ethical and political contribution makes it difficult to assess his position in the Greek moral consciousness. Scholars debate heatedly Solon's position in the development of archaic thought. The question of development is itself controversial. Some literary critics reject the view that the ethical conceptions manifest in Homer or Hesiod are significantly different from a modern, post-Kantian understanding of morality. But neither they nor those who argue in favor of a developmental process agree as to Solon's contribution. Some ascribe to him a virtually modern ethical viewpoint, seeing in his verses reference to concepts of moral responsibility,⁴ universal truths, immanent laws binding communities,⁵ and moral self-consciousness.⁶ In contrast, other scholars do not consider Solon's ethical conceptions to be significantly different from those of Homer or Hesiod. They see little difference between his conception of *Dikē* 'Justice' and Hesiod's,⁷ and reject the view that his imagery depicts universal ethical truths or adds significantly to the ethical contributions of Homer and Hesiod.⁸ According to this view,

4. Thus W. Jaeger describes his "dynamic didactic ethos which lays hold of men as responsible agents" ("Solons Eunomie," in *Five Essays*, translated by A. M. Fiske [Montreal, 1966], p. 88).

5. In Jaeger's view, the "recognition of the universal truth that every community is bound by immanent laws implies that every man is a responsible moral agent with a duty to be done" (*Paideia*, translated by G. Highet, vol. I [New York, 1939], p. 143).

6. According to F. Will, Solon's "self-consciousness is distinctively moral and radiates an appeal to moral self-consciousness in other men" ("Solon's Consciousness of Himself," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 89 [1958], p. 311).

7. A. W. H. Adkins comments that "Hesiod's *Dikē* 'Justice' complains to Zeus, whereas Solon's silently punishes on her own account; but we are in the same world of thought" (*Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists* [Chicago and London, 1985], p. 117).

8. In the opinion of E. A. Havelock, Solon's imagery contains no "conceptual grasp of a profound moral and cosmic principle" and "his elegies make no conceptual contribution which carries one beyond Hesiod" (*The Greek Concept of Justice From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato* [Cambridge, Mass., 1978], p. 262).

Solon's poems reveal that inherited traditional concepts could easily be applied to situations occurring in the new *polis* 'city-state' of his time.⁹

Some literary critics reject both the opinion that Solon's ethical views are essentially modern and the conclusion that his doctrines come directly from Hesiod and from Homer. These scholars adopt an intermediate position, recognizing that Solon opposes greed for wealth and power not with a conscience which reminds one of one's duty—since the conscience as such did not exist yet—but rather with concern for reputation, that is, respect for public opinion.¹⁰ Perhaps because the text is so fragmentary, it can be (and has been) interpreted to support such widely differing conclusions. The range of opinion indicates the need for a re-examination of Solon's poetry in the appropriate context.

That context will, inevitably, include not only archaic thought, but poetry in its formal, stylistic, and occasional aspects. The tendency to neglect Solon's achievement in that area may, in part, be a further consequence of the loss of most of his work. Much critical debate reveals an interpretive bias in favor of viewing him as primarily a statesman and political thinker rather than as a poet.¹¹ It has been argued that, in fact, Solon is neither a true philosopher, in that he does not construct a closed system, nor a true poet, in that he does not create a new world of thought and form.¹² Be that as it may, Solon, at least, seems to have considered *himself* a true poet, inasmuch as he sought to make a permanent contribution to political and ethical discourse in Athens, a contribution over and above the immediate political value of his efforts. This point is essential to a re-examination

9. Although he is far from sharing Adkins' position, H. Lloyd-Jones makes this argument and insists: "Jaeger's attempt to mark him off from his predecessors by drawing delicate distinctions seems to me to be a failure" (*The Justice of Zeus* [Berkeley, 1971], p. 169). He concludes that "it is no disparagement of the achievement of the great statesman and political thinker to point out that the doctrines he puts forward come to him from Hesiod and from Homer" (*The Justice of Zeus*, p. 45).

10. H. Fränkel makes this argument (*Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* [New York, 1951] p. 297). E. R. Dodds explains that a shame culture acquires elements of guilt culture only through the internalization of conscience, which does not occur until late in the Hellenic world (*The Greeks and the Irrational* [Berkeley, 1951], pp. 36–37).

11. Lloyd-Jones' comment (note 9 above) is a good example.

12. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, p. 313.

of his ethical, political, and social vocabulary, as well as the similes and metaphors he employs. Comparison of his usage with that of Homer, Hesiod, and other poets of the period down to, but not including, Aeschylus reveals not only Solon's sensitivity to the relationship between the individual and the community, but also his acute awareness of his own poetic activity, of the relationship between poet and audience, and of the social purposes of his poetry. Examination of his understanding of these issues facilitates appreciation of the extent of his contribution to the problems posed by the concept of community.

In seeking to appreciate Solon's contribution, rigid distinctions between periods and types are likely to be as unhelpful as distinctions between 'Solon the statesman' and 'Solon the poet'. It is, for example, limiting to divide Solon's poetry into categories such as "early" vs. "late"; "political" vs. "not political"; or "general (or religio-ethical or political) theory" vs. "self-explanation." Such categories limit interpretation because they limit the possibilities for comparing Solon's poems with one another and with other poems of the archaic period. So much of archaic poetry failed to survive; it seems a shame not to make full use of what little is available to us. To the modern reader, Solon's poetry often appears vague and puzzling. The only hope for understanding both its emotional impact and its political import lies in examining it in its archaic context, free from artificially and anachronistically imposed distinctions.

Even obvious categories based on metrical distinctions have their pitfalls. The difference between epic and lyric poetry, vast as it is, need not obscure the fact that all poets drew on Homeric poetry, that epic poetry informs lyric. In regard to modes of poetic composition, there is significant continuity between epic and lyric poetry, and oral compositional techniques were, arguably, used in lyric poetry as well as in epic.¹³ In any case, whether Solon composed orally or in writing, it is impossible to imagine his composing without assimilating and responding to other poetry of his period and earlier, without drawing

13. B. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, translated by A. T. Cole, (Baltimore, 1988), pp. 19–21. G. Nagy provides ample support for this view, arguing persuasively against the assumption that archaic Greek poetry required the medium of writing for its performance and composition. Nagy differentiates oral *poetry* (dactylic hexameter, elegiac distich, iambic trimeter) from *song* (optionally accompanied by *aulos* 'reed' or *kithara* 'lyre') and argues that the former actually derives from the latter (*Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* [Baltimore, 1990], especially c. 1).

upon familiar themes and associations and manipulating their emotional resonances and social purposes.

In the case of elegy and iambus, it is important to remember that meter never fully determined subject matter. Elegiac meter was undoubtedly employed for diverse themes and functions, and what was considered "iambic" subject matter, the poetry of blame as against the poetry of praise, could also be treated in a variety of meters, including elegy and hexameter.¹⁴ The antithesis between praise and blame, which has been shown to be powerfully pervasive in archaic thought,¹⁵ found expression in diverse meters. More important than such traditional associations was the occasional or non-occasional character of the poetry. Epic poetry contains praise (or blame) of people and events from the past; occasional poetry accords praise or blame to people of the moment. One consequence of this difference is that, unlike narrative poetry, occasional poetry at times requires a certain tact or veiling of language depending upon the composition of the audience. Solon manipulates many of the poetic traditions associated with praise and blame in reassessing the relationship between poet and audience. Although his attitudes about the social function of poetry and of the poet derive from traditional archaic views, he must adapt them to fit a new political situation. Traditional poetry is designed, by and large, to serve the needs of small, cohesive (and exclusive) groups of *philoi* 'friends'; Solon seeks to create poetry that will serve the needs of the *polis* as a whole.

Each of the three chapters which follow examines one of the three largest surviving fragments of Solon's poetry (Poems 13, 4, and 36 respectively).¹⁶ All three poems share important themes and preoccupations. All three emphasize Solon's consciousness of his role as a poet, his understanding of the causal connections between actions and their consequences, and his assessment of human nature and the problems of communal existence.

14. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, pp. 33–34, and 109. And see M. L. West's discussion in *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* [Berlin and New York, 1974], especially pp. 4, 7, and 22–24.

15. M. Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris, 1981), pp. 18–25.

16. All references to and quotations of Solon's poetry will be from M. L. West's edition, *Iambi et elegi Graeci*, vol. II (Oxford, 1972).

Chapter 1 discusses Poem 13, probably the most difficult of Solon's extant poems. Is this a single, unified work? Does the invocation to the Muses relate to the rest of the poem and, if so, in what way? The question is more than merely academic since upon it must rest full appreciation of the content of Solon's message. Pursuit of this question will reveal Solon's innovative interpretation of crucial terms in the invocation, namely *Mnēmosunē* 'Memory', *olbos* 'prosperity', and *doxa* 'expectation' or 'reputation'. The novel emphases that Solon gives to these traditional terms clarify later transitions in the poem. Exploring the relationship between human actions and human fortunes, Solon finds in human nature the key to the form that human fortunes take. In so doing, he challenges, in subtle and unexpected ways, unexamined acceptance of conventional goals of human achievement in general and of poetic *sophiē* 'skill' or 'wisdom' in particular.

Chapter 2 examines Solon's Poem 4. In contrast to poem 13, which scholars tend to classify as "ethical," Poem 4 is generally considered "political" and, as a result, examined under a different microscope. Nevertheless, thematic similarities between the two poems are marked. Both stress the value of intellectual understanding, human responsibility for human fortunes, and optimism and insatiability as elements of human nature. Although Poem 4 identifies the interrelationship between individuals in the *polis*, the responsibility of individuals for the consequences of their own actions, and the interdependence between individual fortunes and the fortunes of the *polis* as a whole, the poem is vague and unenlightening when read simply as "political theory." What is Solon actually advocating? How is the modern reader to interpret *Eunomiē* 'good order'? Examined as to its language, imagery and emotional impact, however, the poem becomes far more informative. In this chapter it will be seen that Solon shares with other poets the recognition that the relationship between individual satisfaction and communal harmony is problematic, but questions the language and imagery traditionally employed to address the problem. His use of words such as *episkopos* 'guardian', *koros* 'satiety', and *euphrosunē* 'festivity' simultaneously recalls and re-evaluates conventional ideals of communal organization and of the role of poetry in the furthering of communal harmony. Poem 4 thus reveals, as does Poem 13, both Solon's awareness of the traditional attitudes and functions of poetic composition and the novelty of his own vision.

In Chapter 3 it will be seen that Poem 36 explores many of the same themes as Poem 4 and presents a similar problem. As in Poem 4, here,

too, Solon acknowledges the dire threat of enslavement, the direct responsibility of human beings for the consequences of their actions, and the sensitive relationship between the individual and the community. While Poem 4 considers the possibilities for conflict and resolution in the relationship between citizens of the *polis*, Poem 36 reveals Solon's view of himself and his own relationship to his fellow citizens and to his city. But, just as Poem 4 seems vague as political theory, Poem 36 seems unaccountably abstract if it is read merely as a defense of Solon's political actions. The poem contains frustratingly little reference to the specifics of his legislative reforms. It concludes, moreover, with a surprising simile, explicable only by reference to other similes and metaphors in Solon's poetry as well as to the connotations of its terms in epic poetry and the poetry of praise and blame. In voicing his understanding of his own relationship to his fellow citizens, Solon expresses the interconnection between his political and his poetic activity. Far more than simply a defense of his political program, the poem invites scrutiny of the act of poetic composition itself and of the way in which that act may, in fact, be Solon's most successful *political* achievement.

The modern reader needs to overcome the perhaps natural temptation to view Solon as a statesman who happened to compose poetry as a convenient means of disseminating his views. Rather, one may recognize that in composing his verses, Solon considered himself a poet,¹⁷ who happened, perhaps, also to be a statesman. That is, he considered that his primary function in demonstrating his *sophiē* 'skill' or 'wisdom' was to transmit and improve upon traditional wisdom, whatever the subject of his discourse.

17. In justification of my title, *Solon the Singer*, I cite Plato *Timaeus* 21b. In this passage, Critias describes contests in which boys recited the poems of well-known poets and many boys sang (*aoidō* 'sing') the poems of Solon.

Chapter Two

Poem 4: Poetry and Community

The themes that Solon emphasizes in Poem 13 occur elsewhere in his extant poetry and are perhaps particularly visible in the two next largest poems, 4 and 36. Scholars have been reluctant to view Poem 4 in the same light as Poem 13, considering the former "later" in Solon's career,¹ and "political" rather than purely "ethical."² And yet, as already suggested, given the scarcity of Solon's extant poetry, such distinctions, although not untenable, may obstruct rather than promote clear understanding of his views. Undue emphasis on distinctions between the two poems may impede recognition of themes stressed in both.³ Although poem 4 treats Solon's political ideology more exhaustively than poem 13, Athenian literature is more or less always occupied with the problem of political organization.⁴ Moreover, consideration of Poem 4 as "political" has led scholars to identify important Hesiodic parallels and one striking Homeric precursor, but may have contri-

1. E.g. M. Croiset, "La morale et la cité dans les poésies de Solon," *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Comptes Rendus* (1903), pp. 583ff.

2. E.g. F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1949), p. 112. W. Jaeger thinks that both Poem 13 and Poem 4 must date from an early period in Solon's life, but argues that Poem 4 is in a middle position between "those poems which are political in a narrower sense (where Solon takes a stand against the disastrous behavior of the political factions and leaders of his native city or where he justifies his own official line of action), and the pure reflection of the 'Prayer to the Muses'" ("Solon's Eunomia," in *Five Essays*, translated by A. M. Fiske [Montreal, 1966], p. 81).

3. Jaeger does acknowledge that "although he does not say so explicitly, all his words and deeds give the impression that his whole political effort was inspired by a religious-political philosophy of life" ("Solon's Eunomia", p. 81).

4. A. Masaracchia, *Solone* (Florence, 1958), p. 246.

buted to the neglect of other archaic parallels which provide the necessary context for Solon's views. Poem 4 shares with both epic poetry and the genre of praise-blame poetry its pre-occupation with the problem of consumption and the requirement of society that it be regulated. Examination of Poem 4 in this context reveals Solon's awareness that the traditional language and imagery no less than the traditional solutions offered by other poets are inadequate. Where these are inherently exclusionary, Solon recognizes that his poetry, like his polis, needs to include all members of society. In attempting to resolve the political conflict in Athens, Solon was battling not only political realities but poetic conventions as well.

Important thematic similarities exist between Poem 4 and Poem 13. Both, for example, stress the value of intellectual understanding. Just as in Poem 13, in his conception of success and good reputation for an individual, Solon includes the knowledge of the causal connections between specific actions and their consequences, so, too, in Poem 4 he emphasizes the necessity of this knowledge for the well-being of a community. The troubles threatening the survival of the polis are the result of intellectual failings on the part of the inhabitants.⁵ The *astoi*

5. In this context, one may contrast Theognis 833–836:

πάντα τάδ' ἐν κοράκεσσι καὶ ἐν φθόρῳ· οὐδέ τις ἦμιν
αἴτιος ἀθανάτων Κύρνε θεῶν μακάρων,
ἀλλ' ἀνδρῶν τε βίη καὶ κέρδεα δειλὰ καὶ ὕβρις
πολλῶν ἐξ ἀγαθῶν ἐς κακότητ' ἔβαλεν.

All these things have gone to the ravens and to ruin,
nor is any one of the blessed immortal gods the cause of it for us, Kyrnos,
but the violence of men and their miserable profits and reckless arrogance
have thrown us from much good into evil.

Both Solon and Theognis attribute the cause of the destruction to men in contrast to gods, but whereas Theognis describes a *fait accompli*, Solon is detailing a future possibility: that is, the hope remains that destruction may still be averted. Moreover, Theognis blames the *biē* 'violence', *kerdea* 'profits', and *hubris* 'reckless arrogance' of men. In contrast, Solon blames *aphradia* 'folly', *hērēmata* 'property', and *hubris* 'reckless arrogance'. The second and third terms are parallel, but the first are not. Solon is emphasizing the intellectual limitations of human beings. (He continues: οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται 'for they do not understand'.) The problem is not *biē* by and of itself but the way in which it is used. Compare, for example, Solon's claim in Poem 36 that:

'citizens' are willing to destroy the city *aphradiēs*in 'by folly' (4.5–6), and δήμου θ' ἡγεμόνων ἄδικος νόος 'the mind of the leaders of the people is unjust' (4.7). The difficulty is that

οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται κατέχειν κόρον οὐδὲ παρούσας
εὐφροσύνας κοσμεῖν δαιτὸς ἐν ἡσυχίῃ
(Solon 4.9–10)

they do not know how to restrain their greed [*koros*], nor
how to order their present festivities in the peacefulness of the
banquet.

In contrast, *Dikē* 'Justice' is characterized by her knowledge for

ἡ σιγῶσα σύνοιδε τὰ γινόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα
(Solon 4.15)

silent, she knows about what is happening and what has happened.

Solon seems to share the traditional archaic view which considers as intellectual deficiencies what we might term "moral" failings.⁶

Dikē vs. prōtē

ταῦτα μὲν κράτει
ὁμοῦ βίην τε καὶ δίκην ξυναρμόσας
ἔρεξα
(Solon 36.15–17)

I did these things
by my power, joining together force [*biē*] and justice [*dikē*].

6. See, for example, W. S. Barrett regarding *Hippolytus* 377–381. Barrett explains that "Greek usage does not distinguish the intellectual from the moral and volitional faculties of the mind, and commonly describes moral attitudes, etc. in the same words that it uses for intellectual ones: e.g. γνώμη here, 427, 1304; γινώσκω 380; ἐπίσταμαι 380, 996; φρονεῖν 378, 920; νοῦς 920" (Euripides, *Hippolytus*, edited by W. S. Barrett [Oxford, 1964], pp. 227–228). See also E. R. Dodds regarding the archaic "habit of explaining character or behavior in terms of knowledge." Dodds maintains that, as a consequence, "the so-called Socratic paradoxes, that 'virtue is knowledge,' and that no one does wrong on purpose," were no novelties, but an explicit generalized formulation of what had long been an ingrained habit of thought" (*The Greeks and the Irrational* [Berkeley, 1951], pp. 16–17).

In emphasizing the importance of intellectual understanding, Poem 4, like Poem 13, acknowledges the extent to which human beings contribute to the form that their own fortunes may take, stressing the knowledge of predictable and direct relationships between specific actions and their consequences.⁷ As discussed in Chapter 1 above, Poem 13 explores in some detail the way in which human beings participate in the shaping of their own destiny, and in Poem 4, responsibility is transferred emphatically from gods to men.⁸

Both poems also perceive optimism and insatiability as elements of human nature. In Poem 13, Solon suggests that human optimism is independent of actual circumstances and leads to incessant human activity in all its diverse forms as σπεύδει δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος 'one rushes off in one direction, another in another' (13.43). Moreover, the desire for wealth is insatiable, since

πλούτου δ' οὐδὲν τέρμα πεφασμένον ἀνδράσι κεῖται·
οἱ γὰρ νῦν ἡμέων πλείστον ἔχουσι βίον,
διπλάσιον σπεύδουσι· τίς ἂν κορέσειεν ἅπαντας;
(Solon 13.71–73)

Of wealth no limit lies visible for men;
for those of us who now have the most property
strive with double zeal; who could satisfy all?

In Poem 4 Solon also links the optimism and insatiability of human nature, maintaining that

αὐτοὶ δὲ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἀφραδίησιν
ἄστοι βούλονται χρήμασι πειθόμενοι
(Solon 4.5–6)

But the citizens themselves, persuaded by money, are willing
to destroy this great city by their folly,

and that

οὔθ' ἱερῶν κτεάνων οὔτε τι δημοσίων
φειδόμενοι κλέπτουσιν ἀφαρπαγῇ ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος
(Solon 4.12–13)

7. Specifically: unjust actions and the dire consequences which result directly from the actions themselves, not through divine intervention.

8. H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (New York, 1951), p. 293.

sparing neither possessions that are sacred nor those belonging to the public,
they steal rapaciously from every direction.

In their ignorance and, by implication, their optimism, the citizens of the polis are unaware of the danger they are risking, and Solon must insist that δημόσιον κακὸν ἔρχεται οἴκαδ' ἐκάστωι 'the public evil comes homeward to each man' (4.26).

Such thematic similarities between Poem 4 and Poem 13 indicate that rigid categorization of the former as part of Solon's "political" poetry is unhelpful. The label "political" itself adds little to one's understanding of the poem. Poem 4 has been called "the program of a reformer,"⁹ but as political theory the poem is remarkably vague. Thus, for example, *astoi* 'citizens' (6), *khrēmata peithomenoi* 'persuaded by money' or 'trusting in money' (6), *eluthe* 'comes' (18), *doulosunēn* 'slavery' (18), and *hē* 'which' (19), are all ambiguous in their reference.¹⁰ The poem's lack of specificity as political theory encourages one to seek archaic antecedents which scholars have neglected, passages with comparable themes, emotional overtones, and social function.

Many have noted similarities between Poem 4 and passages of Homer and Hesiod. Several compare the opening lines of Solon's poem with Zeus' speech in the first book of the *Odyssey* (1.32–43).¹¹ Arguably, the antithesis between *theoi* 'gods' and *autoi* 'themselves', that is, *anthrōpoi* 'men', and the assertion of human rather than divine responsibility for human fortunes recalls Zeus' speech, and perhaps the causal motif of the passage in the *Odyssey* was Solon's model.¹²

9. U. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Aristoteles und Athen*, vol. II (Berlin, 1893), p. 307.

10. A. W. H. Adkins, noting these examples, explains that "the pervasive, deliberate ambiguities are produced by linguistic skill, not ineptitude." He concludes that the poem is neither history nor political theory, but rather "a work of rhetoric concerned to persuade via emotive language, not to convey precise information" (*Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists* [Chicago and London, 1985], pp. 113–124).

11. Jaeger, "Solon's Eunomia," pp. 82–84. See also: Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, pp. 293–294; C. M. Bowra, *Early Greek Elegists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), p. 78; Adkins, *Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, p. 113.

12. Jaeger, "Solon's Eunomia," pp. 82–84. Jaeger also stresses the importance of foreknowledge in both passages, which makes the human individual responsible.

Hesiodic elements in Solon's poem have received even more attention. The opening language of the poem seems to show Homeric influence, but the succeeding lines resemble more closely Hesiod's warning to Perses and his account of the nobles' wrongdoing.¹³ And, indeed, Solon's description of the function of the goddess *Dikē* does seem to echo Hesiod.¹⁴ The formal structure of Solon's praise of *Eunomiē* recalls the poem of the *Works and Days*, and Hesiod's lines may well have been Solon's model.¹⁵ But now the same praise is applied not to the gods but to good social order (*Eunomiē*).¹⁶

The formal structure of the entire poem, in fact, appears to be Hesiodic. The first thirty-one lines present an analysis of the trouble the city faces, and lines 32–39 propose a solution. This diptych structure may recall the contrast between the just and the unjust city in the *Works and Days*.¹⁷ And Hesiod's combination of dire warnings against unjust actions, and advice on good, may have provided Solon with a structural model for his own elegy.¹⁸

Considerations of formal structure aside, however, thematic echoes in Poem 4 suggest other early parallels to Solon's poem. Both epic and praise-blame poetry recognize as problematic the relationship between individual satisfaction and communal harmony. Just as in Poem 13 Solon's invocation to the Muses simultaneously recalls and re-evaluates conventional attitudes regarding the poet and the social function of his poetry, so, too, in Poem 4, Solon's concern for the survival of his *polis* and his criticism of immoderate consumption reveal both his indebtedness to and his departure from archaic tradition.

In the opening lines of the poem, Solon is attempting to evoke for his audience the immense horror of the imminent destruction of their

13. D. Campbell, *The Golden Lyre: The Themes of The Greek Lyric Poets* (London, 1983), p. 92.

14. Jaeger, "Solon's Eunomia," p. 89; E. A. Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), p. 260; Adkins, *Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, p. 117.

15. Jaeger, "Solon's Eunomia," p. 96.

16. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, p. 295.

17. Jaeger, "Solon's Eunomia," pp. 88–89.

18. Bowra, *Early Greek Elegists*, p. 78.

city. Destruction of the form Solon envisions, a devastation originating from within the city, is without exact precedent in earlier poetry. But precedent of a sort exists in the form of discussion of countless (celebrated) cities destroyed by external enemies. The most famous example in extant archaic poetry of a city haunted by the specter of imminent destruction is Troy in the *Iliad*. And Solon's initial lines must owe a debt to Homer.

Solon begins his poem by saying:

ἡμετέρη δὲ πόλις κατὰ μὲν Διὸς οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται
αἴσαν καὶ μακάρων θεῶν φρένας ἀθανάτων·
τοίη γὰρ μεγάλθυμος ἐπίσκοπος ὀβριμοπάτρη
Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη χειρὰς ὑπερθεῖν ἔχει.
(Solon 4.1–4)

But our city will never be destroyed by the dispensation of Zeus
and the intentions of the blessed immortal gods;
for such a great-hearted guardian [*episkopos*], daughter of a mighty
father,
is Pallas Athene who holds her hands over it [*kheiras hyperthen ekhei*].

Scholars are not in agreement as to whether these lines actually began the original poem. Demosthenes may have only cited part of the poem.¹⁹ It might seem implausible, however, that an orator would fail to cite the opening lines of a well-known work, the lines which make an elegy recognizable and memorable to an audience. If so, we may, in fact, have the entire poem with the exception of the lacunae at lines 10, 11, and 25.²⁰ But this argument would be more convincing if Demosthenes were giving only a brief citation of the poem rather than invoking such a large amount of text. The presence of *δέ* in line 1 does seem to suggest that the initial part of the poem has been lost, and if the particle is given its clearly antithetical value, one might suspect preliminary mention of one or several cities destroyed by divine will. Troy would certainly seem to be a well-known example.²¹

19. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Aristoteles und Athen*, pp. 305–306.

20. Masaracchia, *Solone*, pp. 247–248.

21. B. A. van Groningen, *La composition littéraire archaïque grecque* (Amsterdam, 1960), pp. 131–132. One might, perhaps, compare Simonides 531, in which the discussion of the dead at Thermopylae may form the culmination of a discussion of the transience of most types of achievement.

Whether or not the analogy was explicit, in any case, the opening of the poem as we have it does begin to suggest the analogy between Athens with its internal troubles and a city at risk from external enemies. The assertion that Athena is Athens' divine protector (*episkopos*) serves to emphasize the contrast between divine and human responsibility for the fortunes of the *polis*. But it serves another purpose as well: it enables Solon both to identify the striking fact that the devastation threatening Athens originates not from outside the city but from within it, and, at the same time, to produce in his audience the emotional reaction appropriate to the more familiar threat of utter destruction by external enemies.

To be sure, other archaic passages refer to gods' roles as protectors or guardians of particular cities, although they do not use the term *episkopos*. In *Iliad* 4.30–67, for example, Zeus, Athena, and Hera discuss their respective attachments to particular cities and their occupants, and Hera admits to Zeus:

ἦτοι ἐμοὶ τρεῖς μὲν πολὺ φίλταταί εἰσι πόλεις,
 Ἄργος τε Σπάρτη τε καὶ εὐρύαγυια Μυκῆνη·
 τὰς διαπέρσαι ὅτ' ἂν τοι ἀπέχθωνται περὶ κῆρι·
 τάων οὐ τοι ἐγὼ πρόσθ' ἵσταμαι οὐδὲ μεγαίρω.
 εἴ περ γὰρ φθονέω τε καὶ οὐκ εἰδὼ διαπέρσαι,
 οὐκ ἀνύω φθονέουσ'; ἐπεὶ ἡ πολὺ φέρτερός ἐσσι.
 (*Iliad* 4.51–56)

Of all cities there are three that are dearest to my own heart: Argos and Sparta and Mykenai of the wide ways. All these, whenever they become hateful to your heart, sack utterly. I will not stand up for these against you, nor yet begrudge you. Yet if even so I bear malice and would not have you destroy them, in malice I will accomplish nothing, since you are far stronger.

The implication of the statement is that cities dear to a particular god will not be destroyed unless a stronger god wills their destruction. Tyrtaeus 2.12–13 seems to offer similar reassurance:

αὐτὸς γὰρ Κρονίων καλλιστεφάνου πόσις Ἥρης
 Ζεὺς Ἡρακλείδαις ἄστυ δέδωκε τόδε
 (Tyrtaeus 2.12–13)

For Zeus himself, the son of Kronos, husband of beautifully-garlanded Hera,
 has given this city to the descendants of Herakles.

And elsewhere Tyrtaeus encourages his countrymen:

ἀλλ', Ἡρακλῆος γὰρ ἀνικίτου γένος ἐστέ,
 θαρσεῖτ'· οὐπὼ Ζεὺς ἀχένα λοξὸν ἔχει·
 (Tyrtaeus 11.1–2)

But, since you are all of the race of invincible Herakles,
 take courage; Zeus does not yet hold his neck aslant [i. e. has not yet averted his eyes, is still sympathetic].

In all three of these passages, the danger facing the city comes in the form of assault from outside. But Athens is not threatened by external enemies, nor is the city endangered by a god stronger than Athena. In addition, Solon's point is, of course, the opposite of reassuring. In spite of the fact that Athens has a divine protector,

αὐτοὶ δὲ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἀφραδίησιν
 ἄστοι βούλονται

(Solon 4.5–6)

The citizens themselves, by their folly, are willing
 to destroy this great city.

Solon's collocation is both disturbing and unusual. The expected assertion would be *either* that the gods are providing protection, and, therefore there is no need to worry, *or* that the gods are not to blame, but we are destroying ourselves. Solon himself makes the latter assertion in Poem 11.1–4. Solon's formulation is unHomeric: in the Homeric epics if someone's destruction is imminent, the implication is that he has been abandoned, deservedly or undeservedly, by the gods. Thus, for example, in *Iliad* 22, when Hektor recognizes that he is about to die, he acknowledges that Zeus and Apollo have withdrawn their protection (22.296–303). Solon suggests, rather, some limitation on divine power, and, in a way, makes men more powerful than gods. His statement raises an essential question: in what does the city consist? What is it that the god is protecting? What is it that we are destroying?

If Athena cannot protect Athens from destruction from within, in what sense can Solon claim that she is the city's *episkopos*? When a god or goddess chooses to protect a city, this is usually because the people of that city are dear to the god. This seems explicit, for example, in *Iliad* 4.40–41 and 44–47 and implicit in Tyrtaeus 2.12–13. But Athenians are not behaving as a unified people. They are not united, for example, against an external enemy. They do not acknowledge an identity of interest among themselves. When Solon claims that the city risks destruction in spite of the fact that Athena is its *episkopos*, he begins to suggest that somehow the *polis* itself is a separate entity from its

inhabitants. Athena's role as *episkopos* of the *polis* cannot prevent the people from destroying one another. But what is a city if not the people in it? Perhaps Solon's implicit answer is that the relations between the people, not merely the people themselves, are the city. One Homeric use of *episkopos* suggests this as a possible answer. At *Iliad* 22.255, Hektor refers to the gods as *marturoi* and *episkopoi harmoniaôn* 'witnesses and guardians of agreements'. One may speculate that Solon has this objective genitive in mind when he refers to Athena as the *episkopos* of Athens, that is, as the guardian and protector not of the people themselves but of a kind of tacit civic bond.²²

Perhaps, then, Solon is thinking of a city not simply as a collection of individuals but as a compact or agreement between individuals. In any case, the use of the epithet *episkopos* encourages the identification of Athens' plight with Troy's. Nowhere else in extant epic or lyric poetry is a god called the *episkopos* of a city. In a fragmentary passage, Hesiod appears to refer to Hermes as *episkopos* of shepherds.²³ Simonides addresses Kleio as

22. Achilles' response to Hector's proposal emphasizes the difficulty of establishing such bonds:

Ἕκτορ, μή μοι, ἄλαστε, συνημοσύνας ἀγόρευε·
ὥς οὐκ ἔστι λέουσι καὶ ἀνδράσιν ὄρκια πιστά,
οὐδὲ λύκοι τε καὶ ἄρνες ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν,
ἀλλὰ κακὰ φρονέουσι διαμπερές ἀλλήλοισιν,
ὥς οὐκ ἔστ' ἔμε καὶ σὲ φιλήμεναι, οὐδέ τι νῶϊν
ὄρκια ἔσσονται, πρὶν γ' ἢ ἕτερόν γε πεσόντα
αἵματος ἄσαι Ἄρηα, ταλαύρινον πολεμιστήν.
(*Iliad* 22.261–267)

Hektor, argue me no agreements. I cannot forgive you.
As there are no trustworthy oaths between men and lions,
nor wolves and lambs have spirit that can be brought to agreement
but forever these hold feelings of hate for each other,
so there can be no love between you and me, nor shall there be
oaths between us, but one or the other must fall before then
to glut with his blood Ares the god who fights under the shield's guard.

Solon focuses on this difficulty with particular poignancy in Poem 36. (See Chapter 3.)

23. Fr. 217.2–4:

[] σὺν Ἑρμῇ Μαριάδος υἱεῖ
[] ἐπίσκοπος ἡδὲ νομήων
[] δώματα καλά

ἀγνῶν ἐπίσκοπε χερνίβων
(Simonides 577(b)1)

episkopos of pure water vessels.

And Pindar refers to the Graces as

παλαιγόνων Μινυῶν ἐπίσκοποι
(Pindar *Olympian* 14.4)

episkopoi of the Minyans born of old.

The latter reference is close to the identification of a divinity as *episkopos* of a particular city, but it is worth noting that Pindar does not call the Graces *episkopoi* of Orkhomenus.

The word also occurs five times in Homer, once in the *Odyssey*, and three more times in the *Iliad* in addition to its use in *Iliad* 22 mentioned above. In *Odyssey* 8, Euryalos taunts Odysseus, telling him that he does not look like an athlete but rather like a merchant, one who

φόρτου τε μνήμων καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ἦισιν ὁδαίω
κερδέων θ' ἀρπαλέων·
(*Odyssey* 8.163–164)

careful of his cargo and grasping for profits,
goes carefully on his way.

In *Iliad* 10, the word seems to have the sense of 'spy' rather than 'guardian' or 'protector', as Menelaos asks Agamemnon

ἦ τιν' ἐταίρων
ὀτρυνέεις Τρώεσσιν ἐπίσκοπον;
(*Iliad* 10.37–38)

Is it some one of your companions
you are stirring to go and spy on the Trojans?

And Odysseus, speculating about Dolon's intentions, comments

οὐκ οἶδ' ἢ νήεσσιν ἐπίσκοπος ἡμετέρησιν,
ἦ τινὰ συλήσων νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων
(*Iliad* 10.342–343)

I do not know whether he comes to spy on our vessels
or to strip some one of the perished corpses.

Aside from Solon's use of the word, the only other passage in extant epic or lyric poetry in which *episkopos* refers to the guardian of a city occurs in *Iliad* 24, where the word refers to Hektor as *episkopos* of Troy. Grieving over Hektor's corpse, Andromache foresees the destruction of

Troy. She herself has been left a widow, and her son will never reach manhood:

πρὶν γὰρ πόλις ἦδε κατ' ἄκρης
πέρσεται· ἢ γὰρ ὄλῳλας ἐπίσκοπος, ὅς τέ μιν αὐτὴν
ρύσκειν, ἔχεις δ' ἀλόχους κεδνάς καὶ νήπια τέκνα
(*Iliad* 24.728–730)

for before then head to heel this city
will be sacked, for you, its defender [*episkopos*] are gone, you who guarded
the city, and the grave wives and innocent children.

Solon's use of the term *episkopos* suggests that Athens is facing troubles not only comparable to the ones Troy faced but even worse. The loss of its human *episkopos* will lead to the destruction of Troy, whereas the presence of a divine *episkopos* will not serve to protect Athens; a human being might defend his city against external enemies, whereas even a goddess cannot defend hers against internal ones.

The phrase *χεῖρας ὑπερθεῖν ἔχει* 'holds her hands above it' (4. 4) also encourages the identification of Athens with Troy. It is a variation of an epic phrase which uses a form of *ὑπερέχω* and *χεῖρα*. This phrase occurs once in Hesiod, four times in the *Iliad*, and once in the *Odyssey* in connection with a god or goddess' protection of someone or some thing. It is used of Athena's protection of the oven used in baking pottery (Hesiod fr. 302.2), and the protection of individuals by Zeus or *τις θεῶν* 'some god' (*Iliad* 4.249, and 24.374; *Odyssey* 14.184). In *Iliad* 9, Achilles angrily advises the Greeks to go home, claiming that

οὐκέτι δῆτε τέκμων
Ἰλίου αἰπείνης· μάλα γὰρ ἔθεν εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
χεῖρα ἔην ὑπερέσχε
(*Iliad* 9.418–420)

No longer shall you find any term set
on the sheer city of Ilion, since Zeus of the wide brows has strongly
held his own hand over it.

The statement recurs at 9.685–687 when Odysseus repeats Achilles' words to Agamemnon. But Achilles is mistaken. Troy does fall, and Zeus' protection does not prevent it. Strictly speaking, Zeus withdraws his protection. In the same way, Athena's protection cannot be counted upon to prevent the destruction of Athens.

While the opening lines of Poem 4 derive emotional power from the suggestion of parallels in epic poetry, the rest of the poem contains themes and images which find enlightening parallels in praise-blame

poetry. For Solon, immoderate consumption poses the essential threat to Athens' stability. Both epic and praise-blame poetry recognize the social necessity of regulating individual consumption. But Solon's analysis of the problem is subtler than that of other poets, and the solutions he articulates reflect both this more accurate assessment of the problem and a novel vision of the social purposes of his poetry.

Solon claims:

οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται κατέχειν κόρον οὐδὲ παρούσας
εὐφροσύνας κοσμεῖν δαιτὸς ἐν ἡσυχίῃ
(Solon 4.9–10)

they do not know how to restrain their greed [*koros*], nor
how to order their present festivities in the peacefulness of the
banquet [*dais*].

In this passage, he is simultaneously acknowledging and criticizing other poets' depictions of the problem. In criticizing the Athenians for their inability to control their *koros* and to feast in an orderly manner, Solon is employing a traditional archaic analogy.

Potentially devastating, unrestrained, and improper consumption is a central theme in archaic poetry.²⁴ In the Homeric epics, improper consumption characterizes the threat to Troy and to Ithaca respectively. In *Iliad* 24, for example, Apollo, describing Achilles, says that

λέων δ' ὥς ἄγρια οἶδεν,
ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ' μεγάλην τε βίτην καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῷ
εἷξας εἶσ' ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν, ἵνα δαῖτα λάβῃσιν·
(*Iliad* 24.41–43)

his purposes are fierce, like a lion
who, when he has given way to his own great strength and his haughty
spirit, goes among the flocks of men, to devour them [*daita labēisin*].²⁵

24. For a discussion of the symbolic association between the orderly distribution of meat and the social order of the *polis*, see G. Nagy, *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca and London, 1990), pp. 269–275.

25. In addition, Hekabe describes Achilles as *ômêtês* 'eating raw flesh, savage' (24.207). This adjective and the synonym *ômophagos* do not refer to human beings anywhere else in epic or lyric poetry. In Homer, both words occur only in the *Iliad* and only in reference to undomesticated animals (with the exception of Hekabe's statement). Birds (11.454), dogs (22.67), and fish (24.82) are *ômêtai*; lions (5.782; 7.256; 15.592), jackals (11.479), and wolves (16.157) are *ômophagoi*. In Hesiod, the monsters Echidna (*Theogony* 300) and Cerberus (*Theogony* 311), in Alcaeus Dionysos (129.9), and in

In the *Odyssey*, the suitors' shameless consumption of the absent Odysseus' livelihood threatens Odysseus' marriage and household and the stability of Ithaca.²⁶ In praise-blame poetry, greed is a traditional target for blame, and the expression of that blame typically uses the imagery of the greedy consumption of food, particularly of meat.²⁷

The converse, orderly, controlled eating, serves to represent peace and political tranquility. In the *Iliad*, the accord between Achilles and Priam is sealed and life is resumed when the two feast together. The meal is emblematic of the restoration of order and the return to proper consumption. Achilles' companions prepare it εὖ κατὰ κόσμον 'according to good order' (*Iliad* 24.622), and the formulaic description of the meal contrasts markedly with Apollo's description of Achilles noted above:

λέων δ' ὥς ἄγρια οἶδεν,
ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ' μεγάλην τε βίην καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῷ
εἴξας εἶς ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν, ἵνα δαῖτα λάβῃσιν.
(*Iliad* 24.41–43)

Bacchylides a lion (13.46) are all *ômêstês*. In the Homeric Hymns, *thêres* 'beasts' are *ômophagoi* (*Hymn to Aphrodite* 124), as are fish in Ibycus (321.4), and Centaurs in Theognis (542). Using an adjective appropriate to beasts or monsters, Hekabe thus powerfully emphasizes Achilles' inhuman and unnatural voraciousness and lack of restraint. Achilles' behavior only leads to more inhuman and unnatural voraciousness. Still speaking of Achilles, Hekabe maintains:

τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἥπαρ ἔχοιμι
ἐσθόμεναι προσφῦσα· τότ' ἂν τιτὰ ἔργα γένοιτο
παιδὸς ἐμοῦ,
(*Iliad* 24.212–214)

I wish I could set teeth
in the middle of his liver and eat it. That would be vengeance
for what he did to my son.

26. G. Nagy argues that the story of Iros and Odysseus in *Odyssey* 18 emphasizes that "one is not entitled to feel *phthonos* 'en' /, jealousy' about things that are not one's own (18.16–18)." He explains that "the suitors merit their death—and Iros, his beating—not for eating the food of Odysseus but for actually denying it to him" (*The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* [Baltimore, 1979], p. 230). But one suspects that this contention is a bit extreme. Surely in part the suitors and Iros must be culpable for actually consuming Odysseus' possessions.

27. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, pp. 223–229 and 287. Nagy explains that in the diction of praise poetry, gluttony is a prime characteristic of *phthonos*.

his purposes are fierce, like a lion
who when he has given way to his own great strength and his haughty
spirit, goes among the flocks of men, to devour them [*daïta labêisin*].

Achilles and Priam eat to repletion, and for this Homer has the formulaic phrase

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο
(*Iliad* 24.628)

but when they had put aside their desire for eating and drinking.

The analogy is evident in the poetry of Theognis as well. When Theognis seeks divine protection for Megara, he prays:

Ζεὺς μὲν τῆσδε πόλῃος ὑπείρεχοι αἰθέρι ναίων
αἰεὶ δεξιτερὴν χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἀπημοσύνηι
ἄλλοι τ' ἀθάνατοι μάκαρες θεοί· αὐτὰρ Ἀπόλλων
ὀρθῶσαι γλῶσσαν καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον·
φόρμιγξ δ' αὖ φθέγγοιθ' ἱερὸν μέλος ἥδ' αὖ αὐλός·
ἡμεῖς δὲ σπονδὰς θεοῖσιν ἀρεσσάμενοι
πίνωμεν χαρίεντα μετ' ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες,
μηδὲν τὸν Μῆδων δειδιώτες πόλεμον.
(Theognis 757–764)

May Zeus who dwells in the upper air always hold his right hand
over this city to make it safe [*huperekhōi kheira*]
and the other blessed immortal gods; and may Apollo
set straight our tongue and our mind;
and may the lyre and the pipe sound out a holy song;
and let us pour a libation to the gods and drink,
speaking gracious things among one another,
fearing not at all the war with the Medes.

Throughout the Theognidea, the descriptions of communal eating and drinking parallel the descriptions of the *polis*, that is, the *polis* is described in terms of a symposium, and the symposium is described in terms of a *polis*.²⁸ In lines 757–764, Theognis' implication is that, protected from external enemies, the citizens are able to enjoy the pleasures of the symposium. Unlike Solon, Theognis does not define the *polis* geographically. Rather, for him it is equivalent to a collection of "right-thinking" people, that is, his political party. (So, too, for Alcaeus.)

28. D. B. Levine, "Symposium and the Polis," in *Theognis of Megara*, edited by T. J. Figuera and G. Nagy (Baltimore and London, 1985), pp. 176–196.

But if Theognis' language suggests that the symposium is a microcosm of the state,²⁹ Solon's usage reveals that the analogy is flawed. To be sure, both Solon 4.5–10 and Theognis employ the same terminology,³⁰ but Solon's criticism reveals the inadequacy of the aristocratic symposium as a paradigm for political organization. Both aim at harmony and proper order, but attaining this is more difficult in a political context.³¹ The Athenians *already have* divine protection, and this does not enable them to enjoy communal harmony. Solon's criticism recognizes a fundamental flaw in the analogy: the appetite for food is not, in fact, parallel to the appetite for wealth. The former has an inherent physiological limit; the latter has none. This difference is reflected in Solon's use of the word *koros* 'satiety, surfeit'.

Solon appears to differ from Homer and Hesiod in acknowledging an inherent interrelationship between satiety and insatiability. Both epic poets use the noun *koros* and verb *korennumi* in the same way to

29. Levine, "Symposium and the Polis," p. 194. Levine also discusses the paradigmatic function of eating and drinking in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and Plato's *Laws*. He maintains that Aristophanes "treats the peaceful *polis* as though it were a banquet," and that Plato, insisting on the close association between community and common eating and drinking, "makes the symposium a model for the establishment of an ideal community." The *Republic*, too, Levine notes, contains a "metaphorical description of an intemperate democracy (562d)" which Plutarch also repeats (*Greek Questions* [Moralia 295 c–d]). Both Plato and Plutarch "treat citizens who have had too much freedom in the *polis* as banqueters who have indulged excessively in wine. The intemperance of their political actions is compared to overindulgence at a banquet, much like the intemperate leaders of the *dēmos* in Solon 4.9–10" (Levine, pp. 194–196).

30. Levine explains that in lines 5–10, Solon "dramatizes the destruction of a city by a reference to the citizens' excesses and inability to behave themselves properly at a banquet." He notes that both Solon and Theognis use *kosmos* and its derivatives to describe the ordering of both a symposium and a *polis* or lack of *kosmos* for improper ordering of both a symposium and a *polis* ("Symposium and the Polis," pp. 185–186). Adkins comments that in the *Iliad* the verb *kosmein* is used only of marshalling men and chariots. In the *Odyssey* it is used for the arranging of a meal for Nausikaa. In Solon's lines, "the full sense of 'order, rule, discipline' must be present" (*Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, pp. 114–115). The Homeric usage may thus reveal the seeds of the analogy.

31. W. Donlan recognizes that the symposium is not in fact a satisfactory descriptive or prescriptive analogy for political organization, but he suggests that this is because of the rigid rules in effect at symposia and because discord in this context is of comparatively little consequence. He maintains that while the *polis* *should* be like a properly ordered symposium, it fails to be ("Πιστὸς φίλος ἑταῖρος," in *Theognis of Megara*, edited by T. J. Figuera and G. Nagy [Baltimore and London, 1985], pp. 237–238).

describe a condition of satisfaction or sufficiency and one in which the component of restraint or cessation is inherent. They reserve the adjective *akorêtos* for the sense of insatiability or incessant desire. Hesiod contrasts *koros* with οὐλομένη πενίη 'accursed poverty' when he claims that women are willing to share the former but not the latter with their men (*Theogony* 593). He uses *korennumi* in the positive sense of 'fill up, satisfy, have one's fill' when, for example, he describes the pleasures of sitting in the shade, drinking wine and κεκορημένον ἦτορ ἐδωδῆς 'my desire for food completely satisfied' (*Hesiod Works and Days* 593). Similarly, he uses the verb to refer to 'filling up' or 'being filled' with grain (*Works and Days* 33), wine (*Works and Days* 368) and a meal (fr. 274.2). It is not *koros* but the adjective *akorêtos* which has the sense of 'insatiate, unable to be satisfied'. It occurs only in the *Shield*, three times in the phrase ἀκόρητος αὐτῆς 'insatiate of the war-cry' (*Shield* 346, 433, 459).

Homeric poetry, too, uses both verb and noun in a positive sense to describe the condition of satisfaction and satiety. In the *Iliad* the verb refers to satiety of eating in both human beings and animals (8.379, 13.831, 17.241, 11.562, 16.747, 19.167, 22.509), satiety of work (11.87), war (13.635), being confined (18.287), and weeping and lamentation (22.427). The noun occurs twice, in reference to sleep, love-making, music, and dancing (13.636–637) and to combat (19.221). The implication of all these passages is that when one has *koros* of a thing, one wants no more of it. The adjective *akorêtos* indicates the inability to achieve satisfaction, the inability to stop wanting more of something. People are described as *akorêtos* 'insatiable' *mothou* 'of battle-din' (7.117), *polemou* 'of war' (12.335), *autês* 'of the war-cry' (13.621), *makhês* 'of battle' (13.639; 20.2), and *apeilaôn* 'of threats' (14.479). One passage in particular illustrates the way all three of these words are used in the poem. Menelaos describes the Trojans,

τῶν μένος αἰὲν ἀτάσθαλον, οὐδὲ δύνανται
φυλόπιδος κορέσασθαι ὁμοίου πολέμοιο.
πάντων μὲν κόρος ἐστί, καὶ ὕπνου καὶ φιλόττος
μολπῆς τε γλυκερῆς καὶ ἀμύμονος ὄρχηθμοῖο,
τῶν πέρ τις καὶ μᾶλλον ἐέλδεται ἐξ ἔρον εἶναι
ἢ πολέμου· Τρῶες δὲ μάχης ἀκόρητοι ἔασιν.
(*Iliad* 13.634–639)

whose fighting strength is a thing of blind fury, nor can they ever be glutted full [*korennumi*] of the close encounters of deadly warfare. Since there is satiety [*koros*] in all things, in sleep, and love-making,

in the loveliness of singing and the innocent dance. In all these things a man will strive sooner to win satisfaction than in war; but in this the Trojans cannot be glutted [*akorêtoi easin*].

Odysseus similarly associates *koros* with cessation—or at least respite—from battle, for he insists:

αἰψά τε φυλόπιδος πέλεται κόρος ἀνθρώποισιν,
ἥς τε πλείστην μὲν καλάμην χθονὶ χαλκὸς ἔχευεν,
ἄμητος δ' ὀλίγιστος, ἐπὴν κλίνῃσι τάλαντα
Ζεὺς, ὅς τ' ἀνθρώπων ταμὴς πολέμοιο τέτυκται.
(*Iliad* 19.221–224)

When there is battle men have suddenly their fill [*koros*] of it when the bronze scatters on the ground the straw in most numbers and the harvest is most thin, when Zeus has poised his balance, Zeus, who is administrator to men in their fighting.

In the *Odyssey*, *koros* and *korennumi* are used in the same way, and the suggestion that the condition of *koros* leads to cessation is even more explicit. The adjective *akorêlos* does not appear, but the verb is used to refer to satiety of grief (4.541, 10.499), food (10.411, 14.28, 14.456, 18.372), food and music (8.98), food and wine (14.46), and contests (23.350). When one has reached the point of satiety, as described by the verb, one stops the particular activity. All but two of these passages proceed to mention the new activity which then follows. The same is true of the noun, which only occurs once in the poem. Menelaos makes clear the connection between *koros* and cessation when he explains:

πολλάκις ἐν μεγάροισι καθήμενος ἡμετέροισιν
ἄλλοτε μὲν τε γόωι φρένα τέρπομαι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
παύομαι· αἰψηρὸς δὲ κόρος κρυεροῖο γόοιο.
(*Odyssey* 4.101–103)

many a time when I am sitting here in our palace
I will indulge my heart in sorrow, and then another time
give over, for surfeit [*koros*] of gloomy lamentation comes quickly.

Here, *koros* of lamentation causes Menelaos to stop grieving. The two instances in the *Homeric Hymns* seem consistent with Homeric and Hesiodic usage. In the *Hymn to Demeter*, the verb seems to indicate repletion in a favorable sense. The daughters of Celeus are described

ὥς τ' ἢ ἔλαφοι ἢ πόρτιες ἤαρος ὥρηι
ἄλλοντ' ἂν λειμῶνα κορεσσάμεναι φρένα φορβῇ,
(*Hymn to Demeter* 174–175)

as deer or young heifers in the time of spring
leap throughout a meadow, sated [*korennumi*] in their hearts with
pasture.

In the hymn to Aphrodite, the adjective *akorêtoi* is used of *pardalies* 'leopards' to convey the sense of 'instatiate' (*Hymns* 5.71).

But Solon's usage seems semantically different. He does appear to use the verb in the same sense as Homer and Hesiod in maintaining:

οἱ γὰρ νῦν ἡμέων πλείστον ἔχουσι βίον,
διπλάσιον σπεύδουσι· τίς ἂν κορέσειεν ἅπαντας;
(Solon 13.72–73)

for those of us who now have the most property
strive with double zeal; who could satisfy [*korennumi*] all?

But the noun, rather than having the positive, favorable connotation of satiety or satisfaction, with cessation of the pursuit as an inherent component, takes on, in Solon's usage, the negative, dangerous sense of insatiability, excessiveness, incessant greed for more. Solon admonishes the wealthy citizens:

ὁμῆς δ' ἡσυχάσαντες ἐνὶ φρεσὶ καρτερὸν ἦτορ,
οἱ πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐς κόρον [ἡ]λάσατε,
ἐν μετρίοισι τίθεσθε μέγαν νόον· οὔτε γὰρ ἡμεῖς
πεισόμεθ', οὐθ' ὑμῖν ἄρτια τα[ῦ]τ' ἔσεται.
(Solon 4c.1–4)

But you who have pushed to a surfeit [*koros*] of good things,
quieting the strong heart in your breast,
place your great mind in order; for we will not
be persuaded, nor will these things be suitable for you.

The context suggests that *koros* is a dangerous thing. This implication is strengthened by the claim that

τίκτει γὰρ κόρος ὕβριν, ὅταν πολὺς ὄλβος ἔπηται
ἀνθρώποις ὁπόσοις μὴ νόος ἄρτιος ᾖ.
(Solon 6.3–4)

Satiety [*koros*] breeds reckless violence [*hubris*], whenever much
prosperity comes
to men whose mind is not suitable.

This claim contrasts markedly with Homeric usage, in which not only does *koros* never produce *hubris*; it is the lack of *koros* which is associated with *hubris*. Menelaos refers to

ὑβριστήισι,
Τρωσίν, τῶν μένος αἰὲν ἀτάσθαλον, οὐδὲ δύνανται
φυλόπιδος κορέσασθαι ὁμοίου πτολέμοιο.

(*Iliad* 13.633–635)

these outrageous people [*hubristai*], these Trojans
whose fighting strength is a thing of blind fury, nor can they ever
be glutted full [*korennumi*] of the close encounters of deadly warfare.

The alleged *hubris* of the Trojans is, in this statement, coincident with their inability to be sated with war, their inability to have *koros*—which would, presumably, cause them to stop fighting. If *koros*, in Solon's view, produces *hubris*, it must be checked. The difficulty is that οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται κατέχειν κόρον 'they do not know how to restrain their *koros*' (Solon 4.9). Solon identifies *Eunomiê* 'Good Order' as the remedy for *hubris* because it stops *koros* (Solon 4.34). Thus, while for Homer and Hesiod the component of restraint is inherent in the condition of *koros* itself, for Solon the condition is one which *requires* restraint if cessation is to occur.

In lyric poetry, *koros* often retains its Homeric and Hesiodic sense of satiety leading inevitably to cessation of the activity in question. A few passages are too fragmentary to be of use, but others are more helpful. Tyrtaeus admonishes the Spartans for their unwillingness to continue fighting or fleeing the enemy, asserting

ὦ νέοι, ἀμφοτέρων δ' ἐξ κόρον ἡλάσατε.
(Tyrtaeus 11.10)

Young men, you have reached a surfeit [*koros*] of both.

The Spartans have *koros* of both flight and pursuit, that is, they want no more of it. Alcman seems to use *koros* in the the sense of 'sufficiency' or 'abundance' in the *Partheneion*:

οὔτε γάρ τι πορφύρας
τόσσοις κόρος ὥστ' ἀμύναι.
(Alcman 1.64–65)

nor is their any surfeit [*koros*] of purple dye
sufficient to defend us.

In another lyric fragment the phrase τὰν ἀκόρεστον αὐάταν 'insatiate ruinous folly' uses the adjective *akorestos* for the sense of 'insatiate'.³²

32. *Fragmenta adespota* 973 in D. L. Page *Poetae melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962). Another fragment refers to *koros* as satiety of food and drink followed immediately by the conclusion of the meal (*Melici minores* 836(b)39) in *Poetae melici Graeci*

But if the pursuit of *koros* has a terminus for Homer and not for Solon, this may largely reflect the fact that epic poetry is praise poetry of a certain type and gives relatively little emphasis to faults which stem from heroic excess.³³ In the praise poetry of Pindar, too, *koros* retains its Homeric sense of a condition with a built-in limit. But although Pindar's usage is semantically close to that found in epic poetry, his perspective is different than Homer's. Whereas Homer describes the condition from the perspective of the consumer, Pindar examines it from the viewpoint of the producer. For both poets, *koros* contains its own inherent limit, but for Pindar, as a performer, satiety in his audience is a bad thing since it will lead them to want no more of his song. Pindar retains the Homeric notion that *koros* leads to cessation (at least temporarily):

ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἀνάπαν-
σις ἐν παντί γλυκεῖα ἔργωι· κόρον δ' ἔχει
καὶ μέλι καὶ τὰ τέρπν' ἄνθε' Ἀφροδίσια.
(*Nemean* 7.52–53)

But in every matter
intermission is sweet:
even honey
and the flowers of Aphrodite
bring satiety.

He also uses the absence of *koros*, that is, *akoros* for the sense of 'insatiable' or 'ceaseless' in the statement

εἰρεσία δ' ὑπεχώρη-
σεν ταχειῶν ἐκ παλαμῶν ἄκορος.
(*Pythian* 4.202)

Under their swift hands then the oar blades
dipped insatiably.

But in contrast to Homer, Pindar takes a dim view of *koros*. He refers to it as *aianês* 'wearisome' (*Pythian* 1.82, and *Isthmian* 3/4.2), and *plagios* 'treacherous' (*Nemean* 1.64–65), maintains that it is *barus* 'burdensome' to encounter (*Nemean* 10.19–20), and appears to contrast it with *aretê* 'excellence' (Fragment 169a.15). Pindar's condemnation derives from his position as a performer: he denounces *koros* not joined with *dikê*

33. One notable recipient of blame is the figure of Thersites in the *Iliad*. (See Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, pp. 253ff.)

'justice' for attacking *ainos* 'praise' (*Olympian* 2.95),³⁴ and suggests that it might cause irritation if a singer goes on too long, explaining:

εἰμὶ δ' ἄσχαλος ἀναθέμεν
 πᾶσαν μακραγορίαν
 λύραι τε καὶ φθέγματι μαλθακῶι,
 μὴ κόρος ἐλθὼν κνίσῃ.
 (*Pythian* 8.29–32)

But I am without leisure
 to set the whole story down
 in melody and lyrics.
 Tedium [*koros*] would surely come
 and chafe my audience.

One can compare the Homeric passage cited above in which *koros* of song is one of several natural and, by implication, desirable limits. Menelaos describes the Trojans,

τῶν μένος αἰὲν ἀτάσθαλον, οὐδὲ δύνανται
 φυλόπιδος κορέσασθαι ὁμοίου πολέμοιο.
 πάντων μὲν κόρος ἐστί, καὶ ὕπνου καὶ φιλότῃτος
 μολπῆς τε γλυκερῆς καὶ ἀμύμονος ὀρχηθμοῖο,
 τῶν πέρ τις καὶ μᾶλλον ἐέλδεται ἐξ ἔρον εἶναι
 ἢ πολέμου· Τρῶες δὲ μάχης ἀκόρητοι ἔασιν.
 (*Iliad* 13.634–639)

whose fighting strength is a thing of blind fury, nor can they ever
 be glutted full [*korennumi*] of the close encounters of deadly warfare.
 Since there is satiety [*koros*] in all things, in sleep, and love-making,
 in the loveliness of singing and the innocent dance. In all these
 things a man will strive sooner to win satisfaction
 than in war; but in this the Trojans cannot be glutted [*akorētoi easin*].

Only Pindar's claim that *koros* led Zeus to curse Tantalus (*Olympian* 1.55–56) seems to require an understanding of the word that is similar to Solon's. In this passage, *koros* preceeds *atē*. Although *hubris* is not mentioned, clearly that was Tantalus' sin. His desire to share the gift of immortality with others results in the sort of disaster that comes not from 'fulness' but from 'over-fulness'. It may not, perhaps, be surprising that this Solonian interpretation occurs in a modernizing of the myth by Pindar. Like Solon, too, Pindar proclaims the necessity of restraining *koros*:

εἴ τις ἀνδρῶν εὐτυχῆσαις ἢ σὺν εὐδόξοις ἀέθλοισι
 ἢ σθένει πλούτου κατέχει φρασὶν αἰανῇ κόρον,
 ἄξιος εὐλογίαις ἀστῶν μεμίχθαι.

(*Isthmian* 3/4.1–3)

If a man, fortunate in the enjoyment
 of glorious prizes or the might of wealth,
 keeps his thoughts above restless ambition [*koros*],
 then he deserves
 the praise of his fellow citizens.³⁵

In this passage, *koros* could be translated as 'excess', and so, too in *Olympian* 13.10 (ὑβρις κόρου ματέρα 'hubris, mother of *koros*'), but the reversal of Solon's genealogy in the latter passage suggests that Pindar is thinking of the way a singer's arrogance and insensitivity might cause his audience to be sated with him. And the *koros* that is checked in *Isthmian* 3/4.1–3 may be the same satiety rather than the victor's own excess. However the passages are interpreted, *koros* continues to be, by and large, the same thing for Pindar as for Homer. It is something that contains its own inherent limit, and, as such, is from Pindar's perspective (as the supplier rather than the consumer) undesirable.

The view that Pindar's genealogy was the prevalent formulation and Solon's something of an unaccepted variant is supported by additional passages from Herodotus and Sophocles. Herodotus cites an oracle which has *koros* as the child of *hubris* (Herodotus 8.77). The reference is to the *koros* and *hubris* of the Persians who have every expectation of destroying the Greeks at Salamis, but, according to the oracle, *Dike* 'Justice' will grant victory to the Greeks. The story of Xerxes (and of Croesus, too, for that matter) suggests the Solonian idea that *hubris* has its origin in insatiability and excess. That Herodotus, nevertheless makes *hubris*, and not *koros*, the engendering agent, may reflect the continuing influence of a pre-Solonian formula. Sophocles, too, seems to accept the un-Solonic view when the Chorus, chilled by Oedipus' relentlessness and Jocasta's rejection of the validity of prophecies laments:

34. Regarding *ainos* see also Chapter 1, p. 20 and note 27.

35. Compare Solon 4.9: Οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται κατέχειν κόρον 'they do not know how to restrain their *koros*'.

ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον
(Oedipus Tyrannus 873)

hubris breeds the absolute ruler.³⁶

Vegetal imagery is traditional in the representation of these concepts,³⁷ and Solon employs it, too, when he maintains that *Eunomie*

ἀαίνει δ' ἄτης ἄνθεα φύμενα
(Solon 4. 35)

withers the blooming flowers of ruinous folly [*atē*].³⁸

But Solon's identification of *koros* as the engendering agent (Solon 6.3) may be a reversal of the traditional imagery.³⁹ His formulation is more specific: the root of the problem is not *hubris* in general but, specifically, greed, greed without any inherent limit which therefore needs to be controlled from outside.

The earliest trace of an attitude toward greed and insatiability roughly comparable to Solon's occurs in Theognis. Like Pindar and Solon, he criticizes *koros*, but his criticism begins to distinguish between *koros* in general and *koros* of wealth in particular. Like other poets, Theognis uses the verb in the sense of 'to satisfy' (for example, 1.229, 2.1249, 2.1269), but maintains, with Solon, that *koros* can produce *hubris* (1.152). He claims, moreover, that *koros* is highly destructive (1.693), more destructive than *limos* 'hunger' (1.605), in fact, and refers to it as *leugaleos* 'baneful' (1.1174) and the worst evil for mortals (1.1175). But Theognis indicates that *koros* in general is not the problem: rather it is

36. This reading has been disputed, but Blaydes' alternative, ὑβριν φυτεύει τυραννίς, accepted by R. D. Dawe (*Sophocles tragoediae* [Leipzig, 1975–1979]), for example, has not remained popular. H. Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson (*Sophoclea: Studies in the Text of Sophocles* [Oxford, 1990]), among others, accept the manuscript reading.

37. A. Michelini. "Ὑβρις and plants," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978), pp. 35–44.

38. Nagy explains that "Greek botanical lore recognizes that plants are capable of indefinite expansion, and thus the growth of plants is for the Greeks appropriate for visualizing *hubris*: like some exuberant plant, *hubris* keeps advancing until it is checked by an external force" ("Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of his City," in *Theognis of Megara*, edited by T. J. Figuera and G. Nagy [Baltimore and London, 1985], p. 61).

39. B. L. Gildersleeve maintains that such a reversal of the genealogy is irrelevant since "according to Greek custom, grandmother and granddaughter often bore the same name. It is a mere matter of *hubris—koros—hubris*" (*Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* [New York, 1979], pp. 229–230), but this seems to trivialize the issue.

the pursuit of the unattainable *koros* of wealth, specifically, which is so destructive. This is because:

πλὴν πλούτου παντὸς χρήματός ἐστι κόρος.
(Theognis 596)

There is *koros* of every thing except wealth.

This corroborates the claim attributed both to him and to Solon that

οἱ γὰρ νῦν ἡμῶν πλείστον ἔχουσι βίον,
διπλάσιον σπεύδουσι. τίς ἂν κορέσειεν ἅπαντας;
(Theognis 228–229 = Solon 13.72–73)

for those of us who now have the most property,
strive with double zeal. Who would satisfy all?

Because Theognis begins to distinguish between *koros* in general and *koros* of wealth in particular, his use of the verb in connection with wealth begins to take on the sense of 'to glut' or 'to oversatisfy'. Otherwise, if there can be no *koros* of wealth (596), he could not assert that someone ὑβρίζει πλούτῳ κεκορημένος 'commits outrage, having been glutted with wealth' (751). The phrase indicates that the verb can be used negatively as leading to *hubris*. In another passage, however, Theognis seems to adhere to the Homeric usage in suggesting that the problem is that over-satisfaction is not perceptible to the individual:

οὔτε γὰρ ἂν πλούτου θυμὸν ὑπερκορέσαις·
(Theognis 1158)

for one cannot oversatisfy [*hyperkorennumi*] the heart with wealth.

The compound form of the verb suggests that *koros* itself is good, but excessive *koros* (*hyper-*) is bad. The implication of these examples is not simply that, where wealth is concerned, one cannot get enough, but, rather, that one cannot get enough without getting too much.

The close verbal parallels between Theognis and Solon suggest that at least one of the authors of the Theognidean corpus was familiar with Solon's poetry. Alternatively, it is possible that at a later date than Solon, other poets were thinking along the same lines as he. Since, however, nothing in the Theognidean corpus is demonstrably earlier than Solon, the former possibility seems not unlikely. In any case, Theognis' statements indicate that Solon is not unique in his concern about the delicate relationship between satiety and insatiability. But Solon recognizes the threat that this issue poses to the community. For Homer, there is no delicate balance between satiety and insatiability;

when one reaches satiety, one stops. But Solon suggests that the condition of satiety as perceived by the individual may only become apparent once the point has been reached—and passed. Moreover, in the view of others, an individual may appear to have reached satiety when the individual himself still feels unsatisfied. Pindar, recognizes this difference in perspective in the situation of the performer who may feel that he has not said enough when others think that he has. But Solon is thinking more of the acquisitive individual whose greed for wealth remains unsatisfied even though in the view of others he may seem to possess more than enough. For peaceful coexistence within a community, this disparity is all-important. In Solon's view, the collective (if not the individual's own good sense) must be able to determine—and control—when an individual has enough. If this is left to the individual, perception of the point of satiety may never occur.⁴⁰ In fact, the more one has, the more one wants. This is particularly true where the pursuit of wealth is concerned. Other activities—eating, sleeping, working, fighting—seem to have built-in physiological limits. One may not stop until one has passed the point of satiety and become over-sated, but one must, eventually, stop. This is not the case with wealth. There is no inherent physiological limit to its acquisition (πλούτου δ' οὐδὲν τέρμα πεφασμένον ἀνδράσι κέϊται 'of wealth no limit lies visible for men' [Solon 13.71]),⁴¹ and for the community this difference can

40. Solon's focus on *koros* contrasts with Hesiod's emphasis on *limos* 'hunger'. Solmsen notes that Hesiod mentions hunger more frequently than any other evil (*Hesiod and Aeschylus*, p. 89). Hesiod, too, is concerned with the problem of sufficiency, but he views it from the perspective of insufficiency rather than that of over-sufficiency (e.g. *Works and Days* 366–367). *Koros* might be seen as the antithesis of *limos*—although *koros*, as Solon understands it, like *limos*, also leads to desire for more. But unlike *koros*, *limos* appears to be a purely subjective emotion. One has hunger when one feels hunger. There is not the same possibility for self-deception; it is impossible for someone to have hunger and not know it. In contrast, Solon argues that the rich have satiety and do not know it.

41. One thinks, too, of Solon's comment in Poem 16:

γνωμοσύνης δ' ἀφανὲς χαλεπώτατόν ἐστι νοῆσαι
μέτρον, ὃ δὴ πάντων πείρατα μῶνον ἔχει.

It is very difficult to perceive the unseen measure of good judgement
which alone holds the ends of all things.

Solmsen interprets this as a reference to the difficulty of finding where to draw the line between the rights of one group and the next (*Hesiod and Aeschylus*, pp. 122–123). But very possibly the statement also relates to the internal counterpart of this problem: the individual himself cannot even determine when he has had enough or too much.

be devastating. When Solon claims that Εὐνομίη...παύει κόρον 'Εὐνομίη stops *koros*' (4.32–34), he is asserting the need for communal, rather than individual, regulation of individual consumption and acquisition.

And yet, who comprises that community? In recognizing that the process of eating is not actually parallel to the process of acquiring wealth, Solon identifies a central flaw in the symposium paradigm as a model for, and means of encouraging, social order. But there is another, perhaps greater, flaw. In the poetry of Theognis, for example, the symposium is the ideal place of education and a microcosm of the larger community, in that it is the place to associate exclusively with *agathoi* 'noble or good men' and avoid *kakoi* 'low-born or bad men'.⁴² In contrast, Solon recognizes that the paradigm fails to account for the fact that, in the *polis*, members of all levels of society will necessarily be present, not only the aristocrats. His criticism of ἡγεμόνες δήμου 'the leaders of the people' for their inability to control their *koros* or to regulate properly the manner of their feasting is, therefore, both a criticism of the failure of aristocratic political organization to achieve social harmony in the *polis* and a criticism of the exclusivity of symposiastic praise-blame poetry.

As already noted, for the symposiastic praise-blame poet, the purposes of poetic *sophiē* are potentially exclusive.⁴³ Praise is inherently aristocratic, intended to be acceptable to the few.⁴⁴ As specified in the

42. Levine, "Symposium and the Polis," pp. 179–180.

43. See Chapter 1, pp. 20–21.

44. M. Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris, 1981), p. 21, quoting Pindar *Pythian* 3.112–115:

Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδὸν', ἀνθρώπων φάτις,
ἐξ ἐπέων κελαιδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοὶ
ἄρμωσαν, γινώσκωμεν. ἃ δ' ἀρετὰ κλειναῖς ἀοιδαῖς
χρονία τελέθει. παύροις δὲ πράξασθ' εὐμαρές.

We know of Nestor and Lykian Sarpedon
from resonant words, such as skilled craftsmen of songs
have welded together.

It is radiant poetry
that makes virtue long-lived,
but for few is the making easy.

Similarly, A. P. Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), p. 41.

agathoi to the exclusion of the *kakoi* and intended to be understandable to the *sophoi* 'wise men'.⁵⁰ This orientation can be seen, for example, in his claim that:

τίκτει τοι κόρος ὕβριν, ὅταν κακῶι δλβος ἔπηται
ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ὅτῳ μὴ νόος ἄρτιος ᾖ.
(Theognis 153–154)

Satiety [*koros*] breeds wanton violence [*hubris*], whenever much
prosperity [*olbos*] comes
to a bad [*kakos*] man whose mind is not suitable [*artios*].

This statement is by no means the same as Solon's assertion that:

τίκτει γὰρ κόρος ὕβριν, ὅταν πολὺς δλβος ἔπηται
ἀνθρώποις ὁπόσοις μὴ νόος ἄρτιος ᾖ.
(Solon 6.3–4)

Satiety [*koros*] breeds wanton violence [*hubris*], whenever much
prosperity [*olbos*] comes
to men whose mind is not suitable [*artios*].⁵¹

Theognis' introduction of *kakôs* adds a "natural" or ethical condemnation of the ill-fated possessor of *olbos* ("natural" if *kakos* = 'low-born'; ethical if *kakos* = 'coward, evil man'). Solon's lines maintain that *hubris* results if *olbos* is present and a certain intellectual development is lacking. Unlike Theognis, he accepts that a person's mind could be *not artios* regardless of whether this person is *kakos* or *agathos*, and leaves open the possibility that this same person's mind could become *artios*. Theognis accepts neither the possibility that the mind of an *agathos* could be *not artios* nor that the mind of a *kakos* could become *artios*. Solon does not veer away from either possibility. If

50. Nagy, "Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of his City," pp. 24–25; Cobb-Stevens, "Opposites, reversals, and Ambiguities: The Unsettled World of Theognis," p. 166. See also Edmunds, "The Genre of Theognidean Poetry," pp. 105–106 regarding Theognis 681.

51. Nagy notes that such discrepancies may be meaningful, and not merely textual variations, arguing that "such patterns of phraseological convergence and divergence in parallel passages ascribed to different poets, or even textual variants of the same poem, are a reflex of the workings of oral poetry." He maintains that such differences "reflect for the most part not editorial deterioration in one direction or another, but formulaic versatility corresponding to different compositional needs" ("Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of his City," pp. 46–51). And see also Chapter 1, note 72 above regarding the view of Wilamowitz.

olbos here is equivalent to material wealth, Theognis' claim that καὶ γὰρ τοι πλοῦτον μὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθοῖσιν ἔοικεν, / ἡ πενίη δὲ κακῶι σύμφορος ἀνδρὶ φέρειν 'it is fitting for the *agathoi* to have wealth, and poverty is suitable for the *kakoi* to endure' (Theognis 525–526) may highlight the difference between him and Solon on this point. For Solon the issue is purely one of intellectual understanding or lack of it. Unlike Theognis, he recognizes that wealth can be dangerous for everyone. It may well be that the Theognidean idea is the earlier, and that Solon is applying to all society norms which aristocrats once prescribed for the *kakoi*.

Elsewhere, too, Solon seems to minimize differences between *kakoi* and *agathoi*. Distinction between them is notably absent in Poem 27, discussed in Chapter 1, which contains no suggestion that the potential for intellectual development is in any way dependent upon one's status as *agathos* or *kakos*. Similarly, in Poem 13, Solon claims:

θνητοὶ δ' ὅδε νοέομεν ὁμῶς ἀγαθὸς τε κακὸς τε
(Solon 13.33)

this is the way we mortals think, both *agathos* and *kakos* alike.

One suspects that this statement would have been something of a shock to any audience conditioned to the elitism and exclusivity of the praise-blame genre, that is, to a poetry traditionally asserting rigid distinctions between *kakoi* and *agathoi*.⁵²

To be sure, the categories of *kakoi* and *agathoi* were undoubtedly in flux throughout this period. Whereas the terms originally connoted high or low birth, Theognis uses them on occasion as ethical categories ('noble' or 'base') in reference to intrinsic worth rather than birth.⁵³ If this linguistic shift represents an ongoing struggle for political power,⁵⁴

52. Bacchylides, too, maintains that hope deceives high and low alike (3.74; 9.18; cf. 13.157). Burnett comments that *gnômai* such as this, being true for all mankind, have a leveling function and serve to make the praise song less exclusive (Burnett, *The Art of Bacchylides*, pp. 50–51). But whereas Pindar and Bacchylides use this to avoid "the envy of the excluded" (see Burnett, pp. 48ff.), Solon seems to have a more constructive social purpose, namely, political unity.

53. Nagy, "Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of his City," p. 54.

54. Cobb-Stevens argues that "the reversal in position of the *kakoi* and *agathoi*" is "the very substance of the turmoil of a *polis*, that those who were *agathoi* by birth become morally or economically *kakoi*, and that those who were *kakoi* by birth come into power above those who were by birth (and sometimes morally) *agathoi*" ("Opposites, reversals, and Ambiguities: The Unsettled World of Theognis," pp. 159–165).

Solon seems less concerned with this issue than with a pragmatic solution. Accordingly, he insists that:

θεσμούς δ' ὁμοίως τῷ κακῷ τε κάγαθῷ
εὐθείαν εἰς ἕκαστον ἀρμόσας δίκην
ἔγραψα.

(Solon 36.18–20)

I wrote laws for the base and the noble alike,
awarding each man his just due.

His purpose is not to negate the categories, nor even to reevaluate them. He did not intend, for example, to equalize the distribution of property, since it did not please him:

πει[ρ]ῆς χθονὸς
πατρίδος κακοῖσιν ἐσθλοὺς ἰσομοιρίην ἔχειν.
(Solon 34.8–9)

[it is not desirable that] the base have an equal
share of the rich fatherland with the noble.

Distinguishing between equality of possessions and equality of political rights, Solon acknowledges that failure to do so, failure to differentiate between economic equality and political equality, is an impediment to political unity.

As a result, the ambiguities in Solon's verses serve a different purpose than the ambiguities in the verses of Theognis. Theognis uses ambiguity to convey an aristocratic message. His ultimate hope is the resumption of political power by the *agathoi*. To this end, his poetry is directed toward them and is entirely preoccupied with deceiving and avoiding being deceived.⁵⁵

In contrast, the ambiguities in Solon's poetry do not distinguish between members of his audience; they are equally ambiguous to all. Poem 4 provides numerous examples. As noted above, *astoi* 'citizens' (6), *khremasi peithomenoi* 'persuaded by money' (6), *hēgemonôn* 'leaders' (7), *ēluthe* 'comes' (18), *doulosunên* 'slavery', and *hē* 'which' (19) are all

55. Levine, "Symposium and the Polis," p. 186. Cobb-Stevens explains that, for Theognis, "persuasion must take the form of wily words (*haimulioi logoi* [704]), words that can make deceitful things be like genuine (713). Yet it must be a persuasiveness at all times opposed to the ploys of the many, whose deceptions need not be even remotely like the truth" ("Opposites, reversals, and Ambiguities: The Unsettled World of Theognis," pp. 172–175).

ambiguous in their reference.⁵⁶ Similarly, in lines 21–23, the precise identity of 'friends' and 'enemies' is impossible to ascertain, and *en dêmoi* (23) might mean 'among the common people' or 'in the land'. No doubt, such ambiguity is excellent rhetoric in a political speech designed to reach and persuade two different groups.⁵⁷

As a result, far from employing deception (*haimulioi logoi* 'wily words' in Theognis), Solon criticizes the *dēmos* 'the people'⁵⁸ for being taken in by the words of a *haimulos* 'wily' man:

εἰ δὲ πεπόνθατε λυγρὰ δι' ὑμετέρην κακότητα,
μὴ θεοῖσιν τούτων μοῖραν ἐπαμφέρετε·
αὐτοὶ γὰρ τούτους ἠΰξήσατε ῥύματα δόντες,
καὶ διὰ ταῦτα κακὴν ἔσχετε δουλοσύνην.
ὑμέων δ' εἰς μὲν ἕκαστος ἀλώπεκος ἔχνεσι βαίνειν,
σύμπασιν δ' ὑμῖν χαῖνος ἔνεστι νόσος·
ἐς γὰρ γλώσσαν ὁράτε καὶ εἰς ἔπη αἰμύλου ἀνδρός,
εἰς ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν γιγνόμενον βλέπετε.

(Solon 11.1–8)

If you have suffered miseries through your own baseness,
do not ascribe this fate to the gods;
for you yourselves have strengthened these men, giving them protections,
and on account of these things you have evil slavery.

56. See note 10 above.

57. Adkins, *Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, pp. 113 ff. B. Gentili points out that while both Theognis and Solon use the same mode of expression and nearly identical language (Solon 4.6–11 and Theognis 39–50), their intentions differ: Theognis contrasts citizens (*astoi*) and leaders (*hēgemonas*); Solon criticizes both (*Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, translated by A. T. Cole [Baltimore, 1988], p. 62). In Solon's lines, *astoi* might refer to the whole body politic, to the nobles, or to prominent citizens, and *khremasi peithomenoi* might mean 'persuaded by (someone else's) great wealth' or 'persuaded by (their own) great wealth' (Adkins, *Poetic craft*, p. 113). Nagy argues (in disagreement with West) that *hēgemonas* means not 'popular leaders' but 'the elite of society' in the description of the coming of the *authunēr* 'corrector' (Nagy, "Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of his City," p. 43). Masaracchia explains that regardless of who Solon means by *astoi*, they are like the *dēmoi hēgemonas* in their greed for wealth, which is destroying the city (Masaracchia, *Solone*, pp. 253ff., 267ff.). Similar ambiguity occurs in Poem 36, in which the identity of contending parties is also unclear (36.22–25). (See Chapter 3, note 34.)

58. D. L. Page notes that Homer, Hesiod, Alcman, and Alcaeus use the word to signify the entire populace of the state in contrast to the rulers (*Sappho and Alcaeus* [Oxford, 1955], p. 177). Solon seems to use the word in the same way to refer to those without political power.

Each one of you steps along in the tracks of the fox,
but the mind in all of you together is foolish;
for you look to the tongue and the words of a wily man,
but as to his actual deed you see nothing.

In criticizing the *dēmos* for being taken in by the man who says one thing and does another, Solon is objecting to precisely the kind of aristocratic deception advised and employed by Theognis. Theognis actually advises saying one thing and doing another, as, for example, when he urges:

εὖ κῶτιλλε τὸν ἐχθρόν· ὅταν δ' ὑποχείριος ἔλθῃ,
τεῖσαι μιν πρόφασιν μηδεμίαν θέμενος.
ἴσχε νόωι, γλώσση δὲ τὸ μείλιχον αἰὲν ἐπέστω·
δειλῶν τοι τελέθει καρδίη ὀξύτερη.
(Theognis 363–366)

beguile your enemy with fair words; but when he comes under your hand,
take vengeance on him without pretext.
Be firm in your mind, but let gentleness always be upon your tongue;
the heart of cowards, you know, is rather quick to anger.

Solon is, in a sense, “squealing” by urging the *dēmos* not to allow themselves to be deceived any longer, and by explaining how, in fact, the deception occurs: it is a disjunction between word and deed, that is, a deception not simply on the level of language, but, more importantly, on the level of actions. More often elsewhere, the distinction is between saying one thing and *thinking* another (as, for example, in *Iliad* 9.312–313; *Odyssey* 8.165–167; Theognis 91–92, 93–94, 95–96, 365–366), but it is characteristic of Solon to look to the *effect* of such deceitful thinking. One thinks of his concern to identify the direct consequences of specific actions in Poems 13 and 4.

Solon's attitude toward the *dēmos* in Poem 11 is consistent with his explanation of his actions in Poem 5: in which he claims:

δήμῳ μὲν γὰρ ἔδωκα τόσον γέρας ὅσον ἐπαρκεῖν
(Solon 5.1)

To the *dēmos* I gave as much privilege [*geras*] as was sufficient.

In this statement he pointedly reverses the traditional relationship as it is understood in Homer. In the world of the *Odyssey* it is the collective which gives *geras* ‘privilege’ to the ruler. Odysseus speaks of the γέρας θ’ ὅ τι δῆμος ἔδωκεν ‘the rights the people have given’ to Alkinoos (*Odyssey* 7.150). For Hesiod, *geras* refers to divine privilege; it is never the

possession of mortals (*Works and Days* 126; *Theogony* 393, 396, 427). In Homer, however, *geras* is something accorded mortals—certain mortals, that is. It can be a prize awarded an individual warrior (*Iliad* 1.123 and 276; *Odyssey* 7.10 and 11.534) or servant (*Odyssey* 20.297), rites due to the dead (*Iliad* 23.9; *Odyssey* 24.190 and 296), privileges of old men (*Iliad* 4.323) or grieving mortals (*Odyssey* 4.197), or the rights and powers of a king in his homeland (*Odyssey* 11.175, 184; 15.522). *Geras* in Homer is a mark of distinction. It differentiates certain individuals from other individuals. The conferral of *geras* on the *dēmos*—the distinction of a collection of mortals—is, therefore, a startling inversion of a Homeric concept. It underscores Solon's effort to distinguish the *dēmos* as an actor in the political process.

The realization that the symposium is an inadequate paradigm for political organization, the avoidance of the exclusivity of praise-blame poetry, and the rejection of aristocratic deception in the desire to include all listeners in a community of those who will understand derive from Solon's perception of the problem of consumption and overconsumption and his concern for the relationship between public and private. When he criticizes the citizens of Athens, it is not only for their lack of restraint but also for their inability, or unwillingness, to distinguish public from private:

οὐθ' ἱερῶν κτεάνων οὐτέ τι δημοσίων
φειδόμενοι κλέπτουσιν ἀφαρπαγῇ ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος
(Solon 4.12–13)⁵⁹

59. The nouns *harpaktēr* ‘robber’ and *apharpagē* or *harpagē* ‘robbery, rapacity, rape’ are not common in epic or lyric poetry, and are extant only in Solon, Hesiod, and Homer. In addition to *apharpagēi* (or *eph' harpagēi*) here at Solon 4.13, Solon also reproaches his critics for indulging in *harpagē* in Poem 34.1. Hesiod says *harpakta* ‘stolen’, which he criticizes in contrast to *theosdota* ‘god-given’ (*Works and Days* 320), and *harpaktos*, referring to a seizure of sailing opportunity without thought of possible consequences (*Works and Days* 684). In this passage Hesiod also connects such improper seizure with intellectual limitations, claiming that men do this *aidreīsi noōi* ‘through ignorance’ (*Works and Days* 682–685). When Priam castigates his surviving sons, he calls them *harpaktēres epidēmioi* ‘plunderers of their own people in their land’ (*Iliad* 24.262). The adjective *epidēmios* is also not common in epic or lyric poetry. It occurs only three other times in Homer, and elsewhere, not at all. In the *Odyssey* it seems to mean ‘in the country’ or ‘at home’, referring to Odysseus' presence in Ithaca (*Odyssey* 1.194 and 233). In the *Iliad* Nestor uses it of war among one people, as opposed to war between different peoples, in asserting:

ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιτος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος
ὃς πολέμου ἔραται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυόεντος.
(*Iliad* 9.63–64)

sparing neither possessions that are sacred nor those belonging to the public,
they steal with rapacity [*apharpagē*] from every direction.

Solon's metaphorical use of *helkos* 'wound' also reflects this concern for the relationship between public and private, because while distinctions can and must be made in the *polis* between public and private property, public and private fortunes are inevitably interrelated. Having described the avenging function of *Dikē* 'Justice', Solon insists:

τοῦτ' ἤδη πάσι πόλει ἔρχεται ἔλκος ἄφυκτον
(Solon 4.17)

This comes immediately upon every city as an inescapable wound
[*helkos*].

In Solon's metaphor, the city itself receives a wound as if it were a warrior on a battlefield.⁶⁰ The martial metaphor seems to recall the opening lines of the poem in suggesting again a city under siege by external enemies.⁶¹

Out of all brotherhood, outlawed, homeless shall be that man
who longs for all the horror of fighting among his own people.

Priam's combination of the two uncommon words is thus quite striking. His phrase, *harpaktēres epidēmioi* suggests, as do Solon's lines, the dangers of uncontrolled consumption and the confusion of public with private.

60. Adkins notes that "those who portray Solon as a political theorist render *helkos* as 'sore' or 'sickness' resulting from the disease of injustice in the city. But *helkos* at this period is used of wounds inflicted from without by persons or animals (*Iliad* 2.723, 4.217, 5.361, 11.267, etc.). It never means 'disease' or 'sickness', and its first appearance in the sense of 'sore' seems to be in Thucydides 2.49.5" (*Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, p. 118).

61. And again there may be a parallel to Troy. The reference to *helkos* might recall the wounds of any number of warriors throughout the *Iliad* or even, more specifically, Hektor's wounds at 24.420. But the suggestion that one wound (or one man's wounds) can affect an entire city is, perhaps, pre-figured in *Iliad* 24. When Cassandra sees Hektor's corpse, she cries out *pān katà āstū* 'to the entire city' (24.703), and recalls that, while alive, Hektor *mēga chārma pōlei t'* *hēn pantī te dhēmō* 'was a great joy to his city, and all his people' (24.706). Solon's suggestion that one wound can affect the whole may recall the way that the wounds of one warrior affect the survival of Troy in *Iliad* 24.

And, as is the case with a besieged city, here, too, the stakes are not trivial, for

ἐς δὲ κακὴν ταχέως ἤλυθε δουλοσύνην,
ἢ στάσιν ἔμφυλον πόλεμόν θ' εὕδοντ' ἐπεγείρει,
ὅς πολλῶν ἐρατὴν ὤλεσεν ἡλικίην·
(Solon 4.18–20)

it swiftly comes to evil slavery,
which wakens intestine discord and sleeping war,
that destroys the lovely youth of many.

The emotional overtones are unmistakable: slavery is the punishment that external enemies inflict on the inhabitants of a city they have defeated.⁶²

But Solon also intends this reference to slavery quite literally. He explains that

τῶν δὲ πενιχρῶν
ἰκνέονται πολλοὶ γαῖαν ἐς ἀλλοδαπὴν
πραθέντες δεσμοῖσι τ' ἀεικελίοισι δεθέντες
(Solon 4.23–25)

many of the poor
are wandering in a foreign land
having been sold and enslaved in shameful bonds.

In addition, the mention of slavery evokes the dire prospect that the entire city may come under the rule of a tyrant. Solon thus not only draws upon the familiar, emotionally charged theme of the inevitable enslavement inflicted by external enemies, but also refers to specific contemporary circumstances which his audience would recognize.

Although not further elaborated in this poem, Solon's attitude toward tyranny, expressed elsewhere in his poetry, reveals a re-evaluation of some of the traditional standards of praise and blame. In Poem 32, his reply to criticism of his decision not to assume absolute power, Solon maintains:

εἰ δὲ γῆς (φησιν) ἐφεισάμην
πατρίδος, τυραννίδος δὲ καὶ βίης ἀμειλίχου
οὐ καθηψάμην μίανας καὶ καταισχύνας κλέος,

62. Thus, for example, Andromache, grieving over Hektor's corpse, spells out the grim future for the wives and children of Troy (*Iliad* 24.724ff.), and Priam refers to the many children of his whom Achilles has already sold into slavery (*Iliad* 24.751–753).

οὐδὲν αἰδέομαι· πλεον γὰρ ὧδε νικήσειν δοκέω
πάντας ἀνθρώπους.

(Solon 32.1–5)

If I have spared my
fatherland and have not grasped at tyranny [*turannis*] and implacable
violence [*biē ameilikhos*]
staining and shaming my glory [*kleos*],
I am not ashamed [*ouden aideomai*]; rather, in this way I think I will be
victorious [*nikaō*]
over all men.

The poet's insistence that he is not ashamed on this account indicates his unwillingness to accept unquestioningly all popular standards for praise and blame. In his view, becoming tyrant would be a defilement and a disgrace of *kleos*. This suggests a decidedly more restrictive definition of *kleos* than that held by others who evidently would not consider holding tyrannical power to be a violation of *kleos*. Moreover, in the concluding sentence, Solon seems to offer a somewhat idiosyncratic interpretation of what it means to be victorious over people. His victory will not be in terms of *turannis* and *biē ameilikhos*. By suggesting his own specific interpretation of such traditionally potent praise-blame terms as *aideomai*, *kleos*, *nikaō*, Solon not only attempts to explain his own actions but also to re-educate, that is, include his audience in a departure from traditional standards of praise and blame.

A second reply Solon places in the mouth of a hypothetical critic:

"οὐκ ἔφυ Σόλων βαθύφρων οὐδὲ βουλήεις ἀνὴρ·
ἐσθλὰ γὰρ θεοῦ διδόντος αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐδέξατο·
περιβαλὼν δ' ἄγρην ἀγασθεὶς οὐκ ἐπέσπασεν μέγα
δίκτηνον, θυμοῦ θ' ἁμαρτῇ καὶ φρενῶν ἀποσφαλεῖς·
ἤθελον γὰρ κεν κρατήσας, πλοῦτον ἄφθονον λαβὼν
καὶ τυραννεύσας Ἀθηνέων μόνον ἡμέρην μίαν,
ἀσκός ὕστερον δεδάρθαι κάπιτετρίφθαι γένος."

(Solon 33.1–7)

"Solon is not by nature a deep-thinking nor wise man;
for he himself did not accept good things when the god offered them;
having made a cast about his prey, he was amazed and did not draw up
his great net, having been deprived at the same time of both his
intention and his thoughts;
for if I had this power, having seized bounteous wealth [*aphthonos ploutos*]
and ruling Athens for one single day,
I would be willing to be flayed afterward as a wineskin and have my
race [*genos*] after me wiped out."

In this poem, the poet uses traditional concepts to ridicule his opponent. The *persona loquens* is a characteristic device in blame poetry. According to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 3.1418b 23), if a character's words begin the poem, the procedure is particularly useful for *psogos* 'blame' because it enables the poet to conceal his own identity, and avoid incurring resentment.⁶³ But Solon is inverting this procedure, implicitly blaming the speaker by revealing the corruptness of his values, and, conversely, implicitly praising the object of the speaker's blame. The speaker is evidently someone who is foolish enough to think that it is possible to take by force *aphthonos ploutos* 'bounteous wealth' (5).⁶⁴ Elsewhere, Solon has argued that one can never with impunity take wealth by force (Poem 13). Moreover, this speaker is also willing to sacrifice *kleos* in the process, as indicated by his willingness to forfeit his own *genos* (7). This "critic" appears to be someone whose own standards are so corrupt as to indicate that he has forfeited the right to utter praise or blame—or, at any rate, to be listened to as he does so. In this poem, Solon uses traditional concepts of praise and blame to define and thereby to defuse his opponents.

While other poets, too, cast unfavorable judgements on tyranny, they tend to do so from the perspective of exclusivity, that is, from the perspective of the (potential) tyrant, and conclude that the tyrant's lot is not enviable. Thus, Pindar, for example, maintains:

τῶν γὰρ ἀνὰ πόλιν εὐρίσκων τὰ μέσα μακροτέρωι
(συν) ὀλβωι τεθαλότα, μέφομ' αἴσαν τυραννίδων·
(*Pythian* 11.52–53)

for, having searched
into the city's ways, and having learned
that moderation blooms
with a longer happiness,
I have no fondness for the tyrant's lot.

Similarly, Archilochus presents the carpenter Charon's critique of the wealth and power of Gyges:

οὐ μοι τὰ Γύγεω τοῦ πολυχρύσου μέλει,
οὐδ' εἰλέ πώ με ζῆλος, οὐδ' ἀγαιομαι

63. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, p. 109.

64. For *phthonos* as an important term in the diction of praise-blame poetry, see Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, pp. 224–228.

θεῶν ἔργα, μεγάλης δ' οὐκ ἔρέω τυραννίδος·
ἀπόπροθεν γάρ ἐστιν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμῶν."

(Archilochus 19)

I do not care for the life of Gyges and his abundance of gold;
jealousy has never seized me; nor do I envy the works of the gods,
and I have no love for great tyranny;
for that is far away from my eyes.

Still, it is not a tremendous leap from favoring the rule of the few to accepting the rule of a single man. Thus, Simonides, for example, suggests that tyranny is acceptable if one can still enjoy life's pleasures (584). These comments consider only the advantages or disadvantages of tyranny for the tyrant himself or for a select and fortunate few under his tyranny.

In contrast, Solon's rejection of tyranny derives not merely from a concern for his own welfare but from a desire to find a balance between conflicting factions in his community. Thus, in Poem 34, he maintains:

οἱ δ' ἐφ' ἀρπαγῇσιν ἦλθον· ἐλπίδ' εἶχον ἀφνεήν,
κάδοκ[ε]ον ἕκαστος αὐτῶν δλβον εὐρήσειν πολύν,
καί με κοτίλλοντα λείως τραχὺν ἐκφανεῖν νόον.
χαῦνα μὲν τότε ἔφράσαντο, νῦν δέ μοι χολούμενοι
λοξὸν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὀρώσι πάντες ὥστε δῆϊον.
οὐ χρεῶν· ἃ μὲν γὰρ εἶπα, σὺν θεοῖσιν ἦνυσσα,
ἄ[λλ]α δ' οὐ μάτην ἔερδον, οὐδέ μοι τυραννίδος
ἀνδάνει βίηι τι. .].ε[ι]ν, οὐδὲ πιεί[ρ]ης χθονὸς
πατρίδος κακοῖσιν ἐσθλοὺς ἰσομοιρίην ἔχειν.

(Solon 34.1–9)

But some came for the purpose of robbery; they had rich hope,
and each of them thought that he would find much prosperity,
and that although I was chattering gently I would reveal a harsh mind.
They thought foolish things then, and now, angry at me,
they all look at me aslant, as at an enemy.
It is not necessary, for with the help of the gods, I accomplished what I
said,
and as to the rest, I acted not without reason, nor was it pleasing to me
[to do] anything by force of tyranny, nor for the base
to have an equal share of the rich fatherland with the noble.

Theognis, like Solon, contemplates the prospect of tyranny from the perspective of the well-being of the community. In two almost parallel passages, he maintains:

Κύρνε, κύει πόλις ἥδε, δέδοικα δὲ μὴ τέκνη ἄνδρα
εὐθυντήρα κακῆς ὕβριος ἡμετέρης.
ἄστοι μὲν γὰρ ἔθ' οἶδε σαόφρονες, ἡγεμόνες δὲ
τετράφαται πολλὴν εἰς κακότητα πεσεῖν.

(Theognis 39–42)

Kyrnos, this city is pregnant, and I fear that it may give birth to a man
who will be a straightener of our [*hēmetērē*] evil wanton violence
[*hubris*];

for these citizens are still temperate, but their leaders
have been turned so that they are going to fall into great evil.

and:

Κύρνε, κύει πόλις ἥδε, δέδοικα δὲ μὴ τέκνη ἄνδρα
ὕβριστήν, χαλεπῆς ἡγεμόνα στάσιος·
ἄστοι μὲν γὰρ ἔθ' οἶδε σαόφρονες, ἡγεμόνες δὲ
τετράφαται πολλὴν εἰς κακότητα πεσεῖν.

(Theognis 1081a–1082b)

Kyrnos, this city is pregnant, and I fear that it may give birth to a man
of wanton violence [*hubristēs*], a leader of harsh discord:
for these citizens are still temperate, but their leaders
have been turned so that they are going to fall into great evil.

The two passages might seem to reflect some ambivalence regarding the emergence of a tyrant. The first seems to view it somewhat favorably, the second without doubt unfavorably,⁶⁵ but any contradiction between the two statements may be more apparent than real. The two passages may be evidence of the sort of tact or etiquette required at symposia, the former for use when the would-be tyrant is

65. Nagy sees some contradiction between the two passages, arguing that whereas the latter passage is "one-sidedly negative about the emerging tyrant," the former reveals "a more even-handed—one might say 'Solonian'—stance" ("Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of his City," p. 46). But this use of "Solonian" seems questionable, since Solon is unequivocally opposed to tyranny. The contention is in support of Nagy's argument that the two stretches of the Theognidean corpus—1–1022, containing 39–42 (tyrant as regulator of *hubris*) and 1023–1220, containing 1081a–1082b (tyrant as exponent of *hubris*)—are from different phases of the Theognidean poetic tradition. He suggests that the two passages may represent "the 'same' poem in different phases of Megarian history, the former corresponding to a later 'pan-Hellenic' orientation, the latter to an earlier, more 'provincial' period" (pp. 46–51). In this view, Nagy is in disagreement with M. L. West who argues that the two stretches are superior and inferior excerpts (*Meliora* and *Deteriora*) from a larger corpus (*Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* [Berlin and New York, 1974], pp. 40–61).

present in the audience, the latter for use on other occasions. Still, it is hardly inconsistent to acknowledge that a tyrant can be the regulator of *others' hubris* (39–42) (note *hēmelerē* at line 40), and at the same time to recognize the tyrant's inability to regulate his *own hubris* (1081–1082b). Thus, Theognis, too, recognizes that tyranny is no solution to the problem of human acquisitiveness and its regulation. No single individual can create communal unity and harmony, since he is unlikely to be able to control his own greed, to observe distinctions between that which is his and that which is not, between that which is private and that which is public.

Solon concludes his discussion of the problems confronting the city and their results with a striking and unusual metaphor:

οὕτω δημόσιον κακὸν ἔρχεται οἴκαδ' ἐκάστωι,
αὐλαιοὶ δ' ἔτ' ἔχειν οὐκ ἐθέλουσι θύραι,
ὑψηλὸν δ' ὑπὲρ ἔρκος ὑπέρθορον, εὔρε δὲ πάντως,
εἰ καὶ τις φεύγων ἐν μυχῶι ἢ θαλάμῳ.
(Solon 4.26–29)

Thus the public evil comes homeward to each man,
the courtyard doors [*auleioi* ... *thurai*] are no longer still willing [*ouk ethelousi*] to keep it out,
but it leaps over the high wall [*herkos*], and inevitably finds a man,
even if, fleeing, he runs to hide in the corner of a room.

Although it is quite comprehensible, the picture Solon has drawn is odd. What does it mean to say that the courtyard doors are *unwilling* to keep evil out, particularly since it is over the fence, not through the doors, that the evil enters? A simple explanation is that Solon is not overly concerned with these details,⁶⁶ but perhaps one need not dismiss the puzzle quite so readily, for, alternatively, perhaps Solon intends the oddness of the metaphor to be arresting. And, indeed, although the metaphor is unusual, one Homeric antecedent in particular may help to clarify the implications of this passage.

66. Thus, Adkins explains that "one might suppose that the gates do not wish, or are unable, to keep out the woe either because they open to let it through or because the woe jumps over them. (If the woe can jump, presumably the gates can have wishes.) But the woe jumps over the high fence. The wishes of the gates are consequently irrelevant, and it is the fence which is unable to protect its owner." Adkins concludes that "Solon is more concerned to present an emotive image than to offer reasoned exposition" (*Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, p. 121).

The *aule* 'courtyard', *thurē* 'door', and *herkos* 'wall' (or *herkion*) are standard domestic features in the Homeric epics. Solon's image generally recalls Homeric similes in which lions attack domestic animals in the fold such as, for example, *Iliad* 5.136–142.⁶⁷ More specifically, however, in *Iliad* 9, Phoenix relates that, having been tempted to murder his father, he managed to flee his home, in spite of being closely guarded by his kinsmen, by leaping out over the courtyard wall. He explains:

εἰνάνυχες δέ μοι ἀμφ' αὐτῶι παρὰ νύκτας ἴανον·
οἱ μὲν ἀμειβόμενοι φυλακὰς ἔχον, οὐδέ ποτ' ἔσβη
πῦρ, ἔτερον μὲν ὑπ' αἰθούσῃι εὐερκέος αὐλῆς,
ἄλλο δ' ἐνὶ προδόμῳ, πρόσθεν θαλάμοιο θυράων.
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ δεκάτη μοι ἐπήλυθε νύξ ἐρεβεννή,
καὶ τότε ἔγὼ θαλάμοιο θύρας πυκινῶς ἀραρυίας
ῥήξας ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ὑπέρθορον ἐρκίον αὐλῆς
ῥεῖα, λαθὼν φύλακας τ' ἄνδρας δμωιάς τε γυναῖκας.
(*Iliad* 9.470–477)

Nine nights they slept nightlong in their places beside me,
and they kept up an interchange of watches, and the fire was never
put out; one below the gate of the strong-closed courtyard,
and one in the ante-chamber before the doors of the bedroom.
But when the tenth night had come to me in its darkness,
then I broke the close-compacted doors of the chamber
and got away, and overleapt the fence of the courtyard [*huperthoron*
herkion aulēs]

lightly, unnoticed by the guarding men and the women servants.

The verb *huperthrōskō* (476) occurs elsewhere in epic or lyric poetry only three other times, all in the *Iliad* and all three in reference to horses leaping over the *taphros* 'ditch' of the Greeks (*Iliad* 8.179 and 16.380) or fearing to leap over it (*Iliad* 12.53). Phoenix's use of it in reference to his leap over the courtyard wall is, therefore, unusual, and the phrase *huperthoron herkion aulēs* (9.476) is noticeably similar to Solon's *huper herkos huperthoren* (4.28).

As the barrier to the *aule*, the *herkos* seems to be that which separates the private residence from the rest of the community—in civilized societies. It may be worth noting that the cave of Polyphemos, in *Odyssey* 9, although it has an *aule* (184, 239, 338, 462), *thurai* (243, 417), and

67. Adkins, *Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, p. 118.

even a *thureos* 'doorstone' (240, 340), has no *herkos*. By jumping out over his *herkos*, Phoenix, one individual man, reduced the trouble accruing to the community. Solon's metaphor is, in a sense, an inversion of this situation: in his view the communal trouble jumps in over the *herkos* to cause trouble to an individual man. Solon's *ouk ethelousi* 'they are not willing' might simply be equivalent to *ou dunantai* 'they are not able', but the fact that he does not use this or maintain, for example, that the doors are not high enough suggests that the irrelevance of the doors is Solon's point. His image seems to emphasize, intentionally, not inadvertently or carelessly, the multiplicity of ways in which public evil penetrates into the house of different individuals and, therefore, the insignificance or irrelevance not merely of the *thurai* or their wishes, but of the *herkos* as well, that is, of all traditional barriers between public and private, when the survival of the community is at issue. Thus, not only is the community threatened by the fact that necessary distinctions between public and private are difficult to discern or maintain (Solon 4.12–13): it is also not protected by the traditional, readily discernible boundaries between public and private.

Just as tyranny is no solution, in Solon's view, neither is the Homeric conception of harmony and order achieved by means of a coincidence of divine and human actions. The solution he proposes in the concluding lines of Poem 4 is in marked contrast with such a view. Solon claims that

Εὐνομίη δ' εὐκοσμία καὶ ἄρτια πάντ' ἀποφαίνει
καὶ θαμὰ τοῖς ἀδίκους ἀμφιτίθησι πέδας·
τραχέα λειαίνει, παύει κόρον, ὕβριν ἀμαυροῖ,
αὐαίνει δ' ἄτης ἄνθεα φυόμενα,
εὐθύνει δὲ δίκας σκολιάς, ὑπερήφανά τ' ἔργα
πραΐνει· παύει δ' ἔργα διχοστασίης,
παύει δ' ἄργαλέης ἐριδος χόλον, ἔστι δ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
πάντα κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἄρτια καὶ πινυτά.
(Solon 4.32–39)

Thus Good Order [*Eunomiē*] makes all things orderly and fitting
and often places fetters around those who are unjust;
it smoothes the rough, stops *koros*, enfeebles wanton violence [*hubris*],
withers the blooming flowers of ruinous folly [*ate*],
straightens crooked judgements, and gentles overweening deeds;
it stops acts of dissension,
and stops the anger of troublesome strife; and by its action
all things among men are made fitting and wise.

Does Solon understand *Eunomiē* as a divine force? Experts are not in agreement,⁶⁸ but the more popular view recognizes that *Eunomiē* for Solon is not a divine force but rather a desired social condition,⁶⁹ a goal of Solon's personal policy.⁷⁰

Moreover, the conflict, as Solon has described it, is not amenable to resolution explained in terms of divine intervention. He has stressed that human beings, not gods, are responsible for the city's troubles. Human beings, therefore, must find entirely human solutions. One may contrast the Homeric resolution presented in *Iliad* 24, in which order is restored by means of a coincidence of divine and human actions. In that passage, divine intervention figures prominently,⁷¹ and the strands of human and divine will are tightly intertwined. Achilles agrees because Zeus wills it.⁷² The importance of human will is not

68. Adkins argues that *Eunomiē* is, in fact, a divine agent and that Solon's description functions like multiple determination in which there is both a divine and a human agent. He comments: "Note that many of the good results ascribed to *Eunomiē* suit the actions of a person but not the existence of a condition of 'good order' in which the bad situation would not prevail at all" (*Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists*, p. 124). But it is not at all clear that the continual restoration of order can only result from the actions of a person or that a condition of 'good order' can only be one which precludes trouble from ever arising in the first place.

69. M. Ostwald, *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy* (Oxford, 1969), p. 64.

70. V. Ehrenberg, *Aspects of the Ancient World* (New York, 1946), pp. 84–85. Solmsen explains it as "sound moral condition" (*Hesiod and Aeschylus*, p. 116).

71. Apollo protects Hektor's body from defilement (*Iliad* 24.18–21), and Zeus determines that Priam should give gifts to Achilles and that Achilles should release Hektor's body (74–76). He sends Hermes to guide Priam (334ff.). Hermes tells Priam that the gods are protecting Hektor's body (411–423), and also helps Priam to leave Achilles' camp safely (679ff.). Zeus' message to Achilles (113–116) is repeated by Thetis (134–137), and his message to Priam (117–119) is repeated three times during the book (145–147, 175–176, 194–196). The repetition not only serves a narrative purpose in helping to advance the plot: it also emphasizes the fact that the resolution is both pre-determined and determined by multiple agency.

72. Achilles answers Thetis:

τῇιδ' εἴη· ὃς ἄποινα φέροι καὶ νεκρὸν ἄγοιτο,
εἰ δὴ πρόφρονι θυμῷ Ὀλύμπιος αὐτὸς ἀνάγει.
(*Iliad* 24.139–140)

So be it. He can bring the ransom and take off the body,
if the Olympian himself so urgently bids it.

minimal in the Homeric model; the resolution is based no less on human will than on divine.⁷³ But Solon's description of *Eunomiē* seems, by contrast, to prescribe an entirely human solution—by referring to *that which needs to be done* in order to achieve good order—and suggests that

73. Although the ransom has been mandated by Zeus, and in spite of the emphasis throughout the book on the gifts Priam brings to Achilles, these gifts do not actually determine Achilles' decision. Although he will later excuse his action to Patroklos by citing the gifts he has received (*Iliad* 24.592–595), Achilles becomes angry when Priam offers him gifts, insisting

μηκέτι νῦν μ' ἐρέθιζε γέρον· νοέω δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς
 "Ἐκτορά τοι λῦσαι, Διόθεν δέ μοι ἄγγελος ἦλθε
 μήτηρ, ἣ μ' ἔτεκεν, θυγάτηρ Ἀλκίονος γέροντος.
 (*Iliad* 24.560–562)

No longer stir me up, old sir. I myself am minded
 to give Hektor to you. A messenger came to me from Zeus,
 my mother, she who bore me, the daughter of the sea's ancient.

This speech indicates the importance of Achilles' will as well as Zeus', for in spite of the divine message, in spite of the knowledge that Priam could never have entered the camp without divine aid (*Iliad* 24.563–567), Achilles is still dangerous. He still suggests the possibility that he may attack Priam, warning him:

τῷ νῦν μή μοι μάλλον ἐν ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ὀρίνηις,
 μή σε, γέρον, οὐδ' αὐτὸν ἐνὶ κλισίῃσιν ἑάσω
 καὶ ἱκέτην περ ἑόντα, Διὸς δ' ἀλίτωμαι ἐφετμάς.
 (*Iliad* 24.568–570)

Therefore
 you must not further make my spirit move in my sorrows,
 for fear, old sir, I might not let you alone in my shelter,
 suppliant as you are; and be guilty before the god's orders.

Priam's actions also emphasize the importance of human will and action. Hermes may presage the resolution when he tells Priam φίλῳ δέ σε πατρὶ εἶσκω 'You seem to me like a beloved father' (*Iliad* 24.371). He advises Priam:

τύνη δ' εἰσελθὼν λαβὲ γούνατα Πηλεΐωνος,
 καὶ μιν ὑπὲρ πατρός καὶ μητέρος ἠΰκόμοιο
 λίσσεο καὶ τέκεος, ἵνα οἱ σὺν θυμὸν ὀρίνηις.
 (*Iliad* 24.465–467)

But go you in yourself and clasp the knees of Peleion
 and entreat him in the name of his father, the name of his mother
 of the lovely hair, and his child, and so move the spirit within him.

But, in the event, Priam only entreats Achilles in the name of his father (*Iliad* 24.486–506), and the appeal has the desired effect. It enables Achilles and Priam to grieve together (507ff.) and causes Achilles to feel pity (516ff.)

the harmony he envisions for the *polis* is not a Homeric harmony of conflict utterly resolved but an ongoing, controlled tension.

As such, it encompasses neither tyranny nor the conception of political order embraced by praise-blame poetry: aristocratic rule, the idyllic exclusion of the *kakoi* exemplified by the symposium paradigm.⁷⁴ Solon recognizes that, like tyranny, aristocratic political organization has only produced, and *can* only produce, conflict and disorder since, again like tyranny, it does not account for individuals' inability to control their own acquisitiveness.

In sum, thematic similarities between Poem 4 and Poem 13 suggest that there is little to be gained from viewing the former as "political" and the latter as "ethical" or "religious." Both poems emphasize the importance of intellectual understanding, both recognize the difficulty and dangers in achieving human satisfaction, and both attribute to human beings responsibility for the outcome of human actions. Unlike Poem 13, however, which seems merely to hint at a solution, Poem 4 offers a deliberate prescription. And yet, if viewed as political theory, this prescription seems vague at best.

If, however, one examines the emotional impact and imagery of Poem 4 as well as its literal content, one finds a number of archaic passages which provide the context for Solon's reflections. Comparison of Poem 4 with these passages reveals the way in which Solon is able to present an unprecedented analysis of Athens' problems, while drawing upon familiar themes, as well as traditional images and language. Solon's solution to the problem of civic conflict becomes not only more comprehensible than it might otherwise appear, but also all the more strikingly novel in comparison to the solutions presented by other poets.

74. The virtue of *Eunomiē* is that:

παύει δ' ἀργαλέης ἔριδος χόλον
 (Solon 4.38)

It stops the anger of troublesome strife [*eris*].

If, as Nagy maintains, in the diction of praise poetry *eris* is (like *neikos* 'quarrel'), in fact, a programmatic word which has the specific function of designating the opposite of praise poetry (Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, p. 224), Solon's assertion that *Eunomiē* can put a stop to it may specifically indicate his rejection of the use of invective, and, therefore, of the attempt to achieve social harmony by strengthening the bonds of *philotēs* 'friendship' among members of a select portion of society (*The Best of the Achaeans*, p. 241, and see also "Iambos: Typologies of Invective and Praise," *Arethusa* 9 [1976], pp. 191–206). Solon attempts, instead, to strengthen *philotēs* not by exclusion but by inclusion.

The difference between Solon and other poets in their prescriptions for the resolution of civic conflict and the restoration of order may provide something of an answer to those who would argue, with Havelock, that "Solon's elegies make no conceptual contribution" beyond that of earlier poets.⁷⁵ Sensitivity to differences between an individual's perceptions of himself and his world and others' perceptions of that individual makes the relationship between public and private intensely problematic for Solon. Unlike other poets, he recognizes that, where wealth is concerned, human insatiability can find no analogy in other human desires which have inherent physiological limits. The traditional poetic imagery is, therefore, inadequate because it is inaccurate. Moreover, Solon recognizes the universality of the problem of human acquisitiveness. The *agathoi* are no more immune than the *kakoi*. This understanding of the danger of human insatiability thus dictates the social function of Solon's poetry. In rejecting the exclusivity of the aristocratic solution—which is no solution—Solon attempts to make his poetry equally comprehensible and acceptable to all hearers, not merely a select few.

The implication in Poem 4 is that harmony is possible within the *polis* but it is neither a Homeric harmony in which divine and human will act together and conflict can be resolved utterly nor an aristocratic, utopian vision in which conflict never arises. Solon's solution would neither preclude problems nor ever resolve them completely. Rather, he envisions a community in which *Eunomiê* is a dynamic force perpetually creating balance and order. It is not a divine agent, but a communal commitment to good order.⁷⁶ It prevents *hubris* from getting out of hand by dictating the limits of satiety.⁷⁷ By advocating the determination of limits not by individuals but by the community, Poem 4 thus progresses from the attribution of individual responsibility to the attribution of communal responsibilities. Solon's vision suggests, unlike other poets', that the potential for human concord, for mutual identification, understanding, and compassion, lies not in the individual but in the community as a whole.

75. Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p. 262.

76. See note 16 above.

77. Contrast Theognis 39–42. Theognis can only envision the act of setting limits being the work of an individual, that is, a tyrant. See p. 107 above.

Chapter Three

Poem 36: Poet and Polity

Poem 36 is generally considered part of Solon's "political" poetry, and, undeniably, in it Solon defends his political actions. But just as in Poem 4 the lack of specificity limits any attempt to understand the poem as political theory, in Poem 36 Solon's omission of legislative particulars leaves open many questions regarding the specific details of his political reforms. Moreover, emphasis on the political aspect of both poems does not adequately account for the emotional power of either. Poems 36 and 4 both explore many of the same themes, and, like Poem 4, Poem 36 evokes and manipulates the imagery, implications, and emotional resonances of epic and praise-blame poetry. This intensifies its emotional impact and reveals Solon's awareness of the social purposes of his poetry. Although in structure and style this poem appears less Homeric than either Poem 4 or Poem 13, it gains persuasive power through being simultaneously Homeric and un-Homeric. Moreover, in rejecting the exclusivity of praise-blame poetry in this poem, as he did in Poem 4, Solon does not so much reject the terms of evaluation as reverse them. The reversal enables him to use the familiar theme of the scapegoat for his own political and poetic purposes. In the process, he reveals an acute awareness of his own poetic activity, of the relationship between poet and audience, and of the interrelationship between his poetry and his political activity.

While Poem 4 considers the possibilities for conflict and resolution in the relationship between citizens of the *polis*, Poem 36 reveals most clearly Solon's view of himself and his own relationship to his fellow citizens and to his city. Nevertheless, in their concern for communal harmony, both poems emphasize some of the same themes. The threat of slavery, for example, both real and metaphorical, receives particular attention in both poems. In Poem 4 Solon criticizes the unjust actions of the Athenians and the inevitable vengeance of *Dikê* 'Justice', insisting

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Solon the Singer

Politics and Poetics

Emily Katz Anhalt

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