Inside and Out: Theognis 309-312W and the Construction of Psychological Interiority

Theognis' elegies present "political poetry in its truest sense, an explication of how life is to be lived in a polis" (Figueira and Nagy 1985: 1). The *Theognidea* represent the social values of an elite social class distressed over the loss of long-enjoyed privileges and financial security (Fox 2000). Within Theognis' verses social instability, financial insecurity, and extensive social mobility negatively affect the cultural institutions of friendship and the symposium (Stein-Hölkeskamp 2018). And so Theognis often speaks of deception between friends, as for instance, the duplicitous *hetairos* who says one thing while thinking something else (vv. 91-92W):

ὃς δὲ μιῆ γλώσσῃ δίχ' ἔχει νόον, οὖτος ἑταῖρος δεινός, Κύρν', ἐχθρὸς βέλτερος ἢ φίλος ὤν.

He who has a double mind but with a single tongue, that man is a treacherous companion, Kyrnos, one who's a better enemy than a friend.

Such passages point to a conception of psychological interiority. A duplicitious person "hides" a deceitful thought or intention "inside" their heart or mind, as at Theognis 121-124W:

εἰ δὲ φίλου <u>νόος</u> ἀνδρὸς <u>ἐνὶ στήθεσσι λελήθῃ</u> ψυδρὸς ἐών, <u>δόλιον δ' ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ ἔχῃ</u>, τοῦτο θεὸς κιβδηλότατον ποίησε βροτοῖσιν, καὶ γνῶναι πάντων τοῦτ' ἀνιηρότατον.

But if <u>the disposition</u> of a friend <u>hidden away in his breast</u> turns out to be false, and <u>he has deceitful intent in his mind</u>, this god made to be the greatest fraudulence for mortals, and this is the most painful thing of all to find out.

The possibility of deceit constructs hidden depths within the human personality and points to the metaphorical schema Lakoff and Johnson (1999) identify as 'mind as container' (cf. Zanker 2019: 172-174 and Marcinkowska-Rosół and Sellmer 2021 for 'mind as container' in early Greek poetry).

In the context of verses about treacherous friends, I reexamine verses 309-312W and Theognis' advice on proper etiquette at a symposium:

ἐν μὲν συσσίτοισιν ἀνὴρ πεπνυμένος εἶναι·
 πάντα δέ μιν λήθειν ὡς ἀπεόντα δοκοῖ,
 310
 εἰς δὲ φέροι τὰ γελοῖα· θύρηφι δὲ κρατερὸς εἴη,
 γιγνώσκων ὀργὴν ἥντιν' ἕκαστος ἔχει.

While he is at a banquet, let a man be prudent: let everything seem to escape his notice, as if he weren't there, and let him carry his laughter inside; but outside let him be strong since he recognizes the character each person has.

Theognis advises the prudent symposiast to make observations and judgments about his fellow symposiasts, while self-censoring his own words and behavior. The verses have long appeared problematic both because of textual issues, but also because of the obscure $\varepsilon_{i\zeta} \delta \varepsilon \phi \varepsilon_{i\zeta}$ γελοῖα· <u>θύρηφι</u> δὲ κρατερὸς εἴη. The verse constructs a spatial opposition between an inside and an outside—but inside and outside of what? Van Groningen (1966: 126) suggests the physical space of the symposium itself. Laughter belongs *inside* the social setting of the party, whereas one should be krateros "serious, in control of oneself" outside the space of the party. However, v. 310 advises the wise man to act as if he is not physically present. As Harrison (1902: 325) explains, "The prudent man seems to be among his companions, but everything seems to escape him as if he were away. $\dot{\epsilon}v \dots \dot{\epsilon}v$ is contrasted with $\dot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\dot{\delta}v\tau\alpha$, his bodily presence with his apparent absence of mind." I find 310 difficult to square with a view that one should laugh it up at a party but be serious when the party is over. I suggest, rather, that Theognis' construction of a false friend—a man who spies on other symposiasts—helps us read the verse otherwise, namely in terms of the psychological interiority created by deceit. Theognis subtly advises a prudent man to act one way but keep his thoughts hidden—to be, in other words, a better enemy than a friend.

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