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Introduction
Philosophy and Poetry, Truth and Symbolism

1 Aims, Methods and Assumptions

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ σπασαμένου τὸ ξίφος ἤδη νεανίου τινὸς ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ ξενοδόχον Ἄγχιτον, ἐπεὶ δικάσας δημοσίαι τὸν τοῦ νεανίου πατέρα ἐθανάτωσε, καὶ ἀίξαντος, ὡς εἶχε συγχύσεως καὶ θυμοῦ, ξιφήρους παῖσαι τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς καταδικαστὴν ὡσανεὶ φονέα Ἄγχιτον, μεθαρμοσάμενος ὡς εἶχε τὴν λύραν καὶ πεπαντικόν τι μέλος καὶ κατασταλτικὸν μεταχειρισάμενος εὐθὺς ἀνεκρούσατο τὸ 'νηπενθὲς ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθες ἁπάντων' κατὰ τὸν ποιητήν [δ 221], καὶ τόν τε ἑαυτοῦ ξενοδόχον Ἄγχιτον θανάτου ἐρρύσατο καὶ τὸν νεανίαν ἀνδροφονίας. ἱστορεῖται δ' οὗτος τῶν Ἐμπεδοκλέους γνωρίμων ὁ δοκιμώτατος ἔκτοτε γενέσθαι.

Once, a certain young man drew a sword on Empedocles' host, Anchitus, since, as a judge, he had sentenced the young man's father to death. The youth, in confusion and anger, and bearing a sword, rushed to strike the man who had condemned his father as if he, Anchitus, were a murderer. Empedocles, since he had the lyre, changed its tuning, played a softening and soothing strain, and immediately struck up the line, 'free from sorrow and lacking anger, forgetful of all ills' [Od. 4.221], in the words of the poet, and he saved his own host, Anchitus, from death, and the young man from homicide. And it is reported that this man then became the most distinguished of Empedocles' pupils. (Iamblichus *VP* 113=Empedocles P17<A15)

Iamblichus' wonderful story (probably deriving from the *c.* 100 CE Neopythagorean, Nicomachus of Gerasa) has, understandably, been given short shrift by most interpreters of Empedocles,[1] but it is a revealing document in the history of his ancient reception. Here, there is little hint of his importance for the traditions of science and

[1] For an exception, note Obbink (1993) 80–1.

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philosophy. Instead, he is a poetic performer, striking a chord on the lyre and reciting a line of Homer. As with other ancient accounts of poets' lives, the story could be understood as an interpretation of Empedocles' poetry.[2] It raises the themes of blood guilt and purification so prominent in the surviving fragments. The performance of an Odyssean line is suggestive of his use of epic metre and diction. But perhaps most revealing is the effect that Empedocles' performance is portrayed as having on its listener. Some idea of this effect may be gleaned from a closer examination of the line he performs. *Od.* 4.221 describes the drug that Helen puts into the wine for Telemachus and Peisistratus. Anyone who drinks it would not shed a tear, 'not even if his mother or father were to die' (*Od.* 4.224), a comment that hints at Telemachus' fears that his own father has perished. At least since Plutarch (*Mor.* 614b), Helen's drug has been interpreted metapoetically, as symbolising the emotional function of the story she tells in accompaniment to the drinking. This interpretation is put into action in Iamblichus' anecdote: the swift transition to the outcome of the affair implies that the performance has the immediate, affective impact of Helen's drug, causing the young man, like Telemachus, to forget his anguish at his father's death. If Empedocles here lived up to the ideals of philosophy familiar to modernity (and already promoted in Plato's dialogues), we might expect him to persuade his addressee by means of rational argument. But the young man does not change his mind after evaluating any claims presented by Empedocles or the Homeric line quoted. Instead, he is affected emotionally, in real time, whilst listening to a performance, an experience that alters his outlook on life.

This sort of emotional, transformative effect is also implicit in the language Empedocles uses of his own poetry, where the narrator has a reputation for being able to provide a 'healing utterance' (εὐηκέα βάξιν, D4=B112.11) and his voice is presented as a 'pure stream' (καθαρὴν . . . πηγήν, D44=B3.2), implying that the text itself cleanses its audience like the holy springs used in ritual purifications.[3] It is paralleled in several famous metapoetic passages from early Greek hexameter. Helen's drug is remarkably similar to the song of Hesiod's Muses, who impart 'forgetfulness of ills and ceasing of cares' (*Theog.* 55; note also *Theog.* 96–103), and it is for the same purpose that Achilles sings of the glories of men, distracting

[2] For ancient biographies of poets as a form of literary criticism, note Haubold (2010) 13–4 (on Hesiod) and Graziosi (2006). On ancient biographies of poets more generally, see Lefkowitz (2013) (orig. published 1981); Kivilo (2010); and, on Homer, Graziosi (2002); on Hesiod, Koning (2010).
[3] See the discussion of this fragment in Chapter 3 Section 4c below.

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himself from his anger and frustration (*Il.* 9.186–9). In these passages (among several others),[4] verse does not serve primarily as a mnemonic to preserve important information or as a means of publicising grand claims; rather, its function is to provide a particular experience. An ancient reception, the poetological language of the fragments themselves, and the generic context all bespeak the affective qualities of Empedocles' text.

This aspect is overlooked in the prevailing tendency to read Empedocles in a philosophical manner, primarily for the purposes of reconstructing and evaluating his propositional content.[5] The same preoccupation has predominated to an even greater extent in scholarship on Xenophanes and Parmenides. This tendency has a long history. Already in the fifth century BCE, Hippias of Elis excerpted the cosmological claims of these Presocratic poets and other authors, categorising them by subject in his lost *Sunagoge*, a practice that suggests that he was more interested in their ideas than in any aesthetic experience of their poetry. Gorgias seems to have provided a similar resumé of previous opinions at the start of his *On What Is Not* (D26a=[Arist.] *MXG* 5.979a12–16).[6] For the most part, Plato and Aristotle's procedure when discussing the Presocratics is fundamentally analogous to that of modern philosophical scholarship. Relying heavily on Hippias' and Gorgias' collections, they take the claims made (or reportedly made) by the figures in question and explore their entailments and implications, assessing their coherence, validity and veracity.[7] In short, they treat them as philosophers, and this categorisation has stood ever since. Even such astute literary critics as Karl Reinhardt, Bruno Snell and Hermann Fränkel, working at a time before sub-disciplinary boundaries within the field of Classics had reached their current rigidity, were primarily occupied with the thoughts and mentality of these authors, rather than aesthetic or emotional matters, as part of a teleological 'history of the mind' (*Geistesgeschichte*).[8] This prioritisation of propositional content is, of course, a manifestation of the famous 'ancient quarrel' between philosophy

[4] E.g. passages that depict the 'pleasure' of song: *Il.* 1.474, 9.186, 189, 18.526, 604; *Od.* 1.347; 8.91, 368; 12.188; Hes. *Theog.* 917; passages that associate song and storytelling with 'longing' (ἵμερος): note *Od.* 1.421, 17.518–21, 18.194, 304, 23.144. On these, see Ritoók (1989) 333–9; Halliwell (2011) 45–50.

[5] For this as the prevailing method in the history of philosophy, see e.g. Williams (2006) 257; Barnes (2011a), (2011b).

[6] On Hippias' collection, see Snell (1944); Patzer (1986); on Gorgias', Mansfeld (1985); on both, Palmer (2008).

[7] See e.g. Aristotle's critical overview of previous opinions at *Metaph.* 1.3–10, 983a24–993b26, the root of later groupings of the Presocratics, on which see Cherniss (1935); Frede (2008). On Plato's treatment of the Presocratics, see Palmer (1999); McCabe (2000).

[8] See especially Reinhardt (1916); Snell (1924), (1953); Fränkel (1955), (1975b).

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and poetry mentioned by Plato (*Resp.* 10.607b–e), who crystallised the notion that the two activities are fundamentally incompatible, presenting arguments that poetry (or at least, mimetic poetry) seduces the irrational part of the soul, hindering an audience's rational evaluation of the matters portrayed. Since Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles are retrospectively categorised as philosophers, there has often been an implicit assumption that they cannot be poets in any more essential sense than that they happen to use verse.[9] Consequently, they are relatively neglected by scholars of Greek poetry.[10]

In light of this neglect, the present study applies methods from modern literary criticism of ancient poetry to the texts of these three authors, whilst also remaining sensitive to their philosophical significance, in an attempt to explain what sorts of experiences they could provide to the attentive listener and by what methods. In the following chapters, I enlist a range of historical and archaeological evidence that might seem superfluous for the history of philosophy to help reconstruct the wider cultural norms that could affect an audience's response. Ancient literary criticism and the ancient reception history of these authors, often of little value in the reconstruction of their arguments, provide evidence for their emotional and aesthetic impact: Iamblichus' anecdote tells us virtually nothing about Empedocles' cosmology, but it does indicate something about the way in which his poetry was received in antiquity. Some might question the value of such late evidence,[11] but even if the story arose some centuries after Empedocles' lifetime, it is still the product of a pre-modern, primarily polytheistic society. It therefore reflects a reception context vastly more similar than our own to that which he could have expected.

Of special importance for this investigation is our evidence for the literary context, by which I mean the performance context and the wider network of texts which determine an audience's 'horizon of expectation' (*Erwartungshorizont*)[12] concerning literary genres and *topoi*. The readings offered here are intertextual, both in the sense that they identify and interpret particular allusions – that is, instances where an author refers to another text and expects such a reference to be identified by at least some of

[9] Though Kranz (1916) 1163 makes this assumption explicit. On the history of the 'ancient quarrel' see the scholarship cited at Chapter 1 n. 2 below.
[10] Note that they are absent from Bernabé (1987–2007), an otherwise exhaustive edition of fragmentary early Greek hexameter poetry.
[11] See Feeney (1995) 303–4, criticising Cairns (1972) 32 on these grounds, but we should not overlook the crucial respects in which Imperial literary culture was similar to that of the Archaic period and different from our own.
[12] The expression was influentially coined by Jauss (1970).

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the audience –[13] and in the sense that they posit typological resemblances between texts where no such allusion can be plausibly hypothesised.[14] Chapter 2 offers a reading of Parmenides' proem within the context of other ancient accounts of supernatural journeys to places beyond the usual mortal realm, including some Near Eastern examples from outside the Greek tradition. Although these examples were almost certainly unfamiliar to Parmenides and his audiences, they originated from an ancient literary culture which was broadly similar to, and had at least some points of contact with, that of the Greeks.[15] They are therefore taken as evidence for the sorts of narratives which could have been familiar and so can elucidate the connotations and particularities of Parmenides' text. In Chapter 3, the wider context of Greek stories about wandering blood-exiles supports an interpretation of the function of Empedocles' story of the transmigrating *daimon* who has been exiled from the gods for committing bloody deeds.

Though this study does not aim to offer radically new interpretations or detailed analyses of the arguments, its exploration of potential audience responses cannot be fully divorced from an investigation of the philosophy. As a growing body of work has demonstrated, the application of literary-critical methods can provide important insights into the Presocratics' claims and objectives. An early milestone in this approach was Alexander Mourelatos' *The Route of Parmenides* (first published 1970),[16] which provided an analysis of Parmenides' use of metre and narrative in support of the contention that the poem essentially outlines a 'quest' for truth, a 'way' of thinking that might lead to such an entity. In a similar vein, more recent works by Simon Trépanier on the unity of Empedocles' thought, Jenny Bryan on the concepts of likeness and likelihood in Xenophanes and Parmenides, and Shaul Tor on early Greek epistemology have enhanced

[13] It has been doubted whether such allusions are a feature of early Greek poetry (e.g. on Homer, Nagy [1979] 42; Schein [1984] 28; on lyric, R. Fowler [1987] 20–33; on early Greek performed poetry more generally, Calame [2005] 7–10), but they are present beyond reasonable doubt in Parmenides and Empedocles (see, especially, Wright [1998]; Most [2007]) and are quite plausibly identified in Xenophanes (e.g. Classen [1989]; Bryan [2012] 6–57). For a defence of the language of 'allusion' in early Greek epic, see B. Currie (2016) 4–36; and, in lyric, Garner (1990) 1–20.

[14] That is, Kristeva's original sense of intertextuality, not as a shorthand for 'allusion', but as the quality whereby texts exist in a matrix consisting of other texts (Kristeva [1980] 66; see also Culler [1981] 110–31). For particularly influential discussions of these issues in ancient literature, note Conte (1986); D. Fowler (1997); Hinds (1998). 'Intertextuality' in this sense is applied to early Greek epic by Pucci (1987) and Tsagalis (2008).

[15] See Burkert (1992) and, with particular reference to the Presocratics, (2008); Murray (1993) 81–101; and, most fully, West (1997) (superseding his earlier work on the topic, West [1971]), though West's thesis of pervasive influence is convincingly modified by Metcalf (2015), whose study suggests influence only at certain points.

[16] Cited here as Mourelatos (2008a), a reprint with additional material.

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our understanding of the philosophical claims embodied in these fragments by providing detailed intertextual readings that locate them within their broader cultural and literary contexts.[17] In its emphasis on form and literary context, the present book continues this trend. Although it is primarily intended as a work of literary history, it will also be relevant to historians of philosophy. But in contrast to those valuable contributions, it does not enlist literary aspects primarily in the service of elucidating the arguments. Instead, the philosophical claims are used to shed light on how these texts are designed to affect their audiences. Chapter 1 explores the function of Xenophanes' poetry in the context of his epistemological and theological claims; Chapter 2 looks at Parmenides' use of hexameters in light of his comments on the deceptiveness of mortal terminology; and Chapter 3 argues that Empedocles' poetry is designed, as Iamblichus' story illustrates, to have a purificatory function explicable in terms of his wider doctrines concerning the purity of Love and the pollution of Strife.

Underpinning this approach is an assumption that the texts in question are designed to afford experiences that are dependent on their unique phrasing. That is to say, they fulfil the criterion for poetry encapsulated in the New Critic Cleanth Brooks' 'heresy of paraphrase': an essential function would be lost in any prose summary of their content or themes.[18] In this respect, Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles are poets, not mere versifiers, and hence I shall occasionally refer to the three collectively as the 'Presocratic poets'. Of course, prose may also fulfil Brooks' criterion. As the fragments of Heraclitus amply demonstrate, literary prose, whilst still in its infancy in the sixth century BCE, could have a mystifying yet seductive impact on its readers, demanding a penetrating interpretation that is sensitive to details of phrasing.[19] But these sorts of effects were more typically assumed to be an essential aspiration of verse. It is telling that when Gorgias comes to argue that prose rhetoric irresistibly affects its audience in an emotional manner, he uses the paradigm of poetry to illustrate his point (D24=B11 §8–10): affective or symbolic prose, such as

[17] Trépanier (2004); Bryan (2012); Tor (2017). For Empedocles it has been harder for philosophical interpreters to ignore literary matters, but for particularly important applications note Graham (1988); Primavesi (2001), (2005), (2008a); Picot (2007), (2008a), (2008b); Picot and Berg (2015), (2018); Rashed (2018) (collecting the author's works on the topic), as well as n. 27 below.

[18] Brooks (1947) 192–214. Lamarque (2009a) 46 applies the principle to distinguish poetry from philosophy, on the grounds that no serious philosophical argument demands a unique phrasing. Lamarque's contrast is taken up by many contributors to a recent volume on the philosophy of poetry, Gibson (2015). Richards draws roughly the same distinction between 'emotive utterance' and 'scientific statement' (1970) 58.

[19] See the commentary of Kahn (1979) *passim* and, more recently, Vieira (2013).

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the fragments of Heraclitus, is prose that is especially poetic. Poetry is habitually distinguished from prose, but in the sense of 'poetry' I am using, this is a false dichotomy. It would be more precise to speak of poeticity,[20] a quality that can be present in varying degrees in prose or verse, but which is more characteristically associated with the latter. In contending that these authors were poets, I mean that their work has a high degree of poeticity, a point that is not self-evident from the mere fact that they used verse.

This claim would perhaps be an obvious point if we were dealing with later poetry,[21] but it differs in focus from standard discussions of the Presocratic use of verse which explain the phenomenon in terms of wider cultural factors. Thus, it has been held that they chose the medium simply because prose did not exist at this stage as a viable means of widely publicising content, or because Ionian prose had not yet reached the Western Mediterranean, or because they wished to supplant the authority of Homer and Hesiod.[22] All these theories may well be valid. We know of a few prose books in the sixth century that may have been around at the time of Xenophanes and certainly would have been by the time of Parmenides and Empedocles,[23] but publicly performed verse-texts that were relatively easily memorised and transmitted could reach a far wider audience. The three poets did not operate independently of one another – there are close intertextual echoes of Xenophanes in Parmenides and of Parmenides in Empedocles – so that, in covering this subject matter in this medium, they may have constituted a particular tradition, one that was distinctive to the locale of Sicily and Southern Italy.[24] And they all feature allusions to Homer and Hesiod that seem to assert a correction of, or a progression over, those canonical predecessors.[25] But these explanations

[20] I take the term from Attridge (2019) 3.

[21] Cf. the abundant treatments of Lucretius as poetry, rather than purely as philosophy, of which West (1969) and Gale (1994) are worth singling out for their discussion of the interaction between his doctrinal content and unique form.

[22] No prose alternative: Havelock (1963) 294–5, 308 n. 38, (1983); Long (1985) 245; Osborne (1998); Western way: Wöhrle (1993) 179–80; supplanting authority: Jaeger (1947) 93; Detienne (1996) 130–7; Wright (1998) 6; Nightingale (2007) 190; Lesher (2008) 475–6 (who, however, acknowledges a plurality of possible functions). On the practicalities of literary production for the Presocratics, see Bernabé (1979); Patzer (2006).

[23] I.e., the prose works of Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pherecydes of Syros, Hecataeus and Heraclitus; possibly also the prose theogony of Akousilaos of Argos (see R. Fowler [2013] 623–4). On the Presocratics and early prose, see Laks (2001); Kahn (2003) 143–55; Patzer (2006) 95–158; Granger (2007) 412–17; and on early Greek prose more generally, Lilja (1968). For the dates of the Presocratics, see the relevant discussions in KRS.

[24] See Chapter 1 n. 119 and Chapter 3 Section 3.1 below.

[25] See the Presocratic scholarship cited at n. 13 above.

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tell us little about the intended or actual responses of audiences. On the other hand, one group of interpreters who have taken this aspect seriously are those who, rejecting the philosophical label altogether, have argued that Parmenides and Empedocles used verse in order to induce a 'mystical experience' in their auditors.[26] I share the ambition to historicise the experiences of audiences, but as we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, the evidence suggests a more mainstream performance context for these poems by rhapsodes at public festivals. The question of what responses these texts were designed to elicit is one that has rarely been asked and, consequently, has not been fully addressed.[27]

Moreover, the treatment of these authors as 'poets' and their work as 'literature' would appear to some to commit an egregious and problematic anachronism.[28] Certainly, as we are often reminded, what we habitually refer to as poetry during this period is more aptly labelled 'song', designated with vocabulary such as *aoide*, *humnos* and their cognates and, at least in many cases, vocalised melodically to an instrumental accompaniment.[29] It is performed before an audience, often in particular, ritualised circumstances, a very different phenomenon from the later practice of the private reading of poems.[30] The distinction is conceptual as well as practical: Greek songs, at least up until the latter part of the fifth century, tend to be evaluated in terms of their social utility and truthfulness; 'poetry' and 'literature' are closely bound up with notions of autotelic art and of fiction.[31] Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles, in using verse to present truth claims about the nature of the universe, might appear,

[26] Böhme (1986); Kingsley (1995), (1999), (2003); Gemelli Marciano (2008), (2013) relate the verse form of Parmenides and Empedocles to esoteric cults. A key influence on their approach is the classic article on Parmenides' proem, Burkert (1969).

[27] This is true even of Empedocles, the most recognised of the three for his literary merits, although more attention has been devoted to this aspect of his work, especially in francophone scholarship, starting with the learned but often impenetrable commentaries of Bollack (1965–9), (2003). See also van Groningen (1971); Gagné (2006); Rosenfeld-Löffler (2006); Gheerbrant (2017) for discussions of Empedocles' audience's experience. On Parmenides, Robbiano (2006) addresses the audience's experience but, to my mind, assumes too narrow a view of the hexameter genre. See n. 36 below. Regrettably, Leopoldo Irribaren's *Fabriquer le monde: technique et cosmogonie dans la poésie grecque archaïque* (Paris, 2018) reached me too late to be taken into consideration in the present study.

[28] The suitability of such terms is denied by Goldhill (1999); Ford (2003); and Gemelli Marciano (2008) 21–7; but for a defence of their usage, see Laird (2006) 25–30 and Maslov (2015) 9–22.

[29] It is only with Herodotus, in the later fifth century, that *poietes* and *poiesis* come into play. See Ford (2002) 131–57. On the singing of early Greek hexameter, see West (1981). On the 'song culture' of this period, see the influential studies of Herington (1985) and Gentili (1988).

[30] On this distinction, see Ford (2003).

[31] See esp. Ford (2002). The assumption of such a process underlies the influential studies of Herington (1985); Gentili (1988); and Nagy (1989).

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above all, to exemplify the differences between early Greek song and later poetry.

Important though these distinctions are, they should not occlude the significant points of overlap between Archaic and Classical Greek conceptions of song on the one hand and later conceptions of the poetic and the literary on the other.[32] The Presocratic poets may conform to the tendency of early Greek song to advertise its truth status, but the truthfulness of song is always complicated by its emotive and immersive qualities,[33] features that would later be conceived as hallmarks of poetry and literature.[34] What is even more challenging to the traditional, philosophical approach to the Presocratic poets is the possibility that the 'truthfulness' of early Greek song is not restricted to its overt statements: the medium implicitly conveys a symbolic significance that lurks beneath the surface meaning. My understanding of this symbolic quality of early verse and the role it plays in an audience's experience warrants some elaboration.

2 Truth, Symbolism and Sublime Perspectives in Early Greek Song

In an oral culture, verse can serve as both a mnemonic and a means of publicity, so that poet-bards may be 'masters of truth', entrusted with preserving valued information about the past.[35] Whether the prominent association between verse and truth in surviving Greek examples represents a living continuation of this practice or a fossilised survival from the preliterate period, it is one reason for the Presocratics' use of the medium, though it does not exclude the possibility that they also chose it for its affective qualities.[36] Some scholars have insisted, on the grounds that 'fiction' is an alien concept to this sort of culture, that early Greek verse

[32] For recent attempts to identify features of poetry that endure from the earliest surviving Greek texts to modernity, see Culler (2015) (specifically on lyric) and Attridge (2019) (more generally).

[33] As Halliwell (2011) 36–92 argues at length of Homer.

[34] For immersiveness in both ancient Greek poetics and modern conceptions of the literary, see Allan et al. (2017); note also Halliwell (2002) on the related concept of *mimesis*. For emotional affectivity, see e.g. Verdenius (1983) 46–53; Laird (2006) 26–30; Halliwell (2011) *passim*; Attridge (2015) 259–79, (2019) 11–54.

[35] See Detienne (1996); Rösler (1980) 289–93; Puelma (1989) 72–3; Thomas (1992) 113–17; Finkelberg (1998) 73–88; and, more generally, Finnegan (1977) 208.

[36] Puelma (1989) 76–7 sees Parmenides and Empedocles as developing the Hesiodic tradition of conveying physical and ethical truths in poetry, as opposed to Homer's historical truth claims. Robbiano (2006) 35–60 argues that Parmenides' audience would have expected to hear 'something true and of great importance' (42) of a hexameter poem, but not all passages of hexameter poetry fit this description (cf. Demodocus' song of Ares and Aphrodite at *Od.* 8.266–366; the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*) and, in any case, the association with truth does not rule out stereotypically pleasurable, emotional and engrossing aspects of the medium. See further Halliwell (2011) 55 and n. 37 below.

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can only mean exactly what it states overtly,[37] but this is too restrictive. The 'truth' of a narrative need not be limited to its bare factual details.[38] This principle is already recognised in Aristotle's argument that poetry is more 'philosophical' (φιλοσοφώτερον) than history since it does not simply report what happened but tells a story which ideally conforms to the rules of probability or necessity (*Poet.* 9. 1451a36–b7). On this view, a poetic narrative should follow real patterns of human behaviour, such as how a certain type of person would react to a certain type of situation, and it may achieve this irrespective of whether it portrays events which actually happened.[39] In other words, the truth of a narrative may reside not exclusively – or even not at all – in its correspondence to actual events, but may also encompass the accuracy of the patterns of behaviour it instantiates.

There are good reasons for thinking that this sort of conception of poetic truth was familiar to the Archaic period. In the *Works and Days*, the narrator promises to declaim ἐτήτυμα, 'true things', to Perses (*Op.* 10) then proceeds to recount two myths – of Prometheus and Pandora and of the Races – which are ostensibly incompatible with one another, but which contain deep interconnections on a thematic level: both are occupied with work and justice, both describe a fall from a better state to a worse and warn of the human potential for disaster.[40] It is left for Perses and the audience to work out how these stories fit together, a process that mirrors on an intellectual level the physical labour that must be performed to access the means of life that is so prominently 'hidden' in the poem (*Op.* 42). Even if we assume that, on some level, Hesiod believed in the historicity of these stories, their 'truth' extends, beyond their factual content, to the wider themes they convey.[41]

[37] Most (1999) 339, 342–3; Gemelli Marciano (2008) 25–6. Finkelberg (1998) recognises that truth and fiction are not necessarily mutually exclusive (21) but argues that early Greek hexameter poetry was overwhelmingly valued for its historicity. For criticisms of this view, see Pratt (1993); Bowie (1993); and Halliwell (2011) 36–92.

[38] Pratt (1993) 1–9, 36–7; Halliwell (2011) 7. In modern philosophy, Lewis (1978) influentially argued for the applicability of the concept of truth to aspects of fictional worlds (such as its themes or morals) that go beyond the strict statements of the text and stimulated a range of responses which, though critical of the details of his argument, still broadly accept this principle. See e.g. Pavel (1986) esp. 144–5; G. Currie (1986), (1990) 52–91; Gibson (2009) *contra* e.g. Doležel (1980), (2010) 41–4.

[39] This point is unaffected by the dispute over whether Aristotle here assumes that poetry should produce new knowledge of these 'universals' in the audience (thus Halliwell [2002] 193–206, partly on the basis of 4.1448b4–1449a31) or whether it should appeal to knowledge the audience already possesses (thus Heath [1991] 399; see also Heath [2009]).

[40] B. Currie (2012) 53; Canevaro (2015) 151. Ledbetter (2003) 51 makes a similar point on the didactic function of the *Theogony*. Krischer (1965) 172–3 and Halliwell (2011) 18 n. 37 argue that ἐτήτυμος differs from ἀληθής in referring to normative or didactic truth rather than narrative accuracy.

[41] On such 'abstracted thematic content' as inherent to poetry, see Lamarque (2009a) 39–50.

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