Ideology in the *Iliad*:
Polis, *Basileus*, *Theoi* [1]

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for Edith Hall

In the following text I wish to question, first, the use which a number of scholars [2] have made of the concept of *ideology* in analyzing the relationship of the *Iliad* to the rise of the polis, in particular the claim that the poem **[End Page 151]** reflects a relatively straightforward conflict between the values of the polis and the values of the aristocratic *oikoi*. I will then offer a brief excursus on the study of ideology before turning to an exploration of what can be claimed about the rise of the polis in eighth-century B.C. Greece. Finally, I will look briefly at the evidence for ideology in the poem itself.

In his 1986 article, Ian Morris posits two layers of values in the *Iliad*: one layer, which he argues is more accurately reflective of the eighth-century polis and therefore of "cooperative" values in Adkins' terms (Adkins 1960.40 and passim), and a second layer, more "*oikos*-oriented," stressing the competitive "heroic" ethic. The difference is explained by invoking the notion of *ideology*: the *Iliad* is a class-based poem in which the ideas and agendas of the aristocracy are self-evident (Morris 1986.123-27). In Morris' book of the following year, *Burial and Ancient Society*, subtitled "The Rise of the Greek City-State" (Morris 1987), he elaborates his case with a very detailed analysis of Greek--mostly Athenian--burial data from 1100-500.

In Stephen Scully's *Homer and the Sacred City* (1990), the foundation of the argument is an exhaustive analysis of epithets for cities in Homer. Like Morris, he is primarily concerned to stress the eighth-century, polis-oriented values associated with Troy and Hector while sharply distinguishing them from the heroic ethic of Achilles and all the Achaean attackers. While Scully, too, addresses *oikos* versus polis in terms of the class nature of the audience (1990.100f.), his fundamental categories seem to me to be structuralist (i.e., Lévi-Strauss via Redfield 1975), moral, and religious: the sacredness of the wall is a function of its separation of nature from culture. The values of the city, concentrated in the protection of women and children, are presented by Scully as self-evidently superior to those of the Greeks and Achilles who want to destroy it. Finally, he argues the wall is "sacred," "holy," *because* it marks off nature from culture. [3] **[End Page 152]** While Scully nods in passing to the notion of an ideological dimension in the contrast in values between attackers and defenders (Scully 1990.110-13), nowhere in his treatment of what is called "Homeric Religion," the evidence and use of religion *in* the poem, is there a hint that it too might have an ideological aspect worth analyzing from a contemporary perspective, the perspective of an era and a society which--whatever its own religious commitments--does not accept as literally true the claims about reality made by characters in a poem from the eighth century B.C. [4] Indeed, there often seems to be no distinction marked at all between what appears to be exposition of ideas *in* the poem and the author's own analytical categories. Marxists are often accused of imposing inappropriate modern categories on historical periods which operated on fundamentally different bases from our own society. But however sympathetically one attempts to read the remains of another culture and another period, it is inadequate, as Marx rightly argued, simply to "share the illusion of that epoch" (Marx-Engels 1975.5.55). [5] The very act of *analysis* implies posing questions **[End Page 153]** about that society that it did not pose for itself--*some sort* of contemporary analytic categories are inescapable. The question is whether they are explicit or unacknowledged by the analyst.

More recently, in an ambitious attempt to synthesize the social origins of both epic and tragedy, Richard Seaford (1994) offers his own version of a fundamental opposition between aristocratic *oikos* and emergent polis. Burial, hero-cults, and religious observances for the divine protector of the polis also figure prominently in his argument. Ideology, though formally his first point of inquiry (1994.1), is quickly abandoned as an analytic category. [6] His own primary critical categories (those focused on reciprocity and ritual) derive from modern anthropology.

I would first like to make the general case that ideology in a literary text is at least as complex as the representation of marriage customs, the implications of burial customs, or rituals and gift-giving. The study of ideology, in turn, implies some sort of relationship with its Other, the "reality" of the historical situation external to the poem. This "reality" is an obviously problematic, but I would argue, inescapable category. The representation of reality extracted from the literary texts of a literate society can be juxtaposed to other "texts"--not only other literary texts, but non-literary writings, visual arts, inscriptions, etc. In dealing with a text from an otherwise illiterate period, I have been compelled to wrestle with archeological and historical reconstructions that I am not competent to evaluate independently. I have thus been driven to the sort of dialectical circularity between the texts of Homer and the claims of these empiricist experts that is, for better or worse, characteristic of most discussions of the *Iliad* and its contexts. Only after such a struggle to imagine the "real" of Homer's own society, can we explore his poem as a specific response to that real world. [7] Finally, in questioning the case made by Morris, Scully, Seaford, and other **[End Page 154]** scholars that the fundamental ideological tension in the poem is between the aristocratic *oikos* with its competitive values and the polis with its cooperative values, I want to consider especially two other loci of ideological energy in the poem, kingship and religion.

Versions of Ideology

I have the impression that until about ten years ago European and American classicists hardly ever talked about ideology. I remember some while ago when I submitted an abstract containing the word "ideology" to a conference session, one of the more genial Pindarists I know, who happened to be chairing the session, exclaimed, "Now why would anyone want to talk about *ideology*?" The word, however, now seems to crop up rather frequently, for example, in the work of Simon Goldhill (e.g., 1990.97-129), Josiah Ober (1989), or the recent collection edited by Boegehold and Scafuro (1994). Nonetheless, I suspect that the characteristic use of the term by most classicists derives from the source Ober explicitly acknowledges, the enormously influential writings of M. I. Finley, who in turn relies heavily on the sociology of Weber. [8] Morris, too, derives his conceptual framework from Finley: "Returning to Finley's view **[End Page 155]** of the emergence of slave society, I would suggest that the structural revolution of the eighth century is best understood as a consequence of class struggle, and that the dynamic relationship was between the *agathoi* and the *kakoi*" (Morris 1987.177). When Morris comes to an explicit account of what he means by "ideology," a term he uses very frequently indeed in the burial book, [9] he declares, "Most modern sociological schools adhere to some version of the 'dominant' ideology thesis, where it is assumed that a society can be characterized by a particular world-view, generally that of the economically dominant class" (1987.41). Moving on to the function of ideology, Morris informs us, "For functionalists, the dominant ideology is the glue which holds society together; while for many neo-Marxists, ideology plays the same role, but in the more sinister fashion of disguising exploitation and conflict" (1987.41). In support of this dismissal, not, to be sure, of Marxists, but of "neo-Marxists," he cites a work by sociologists Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980) attacking the very idea of a dominant ideology. Following them, Morris expresses his own skepticism about the function of a concept he so widely employs, "It is a moot point whether ideology really plays such a vital role in maintaining the functioning of society" (1987.41). Finally, in partial acknowledgment of the severe limitations of his primary category of evidence, Morris expresses further skepticism: "Attempts to go beyond the archaeological evidence for social structure to detect competing ideologies or Habermas-type legitimation crises, while very stimulating, leave an uneasy gap between the social theory and the archaeological data. Even with the aid of literary sources, ideology is a problem. It has been well-nigh impossible for Greek historians to discover competing counter-ideologies" (Morris 1987.41). [10] Thus, even an author who uses the concept of ideology extensively **[End Page 156]** is most uncomfortable with it. In this he seems to follow the lead of Finley, who comments, apropos of a pervasive political slogan among the Greeks, "Modern analytical philosophers have no difficulty in dismissing the slogan as uselessly vague and woolly, but they are misdirecting their effort: ideology is not theory and should not be subjected to the same sort of rigorous analysis" (Finley 1983.136).

I risk trying the reader's patience with these quotations because I want to distinguish as sharply as I can the concept of ideology most generally used by classicists from the concept--or range of concepts--I would like to recommend in reading the *Iliad.* Although Morris' burial book does speak of classes and even class warfare, and the earlier article envisioned a kind of *ideological* dimension to this struggle in a conflict between *oikos* values and polis values, the ideology of neither group is conceived of as interactive with the other: they are like homogeneous blocks of solid plaster opposed to each other. The dominant class pushes its block and smashes the other block, which leaves nary a trace.

Central to a Marxist analysis of ideology is the *relational* nature of class. [11] Classes only emerge and become conscious of themselves as classes in a society characterized by serious conflict over control of the material means of production, the human relations in the actual process of production, and the distribution of the fruits of production. [12] Morris speaks of *agathoi* and *kakoi*, while Finley speaks of rich and poor as the relevant **[End Page 157]** "classes" in antiquity, but neither sees the existence of one group as a function of the existence of the other. In our society, too, we are encouraged to see no intimate connection between the allegedly isolated phenomena that some people are rich and some are poor. It is considered crude or simplistic to suggest that there are rich *because* there are poor and vice versa. [13] Yet I would like to argue that such a relational understanding of class is fundamental to using the most valuable critical concepts developed in the last thirty years for the study of ideology. I, at least, am struck by the sheer richness of recent theoretical work among *non-*classical cultural analysts directed at what, for Finley, was inherently unworthy of such scrutiny. Ideology, to be sure, is not, as he says, the same as theory, but it scarcely follows that it is therefore transparent, self-evident, and unworthy of serious analysis.

In the array of analytical tools centering on ideology, a view of ideology clearly inspired by Marx insists, as I have argued, that ideology is relational and a function of class conflict; it is not simply the world-view of one class or group viewed *in isolation.* It is certainly true that the term "ideology" is most often used by both Marxists and non-Marxists to mean the ideology of the dominant group, as Morris argues, because, as Marx pointed out, "the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production" (Marx-Engels 1975.5.59). Alternative ideologies attain independent articulation only in periods of grave crisis. [14] **[End Page 158]**

This basic Marxist concept of ideology has been significantly enriched, particularly in the anti- or post-Stalinist tradition. [15] I will cite only a few examples relevant to my own approach. [16] The structuralism of Lévi-Strauss looks especially at the role of narrative in offering imaginary resolution of real social contradictions. [17] Roland Barthes followed very much in the spirit of Marx in focusing on the ways ideology seeks to transform the historically specific into the mythically "natural." [18] Althusser, following in the footsteps of Gramsci 1971, turned attention toward the material institutions and practices by which ideology seeks to construct the subjectivities of individuals. [19] Althusser's pupil Pierre Macherey has **[End Page 159]** focused on the way ideological narrative is structured around a usually unconscious silencing of those aspects of the perceived reality which are most troubling, the problems which, in a sense, generate the ideological effort in the first place. [20] Fredric Jameson has elaborated Macherey's concept of a political unconscious and fused it with a double hermeneutic derived ultimately from the Frankfurt School. [21] Reception or "reader-response" theory [22] and a variety of perspectives associated with the approach **[End Page 160]** --it is not a field--called Cultural Studies have also called our attention to the entire *circuit* of production, consumption, and feedback that goes into the new production of cultural texts. [23] Within this theorizing there is inevitably no consensus about ideology because, as David McLellan has noted, ideology is an "essentially contested concept" (McLellan 1986.1)--itself a matter of ideological struggle. There is something politically at stake in how we use the term.

In the interests of brevity, I'll try to sketch what I find most useful in all this theorizing. A more or less homogeneous "world-view" may perhaps be attributed legitimately to a homogeneous society like the Pygmies of the African Congo (Turnbull 1962), but Lévi-Strauss' analysis of a North American Indian myth, "The Story of Asdiwal" (Lévi-Strauss 1967b), suggests that, even in relatively egalitarian societies, a crucial role of ideology is to represent alternatives to the status quo as inherently unworkable. [24] But, in general, the analysis of ideology is most interesting precisely in those societies where we have grounds for assuming fundamental class conflict. A central feature of ideology in a conflict-ridden society is that it functions by *persuasion* rather than force. The ideology of the dominant group may or

may not succeed, in the phrase used by Morris, **[End Page 161]** as "the glue that holds society together," but its success in reproducing the status quo depends essentially on its persuasiveness. Persuasion implies that one's opponents' needs and desires and values are not simply ignored, but somehow redefined or mystified in terms acceptable to them or shown to be by their nature impossible of fulfillment. Thus, in the very heart of a dominant ideology, there are discernible if distorted *traces* of the alternatives against which the dominant ideology is deployed. Ambiguity is therefore a central characteristic of a dominant ideology since it is designed simultaneously to sustain the positive self-conception of the dominant group and to co-opt, silence, or neutralize the perceived opposition. [25] Depending on whether the dominant class has complete or incomplete control of the means of ideological production, the values and perspectives of the subordinate group will appear either as traces embedded in ambiguities or, more openly, as competing, contradictory elements.

We may distinguish three potential responses to a dominant ideology. Those who are likely to benefit most from the status quo find only confirmation of their high self-esteem and align their aspirations with the normative elements in the dominant ideology. A second response, which may be called a "subordinate" ideology, may express skepticism or open resentment of aspects of the dominant account of reality because it justifies the relatively reduced access to the socially generated resources of the subordinated elements in the status quo (Parkin 1971.88-96). But this subordinate ideology accepts the dominant ideology, however despairingly, as essentially true. Finally, by adopting a "radical" ideology, one may respond with categorical negation of the assumptions of the status quo and seek to articulate and promote alternatives (Parkin 1971.97-102, cf. Cormack 1992.21).

A more temporally focused, less explicitly combative triad worked out by Raymond Williams (1977.121-27) is also potentially very helpful in analyzing ambiguities or contradictory elements in texts. He suggests that a particular cultural construct may simultaneously contain reflections of the dominant ideology and also what he calls "residual" elements that look back to an earlier structuring of society and evoke the values generated within that structure. Finally, there may also be in the text what Williams **[End Page 162]** calls elements of the "emergent," that is, features that look forward to or anticipate the restructuring of the social order that is only emerging below the surface of the current dominant order.

Thus, to apply these triads to an incident widely recognized as "ideological" (e.g., Rose 1988, Thalmann 1988), [26] one might argue, for example, that the aggressive insistence of Odysseus on the principle of monarchic rule as he forcibly chastises Thersites represents the dominant ideology of the dominant group in the social order envisioned in the poem. Thersites' objections reflect a subordinate ideological stance which expresses resentment of the consequences of the dominant order, but in no way offers an alternative structuring of that reality. Not every social formation produces an openly oppositional negation of the dominant ideology, and we may return later to question whether such an opposition is present in the world imagined in the *Iliad.*

Shifting to Raymond Williams' triad, one could say that Odysseus' glorification of monarchy represents an historically *residual* or nostalgic position in a period when monarchy was essentially over (Finley 1978.106). [27] To the extent that the chieftains cooperate in consolidating their control at this moment of crisis, they reflect what is actually *dominant* in the target audience of the poem, namely, oligarchy. Finally, the apparently futile and utterly discredited protest of Thersites might be perceived as an *emergent* element--a new level of self-consciousness that anticipates the later movement toward restraint of elite leadership by the previously powerless people of the *demos*. I don't wish to argue in detail for any of these positions here but only to suggest that these analytical models merit some study if one chooses to talk about ideology.

A more complex issue arising out of the Thersites scene that is usefully addressed by contemporary theorists of ideology is the question of the way or ways in which this scene ideologically addresses the target audience of the poem. To speak of Odysseus as voicing the dominant ideology and Thersites the subordinate is to look at the scene as reflecting two antagonistic ideological positions represented *within* the world of the **[End Page 163]** poem, but does the text itself make a decisive bid to persuade its own target audience of the superiority of one of these positions? To put it another way, if ideology addresses a divided or conflictive social order in an interested fashion, how does it seek to position the subjectivities, the self-perceptions of the individuals within the conflictual groups? One common reading of the Thersites scene finds reassurance for the high self-esteem of those who actually run eighth-century Greek society and an invitation to the relative losers in that society to perceive themselves in the mass of Achaeans who appear to endorse Odysseus' actions enthusiastically, thus acquiescing in

their own "subjugation"--to echo Althusser's play on two senses of "subject." Such a reading presupposes, however, a relatively straightforward ideological commitment on the part of the poet that is by no means as self-evident as is often assumed. While reception theory has had relatively little play in classics as far as I'm aware, there are interesting opening forays in Nicolai 1983 and Heiden 1991. Nicolai anticipates to some extent Morris' view of a conflict between heroic and polis ideology, but Nicolai's focus on what he calls "affirmative" and "critical" elements in his analysis of what he believes is a recoverable authorial intention nonetheless has opened the question of what *can* be assumed about the audience's response.

Although ideology is by its very nature persuasive, it can, as in the Thersites scene, be combined with forcible repression. But it is precisely Odysseus' recourse to violence that has suggested to some readers of the scene its tacit acknowledgment of the *failure* of the dominant ideology to achieve the social consensus that is its primary goal. Indeed, the whole context of book two is hard to read as a demonstration of the effectiveness of the monarchy of Agamemnon. [28] Heiden, however, has rightly emphasized the freedom with which Greek audiences ignored contextually motivated meanings and constructed their own various meanings from oral performances. In dealing with questions of oral composition and reception it would be helpful to have at least a working model of what Richard Johnson calls the "circuit of the production, circulation, and consumption of cultural products" (1986/87.46-47)-- the constant movement of creation, reception, audience feedback, lived experience of social and cultural reality leading to new or, in the case of oral poetry, significantly adjusted artistic production. **[End Page 164]**

Nicolai also points to an element which has been elaborated considerably by theorists of ideology, namely, the extent to which the traditional *form* of epic carries its own inherent weight of ideology. The characteristic story-patterns, epithets, character types, type-scenes, and so on by no means constitute a value-free vehicle for individual expression. They entail, most obviously, the near total absence or marginalization of the vast majority of the society: women, agricultural workers, herdsmen, craft-workers, traders, etc. [29] Thus to posit a fundamentally *critical* message in this form requires some account of how this weight of the form is counterbalanced or, to switch metaphors, how the dominant ideology embedded in the form is subverted in the generation of the actual text.

In approaching the *Iliad,* one source of relative confidence is that we have, in fact, learned a great deal in this century about the artistic protocols of the Homeric poems. For me, one of the most relevant gains of recent studies of formulaic composition is summed up succinctly by Claus (1975.16):

> The formulae do not describe a perfect and inflexible world of thought patterns that can be regarded as reality--as a system one need merely memorize and subscribe to--but are instead . . . partial and perhaps contradictory truths that must be used and manipulated by the mind to confront adequately the hard facts and contradictory demands of the world of experience.

I think this statement is in harmony with the more detailed studies of Hainsworth, Fenik, Mark Edwards, and others emphasizing the *flexibility* of the system at the level of formula-shape and type-scene, but its great attraction to me is its emphasis, beyond "flexibility," on the reality of "contradictory truths" at the level of values. In examining artistic practice--particularly from the perspective of ideology--we are well advised to **[End Page 165]** go beyond the necessary admiration for the artist's capacity to manipulate our consciousness; we must incorporate in our reading the recognition that what the artist attempts is finally impossible: to reflect, to respond to, and to shape the ultimately incomprehensible data of experience in terms acceptable to his divided audience within the parameters permitted in his chosen genre. I would also resist confusing what may be ideological, either consciously or unconsciously, in the poem and the will of the text to express the "truth" of its historical moment. If one of the great gains of ideological criticism has been to insist upon the continuities in techniques and operations between different ideological phenomena, nonetheless, I would like to insist on the *differences* as well as the continuities in a continuum from, say, TV ads for "I can't believe it's not butter" to *The Divine Comedy.* To cite Eagleton's highly abstract formulation on the specificity of literature (Eagleton 1976.101, my emphasis):

> Literature is a peculiar mode of linguistic organization which, by a particular "disturbance" of conventional modes of signification, so foregrounds certain modes of sense-making as to allow us to *perceive* the ideology in which they inhere.

From Ideology to the "Real" of the Eighth Century

Let us return to Morris' discussion of ideology, which is tantalizingly brief as compared, for example, with his quite detailed refutation of Finley's analysis of marriage customs. He acknowledges, with a nod to Nicolai, that "there is much in the poems that is ambiguous," but opts for a rather unidimensional conclusion: "The dominant element in the Homeric model of the world seems to me to be an aristocratic vantage point" (1986.124). This conclusion entails for him a crucial consequence (1986.124):

> A tentative model of the social function of the poems can then be suggested. At a time of tremendous tension, when the whole structure of society was in a state of flux, the *aristoi* had to try to preserve their position through every possible ideological device. With the invention of the alphabet, it became possible to record the work of a poet **[End Page 166]** of genius which presented a notion of how society worked which the elite agreed to, and wished all to agree to. A tremendously powerful weapon was forged in the struggles accompanying the rise of the *polis.*

This formulation has, I think, the great virtue of seeing ideology as, in some sense, generated by profound change in the social order. Like Scully's later elaboration, Morris sees the rise of the polis as the single most radical change behind this "tremendous tension." We may note in passing that this formulation effectively brackets the question of the class allegiance of the poet: it could be a pure accident in this phraseology that the poem "presented a notion of how society worked which the elite agreed to." At the same time, Morris' focus on the alphabet, together with his endorsement of some version of Wade-Gery's thesis (1952) about the connection between the composition of the monumental poem and the emergence of panhellenic festivals, implies a significant institutionalization of the poem's ideological function: the festivals would then constitute what Althusser dubbed "an ideological state apparatus." Morris seems to envision a short-circuited process of artistic production in which the consciousness of the main target audience, the *demos*, contributes no relevant feedback to the generation of the text.

Morris argues in support of his characterization of the poem that "Homer exaggerated competition in the Heroic World and glorified the *basileis*, presenting the *demos* as totally dependent on them" (1986.124). He seems, like many scholars, to assume a direct equation not just between *aristoi* and *basileis* in the poems, but also an equation between the *aristoi* in the poems and the aristocracy of the eighth century B.C.

We come then to some embarrassingly fundamental questions about the image of society represented in the poem. What is a polis in the *Iliad*? What is a *basileus*? What is the relation between the two and whatever sort of values are represented in the poem as characteristic of each? How are these images and these represented values related to the *actual* structures and values of the poet's target audience? Perhaps an even more fundamental question, is there sufficient consistency in the assumptions of the poem to make such questions answerable? Up to a certain point, the case for seeing the poem as a more or less confused patchwork of institutions, social structures, and values drawn from widely disparate periods (the position, for example, of Snodgrass 1974), is terribly seductive--almost commonsense in the light of the evidence of the language **[End Page 167]** itself and the historically scattered objects stretching over some 700 years. But to remain at this level of analytic safety is also to surrender any hope of accounting for the poem as a construct of meaning for a specific flesh and blood audience. Finally, closely entwined with these questions is an old question that for a time, at least, had seemed to be settled: at what point in time are we to envision the Homeric poems as essentially fixed? A book-length study (Jensen 1980) has revived the old thesis that these poems achieved their present form only in the mid sixth century under the aegis of the Athenian tyrant Peisistratus. Nagy 1992 has elaborated a concept of "evolutionary fixation" that, at times, is hard to distinguish from Kirk's notion that the poems remained fully "oral" for 200 years in a state of relative fixity or, as Kirk put it more cautiously, "not too mutilated" (1962.97). [30] Seaford opts for a curiously eclectic version of a real Peisistratean recension in which both written texts and fully oral performances are fused together quite literally by a committee resulting, miraculously, in fully "organic" poems. [31]

The issue of *ideology* in the poems plays a far more central role in the elaborate debates about writing, orality, and the date at which we can posit a fixed written text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* than may at first blush **[End Page 168]** appear amid all the twists and shouts of scholarly rhetoric. Jensen states the

issue with her characteristic forthrightness and rigor (Jensen 1980.163-64):

> As the language [of truly oral poems] changes for the sake of verse-making and the desire for an elevated style, the content changes for the sake of acceptance by the audience, while it remains unaltered for the sake of rapid performance and the desire to describe correctly the events of the heroic past. . . . An inference for our reading of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is that they must be interpreted as expressive of ideas and morals of Athens in the second half of the sixth century. The poems are hardly useful as sources for institutions of earlier periods; they describe society and customs as poet and audience imagined them to have been in the past, not precisely as they were. But it will be possible with great precision to read out of the poems what was considered good or bad in Pisistratean Athens, because anything that was not acceptable to this audience must have been changed or left out.

With the full courage of her convictions, she sets forth in detail a "Pisistratean ideology" in the poems as the climax and ultimate consequence of her whole argument (167-71). Other scholars I have read who work in this vein seem to me to lack her hardihood. Kirk, with all his characteristic cautions ("provisionally and with due caution"), accepted "the eighth century, as many others have, as the probable date of the composition of the Iliad" (1962.287, cf. 1964.30-32 and 1985.1-16). In elaborating his theory of a reproductive stage (which he posits between the oral fixation of the text and its fixation in writing: Kirk 1960 and 1963.95-98), Kirk had recourse to pure hypothesis, unsupported by any fieldwork, to account for the 200 year gap (Jensen 1980.113). Nagy, invoking a very Kirk-like distinction between a "formative stage," a "static stage," and a "definitive stage," gives a curious nod to Morris' focus on an eighth-century political context at the same time that he endorses a fixation of the text in writing after 550 B.C. [32] Seaford's elaboration of his own eclectic version of **[End Page 169]** a Peisistratean recension entails, for me at least, a quite dizzying blur of historical data claimed for the whole period from 750 to 550 [33] which profoundly affects his analysis of how the rise of the polis impacts upon the poems. While, as I will try to show, a central aspect of Morris' discussion of ideology in the *Iliad* entails a subtler version of reading backward from the Solonian crisis, nonetheless his work, like Scully's, assumes that in exploring the ideology of the *Iliad*, we are looking essentially at the second half of the eighth century.

Jensen, Nagy, and Seaford--to somewhat limit the scope of inquiry--survey an impressive array of scholarship about both oral poetry and the Homeric question. It would be, in many senses, beyond my means in this context to attempt a response which respects all the arguments of these scholars that deserve respect. I can only say here how I was struck in my reading by the enormous gap in Homeric studies between the different sorts of impressions made by different sorts of alleged evidence. To take only one example of a key element in a complex case: for scholars such as Kirk, Jensen, Nagy, and Seaford the technological difficulties entailed in imagining the writing down of 28,000 hexameter lines c. 750-700 B.C. loom so large that almost any alternative solution appears preferable. For others of us (including, e.g., Wade-Gery 1952, Adam Parry 1966, or Janko 1992), the aesthetic, intellectual, cultural, and political consequences of an *Iliad* to be read as a response to Athens in the second half of the sixth century are so preposterous that we can live with the technological **[End Page 170]** problem. [34] I am also struck by the two-edged character of arguments from silence. Jensen, for example, is quite impressed by Kirk's argument that so monumental a task as writing down 28,000 lines in the eighth century *ought* to have left some historical memory (Jensen 1980.95). But I believe that the various invasions of Ionia (Cimmerians, Lydians, Persians) and the very dominance of Athens so central to Jensen's thesis are more than adequate grounds to explain the silence on all sorts of matters about Ionia. Indeed, Ionia gets very short shrift in the work of Jensen, Nagy, and Seaford. [35] However murky the Ionian grounds on which Wade-Gery (1952), followed by Janko (1992), posits an eighth-century Ionian dictation under the aegis of vestigial kings, the centrality of the pan-Ionian festivals at Delos and Mycale still seems to me a quite credible occasion to account for both the scale of the poems and the logic of dictation. [36] Therefore, in discussing ideology in the *Iliad,* I assume with Morris and a host of others [37] that we are dealing with the second half of the eighth century.

In thinking about the emergence of the Greek polis, it may be helpful to look briefly at some of the most obvious implications of the urban revolution in the ancient Near East. The extraordinarily favorable conditions of the environment both in Mesopotamia and in the valley of the Nile make possible the production through systematic irrigation of so great an agricultural surplus that changes, not merely of

degree but affecting fundamental social structures, justify the term "revolution." [38] Gordon **[End Page 171]** Childe, in his classic essay on the Urban Revolution, listed ten criteria distinguishing "even the earliest cities from any older or contemporary village": 1) denser population; 2) a changed social composition, i.e., new classes of non-foodproducing specialized craftspeople; 3) primary producers paying over a tithe or tax to an imaginary deity or divine king; 4) monumental public buildings, usually a temple associated with a granary; 5) priests, civil and military leaders forming a ruling class absorbing the majority of the social surplus; 6) invention of systems of recording, i.e., writing; 7) elaboration of exact and predictive sciences: arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy; 8) specialists giving new direction to artistic expression; 9) trade with other cultures; finally, 10) state organization based on residence rather than kinship (1950.9-16). [39] **[End Page 172]**

When we turn to Greece, the differences and parallels are striking. Greece was, and is, with a few notably exceptional areas, agriculturally disadvantaged--enormously so in comparison with the Near East. The concentration of wealth that enabled urbanization came, one suspects, with a great deal more explicit imposition of the militarily stronger over the weaker producing elements in the society, predominantly herders and farmers. [40] Furthermore, the amount of surplus, even when presumably supplemented by overseas raiding and trade, would not be sufficient to liberate from direct production of necessities as substantial a proportion of the population as was so liberated in ancient Mesopotamia. Finally, Greece seems to have had *two* urban revolutions, one leading to the Mycenaean era--which looks like a very poor relation of the bureaucratic ancient Near Eastern empires from which it clearly drew, in Childe's phrase, significant "cultural capital" (1950.17)--and a second, the rise of the polis in the eighth century. Here we need not only to consider what was specific to the *polis* in comparison to what preceded it, but to have at least a plausible working hypothesis about what *did* precede it. Anthropology and archaeology can suggest to us the character of purely pre-urban life both in the ancient Near East (e.g., Maisels 1990) and in Greece before the Mycenaean period (Vermeule 1972.1-81), but when it comes to envisioning the character of the social existence of Greeks in the Dark Age before the rise of the polis, we are far more in the realm of speculation and, sometimes, intense debate. Yet, if we are to explore just what the social tensions associated with the rise of the polis were, to grasp the likeliest outlines of ideological struggle as the variegated subjectivities collected in the polis adjusted to its new reality, we need some plausible conception of what sorts of social formations preceded it. **[End Page 173]**

The older paradigm was essentially an extended kinship or tribal group which presupposed, in effect, a return to the forms of organization with which we are more or less familiar from the study of contemporary or recently obliterated non-urban cultures. The researches of Bourriot 1976 and Roussel 1976, brought to the attention of most of us by the extensive and valuable work in this area of Walter Donlan, suggest the inadequacy, if not the complete falsity, of viewing Dark Age Greece as a collection of kinship pyramids, where what differentiation there was in wealth and status was a function of the tendency of the older members of the kin group to channel prestige, power, and wealth in their own direction. The alternative picture suggested by Donlan, in a period which at the outset at least (1200-1000 B.C.) would have been characterized by widespread dispersion of traditional communities and more or less constant warfare, marauding, or the threat of marauding, is a series of what we might call military affinity groups (or in Donlan's term, "follower-groups," 1985.298) where the physically able males attach themselves to alpha-male types for the purpose both of protecting their dependents and of violently extracting wealth from the surrounding territory. This is how Donlan interprets the Homeric term *phylon* (1985.295-97). These leaders, whom I've designated as the alpha-male types, are behind what I take to be the primary meaning in the period *preceding* the rise of the polis, of *basileus*, a term which Donlan, Starr, and others now prefer to translate as "chieftain." Donlan envisions the development of larger affinity groups in which minor leaders bring their followers into alliance with other small groups to form a major group under a superleader. It is by such a group that Donlan explains the Homeric term *phratrê* (1985.307-08). Here, on one key point at least, I have trouble following him. While I applaud his attempt to get rid of some of the more troublesome interpretations of phratries in Homer, one would expect to find some clearer reflection of such an arrangement in the terminology for leadership--for example, a sharply observed distinction between *anax* and *basileus,* as in the Mycenaean evidence. Instead, as I read the *Iliad*, there is only a vestigial echo of the distinction in designating Agamemnon as *anax*, but in other uses clear signs of that term's decay, whereas *basileus* is the key term over which the major conflict among the Greeks is played out.

An earlier article of Donlan's on "The Structure of Authority in the *Iliad*" (1979) deals tantalizingly with central issues in the poem, but speculates very cautiously about the connection between the poem and

historical realities of the eighth century--not to mention those of the preceding centuries. He focuses on three elements: *established social* **[End Page 174]** *position* (based most explicitly in the case of Agamemnon on such claims as "inheritance, remote divine sanction, age, personal wealth and numbers of followers"), *standing based on ability* (1979.53), and the *authority of the group* (1979.55). What most interests me in this connection is that despite his reading of the "message" of the poem as reasserting "the principle of position-authority" (1979.65), he offers what I consider an essentially correct picture of the fundamentally egalitarian, proto-democratic context from which authority based on "standing" emerges (1979.64-65):

> Group-authority is the primal element, the matrix, as it were, of normal social interaction. It is not an unreasonable hypothesis that its historical foundation is prior, hearkening back to a distant time when leadership initiative was a matter of situational impulse in a society where all action was essentially collective . . . In such cases leadership is equivalent to initiative. Its basis, then, would be a higher degree of psychological authority, predicated on possession of superior physical strength and skills.

As useful as it is, I find Donlan's account of pre-polis social structure a bit blurry precisely where I think we need a sharper sense of generative conflict among the three elements he has earlier outlined. Focusing on terminology, he argues for the essential semantic collapse in the Homeric picture between *demos* and polis: both words, he argues, already imply a *koinonia* (1985.13-15). The term *oikos*, which Donlan, following the lead of linguists (cf. Lat. *vicus*), suspects initially "denoted a settlement of interrelated extended families--a 'clan village'" (1985.299), has by Homer's time come to designate the isolated nuclear family, its private land, immediate subordinate laborers, and intimate non-kin supporters (1989.7-13). While acknowledging that the emphasis in the poems is overwhelmingly on the *oikoi* of the powerful, he assumes that in structure the humblest and the grandest *oikoi* are essentially the same (1989.8). The slippage or gap that particularly concerns me centers in two connected relationships: that of the predominant *basileus* to the *demos,* and that of the *basileus* to a posited "preeminent class" (1989.27). On the one hand, the individual *basileus* is credited with the consolidation of smaller groups into larger groups as a consequence of his extraordinary prestige--presumably martial--with the *demos.* On the other, the actual *poleis* we encounter by **[End Page 175]** 700 are overwhelmingly ruled by oligarchs, [41] who, as in the *Odyssey* or in Hesiod, may be called *basilêes*, but function as a collectivity. Donlan emphasizes the fragility of the bonds between the individual *basileus* and his followers (1989.25), and the origin of the aristocracy as a class seems to lie in the plurality of lesser chiefs who are induced to subordinate themselves under the true predominant chieftain. The factors that led to the true polis seem to have entailed the suppression of one-man rule and its supersession by the collective rule of the lesser chiefs. The tensions between the one and the many *within* what could broadly be designated the ruling element seem to me far more important than Donlan's account recognizes.

In particular, I would like to have a clearer conception of the differences in the *economic* relationship between the individual *basileus* and the *demos* on the one hand and, on the other, that between the collective *aristoi* and the *demos*. To return to the terms of Childe's ten criteria, what are the differentiating specifics of the first Greek *poleis*? How are we to envision the nature of the social surplus which seems the key precondition of such visible signs of urbanization as monumental building? How was this surplus extracted? Who controlled it and benefited most from it? What does all this imply about the nature of the ideological struggles we should expect in the "real" world of eighth-century Greece?

The picture is complicated by the fact that, just as the first Mycenaean urban revolution was not *ab ovo*, but clearly drew upon the experience of the ancient Near East either directly or indirectly through Crete, so too the second urban revolution, the polis revolution, entailed at least some continuities with the Mycenaean world, however dark the Dark Ages. [42] Some trade, for example, seems to have continued and some specialization of crafts. However, the Homeric picture of wandering **[End Page 176]** *dêmiourgoi* suggests precisely a pre-urban stage, when there is insufficient surplus or concentration of population to support full-time resident craftsmen. At the same time, the archaeological record suggests that a number of undisputed developments from Childe's list justify speaking of an urban "revolution" in the eighth century. These relatively undisputed items include a dramatic increase in population, [43] the appearance of monumental buildings after an absence of several hundred years, dramatic experimentation in other visual arts, significant expansion of trade, a very widespread resort to colonization, and the return of literacy on an entirely new basis.

As suggested above, the most interesting (to me at least) and disputed item on Childe's list is, of

course, the question of whether an essentially new ruling class emerged with the polis. [44] Closely associated with this question is the question of whether the rise of the polis entailed a new method of extracting surplus from the primary producers to the advantage of such a ruling class and, a question already touched on, whether significant changes in the role of kinship characterized the new social formation of the polis. Examining these questions requires some working hypothesis about the motives underlying the shift towards the polis. **[End Page 177]**

As to the motive for consolidating in cities, Starr offers two alternative models drawn from anthropology--one coercive, in which a military elite imposes consolidation in cities on an oppressed population as a means of resolving tensions arising from "a system of differential access to basic resources" (Starr 1986.43, quoting Haas), and a second, by consensus, "a gradual evolution as 'a response to the need for increased integrative mechanisms in larger and more complex structures'" (Starr 1986.43, quoting Service). Pointing to what he sees as the absence of evidence for "destructive conflict of classes until well after the *polis* had become the political vehicle of life," [45] Starr opts for the second or consensual model. Morris' model, if I read him accurately, falls somewhere between Starr's alternatives. On the one hand, Morris seems to assume that there was a fully constituted aristocracy throughout the Dark Ages and, consequently, that there was a fundamental conflict between the *agathoi* and the *kakoi* over the social surplus throughout the period. On the other hand, he seems to envision some sort of major radical compromise about 750 through which there emerged the very essence of a polis, in his view, namely, the concept of *koinonia* (1987.8), the "identity of the citizens with the state itself . . . The source of all authority was located in the community, part or all of which made binding decisions through open discussion" (1987.2-3). Never mind his extraordinary equivocation here in speaking of "part or all" of the community making decisions. His sole evidence for this radical invention of politics, as he dubs it (1987.2), is some changes in burial practices in Attica. Subsequent changes in burials, combined with the literary evidence of the Solonian crisis, compel Morris to argue further that this apparently amicable compromise entailing the surrender of major power by the aristocracy to the community ended some fifty years later, about 700, when the aristocracy returned to a domineering and exploitative relationship with the rest of society--in Morris' terms "the *kakoi*." Again I must confess my inability to offer a fully professional archaeologist's assessment of a line of argument which, for all the impressive graphs and diagrams, strikes me as quite preposterous. **[End Page 178]**

Morris and Starr are both skeptical about two related factors that have been suggested as motives for consolidation--whether coercive or consensual--namely, a significant shift from animal husbandry to agriculture as the primary form of production and a resultant dramatic increase in the population (Snodgrass 1971.378-80 and 1980.35-38). [46] Morris seems, however, to agree with Starr's compelling emphasis on the evidence for quite substantial warfare (cf. Qviller 1981) in the latter half of the eighth century, which, as Starr repeatedly stresses, determined the political map of Greece for the succeeding centuries. Beyond the murky Lelantine War, which seems to have doomed Eretria to subsequent obscurity, Starr points to the Spartan conquest of Messenia, the Theban conquest of Boeotia, the protracted conflict of Corinth and Megara (1986.39) and, less chronologically clear, the consolidation of Attica and Eleusis under Athenian domination.

On the issue of a shift to agriculture, I can only say that in addition to what I already found compelling in the earlier arguments of Snodgrass, I am fully persuaded by the differing approaches of de Polignac and Qviller and their relevance to understanding the class politics of the rise of the polis. De Polignac, focusing on the emergence of extra-urban sanctuaries in the second half of the eighth century, argues that they are best understood in the framework of a shift from herding to agriculture (1984.46-47). Indeed, he interprets the shift from the Homeric mode of fighting to the full hoplite mode as precisely a shift from a style appropriate to cattle rustling to one designed for the defense of farm land (1984.57). Finally, to anticipate a central point I wish to emphasize below, he argues that the ritual procession of the entire community to the sanctuary at the limit of their agricultural territory represents a *political* gesture aimed at fostering simultaneously a sense of the solidarity of the community of all farmers *and* of subordination of the majority to their aristocratic rulers (1984.48).

Qviller 1981 suggests that a new level of complexity and duration of warfare over land led to the displacement of the single chieftain or his reduction to the status of a military leader who only served at the pleasure of a collective rule by the larger landowners or former small-scale chiefs. **[End Page 179]** This might explain the significant ambiguity of the term *basileus* [47] which comes, in the *Odyssey* and in Hesiod, to fluctuate between single and collective designations. Qviller points out, following Finley, that while the Homeric *basileus* offers to give away land, he never seems to fight to take land (Qviller

1981.134). His economic relations with his followers seem to entail a central contradiction between a need to give them gifts and a relentless temptation, when raids on those outside his group are inadequate, to extort something from his own followers to give away (Qviller 1981.127-34). Thus, while a successful warrior would have tremendous prestige, the less successful would become more burdensome than they were worth. With the increase in the importance of land accompanying a shift toward greater reliance on agriculture, the poorer *oikoi* might have found a more predictable system of oligarchic extortion, such as the hectemorage of pre-Solonian Attica, less noxious than unpredictable swings between lavish generosity and random hits from the chieftain. This is, of course, speculative, but a fundamental conclusion I draw from examining the rise of the polis is that the aristocrats or, more accurately, "incipient aristocrats" as Starr cautiously now names them (1986.41), were the key decision-makers in the developments which archaeology finds specific to the emergence of the Greek polis.

It may be helpful if I sum up schematically the picture I have arrived at in trying to envision the emergence of the polis:

> *Step one:* increased production due to more emphasis on agriculture leads to increased population.

> *Step two:* increased population as well as the consolidation of ownership of the best land by the most powerful warriors leads to intensified struggle over land between and within chieftain bands based in villages.

> *Step three:* intensified struggles over land lead to consolidation of chieftain bands in *poleis*, entailing for a period the uneasy subordination of former little chiefs under a predominant chieftain.

[End Page 180]

> *Step four:* these former chieftains in *poleis* do away with the notion of monarchy and consolidate themselves as a *new* ruling class, intensifying their extraction of surplus from the peasantry by means similar to or comparable to those which culminate a century or so later in Attica in the Solonian crisis.

I return to my point of departure, namely, dissatisfaction with Morris' formulation of ideological struggle in the *Iliad* as a struggle between the *oikos*-oriented aristocracy and the community-oriented polis. Rather than a simple dichotomy of elite and mass, I see a more complex struggle *within* the ruling element over the issue of one-man rule vs. the collective exercise of power by aristocrats who view themselves as formal equals. The *demos* was the target audience for their struggle, and the key to the victory of the aristocrats was their success in presenting their own collective interests as the collective interest of the whole community. [48] Thus I would argue that the politically organized polis with systematic separation and temporal limitation of executive functions was initially the creation and the creature of the aristocracy, not the triumph of the *kakoi* about 750 B.C. as Morris seems to believe. To be sure, once the polis was consolidated, class warfare took on a dramatically new character, one which *gradually* led to the sort of crises we can see in the Athens of Solon, but which more generally entailed the supplanting of aristocracies by a new sort of monarchy: tyrants supported by what used to be called the hoplite revolution (Cartledge 1977 and Rose 1992.146-47). If, however, we want to understand the terms of ideological warfare from about 750-700 B.C., we have to assume that the dominant group was the aristocracy. In the case of **[End Page 181]** the only early states for which we have something approaching "data," i.e., Sparta and Athens, the pattern of government before 600 was domination by a small council holding membership for life (the Gerousia and the Areopagos) and the organization of the population through kinship groups into military units (Hammond 1982.738-41, Andrewes 1982.363-68). [49] The elaborate kinship pyramids we know from later periods are most plausibly understood as the invention of eighth-century aristocrats: the essence of aristocracy is the insistence that birth from specific parentage is the fundamental determinant of human excellence or mediocrity. At the same time, as the dominant force, *they* are most likely to have been responsible for initiatives to create a new sense of cohesiveness in the newly emergent "community." What Bérard says apropos of hero-cults is true in other areas as well: these changes "reflect a new awareness (*une prise de conscience*) of the necessity of a social game more subtle than before" (Bérard 1983.44). The political manipulation of religious feeling seems to have been their most fruitful move in this new game.

Thus, in the real world of the eighth century, two developments that I think should be understood in terms of ideological struggle are tomb cults and hero-cults. Antonaccio (1995 and 1994) has insisted on distinguishing what are frequently blurred: evidence of religious tendance at anonymous Mycenaean gravesites ("tomb cult") and formal cults of named heroes (true "hero-cult"). While there is widespread acknowledgment that both practices have a *political* meaning closely related to the rise of the polis (e.g., Morris 1988, Bérard 1982 and 1983, de Polignac 1984, Whitley 1988, Antonaccio op. cit.), there is in many of the same scholars a strong inclination to insist upon the dangers of a monolithic theory to decipher the precise political implications in geographically diverse areas. Indeed, *mutatis mutandis*, these practices fit quite well with Althusser's argument **[End Page 182]** that an ideological apparatus of the state is always a "site of struggle" (Althusser 1971.147). What is peculiar to this particular element is that the struggle seems focused precisely on the formation of what could be called a "state." Tomb cult seems the more open of the two phenomena: both modest peasant offerings and more pretentious offerings suggest that both the elite and humbler farmers sought the comforting authority of the ancient dead. True hero-cult seems much more clearly to represent a bid by the aristocracy to support its claims to authority by asserting kinship with the glorious figures of the past (Antonaccio 1994.403). But here, too, it is open to the community as a whole to claim a sort of metaphorical kinship with the heroic figure. If the monarchic *basileus* retained great prestige among the peasantry, it could be very convenient to institute rituals which insisted that the age of the great heroes was past. It was also perhaps convenient, if we read back from Pindar, to invest the new oligarchic collectivity of *basilêes* with genealogical legitimation. The great popularity of heroic scenes on vases of the period (Snodgrass 1979) suggests that those most able to pay for such works found these subjects most congenial.

The issue of hero-cults already takes us into the area of religion and the aspect of the rise of the polis most stressed by Scully: the centrality to the polis of worship of a tutelary deity. Here again I believe it is most plausible to see the aristocracy as the prime movers in major expenditures fostering a new sense of collectivity in the polis. These expenditures involved not only massive temples and altars, but also state-organized festivals at fixed times replacing the peasant festivals based upon the peasants' own sense of when their work was done. [50] It also seems plausible, as Cartledge argues (1985), that the aristocrats were responsible for a new emphasis on competitive performances in these festivals. All Greeks, not just aristocrats (pace Griffin), enjoyed these contests. But the aristocrats were obviously best placed to shine in them (Young 1985, Rose 1992. 147-48). **[End Page 183]**

Broadly, then, I see a number of phenomena often treated in purely religious terms: cults, shrines, temples, impressive offerings, processions, and festivals, all undergoing dramatic changes in the latter half of eighth century with a distinctly *political* thrust. As in the ancient Near East, a ruling class diverted major resources into religious practices in a massive effort to consolidate the conditions of their continued and, in all likelihood, intensified exploitation of the peasant class. [51]

Ideology in the *Iliad*

How then, at last, are we to envision the *Iliad* as an ideological response to these radical developments? What in the poem are the chief sites of struggle? Does the text of the poem reveal a discernible taking of sides, a point of view? And, if so, how would we, as modern readers, gain access to such a perspective? While I have been persuaded by my more recent readings that the emergent polis--its tutelary deities, its heroes, and its claims upon the lives of its inhabitants--is *reflected* more prominently in the poem than I had previously appreciated, I have not substantially changed my mind about the ideological issues that are the central concerns of the poem. [52] The theme of the wrath of Achilles makes the grounds for monarchic authority or, more broadly, the justice of the social and political hierarchy *the* central concern of the poem. The fusion of this theme with the broader theme of the Trojan War raises the issue of the justice of the gods vis-à-vis the fate of cities.

In working through the examination of the social and political hierarchy, the poem certainly gives voice to a variety of perspectives--some of which we have already briefly glanced at in connection with possible readings of the Thersites scene and in considering Donlan's analysis of the structure of authority in the *Iliad.* In Donlan's terms, the case is certainly made in the poem for authority based on "established social position." One striking element that I believe establishes a position or point **[End Page 184]** of view on the central ideological issues in the text is a pervasive *dramatic irony* in which the audience is repeatedly invited to note a gap between claims made and the reality of the situation as it unfolds. Thus I believe (and have attempted to demonstrate elsewhere) that every one of the factors cited by Donlan as the basis for Agamemnon's (and others') established social position: "inheritance,

remote divine sanction, age, personal wealth and numbers of followers" (1979.53) is subjected to withering irony. But rather than repeat all those arguments here, I will focus on how these factors relate to the issue of aristocracy.

In Donlan's own terms, it is striking that the only collectivity he sees as relevant to the central opposition is a "principle of collectivity" manifested in the notion of a "single counsel" wished for by Nestor (1979.61) and the "wider group authority" appealed to by Achilles in his objection to Agamemnon's demand for another prize (1979.58). In the *Iliad,* there is no polis ruled by a collectivity of *aristoi* who base their claim to authority primarily on birth. Monarchy (or the rule of individual "chieftains") is assumed throughout, and the chieftain is assumed to be "the best." In the poem, the primary focus of struggle is over who is "the best of the Achaeans," and the pervasive assumption is that the *one* who is best should give the orders. At the same time, the capacity required for giving orders is, as Achilles asserts, knowing "how to look both forward and backward [i.e., see the past and the future] / in order that the Achaeans might fight safely beside the ships" (*Il*. 1.343-44). The welfare of the collectivity of the Achaeans is at stake in deciding who is the single best. Nowhere in the poem is the alternative of rule by the chiefs functioning as a *collectivity* explicitly advocated. We do see Odysseus, Nestor, and, to a lesser degree, the other chiefs working together in action to make the incompetent monarchy of Agamemnon continue to function. But, I repeat, one-man rule by the *best* man is the assumed ideal of the poem as a whole. Aristocracy, as the collective rule by an elite whose primary claims to authority are precisely those of "position," is, I believe, only indirectly attacked in the *Iliad* through the poet's narrative assault on inheritance, kinship, and divine favor.

The data about the range of attitudes toward kinship and descent is, of course, itself already embroiled in ideological struggle. Morris (1986.115) is at pains to insist that Geddes' (1984) revival of Calhoun (1934, cf. 1962) is merely "idiosyncratic" and cannot displace Finley. Geddes' emphasis on prowess over kinship may be felt to share with its inspiration in Calhoun an inadequate account of how important genealogical **[End Page 185]** boasts and concerns actually are in the *Iliad.* Certainly anyone reading the genealogy of Agamemnon's scepter (*Il*. 2.101-08), Aeneas' elaborate account of his genealogy (*Il.* 20.203-41), or even the ambiguous difference of opinion in book 4 between Agamemnon and Sthenelus over the relative *aretê* of fathers and sons (*Il*. 4.372-410) could scarcely claim that a sense of a paternal line, of excellence transmitted from generation to generation through that line, was irrelevant in the *Iliad.* Looking at the Trojan royal house, its material layout as well as its functioning politically and socially, one would also need to concede that Homer's audience was familiar with, or could at least recognize, what a family-based power structure entailed. But even granting these significant presences in the poem, I would still maintain (cf. Rose 1992.61-77) that the core of the Calhoun-Geddes reading is correct insofar as it insists that, in the *ideological* world of the poem, prowess on the field, *not* genealogy, is the fundamental principle upon which the legitimacy of leadership depends. [53] Genealogical elements might then best be understood as signs of what Raymond Williams would call an *emergent* element in the poem, a new principle of legitimacy that the aristocracies of the eighth century were bent upon establishing.

While I have already suggested some of the ways in which I believe the eighth-century proto-aristocrats manipulated religion to win over the *demos* to their collective rule, there remain many excellent reasons for hesitation in even broaching the topic of religion in Homer--or anywhere else, reasons that go well beyond the terrors of the bottomless bibliography. "Making sense of Greek religion," in Gould's phrase, entails first of all recognizing the sheer range of human phenomena to which that religion represents a response: "within the culture . . . there is no corner of life that is not lived in [its] terms" (Gould 1985.4). In the present context of my efforts to explore evidence in the *Iliad* of ideological conflict, I am wary of reinforcing the stereotype of Marxist reductionism. For many people in our own world, religion, in almost any form, may be "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of **[End Page 186]** soulless conditions," a description by Marx of religion that tends to be quoted far less often than the declaration that "It is the *opium* of the people," which immediately follows. [54] One can also agree with Gould, following Geertz, that religion offers "both a framework of explanation for human experience and a system of responses to all that is wayward, uncanny and a threat to the perception of order in that experience--a language for dealing with the world" (1985.5). Indeed, for just that reason perhaps, there is a strong tendency for serious students of religion in other cultures to slip from explication and analysis to defense of the essential profundity of its claims. Griffin, for example, whose treatment of the Homeric gods is justly admired, begins his climactic discussion of religion in the *Iliad* with the categorical declaration, "no account of the poems can be adequate which fails to take the gods seriously" (Griffin 1980.179). His immediate point concerning dismissive accounts which speak

summarily of a "divine apparatus" or a "*façon de parler*" (cf. Kirk 1974.292, cited by Griffin 1980.147) is entirely valid. Yet I, at least, begin to be uncomfortable at the apparent costs of "taking the Homeric gods seriously" when I encounter in Griffin such enthusiastic declarations as, "These gods must be worthy to be gods indeed" (1980.155) or read his extraordinarily smug, ethnocentric dismissal of the "grotesque play of fantasy" in non-Greek myth (1980.177) beside his paean to "*noble* speeches and tragic insights" in the *Iliad,* citing scenes and characters that "all show us that amid suffering and disaster *human nature* can remain *noble* and almost *god*-like" (1980.177, my emphasis). For me, it is hard not to feel here that Griffin has crossed the line between sympathetic historical analysis and ahistorical essentializing.

I think, at least, it is important to be clear that the Greeks themselves and many subsequent centuries of readers of Homer saw that there was something at *stake* in the representation of the gods in Homer or, to echo Lamberton's title (1986), *Homer the Theologian*, something more than just declaring that he was "right" about the way things "really" are or about the alleged essence of human nature. Griffin himself, in his detailed analysis of the differences between the gods in Homer and in the poems of the Epic cycle (1980.167, cf. Griffin 1977.39-53), which poems may have been earlier, later, or roughly contemporary, offers some of the best grounds **[End Page 187]** for historicizing the gods in the *Iliad*--not situating them simply in a straightforward "development," but assessing how they might, as a configuration, represent a specific response to a specific ideological crisis.

What is most simply at stake about the Homeric gods, especially those of the *Iliad*, is their moral ambiguity. One may or may not personally agree with the epigraph from Empson which Gould offers as his version of "making sense of Greek religion," namely, "The notion is that life involves maintaining oneself between contradictions that can't be solved by analysis" (Gould 1985.1). But when Xenophanes, Heraclitus, or Plato complain about the gods in Homer, they implicitly recognize that their own efforts to construct a morally comprehensible universe are threatened by Homer. When Werner Jaeger declares of the *Odyssey*, "the entire poem is filled with the same purpose--to justify the ways of God to man" (1945.54), he implicitly recognizes that it *matters* whether the representation of the gods offers overall a justification or a negation of the status quo. Dominant ideologies seek first and foremost to win assent to the essential rightness of the status quo. Where that is impossible, the best backup position--one painfully familiar from our own historical moment--is to inspire despair of all alternatives or an incapacitating cynicism in those irreconcilably opposed to the status quo. Yet resort to such a backup strategy is itself, to some extent, an implicit acknowledgment of failure in persuasion.

A number of authorities on Greek religion have, in fact, noted a dramatic difference between the representation of gods in the *Iliad* and that in the *Odyssey*. [55] In looking at the gods in the *Iliad* from the perspective of their historical ideological meaning, I think it is useful to separate precisely what Griffin warns us must be accepted as an indissoluble unity. I think it is worth asking what are the optimistic features of the gods and what elements in their representation tend to negate optimism. By taking this **[End Page 188]** tack, we may be able to get a clearer perspective on how the ideological struggles in the text are played out.

I have argued above that it is most plausible to see the aristocracies who actually ran the early *poleis* as reorganizing the population in pseudo-kinship pyramids and devoting massive resources to the support of hero-cults, temples to tutelary deities, and religious festivals. They would most benefit from a view of positive genealogical ties between divinities and mortals which, in the case of hero-worship, blurs the line between mortal and immortal by bestowing a quasi-immortality upon the hero. Similarly, the efficacy of the protection of the tutelary divinity implies the justice of the polis structure--a structure firmly in the hands of the aristocracy, who, in some cases at least, may have themselves claimed a genealogical tie to the divinity.

What do we find in the *Iliad*? Most striking is precisely the issue of kinship with divinity. As I have argued elsewhere (Rose 1992.66-77, cf. Kullmann 1985.16-17), the motif is relentlessly ironized--in the figures of Tlepolemus, Sarpedon, Ares' son Askalaphus, Aeneas, Heracles and, most fundamentally, as is well argued by Slatkin (1991), in the figure of the chief hero of the poem, Achilles. Indeed, to short-circuit a complex issue I have tried to address elsewhere, I would say here simply that *irony* is one of the major means by which the *Iliad* achieves, to echo the passage from Eagleton (1976.185) cited earlier, "a particular 'disturbance' of conventional modes of signification" and in so doing undermines the heavy ideological bias of the epic form toward the naive celebration of the glorious deeds of "heroes."

Slatkin has elaborated persuasively the implications of the sharp contrast between the *Iliad*'s treatment of divine kinship and that in the *Aethiopis,* where both divine mothers, Eos and Thetis, bestow immortality on their sons. What I wish to underline here is that this has not only philosophic or theological implications, but marked ideological implications as well. The absoluteness of the gap between mortal and immortal entails an absolute negation of the optimistic aristocratic version of that tie--so obvious, for example, in Plato's critique of the *Iliad.* [56] It is, of course, too sweeping to say that a tragic form inherently challenges the **[End Page 189]** status quo: Gerald Else (1965, cf. Seaford 1994.232-34 and passim) has shown brilliantly how the invention of the form of tragic drama in sixth-century Athens may have dovetailed with the ideological agenda of the tyrant Peisistratus. Nevertheless, the obvious ways in which a narrative with an unhappy ending may carry a strong ideological meaning came home to me while reading about the censoring of operas in Naples during the 1820s and 30s. To quote Ashbrook 1983.39: "The Neapolitan censors . . . sincerely believed that plots should be morally uplifting . . . [They] retained a marked preference . . . for happy endings, as they believed they affirmed the status quo and upheld the principle that benevolent intervention could reconcile differences."

Benevolent divine intervention may bring reconciliation at the end of the *Odyssey*, but it is conspicuous by its absence in the *Iliad.* [57] Not only can the powerful goddess Thetis do nothing to protect her son, the most powerful of the gods, Zeus, cannot protect his beloved children Sarpedon and Heracles, nor his pious favorite Hector, nor the city of Troy. The grim deal between Hera and Zeus over destroying cities (*Il.* 4.1-68) is, as Griffin puts it, "a nightmare picture for men" (1980.197) and presumably for women as well. But I am not sure he adequately accounts for this note in the poem in conjunction with the one aspect of the gods he consistently historicizes, that is, their resemblance to a patriarchal, aristocratic, extended family. He notes the close parallel between their life of ease and the portrait of the suitors in the *Odyssey* (Griffin 1980.192), widely acknowledged to reflect the oligarchs of Homer's own society (e.g., Whitman 1958.306-08, cf. Rose 1992.99-102). But Griffin assumes without question that only the aristocracy are the intended audience for the poem: "the gods themselves **[End Page 190]** form an aristocratic society which reflects and glorifies the human society for which the poem was composed" (1980.193). Not only do I believe this assumption about the audience is insupportable (Kirk 1962.274-80, Dalby 1995.276-78), but its assumption of an essentially celebratory relationship between humans and gods is contradicted by Griffin himself [58] and by the text of the poem itself. Let me just recall Achilles' climactic invocation of the paradigm of Niobe as his last word on the human condition. Achilles is the figure par excellence of alienation from the gods and from human society. Again and again he associates himself with the marginalized--with the wanderer, dishonored, hunger-driven, utterly rejected of the gods, with Priam, the enemy king who has lost all that matters in his life, and finally with the queen of old who had dared to assert her mortality and

> now somewhere among the rocks, among the lonely mountains,
> In Sipylus, where they say are the couches of goddesses,
> of nymphs, who move lightly about the river Acheloeon,
> there she, though a stone, chews upon the sufferings from the gods.

(24.614-17)

A final juxtaposition of mortal and immortal, of divine ease, divine mobility contrasted with mortal fixity, culminates in an ironic metaphor of eternal eating (*pessei*). What begins as an image of Niobe's acceptance of her mortality, her literal turning to food after ten days of grieving, ends as a bitter refusal of mortality, an eternal indictment of the injustice of the gods.

Conclusions

I have tried to argue in the foregoing, first, for the value of taking ideology seriously, for exploring some of the rich array of analytical tools that have been developed over the last few decades. Secondly, by attempting to understand the reality of the rise of the polis in the latter half of the eighth century, I have attempted to show the inadequacy of understanding the ideological conflicts of the *Iliad* in terms of a simple dichotomy **[End Page 191]** between aristocratic *oikos* and polis. Insofar as there is an ideology specific to the early polis as an institution of newly centralized power, the polis together with its institutions and ideological apparatuses must be recognized as the creation and creature of the aristocracy, who fostered the collectivity of the polis as the best guarantee of their own collective exercise of power. It is an entirely different matter to speak of the *class* of the peasantry who made up the bulk of the citizenry of the polis and whose ideological incorporation into the polis would be a chief

goal of the ruling aristocrats. I have posited in the ideological thrust specific to the poem a strong attachment shared by the poet and, I believe, a significant majority perhaps of the peasantry who constituted his major audience, to the image of the monarchic warrior-chief, the true *basileus*, who based his claim to authority not on dubious claims of genealogy but on demonstrated prowess on the field and generosity in his direct relationship with his followers. While the hero-cults of the polis might attempt to exploit this attachment, the ideological weight of the poem, manifested in its pervasive irony and the strikingly tragic form of its narrative, implies a grim negation of the major claims of the aristocrats about the efficacy of kin ties with divinity, about the support of tutelary deities, and about the essential justice of the status quo. As a whole, the poem does not celebrate a "cooperative" polis, but embraces a vision of the death of all that is good and a paradigm of eternal grieving. If the figure of Thersites represents an emergent oppositional feeling in an as yet thoroughly subordinated peasantry, the negations centered in the towering figure of Achilles are, in Williams' terms, "residual": they look back nostalgically and bitterly to a type of ruler whose historical moment seems to be passing forever from the scene. That his resurrection in the form of the tyrant was just around the corner is another story and serves to show, perhaps, that deeply felt and superbly represented ideological positions do not necessarily reflect the truth of history. [59]

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Notes

[1]. My thanks to Steven Nimis, Mitchell Greenberg, and Susan Jarratt for comments on earlier versions of this text.

[2]. While I focus primarily on the work of Ian Morris and, to a lesser degree, Stephen Scully and Richard Seaford, I believe it is fair to say that the interpretive position I call into question has become something like a consensus among recent readers of the *Iliad.* See, for example, William Sale, "I agree with Scully (100-13) that the idea of individual subordination to the interests of the polis is part of the picture of Troy; I would add to that picture the contrary idea, that the polis is unable to force its will upon its citizens, at least upon the members of the powerful *oikoi*" (1994.17). Though he takes Morris to task for too simple a collapse of time-frames in oral poetry and for a failure to distinguish Achaean from Trojan government in the poem, Sale is in essential agreement with Morris on the point he purports to "add" in the passage cited. I should note that I became aware of Richard Seaford's *Reciprocity and Ritual* (1994) after I had already delivered a symposium version of this text. I have tried to take account of various relevant arguments of his, but an adequate account of our points of disagreement would completely alter the scope of my argument in this text. So too with Sale: I have made some effort to situate his argument in mine, but cannot respond adequately to his long and, at points, complex argument in support of the thesis that *only* Troy offers echoes of the reality of the emergence of the polis. The only conflict of values he sees is, then, between the Achaeans as echoes of an idealized memory of a Mycenaean warrior class (1994.53-54) and the Trojans: "the government and economy of Troy in the *Iliad* reflects [sic] the government and economy of an eighth-century polis" (1994.13). The fact that Sale is only interested in the "*intellectual* force of the creation of the polis" (1994.11 and 101) rather than anything he calls "ideology" also makes his argument somewhat less relevant to my focus here.

[3]. The pervasive moral and religious tone is illustrated by such comments as, "Sacred Troy rising from the plain deserves its epithet precisely because the polis, inspired by Zeus, leads man toward the uniquely human. The act of civilization itself is sacred and partakes of the divine. The polis, even more than a 'political' community, is a religious one, separated as it is from nature" (1990.26). His sole support for this argument, as far as I can tell, is a comment quoted from Eustathius apropos of Thebes, "every *polis* is *hieros* as it guards the people within which [act], indeed, is divine [*theion*]" (1990.26). I would like to know in what sense the polis is "inspired by Zeus." Further, in the same passage, Scully declares, "the Achaean wall perverts the higher necessity of the polis to 'defend women and children'" (1990.26). A negative moral judgment on Achilles within this nexus of values is more explicit in the following: "When Achilles prays to Zeus that he may loosen or unyoke Troy's holy diadem of towers (*hiera krêdemna luômen, Il.* 16.100), he expresses a desire to violate the hallowed bonds of civilization but not, I suspect, a desire to rape the armed virgin goddess" (1990.33). "Homer strongly sets Achilles' inhumanity against the polis order, the city wall deservedly 'divine' for its protective, if tragic, embrace of civilization" (1990.53). For Scully's further elaboration of the nature/culture dichotomy see his 1990.44-45. More compelling is de Polignac's insistence on the extra-urban sanctuary as the decisive marker of the line between "nature" and "culture" (1984.44-45) rather than the wall, which is not even a feature of

some quite important *poleis* such as Sparta.

4. While I have yet to discuss the range of concepts I imply by "ideological," some sense of what I have in mind may be suggested by the contrast between Scully's long and interesting discussion of ancient Mesopotamian evidence and the comments of a once respected anthropologist with a distinctly Marxist orientation, Leslie White. In analyzing the agricultural revolution and the consequent emergence of a city-dominated (i.e., "civil") society, White argues, "Civil societies are characterized by a number of diverse parts and specialized functions, on the one hand, and a special mechanism of coordination, integration and control, on the other. This special mechanism should have a name, and we have decided to call it the *state-church*" (White 1959.303). Among its specific functions he includes "keeping the subordinate class docile and obedient" (1959.327).

5. In response to a critic who specifically objected to his analyses of the ancient world, Marx responded as follows: "In the opinion of the German-American publication this [i.e., Marx' analysis of society] is all very true for our own times, in which material interests are preponderant, but not for the Middle Ages, dominated by Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, dominated by politics. In the first place, it strikes me as odd that anyone should suppose that these well-worn phrases about the Middle Ages and the ancient world were unknown to anyone else. One thing is clear: the Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism, nor could the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the manner in which they gained their livelihood which explains why in one case politics, in the other case Catholicism, played the chief part. For the rest, one needs no more than a slight acquaintance with, for example, the history of the Roman Republic, to be aware that its secret history is the history of landed property" (Marx 1976.176 n. 35).

6. In a note, Seaford defines ideology as "a body of ideas expressing the interests of a (not necessarily dominant) social group or class" (1994.6 n. 29), then refers the reader to Eagleton 1991 for "the problems of defining ideology."

7. Sale rightly stresses that the similes in the poem "depict a generalized present; they claim to refer to a world with which the audience is familiar" (1994.14). To this extent they posit a "real" *within* the world of the poem.

8. Ober's definition of ideology is set forth as number 3 of his "Premises and Methods": "Each member of any given community makes assumptions about human nature and behavior, has opinions on morality and ethics, and holds some general political principles; those assumptions, opinions, and principles which are common to the great majority of those members are best described as ideology" (Ober 1989.38). He goes on to comment, "My definition of ideology is similar to that of Finley, who suggests that ideology is 'the matrix of attitudes and beliefs out of which people normally respond to the need for action . . . without a process of ratiocination leading them back to the attitudinal roots or justification of their response . . .' or 'the combination of beliefs and attitudes, often unformulated or subconscious and certainly neither coherent or necessarily consistent, which underlay . . . thinking . . . behavior'" (Ober 1989.38, cf. Finley 1982.17). As Shaw and Saller note in their illuminating introduction to Finley's *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (1982), Finley was himself strongly influenced by his early reading of Marx and by his association with the Frankfurt School, but Weber's influence entailed a fundamental break with Marx: "In the sphere of social analysis, we see that Finley has throughout all his work clearly rejected the Marxist conception of 'class' as the only, or even the most profitable, way of analyzing social relations in ancient society. He has preferred to give primacy to the Weberian concepts of 'order' and 'status,' especially the latter, which he considers 'an admirably vague word with a considerable psychological element'" (Finley 1982.xvii). For a discussion of the relative *lack* of a theory of ideology in Weber, see Ricoeur 1986.181-215. For a critique of Weber and of Finley's reliance on order and status rather than class, see Ste. Croix 1981.58, 86-96.

9. I cite a few examples: "Another explanation might be framed in terms of ideology--in particular, an ideology like that of the citizen estate of the classical polis" (1987.139); "the new ideology was not successful, and perhaps already by 1100 competition was on the increase" (1987.173); "we might surmise a period of rapid changes and unstable ideologies in the shadows of the vanished glories of the palaces" (ibid.); "a funerary ideology of denial of differences in status, with very few exceptions, operated at both Argos and Corinth throughout the Archaic period" (1987.186); "he [Cleisthenes] substituted citizenship for dependency in the ideology of power" (1987.209).

10. Morris cites in support of this contention Austin and Vidal-Naquet (1977.15-16), Ste. Croix (1981.441), and, with a "but see also," Finley (1983.122-41). The terms of Austin and Vidal-Naquet are ridiculously narrow: the only alternative ideology they imagine and fail to find is some sort of capitalist work ethic. While Ste. Croix does refer to the paucity of evidence and ignores everything before Solon, he does offer eleven large pages discussing later forms of ideological resistance despite his relative lack of interest in issues of ideology. Finally, Finley, as noted above, takes his views of ideology from Weber. All these sources ignore Donlan's early article on anti-aristocratic thought in early Greece (1973), not to mention Rose 1975.

11. It is striking that Morris has an excellent citation from E. P. Thompson (Morris 1987.171) precisely on the relational nature of class, and declares himself, "there can be no such thing as 'class' without the notion of historical relationship" (ibid.). Yet in speaking of ideology in the passage quoted in my text, he not only ignores this dimension but denies its presence.

12. For an early formulation of this see Marx' *German Ideology*, e.g., "In the Middle Ages the citizens in each town were compelled to unite against the landed nobility to defend themselves. . . . Out of the many local communities of citizens [i.e., city-dwellers] in the various towns there arose only gradually the middle *class*. . . . The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; in other respects they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors. On the other hand, the class in its turn assumes an independent existence as against the individuals, so that the latter find their conditions of life predetermined, and have their position in life and hence their personal development assigned them by their class, thus becoming subsumed under it" (Marx-Engels 1975.5.76-77).

13. Cf. Marx on the explanation offered for the origin of capital under the rubric "primitive accumulation" by the apologetic discipline called in his day "political economy": "This primitive accumulation plays the same role in political economy as original sin does in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote about the past. Long, long ago there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent and above all frugal élite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort finally had nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority who, despite all their labour, have up to now nothing to sell but themselves, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly, although they have long ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defense of property" (Marx 1976.873-74). One has only to thumb through the Congressional Record to confirm the last sentence.

14. Cf. Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "In times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact, within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class . . . and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement of the whole" (Marx-Engels 1975.6.494). Of course, the polemical nature of this particular text tends to conflate a general comment on the appearance of alternative ideological elaborations with a rationale for the current activity of radical intellectuals like Marx and Engels themselves.

15. I attempt very briefly here to summarize and extend my account of twentieth-century Marxist thought in Rose 1992.1-42.

16. For overviews of approaches to ideology see Larrain 1979 and 1983, McLellan 1986, Eagleton 1991, and Cormack 1992, the last of which has a convenient annotated bibliography. I ignore in what follows the fascinating work of Slavoj Zizek (1989, 1991, 1992), who attempts to fuse Lacanian psychoanalysis with Marx, not because I think it unimportant, but because at the time of working through this project I had not digested it.

17. Cf. "The purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (an impossible achievement if, as it happens, the contradiction is real)" (Lévi-Strauss 1967a.226). In his quasi-autobiographical account, *Tristes Tropiques*, Lévi-Strauss cites Marx along with geology and

Freud as decisive formative influences on his thought (Lévi-Strauss 1974.55-58, cf. Lévi-Strauss and Eribon 1991.7-9, 15). One striking comment he makes at the age of 80 is particularly relevant to ideology: "Only a few lessons from Marx's teaching have stayed with me--above all that consciousness lies to itself" (Lévi-Strauss and Eribon 1991.108).

18. Cf. "Entrusted with 'glossing over' an intentional concept, myth encounters nothing but betrayal in language, for language can only obliterate the concept it hides, or unmask it if it formulates it. The elaboration of a second-order semiological system will enable myth to escape this dilemma: driven to having either to unveil or to liquidate the concept, it will *naturalize* it. We reach here the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature" (Barthes 1972.129). Cf. Marx' declaration in *Capital*: "One thing, however, is clear: nature does not produce on the one hand owners of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their own labour-power. This relation has no basis in natural history, nor does it have a social basis common to all periods of human history. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older formations of social production" (Marx 1976.273).

19. I offer here only a few nuggets from a very complex and rich essay: "I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (Althusser 1971.143). "The Ideological State Apparatuses may be not only the *stake*, but also the *site* of class struggle. . . . The resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself there, either by the utilization of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in struggle" (Althusser 1971.147). "An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material" (Althusser 1971.166). "Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' . . . The one hailed always recognizes that it is really him who is being hailed. . . .The existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (Althusser 1971.174-75).

20. Thus, for example, he argues, "it is not a question of introducing a historical explanation which is stuck on to the work from outside. On the contrary, we must show a sort of splitting within the work: this division is *its* unconscious, in so far as it possesses one--the unconscious which is history, the play of history beyond its edges, encroaching on those edges: this is why it is possible to trace the path that leads from the haunted work to that which haunts it" (Macherey 1978.94).

21. He offers the following dense description of his project: "These divergent and unequal bodies of work are here interrogated and evaluated from the perspective of the specific critical and interpretive task of the present volume, namely to restructure the problematics of ideology, of the unconscious and of desire, of representation, of history, and of cultural production, around the all-informing process of *narrative*, which I take to be (using the shorthand of philosophical idealism) the central function of *instance* of the human mind" (Jameson 1981.13). He sums up, "Such a view dictates an enlarged perspective for any Marxist analysis of culture, which can no longer be content with its demystifying vocation to unmask and to demonstrate the ways in which a cultural artifact fulfills a specific ideological mission, in legitimating a given power structure, in perpetuating and reproducing the latter, and in generating specific forms of false consciousness (or ideology in the narrower sense). It must not cease to practice this essentially negative hermeneutic function (which Marxism is virtually the only current critical method to assume today) but must also seek, through and beyond this demonstration of the instrumental function of a given cultural object, to project its simultaneously Utopian power as the symbolic affirmation of a specific historical and class form of collective unity" (Jameson 1981.291).

22. Although Iser speaks of "social and historical norms" and the "varying degrees of negation with which the norms are set up in their fictional context" (Iser 1974.xii), Jane Tompkins, in her stimulating overview (admittedly now dated) of reader-response theory, underlines its heavy emphasis on the individual: "modern reader-critics understand effects as entirely a matter of *individual* response" (Tompkins 1980.210). This seems to be the case in spite of the move towards focus on "interpretive communities" (ibid. xxi). She underlines the general lack of a political conception of the role of writing that she finds characteristic of the ancient world and Renaissance (ibid. 201-26). Yet Jauss takes Marxism very seriously in his account of "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (Jauss 1982.3-45).

23. Richard Johnson, in particular, theorizes most fully this circuit: "Processes disappear in results. All cultural products, for example, require to be produced, but the conditions of their production cannot be inferred by scrutinizing them as 'texts.' Similarly, all cultural products are 'read' by persons other than professional analysts (if they weren't there would be little profit in their production), but we cannot predict these uses from our own analysis, or, indeed, from the conditions of production. As anyone knows, all our communications are liable to return to us in unrecognizable or at least transformed terms. We often call this *mis*understanding or, if we are being very academic, *mis*-readings. But these 'misses' are so common (across the range of a whole society) that we might well call them normal. To understand the transformations, then, we have to understand specific conditions of consumption or reading. These include asymmetries of resources and power, material and cultural. They also include the existing ensembles of cultural elements already active within particular social *milieux* ('lived cultures' . . .) and the social relations on which these combinations depend. These reservoirs of discourses and meanings are in turn raw material for fresh cultural production. They are indeed among the specifically cultural *conditions* of production" (Richard Johnson 1986/87.46-47).

24. Douglas' critique (1967.49-70) of Lévi-Strauss points out that there was, in fact, more class differentiation among the Tsimshian tribes as well as sharper gender-based differentiations of work roles than one could imagine from Lévi-Strauss' analysis.

25. Cf. Fredric Jameson's observation that "ideology is designed to promote the human dignity and clear conscience of a given class at the same time that it discredits their adversaries; indeed, these two operations are one and the same" (1971.380).

26. Postlethwaite, writing in the same year (1988), is at pains to eschew any historical, much less ideological significance to the figure. However, his review of earlier approaches adds a few more examples of those who have (123-24).

27. Much of Sale's discussion of what he sees as the special pleading of Odysseus and Nestor to invoke a notion of absolute monarchy applying to Agamemnon's authority over the entire Greek army (1994.32-37) might also be set within Williams' concept of the residual.

28. Donlan's analysis of the Thersites episode (1979.60-61) does see the scene as ultimately a reinforcement of "the precedence of position-authority." For my disagreements with his conclusions in this article see below in the text.

29. This formal marginalization seems to me underappreciated in Sale's effort to mark a sharp distinction between Troy, on the one hand, as a place where women weave and members of the ruling class have jobs as herders and house-builders and, on the other, an Achaean professional warrior class (1994.49-50, 80-90). Presumably Helen (cf. Sale 1994.85) wove as a Greek before being counted as a Trojan woman; Achilles notes he has no quarrel with the Trojans who never drove off *his* cattle or horses nor pillaged his crops in Phthia "rich-in-soil, nurse of men" (cf. *Il.* 1.154-56). But his status as potential herder or farmer is of little interest to the epic form as such.

30. Nagy offers the following distinction: "My evolutionary model differs from that of G. S. Kirk (1962.88-98 and 1976.130-31), who posits a sequence of oral transmission starting with a monumental composer in the eighth century B.C., to be defined as an individual Homer, and proceeding from there into the historical period of sixth-century Athens. Either model takes us down to 550 B.C. or so" (1992.52). Since, for Nagy, "Homer" is simply a *façon de parler* for the epic tradition, and notions of an individual Homer represent the nadir of romantic illusion, this is, from his perspective, an important difference. But for my purposes here the consequences of Kirk's and Nagy's arguments are nearly the same.

31. Seaford declares: "There is no question of mere 'concoction.' My guess is that there would be both oral and written material available from various centers . . . there were no doubt various ideas, based on actual lengthy oral performances, of how episodes could be combined into the long narratives of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The editors at Athens would then be faced with numerous, variously related episodes in shifting combinations with each other. And these had to be combined to form definitive, long narratives, for which various models existed" (1994.150-51). Despite his emphatic conclusion ("This is *not* to deny that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are highly sophisticated and organic poems," 151), in practice, Seaford's analysis of individual passages reverts to the language of nineteenth-century "analysis," e.g., "Moreover, these passages are, in both 6 and 24, among those considered to be late" (177-78) or "this section of

the narrative reflects, like the continuation of the *Odyssey*, a later stage of the development of the polis than does the bulk of the poem. And in fact it has often been argued . . . that the description of the offering to Athena is a late passage of Athenian inspiration" (337).

32. "The static phase could easily have lasted two centuries or so, spanning the time stretching from the later part of the eighth century, a point that we may call the *formative stage* in line with Ian Morris' observations, all the way to the second half of the sixth, a point we may call the *definitive stage* in line with what appears to be the achievement of a near-textual status of the Homeric poems in the context of performance by rhapsodes at the Panathenaia" (1992.52).

33. Thus, along with many eighth-century developments (e.g., temples: 1994.197), Seaford relies heavily on the Solonian crisis (22 often lengthy citations in his index) and, of course, on much from the period of the Peisistratids (twelve citations).

34. In learning writing from the Phoenicians, the Ionian Greeks became heirs through them to a tradition of scribal literacy stretching back to the third millennium B.C. (Isserlin 1982.794, cf. Jeffrey 1982). I was struck by the fact that although Jensen appears to endorse Havelock's general scheme of the development of literacy in Greece (Jensen 1980.124), she seems to ignore the implications of his term "craft-literacy" for the period "c. 700-550" when she opts for the impossibility of a dictated text in Homer's lifetime. The reliance of so many of these scholars on what remains on stone or metal for assessing the possibilities of perishable papyrus strikes me as odd. Alan Johnson notes that the evidence from far off Pithecusai "shows this adoption [of Phoenician signs] took place perhaps a generation before the first surviving graffito of c. 740" (1983.66). On Homer he concludes: "There is evidence that the text of the Homeric epics was largely fossilized by c. 700, and I see no overwhelming reason why they should not have been set down in writing by then" (1983.67).

35. Jensen does acknowledge, in passing, "Homeric epic is a product of Ionian culture" (1980.103), but that fact seems not to enter into her main arguments. To his credit, this is not the case with Kirk who declares, "The poems are in a real sense Ionian poems, even though many of their materials had come down in a tradition which first developed, probably, on the mainland" (1964.28, cf. 1962.271-74). At the same time he does go on to reject the idea that Ionian festivals in the eighth century were a sufficient cause for either the monumentality or the dictation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (1962.276-77).

36. Seaford's allusion to the pan-Ionian recitations on the "tiny island of Delos" (1994.152) seems designed to minimize the significance of a location which through the Roman period repeatedly demonstrated its centrality in the Aegean world. His acknowledgment in the same context that Peisistratus may well have felt himself in competition with these Delian festivals can easily be applied as a further argument that fixed texts of the poems under the aegis of the Homeridae were already a fundamental element in the prestige of these festivals. On early Ionia see Roebuck 1955, Huxley 1966, and Emlyn-Jones 1980.

37. See Jensen's impressive note listing all the adherents of a date for the *Iliad* of about 700 B.C. (1980.184 n. 168).

38. As has often been pointed out (e.g., White 1959.281), the appropriateness of the term revolution has nothing to do with the time-frame of the change (cf. the Neolithic "revolution"), but with the qualitative character of the change. What has been hotly contested are the implications of any "evolutionary" approaches to archaeology and anthropology. The evolutionary approach, bitterly repudiated in the 1940s, celebrated in the 1950s (Sahlins and Service 1960, see especially the foreword by Leslie White), came under strong attack from the French in the 60s, especially Lévi-Strauss (e.g., 1967a.3, 279). Maisels cites without demur a declaration that "in France 'anti-evolutionist feeling has been intense for most of this century'" (1990.7) and offers in his Introduction (esp. 6-15) a fairly recent overview of the controversy, arguing that "an acceptable evolutionism (and some such is indispensable) is descriptive rather than prescriptive" (Maisels 1990.8). What is often at stake, as Lévi-Strauss noted (1967a.chapter 1), is a tension between studying what structural factors seem most relevant to the functioning of an actual society at a given moment in time and positing criteria of significant change which are not simply reflections of the observer's own time warp. The fact that we are concerned here with understanding how certain changes took place and what precisely those changes were inevitably makes evolutionary perspectives of more interest.

39. I use Childe not only because of its canonical status, but also because of his relative straightfowardness and comprehensiveness compared with later, more nuanced, attempts to define civilization. Renfrew, for example, after noting "there will be almost as many definitions of civilization as there are archaeologists making them" (1972.3), first cites as decisive criteria "craft specialization and social stratification" (1972.4). Noting that for Childe and others the city was the essential feature, he declares that "while the densely populated city is the most obvious symptom of civilization, it is not an essential component. On the other hand, probably no civilization lacks the monumental public buildings. . . . The presence of *writing* is another key feature" (1972.5). "The presence of a *state religion* has often been stressed, but this again is hardly a satisfactory universal criterion" (1972.7). While endorsing the value of a "polythetic" approach--i.e., looking for a certain number of features, but not all--Renfrew personally endorses the "practical, operational" value of Kluckhohn's short list of three criteria; the "urban" designation requires two of the following: "(i) towns of upwards of, say, 5,000 inhabitants, (ii) a written language, (iii) monumental ceremonial centres" (1972.7-8). His own less operational definition is summed up as follows: "civilization is the complex artificial environment of man; it is the insulation created by man, an artifact which mediates between himself and the world of nature" (1972.13).

40. Maisels often invokes the term "broad spectrum" economy to designate pre-urban reliance on a combination of hunting, gathering, herding, and some agriculture (e.g., 1990.104). Whatever the specific mix in Greece before the consolidation of the polis, I think it is worth keeping in mind what Jonathan Haas describes as a "central consensus" of a seminar on the evolution of political systems in small-scale sedentary societies: "people in egalitarian societies actively resist trends toward political hierarchy and social inequality. Hierarchy and inequality emerge in spite of such resistance; political centralization and social hierarchies are *imposed* on egalitarian systems" (Upham 1990.xvii, my emphasis). Of course, my assumption that pre-polis, Dark Age Greece was relatively *more* egalitarian than the early polis flies in the face of the assumption by Morris and many others that Greece after the fall of Mycenaean society was an aristocratic society.

41. The word "aristocracy" and, even more, the adjective form "aristocratic" entail ambiguities that are central to the distinctions I am trying to make here. In so far as the terms imply the transmission of power through birth, they may be accurately applied to at least an aspiration or tendency of Dark Age *monarchy.* Thus Snodgrass speaks of "smaller and at times more mobile units, each dominated by an aristocrat and his family" (1971.387). The mischief enters, I think, when this is blurred with the specifically *collective* rule of a small class whose primary claim to domination is inherited excellence, which, in turn, gives a special weight to notions of kinship.

42. Thomas 1993 emphasizes continuities; others (e.g., Desborough 1972 and Snodgrass 1971), the degree of darkness. Striking, I think, is Snodgrass' dismissal of the specifically "urban" attributes of Mycenaean culture: "Cyclopean walls, palace bureaucracies, built family tombs, large-scale painting and miniature glyptic . . . as exotic and essentially intrusive features, transplanted to the soil of Greece and never to become deeply rooted there" (1971.385). The relatively rich finds in tenth-century Lefkandi in Euboea (Popham et al. 1982) seem to require some reassessment of poverty and isolation in Dark Age Greece at least in Euboea; but as far as I know, no one seriously disputes the radical changes of the second half of the eighth century.

43. This is not to say that Snodgrass' figures (1980.19-25) are undisputed. Morris suggests that changes in who is included in the official burial group, as opposed to those whose remains might be disposed of in ways that leave no archaeological trace, could equally explain the dramatic increase in buried population (1987.23, cf. 1991.28). But Morris does, in connection with the other dramatic evidence for an increase in population--colonization and the sheer increase in occupied territory--acknowledge that "the eighth-century increase is most impressive" (1987.158). Increase in population is not, however, in itself a sufficient or "natural" cause of the rise of the polis. Maisels is particularly compelling in his insistence that population increase itself requires analysis and must be seen in conjunction with other factors in the face of considerable evidence that pre-urban societies have effective means of controlling their population (1990.25-31).

44. Though class differences reflected in burials seem to be Morris' chief grounds for positing an "aristocracy" throughout the Dark Age (1987.140-55 and passim), Hägg's study of Argive burials leads him to the following conclusion: "the homogeneous society of Protogeometric times had developed by the end of the eighth century into a differentiated society with at least two distinct classes" (1983.31). But, in the absence of written evidence, it seems to me quite possible that the aristocrats in one area

may have felt free to display their wealth in burials while in another they may have felt the need to consolidate their power by "investing" in more communal religious expressions.

45. I must acknowledge that in the same text Starr dubs my own analysis of class conflict in the *Odyssey* "anachronistic, to say the least" (1986.26). But on page 44 he takes a more charitable view of my argument without citing my work by name: "the marks of conflict (i.e., between rich and poor, powerful and powerless) can be traced in Greece back to Hesiod and perhaps even, as recently argued, in the *Odyssey.*"

46. Sale makes the interesting observation that there are roughly 35 similes focused on the world of the herdsman and over twenty that pertain to agrarian farming (1994.95). One might read this disparity either as a mark of the actual distribution of these economic activities or as a sign of a bias for the past even in the formal device that purports to reflect the present (see note 7 above).

47. The problems and lacunae of Drews' study of this term (1983) are well laid out in reviews by Donlan 1984 and Cartledge 1983.

48. In this connection I find Marx' early generalizations in the *German Ideology* about class struggle quite suggestive: "Out of this very contradiction between the particular and the common interests, the common interest assumes an independent form as the *state*, which is divorced from the real individual and collective interests, and at the same time as an illusory community, always based, however, on the real ties existing in every family conglomeration and tribal conglomeration. . . . It follows that every class which is aiming at domination . . . must first conquer political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest" (Marx and Engels 1975.5.46-47). It is this very fraud perpetrated by the ruling element which then determines the form of subsequent struggle by the underclass to compel the state to represent the *real* common interest. This is the way I would interpret the rift that soon opens between the "polis" in the sense of the *demos* and the aristocracy as a whole (i.e., their "*oikoi*").

49. This, of course, is not to suggest that there were no significant differences between the Lycurgan order in Sparta and the political regime of early Attica, but to emphasize that what little we know suggests broadly similar domination by an elite of birth. The Bacchiadae of Corinth would be a further example. I find it symptomatic of the muting of the aristocratic character of the early polis that Morris has only two passing references to the Eupatridae (1987.94 and 206), both downplaying their importance, while Seaford refers to them only once in a note, where he speaks only of "the Eupatrid exegetes, whose concerns included murder purifications" (1994.82 n. 28). The scope of Scully's inquiry perhaps explains the absence of the Eupatridae from his index. Sale (1994.91-93) reviews other evidence for Archaic aristocratic councils, but nowhere seems to draw the inference that if the aristocracy actually ran the early polis they are likely to have created it.

50. As Cartledge puts it: "A process of secularization, or more precisely politicization, can be detected as the Greek world became organized into city-states (*poleis*) and these states gradually developed urban centres increasingly divorced from their rural hinterland. Indeed, the very act of fixing a day of the month for a festival represented a move away from the natural, peasant basis of its original celebration" (1985.102). Of course the invention of specific calendars is part of the emergence of the specialized "sciences" necessary to the exercise of control characteristic of the emergence of "civilization" in the ancient Near East (White 1959.362-64).

51. Cf. Morgan 1990.6, following Snodgrass 1980: "it is equally likely (as he [Snodgrass] himself acknowledges) that the conspicuous consumption evident in a variety of contexts at this time [sc. the latter half of the eighth century B.C.] was made possible by the generation of even greater resources. This may have been a result of the increasingly exploitative relations between the elite and lower social orders which culminated in the problems of debt addressed by Solon."

52. Accordingly, readers who are interested a fuller "reading" of the poem's ideological dimension should read my chapter on the *Iliad* (Rose 1992.43-91).

53. Here, of course, I am in a sense drawing the opposite conclusions from those drawn by Donlan 1979 (esp. 65-66). But for all his aspersions cast on "purely literary interpretations" (69 n. 13), I think he reads the outcome of the plot as the message of the plot, whereas I read the epic as a whole as a tragedy in which the emotional, and therefore the ideologically most persuasive, weight of the poem

favors "standing based on ability" over "established social position." On the other hand, his pervasive, nuanced emphasis on the fragility of both positions saves his article from a univocal reading of the poem.

[54]. Here I prefer the older translation used in the Tucker anthology (1978.54) for this famous passage from the introduction to Marx' "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," written in 1843 when Marx was 25 years old.

[55]. Burkert, for example, notes: "That quasi-ironical mirroring of human and divine levels so evident in the *Iliad* is entirely missing from the *Odyssey*, and in its place a moralizing piety comes to the fore" (1985.122). Kullmann focuses along lines similar to mine on the *tragic* implications of the relations between gods and humans, but only tantalizingly glances at the class implications: "The society of the gods is certainly some sort of projection of the aristocracy of the poet's own time and their ideas. This is, however, not the case as far as this special form of divine intervention prevalent in the *Iliad* is concerned" (1985.15). Even closer to my approach is his comment apropos heroic immortality: "This idea seems to be much more in accordance with common aristocratic feeling than the extreme, tragic view of the *Iliad*" (Kullmann 1985.16).

[56]. Richardson (1985, esp. 54-59) lays out the range of alternatives to the absoluteness of death current at the time of Homer, knowledge of which is evinced in the text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey.*

[57]. Seaford's entire reading of the ending of the *Iliad* (1994, esp. 172-77) insists upon divine intervention in ordering the return of Hector's body: e.g., "this divine concern *produces* a reconciliation with Priam" (172, my emphasis). Here, as throughout his reading of the *Iliad,* I cannot help feeling that he consistently endows gods and various epiphenomenal forms like ritual and traditional reciprocity with *causal* force in a text where the force of historically shaped human character-types is primary. Thus, for example, in this scene Seaford has to acknowledge immediately what Lesky long ago laid out as the double motivation in Homer: "At one level the change is demanded by the gods. And yet it is entirely coherent in merely human terms" (1961.173). Moreover, all that is most moving in the scene is not "caused" by the intervention of Zeus, but by the interplay of carefully elaborated characters, for neither of whom is there the slightest hope of being "saved" by the gods in any meaningful way from what even Seaford calls, in the case of Achilles, "his death-like sorrow" (Lesky 1961.175).

[58]. Beyond his own recognition of the nightmare for humans, he offers abundant evidence for a profoundly pessimistic conception of the relation of gods to mortals, e.g., Griffin 1980.182-89.

[59]. That there were *aspects* of the *Iliad* that might give comfort to the Peisistratids--given in particular the relative freedom of audiences to pick and choose meanings (cf. Heiden 1991)--I would not dispute. But the attempts of Jensen and Seaford to read the Homeric poems as significantly shaped to please these rulers seem to me to entail major problems. Not the least of these in the case of the *Iliad* is the massive challenge to constituted authority mounted by the major hero of the poem. If, as I have tried to show, Achilles' ideological profile points towards a meritocracy dominated by the truly best in the field, there would be small comfort for someone trying to establish an inherited monarchy in the *Iliad*'s picture of Agamemnon's arbitrariness and incompetence.

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