

The Lion's Eye: Imitation and Uncertainty in Attic Red-Figure

*They do not apprehend how that which differs with itself is in agreement; there is a
backsprung tension, as in a bow or a lyre.*

—Herakleitos (fr. 51 DK)

TWO HABITS OF THOUGHT characterize the study of early Greek art. The first is a tendency—endemic among art historians of all stripes—to embed historical contingencies within a seamless evolutionary process: art gets more mimetic (and hence better) as time goes on. This mode takes Pliny and Giorgio Vasari as its exemplars; its foremost practitioner among classicists was Gisela Richter, who claimed to describe “the progress made from period to period” as the Greeks made “groping attempts . . . to understand and solve the manifold problems involved” in “true” representation.¹ The flaws of this approach are obvious: apart from its teleological bias, it simply assumes that visual experience is the starting point of all representation. More subtle, perhaps, is the second method, which downplays narrative in favor of a philosophical idealism with roots in Goethe and Schiller. Rather than binding images to visual experience, here one ties them to the intellect or spirit. “When a Greek artist set out to portray a horse,” writes one scholar, “he took it for granted that . . . he was not going to represent a particular horse but rather that he was going to create a form which expressed the most basic nature of horses.”² In short, an a priori concept—“horsiness”—structures representation, limits semiotic play, when the eye cannot. It is, in E. H. Gombrich’s term, “conceptual.”³

The difference between these two readings is minimal; both deny the role of cultural habitus in the production of imagery, asserting instead the primacy of a transcendental metric: the eye in the first case, the mind in the second.⁴ This paper will argue that if one suspends belief in such metaphysical values and insists instead on the contingency of representational modes, the result will be a richer understanding of Greek art and visuality. Focusing on a few works from the late archaic and high classical eras, it will attempt to sketch out a new poetics of Attic vase-painting. The choice of medium is deliberate, for it is on painted vases that Western drawing has its mythic origins; consequently, it is in the study of those vases that the stakes—for classics and, indeed, for art history—are highest.

Fortunately, historians of ancient painting need not look far afield for alternatives to the traditional aesthetics. Recent studies have shown that the poetry of archaic Greece insistently defines itself through a rhetoric of artifice and hedonism⁵: far from being transparent to any truth, it is constantly reflexive, playing upon its own materiality, its own status as a product of human craft or *tekhne*. I hope to show that the same may be said of vase-painting: that it was never a medium bound to some absolute mimetic truth.⁶ Rather, it resembled archaic poetry in its valuation of skill and virtuosity, its ability to play, in the words of Marcel Détienne, “le jeu du véridique et trompeur.”⁷ To the extent that the pictures on pots bore any relation to “reality,” it was through their engagement with the problem of reference itself, and not through any simplistic desire to imitate appearances. A vase-painting is, in this sense, more an allegory of the world than a reproduction of it, closer to a pictogram than to a Raphael: it signifies, but never loses its radically *figural* quality.

For Plato, writing in the fourth century B.C.E., poetry is dangerous precisely because of its mendacity: it is a “screen” for hiding the truth, an obstacle to true vision (*Protagoras* 316d, 317a). Such concerns have an ancient pedigree. The eighth-century poet Hesiod, for example, describes how the Muses address their mortal audience: “Shepherds of the wilderness,” they say, “wretched things of shame, mere bellies, we know how to speak many falsehoods like the truth [*etumoisin homoia*], but when we will, we know how to utter true things” (*Theogony* 26–28). Appropriately enough, this disconcerting remark has spawned reams of scholarly text; nobody can decide just what it means.⁸ But one thing, at least, seems clear: if the Muses can lie, then poetry is not a comfortable zone of true utterance, and deception is an ever-present possibility.

This uncertainty defines archaic poetry; neither true nor false, it is ambiguous to the core.⁹ On the one hand, an oral culture relies on poets for knowledge of the past. In the absence of any independent record, they are—in Détienne’s phrase—“*maîtres de vérité*,” creating a new truth with every song. Who can contradict a poet but another poet? Their stories are, in effect, “true” by virtue of being told: poetry is performative, truth a discursive effect. But of course no language can possess such totalizing power; as Plato recognized, truth of this sort cannot be distinguished from mere invention. The Muses can lie, and “*le maître de vérité est aussi un maître de tromperie*.”¹⁰ Indeed, for the poets of the later sixth century, working on commission for aristocratic patrons, this side of poetry is precisely what needs emphasizing: its status as a material product, made by an artisan and purchased by a customer.¹¹ Far from holding up a mirror to the world, then, Greek verse constantly reiterates its own materiality, its own place within an economy of performance and prestige.

In this light, it is not surprising that the Greeks describe their literature in

terms of the pleasure it gives rather than its historical accuracy: poetry is “sweet,” “delightful,” “honey-like,” and so on.¹² Rhapsodes “adorn” (*kosmein*) the lines they recite in order to make them all the more pleasing to the audience—as though a poem were something to be decorated, dressed up, not distilled into an essence of truthfulness.¹³ Odysseus praises a song about the Trojan War, not for its veracity, but for its formal qualities: it is, he says, “orderly” (*kata kosmon*).¹⁴ In short, the standard of value for archaic poetics is more hedonistic than historical. As one sophist put it, “Poets create with pleasure, not truth, as their goal” (*Dissoi Logoi* 2.28, 3.17).

This hedonism must be situated within the broader context of the *agôn*, or competition, that was a poem’s normal venue.¹⁵ In archaic Greece, poems were not read in solitude but were performed in public. Often the occasion was a contest of some sort; all of the major Panhellenic games, save the Olympics, included musical events. Like modern-day bohemians at poetry “slams,” or rappers in dance clubs, Greek poets would often cast aspersions on the competition, declaring rival works to be inferior. Typical in this respect is the priamel form of composition, in which the poet begins by opposing his or her version of a tale to the competing accounts.¹⁶ Thus the first *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos* opens: “For some say you were born at Dracanum; and some, on windy Icarus; and some, in Naxos . . . but all these lie. The Father of men and gods gave you birth remote from men . . . [on] Nysa, a mountain most high” (1–8; trans. H. G. Evelyn-White). Though the poet does make a claim to truth in these lines, the net effect is to undermine the factual value of traditional narratives as such. For if poets can lie, then the mere fact that a tale has been set down in verse does not guarantee its validity. Faced with such battling truth-claims, the audience can judge only on the basis of subjective criteria: which version is more pleasing?¹⁷ Such agonistic speech, free from obligation to the truth, appears even in Homer; the heroes of the *Iliad* engage in formal boast-and-insult contests—dubbed “flyting” by one scholar—that are decided on the basis of rhetorical skill, not veracity.¹⁸ The point is to give a good performance, to crush one’s opponent with verbal prowess; *tekhnhê*, not truth, determines the winner.¹⁹

Competition also structures archaic conceptions of authorship. Here, the quality of the performance, of the material product, takes precedence over all else: early lyric is not expressive, but rather orients itself toward its audience as a vehicle of pleasure. Thus, when the poets emphasize their own craftsmanship, the purpose is “to glorify not the poet but the product of his craft, the *poem*”—whether for the benefit of a patron, or the judges at a festival, or both.²⁰ In the same way, lyric’s so-called individualism is a misnomer: the poets construct socially useful personae for themselves, addressing their listeners from certain ideal positions rather than expressing some sort of inner subjectivity.²¹ Archaic authors are thus always openly embedded in discourse—and, to an equal extent, alienated from their texts.

There is, in sum, good reason to suppose that Greek poetics recognized the artifice behind literary works, even as it acknowledged the truth-value of some poetic utterances. Poets aimed to give pleasure, and audiences valued poetry for its sweetness. At the same time, the distinctively Greek institution of the *agôn* fostered competition among poets and the development of stylistic idiosyncrasy in their products.

Many of the features characteristic of archaic poetry have counterparts in vase-painting. Just as a poet was not expected to tell the absolute truth, so a painter never thought to reproduce visual “reality.” Indeed, Gerald Else has shown that the term *mimêsis* and its derivatives only entered the vocabulary of the Greek mainland in the late fifth century—and were confined, at that date, to dramatic contexts, the “imitation” that an actor gives of a character in a play.²² Although it may be extreme to follow Bruno Snell in declaring that, “if they had no word for it, it follows that as far as they were concerned it did not exist,” nonetheless, the absence of this word from sixth-century discourse puts the burden of proof on those who would see likeness as the aim of all Greek art.²³ In point of fact, close reading of the artworks themselves reveals that vase-painters, like poets, were accomplished players of “le jeu du véridique et trompeur.” They aimed to delight their customers by a variety of means, including an elaborate surface patterning, or *poikilia*. For examples of this hedonism I look to the works of Euphronios, one of the so-called Pioneers of Attic red-figure who flourished in the last decades of the sixth century B.C.E. I choose him in part because it is in the study of his oeuvre that the aesthetic ideology finds its fullest expression; this artist is credited with achieving unprecedented success in the imitation of the phenomenal world.

In the Louvre there are fragments of a calyx-krater signed by Euphronios and dated on stylistic grounds to circa 515–10 B.C.E.²⁴ On the front of the vessel is a scene of Herakles wrestling the Nemean lion. Though little more than the center of the composition remains, the motif is well known: the hero kneels on the ground at left, his left knee doubled beneath him and his right leg extended to the rear as he grasps the monster in a headlock (fig. 1). Behind the pair is a budding tree, while a spectator stands on either side; all are fragmentary in the vase’s current state, and are not shown in figure 1.

Though the work is poorly preserved, it is still possible to get a good sense of the drawing. Particularly striking is the combination of short, rhythmic arcs with sweeping curves. These elements are clearest on the lion’s face, where they are offset against a uniform background of stipples. Running alongside the great curve of the lion’s maw is a series of little hooks, short lines that pick up again around the beast’s nose, and yet again over its wrinkled brow; indeed, the jaw-line that frames the whole face simply repeats these quick strokes. At the same

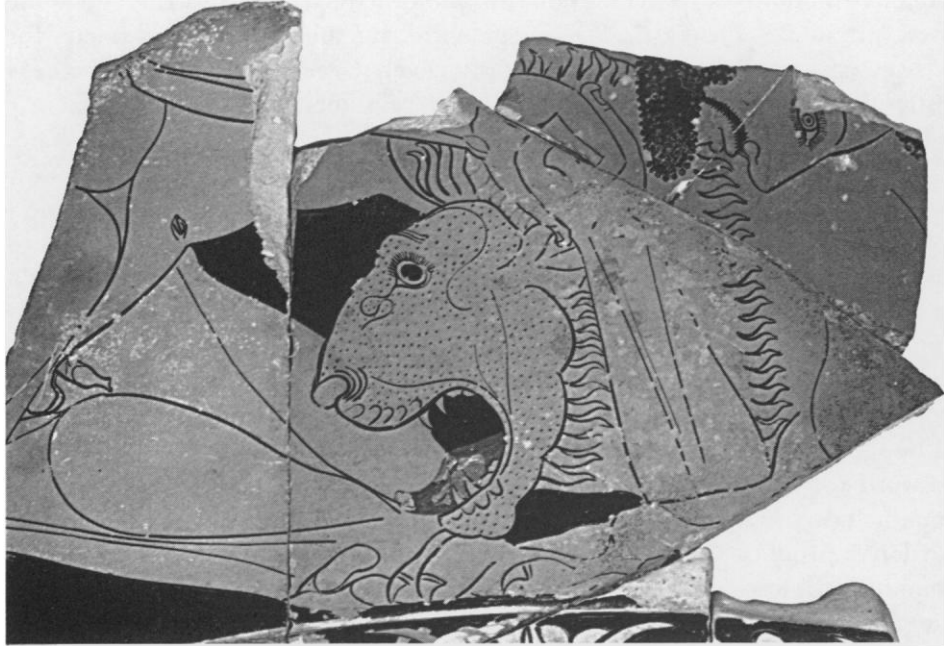


FIGURE 1. Euphronios, calyx-krater fragments: Herakles and the Nemean lion, c. 515–10 B.C.E. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo: M. Chuzeville.

time, a magnificent S-shaped line traveling from nose to chin is instantly echoed by a finer counterpart just to the right, and then again by one on the forehead between eye and mane. But the line that stands out in particular is the convoluted arabesque alongside the lion's tear duct. Such tight, backsprung curves would have been impossible in the old black-figure technique, for the graver imposed limitations on the length and fluidity of the line. In a sense, this distinctive rendering celebrates the newfound medium of red-figure, triumphantly displaying its possibilities.

Nor has Euphronios lost that love of detailing and patterning so characteristic of black-figure. A miniaturist aesthetic, what the Greeks called *akribeia*, pervades the work.²⁵ Eyelashes are picked out individually, as are the inner workings of Herakles' navel, the veins of his penis, the cuticles of his fingernails, the bristles of his mustache. Most laborious of all are the stipples on the lion's face. As for patterning, the series of triangles radiating out from Herakles' pelvis speaks for itself, and the formal qualities of the lion's face have already been discussed. All that remain are the flame-like serrations of the lion's mane and the meander-

pattern formed by the hero's interlocking hands—a resolutely flat motif at what was once the very center of the composition.

Equally impressive is the sheer variety of different glazes at work. The lion's lolling tongue is rendered in added red glaze, as it would have been in black-figure. But that is one of the few traditional glazes Euphronios has employed. For all contours he uses relief-glaze, which makes a heavy line that stands up off the wall of the vessel. Restricted to subsidiary zones of florals in black-figure, this technique came into its own with the Pioneers; it is one of the hallmarks of the new style, and Euphronios is particularly lavish in his use of it. New as well is the golden-brown dilute glaze used for the stipples on the lion's face, for some of the hero's musculature, and, invisible in the illustration, for wavy lines on the beast's mane. Lastly, Herakles' beard and curly hair are rendered with blobs of glaze that, like the contour lines, stand up in relief: a brilliant solution to the problem of contrasting black hair with a black background and one that was employed by many painters of the new style. In short, Euphronios shows off everything red-figure can accomplish.

The sherd with the Nemean lion is a rather small one, only a few inches across; but nonetheless the technical virtuosity, the detailing, and the distinctive quality of the lines are almost overwhelming. These features—expressed in many ways—typify Euphronios' work. Less apparent in the fragment with the lion, but important nonetheless, is Euphronios' much-vaunted anatomical "realism."²⁶ A good example is the dead Sarpedon on another calyx-krater of circa 515–10, this one in New York (fig. 2).²⁷ Euphronios has picked out every muscle and sinew; he even accentuates the abdominals by surrounding them with dilute glaze in one of Western art's earliest experiments with chiaroscuro. The sheer *skill* of the drawing is meant to impress.

Yet, for all his anatomical "realism," is Euphronios really trying to imitate the visible world? Is the point of all this detail simply to mimic what he sees before his eyes? Surely not, for much of the detail has nothing to do with *mimêsis*; indeed, it only serves to focus the viewer's attention on the vast difference between image and "reality." The twisting, profoundly unmimetic line that wanders down from the lion's eye seems emblematic of this activity. It does not look like anything found in nature, whether on a lion or a tabby or anything in between, but rather is simply *there*, presented to the viewer by the artist. To be sure, the line does not escape wholly from the economy of reference: one can imagine it standing in for any number of anatomical features—a tear duct, say, or the contour of the muzzle. Yet any such referential tendencies are subjected to a twofold attack. First, the line exceeds, in its involution, the demands of signification. It deliberately over-elaborates that which could have been rendered more simply and thereby goes beyond the simply referential. Indeed, it is precisely this excess that makes the line difficult to read; were it less convoluted, it would signify more clearly. Second, the distinctive S-shape is an iterated mark, repeated over and

over across the lion's face. Such repetition necessarily weakens the one-to-one signifying power of any particular instance: the viewer cannot attach a unique meaning to any one of them, and the mark is left in suspended play.²⁸ Taken together, this excess and iterability go a long way toward severing whatever ties the line might have with the visible world. What remains is, primarily, the calligraphic quality of the S-curve; the lion's eye is, in fact, the embodiment of a gesture, or rather the *trace* of a gesture left on the surface of the vessel. Thematised here is the carnality, the bodiliness, of representation; though the line marks some feature of leonine anatomy, it does so in a way that draws attention to its own materiality—and thereby resists the totalizing correspondence of sign and referent that defines *mimêsis*.

The line thus highlights a visual phenomenon known as “seeing-in.”²⁹ Coined by Richard Wollheim, this term denotes a way of looking at pictures that attends simultaneously to their material and representational aspects. Instead of seeing an image *as* the object it represents, the pottery sherd *as* a lion, one sees the object *in* the image, the lion *in* the sherd. The former experience, “seeing-as,” is really just a species of error, missing as it does the distinction between looking at a real lion and looking at a picture of one.³⁰ Seeing-in, on the other hand, registers precisely that difference—and is thus, as Wollheim has it, “the kind of seeing appropriate to representations.”³¹ It is, by definition, a “twofold” phenomenon: lion and pot are “two aspects of a single experience . . . and the two aspects are distinguishable but also inseparable.”³²

An early account of seeing-in appears in book nineteen of the *Odyssey*, as the poet describes a gold brooch:

The front part of it was artfully
done: a hound held in his forepaws a dappled
fawn, preying on it as it struggled; and all were amazed [*thaumazeskon*],
how *though they were golden*, it preyed on the fawn and strangled it, and
the fawn struggled with his feet as he tried to escape him.

(19.225–31; trans. slightly modified; italics added)

The audience sees the animals and the gold at once, and that simultaneity, that twofoldness, is cause for amazement. Something of the sort is plainly going on when Euphronios forces our attention back to his own gesture, back to the materiality of his medium; with the lion's eye, he thematizes seeing-in. The concept of imitation, by contrast, misses what is most interesting and most complex about such work.

Euphronios' calligraphy is analogous to the formal elaboration of sixth-century poetry; the key Greek terms here are *kosmos* (adornment) and *poikilia* (embellishment). As a poet stitches together words to create “honey-sweet” verse, so Euphronios draws a line that exists to give pleasure.³³ This tangible record of the painter's activity acts out an almost Barthesian *jouissance*: intervening between the

viewer and the ideal representation of the world like Plato's "screen" of poetry, it is hedonistic in the extreme. No surprise that one of the Greek words for "image" was *agalma*, "that which delights."

But, as in poetry, such pleasures must be seen in the broader context of the *agôn*. Though as far as we know there were no pottery-decorating contests, vase-painters did compete against one another in the open market. This competition belongs to the agora, not the festival. As Hesiod puts it:

Neighbor vies with neighbor as he hurries after wealth. This Strife is good for mortals. And potter is angry at potter, carpenter at carpenter, and beggar is jealous of beggar, singer of singer. (*Works and Days* 25; trans. H. G. Evelyn-White)

Direct evidence for such rivalry appears on a famous amphora signed by another Pioneer, Euthymides.³⁴ Alongside a particularly pleasing depiction of a drunken revel, he writes, "As never Euphronios!"; whether as "a gay challenge to a comrade," or "a cry of senile jealousy," we shall never know for sure.³⁵ The point, which has long been recognized, is that this inscription firmly establishes that the competitive relationship between craftsmen was no mere topos of the poets; indeed, as a deft combination of boast and insult, Euthymides' words are a direct parallel to the Homeric practice of "flyting." It is perhaps no coincidence that musical contests appear frequently on vases, as if the artists were translating the *agôn* into paint.³⁶

As in poetry, the competitive environment requires an artist to showcase his own *tekhmê*. Highlighting the materiality of the image, details like the lion's eye draw attention to the skill that went into the product and thereby increase its value. The ceramic vessel has been worked expertly, and, like any good salesman, Euphronios shows off all the craft that he exercised in the making. Yet such showmanship requires an authorial presence as its precondition, and it is in the construction of that presence that the lion's eye is most effective. As the trace of gesture, the eye presents itself as an indexical sign, pointing back insistently to an originary moment of inscription; if it does not refer cleanly to some founding perception of an object-as-such (that is, a feline), nonetheless it does mime a bodily movement, one of wrist and forearm and hand.³⁷ The eye thereby raises the question of authorship—which, though beyond the scope of this paper, needs to be addressed briefly.

J. D. Beazley voiced his own faith in the gestural index when he wrote, "I was always brought up to think of style as a sacred thing, as the man himself."³⁸ For him, the prosopopeia of the line is so miraculously efficient that, as it summons the long-dead artist into full presence, it takes on all the power of divine incarnation. And yet if we read the final clause of Beazley's remark literally, if style is *the man himself*, style and nothing but, then an underlying paradox emerges: Euphronios, the man himself, really is nothing but that trace. He is secondary to the index that gestures to him, his identity always already a function of the line.

As Paul de Man once asked, of autobiography, “Does the referent determine the figure, or is it the other way round: is the illusion of reference not a correlation of the structure of the figure, that is to say no longer clearly and simply a referent at all but something more akin to a fiction which then, however, in its own turn, acquires a degree of referential productivity?”³⁹ The lion’s eye negotiates precisely this turn, gesturing to some prior maker even as it appropriates “the man himself.”

This reading would be mere cliché were it not grounded in a specific locus of production and reception, that is, the commercial *agôn*. The market—which cares nothing for the personal expression of an artisan, and everything for the worked and elaborate object—provides a context for the idea of Euphronios as a referentially productive fiction.⁴⁰ The point is not so much to express an artist’s inner state as it is to create a distinctive system of marking. Oriented as it is toward final causes, the lion’s eye never needs to bear the full weight of authorial presence; rather, its sole requirement is that it stand out, that it be inimitable, drawn “as never” anyone else could do. It must create a Euphronios-effect, quite apart from some real or imagined man of that name.⁴¹ Just as a lyric poet may take on the voice of a kinsman or guest-friend of his patron, so Euphronios organizes himself as a marketplace persona.⁴² He may have been a real person as well, but that is not the point. The market demands diversity, and the artists supply it; their styles are but functions of that economy, and so, therefore, are the men themselves. It is a process of differentiation (“As never Euphronios!”) and materiality (the lion’s eye), not metaphysics (“a sacred thing”). The authorial persona emerges in a commercial field, in “a substitutive exchange that constitutes the subject.”⁴³ And that exchange is, of course, bound up inextricably with the referential aporia of the rest of the image; the one is the precondition of the other.

Far from expressing genius, then, Euphronios’ work situates itself within a space of skill and selfhood as real as that of a Panhellenic festival or the Attic stage. This sense of the work as a spectacle leaves traces in the (now missing) bystanders who watch Herakles at work, an audience for his performance. If the lion’s eye insists on the image’s materiality, these viewers ground the act of spectatorship in the work itself, creating an effect of reduplication: vase and fight, both are meant to be *seen*. That such figures are common in Attic pottery only attests to the prevalence of this theatrical ethos.⁴⁴ The vase is a performance, a self-conscious object of looking.

In short, there is good evidence that painters were more concerned with pleasure and self-promotion than with the imitation of the phenomenal world. Their images are twofold figurations of narrative, not transcriptions of the real. Figured through the exuberance of his lines, Euphronios creates an art that is premimetic, that celebrates craft and gesture. The vase is a closed system, firmly resisting absorption into an optical reality external to itself: it marks or signs the world, but asserts its own distance from it. Yet if later artists like Honoré Daumier and

Eugène Delacroix subverted the representational conventions of the Enlightenment through their use of “bravura styles,”⁴⁵ the Pioneers show a disregard for imitation that is, to modern eyes, almost naive. Their bravura does not comment on or revolt against convention; rather, it demonstrates that they were working in an age when *mimêsis* was not yet codified as the legitimate goal of painting. The image stands in for, say, Herakles or the lion; but the artist remains free to adorn his sign-picture, to imbue it with that sense of painterly gesture that makes a successful commodity.

But what of the Pioneers’ famous concern for anatomy and foreshortening? The chiaroscuro on Sarpedon’s torso, or the foreshortened foot of an Amazon on a third krater: both seem to bespeak a profound interest in resemblance, quite apart from any thematized seeing-in (figs. 2 and 3).⁴⁶ The examples of such work are legion; they have been collected assiduously and greeted with cries of recognition by those who view vase-painting as the *Ursprung* of Western pictorialism. But even such seemingly ironclad evidence does not hold up to close scrutiny. As it turns out, the concept of resemblance does not do justice to Euphronios’ activity.

Once again, archaic poetry provides an interpretive framework. Ancient critics often praised Homer for his *enargeia*, his “vividness” and “clarity” of description. As Graham Zanker has shown, this term has strong visual connotations: it refers, specifically, to pictorial effects in literature, to descriptions so “vivid” one feels like an eyewitness.⁴⁷ As such it has obvious affinities with the visual arts proper; indeed, for Plutarch *enargeia* is the crucial link between painting and poetry, since both possess it (*Moralia* 347a). Though as a critical term it probably does not predate the fourth century B.C.E., this “vividness” is certainly a feature of archaic poetry; *enargeia* describes a very real phenomenon. Archaic poets do seem compelled to tell everything fully and completely. Yet such tendencies do not, of course, conflict with the idea of a lying Muse; for one can have an exceptionally nuanced description of an object that never existed.

The account of the Shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 18.478–608) and its Hesiodic imitation, *The Shield of Herakles*, are paradigms of this ideal. In these prototypical *ekphraseis*, the poet gives a detailed account of the scenes that the smith-god Hephaistos, “in his skill and craftsmanship” (*Iliad* 18.482), set onto the surface of the shield. For the present discussion, the sheer quantity of the detail is of primary interest. As James Redfield has pointed out, the Shield of Achilles is “a systematic image of the wider world outside the *Iliad*.”⁴⁸ Everything is there, from the sun and moon to the encircling Ocean, and everything in between. The Hesiodic shield, for its part, is essentially the same in its comprehensive vision of humanity and the gods. Panoramic in scope and yet minute in detail, these shields are paradigms of *tekhne*—of “the renowned smith with the strong arms” (*Iliad* 18.587) and of the poets who describe them.



FIGURE 2. Euphronios, calyx-krater (detail): Sleep and Death with the body of Sarpedon, c. 515–10 B.C.E. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Joseph H. Durkee, gift of Darius Ogden Mills, and gift of C. Ruxton Love, by exchange, 1972. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Such tableaux are more than literary tropes. They find a real-world counterpart, for instance, in the so-called Chest of Kypselos, which Pausanias saw at Olympia. Made of ivory, gold, and cedar-wood, this technical marvel of the early sixth century displayed what one scholar has called a “dictionary of myth,” with literally hundreds of figures arranged in registers and compartmentalized.⁴⁹ Closer to home, the celebrated François Vase (circa 570–60 B.C.E.) betrays similar ambitions. An enormous volute-krater, signed by Kleitias as painter and Ergotimos as potter, it too masses figures in registers and enacts a bewildering array of narratives, from the deeds of Peleus to the battle of Pygmies and Cranes.⁵⁰ Despite the vast scope of the design, the painter works in a miniaturist style, lavishing care on even the smallest elements of drapery and coiffure. Such concern with pattern and decorative richness, with *poikilia*, was never lost to archaic artists, and in a sense marks many of the great names of Attic black-figure—among them Nearkhos, Lydos, and Exekias—as heirs of Kleitias.

Returning, then, to Euphronios: it would be wrong to isolate his concern with

musculature and his occasional use of foreshortening from this broad tradition. On the contrary, the naturalistic elements in his art are but one more manifestation of a general concern with detail that goes back to the Shield of Achilles. Looking, for example, at the torso of the dead Sarpedon, many commentators are struck by its anatomical realism and its delicate chiaroscuro (fig. 2). Yet the figure's torso, however "accurate," cannot be separated from its ornate kneecaps, its fine eyelashes, its gritted teeth, or its waving strands of hair—nor, for that matter, from the countless other details elsewhere on the vase. Just as the Homeric style demands a certain vividness of detail, so Euphronios carefully marks every contour of Sarpedon's corpse. But to claim that the painter is setting out to create an image that looks like reality, one that corresponds to a real body in a strong, one-to-one way, is simply untenable in the face of the tremendous effort he has expended to make the image unreal, or more precisely, unreal. There



FIGURE 3. Euphronios, volute-krater (detail): legs of Amazons, c. 510–500 B.C.E. Museo archeologico, Arezzo. Photo: Museo archeologico.

is no protoscientific empiricism here; rather, Euphronios evinces a typically archaic sensibility, one that demands detail for its own sake, whether it be “true” like the abdomen, or “false” like the knee. To argue otherwise is either to ignore part of the painting, or to label every work a failure, and these are unacceptable alternatives.

It is important, here, to distinguish overall formal elaboration from specifically faithful detail: the latter being simply a subcategory of the former. This distinction is summed up in the term *akribeia*, which can mean both accuracy (in the sense of faithfulness) and precision (in the sense of jewel-like detailing). Once it becomes clear that Sarpedon’s torso is but one kind of a general *akribeia*, two points emerge. First, that resemblance is not adequate to describe Pioneer practice but is rather a part of that practice. A description of their art should not elevate this subcategory at the expense of what is often, pejoratively, called “the decorative.” Second, that any critical discussion must account for the coexistence of these two kinds of rendering. As will become clear, painters like Euphronios thematize this coexistence quite explicitly, and they do so in a way that endorses it as fundamental to their practice.

The complexity of this situation is revealed in the Pioneers’ celebrated use of foreshortening. Far from showing that they were interested in mimicking optical “reality,” even a brief examination of their spatial devices reveals almost (but not quite) the opposite. First of all, many of the examples frequently adduced to support the claim that the Pioneers have a new interest in three-dimensional space do nothing of the sort. For example, the lion’s eye in figure 1 is not “montré de trois-quarts,” as one scholar has claimed recently.⁵¹ A foot seen from above or below does not count as foreshortening, nor does a leg doubled under the body. Though there are many incontestable examples of spatial effects in Pioneer work—for example, figure 3—they have doubtless been overplayed. As Martin Robertson points out, “We see no three-quartered face in their surviving work, and when they foreshorten a limb they do it by implication rather than by actually drawing it.”⁵² Moreover, the black background of red-figure actually emphasizes the surface of the vase and inhibits a sense of recession. Thus, while recognizing the role that pictorial depth plays in Pioneer work, it is important not to exaggerate its importance.

A second, more significant characteristic of late archaic space is its lack of coherence. In no case is there any attempt to provide a unified spatial setting for the actors. On the contrary, Euphronios and his contemporaries focus their attention on a single detail and leave the rest of the body—not to mention the rest of the picture—quite flat. The Amazon’s foot in figure 3 is a case in point: Euphronios never tries to situate the whole figure in space, but only a select body part. Taken as a whole, the “integrity of the picture plane” always remains intact. Far from displaying a new sense of the human figure moving in space, the

Pioneers work within established convention but lavish particular attention on certain details.

Progressivist historians like Richter see this haphazard sense of depth as a “groping attempt” at “true” perspective. But it is absurd to view Euphronios as some sort of Brunelleschi manqué. One would do better to accept these images on their own terms: as fragmentary spaces, committed to disjunction over general synthesis. Indeed, on the Amazon krater Euphronios deliberately subverts any such totalization by allowing the legs at lower right to overlap a stray palmette tendril: the image and its frame thus interpenetrate, the floral set impossibly *behind* the archers.⁵³ The result is a constant oscillation between surface and depth, as the sense of recession collapses from the inside: overlapping, which ought by rights to complement the foreshortened foot, here reveals the artifice behind any such pictorial device.

Such spatial dissonances suggest that Euphronios was not trying to create illusionistic space on the surface of a pot. When he paints the way he does, juxtaposing the foreshortened with the surface-bound, it is not out of ignorance or incompetence. Rather, he is restating the paradox of the lion’s eye in a more extreme form. The Amazon’s foot is strictly undecidable—and, crucially, its illusionism works entirely in the service of that aporia. This intense, involuted engagement with the twofoldness of representation, this exploitation of the tension between sign and referent, is in a very real sense what Pioneer work is all about. Depth, here, is not innocent; it is always employed in the service of disruption and difference.

In engaging the materiality of the medium in this way, this spatial fragmentation—like the lion’s eye—contributes to the sheer pleasure given off by the image. The dizzying conjunction of depth and flatness approaches (once again) the Barthesian concept of *jouissance*, which thrives on precisely this sort of disjuncture: “Is not the most erotic portion of a body *where the garment gapes?* . . . it is intermittence . . . which is erotic: the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing (trousers and sweater), between two edges (the open-necked shirt, the glove, and the sleeve); it is this flash itself which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance.”⁵⁴ So far from presaging the ideal Albertian picture, the spatial experiments of Euphronios and his contemporaries are small essays in visual pleasure; spatially fragmented, they do not aim to recapture visible experience but to adorn it, to elaborate it into a feast for the senses. In what have always been taken to be their most mimetic passages, they are, precisely, at their most reflexive and aporetic.

These spatial dissonances are confined to relatively minor details; if they disturb the visual order of the work, they never upset it completely. Nevertheless, it is only a short step from such experiments to full-blown illusionism, a mode of picturing that goes beyond the unsettling effects of Pioneer work to challenge the



FIGURE 4. Pelike: "The First Swallow," c. 510 B.C.E.
Hermitage, St. Petersburg. Photo: Hermitage.

basic representational order of vase-painting itself. This blossoming of spatiality will be a primary focus of the second half of this paper. First, however, it is necessary to elucidate further the implications of the Euphronian approach to picture-making.

One of the most charming of all Greek vases is a pelike in the Hermitage, once thought to be an early Euphronios but now assigned to a follower (fig. 4).⁵⁵ At far left is a seated youth, his lower body wrapped in a cloak; at center is a seated adult, similarly clad; and at far right is a young boy, nude. All three point upward at a small bird flying overhead. Like comic-strip balloons, inscriptions emerge from their mouths: "Look, a swallow!" says the youth; "Yes, by Herakles!" responds the man; "That means it is spring now," says the boy. A slice of Athenian life, this vase has long fulfilled its task of delighting viewers. But it does more than just evoke the quotidian existence of Athens; it is also, as François Lissarrague was the first to suggest, a program-piece of archaic signification.⁵⁶ It focuses our

attention on the nature of signs by juxtaposing, and boldly drawing our attention to, different semiotic systems: the figural image itself, the written word, and the *oiðnos*, the bird of omen. Pointing insistently at the ultrasignificant swallow, the three figures allegorize precisely this aspect of the image: its status as a *sêmeion*, a sign or a trace, an act of signification.

The juxtaposition of different codes—alphabetic, graphic, and “mantic”—goes beyond Wollheim’s twofoldness, and yet works smoothly, without any apparent contradictions. There is nothing disturbing about the interaction of these semiotic orders; the little swallow seems to bear quite easily the brunt of all those pointing fingers, which demand insistently that it convey some meaning. The scene charms, as it ought; it would be mean-spirited to remind the boy that, as the Attic proverb has it, “one swallow does not a springtime make.”⁵⁷ This easy coexistence is of crucial importance, for it suggests that the painter simply does not distinguish between the different orders of discourse, does not see any reason to differentiate text from image, image from *oiðnos*. For the swallow does not “imitate” spring, it does not “represent” spring, it is not itself spring. Rather, it *denotes* spring. It is a sign that, while conveying meaning within a stable field, nonetheless remains distinct from that which it signifies. The signified, in short, never absorbs the signifier as in an ideally mimetic painting: there is never any sense that the image is directly reproducing optical “truth.”

This ability to juggle three sign-systems at once is a crucial reminder of the limits of archaic figurality. In a pre-mimetic world, there is simply nothing for Euphronios’ fractured space to work *against*, nothing for it to displace except its own internal logic. When the painter juxtaposes different orders of signification, he can be anarchic or orderly depending on the circumstance. In the case of the Amazon’s foot and other such fragmented spaces, the image works against itself to create a wholly artificial display; but on the swallow pelike, three levels operate together without difficulty. Signs do work; images can be comprehended. The key point, however, is that in a world without *mimêsis*, those signs and images were never confined to the single task of imitating the visual. Rather, their fluidity and openness were exploited by painters to dramatic effect; the end result being something close to the “backsprung tension” championed by Herakleitos, a chiasmic intertwining of sign and referent.

To sum up, I have argued that two complementary ideals permeate Euphronios’ work. On the one hand, he is an artist committed to the senses, to the hedonistic aspect of viewing. Striving to create images that will delight the viewer, indulging in ornate, twisting lines and flat patterns, he displays the materiality of his products: pleasing objects, delights, they are preeminently commodities designed to sell. Form, in this respect, accords perfectly with function; when filled with a mixture of wine and water, set in the middle of the symposium, the

intoxicating effect of this art would be overpowering.⁵⁸ On the other hand, Euphronios is equally committed to description and detail—in short, to *akrabeia*. Following a tradition as old as Homer, he lavishes care and attention on the smallest elements of the composition, picking out veins, eyelashes, muscles—and, sometimes, articulating a foot or an abdomen in a dim halo of three-dimensional space. All of this detail is ultimately reflexive, with every putatively mimetic passage proving, ultimately, to be in the service of a general materiality. Instead of seeking to reproduce the world on the surface of a pot, Euphronios invests the image with an aura of *tekhnê*, pleasure and richness that, then as now, makes it an irresistible commodity.

The result is deliberately paradoxical. On the one hand, the painter enacts a state of *jouissance*, derived in large part from the sheer artificiality of his product; on the other, there remains a commitment to a vivid seeing-in. The former, characterized by fragmented space and exuberance of line, might seem to work against the easy legibility of the latter. Yet, miraculously, “that which differs with itself is in agreement.” It is precisely the ability to exploit this “backsprung tension” that defines the Pioneer style. Later artists were not so adept at balancing these demands.

A move toward fullness of description, even *mimêsis*, requires ever more fantastic displays of skill. Exemplary in this regard is an astonishing fragment by Douris (circa 470) that shows a radically foreshortened corpse lying on the ground, its arms outstretched, so that we seem to be looking down on the crown of its head—a bit like Andrea Mantegna’s *Dead Christ* in reverse.⁵⁹ This experiment upsets the spatial coherence of the image to an unprecedented degree: the corpse stabs deep into an otherwise flat background. Indeed, the recumbent figure is almost illegible and cannot possibly have jibed with the warriors in profile who originally surrounded it. Such games of *tekhnê* are ultimately self-defeating, for they drive the representational paradox to the point where it can no longer be ignored. It is easy to accommodate the odd foot or torso, but a whole body seen from above is another matter entirely.

The years following the Persian Wars brought an additional challenge to the old regime, as mural-painters like Polygnotos of Thasos and Mikon of Athens developed a new technique for showing spatial recession. Instead of lining up all their figures on a single ground-line, they ranged them at different levels over the surface of the wall; the higher figures were understood to be further back, while those at the bottom were in the “foreground.”⁶⁰ Though the murals are lost, descriptions survive, and it is clear that their influence extended into the Potters’ Quarter of Athens. Regardless of how successful this technique seems today, the point is that vase-painters were trying for the first time to create a consistent sense of depth: *mimêsis*—and with it, the possibility of a seeing-as—had arrived on the painting scene.

There was, in short, what Robertson calls “a crisis in the art of vase-



FIGURE 5. The Lykaon Painter, pelike: Odysseus, Elpenor, Hermes, c. 440 B.C.E. William Amory Gardner Fund, courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Drawing from *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 54 [1934], plate 11).

painting.”⁶¹ Not only had the Archaic equilibrium between hedonism and seeing-in started to dissolve, but a new spatial sense had been introduced from outside. Nowhere is this hemorrhaging of the archaic sign more apparent than in the works of the Lykaon Painter.⁶² This anonymous craftsman, working at roughly the same time as Pheidias (the 440s), is generally considered a minor artist. Unlike Euphronios, he has been the subject of no retrospective exhibition, and no articles have discussed his oeuvre in depth. His one claim to fame has been the fact that, like some of his contemporaries, he shows the influence of the muralists: though retaining a single, flat baseline, like Polygnotos he picks out the contours of rocks and hillsides to suggest a landscape setting. This humble status is unjustified. In fact no other painter of the classical era gives such eloquent form to the problems of *mimêsis*; in his work, the anxieties of the *Parthenonzeit* receive their fullest and most emphatic statement.

In Boston there is a pelike that is generally regarded as the Lykaon Painter’s masterpiece (fig. 5).⁶³ It shows Odysseus’ visit to the Land of the Dead, “beneath fog and darkness,” where he has come to ask Teiresias how he might return to Ithaka (*Odyssey* 11.57, 155). The painter, as John Boardman puts it, “comes closer

than usual in a vase to a literal illustration of lines from Homer.”⁶⁴ As in the *Odyssey*, the hero sits on “a rock . . . [at] the junction of two thunderous rivers” (10. 515), signaled by the tall reeds at left, while before him two rams lie sacrificed; at left the *eidolôn* or “image” of Elpenor clammers “up out of Erebos” (11.37):

This man,
apart from the rest of his friends, in search of cool air, had lain
down drunkenly to sleep on the roof of Circe’s palace,
and when his companions stirred to go he, hearing their tumult
and noise of talking, started suddenly up, and never thought,
when he went down, to go by way of the long ladder,
but blundered straight off the edge of the roof, so that his neck bone
was broken out of its sockets, and his soul went down to Hades.
(10.553–60)

Abandoned on the island, his shade has beaten Odysseus’ ships to the Underworld and now confronts its former captain:

But first there came the soul of my companion, Elpenor,
for he had not yet been buried under earth of the wide ways,
since we had left his body behind in Circe’s palace,
unburied and unwept, with this other errand before us.
I broke into tears at the sight of him.
(11.51–5)

Nonetheless, Odysseus keeps his guard:

I myself, drawing from beside my thigh my sharp sword,
crouched there, and would not let the strengthless heads
of the perished
dead draw near to the blood, until I had questioned Teiresias.
(11.48–50)

The ghost asks the captain to return to Circe’s isle and cremate him, erecting a *sêma* or marker over his ashes; a request to which Odysseus readily agrees. The two converse for a while:

So we two stayed there exchanging our sad words, I on
one side holding my sword over the blood, while opposite
me the phantom of my companion talked long with me.
(11.81–83)

Then the shade departs.

Not without reason, this pelike has frequently been understood as the most “literary” of vases. The only substantial departure from Homer’s version is the addition of Hermes at far right. Though this god does not appear in the poem, his presence is usually explained by the fact that he is the *Psukhopompos*, the one

who guides souls on their way to Hades; a role, moreover, that he actually performs later in the poem, in book twenty-four.⁶⁵ Here, he seems almost surprised at the sight of Elpenor, as if, like Odysseus, he cannot believe that the ghost has traveled more quickly than the black ship.⁶⁶ At the same time, the vase is frequently cited as an example of the new, post-Polygnotan spatial sense. The figures move within a landscape setting of unprecedented detail, with ground-lines set free from the bottom of the figure-frame. Moreover, Polygnotos himself included Odysseus and Elpenor in his great *Nekyia* at Delphi, a mural that may have exerted some influence on this rendering.⁶⁷ In short, the vase is understood to be readerly in the extreme, its meaning predetermined by the Homeric text, its spatial sense by the new developments in painterly *mimêsis*. It is, as Norman Bryson has written in another context, an image “consumed by discourse—the figural and the discursive exactly fitting each other.”⁶⁸ As such it makes a stark contrast to the painterly excess of a Euphronios.

Of all the figures, Elpenor is certainly the most “advanced.” He is located unequivocally *in space*, his head turned three-quarters, his midriff twisting, his legs and fingers cropped by rocks, his whole body framed by reeds. There is a real sense of three-dimensionality here. Moreover, the artist goes out of his way to give corporeal weight to this figure who, with a palpable gesture, pushes himself upward with his right arm and pulls with the left. He is genuinely *heavy*, with the fingers of his right hand splayed over the rock to convey a sense of pressure and solidity. Odysseus and Hermes, with their resolute profiles, are flat by comparison. Indeed, the Lykaon Painter has done all in his power to emphasize this distinction, establishing a distinct progression from right to left. Hermes’ body remains hidden beneath a flat cloak, the surface of which is articulated only by a series of curls and arabesques that do nothing to suggest depth. Odysseus is almost as two-dimensional, but a few details suggest a shallow space: the fold of cloth over his right thigh, the shading on his sun-hat, the slight twist to his upper torso, or the (impossible) turn of his right forearm. Last comes Elpenor, outdoing them all in a display of unprecedented virtuosity: the literal embodiment of *mimêsis*.

But there is a paradox here, one that goes far beyond the old Pioneer balance of fragmented space. For Elpenor is a *ghost*. Far from being weighty or ponderous, he is, as Homer tells us, no more substantial than “a shadow or a dream” (11.207).⁶⁹ This figure, for whom the artist has pulled out all the stops, on whom he has bestowed an unprecedented sense of corporeality, is precisely the one least deserving of that honor: the single most insubstantial, incorporeal, shadowy, dreamlike figure one could possibly represent. And the viewer knows it. If this is *mimêsis*, it is of a strange sort.

What is one to make of a picture that so openly self-destructs? On the one hand, the Lykaon Painter has presented a supremely mimetic figure, using every trick in the book to assert its weight and presence. On the other, he has made it

clear that the figure is nothing but a phantom, an illusion: in short, an *eidolôn*, a word that can mean either “ghost” or “image.” The viewer’s dilemma in this situation has an echo on the pot itself, in the contemplative, even puzzled figure of Odysseus. In this respect the Lykaon Painter departs from the traditional *Nekyia* composition, which tends to show the Underworld as a panorama of famous ghosts—Sisyphus, the Danaids, and so on—rather than as a confrontation between looker and spectacle.⁷⁰ In a typical rendering we, as viewers, partake of the scene, picking out the recognizable dead; but never do we find our own activity repeated within the composition itself. Never, in other words, does the artist thematize looking as insistently as the Lykaon Painter does on his pelike. Gazing at the bizarre apparition that has appeared before him, Odysseus in his amazement clearly parallels the real-life viewer. The act of seeing thus finds itself inscribed into the image itself, such that the boundaries between life and art, reality and illusion—indeed, between ourselves as viewers and it as object—are once more confounded. The viewer enters the imagery to an unprecedented degree here, is put to work at producing meaning. But what is the result? Simply an absence of closure: the unresolved contemplation of Odysseus. “Fog and darkness,” indeed.

The openness with which the artist displays his mendacity is singularly appropriate in a scene containing both Odysseus and Hermes; these two figures are the supreme tricksters of Greek myth, excelling all others in their guile.⁷¹ They, and only they, are called *polutropos* (of many turns), an epithet that denotes vividly their crafty, crooked aspect.⁷² Both are lying narrators: like poets, they tell tales that they themselves create. The word for such deception is *apatê*; significantly, in the fifth century the same term was used to describe art’s ability to trick the eye or the ear.⁷³ Indeed, as Redfield points out, not only is Odysseus likened explicitly to a poet on several occasions in the *Odyssey*, but also, like Hesiod’s Muses, he “tells lies like truths” (19.203).⁷⁴ Hermes, for his part, is inventor of the lyre, the poet’s instrument, with which he sings a theogony; he also can lie, creating a false narrative when he disguises his theft of Apollo’s cattle by making the herd walk backward.⁷⁵ The Lykaon Painter shows him holding “the golden staff” described by Homer, “with which he charms the eyes of men or wakens whom he wills” (24.2–4).⁷⁶ The viewer of the pot is in just this position, charmed and wakened by turns in the spell. Here, *apatê* is wholly overt; to believe that this painting imitates appearances is to fall victim to a liar. The Lykaon Painter thus takes paradox to an extreme undreamed by Euphronios: not only is the viewer thematized in Odysseus’ contemplative gaze, but the deceptive activity of the painter reappears in the presence of two supreme tricksters.

There is nonetheless some continuity with Pioneer work. The same combination of description and artifice obtains, the same commercially motivated display of *tekhnhê*. But there is at the same time a crucial change, for the paradox latent in the Pioneer image blossoms into full aporia on the Boston pelike. If

Euphronios found it possible to juxtapose distinct representational modes, if the swallow in St. Petersburg could function on three levels at once, here the balance has been lost. Just as Odysseus ponders but keeps his sword at the ready, unsure of what he sees, so the viewer can never be certain of the status of this image. By including the perplexed spectator in the scene itself, the artist draws our attention to these very issues: the problematic interface of illusion and representation, seeing-as and seeing-in. Does the image imitate reality, or is it just “a man-made dream for waking eyes” (Plato *Sophist* 266c)? Is this picture truth—or just one of those “lies like truth” that are the Muses’ specialty? Even Hermes, gesturing in astonishment at the miraculous sight, gives no answer. In place of the equilibrium of a Euphronios, the Lykaon Painter presents a world of confusion. Seeing-in has, it seems, become a field of doubt and misgiving, where you cannot believe your eyes; *jouissance* is now the uncanny sensation of having just seen a ghost.

But there is still pleasure here, albeit of a different sort from that of the archaic image. The Boston pelike seems very like a trompe l’oeil in its mixture of illusion and artifice. The pleasure in trompe l’oeil, it has been argued, comes from the openness of the fiction combined with the deceptiveness of the lie; the eye is at once fooled and not fooled, you know you are being tricked. The viewer’s “twofold attention” bifurcates, the dual aspects oscillating back and forth in constant undecidability. Such is, precisely, the case in viewing the Elpenor: the double knowledge that he is both material image and shadowy phantom. We are somewhere beyond the archaic valuation on artifice as the signature of labor, in a realm in which the interplay of *mimêsis* and *tekhnê* is both a joy and a problem. If the gap, the seam, the place “where the garment *gapes*,” remains pleasurable, in this instance it has widened into a chasm; there is bliss in Hades, but of a somewhat queasy sort.

It may be objected that, in the continuity of their illusionism, trompe l’oeil paintings differ from vases. In the former, everything is part of the game, even the frame of the picture itself (which may take on the appearance of a door-jamb, a cabinet, or a window-frame). The Lykaon Painter, on the other hand, is careful to contrast his spectacular illusionism with the more conventional figures of Hermes and Odysseus. Taking the Pioneer fragmentation of space to an extreme, he presents a radical juxtaposition of different representational modes. From a modern perspective this exaggerated disjunction resembles nothing so much as Hans Holbein’s *Ambassadors* in London. Like the Lykaon Painter, Holbein forces his viewers to operate in two distinct optics at once. Two courtiers stand facing out, rendered in a high mimetic style, surrounded by worldly bric-a-brac; at their feet, floating in midair, an anamorphic skull of grotesque proportions asserts a very different pictorial mode. Martin Jay has written that, “by combining two visual orders in one planar space, Holbein subverted and decentered the unified subject of vision painstakingly constructed by the dominant scopic regime.”⁷⁷ Though it might be argued that the skull actually supports the regime through

the incorporation of its Other (under the sign of death, no less), the key point is that, for Holbein, the way to mark a decisive rupture is through a profoundly antimimetic, distortive technique.

The Boston pelike is equally death-ridden and reflexive: like the Holbein, it dramatizes breaches and disjunctions within representation. The irony, of course, is that between the two images the terms are neatly reversed. On the pelike, the destabilizing element is precisely the most imitative: the *eidolôn*, granted an extreme of presence and weight, ruptures an otherwise flat composition. What anamorphosis does in the Renaissance, *mimêsis* does in the age of Perikles; as much as it is a display of painterly skill, the ghostly Elpenor is an image of death, a trick, a reminder of ephemerality. The poet Simonides used the image of a whirlpool to achieve the same dizzying effect: "All things," he wrote, "arrive at one single horrible Kharybdis, great excellences and wealth alike" (522 *PMG*). In short, the very qualities that we see today as attempting to enact semiotic closure, the qualities that define a realist text or an illusionistic painting, are in the work of the Lykaon Painter disruptive and disturbing. The possibility of a seeing-as haunts the image.

Similar concerns about the phenomenology of representation occupied many of the sophists, Protagoras of Abdera especially. An exact contemporary of the Lykaon Painter, Protagoras was well known in Athens by 444, when Perikles commissioned him to write a constitution for the colony of Thurii.⁷⁸ Though there is no evidence to suggest that he had any direct influence on Attic painting, his theories do provide a conceptual horizon for objects like the Boston pelike. As Svetlana Alpers has written in another context, "I am not claiming a source for or influence upon the art, but rather pointing to a cultural ambiance . . . that offers appropriate terms and suggests strategies" for dealing with it.⁷⁹ As will become clear, Protagorean theories display the same uncertainty about signification that characterizes the Elpenor pelike. The congruence is too close to be coincidence.

Arguing against any transcendent or absolute truths, Protagoras was the first Greek to put forward a consistent argument for subjectivism. "Man," he famously said, "is the measure of all things, of the things that are that they are, and of the things that are not that they are not" (fr. 1 DK).⁸⁰ As Sextus Empiricus put it, this dictum means that "truth is something relative because everything that has appeared to, or been believed by, *someone* is at once real in relation to *him*" (*Adversus Mathematicus* 7.60). Or, in Plato's succinct paraphrase, "the truth is that things are as they appear to anyone" (*Cratylus* 386c). Elsewhere Plato gives another example: one person may feel a breeze to be cool, while another may feel it to be warm—therefore the breeze truly *is* both warm and cool (*Theatetus* 152b). Reality is measured by the individual.⁸¹

Protagoras extended this subjectivism to rhetoric and language, entering an important fifth-century debate about the “correctness of words” (*orthotês onomatôn*). Does language operate along pathways laid down by nature (*phusis*), or is it all just convention (*nomos*)? Is truth to be judged by correspondence or consensus?⁸² Siding with the latter, Protagoras was an exponent of “antilogic”—the doctrine that, as he put it, “there are two opposite arguments on every subject,” each of which is equally valid (fr. A 21 DK).⁸³ The breeze could be cool, it could be warm; one could argue either way and not be wrong. In antilogic, truth is constantly deferred in the face of two irreconcilable assertions. Moreover, what is true for a debate between two people holds for language in general: a word may have a plurality of meanings, and all may be equally proper. The only criterion for choosing one over the other is convenience; as Plato puts it, “Some appearances are better than others, though none is truer” (*Theatetus* 167b).

This discourse has much in common with the Lykaon Painter’s imagery. In both cases there is the same anxiety about representation. On the vase it is an enterprise fraught with problems: the *eidolôn* both is and is not weighty, is and is not real. Elpenor thus comes as close to antilogic as is possible in visual art, a strictly undecidable combination of materiality and insubstantiality. Indeed, compared with this dramatic confrontation of living and dead, the sophist’s breeze seems trivial. The Lykaon Painter dramatizes an anxiety shared by contemporary philosophers, suggesting a radical deferral of meaning that goes far beyond the archaic love of pattern and artifice. Like Protagoras, he suspends meaning between two contrary *logoi*, admitting the possibility of mimetic representation only to undercut it radically.

Nor is the pelike an isolated example. A second vase by this painter, also in Boston, is equally complex. It is a bell-krater, showing the death of Aktaion (fig. 6).⁸⁴ For some sin (the accounts vary) this huntsman was transformed into a deer and killed by his own hounds. The scene is not particularly common, and the Lykaon Painter’s version is unlike any other.⁸⁵ At far right stands Zeus, one foot resting on a boulder, grasping his thunderbolt in his left hand and his scepter in his right. Next comes Lyssa—“Madness”—with a small canine emerging from the crown of her head, driving the hounds to attack their master. Aktaion, at center right, tries to defend himself against his rabid pack. He is in midmetamorphosis, with his ears elongated, horns emerging from his head and fur sprouting on his face. At far left stands Artemis herself, watching and holding a torch. All of the figures are labeled for easy reading.

Once again, the Lykaon Painter has juxtaposed different spatial modes. Like Elpenor, Aktaion is drawn with face in three-quarters—and once again, the other figures are in profile. Also like Elpenor, Aktaion is set in a small landscape of rocks and plants. While there is no cropping of the kind seen on the pelike, pat-



FIGURE 6. The Lykaon Painter, bell-krater: the death of Aktaion, c. 440 B.C.E. H. L. Pierce Fund, courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo: Museum of Fine Arts.

terns of overlapping do set the hunter in a shallow space. The dog at upper left, for instance, stands on a boulder in the background, passes in front of a tall shrub, and snaps at Aktaion's genitals, the net effect being to emphasize the distance between the victim and the rock behind him. In the same way, the lower corner of Aktaion's cloak passes behind his left leg but overlaps one of the hounds. Most impressive of all, Aktaion's right leg has been severely foreshortened; of the other figures, only Zeus can approach this sense of depth.

In short, the Lykaon Painter has once again set off a single figure from his fellows, isolating him in a sliver of three-dimensionality. And once again, there is uncertainty about that figure's corporeal status: Aktaion appears at the moment of his transformation, and so is neither man nor beast. He is caught, like Elpenor, somewhere in between full humanity and full otherness. In this intermediate

state, Aktaion is a strictly undecidable figure: he exists on the margins, a figure of antilogic for whom two opposing arguments compete with equal validity.

Were that the whole story, this krater would seem fairly timid compared with the pelike. However, an inscription signals that something more complex is afoot. Unlike the other figures, Aktaion is labeled not once but twice: with his proper name and with another, "Euaion," up above. The latter appears on several other vases and can be identified with a real person: Euaion, son of the playwright Aeschylus and a known *tragikos* or "poet / actor" in his own right.⁸⁶ On some vases he is even given his patronymic, "Aiskhylou."⁸⁷ Since Euaion was an actor, it has often been argued that vases that bear his name were inspired by his performances.⁸⁸ That is, the figure of Aktaion on this krater is to be understood as Euaion *in the role* of the doomed hunter. The argument is particularly strong in this instance, because Aeschylus himself based a lost tragedy, the *Toxotides* (Archeresses), on this very myth; his son Euaion may have played a role. Moreover, the sheer novelty of the Lykaon Painter's composition suggests some sort of outside influence.⁸⁹ If such is indeed the case, then this vase is not a straightforward narrative but the record of a theatrical performance.

This realization has several consequences. One is to render the central figure even more problematic: where Elpenor remained caught between substance and ethereality, Aktaion is at once deer and man, character and actor. This state is, once again, the visual equivalent of Protagorean antilogic, presenting two opposite arguments with equal validity. Yet the question of the figure's exact identity is only part of a broader uncertainty about representation itself; tragic drama, it will be recalled, is the definitive form of *mimêsis*. The Lykaon Painter thus engages in a twofold mimicry, presenting his viewer with the imitation of an imitation. For all the spatial effects lavished on him, Aktaion is but a copy, a product of *tekhne*. There is no truth here; everything is just performance.

As this theatricality reveals, the vase is itself a spectacle for visual consumption, a stage for self-display. In a way, the scene here may be best understood as a sort of embedded narrative, a play-within-a-play. It is a bold reduplication of *tekhne*, at once exposing and celebrating the artifice behind representation. Thus Zeus and Artemis each play two roles: that of an actor in the unfolding drama and that of a spectator, standing idly by while the main action takes place. While each plays a role in the narrative, each watches, stands outside the action, and observes. Looking and acting thus merge into one, caught in *aporia* once again. The image is ruled by uncertainty: deer or man, Aktaion or Euaion, reality or counterfeit. Antilogic replicates itself constantly, with dizzying effect. Or, to use Charles Segal's description of tragedy, it "simultaneously culminates and dissolves the semiotic system behind the mythical material it uses."⁹⁰

The situation becomes even more complex when one recalls the unshakable rule of Greek tragedy that all violence must occur offstage. In fact, a surviving fragment of *Toxotides* shows that the death of Aktaion was not acted out but was,

instead, recounted by a messenger (Aeschylus fr. 244 *TrGF*). In other words, the tableau that the Lykaon Painter presents as a scene from drama *never happened onstage*. It is a fantasy, a willful departure from fact; no Athenian would believe for a minute that it provides an accurate record of a performance. Yet, by naming Euaion, the Lykaon Painter makes precisely that claim. He seems, in other words, to be taking one step forward and two steps back. First he depicts a figure in illusionistic space, and then he undercuts that depiction by revealing it to be a performance—and not just a performance but one that was not even staged. Caught *en abyme*, the scene is an imitation of an imitation that never was, an open and deliberate fiction.

In one sense, all this artifice only accrues to the painter's benefit: as with Pioneer work, it indexes the artist's *tekhne*. But, like the Elpenor, the deer / man goes far beyond archaic prosopopoeia. Seen here in agony, dehumanized, attacked by the very beasts he used to master, the figure of Aktaion / Euaion ruptures the whole composition. Virtuosity no longer emerges in the individual lines; there is no equivalent to the lion's eye in the work of the Lykaon Painter. Instead, the authorial "turn" depends on a bravura mimicry of three-dimensional space. That is the problem, for by ignoring gesture in favor of an illusionism that imitates nothing, the Lykaon Painter creates an aporetic image. Materiality, which Euphronios was able to exploit, here becomes an obstacle: in a painting manifestly "about" the impossibility of presence, the artist depends on a dramatization of that impossibility to organize his own authorial persona. Like Aktaion, he traps himself, and the work remains unsigned. The image self-destructs thrice-over: on the level of narrative (deer or man?), on the level of representation (hero or player?), and on the level of signification (imitation or fantasy?).

These images differ from their predecessors in yet another way, in their relationships with their textual sources. It is often said that we should not expect vase-painters to provide us with literal illustrations of Homer or other authors.⁹¹ Thus, to give one example, in figure 2 Euphronios departs from the Homeric version of Sarpedon's death. Though nude in the picture, in the poem the hero is borne away only after Apollo has "put ambrosial clothing on him" (*Iliad* 16.680–81).⁹² The text thus acts as a sort of guide, helping us to understand the picture without transforming it into a mere supplement. If Euphronios does not follow Homer to the letter, it does nothing to affect his representational activity: it tells us nothing about the ontological status of his work. In much the same way, the labels appended to the figures ("Sarpedon," "Thanatos," and so on) only help to make the picture more legible; like small outposts of the Homeric text, they tie down the "floating chain" of signifieds, telling the viewer just who is who. With the Lykaon Painter, on the other hand, the relation between image and text is infinitely more problematic. For it is precisely in this space between writing and drawing that the image self-destructs. Here the labels do not stabilize the image—quite the opposite. Indeed, it is only from the inscription that we know that the

deer/man is both Aktaion *and* Euaion, only there that the problem of theatricality and imitation irrupts forcefully into the pictorial field. In the same way, the inscription labeling Elpenor—written, significantly, in the genitive case, not “Elpenor” but “*of* Elpenor”—only reminds the viewer that the magnificent figure is an insubstantial phantom.⁹³ Referring back to Homer or Aeschylus has the same effect, revealing the contradictory and fantastic nature of the imagery. It is only from Homer that we know Elpenor is not the weighty figure he seems to be, only from the drama that we know Euaion never died onstage. Unlike archaic work, which engages in a sort of partnership between image and poem, these images exceed their written sources, overwhelming them with a disruptive figurality.

I do not believe that the Lykaon Painter had any intention of commenting on the nature of *mimêsis*, that his works are in any way examples of Protagorean language-theory in action, or that he was inspired by Aeschylus in anything but the most general sort of way. Indeed, such forms of discursive message-bearing seem quite the opposite of his mode: far from tagging along in the role of simple illustrations, his vases constantly assert their own slippery powers. If this vertiginous uncertainty is contemporary with a broader reevaluation of the city’s archaic heritage, nonetheless it cannot be assimilated to any other discourse: the Lykaon Painter’s vases are objects in their own right, not mere stepchildren of sophism or tragedy. In any event, speculation about the origin of this or that aspect of his art would be fruitless—there is no way to know the artist’s intentions when we don’t even know his name and are not entirely sure he ever existed in the first place. He is, after all, a product of connoisseurship, only as real as his pictures.

What does seem clear, however, is that the Lykaon Painter’s vases do not signify in the same way as those of Euphronios. Rather, they stand as visual *parallels* to tragedy and antilogic. They manifest the same belief in plurality of meaning, the same refusal to accept any truth at face value. Thus they signal a profound change in the approach to picture-making, from a celebration of the fragment to a state of morbidity and disintegration. If Euphronios engages with the materiality of his medium in order to highlight its sheer artifice, here the pleasures of description no longer satisfy. They have, instead, given way to a fundamental indecision: an attempt (doomed, perhaps) to fuse imitation and invention, truth and falsehood, into a single figure.

All of this seems part and parcel of that “crisis of representation” that overwhelmed painting around the middle of the fifth century. The Lykaon Painter seems to have lost the easy balance of his predecessors: his heroes quite literally embody a profound unease, an inability or refusal to decide between opposing arguments. These later images, I have suggested, have much in common with Protagorean antilogic; like the sophist, this painter seems unwilling or unable to impose a single order (*kosmos*) upon the world—precisely because he cannot ignore the shaky foundations of his own illusionism. *Mimêsis*, nascent in the fig-

ures of Aktaion and Elpenor, does not bring with it the perfection and closure so often associated with the Perikleian age. It is, on the contrary, the vehicle of aporia. In this world, to tie an image to visual reality only makes that image less stable, less legible. Imitation, coming on the heels of archaic bravura, is unsettling. The archaic paradox, which made the most mimetic element of a scene the most artificial, has come back to haunt the painters.

A great distance separates the cavalier attitude of a Euphronios from the aporia of a Lykaon Painter. Within that space—corresponding to the first half of the fifth century B.C.E.—is the first irruption of the typically Western approach to painting. Vase-painters never took *mimêsis* for granted, and in works like the Elpenor pelike or the Aktaion krater we see something of the disturbing effect that this idea had on classical art. For painting, it is the moment in which the discursive made its first great incursions into the figural, when the rhetoricity of painting first became problematic. By the next century, the time of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, imitation had become an accepted goal of painters. But by then vase-painting was, for all intents and purposes, dead in Athens.

Notes

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The following abbreviations will be used throughout:

ABV J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956).

*Add*² Thomas H. Carpenter, ed., with Thomas Mannack and Melanie Mendonca, *Beazley Addenda: Additional References to ABV, ARV² and Paralipomena*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1989).

*ARV*² J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1963).

DK H. Diels, ed., with additions by W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th ed. (Zurich, 1951–52).

Para J. D. Beazley, *Paralipomena: Additions to Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters and to Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1971).

PMG Denys Page, *Poetae melici graeci* (Oxford, Eng., 1962).

TrGF August Nauck, *Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta*, 2d ed. (Hildesheim, Ger., 1964).

Translations from Homer are by Richmond Lattimore unless otherwise noted.

1. Gisela M. A. Richter, *Perspective in Greek and Roman Art* (London, 1974), 21.
2. Jerome J. Pollitt, "Early Classical Greek Art in a Platonic Universe," in Cedric G. Boulter, ed., *Greek Art: Archaic into Classical* (Leiden, Neth., 1985), 97. Compare Goethe's and Schiller's notions of the *Bestimmungen* in Greek art, on which see Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Blood for the Ghosts* (London, 1982), 47.

3. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 2d ed. (Princeton, 1961), 131 and elsewhere.
4. Compare the somewhat similar argument in Erwin Panofsky, *Idea*, 2d ed. (Berlin, 1960). Though the idealistic mode at times masquerades as a corrective to the realistic, the two are in fact complementary, accommodating almost any image within their totalizing field. The double bind is clear in Karl Schefold's assertion that "griechische Bilder sind Symbole, keine Naturkopien." One metaphysic—that of Nature—is rejected, only to be replaced by another—the pure transparency of the Symbol. Karl Schefold, *Die Göttersage in der klassischen und hellenistischen Kunst* (Munich, 1981), 127.
5. Relevant works are too numerous to be cited comprehensively. For this paper I have found the following to be especially useful: Karen Bassi, "Helen and the Discourse of Denial in Stesichorus' Palinode," *Arethusa* 26 (1993): 51–75; E. L. Bowie, "Lies, Fiction, and Slander in Early Greek Poetry," in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin, 1993), 1–37; Marcel Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la grèce archaïque*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1990); Leslie Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* (Ithaca, 1991); Richard P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes* (Ithaca, 1989); Louise H. Pratt, *Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar* (Ann Arbor, 1993); Jesper Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre* (Lund, Sweden, 1976).
6. For the equation of truth with representational fidelity, see, for example, Pliny *Natural History* 35.65.
7. Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité*, 146.
8. See, for example, Bowie, "Lies, Fiction, and Slander," 20–22; Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité*, 75–76; G. R. F. Ferrari, "Hesiod's Mimetic Muses and the Strategies of Deconstruction," in Andrew Benjamin, ed., *Post-Structuralist Classics* (New York, 1987), 45–78; Gregory Nagy, "Hesiod," in T. J. Luce, ed., *Ancient Writers* (New York, 1982), 43–72; Pratt, *Lying and Poetry*, 106–13; Pietro Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore, 1977), 8–44; Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre*, 46–67. All give further references to the vast literature on this passage.
9. The account that follows relies chiefly on Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité*. See also Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre*, 147–52. For an alternative approach, which sees a distinction between "ethical" and "factual" truth in Greek poetics, see Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), esp. 87–96; Christopher Gill, "Plato's Atlantis Story and the Birth of Fiction," *Philosophy and Literature* 3 (1979): 64–78; idem, "Plato on Falsehood—Not Fiction," in Gill and Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, 69–74. Also Wolfgang Rösler, "Die Entdeckung der Fiktionalität in der Antike," *Poetica* 12 (1980): 283–319.
10. Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité*, 77. Compare Nagy, "Hesiod," 47.
11. The metaphor of choice is sculpture. See Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre*, esp. 186–94; Kurke, *Traffic in Praise*, esp. 192–4. The roots of the Platonic critique of poetry are apparent in this valuation of materiality over even ethical truth. On this trajectory see Havelock, *Preface to Plato*; Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre*; Gill, "Plato's Atlantis Story and the Birth of Fiction"; idem, "Plato on Falsehood—Not Fiction."
12. On these terms see W. H. Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia* (Leipzig, 1883), esp. 69–72. Cf. Pratt, *Lying and Poetry*, 30–31 n. 31.
13. *Kosmein*: Plato *Ion* 530d7–8. Compare also Thucydides 1.21; Gorgias fr. B 11. To this adornment one may compare the "aesthetic of expansion," described by Martin, *Language of Heroes*, chap. 5.
14. *Odyssey* 8.492; Pratt, *Lying and Poetry*, 44–45. Contrast the speech of the upstart Ther-sites, which is *ou kata kosmon*, "ugly," at *Iliad* 2.214.
15. On the agonistic context of Greek poetry see most recently Mark Griffith, "Contest

- and Contradiction in Early Greek Poetry,” in Mark Griffith and Donald J. Mastrorarde, eds., *The Cabinet of the Muses* (Atlanta, 1990), 185–207; Kurke, *Traffic in Praise*, 1 n. 1; Martin, *Language of Heroes*; W. Rösler, *Dichter und Gruppe* (Munich, 1980). The classic account of the archaic “agonale Mensch” remains Jacob Burckhardt’s *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1952). See also V. Ehrenberg, “Das Agonale,” in *Ost und West* (Prague, 1936), 63–96.
16. On priamel see W. H. Race, *The Classical Priamel from Homer to Boethius* (*Mnemosyne Suppl.* 74, 1982).
 17. Bassi, “Helen and the Discourse of Denial”; Griffith, “Contest and Contradiction,” 189, 196; Nagy, “Hesiod,” 47; Pratt, *Lying and Poetry*, 26.
 18. Martin, *Language of Heroes*, 68–75. Cf. Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, 1979), 222–42.
 19. Not all of these contests were public. Equally important for the present discussion, in fact, is the private symposium, or drinking party. During the course of these gatherings the guests would take turns singing a special class of drinking song, the *skolion*, each trying to outdo the others in a sort of convivial *agôn*. Since the majority of Attic black- and red-figured vases were designed specifically for these parties, the *skolion* provides a direct connection between poetry contest and visual imagery. Indeed, there is considerable overlap in theme between the songs and the pots: they cover the same ground, tell the same stories. For instance, a vase by the Copenhagen Painter (Würzburg 515; ARV², 256.5; Add², 204) shows the assassination of Hipparkhos, commemorated in a *skolion* credited to Kallistratos (893–6 PMG). On the *skolion* see R. Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion* (Giessen, Germ., 1893).
 20. Kurke, *Traffic in Praise*, 193. See also Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre*, 186–94. Indeed, a whole class of singers the rhapsodes or “stitchers of songs,” recited and combined preexisting poems, but did not themselves compose.
 21. See, for example, Mark Griffith, “Personality in Hesiod,” *Classical Antiquity* 2 (1983): 37–65; Kurke, *Traffic in Praise*; idem, “Pindar and the Prostitutes, or Reading Ancient ‘Pornography’ (forthcoming); Mary R. Lefkowitz, *First-Person Fictions* (Oxford, 1991). Also relevant here is Gregory Nagy’s argument that certain key “authors”—notably Hesiod and Theognis—were not real people so much as personifications of a poetic tradition. See Nagy, “Hesiod”; idem, “Theognis of Megara: A Poet’s Vision of His City,” in Gregory Nagy and T. Figueira, eds., *Theognis of Megara* (Baltimore, 1985), 22–81; idem, “Early Greek Views of Poets and Poetry,” in George A. Kennedy, ed., *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1, *Classical Criticism* (Cambridge, 1989), 35–63; also Walter Burkert, “The Making of Homer in the Sixth Century B.C.: Rhapsodes Versus Stesichorus,” in Marion True, ed., *Papers on the Amasis Painter and His World* (Malibu, 1987), 43–62.
 22. Gerald F. Else, “‘Imitation’ in the Fifth Century,” *Classical Philology* 53 (1958): 73–90. Only in the fourth century did *mimêsis* come to cover the realm of visual imagery.
 23. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 5.
 24. Paris, Louvre G 110; ARV², 14.3; Para, 322; Add², 152. See, most recently, Martine Denoyelle, “Autour de cratère en calice Louvre G 110, signé par Euphronios,” in Martine Denoyelle, ed., *Euphronios peintre. Actes de la journée d’étude organisée par l’Ecole du Louvre et le département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques, et romaines du musée du Louvre, 10 Octobre 1990* (Paris, 1992), 47–60.
 25. Cf. Dionysios of Hallikarnassos, *De compositione verborum*, 25.
 26. See, for example, Donna Kurtz, “Pioneering Anatomical Realism,” in M. Cygielman,

- M. Iozzo, F. Nicosia, and P. Zamarchi Grassi, eds., *Euphronios: Atti del seminario internazionale di studi, Arezzo 27–28 maggio 1990* (Florence, 1992), 29–35.
27. New York 1972.11.10. Not known to J. D. Beazley. See L. Giuliani and W.-D. Heilmeyer, eds., *Euphronios der Maler*, exhibition catalog (Berlin, 1991), 93–105, for discussion and further references.
 28. On iterability and its consequences: Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Chicago, 1988), esp. 10–21, 62–3. I should note that, for Derrida, iterability enables reference as much as it ruins it; see, for example, *ibid.*, 76–77; *idem*, *Dissemination* (Chicago, 1981), 168–9. In what follows, I hope to bring out the ways in which this doubleness reappears in Euphronios' imagery.
 29. See Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1980), 205–26; *idem.*, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton, 1987), 46–77.
 30. This possibility may sound odd, but it is crucial to much ancient art criticism: in the well-known story of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, for example, the birds see the painting as grapes, and that is precisely the point (Pliny *Natural History* 9.310–11). See W. J. T. Mitchell, "Illusion: Looking at Animals Looking," in *Picture Theory* (Chicago, 1994), 329–44. In much the same way, modern progressivist historians of art sometimes talk as though the desire to achieve a really perfect seeing-as were the motor of all stylistic change.
 31. Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects*, 205 and elsewhere.
 32. Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, 46.
 33. Wollheim's brief remarks on visual pleasure are suggestive in this regard: see *ibid.*, 100.
 34. Munich 2307; *ARV*², 26.1; *Para*, 323; *Add*², 155.
 35. Both quotations, *ARV*², 21.
 36. On these scenes see Konrad Schauenberg, "Eine neue Amphora des Andokidesmalers," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 76 (1961): 48–71; Maria F. Vos, "Aulodic and Auletic Contests," in H. A. G. Brijder, A. A. Drukker, and C. W. Neeft, eds., *Enthousiasmos* (Amsterdam, 1986), 122–30. By Euphronios, see Paris, Louvre G 103; *ARV*², 14.2; *Para*, 322; *Add*², 152.
 37. The line has a counterpart in a uniquely emphatic signature on the reverse of the vessel: "*Euphronios egraphsen tadê*" (Euphronios painted *this*). On this signature see Denoyelle, "Autour de cratère"; Giuliani and Heilmeyer, *Euphronios der Maler*, 76; H. R. Immerwahr, "The Letterings of Euphronios," in Irma Wehgartner, ed., *Euphronios und Seine Zeit* (Berlin, 1992), 49–56.
 38. *ABV*, x. The remark, of course, derives from the Comte de Buffon's *Discours sur le style* of 1753.
 39. Paul de Man, "Autobiography as De-facement," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York, 1984), 69. See also *idem.*, "Hypogram and Inscription," in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis, 1986), 45–50.
 40. Cf. Kurke, *Traffic in Praise*, 192–4 (with further references), on the importance of final causes in Greek craftsmanship; also Alison Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (Ithaca, 1972), 184–218; M. I. Finley, "The Servile Statuses of Ancient Greece," in *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (London, 1981), 133–49. See also notes 20 and 21, above, for literary parallels.
 41. The term "Euphronios-effect" derives from Svetlana Alpers' discussion of an "individually 'effect'" in the work of Rembrandt. See her *Rembrandt's Enterprise* (Chicago, 1988), 114.

42. This thesis is strikingly confirmed, in the field of vase-painting, by the fact that at least two people painted in the persona of Douris: the connoisseurial literature distinguishes the “real” Douris—a cup-painter of the early fifth century—from the ancient “forger” who used his name on two vessels. Crucially, however, the “forger” made no attempt to paint in the style of the “real” Douris; indeed, the “forgeries” have been attributed to a prolific artist known as the Triptolemos Painter. The authorial name is thus independent of a particular style—a fact inexplicable to a connoisseurship premised on a centered, self-present author (and which must therefore conclude that the “forger” is curiously inept). See J. Robert Guy, “A Ram’s Head Rhyton Signed by Charinos,” *Arts in Virginia* 21 (1981): 10–11 and nn. 69–70. For a similar case involving a potter named Nikosthenes, see John Boardman, *Athenian Black-Figure Vases: A Handbook* (New York, 1974), 236.
43. de Man, “Autobiography as De-facement,” 70.
44. Contrast the choric figures of quattrocento painting, who by gesturing to the main action transform the viewer into an “active accessory to the event.” Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1988), 71–76. In vase-painting there is no such appeal to the viewer: the bystanders, wholly self-contained, reinforce the spectacular quality of the image, rather than absorbing the viewer into the scene.
45. Norman Bryson, in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle, 1988), 25.
46. Arezzo 1465; *ARV*², 15.6; *Para*, 322; *Add*², 152.
47. Graham Zanker, “Enargeia in the Ancient Criticism of Poetry,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 124 (1981): 297–311.
48. James M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, (Chicago, 1975), 187.
49. Pausanias 5.17.5–19.10. “Dictionary of myth”: Jeffrey M. Hurwit, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1100–480 B.C.* (Ithaca, 1985), 229. On the Chest in general see H. A. Shapiro, “Old and New Heroes: Narrative, Composition, and Subject in Attic Black-Figure,” *Classical Antiquity* 9 (1990): 138–42, with further bibliography.
50. Florence 4209; *ABV*, 76.1; *Para*, 29; *Add*², 21. For a comparison of the Chest and the François Vase see Shapiro, “Old and New Heroes,” 138–42.
51. Denoyelle, “Autour de cratère,” 41.
52. Martin Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1992), 133.
53. On such passages see Jeffrey M. Hurwit, “A Note on Ornament, Nature, and Boundary in Early Greek Art,” *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 67 (1992): 63–72; idem, “Image and Frame in Greek Art,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 81 (1977): 1–30. The reverse of the Arezzo krater has another Amazon superimposed over a palmette. The conceit is not uncommon in Euphronios’ work, though the effect is certainly at its most dramatic in the passage illustrated here.
54. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York, 1975), 9–10. His italics. Cf. *ibid.*, 13–14.
55. St. Petersburg 615; *ARV*², 1594.48; *Para*, 507; *Add*², 389.
56. François Lissarrague, “Graphein: écrire et dessiner,” in Christiane Bron and Effy Kasapoglou, eds., *L’image en jeu* (Yens-sur-Morges, 1992), 200. Lissarrague’s reading differs from my own on several points.
57. The phrase is said to have been used by the fifth-century comedian Kratinos in his *Deliades*. Kratinos in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a 18 (fr. 33 Kock). Cf. Simonides fr. 598 *PMG*.
58. On the importance of this metaphor in vase-painting see François Lissarrague, *Un flot d’images* (Paris, 1987), esp. 23–48.

59. Bryn Mawr P 936; *ARV*², 438.131; *Add*², 239.
60. Polygnotos and Mikon: Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting*, 180; M. Stansbury-O'Donnell, "Polygnotos's *Iliupersis*: A New Reconstruction," *American Journal of Archaeology* 93 (1989): 203–15; idem, "Polygnotos's *Nekyia*: A Reconstruction and Analysis," *American Journal of Archaeology* 94 (1990): 213–35; John Boardman, *Athenian Red-Figure Vases, the Classical Period: A Handbook* (New York, 1989), 11–15 (against a new spatial sense); Martin Robertson, *History of Greek Art* (Cambridge, 1975), 240–59.
61. Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting*, 180.
62. The Lykaon Painter: *ARV*², 1044–46; *Para*, 444; *Add*², 320.
63. Boston 34.79; *ARV*², 1045.2; *Para*, 444; *Add*², 320.
64. Boardman, *Athenian Red-Figure Vases, the Classical Period*, 63. See also L. D. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase-Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1954), 87.
65. For this reading see, e.g., Wassiliki Felten, *Attische Unterweltdarstellungen des VI. und V. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Munich, 1975), 54; Caskey and Beazley, *Attic Vase-Paintings*, 2: 87.
66. Cf. Caskey and Beazley, *Attic Vase-Paintings*, 2: 88.
67. It is important not to give too much weight to this influence. First, the Polygnotan Elpenor is clad in a plaited mat, not nude, which in itself rules out any ideas of a slavish copy. Second, Polygnotos' *Nekyia* was a vast tableau populated by dozens of figures, without the focused intensity of the three figures on the vase; the overall effect must have been very different. Third, and most important, the Lykaon Painter's version is, quite simply, not the same thing as Polygnotos', and it must stand or fall on its own merits.
68. Norman Bryson, *Word and Image* (Cambridge, 1981), 74.
69. The phrase is used of Antikleia, whom Odysseus tries three times to embrace (only to have her slip through his fingers), but it would presumably apply equally well to any of the dead. Compare *Iliad* 23.65–108, where the same thing happens between Achilles and the ghost of Patroklos.
70. On the *Nekyia* see Felton, *Unterweltdarstellungen*. For a traditional illustration see the "Leaky Pithos" amphora by the Bucci Painter: Munich 1493; *ABV*, 316.7; *Para*, 137; *Add*², 85. Sometimes spectators do appear in early *Nekyiai*, as on the Acheloos Painter's amphora in Munich (Munich 154; *ABV*, 383.12; *Para*, 168; *Add*², 101); but they are to be identified as Hades and Persephone, and so may properly be thought more part of the spectacle itself than as distinct viewers.
71. On Odysseus see especially Pietro Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos* (Ithaca, 1987); C. Emlyn-Jones, "True and Lying Tales in the *Odyssey*," *Greece and Rome* 33 (1986): 1–10; Pietro Pucci, "The Song of the Sirens," *Arethusa* 12 (1977): 121–32; Redfield, *Nature and Culture*, 37–39; D. N. Levin, "Odysseus' Truthful Untruths," *Classical Bulletin* 37 (1961): 76. For an ancient opinion see Juvenal 15.13–26. On Hermes as trickster see especially L. Kahn, *Hermès passe* (Paris, 1978); Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 156–59, with further references; Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos*, 23–25.
72. Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos*, 24. The epithet is used of Hermes in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* 13, 439; and of Odysseus at *Odyssey* 1.1, and 10.330.
73. On *apatê* see Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité*, 105–19; Thomas Rosenmeyer, "Gorgias, Aeschylus, and *Apatê*," *American Journal of Philology* 76 (1955): 225–60; Charles Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 66 (1962): 99–155; Eric Downing, "*Apatê*, *Agôn*, and Literary Self-Reflexivity," in Griffith and Mastronarde, eds., *The Cabinet of the Muses*, 1–16; Anne Carson, "Simonides Painter," in Ralph Hexter and Daniel Selden, eds., *Innovations of Antiquity* (New York, 1992), 53, with further references n. 10. For Odysseus' *apatê* see *Odyssey* 13.294.

74. Redfield, *Nature and Culture*, 37.
75. Both incidents recounted in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*.
76. Translation by Robert Fitzgerald (slightly modified). Cf. *Odyssey* 5.47 and *Iliad* 24.343.
77. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes* (Berkeley, 1993), 48.
78. On Protagoras' time in Athens see G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge, 1981), 42.
79. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing* (Chicago, 1983), 26.
80. Translated by W. K. C. Guthrie. On the translation see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), 3: 188–92.
81. This reading is perhaps a bit tendentious, inasmuch as it has been argued that the “man” to which Protagoras refers is actually mankind, not the individual. Though the weight of opinion does favor the individualist reading presented here, nonetheless there are dissenting voices. For a brief summary of the issues involved, see Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, revised ed. (London, 1982), 542. Barnes comes down in favor of the individualist view; contra, see L. Versenyi, “Protagoras' Man-Measure Fragment,” *American Journal of Philology* 83 (1962): 178–84.
82. On this debate see Guthrie, *History*, 5: 204–19, with further references. That Protagoras participated in it is attested by Plato *Cratylus* 391c.
83. Translated by W. K. C. Guthrie. On antilogic see Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 63. The name has nothing to do with logic as we mean it. Rather, it comes from *anti-* (opposed, counter to), and *-logos* (word, argument).
84. Boston 00.346; *ARV*², 1045.7; *Para*, 444; *Add*², 320. An identical composition appears on a calyx-krater fragment by the same artist: Oxford 1980.31 (289); *ARV*², 1046.11; *Add*², 320.
85. On the scene in general: Frank Brommer, *Vasenlisten zur griechischen Heldensage*, 3rd ed. (Marburg, 1973), 473–75; Lucien Guimond, “Aktaion,” *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, vol. 1.1, 454–69; L. R. Lacy, “Aktaion and a Lost ‘Bath of Artemis,’” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990): 26 n. 1, with bibliography, to which add Herbert Hoffmann, *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 12 (1967): 9–34, and Paul Jacobsthal, *Aktaions Tod* (Marburg, 1929). See also Analiese Kossatz-Deissmann, “Lyssa,” *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, vol. 6.1, 322–29. Compare fragments of an Apulian oinochoe, Boston 1900.63.839a–b; J. Michael Padgett et al., *Vase-Painting in Italy* (Boston, 1993), no. 11.
86. Cf. Arthur Dale Trendall and T. B. L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (New York, 1981), 4–5, 62, 65, 69; Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting*, 207. For other instances of the name see Caskey and Beazley, *Attic Vase-Paintings*, 2: 85, to which add Malibu 83.AE.41; *Add*², 394.
87. Agrigento, museum; *ARV*², 1017.53; *Para*, 440; *Add*², 315; Malibu 83.AE.41; *Add*², 394.
88. Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting*, 207. Cf. Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, 62. However, the Lykaon Painter's depiction of Euaion as a symposiast on a bell-krater in Naples is surely an exception: *ARV*², 1045.9; *Add*², 320. The classic work on theatrical scenes is Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, though the subject has attracted considerable attention. For a recent overview see J. R. Green, “On Seeing and Depicting the Theater in Classical Athens,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 32 (1991): 15–50, with further references, 38 n. 77.
89. Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, 4; Caskey and Beazley, *Attic Vase-Paintings*, 2: 84.
90. Charles Segal, *Interpreting Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca, 1986), 66. Cf. Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1988), 29–48.

91. For a recent restatement of this position see H. A. Shapiro, *Myth into Art* (New York, 1994).
92. Cf. Dietrich von Bothmer, "The Death of Sarpedon," in S. Hyatt, ed., *The Greek Vase* (Latham, N.Y., 1981), 63–80; Shapiro, *Myth into Art*, 22–27.
93. On the archaic conceit of writing names in the genitive see Hurwit, *Art and Culture*, 249.