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ART, BELIEFS, AND VALUES IN THE LATER BOOKS OF THE *ILIAD*

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IN HIS preface to *The Story of the "Iliad,"*¹ Professor E. T. Owen says,² "With the Homeric controversy, then, this book has nothing to do. No-one denies that the *Iliad* we possess, in whatever circumstances and from whatever sources it was put together, was designed to be taken as a single poem, as a continuous story. It is this poem only that I am talking about, not its history nor its authorship, but itself, and with a view, not to establishing, but to accounting for, its artistic integrity." Professor Owen, as has been widely recognized, made a notable contribution to demonstrating that³ "where many of the searchers for the 'original' poem run off the rails aesthetically is in assuming that by showing that a passage is unnecessary to the intelligibility of the story they have shown that it is not necessary in the poem" and that "to say it is not necessary to the intelligibility of the story is not the same as saying it is not necessary artistically." Other scholars⁴

have studied narrative and other devices found in the *Iliad*—and *Odyssey*—which are characteristically associated with oral composition: we know nowadays a great deal more about, and pay more attention to, the nature of the *Iliad* as a poem than was once the case.

In this paper I wish to adopt a stance similar to that of Professor Owen and, while raising none of the traditional questions related to the composition or assembly of the Homeric poems (a number of which, in my own opinion, Milman Parry demonstrated to be in principle incapable of being answered), to entertain simply the hypothesis that passages which appear at a particular point in the exposition of our *Iliad* were placed there for some reason which appeared good to the person who placed them there; and I shall endeavor, with reference to a number of passages which seem to me to be linked and to be of importance to the story, to suggest what that reason may have been in

1. E. T. Owen, *The Story of the "Iliad" as told in the "Iliad"* (Toronto, 1946).

2. P. vii.

3. P. 201.

4. See, for example, W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin, 1933); J. I. Armstrong, "The Arming Motif in the *Iliad*," *AJP*, LXXIX (1958), 337–54; *idem*, "The Marriage Song—*Odyssey* 23," *TAPA*, LXXXIX (1958), 38–43; A. A. Berman, "The Transmigrations of Form: Recurrent Patterns of Imagination in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*," *HSCP*, LXV (1961), 348–51; S. S. Bertmann, "A Study of Analogy and Contrast as Elements of Symmetrical Design in the Structure of the *Odyssey*" (Diss. Columbia, 1965); C. R. Beye, "The Catalogue as a Device of Composi-

tion in the *Iliad*," *HSCP*, LXV (1961), 351–53; J. B. Hainsworth, "The Criticism of an Oral Homer," *JHS*, XC (1970), 90–98; J. A. Notopoulos, "Parataxis in Homer: A New Approach to Homeric Literary Criticism," *TAPA*, LXXX (1949), 1–23; *idem*, "Continuity and Interconnexion in Homeric Oral Composition," *TAPA*, LXXXII (1951), 81–101; M. N. Nagler, "Formula and Motif in the Homeric Epics: Prolegomena to an Aesthetics of Oral Poetry" (Diss. University of California Berkeley, 1966); H. Patzer, *Dichterische Kunst und poetische Handwerk im homerischen Epos* (Frankfurt, 1972); W. J. Verdenius, "L'association des idées comme principe de composition dans Homère, Hésiode, Théognis," *REG*, LXXII (1960), 345–61.

their case. In so doing I shall advance and attempt to justify the claim that some aesthetic judgments of passages in the *Iliad*—and, I would argue, of other Greek works of literature too—have in the past been inappropriately blinkered by the presuppositions of our own culture. Scholars have assumed that what seems irrelevant or unimportant to us must have at all times appeared irrelevant or unimportant, and therefore aesthetically crass and offensive: an assumption which it is dangerous to make about a work composed in a society so remote from us in space and time as that in which the Homeric poems were composed. In their edition of the *Iliad* Leaf and Bayfield were making just such an assumption when they wrote:⁵ “For some reason which we do not know, the poet of this part has wished to interweave into the *Iliad* legends which were evidently current in his time about the sway in the Troad of some descendants of the family of Aineias. To this end he has subordinated all considerations of literary appropriateness.” That is to say, literary appropriateness is literary appropriateness at all times and the world over; the poet of the “original *Iliad*” must have known this; he was a genius: therefore we may reject as not his handiwork all parts of the poem which do not appear to us to be appropriate in terms of our aesthetic. Leaf and Bayfield’s comment refers to *Iliad* 20, more especially to 156–352. On this passage Monro takes a similar view,⁶ though he recognizes the artistic contribution of Books 20 and 21 in general. The reason why Achilles⁷ is “drawn away into a slaughter of Trojan rank and file, with incidents that occupy two books” is that “the poet has to fill his canvas. The death of Hector must not stand by itself in the

picture, but form the climax of the last and greatest days of the battle.” Owen⁸ agrees with Monro’s general account, but attempts to rebut his criticism of the fight between Achilles and Aeneas. He concedes,⁹ “But after this thunderous introduction the tone changes. It flattens down to the slow-moving, comparatively spiritless account of Achilles’ meeting with Aeneas. The faults of this incident are plain to see. It is in itself one of the least effective fights in the *Iliad*, and it stands out particularly glaringly here because the action has been moving at such high tension. Also, a futile fight would seem to be exactly the thing *not* to give Achilles at this time; it seems to slow him up, to blunt the keen edge of his wrath, and so to blunt the keenness of our expectations. If legend forbade Achilles to kill Aeneas, why make him meet Aeneas at all?”

Owen in fact offers a subtle and sensitive analysis of the reasons, as he sees them, linking Achilles’ fight here with Diomedes’ fight in *Iliad* 5; but he has this to say of 213–241:¹⁰ “Aeneas’s extended sketch of his ancestry . . . should not surprise us by its apparent ineptitude at such a moment: we have had this sort of thing before; it is indeed a duller version of Glaucus’s address to Diomedes in Book VI. Such speeches before a fight are a literary development of the taunts which apparently were really uttered in this kind of fighting. And though it may seem to us surprising that the relation of Aeneas’s ancestry should have been regarded as interesting either by the poet or by his audience, it is a fact that early story everywhere shows that there was a deep interest in genealogies.”

This judgment is not fettered by the presuppositions of our own culture: Owen

5. W. Leaf and M. A. Bayfield (eds.), *The “Iliad” of Homer*, II (London, 1898), 482.

6. D. B. Monro (ed.), *“Iliad” XIII–XXIV*^a (Oxford, 1897), 366.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

8. *Op. cit.*, pp. 199 ff.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

acknowledges that different societies have different interests, and that these differences affect aesthetic preferences; but it is rather a negative judgment nevertheless. My first objective in this paper is to demonstrate that this extended sketch of Aeneas' ancestry has great relevance to the most important events of the later books of the *Iliad*, when it is considered in the light of the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the original audience; and that indeed the choice of a hero with Aeneas' particular attributes was necessary. I shall then endeavor to link this passage with other passages in subsequent books, in order to demonstrate the existence of an important theme in the latter part of the *Iliad*.

In the earlier part of Book 20, Apollo urges Aeneas to face Achilles in battle. In the voice of Lycaon, Priam's son, he taunts him (83 ff.), asking him what has become of the *apeilai*¹¹ that he uttered, saying that he would fight against Achilles. Aeneas replies (87 ff.) that he is unwilling, since Achilles almost killed him on a previous occasion. Achilles has the help of Athena, so that (97 ff.) "it is not possible for a man to fight against Achilles; for there is always one of the gods with him, warding off destruction from him." Athena prevents Trojan warriors from harming Achilles and at the same time she sees to it that his missiles strike home—as they did, says Aeneas, even without divine help. Nevertheless, if the god made the chances even, Achilles would not win easily.

Apollo replies (104 f.) with a speech which is worth quoting in full:

ἥρωες, ἀλλ' ἄγε καὶ σὺ θεοῖς αἰεγενέτησιν
εὖχεο· καὶ δὲ σέ φασι Διὸς κούρης Ἀφροδίτης

11. For *apeilai*, see my "Threatening, Abusing and Feeling Angry in the Homeric Poems," *JHS*, LXXXIX (1969), 10 ff.

12. For *euchesthai*, see my "εὔχομαι, εὐχολή and εὐχος in Homer," *CQ*, N.S. XIX (1969), 20–33.

13. "Men say" does not cast doubt on Aeneas' parentage: what men say is the only means by which the truth may be

ἐκγεγάμεν, κείνος δὲ χερείονος ἐκ θεοῦ ἔστω·
ἡ μὲν γὰρ Διὸς ἔσθ', ἡ δ' ἔξ ἀλίου γέροντος.
ἀλλ' ἰθὺς φέρε χαλκὸν ἀτειρέα, μηδὲ σε πάμπαν
λευγαλέοις ἐπέεσσιν ἀποτρεπέτω καὶ ἄρειῃ."

Aeneas should "pray" (*euchesthai*)¹² to the gods himself. Men say¹³ that he is the son of Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, while Achilles is the son of an inferior deity:¹⁴ Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus, Thetis the daughter of the old man of the sea. So let Aeneas fight boldly against Achilles.

Apollo then breathes might into Aeneas (110 ff.); and now Hera becomes alarmed, and urges Poseidon and Athena either that they should go down and drive Apollo away, or that one of them should stand in a similar manner by Achilles, and give him strength (121 ff.),

ᾧ μὲν δέ τι θυμῷ
δευέσθω, ἴνα εἰδῇ ὁ μιν φιλέουσιν ἄριστοι
ἀθανάτων, οἳ δ' αὖτ' ἀνεμῶλοι οἱ τὸ πάρος περ
Τρωσὶν ἀμύνουσιν πόλεμον καὶ δῆϊότητα."

They should see to it that Achilles realizes that the most *agathoi* of the gods *philein*¹⁵ him, whereas the gods who support the Trojans are worthless by comparison. If the gods themselves do not send Achilles a message, he may be terrified if he comes face to face with Apollo or any god who meets him in a hostile manner.

Poseidon in reply recommends that they should not interfere in the battle unless Ares or Apollo begins the fight, or attempts to restrain Achilles; and both groups of deities retire to hills and watch the fighting. Nevertheless, two points have been made: Aeneas' divine parentage is better than that of Achilles, and Achilles is supported—or Hera asserts that he is—by stronger deities.

transmitted in a non-literate society. See my "Truth, *Kosmos* and *Arete* in the Homeric Poems," *CQ*, N.S. XXII (1972), 5–18.

14. To be the child of a deity gives one an advantage in prayer. See "εὔχομαι" (n. 12), p. 23.

15. For *philein*, see my "'Friendship' and 'Self-Sufficiency' in Homer and Aristotle," *CQ*, N.S. XIII (1963), 30 ff.

How does the modern reader respond to this? Probably hardly at all: like the editors of the *Iliad*, he sees little point in the lines. Yet Homer has not finished with the subject: he returns to it even in Book 20.

Achilles now taunts Aeneas, who has advanced to meet him. He recalls the previous occasion when Aeneas fled, and says that, though Zeus and other gods protected Aeneas then, Zeus will not help him now. Aeneas, emboldened, scorns Achilles' attempt to terrify him with mere words as if he were a child, and adds that each knows the other's genealogy, though they have never met before (206 ff.): Achilles is the son of "blameless" Peleus and Thetis, whereas he is the son of Anchises and Aphrodite. The mind returns to Apollo's heartening words: Aeneas is claiming to be sprung from a more powerful deity than is Achilles. But Aeneas now enumerates his *paternal* genealogy too, which also derives from Zeus, though at a much greater distance: Zeus–Dardanus–Erichthonius–Tros–Assaracus–Capys–Anchises–Aeneas.¹⁶ Aeneas then says (241 ff.),

“ταύτης τοι γενεῆς τε καὶ αἵματος εὐχομαι εἶναι.
Ζεὺς δ' ἀρετὴν ἄνδρεσσιν ὀφέλλει τε μινύθει τε,
ὅπως κεν ἐθέλῃσιν· ὁ γὰρ κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.”

He has, at least implicitly, reiterated the claim, expressed by Apollo earlier, that he is of better descent than Achilles; but he immediately adds that Zeus can increase and diminish *arete* (and hence grant victory and defeat) as he chooses. He does not assume that superior lineage will guarantee victory.

Achilles and Aeneas now fight (259 ff.). Aeneas hits Achilles' shield with a spear, and Achilles is afraid. “Fool that he was,”

says Homer, since Achilles' armor was made by a god. Achilles then hits Aeneas' shield (273 ff.), with much more success; and as Achilles rushes forward, drawing his sword, Aeneas picks up a rock with which to repel him. Aeneas would have been killed, we are told, had Poseidon not noticed. He proposes that the three (Hera, Athena, and himself) should save Aeneas.¹⁷ Hera and Athena refuse to help Poseidon, but make no attempt to prevent him. Accordingly, Poseidon pours mist over Achilles' eyes, and enables Aeneas to make a great leap, saying to him (332 ff.):

“Αἰνεία, τίς σ' ὦδε θεῶν ἀτέοντα κελεύει
ἀντία Πηλεΐωνος ὑπερθύμοιο μάχεσθαι,
ὃς σεῦ ἅμα κρείσσων καὶ φίλτερος ἀθανάτοισιν;
ἀλλ' ἀναχωρῆσαι, ὅτε κεν συμβλήσῃαι αὐτῷ,
μὴ καὶ ὑπὲρ μοῖραν δόμον Ἄϊδος εἰσαφίκηαι.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κ' Ἀχιλεὺς θάνατον καὶ πότμον ἐπίσῃ
θαρσύνῃσας δὴ ἔπειτα μετὰ πρῶτοις μάχεσθαι·
οὐ μὲν γάρ τίς σ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν ἐξεναρίξει.”

“Achilles is stronger and more *philos* to the gods. Retreat, lest you be killed, though it is not your *moira* to be killed (ὑπὲρ μοῖραν).¹⁸ But when Achilles is dead, fight in the forefront: no other Greek will kill you.”

Poseidon then dispels the cloud about Achilles, who sees that Aeneas has escaped and concludes (347 f.), “ἦ ῥα καὶ Αἰνείας φίλος ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν / ἦεν· ἀτὰρ μιν ἔφην μὰψι αὐτῶς εὐχετάσθαι.” Aeneas turns out to have been *philos* to the immortal gods, for they are prepared to *philein* him.¹⁹ (He is not, however, it seems, so *philos* to them as Achilles, despite his superior lineage: a question which will become relevant again later.)

Achilles now perforce, Aeneas having escaped, attacks other Trojans. Hector makes a brief appearance (366 ff.), and

16. The account indicates that Anchises and Priam have a common great-grandfather (Tros), so that the words may in part be a reply to Achilles' disparaging words (181 ff.); but Aeneas does not emphasize this point. His primary concern is to demonstrate his descent from Zeus.

17. For the relationship of Poseidon's reasons to Greek

beliefs concerning the motives of their deities, see my “Homeric Gods and the Values of Homeric Society,” *JHS*, XCII (1972), *passim*.

18. One may be killed ὑπὲρ μοῖραν. See my *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 17 ff. (henceforth MR).

19. For this, see “Homeric Gods” (n. 17), pp. 11 ff.

utters threatening words, but retreats on Apollo's advice. Later, however (419 ff.), when Achilles has killed his brother Polydorus, Hector advances boldly, in reply to Achilles' threats speaks three lines (431–33) already used by Aeneas (200–202), and continues:

"οἶδα δ' ὅτι σὺ μὲν ἐσθλός, ἐγὼ δὲ σέθεν πολὺ χείρων.
ἀλλ' ἥτοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κείται,
αἱ κέ σε χειρότερός περ ἔων ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἔλωμαι
δοῦρὶ βαλὼν, ἐπεὶ ἦ καὶ ἐμὸν βέλος ὄξυ πάροιθεν"

[434–37].

Achilles is more *agathos* than he, Hector, is. The word reminds us that Achilles is the better fighter; but to be *agathos* is also to be of good birth, to be more *agathos* to be of better birth. The claims of birth have a conspicuous role to play later in the poem where the status of Hector and Achilles is concerned; and there may well be allusion to them here.

Hector then hurls a spear at Achilles (438); but Athena blows it back, and it lies at Hector's feet. His spear may have a sharp point, as he has just said (437); but if the gods prevent it from reaching its target, it is useless. Achilles attacks, but Apollo hides Hector in a mist. At this Achilles is angry, and says (449 ff.),

"ἔξ αὖ νῦν ἔφυγες θάνατον, κύον· ἦ τέ τοι ἄγχι
ἦλθε κακόν· νῦν αὐτὲ σ' ἐρύσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,
ὃ μέλλεις εὐχεσθαι ἰὼν ἐς δοῦπον ἀκόντων.
ἦ θήν σ' ἐξανύω γε καὶ ὕστερον ἀντιβολήσας,
εἰ ποῦ τις καὶ ἔμοιγε θεῶν ἐπιτάρροβός ἐστι."

Phoebus Apollo has saved Hector this time: no doubt Hector "prays" (*euchesthai*) to him before battle. But Achilles will kill Hector on a later occasion, if there is a god who is on *his* side. For the moment, Achilles attacks other Trojans.

Leaf and Bayfield, as we have seen, hold that the first part of this book (which they in fact divide into two, 1–74 and 75–352) is marked by "literary inappropriateness"; but from 353 onward is, they claim, part of the original "wrath-poem." Monro

values the first part of the book rather more highly, regarding it as a means whereby the poet fills his canvas, building up to the climax of the fight between Achilles and Hector. (He holds that "the remainder of this book, at least from 381, satisfies every requirement of epic art.") Owen, despite his defense of the book, can speak of the "spiritless" meeting between Achilles and Aeneas, "a futile fight," and inquire why Aeneas should be portrayed as meeting Achilles if legend forbade Achilles to kill him. Aeneas' excursus on his ancestry, possessed as it is of "apparent ineptitude at such a moment," he can explain only as a result of "a deep interest in genealogies."

It is not my purpose here to defend the author of these lines on the ground on which he has been attacked, to attempt to show that the fight is not really spiritless at all; I wish to argue that the book has a different, and very powerful, interest, for anyone holding early Greek values and beliefs, and that there are certain motifs and ideas which bind the narrative together, and also link it with later books. (I should add that it is not my purpose to construct a traditional "unitarian" argument on this basis: I am considering the poem here as a finished product.)

There is, I believe, an important reason why Achilles must meet Aeneas, or someone with lineage similar to that of Aeneas, even if legend forbade Achilles to kill him; and the reason lies in the lines quoted above, which raise the question whether Aeneas can possibly defeat Achilles, when Athena is both preventing anyone from hitting Achilles and insuring that Achilles' missiles strike home. Anyone who reads *Iliad* 20 reads these lines; but we find difficulty in appreciating their force in a society which actually believed in the gods concerned, and was accustomed to fighting battles hand-to-hand in not dissimilar

circumstances; for such lines are likely to affect us in the same way as do passages like the following:²⁰

The Fairy had provided King Giglio with a suit of armour, which was not only embroidered all over with jewels, and blinding to your eyes to look at, but was waterproof, gun-proof and sword-proof, so that in the midst of the very hottest battles His Majesty rode about as calmly as if he had been a British Grenadier at Alma. Were I engaged in fighting for my country, I should like such a suit of armour as Prince Giglio wore, but, you know, he was a Prince of a fairy tale, and they always have these wonderful things . . .

Giglio meets and pursues the usurper Padella, catches him, and compels him to turn and fight.

When he was fairly brought to bay, Padella turned and dealt Prince Giglio a prodigious crack over the scone with his battle-axe, a most enormous weapon, which had cut down I don't know how many regiments in the course of the afternoon. But Law bless you! though the blow fell right down upon His Majesty's helmet, it made no more impression than if Padella had struck him with a pat of butter: his battle-axe crumpled up in Padella's hand, and the royal Giglio laughed for very scorn at the impotent efforts of that atrocious usurper.

At the ill success of his blow the Crim Tartar monarch was justly irritated. "If," says he to Giglio, "you ride a fairy horse, and wear fairy armour, what on earth is the use of my hitting you? I may as well give myself up at once. Your Majesty won't, I suppose, be so mean as to strike a poor fellow who can't strike again."

The justice of Padella's remark struck the magnanimous Giglio. "Do you yield yourself a prisoner, Padella?" says he.

"Of course I do," says Padella.

A frivolous work; but I have quoted it to illustrate a point. We all know just how we are intended to read this passage. We do not believe in fairies, nor in the possibility of magic armor; and we know that Thackeray and his readers did not believe

in them either. The danger is that we shall read our Homer in a similar mood. We do not believe in Zeus, Hera, Apollo, and the rest, and we may carelessly suppose that no one else believed in them either. But Homeric men—both the characters in the poems and the Greeks of the bards' day and later—did believe in the existence of such gods as these, and in their intervention in time both of war and of peace. When they were fighting in battle and everything went wrong, while everything that the enemy attempted prospered, they were wont to ascribe the situation to the intervention of deity, and they ascribed to their deities a motivation based on *arete*, *time*, social status, and blood relationship,²¹ analogous to the motivation of the human *agathos* vis-à-vis his fellow men. They did not find the behavior of such deities incredible, unworthy, shocking, or amusing: they had no other standard of divine behavior with which to compare it. In real life too, Greek gods were respecters of persons; and in real life too there were those who traced their lineage from a deity.²² Furthermore, Greek gods demanded sacrifice, and were believed to favor most those who were able to offer the most expensive sacrifices.²³ Accordingly, in a real-life situation a Greek might well be concerned to know what could be expected to happen if he fought against a man with a god in his ancestry, a man whose *arete* in any aspect of that complex notion was superior to his own, or a man who had sacrificed to the gods more copiously than he himself could hope to do. For the Greek of the archaic period—and later—the question was not academic, and it did not belong to the realms of fairy tale: he would not have overlooked the passages I

20. W. M. Thackeray, *The Rose and the Ring: The History of Prince Giglio and Prince Bulbo*, chap. xvii.

21. See "Homeric Gods" (n. 17), *passim*.

22. E.g., the Spartan kings, and many aristocratic families, such as the Eteobutadae at Athens. For the manner in which

different classes in society are mythologically allotted different origins, see my *From the Many to the One* (London, 1970), pp. 53 ff.

23. See, for example, *MR*, pp. 134 ff.

have discussed above, and they would not have appeared irrelevant to him.

To return to the subject matter of the poem: in *Iliad* 22 we are to have, and the audience knows that we are to have, the climactic action of the whole sequence, the combat between Achilles, son of a goddess, and Hector, whose immediate parentage is human. In these circumstances, is there any hope for Hector? The question is important to the Greek of this period; and, I suggest, in Book 20 the matter is discussed on a number of occasions, and a number of answers are suggested. (The definitive answer of the poem is offered in *Iliad* 24, as I shall argue below.) If I am correct, Book 20 offers not merely "preliminary bouts" to fill the poet's canvas and help to raise the tension: it also offers discussions of a real problem of belief and values.

Let me recapitulate, and comment on, the discussions that have occurred. The position is evaluated first by Aeneas (97 ff.): Achilles has the help of a goddess, Athena, and so can defeat Aeneas, who has not (and Achilles is a powerful and effective warrior even unaided). Apollo replies that Aeneas too is the son of a goddess, and that Achilles' mother is a goddess inferior to Aeneas' mother, since Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus, whereas Thetis is merely the daughter of the old man of the sea.

The consolation and encouragement have a different basis from the basis of Aeneas' complaint. Aeneas believed that he could not defeat Achilles because Athena was actually present on the battlefield helping him. Apollo does not reply that Aeneas can summon his mother to defeat Athena, a reply that would of course be most implausible: Homeric man has a low opinion of Aphrodite as a warrior²⁴ (and it is also difficult to imagine

Thetis in this role). Apollo is claiming that Aeneas is descended from the major divine aristocracy, while Achilles is sprung from the minor. I have discussed the values of such judgments elsewhere:²⁵ the implication in this passage is presumably that Aeneas, a socially superior descendant of deity, may reasonably hope that more powerful deities will interest themselves in his affairs. I repeat that I make no suggestion that this is a dogma: there are no dogmas in this area of Greek belief. It is one of several possible evaluations offered by characters in this book.

At 121 ff., Hera becomes anxious for Achilles' safety, and insists that Poseidon, Athena, and herself should make it clear to him that the most *agathoi* (a word which commends both status and power) of the gods are on his side. This is not formally a rejoinder to Apollo's words, since Hera did not hear them; but the audience of the poem is aware of both, and can take the point.

Aeneas has heard only the words of Apollo / Lycaon, and has been heartened by them: when he proclaims his genealogy (206 ff.), he should, on the basis of the argument of 104 ff., have the advantage. But being a mortal, with no knowledge of what the gods in fact intend, he piously and prudently ascribes control of the eventual result to Zeus.

The question thus far remains open; but possibilities have been discussed. At 332 ff. Poseidon's statement that Achilles is *κρείττων* than Aeneas and *φίλτερος* to the gods requires comment. *κρείττων* serves as a comparative of *agathos*, which commends both prowess and high birth. Here prowess must be in the forefront of the mind: despite the fact that Aeneas is of better birth, Achilles is more "dear," to the gods.²⁶ Yet, even if Achilles is

24. See *Il.* 5. 311.

25. See "Homeric Gods" (n. 17), pp. 11 ff.

26. As will appear, were it Aeneas' *moira* to be killed now,

no amount of "deariness" should (*not* "could") save him. See p. 250.

"dearer," Aeneas is "dear," and so escapes (347 f.). An analogous evaluation occurs in *Iliad* 24, as we shall see.

When Hector arrives on the scene, he concedes that Achilles is much more *esthlos* than he (and this is true, in respect both of his parentage and of his prowess); but he reflects that the more *kakos* can in fact kill the more *esthlos*, that the gods dispose, and that they may not do so in terms merely of the *arete* of the contestants. He is more sanguine than in *Iliad* 22; and the effect of his entrance here is twofold. Leaf and Bayfield, who believe this passage to be part of the "original *Iliad*," thus evaluate it: "Hektor is brought before us for a moment, in order to rouse our expectation of the final meeting; but that has to be postponed for a while, that it may serve as the climax of Achilles' revenge." This is true;²⁷ but Hector's words also contribute to the discussion of the attitude of the gods to human combatants of different status, as does Achilles' speech at 449 ff.—a discussion that has been sustained throughout the book. Whoever originally composed the poetry that we now find in *Iliad* 20, for whatever purpose it was originally composed, whether the parts were originally composed separately or together, however the bards developed the parts, or the whole, over a period of time, the book as a whole, I contend, was arranged in this manner (and it is possible that some of the passages were specially composed for the purpose) in order that the argument which is put forward could occur in circumstances which develop naturally from the action. The argument is very important: it concerns matters which affect the most significant events which occur in the remainder of the poem; and, I suggest, Hector is briefly introduced at this point in the narrative not only to whet

the appetite of the audience for the final conflict, but to remind the audience of the relevance to that final conflict of the reflections which have arisen out of the indecisive meeting of Achilles and Aeneas. But only argument has occurred so far: the question is left open, for neither Achilles nor Aeneas has killed the other.

A related theme, relevant to the ultimate treatment of Hector by gods and men, is also stated in this book. At 20. 20 ff. Zeus gives his permission to the other gods to go down to the battlefield lest Achilles sack Troy, though it is not his "share" (*μόρος*) to do so; and at 302 and 336 Poseidon expresses the fear that Achilles may kill Aeneas though it is Aeneas' "share" (*μοῖρα*) to survive the war. I have discussed elsewhere²⁸ the possibility of doing or suffering more than one's share. I mention these passages here in the context of a larger question: we know, and the original audience knew, that Achilles is much stronger than Hector, and that he will soon kill Hector; that he has higher status than Hector in the eyes of the gods, for he is directly descended from a goddess and Hector is not; and that he will treat the corpse of Hector in a cruel and insulting manner. Since he has more status than Hector, and the gods are believed to acknowledge this, it might perhaps appear that he may behave in any manner that is within his power: are there in fact any other restraints on his behavior, and—an allied question—what are the limits of Achilles' power? This question too, I suggest, is debated in the later books of the *Iliad*, and debated in a manner appropriate to an epic poem: the questions arise from violent action and suffering.

We may now turn to Book 21. I forbear to quote the analyses of this book given by editors:²⁹ I shall simply inquire whether

27. And cf. Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

28. See *MR*, pp. 17 ff.

29. For which see, e.g., Leaf and Bayfield, II 500 ff.; Monro, "*Iliad*" XIII–XXIV⁴, pp. 374 ff.

the themes that I have discussed above appear in 21, and whether they have a discernible role to play in the development of the narrative.

The theme of divine parentage is re-introduced in Achilles' second contest in this book, that with Asteropaeus, who proclaims himself to be the grandson of the river Axius; for rivers are gods. Possibly the grandson of a river-god is at least equal in status with the son of a sea nymph. Achilles ignores the claim until he has killed Asteropaeus; but then says (184 ff.):

"κεῖσ' οὕτως· χαλεπὸν τοι ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος
παισὶν ἐρίζεσθαι, ποταμοῖό περ ἐκγεγαῶτα.
φῆσθα σὺ μὲν ποταμοῦ γένος ἔμμεναι εὐρὺ ρέοντος,
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γενεὴν μεγάλου Διὸς εὐχομαι εἶναι.
τίκτε μ' ἄνθρωποι πολλοῖσιν ἀνάσσωσι Μυρμιδόνεσσι
Πηλεὺς Αἰακίδης· ὁ δ' ἄρ' Αἰακὸς ἐκ Διὸς ἦεν.
τῷ κρείσσων μὲν Ζεὺς ποταμῶν ἀλμυρηνέντων,
κρείσσων αὖτε Διὸς γενεῇ ποταμοῖο τέτυκται."

A card is played here that was not played in the encounter between Achilles and Aeneas. Achilles is not merely the son of Thetis, he is the great-grandson of Zeus, and evidently both outranks and is greater in strength than the grandson of a mere river. He might even be held to outrank Aeneas in the male line, for Aeneas' descent from Zeus is much more remote. (That strength as well as rank is in question here is evident from 192 ff.) The suggestion may win little support, since it is generally agreed that we are here groping among the murky dregs of the Homeric poems; but surely the fact that Achilles reserves his ace until now not merely advances the discussion by adducing more relevant data, but is artistically very effective.

But now another adversary appears. The river Scamander is angry with Achilles, who has been clogging his streams with the corpses of dead Trojans. He attacks Achilles and pursues him over the plain;

and Achilles flees, as flee he must: *θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν* (264). Achilles fears he may be overcome and drowned in a most ignominious death; and though Poseidon and Athena give him courage and strength, and Poseidon assures him that it is not his "lot" to be drowned, he continues to be in great difficulty until Hera tells Hephaestus—another god—to fight with the river.

I suggest that the fight with Asteropaeus and the fight with the river are juxtaposed to define the powers of Achilles. Asteropaeus is the grandson of a river-god, Scamander a river-god himself. The grandson of the Axius can be slain with small difficulty by the great-grandson of Zeus, but the great-grandson of Zeus is much weaker than a mere river-god: *θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροί εἰσιν*. The status and prowess of Achilles are established with relation to both gods and men; and this is relevant to the treatment of Achilles and Hector in the remainder of the poem.

There now ensues the fight among the gods (385–513). Few commentators can find anything favorable to say of it. Owen (pp. 212 f.) speaks of it as "the grotesque foolery, the laughter of the battle of the gods," and adds, "No doubt this is rather crude and clownish sort of fun, and seems to us readers out of keeping with the terrible seriousness of the event which we know is approaching, but no doubt also it was heartily appreciated by the comparatively naive minds of those listeners for whom it was composed, and excellently served its purpose of giving them the recreation of simple laughter, so that they might re-enter the solemn and darkening scene of human suffering with renewed zest for the pity and terror of it." This is an unusually favorable judgment of the passage;³⁰ and it attempts to evaluate it in terms of the likely response of the original audience: it produces, Owen claims, an

30. Contrast Leaf and Bayfield, II, 500.

effect like that of the porter's scene in *Macbeth*.

To argue thus, however, is to assume that no one could fail to find the Battle of the Gods amusing. The assumption seems to be generally made; but is it self-evidently justified? If the behavior of the gods depicted here falls far below the standard expected by their worshipers in Homeric society, it must certainly have seemed amusing; but there is no evidence of this. The gods have more *arete*, *time*, and strength than human beings; and this, apart from the fact that they do not die, alone distinguishes them from human noblemen.³¹ Human noblemen battle among themselves to further their own plans: why then should not the gods? To be defeated in battle is certainly laughable, mockable, *aischron*, for a human being; and a defeated god will be mocked by another god.³² One might accordingly suppose that the original audience might find amusing and mockable those deities who are worsted here. But to suppose this is not to suppose that the audience found the battle as such amusing. Furthermore, even a weaker deity is much stronger than the strongest human being: a river-god, readily worsted by Hephaestus, would have been too much for Achilles, as we have seen. An audience which believed in these deities could not afford to mock even the weakest of them: even the weakest of them could effectively take their revenge. The audience of Homer is different from the audience of Offenbach.³³

But if this passage is not included as comic relief, and we hold in reserve, as a last resort, the explanation that it is merely inept, we must endeavor to furnish a

rational explanation of its presence here. The narrative leads naturally from Achilles' fight with the river,³⁴ by way of Hephaestus' fight with the river, to the general melee; and we may inquire whether any judgments relevant to our theme are passed.

At 357 ff., as we have seen, the river-god admits his inferiority to Hephaestus in combat, and beseeches Hera to call off her son. This she does (379 f.): “οὐ γὰρ ἔοικεν / ἀθάνατον θεὸν ὧδε βροτῶν ἔνεκα στυφελίζειν.” It is unseemly for one god to fight with another for the sake of mortals. Divine unwillingness to quarrel on mortals' behalf can readily be exemplified elsewhere in Homer:³⁵ gods are reluctant to give themselves trouble *merely* for the sake of mortals, and must be persuaded to do so.³⁶ But when their own status has become involved in the outcome, they will certainly contend with one another, as they do here:³⁷ the gods in general do fight one another with no regard for the proprieties alleged by Hera to exist. And it is certainly not *aischron* for them thus to behave—a much stronger judgment—for it is *aischron* only to be defeated.³⁸

Only one god unbidden adopts the attitude which Hera successfully urges upon Hephaestus; and the identity of that god is, I believe, significant. At 435 ff., Poseidon challenges Apollo to fight, saying,

“Φοῖβε, τίη δὴ νῶϊ διέσταμεν; οὐδὲ ἔοικεν
ἀρξάντων ἑτέρων. τὸ μὲν αἰσχρον, αἱ κ' ἀμαχητὶ
ἴομεν Οὐλύμπόνδε, Διὸς ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ”

[436–38].

It is not seemly—Hera's words—*not* to fight when others have begun. It is more *aischron* to shun a fight: a sentiment not surprising in the mouth of a god of a

31. See “Homeric Gods” (n. 17), pp. 1 ff.

32. As in *Il.* 5. 421 ff. (Athena and Aphrodite).

33. I intend to discuss this question more fully on another occasion. I include here only so much as is necessary to the present theme.

34. As Leaf and Bayfield observe, *Il.* 501.

35. See *Il.* 1. 573 ff.

36. See “ἐρχομαι” (n. 12), pp. 20–33; “Threatening” (n. 11), pp. 12, 20.

37. They must contend in a manner similar to mortal warriors, for in general all but Zeus function as mortal warriors writ large: only Zeus can sit at a distance on a mountain and promote his plans from there.

38. See *MR*, pp. 33 f.

warrior people, and one apparently shared by most of the deities in this battle. But Apollo replies (462 ff.),

"ἐννοσίγαι', οὐκ ἂν με σάοφρονά μιν μῆσαι
ἔμμεναι, εἰ δὲ σοὶ γε βροτῶν ἔνεκα πολεμίζω
δειλῶν, οἳ φύλλοισιν εἰκότες ἄλλοτε μὲν τε
ζαφλεγέες τελέθουσιν, ἀρούρης καρπὸν ἔδοντες,
ἄλλοτε δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἀκήριοι. ἀλλὰ τάχιστα
πανώμεσθα μάχης· οἳ δ' αὐτοὶ δηριάσθων."

Poseidon would not—or rather should not (it was he who challenged Apollo, and Apollo is gently and tactfully rebuking him)—regard Apollo as *saophron* if Apollo fought with him for the sake of wretched mortals. The last four words indicate that Apollo is contrasting his own evaluation with that of the other deities; and the poet explains (469 f.): ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας πάλιν ἐτράπετ'· αἶδετο γάρ ῥα / πατροκασιγνήτοιο μιγήμεναι ἐν παλάμῃσι. Apollo treats his blood relationship to Poseidon as a reason for not fighting with him.

This is characterization of Apollo: Poseidon is equally the uncle of Artemis, and she immediately reviles Apollo as a coward for not fighting him. This characterization, I suggest, was of the utmost importance for the original audience of the poem. Let me repeat that that audience really believed in these deities, that it saw the hand of deity everywhere displayed in daily life; and that it tried to account for the apparent behavior of its deities, friendly or hostile, by ascriptions of motive which it could understand.³⁹

In Book 20 the poet almost created a situation in which two warriors were each actively supported by a deity while they fought, and the lines which occur there must have induced any audience which believed in such deities to wonder what would happen in such a situation, if the gods were equally matched. Could either human being ever defeat the other?

Now just such a situation is developing

in the poem. Athena regularly assists and accompanies Achilles, while Apollo affords the same help to Hector. Apollo and Athena are equally matched, yet we know, and the original audience knew, that Achilles killed Hector. There must be some reason why Apollo did not protect Hector in Book 22 as he protected the Trojans at the end of Book 21; or why he did not enshroud him in a mist, as he did at the end of Book 20. Surely, even if Apollo has to abandon Hector as a result of supernatural *force majeure* of some kind, he will protest bitterly and struggle against necessity there. He does not; we know he does not; and the ancient audience knew that he does not. That he does not is artistically sound, as we shall see. But it needs to be motivated, and I suggest that Apollo's behavior in the Battle of the Gods is intended to motivate it. Unlike most of the other deities, he is unwilling to go to extremes in conflict with them on mortals' behalf. He quietly declines conflict with Poseidon here; and in 22 he quietly withdraws from the scene, without reviling Athena, without a word. His intervention to help the Trojans at the end of Book 21, his revelation to Achilles of what he has done (22. 8 ff.), and Achilles' reply, all remind the audience of Apollo's power when he feels no constraint of this kind. Apollo and Achilles both refer to the difference in power between gods and men: at 22. 8 ff., Apollo says:

"τίπτε με, Πηλέος υἱέ, ποῖον ταχέεσσι διώκεις,
αὐτὸς θνητὸς ἐὼν θεὸν ἄμβροτον; οὐδέ νύ πώ με
ἔγνωσ ὡς θεὸς εἰμι, σὺ δ' ἀσπερχές μενεαίνεις."

Achilles replies (18 ff.):

"νῦν δ' ἐμὲ μὲν μέγα κῦδος ἀφείλεο, τοὺς δὲ σάσας
ῥηϊδίως, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι τίαν γ' ἔδεισας ὀπίσσω.
ἦ σ' ἂν τεισαίμην, εἴ μοι δύναμις γε παρέη."

It is foolish for Achilles to strive against Apollo: Apollo can readily save whom he chooses, for he fears no reprisal afterward.

39. See "Homeric Gods" (n. 17), pp. 1-19.

Achilles would readily make such a reprisal for this injury, if only he could. But he cannot; and the narrative is sweeping on to the combat between Achilles, supported by Athena, and Hector, supported by Apollo. If Athena and Apollo effectively protect Achilles and Hector respectively, how can either hero defeat the other?

Let me now mention briefly the relevant interventions of deity in *Iliad* 22. At 169 ff., Zeus expresses pity for Hector, who was wont to perform abundant sacrifice to him, but is now about to be killed by Achilles. He asks the gods to deliberate whether to save him or "subdue him to Achilles son of Peleus, *esthlos* though Hector is." Athena indignantly replies (178 ff.):

"ὦ πάτερ ἀργικέραυνε, κελαινεφές, οἷον εἶπες·
ἀνδρα θνητὸν εὐντα, πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ,
ἅψ' ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἐξαναλῦσαι;
ἔρδ'. ἀτὰρ οὐ τοι πάντες ἐπανέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι."

Hector is a mortal: it would be shocking to save him when it is his *moira* to die now.

This argument does not concern the relative status of Hector and of Achilles. Athena does not mean that Hector is a mortal while Achilles is something more: the same lines are used earlier in the poem (16. 441–43), when Patroclus, who has no claim to divine parentage, is about to kill Sarpedon, who is a son of Zeus himself. When it is his *moira* to die, a mortal is a mortal, no matter who his parents are, and it would be shocking for Zeus to interfere, even to save his own son.⁴⁰

Zeus's other relevant intervention in 22 occurs at 210 ff. When Achilles and Hector have circled the city three times, Zeus

ἐν δὲ τίθει δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο,
τὴν μὲν Ἀχιλλῆος, τὴν δ' Ἑκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο,
ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβῶν· ῥέπε δ' Ἑκτορος αἵταιμον ἡμαρ,
ᾗχετο δ' εἰς Αἶδαο, λίπεν δέ ε' Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.

40. For the reason, see *MR*, pp. 19 ff., and "Homeric Gods" (n. 17), pp. 1 ff., 11 ff.

Athena, as we have seen, complained when her purposes seemed likely to be thwarted. Apollo does not complain, but quietly withdraws, and ceases to protect Hector. True, Athena complained when Zeus wished to go against *moira*, while Apollo is merely acquiescing in the requirements of *moira*. But gods can, and do, act beyond what *moira* permits to them.⁴¹ Apollo's withdrawal has several effects: it serves to characterize him here, or to exemplify the characterization sketched in Book 21; it makes possible the occurrence of what the story demands, since only if Apollo has withdrawn his aid can Hector be killed;⁴² and the unobtrusive mode of Apollo's withdrawal helps to direct the attention of the audience to the actions of the human combatants. Athena is there throughout, it is true, helping Achilles and lending status and stature to the contest; but both here and in Book 22 in general after the initial altercation between Apollo and Achilles, the human combatants are evaluated primarily in terms of their human characteristics. It is nonetheless true that Achilles is the son of a goddess, while Hector is not; and the fact becomes important again in Book 24. But the discussion of the relative prowess and effectiveness of warriors of human and of partly divine descent occurred in Book 20, and there is no need to impede the flow of the narrative by including it here. Instead, it is Achilles as a human being whom Hector fears (91 ff.) and from whom he runs (136 ff.). At 158, *πρόσθε μὲν ἑσθλὸς ἔφρευγε, δῖωκε δὲ μιν μέγ' ἀμείνων*. Since Hector is spoken of as *esthlos*, and he has human parents, to say that Achilles is more *esthlos* does not here focus attention upon his divine lineage but upon those human qualities in terms of which he can be

41. As Zeus does, according to Poseidon in *Il.* 15. 185 ff. See "Homeric Gods" (n. 17), pp. 1–3.

42. See *Il.* 22. 202 ff.

directly compared to Hector: his courage and prowess as a warrior.⁴³ Throughout the combat and the slaying of Hector, the story is that of a better warrior overcoming an inferior warrior. True, the better warrior has the aid of a powerful deity: the whole combat is summed up: *ὁ μιν μάλα τῆλε λοετρῶν / χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος δάμασε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη* (445–46). But the reason for Athena's supporting Achilles is left in the background.

As I stated at the beginning of this paper, it is not my purpose to discuss the *history* of the Homeric poems here: I am concerned here with the *Iliad* as we have it, and with the artistic and other reasons, so far as these can be estimated, for the placing of each passage where we have it. I have attempted to suggest reasons why the much-criticized parts of Books 20 and 21 may have been placed where they now stand, reasons which would not appear appropriate to any modern writer, but which might well appear entirely appropriate to anyone who shared the values and beliefs of the original bards and their audience. I now suggest that the treatment of these important questions of belief and value in 20 and 21 opens the way to an artistic effect which we can all appreciate. Toward the close of 21 (514 ff.) Apollo goes into Troy to protect it, but the rest of the gods, having ended their fight, return to Olympus. Since the beginning of 20, when Zeus gave permission to the gods (23 ff.) to go down onto the battlefield to support the side they favored, gods have been in the

foreground of the action. Now all this is ended: the emphasis in Priam's plea to Hector (38 ff.), in Hecuba's plea (82 ff.), in Hector's realization of his own situation, is on human beings and their behavior.⁴⁴ Hector flees from Achilles, Achilles pursues, *and the gods look on* (160): with the exception of Apollo and Athena, they are no longer actors, but spectators. Zeus gives Athena permission to do what she will (185), and she returns to the battlefield. A clash between deities seems imminent, but Zeus holds up his scales, and Apollo departs. The other gods watch from above, the Trojans watch from the city, Achilles (205) holds back the Greeks. Zeus's scales are held up, only here for the death of an individual. The poet emphasizes by every means at his disposal the isolation of the three figures⁴⁵—Hector, Achilles, and the disguised Athena—within this mighty frame. After the confused tumult of 20 and 21, the poet focuses his—and our—attention upon this one climactic event.

This is an artistically powerful effect to this day; and I do not believe that it is an accidental effect. I have argued that it is not the only reason for 20 and 21 as we have them, that important questions of belief and values are there raised; but I feel certain that it is one reason.

In Book 22, we are concerned with prowess rather than status. Book 24 returns to the question of the advantages conferred by divine birth. Apollo allowed Hector to be killed, for his time had come; but Achilles has not merely killed Hector, but

43. Cf. also 250 ff. and 287 f.

44. Lines such as 130, which ascribe the final outcome to Zeus, do not affect the point I am making, since piety demands such an ascription in Homer: the emphasis is upon human behavior to the greatest extent possible in the Homeric poems, incomparably more so than in 20 and 21. (41 f. is similar.)

45. In a very interesting article ("Some Aspects of the Gods in the *Iliad*," *BICS*, XVII [1970], 1–10), M. M. Willcock says of Athena's presence here (p. 7): "Many people think, consciously or unconsciously, that this is unfair to Hector, that it is unsporting. Two against one. That is blasphemous

thought, arising out of disbelief. The god is not another human being. There were two people, not three, standing out there on the plain under the walls of Troy." But when Hector kills Patroclus with Apollo's help, Patroclus says (16. 849 f.), "ἀλλὰ με μοῖρ' ὅλοη καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός, / ἀνδρῶν δ' Εὐφορβὸς" σὺ δέ με τρίτος ἐξεναρίζεις." *Moirai* is not a separate agent, apparently; but the arithmetic shows that Homeric man could treat a deity who behaves as Apollo (or Apollo plus *moira*) behaves here as an additional agent. (The general influence of Zeus, 16. 845, is not counted.) On this question and on the relation of this passage to general Homeric belief, see *MR*, chap. ii, and esp. pp. 14 f.

treated—or attempted to treat—his body in a shameful manner. All the gods save Hera, Poseidon, and Athena pitied Hector (23 ff.) and wished Apollo to steal the corpse of Hector from Achilles. Apollo indignantly addresses the gods (33 f.): “σχέτλιοι ἔστε, θεοί, δηλήμονες· οὐ νύ ποθ’ ὑμῖν / Ἐκτωρ μηρί’ ἔκηε βοῶν αἰγῶν τε τελείων;” Hector sacrificed to them all, yet they have not the heart to save his dead body. No; they help Achilles (40–41), “ᾧ οὐτ’ ἄρ φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναῖσμοι οὔτε νόημα / γναμπτόν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, λέων δ’ ὥς ἄγρια οἶδεν.” Achilles has lost all sense of pity (44) and αἰδώς. Others may lose someone closer to them than was Patroclus to Achilles, but they do not behave as Achilles has behaved (52–54):

“οὐ μὴν οἱ τό γε κάλλιον οὐδέ τ’ ἄμεινον.
μὴ ἀγαθῷ περ ἔοντι νεμεσσηθῶμεν οἱ ἡμεῖς·
κωφὴν γὰρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀεικίζει μενεαῖνων.”

It is neither more *kalon* (honorable) for Achilles, nor more *agathon* (beneficial). Let him beware lest, *agathos* though he be, the gods may grow angry with him. (It should be noted that the reason which Apollo adds is that Achilles is treating the earth in an unseemly manner; but the earlier lines make clear that this is not the reason for Apollo’s anger nor for that of the other deities who take his side. This is an early example of a rhetorical argument.)

Nothing that Apollo has said implies that Achilles is diminishing his *arete* by acting as he has done;⁴⁶ and it is his *arete* which gives him his claim to behave thus. Apollo is stating the case for Hector: he has always given due sacrifice, and Achilles’ behavior goes beyond the bounds of the reasonable.

Hera immediately states the other side of the case (56 ff.). To act as Apollo wishes is to give equal *time* to Achilles and Hector. But Hector is a mere mortal and was

suckled by a mortal woman, whereas Achilles is the son of a goddess, whom Hera herself brought up and gave as a wife to Peleus. “And you all went to the wedding, you gods—and you among them, Apollo, comrade of *kakoi*.” The whole speech is concerned with the respective status of Achilles and Hector. Hector is a mere mortal, by comparison with Achilles a *kakos* in status, whereas Achilles is the son of a goddess, a relative of the divine family.⁴⁷

The position is now stated in the starkest terms of *arete* and *time*; and, to repeat what I have said already, this is not a literary exercise. The bards and the members of the original audience—and Greeks for long after—believed in these gods, and believed that they could decisively influence mortal well-being. If one who was held to be the son of a deity, or who had some other grounds for superior status in terms of *arete* and *time*, could act as he chose to the weaker with no fear of the wrath of heaven, the state of the weaker was miserable indeed.

Zeus now arbitrates between Apollo and Hera (65 ff.):

“Ἡρη, μὴ δὴ πάμπαν ἀποσκύδμαινε θεοῖσιν·
οὐ μὲν γὰρ τιμὴ γε μί’ ἔσσεται· ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἐκτωρ
φίλατος ἔσκε θεοῖσι βροτῶν οἱ ἐν Ἰλίῳ εἰσὶν·
ὥς γὰρ ἔμοιγ’, ἐπεὶ οὐ τι φίλων ἡμάρτανε δώρων.”

Hector may not have the same status as Achilles, for the reasons already given. But Hector was most *philos* to the gods of the mere humans who live in Troy, for he always performed due sacrifice. Accordingly Zeus sends for Thetis (75–76), “ὄφρα τί οἱ εἶπω πυκινὸν ἔπος, ὥς κεν Ἀχιλλεὺς / δώρων ἐκ Πριάμοιο λάχῃ ἀπό θ’ Ἐκτορα λύσῃ.” Achilles is not to be punished for the harm he has done—or tried to do—to the corpse of Hector: he is simply to be told to accept an abundant ransom for the body. And Hector is to be rescued not

46. See *MR*, p. 38; “Homeric Values and Homeric Society,” *JHS*, XCI (1971), 10 ff.; “Homeric Gods” (n. 17), pp. 13 ff.

47. For further discussions of this, see “Homeric Values” (n. 46), pp. 10–11.

because justice demands that a corpse should not be so treated, but because he has given sacrifice and can expect something in return. Zeus bids Thetis to tell Achilles that the gods, and especially Zeus, are angry (114–16):

“ὅτι φρεσὶ μαινομένησιν
Ἕκτορ’ ἔχει παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν οὐδ’ ἀπέλυσεν
αἱ κέν πως ἐμέ τε δείσῃ ἀπὸ θ’ Ἕκτορα λύσῃ.”

The last line is presumably ironical. There is no likelihood that any mortal, however great and powerful, would attempt to defy a direct command of Zeus in Homer, and Achilles does not (139 ff.):⁴⁸ “τῇδ’ εἴη· ὃς ἄποινα φέροι, καὶ νεκρὸν ἄγοιτο, | εἰ δὴ πρόφρονι θυμῷ Ὀλύμπιος αὐτὸς ἀνώγει.”

The body is now ransomed, and receives due rites; and in the remainder of the book the reason for Hector’s treatment is raised on two more occasions. The disguised Hermes tells Priam (411 ff.) that the gods have kept Hector’s body free from harm despite all that Achilles and other Greeks have done to it, and he ends his speech (422 f.), “ὥς τοι κήδονται μάκαρες θεοὶ υἱὸς ἑῆος | καὶ νέκυός περ ἔοντος, ἐπεὶ σφι φίλος περὶ κῆρι.” Priam replies (425 ff.):

“ὦ τέκος, ἦ ρ’ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἐναΐσιμα δῶρα διδοῦναι
ἀθανάτοισι, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποτ’ ἐμός πάϊς, εἰ ποτ’ ἔην γε,
λήθεται ἐνὶ μεγάροισι θεῶν, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν·
τῷ οἱ ἀπομνήσαντο καὶ ἐν θανάτοῦ περ αἴσῃ.”

Hecuba takes up the theme again in her lament for Hector at 748 ff.:

“Ἕκτορ, ἐμῷ θυμῷ πάντων πολὺ φίλτατε παίδων,
ἦ μὲν μοι ζωὸς περ ἔων φίλος ἦσθα θεοῖσιν·
οἱ δ’ ἄρα σεῦ κήδοντο καὶ ἐν θανάτοῦ περ αἴσῃ.”

The gods have not merely restored Hector’s corpse to her, but restored it undefiled, despite all that the Greeks have done. The question of Hector’s abundant sacrifices is not raised in 748 ff. It is unnecessary to do so: it has been a theme of the whole book; and it is a theme whose

treatment in this book serves as the poet’s resolution of the questions raised from Book 20 onward.

In all the books of the *Iliad* discussed here, a theme of the poem has been the manner in which the gods regard and treat those who possess more, and those who possess less, *arete* in one or more of its different aspects. Consider the encounters between Aeneas and Achilles (20. 83–352); Hector and Achilles (20. 419–54); Achilles and Asteropaeus (21. 149–99); Achilles and Scamander (21. 211–327); Hephaestus and Scamander (21. 328–82); the Battle of the Gods, with its conversation between Apollo and Poseidon (21. 383–514); the altercation between Apollo and Achilles (22. 8–20); the interventions of Zeus (22. 169–85, 210–13); the treatment by Achilles of Hector’s corpse, and the consequent argument between the factions of deities (24. 23–140). All have explored—in a manner entirely suited to an epic poem, for the questions arise out of violent action and suffering—the problem of the gods’ attitude to human *arete*, and have faced the fact that the Homeric gods *were* believed to be respecters of persons, as was virtually inevitable if one considers the nature of the universe of value and belief in which Homeric man lived.⁴⁹ The close of the poem in Book 24 has offered a solution in terms of the most important Homeric values, expressed by *arete*, *time*, and *philotes*.

The presence of these questions in the later books of the *Iliad*, questions of the greatest importance to those who believed in the Olympian deities, must have lent added significance to those books for the original audience, and endowed them with an additional thematic unity. The desire to raise these questions, I believe, furnished at least part of the motive for the inclusion

48. He contended unsuccessfully with a mere river-god earlier, *Il.* 21. 233 f., 264; cf. p. 247 above.

49. For which see “Homeric Gods” (n. 17), pp. 1–19.

of Books 20 and 21 in the form in which we have them. The same motivation is at work in the composition of Book 24. Modern scholars and critics evaluate 24 very differently from 20 and 21; but, in the light of the arguments offered here, I suggest that the original audience is unlikely to have done so.

Here is a type of thematic link in the Homeric poems which is frequently overlooked, but which the original audience could hardly have overlooked; and here, it seems to me, we have further evidence of purposive activity, as opposed to mere agglomeration, in the composition of the Homeric poems. We need not resort to Leaf and Bayfield's "for reasons which we do not understand": the reasons are there to find. I wrote at the beginning that I was not concerned with the traditional "analyst-unitarian" conflict, largely because the work of Milman Parry and his successors has rendered the traditional questions meaningless and in principle unanswerable. I am not now smuggling in those questions

in disguise. I do not wish to discuss the question of *how many* "purposes"—individual bards—had a part to play in the development and composition of the fluid units of oral poetry of which these books are composed. What I do wish to argue is that, from Book 20 onward (that being the scope of the present article), there are clear indications that the work of these individual "purposes" has been organized into a whole which is significant in the light of the values of the society in which it was produced, and that this organization suggests the work of an overriding "purpose." If we confine our attention merely to the presence of these themes in the poem, we shall gain a deeper appreciation of "the poem as it exists." But, if we raise the more hazardous question of *how* they came to be there, we may find ourselves drawn to the conclusion that we see here the mind of the "monumental composer" at work.

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