

## MORALS AND VALUES IN HOMER

For the lack of forty-nine drachmas Socrates was unable to attend the costly *epideixis* of Prodicus from which he would have learnt the truth about correct use of words (Plato, *Cra.* 384b).<sup>1</sup> From Prodicus' *ῥῆμαι* Socrates could also have learnt the concepts and characteristic words associated with *arete* and *kakia*:<sup>2</sup> these compete in that work for the allegiance of Heracles, parading their respective characteristics. Thanks to Professor Arthur Adkins we have had for the past decade a book which not only confronts *arete* and *kakia*, but also analyses the meaning and usage of many Greek words for the evaluation of action from Homer to Aristotle.<sup>3</sup> The importance of this book is generally acknowledged but it has not received the detailed discussion it deserves. Professor Adkins finds the social structure of ancient Greece inimical to the development of an adequate concept of moral responsibility. He shows, in a most interesting manner, how Greek values changed as the needs of society changed. But, he argues, from Homer onwards the key terms, *ἀγαθός* and *ἀρετή*, were so closely linked with social status and competitive excellence that even after *ἀρετή* became associated with the 'quiet virtues' (e.g. *δικαιοσύνη*, *σωφροσύνη*) it commends 'successful living' rather than 'doing one's duty'.

Undoubtedly Professor Adkins has performed a valuable service in focusing attention on some of the social and historical factors which underlie Greek ethics and help to differentiate them from others. But the grounds for his dissatisfaction with the Greek conception of moral responsibility are difficult to grasp. Adkins never clearly explains what Greek word or set of words he takes to express 'moral responsibility' or 'responsibility' nor does he define what he means by these terms in English.<sup>4</sup> It appears however that the standard against which he measures Greek ethics in this respect is a Kantian one: 'we are all Kantians now', he writes, meaning by this that we all regard the concepts of duty and responsibility as central in ethics (p. 2). 'Central' they may be, though Moore, Ross, Prichard and many recent writers have shown how difficult philosophers find it to agree on an analysis of Adkins' 'basic (moral) question', 'What is my duty in these circumstances?' However by 'we' Adkins refers not specifically to moral philosophers but 'any man brought up in a modern western democracy' (*ibid.*). Such a man, he thinks, would find it very difficult to accept the idea of 'a society (i.e. ancient Greece) so different from our own as to render it impossible to translate "duty" in the Kantian sense into its ethical terminology at all'. It is often illuminating to compare the values and institutions of one society with those of another. But the notion that modern western man's moral values may be properly distinguished from those of an ancient Greek by reference to Kantian ethics is a highly debatable proposition.

From time to time in this paper I shall find it necessary to raise certain general points of this kind. But my primary purpose is to express strong reservations concerning the philosophical and philological analysis of certain Homeric texts which Adkins offers on the basis of his general assumptions. More positively, I hope also to point to some characteristics of Homeric ethics which seem to fall outside Adkins' scheme. Needless to say, my indebtedness to *Merit and Responsibility* is considerable.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally delivered to the Oxford Philological Society in January 1969, and subsequently parts of it were read at seminars in the Institute of Classical Studies, London University, and in Princeton University. I learnt much from the discussion at these meetings, and I am especially grateful for private comment and criticism from

Mr M. F. Burnyeat, Professor M. I. Finley, Mr J. T. Hooker, Professor A. D. Momigliano and Professor Gregory Vlastos.

<sup>2</sup> DK 84 B1.

<sup>3</sup> *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford 1960).

<sup>4</sup> See Richard Robinson's review, *Philosophy* xxxvii (1962) 277 f.

*Homeric 'society', evaluative language and Professor Adkins*

Before passing to detailed analysis of texts I wish to call in question two of Adkins' general assumptions. Much of his argument about Homeric values is based on the men and qualities which Homeric society needs most (p. 36). Taking the *oikos* as his reference for 'society' Adkins argues that Homeric values are a product of its needs: the values he has in mind are success in war and peace which are taken to be commended and decried by such words as ἀρετή and κακότης: 'the chieftains must protect their own families and followers' (p. 35). 'In comparison with the competitive excellences, the quieter co-operative excellences *must* [my italics] take an inferior position; for it is not evident at this time that the society of the group depends to any large extent upon these excellences' (p. 36). Adkins wisely admits that such values may have become anachronistic in the society for which the epics were composed (p. 57, n. 3). But at the same time he finds it perfectly legitimate to interpret many Homeric contexts as if the society which they are claimed to reflect had some autonomous existence, outside the poems. He is also able to distinguish certain 'literary' passages from others in which 'life' is represented (pp. 15–20). In fact, of course, our knowledge of Homeric values is not extended by any sound evidence independent of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Inferences drawn purely from Homer about ethical language cannot be assumed as historical axioms. It would certainly be remarkable if the moral standards found in Homer bore no relation to the life and language of actual peoples. But Adkins makes little or no allowance for the absence of any authoritative historical check on this aspect of Homer, Homer's idealisation of great individuals, and his concern, as I would say, to portray heroic ἀρετή, rather than to represent accurately the life and values of any actual society.<sup>5</sup> Nor can divine intervention be simply removed from the poems to leave a kernel of sociological truths.<sup>6</sup>

If these remarks are correct, it follows that we should interpret Homer's ethics primarily by means of the internal logic of the poems. We are not entitled to say that certain words *must* take their sense and strength from the facts of Homeric life (p. 39). For the only relevant facts which we have are literary contexts. These do not enable us to establish the effectiveness of an item of epic moral language in any non-literary sense. Nor can any necessary connexion be posited between the meaning of ἀγαθός in Homer and 'the needs of Homeric society'. But if we confine attention to the usage of ἀγαθός in Homer and compare this with all the modes of moral judgment which occur in the epics, certain facts do emerge which differ from those presented by Professor Adkins.

The second assumption of Professor Adkins which I find it necessary to challenge concerns his fundamental division of values into two groups. After asserting that the concept of moral responsibility (in any society) must depend on the general world-view and complex of values he writes: 'in any society there are activities in which success is of paramount importance; in these, commendation or the reverse is reserved for those who *in fact* succeed or fail. In such activities what a man intended to do is of little account in estimating his performance. On the other hand, in any society there are also those activities, such as contracts or partnerships, in which men co-operate with one another for a common end. Since the only basis for co-operation is fairness . . . it is in terms of fairness, or some similar word, that the relations of men who co-operate will be estimated. Fairness raises questions quite different from those of success or failure' (pp. 6–7). He goes on to observe that different sets of terms may be found to commend these activities which 'are so different in kind'. It is clear that Adkins introduces his division, described as 'very much simplified' to explain, among other things, how attitudes to intentions vary according to the type of

<sup>5</sup> See in particular H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie* (New York 1951) 51–7; von Erffa, *Philologus* suppl. 30, 2 (1937) 36 f, and below n. 58.

<sup>6</sup> As M. I. Finley says, 'The Trojan War', *JHS*

lxxxiv (1964) 2, 'By what reasoning do we permit oral transmission so much latitude with the supernatural side of the story while denying it equal freedom with the human side?'

action or value. He calls the two groups of values 'competitive' and 'co-operative or quiet'. These two categories of values are then applied to the analysis of Homeric texts.

Adkins seeks evidence to justify his application of these categories in the usage and relative strength, which he detects, of certain Homeric words. He finds that *ἀρετή*, *ἀγαθός* (*ἔσθλός*, *χρηστός*) in all its forms, *κακότης*, *κακός* (*δειλός*, *πονηρός*) in all its forms, are the strongest words for commending or denigrating men in Homer and later Greek; for denigrating action he claims that *αἰσχρόν*, *ἐλεγχείη* 'and some allied words' are the most powerful Homeric terms (p. 30). These terms, he holds, commend the 'competitive excellences' or decry failures in competition. Value judgments made by them refer to results, and 'only results have any value' (p. 35). 'To be *ἀγαθός* one must be brave, skilful and successful in war and in peace' (p. 33); 'the *ἀγαθός* need not be *πυντός*, *πεπνυμένος*, *σαόφρων* or *δίκαιος*' (p. 37). That is to say, he *need not* (my italics) possess the quiet or co-operative excellences (which Adkins takes to be exemplified by these terms). The system of values is such, he argues, that no 'quiet' term can be successfully opposed to *ἀγαθός*. For the values which that term commends are those most important in Homeric society.

Now Adkins is entirely correct to observe that being *ἀγαθός* in Homer does not necessarily entail having the qualities commended by *πυντός*, *πεπνυμένος*, *σαόφρων* or *δίκαιος*. Success in competition is certainly one hall-mark of being *ἀγαθός*, as it is not of being *δίκαιος*. But I have grave doubts about the appropriateness in principle of attempting to classify Homeric ethical terminology under the two exclusive categories of judgment by results (competitive) or judgment in terms of some different criterion like fairness (quiet or co-operative). In fact, *δίκη* in Homer is a matter of doing or failing to do certain things (e.g. returning Briseis to Achilles) and fairness has no obvious connexion with the sense or application of *σαόφρων*, *πυντός* or *πεπνυμένος*. The distinction fares no better if we take other 'quiet' terms, unmentioned by Adkins. The *ἀγαθὰ φρονεῖν* which makes Bellerophon reject the seduction of Anteia (*Il.* vi 161 f.) or which Hermes has when he tries to dissuade Aegisthus (*Od.* i 42 f.) denotes prudence or well-wishing rather than moral sense.<sup>7</sup> Such 'thinking' is evaluated neither by reference to fairness nor to successful results, nor are intentions rather than results invoked when someone is called *ἥπιος*, *ἀγανός* or *πρόφρων*. Such commendatory epithets, like those which ascribe *ἀρετή*, are awarded for how people actually act or speak.<sup>8</sup>

If *ἀρετή*/*ἀγαθός* describe and evaluate the hero's success in war and peace, as they often do, then the majority of actions which might ordinarily be called 'co-operative', though not necessarily 'quiet', prove also to belong to the competitive category, as Adkins defines it. Showing hospitality to *ξένοι*, sacrificing to the gods, assisting one's fellow heroes in war, feasting—these are perhaps the most obvious examples in Homer of men 'co-operating for a common end'. Concerning contracts and partnerships the poet has little to say. This does not mean that 'fair dealing' is not something valued in the epics. It is highly valued in certain specific situations, so much so that heroes are expected to be successful at it. To put it in a more Homeric way, *τιμή* is involved in some joint enterprises as well as in individual acts of prowess and the hero's personal status. Some examples will illustrate this.

### *Competition and? co-operation*

*Ἔκτορ, εἶδος ἀριστε, μάχης ἄρα πολλὸν ἐδεύεο.  
ἦ σ' αὐτῶς κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἔχει φύξην ἐόντα . . .*

<sup>7</sup> What may loosely be called 'intelligence' certainly enters into some Homeric judgments of value; but I think Lionel Pearson goes too far in isolating 'intelligence' as a criterion of moral worth in Homer, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* (Stanford 1962) 52.

<sup>8</sup> Thus Chalcas wants Achilles to support him

*πρόφρων* in words and deeds (*Il.* i 77), cf. *ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσι* (*Il.* ii 164, etc.); receiving someone *πρόφρων* means performing the appropriate social courtesies, *Od.* xiv 54; the king who is *πρόφρων*, *ἀγανός* and *ἥπιος* (*Od.* ii 230 ff.) is praised not for his intentions but for the behaviour which distinguishes him from one who is *χαλεπός* and performs *αἰσῶλα*.

πῶς κε σὺ χεῖρονα φῶτα σαώσεας μεθ' ὄμιλον,  
σχέτλι', ἐπεὶ Σαρπηδόν' ἄμα ξεῖνον καὶ ἑταῖρον  
κάλλιπες Ἀργείοισιν ἔλωρ καὶ κύρμα γενέσθαι,  
ὅς τοι πόλλ' ὄφελος γένετο, πτόλει τε καὶ αὐτῶ,  
ζῶος ἑών·

*Il.* xvii 142 ff.

Glaucus reproaches Hector for 'falling far short in the fray'. Our first reaction may be to apply the criterion of 'competitive excellence': Hector has failed to succeed as an ἀγαθός and merits condemnation accordingly; his κλέος is incompatible with fleeing from the combat. Quite so. But Glaucus' remarks are not directed simply against Hector's failure to succeed in the particular exploit of rescuing Sarpedon's corpse. He makes a more general point: 'how would you bring protection to an inferior man . . . seeing that you have abandoned Sarpedon, your ξεῖνος and ἑταῖρος, who afforded you great help in his lifetime?' Hector is attacked not just for cowardice but for failing to repay a debt to Sarpedon and honour his rank. Sarpedon's support as an ally and the guest-friendship involve obligations which Hector has failed to meet; cowardliness is linked to a breach of social *arete*. Hector's reply is interesting. He defends himself, apparently successfully, by disclaiming cowardly intentions, οὐ τοι ἐγὼν ἔρριγα μάχην οὐδὲ κτύπον ἵππων (175): 'but even brave men are sometimes put to flight by Zeus'. Even an ἀγαθός (we may interpret) cannot be expected to succeed all the time, but he can be expected to try. Adkins denies virtually any importance to intentions in Homer, but there are other passages in which some emphasis is placed upon 'trying'.<sup>9</sup>

Earlier in the *Iliad* a somewhat similar reproach is brought against Hector by Sarpedon himself (v 472 ff.). Hector, he alleges, has failed to fight and urge on his men, whereas Sarpedon with the Lycians is fighting: σοὶ δὲ χρὴ τάδε πάντα μέλειν νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμῶν . . . (490 ff.).<sup>10</sup> Whereupon, Hector 'feels the stab in his heart' and leaps into the fray.<sup>11</sup> Both

<sup>9</sup> I think that Adkins establishes the relative unimportance in Homer of 'intentions', in the sense of moral will, decision or purpose, where explicit judgments of value are concerned. But I do not agree that Homer has no room for intentions where that term means 'trying one's best to succeed'. Thus it seems to me that 'giving up the attempt' as well as 'failure to achieve a desired result' is involved in such phrases as *αἰσχροὺν τοι δηρόν τε μένειν κενεὸν τε νέεσθαι* (*Il.* ii 298). It is *αἰσχροὺν* that the Greeks have not yet succeeded in defeating the Trojans (119–21); but it is also *αἰσχροὺν* (in a different sense?) to give up trying. Odysseus cannot issue the command 'succeed', but he can say *τλήτε, φίλοι, καὶ μείνατ' ἐπὶ χρόνον* (299). Similarly, Idomeneus (*Il.* xiii 232 ff.) is reproached by Poseidon for advocating withdrawal. Voluntary abstention from fighting is inexcusable: a zealous *effort* is needed, *αἶ κ' ὄφελός τε γενώμεθα καὶ δ' ἑόντε* (236). Poseidon appeals for efforts (he cannot ask for more). In the event Idomeneus succeeds in killing many Trojans; he fails in his final attempt to complete the stripping of Oenomaus' arms, but there is no suggestion that any disgrace thereby attaches to him. Later in the same book Hector reproaches Paris, *αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσι*, because many of the Trojan leaders are now dead or wounded in a war for which Paris is responsible

(768–73). Paris ducks this charge, but he has no difficulty in defending his own prowess; he and his men have fought ceaselessly (778–80), and he will continue to do so, *ὅση δυνάμις γε πάρεστι/πὰρ δύναμιν δ' οὐκ ἔστι καὶ ἐσσύμενον πολεμίζειν* (786 f.). A man can only try his best. Rather differently, compare *Od.* xiii 276 ff. where Odysseus, pretending to be a Cretan fugitive, guilty of homicide, excuses the Phoenician sailors who failed to ship him to Pylos or Elis, *ἀλλ' ἢ τοί σφραγ κείθεν ἀπόστατο ἕς ἀνέμοιο/πόλλ' ἀεκαζομένους, οὐδ' ἦθελον ἐξαπατήσασθαι*: they did not mean to cheat him, and they were sorry. He has no similar excuses for the Phaeacians who he supposes failed to conduct him to Ithaca (*ibid.* 209–16).

<sup>10</sup> For *χρὴ* in general cf. G. Redard, *Recherches sur χρὴ, χρῆσθαι. Étude sémantique* (Paris 1954). As a means of denoting what must or should be done *χρὴ* in Homer is very strong. In military contexts cf. *Il.* x 479 f. (Diomedes should not stand idle); xii 315 f. (Sarpedon and Glaucus should take their position in the vanguard); xvi 492 f. (Glaucus must show his military excellence); *ibid.* 631 (Meriones should fight, not waste time talking, cf. *Il.* xix 149 f.).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Il.* xiv 104 f. where Agamemnon acknowledges the appropriateness of Odysseus' charge of unkingly behaviour in the same way, *ὦ Ὀδυσσεῦ, μάλα πῶς με καθίκεο θυμὸν ἐπιπῆ/ἀργαλέη*.

co-operative and competitive excellence are impugned here. It is *unfair* treatment of allies as well as cowardice that Hector is accused of showing.

Kinship is another spur to action which bridges Adkins' distinction between types of excellence.

τὸν (Aeneas) δ' ὕστατον εὖρεν (Deiphobus) ὀμίλου  
 ἔσταότ'· αἰεὶ γὰρ Πριάμῳ ἐπεμήνιε δίῳ,  
 οὐνεκ' ἄρ' ἔσθλὸν ἔόντα μετ' ἀνδράσιν οὐ τι τίεσκεν . . .  
 "Αἰνεΐα, Τρώων βουληφόρε, νῦν σε μάλα χρῆ  
 γαμβρῶ ἀμυνέμεναι, εἴ πέρ τί σε κῆδος ἰκάνει.  
 ἀλλ' ἔπευ, Ἀλκαθόῳ ἐπαμύνομεν, ὅς σε πάρος γε  
 γαμβρὸς ἐὼν ἔθρεψε δόμοις ἐνι τυτθὸν ἔόντα.

*Il.* xiii 459 ff.

Deiphobus appeals to Aeneas to leave his place in the rear and enter the fray: νῦν σε μάλα χρῆ/γαμβρῶ ἀμυνέμεναι, εἴ πέρ τί σε κῆδος ἰκάνει (463 f.): 'now it is plainly incumbent on you to defend your dead brother-in-law, Alcaathous, if any care of kin seizes you at all'.<sup>12</sup> This has the effect of urging Aeneas on, *in spite of* the resentment he feels at Priam's failure to acknowledge his τιμή. (αἰεὶ γὰρ Πριάμῳ ἐπεμήνιε δίῳ/οὐνεκ' ἄρ' ἔσθλὸν ἔόντα μετ' ἀνδράσιν οὐ τι τίεσκεν . . . , 460 ff.)

The requirement to avenge a kinsman, an ally or a *xeinos* is of course seen in terms of τιμή. But this episode shows that unco-operative action by an ἀγαθός, prompted by affronts to his τιμή, may conflict with what is expected of him in relation with others. Like Achilles, Aeneas resents a king's rejection of the rights he feels himself to have. But like Achilles again Aeneas' standing is involved in the death of a fellow-hero, and the second claim takes precedence over the first. The fact that some co-operative activities are seen in terms of τιμή may be relevant to Homer's neglect of intentions, but it does not rob them of the right to be called 'co-operative'. It means that certain kinds of co-operation are required by a man's personal status and situation. Adkins would perhaps agree, for he notes that 'Eumaeus, the swineherd, says that he would have suffered *elencheie* had his watchdogs harmed the "beggar" Odysseus when the latter blundered into his farmyard' (*Od.* xiv 37 f.) . . . 'the host must, as the case of Eumaeus shows, protect his guest against unforeseen accidents . . . his actions must be judged by results; for it is by results that the household continues to exist or fails to do so'.<sup>13</sup> But Adkins' conception of 'results', underlined by the word ἐλεγχείη which condemns failure in the strongest competitive contexts, persuades him to regard Eumaeus' behaviour as an aspect of heroic ἀρετή, categorically different from being δίκαιος, σαόφρων, etc.

Now I find nothing odd or morally unsatisfactory or heroic about Eumaeus' reference to ἐλεγχείη. Any host, not just an Homeric one, has a duty to protect a stranger from being mauled by his dogs. If, for any reason, the dogs had mauled Odysseus, Eumaeus would be in the wrong. It would be no excuse to say, 'I did not want the dogs to harm you'; that is precisely the kind of situation in which we use 'well-meaning' in a bad sense. Like Eumaeus, I would be failing in my duty if I kept dogs which I was unable to prevent from attacking strangers, and I too would feel ashamed if this happened. My good intentions would be neither here nor there. The fact that certain social obligations in Homer require successful fulfilment does not show that they are to be distinguished as 'competitive' values from the qualities commended by δίκαιος. Perhaps they are required of the ἀγαθός in a sense in which justice is not. But Agamemnon, an ἀγαθός, is told to be δικαιότερος in future

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Il.* xv 553 f. Hector's rebuke to Melanippus for failing to rush to the defence of the newly slain Dolops, οὐδέ νυ σοὶ περ' ἐντρέπεται φίλον ἦτορ ἀνεπιού κταμένοιο.

<sup>13</sup> *Merit and Responsibility* 33, 35; Adkins cites this example in paragraphs concerned to show that in peace, as in war, failure (or failure in certain situations) is decried by *elenchistos* and *aischron*.

by Odysseus *à propos* his treatment of Achilles, and in spite of his apology he accepts all Odysseus' words as *ἐν μοιρῇ* (*Il.* xix 186). 'Being just' in Homer is judged as much by results as the qualities which constitute *ἀρετή*. And the standard of fairness, if that means 'appropriateness in dealing with others', enters into the actions designated 'competitive'. It is quite true that failures in justice are not dubbed *ἐλεγχείη* or *αἰσχρόν*. This is very important in Adkins' argument, as I will try to show. But in the Homeric poems the sanction of the quiet excellences, insofar as they have one, is also public opinion and the dislike of its disapproval.<sup>14</sup> In other words, for Homer Adkins' distinction between competitive and co-operative values proves to be not a categorical distinction between two kinds of judgment, but a distinction between powerful words for commending success or denigrating failure and allegedly weaker words for evaluating results, not intentions, of a different kind. How much weaker remains to be seen. But in both cases the failure or success adjudged may concern inter-personal or co-operative activities.

### *The claims? of agathos*

The need to prove himself in peace and war is undoubtedly the primary impulse of the Homeric hero. Some of the consequences which this entails for the ethics and value language of the *Iliad* are sketched brilliantly by Adkins. *ἀγαθός* and *ἀρετή*, used absolutely, generally serve to commend prowess in war and warlike pursuits, not moral excellence. *κακός* and *κακότης* denigrate the opposite. Related to these, which are probably their primary uses, is the function of *ἀγαθός* or *κακός* (in various linguistic forms) to denote high and low social class.<sup>15</sup> But in many contexts the latter use seems to prevail almost entirely over the former. When the suitors are called 'the *ἄριστοι* who rule over the islands' (*Od.* i 245 etc.) or *ἀγανοί*, we are not, in my view, to think of them as commended any more than Aegisthus is commended by *ἀμύμων*. The suitors *are* nobles, *βασιλεῖς*, and *ἄριστοι* here describes their social category.<sup>16</sup> It is the relations between heroes or men of substance rather than those between high and low social groups with which Homer is largely concerned. In contexts where one *ἀγαθός* condemns another the commendatory function of *ἀγαθός*, *ἔσθλος*, etc., may be weak, or such words may be almost entirely honorific. Hector is *δῖος* even at the moment of being accused by Sarpedon of behaviour as a *κακός* (*Il.* v 471). Where all are *ἀγαθοί* the possession of the qualities which strictly earn this epithet may not suffice to win a man approval from his fellows or to justify all that he does. Adkins is right to point *ἀγαθός* as the adjective which can be used in Homer to make the most powerful commendation. But in fastening such close attention on this isolated word he makes no allowance for the formulae and ornamental epithets of oral poetry. The fact that a man can remain *ἀγαθός* while earning disapproval for certain actions does not of itself show that he is more commended than condemned. Only the context will decide whether it is the evaluative or rather the descriptive aspect of *ἀγαθός* which prevails. What such passages must prove is that being *ἀγαθός* is not inconsistent with breaches of the qualities decried.

<sup>14</sup> Two examples will illustrate this. Antilochus yields to Menelaus, when accused of cheating in the games, since he does not wish to fall out of favour with him (*Il.* xxiii 592-5); he is thereby *πεπνωμένος* (586) which I take to be more than a conventional epithet here. Again, Euryalus (*Od.* viii 401 ff.) makes amends to Odysseus for insulting him without justification, under pressure from Alcinous and the other Phaeacian nobles (*ἐπεὶ οὐ τι ἔπος κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπεν*, 397).

<sup>15</sup> See Adkins 36, and next note.

<sup>16</sup> For an excellent discussion of the descriptive and evaluative uses of 'good' see Hare, *The Language*

*of Morals* (Oxford 1960, corrected second impression) 111-26. I would not venture to say that *ἀγαθός* in Homer ever becomes wholly descriptive, but we have to reckon both with its evaluative function becoming relatively conventionalised, and also with the requirements of formulaic diction. Thus *μνηστήρες ἀγανοί* (or accusative) is a common line-close, for *ἀγανός* like *ἀγρήνωρ* is a stock-epithet of the suitors. So far as I can see they are never, as a group, just termed *ἀγαθοί* or *ἔσθλοί*, *contra* Adkins 32. Indeed, at *Od.* xviii 383 Odysseus charges Eurymachus with thinking himself to be a great man because he consorts with *παύροισι καὶ οὐκ ἀγαθοῖσιν* (i.e. the other suitors)!

There may however be other terms which can be set against even *ἀγαθός*. That 'standard' in Homer is less categorical than some passages may be taken to imply.

Adkins illustrates the power of *ἀγαθός* to override other claims by two key passages from the *Iliad*. When Agamemnon states his intention of taking Briseis from Achilles Nestor pleads:

μήτε σὺ τόνδ' ἀγαθός περ ἔων ἀποαίρεο κούρην,  
ἀλλ' ἔα, ὧς οἱ πρῶτα δόσαν γέρας υἷες Ἀχαιῶν.

*Il.* i 275 f.

Nestor prefaces his speech by observing that he has successfully persuaded 'better' men in the past. Adkins, commenting on the first line above, writes: 'That is to say, an *agathos* might well do this without ceasing to be an *agathos*, and indeed derives a claim to do it from the fact that he is an *agathos*; but in this case Nestor is begging Agamemnon not to do it' (p. 37). Adkins' first statement here seems to me to be entirely correct; but I think that the context makes the rest of his remarks questionable. Elsewhere the phrase *ἀγαθός περ ἔων* is backed up by a reason, and that is so here too:<sup>17</sup> 'Do not, *agathos* though you are, steal the girl but let her be, for the sons of the Achaeans first gave her to Achilles as a prize'.<sup>18</sup> That is, your being an *agathos* is not a reason for overriding the decision of the army. Moreover, the issue here is not simply the claims of an *agathos* but the claims of a *σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς*, who ranks above Achilles. The king is no ordinary *ἀγαθός*, as Nestor acknowledges in his requests to Achilles to end the quarrel; and the claims of his position constitute Agamemnon's defence. He feels himself threatened not only by the particular loss of Chryseis, but also by Achilles' attempts to assert himself. Hence Agamemnon accepts the 'appropriateness' of Nestor's pleas, *καὶ δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα, γέρον, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες* (286, contrast his earlier reply to Chalcas, 26 ff.) but directs his refusal to the *ὀνειδέα* (291) of Achilles.

Adkins finds it highly significant that Nestor has no word (such as *pinutos*) which he can oppose to *agathos* here. But is this so? It is true that no adjective occurs, but the *ὧς* clause surely amounts to saying that Agamemnon's *ἀρετή* does not give him grounds for ignoring the demands of appropriate conduct. The failure of the appeal illustrates not the poverty of Homeric restraints on the *agathos*, but the fact that power in any society can overrule another's rights. And this is an especially complex situation owing to Agamemnon's belief that his rights are also at stake. The decision in Agamemnon's favour is decided not by the claims of *ἀρετή*, but by divine intervention (188–222). If Achilles had acted on his impulse we should have had no *Iliad*. Whether or not the gods are held to be underlining the rights of kingship is a question which loses importance in the requirements of the epic plot.

αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' Ἔκτορα δῖον . . .  
ἔλκει· οὐ μὴν οἱ τό γε κάλλιον οὐδέ τ' ἄμεινον.  
μὴ ἀγαθῶ περ ἔόντι νεμεσσηθέωμέν οἱ ἡμεῖς·  
κωφὴν γὰρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀεικίζει μενεαίνων . . .  
οὐ μὲν γὰρ τιμὴ γε μί' ἔσσειται· ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἔκτωρ  
φίλτατος ἔσκε θεοῖσι βροτῶν οἱ ἐν Ἰλίῳ εἰσίν.

*Il.* xxiv 50 ff.

The third line quoted above is the second passage which Adkins takes to illustrate the power of *agathos*. Like Agamemnon's treatment of Achilles, Achilles' maltreatment of Hector involves an affront against *τιμή*: at *Il.* xxiv 33 ff., Apollo upbraids the gods for failing to

<sup>17</sup> The other contexts are *Il.* i 131; xv 185; xix 155; xxiv 53 (discussed below), and *cf.* also *καὶ ἐσθλός ἔων . . . γὰρ*, *Od.* xvii 381 f. *Il.* ix 627 does not count for this purpose, since the reference of *ἀγαθός* is *μοῖρα*. A useful treatment of *ἀγαθός περ ἔων* is given by

M. Hoffmann, *Die ethische Terminologie bei Homer* (Tübingen 1914) 73 ff.

<sup>18</sup> The evidence just cited confirms Ebeling's judgment, *Lexicon Homericum* ad loc, that *ὧς* is equivalent here to *quoniam*.

protect Hector's corpse; he concludes, 'for sure this is not something very fine and good for Achilles;<sup>19</sup> he should watch out lest we be angry with him, ἀγαθῶ περ ἔόντι.<sup>20</sup> For he is subjecting the dumb earth to shame in his fury'.

Adkins comments: 'the gods do not approve of Achilles' action: but clearly the fact that he is *agathos* gives him a strong claim against gods and men to be allowed to do it' (p. 38). This statement requires modification. The gods do not all disapprove of Achilles.<sup>21</sup> On the contrary, Hera angrily rejects Apollo's complaints on the predictable grounds of Achilles' greater τιμή, εἴη κεν καὶ τοῦτο τεὸν ἔπος, ἀργυρότοξε, εἰ δὴ ὁμῆν Ἀχιλῆϊ καὶ Ἔκτορι θήσεται τιμῆν (56 f.). But Zeus supports Apollo, and his manner of doing so offers an important insight into the Homeric moral code: οὐ μὲν γὰρ τιμὴ γε μί' ἔσσεται· ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἔκτωρ/φίλτατος ἔσκε θεοῖσι βροτῶν οἱ ἐν Ἰλίῳ εἰσὶν (66–7). Zeus accepts Hera's distinction between the τιμαί of Achilles and Hector (Nestor's point in book i) but Hector too has his τιμή and Achilles is not to be permitted to forget this. Thetis is to be summoned to Olympus to convey to Achilles news of the wrath he has excited among the gods, especially Zeus (112–16).

In my view then, ἀγαθῶ περ ἔόντι does not clearly or unclearly assert Achilles' claims; it shows that there are limits to the actions which even a pre-eminent *agathos* can perform without forfeiting the gods' support. The scholiast, familiar with later uses of ἀγαθός, was naturally puzzled: πῶς γὰρ ὄν ὀλοὸν εἶπεν (cf. line 39) νῦν ἀγαθὸν φησιν; then he added, rightly, ἢ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀνδρείῳ ἔστιν. He attributed a moral sense to a word for pre-eminence of rank and achievement. Achilles does not lose the title ἀγαθός by dishonouring Hector's corpse; how could he? But he is dangerously near to losing divine approval on which much of his success and claims to ἀρετή are based.

One further observation. What are we to say of Apollo's words, οὐ μὴν οἱ τό γε κάλλιον οὐδέ τ' ἄμεινον? Adkins says nothing, though he does write, 'had it been possible successfully to use *ou kalon* to oppose the claims of the *agathos* to do as he pleases . . . Apollo would have claimed the same of Achilles' maltreatment of Hector' (p. 45). Apollo does so, in the comparative form, and successfully. What exactly is the force of οὐ κάλλιον here? According to Adkins οὐ καλόν (though καλόν is strictly the contrary of αἰσχρόν) 'is not in Homer an equivalent of αἰσχρόν either in usage or in emotive power'. In his view, as enunciated on p. 45, 'to be *agathos* cannot be *aischron*, nor involve a man in *aischos*'. Interestingly enough, οὐ μὲν τοι τόδε κάλλιον οὐδέ ἔοικε is used by Echeneus to charge Alcinous with a breach of hospitality towards Odysseus (*Od.* vii 159 ff.).<sup>22</sup> That, on Adkinsian principles, is a failure in competitive *arete*. I take the parallels to show that both excess and deficiency *may* be decried in similar and equally strong language. At least, it is not true to say that to be *agathos* cannot involve a man in *aischos* since both Paris and Menelaus, who are *agathoi*, are involved in it, for very different reasons (*Il.* vi 524; xiii 622). Nor do I see any grounds for stipulating categorically that αἰσχρόν, in the mouth of Apollo, would be a more effective denigration of Achilles than οὐ μὴν οἱ τό γε κάλλιον οὐδέ τ' ἄμεινον, nor again than αἰεκέα ἔργα (*Il.* xxii 395; xxiii 24) which Adkins takes to discredit the agent, Achilles (as well as Hector?, p. 43).

<sup>19</sup> The force of the comparatives κάλλιον and ἄμεινον is a little difficult to establish. The closest linguistic parallel seems to be *Od.* vi 182 οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον, where τοῦ γε makes the comparison explicit. οἱ in our passage serves a quite different function, and persuades me to take κάλλιον and ἄμεινον as comparative for superlative, cf. Kühner-Gerth i 22.

<sup>20</sup> νεμεσσηθῶμεν is the form attested by Aristarchus, a presumed metathesis for νεμεσσηθόμεν. But the

position of οἱ casts grave doubt on the line. Its sense, however, which led the scholiast on B and T to athetise (see main text below), is neither doubtful nor difficult.

<sup>21</sup> *Il.* xxiv 22–6 asserts that Hera, Poseidon and Athene opposed the rest of the gods who urged Hermes to steal Hector's corpse from Achilles.

<sup>22</sup> Stanford, in his edition of the *Odyssey* ad loc., takes παλαιά τε πολλά τε εἰδώς, said of Echeneus (157), to be the comparative reference for κάλλιον.



*The application of words evaluating action: excess and deficiency*

To establish the effect of Homeric values upon 'the concept of moral responsibility', Adkins proposes a schema of three sets of words (pp. 45 f.). His argument deserves the closest attention. According to it, we have to distinguish: (1) words for commendation/denigration in the competitive sphere; (2) words performing this function in the co-operative or quiet sphere; and (3) words like *αἰδώς* and *ἀεικής* which span both spheres. The words confined to the competitive sphere are taken to be very much more powerful than those confined to the quiet sphere. *αἰδώς* and *ἀεικής*, in association with competitive values, are taken to be strong, but their emotive power for promoting the quiet excellences is argued to be very weak. I hope to show that there is a link, neglected or denied by Adkins, between *τιμή*, the competitive standard, and the unfavourable evaluation of certain kinds of aggressive or unco-operative behaviour.

The 'key terms' for denigration of action in the competitive sphere, which Adkins cites and discusses, are *αἰσχρόν*, *αἰσχος* and *ἐλεγχείη*. A primary difficulty here is the lack of material. Homer has an extraordinarily rich vocabulary which may loosely be called ethical.<sup>23</sup> Only a fraction of this is examined by Adkins, whose principles of selection are asserted as if they were obvious facts of Homeric language. The unwary reader will draw the conclusion from Adkins' discussion of *αἰσχρόν* that this word both plays a fundamental role in the strongest denigration of action, and also provides a standard against which words of allegedly wider applicability, such as *ἀεικής*, may be measured. But *αἰσχρόν* occurs only twice in Homer, in similar contexts of *Iliad* ii.<sup>24</sup> *ἀεικής*, a word of approximately cognate sense, occurs very frequently and in some contexts similar to those in which *αἰσχρός* appears or could appear. With *πότμος*, *λοιγός* and *πήρη*, *ἀεικής* is a standard epithet but, what is much more important, it frequently qualifies *ἔργον*.<sup>25</sup> As we shall see, it suits Adkins' argument to make *αἰσχρόν*, but not *ἀεικής*, a key term of disvalue; but for Homer *ἀεικής* has a significance which it only in later Greek concedes to *αἰσχρός*. For Adkins' other key words of denigration there is more, but not overwhelming, evidence on which to build generalisations: *αἰσχος* occurs four times in both poems, and *ἐλεγχείη* is found twice in the *Odyssey* and three times in the *Iliad*. To this, however, could be added the occurrences (fifteen in all) of *ἔλεγχος*, *ἐλέγχιστος*, *ἐλεγχής* and *ἐλέγχειν*.

How are these words used? *αἰσχρόν* expresses what it would be for Agamemnon to return to Greece without a victory, and *ἐλέγχιστος* belongs to the same context.<sup>26</sup> This corresponds with Hector's prediction of *ἐλεγχείη* if he returned to Troy without fighting Achilles, after allowing the Trojans to be depleted by his *ἀτασθαλίαι*.<sup>27</sup> *ἔλεγχος* and its related forms seem to be particularly concerned with reproof for failure in war and warlike pursuits. This is certain enough to establish *ἐλεγχ-* as a very strong root-word, and it is associated with *αἰδώς*, as a means of inducing courageous behaviour, e.g. *αἰδώς*, *Ἄργεῖοι*,

<sup>23</sup> If anyone doubts this let him consult M. Hoffmann's *Die ethische Terminologie bei Homer* (Tübingen 1914). Hoffmann like Adkins shows convincingly that prowess in war is the first thing expected of the Homeric hero. But he also sees how the heroic qualities, based on the priority of victory, wealth, beauty, etc., may not prevent a hero from earning censure. Hoffmann sees the emergence of specifically moral thinking in the clash which arises from the condemnation which a hero may earn in spite of his satisfying all requirements of the heroic code, p. 100.

<sup>24</sup> *αἰσχρόν* (*Il.* ii 119; 298), of what it would be for Agamemnon to return to Greece without victory. Other forms of *αἰσχρός* do occur: *αἰσχιστος*, *Il.* ii 216 (of Thersites); *αἰσχίον*, *Il.* xxi 437, cf. *αἰσχροῦς*, *Od.* xviii 321; and three instances from the *Iliad* of

*αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσι* (iii 38; vi 325; xiii 768, cf. xxiv 238). *αἰσχρός* is not found in Hesiod.

<sup>25</sup> In descriptions of actions, apart from dying or warding off death, we find the following repeated line-closes: (*ἀναίνετο/ἐμήσατο/ἔτισατο/ὠμορε/εἴσιδεν*) *ἔργον ἀεικές* (*Od.* iii 265; xi 429; xv 236; xxii 222; *Il.* xiv 13); *ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο* (*Od.* xx 394; xxii 432); *ἀεικέα μήδετο ἔργα* (*Il.* xxii 395; xxiii 24; cf. *ἀεικίζεν* (or *ἀεικίζει*) *μενεαίνων*, xxiv 22; 54). These include references to the murderous act of Clytemnestra (for Aegisthus, cf. *ἀεικέα μερμηρίζων*, *Od.* iv 533), Achilles' maltreatment of Hector, and the suitors' behaviour in Odysseus' house.

<sup>26</sup> *Il.* ii 119, 298, 285, see Adkins 33 and *supra* n. 13.

<sup>27</sup> *Il.* xxii 104 ff., see Adkins 47 ff.

κακ' ἐλέγχεα, εἶδος ἀγητοί (*Il.* v 787; viii 228). Hence the fact that it occurs far more often in the *Iliad* than the *Odyssey*. But the fact that ἔλεγχος is so used gives no necessary proof of the inadequacy of Homeric language to condemn breaches of socially acceptable behaviour in non-military contexts. For we have yet to see how such actions are described or evaluated. Nor is failure in war or peace the only reference for ἔλεγχος. Odysseus is banished by Aeacus as being ἐλέγχιστος ζώντων, apparently on the grounds that he is hated by the gods.<sup>28</sup> So too with αἰσχος. That word certainly may be used to denigrate a man's military excellence.<sup>29</sup> But I find no evidence to hold that this is its specific function. Clytemnestra incurs αἰσχος by her murder of Agamemnon.<sup>30</sup> And the suitors, ὑβρίζοντες, perform αἰσχεα πόλλ' which would cause a πιτυτός who saw them to be angry (*Od.* i 228 f.).

This last passage merits a close look.

τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη·	221
οὐ μὲν τοι γενεήν γε θεοὶ νῶνυμνον ὀπίσσω	
θῆκαν, ἐπεὶ σέ γε τοῖον ἐγείνατο Πηνελόπεια.	
ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἶπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον·	
τίς δαίς, τίς δὲ ὄμιλος ὄδ' ἔπλετο; τίπτε δέ σε χρεώ;	
εἰλαπίνῃ ἢ γάμος; ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔρανος τάδε γ' ἐστίν.	226
ὣς τέ μοι ὑβρίζοντες ὑπερφιάλως δοκέουσι	
δαίνυσθαι κατὰ δῶμα. νεμεσσήσαιτό κεν ἀνὴρ	
αἰσχεα πόλλ' ὀρόων, ὅς τις πιτυτός γε μετέλθοι' . . .	
'ξείν', ἐπεὶ ἄρ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνείρειαι ἠδὲ μεταλλάς . . .	231

With regard to αἰσχεα here, the words of Athena-Mentes, Adkins writes, 'Telemachus, not the suitors, should feel ashamed, for it is he whose condition is *aischron*. Any feeling of quiet values derives from the fact that, as is said, a *pinutos*, a prudent man, should feel anger, *nemesis*, at the sight' (p. 42). Now, there is certainly a passage in which Telemachus is censured through the word αἰσχος (and other words) for his failure to prevent the beggar Odysseus from being αἰκισθήμεναι, *Od.* xviii 215–25. But it seems to me both an unwarranted assumption to suppose that the plural αἰσχεα behaves in the same way here, and also contrary to the evidence of the context. There is no suggestion that Athene is criticizing Telemachus, to whom her attitude is kindly and courteous; nor does he take her words as a criticism.<sup>31</sup> In the later passage cited above there is no doubt that he is the object of Penelope's χόλος, and he acknowledges this (*Od.* xviii 227). Where one speaker expects his auditor to feel ashamed this is regularly indicated in the text by such words as νεικέειν, ὀνειδίζειν, λωβᾶσθαι.<sup>32</sup> Here too we have such a word νεμεσσήσαιτο, which is the normal correlate or sanction of a breach of αἰδώς,<sup>33</sup> but its reference is not Telemachus but

<sup>28</sup> *Od.* x.72 ff. These are the words with which Aeacus rejects Odysseus' pleas to the winds. He goes on, οὐ γάρ μοι θέμις ἐστὶ κομιζέμεν οὐδ' ἀποπέμπειν/ἄνδρα τὸν ὅς κε θεοῖσιν ἀπέχθηται μακάρεσσιν.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Il.* vi 524, of Paris.

<sup>30</sup> *Od.* xi 433 'she brought αἰσχος on women of time to come'. Adkins explains this instance of αἰσχος as due to the fact that Clytemnestra is a woman, 45: 'similar condemnation of Agamemnon and the suitors is not found . . . the demands of success are too strong in the case of men'. But Agamemnon and the suitors did not commit the same kinds of act (though I shall give reasons for thinking that the suitors are condemned in very strong terms). What Adkins does not mention in this context (but see p. 43) is the fact that both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are described as doing

or planning something αἰκίης (*Od.* iii 265; iv 533); they are both δολόμητις (*Od.* iii 259; xi 422).

<sup>31</sup> After Athene learns the full situation from Telemachus she urges him to take thought for expelling the suitors (269 ff., 295 ff.) and to adopt Orestes as a model, in order to be well-spoken of by posterity. This the heroic code requires, but Athene does not charge Telemachus with αἰσχος at the present time, and he receives her words as 'kindly, fatherly and unforgettable' (306–8), hardly the reaction of a man censured in the strongest terms.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Il.* vi 325; vii 95; xiii 623.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. C. E. von Erffa, 'ΑΙΔΩΣ und verwandte Begriffe in ihrer Entwicklung von Homer bis Demokrit', *Philologus* suppl. 30, 2 (1937) 36. E. Laroche, *Histoire de la racine NEM- en grec ancien* (Paris 1949) 91 f.

those engaged in 'insolent feasting'.<sup>34</sup> The suitors are charged with a *failure in co-operation*. Their behaviour would provoke a prudent man to anger, and a prudent man is available in *Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος*.<sup>35</sup> In other words, Athene is saying that the suitors' ὄβρις, their αἴσχρα, merits νέμεσις; the fact that they are ἀναιδεῖς (254) insensitive to this, is something she learns from Telemachus' replies to her questions.

If confirmation of αἴσχρα as a reflection on the suitors is still needed it can be provided by *Od.* ii 85 ff. Telemachus has summoned the people of Ithaca to assembly, and he protests to them about the 'unendurable actions' (64) of the suitors. The Ithacans themselves (or the suitors) are asked to show sensitivity to *nemesis* (νεμεσσήθητε καὶ αὐτοί), to care for what neighbouring peoples will say (αἰδέσθητε) and to fear the wrath of the gods.<sup>36</sup> Calling on Zeus and Themis Telemachus urges his fellow-countrymen to support him against the suitors (68–71). Now the passages I have just cited may be construed as complaints against the Ithacans for their *failure* to support Telemachus, their failure to react by *nemesis* against the excessive actions of the suitors. But the overriding purpose of this speech is to attack the suitors and rally support against them. Whether or not the suitors are the reference at νεμεσσήθητε καὶ αὐτοί ff. Antinous, their representative, reacts as one so confronted:

Τηλέμαχ' ὑφαγόρη, μένος ἄσχετε, ποῖον ἔειπες  
ἡμέας αἰσχύνων; ἐθέλοις δέ κε μῶμον ἀνάψαι. 85-6

Antinous takes Telemachus to be αἰσχύνειν (bringing αἴσχος on) the suitors: 'you would attach disgrace (μῶμος) to us'. He goes on,

σοὶ δ' οὐ τι μνηστῆρες Ἀχαιῶν αἴτιοί εἰσιν,  
ἀλλὰ φίλη μήτηρ, ἣ τοι περὶ κέρδεα οἶδεν.

This passage shows that Antinous does not deny the appropriateness of Telemachus' bringing a charge of shameful conduct for the treatment he has received. But Antinous tries to make Penelope responsible, which is a very different thing. If αἴσχος and its related forms were confined in Homer to denigration of failure in competition, Antinous could not take Telemachus' speech as something which besmirches the suitors. But he does so take it, and offers a defence.

I submit then that αἴσχρα at *Od.* i 229 is a comment which reflects on the suitors and on them alone. This does not mean that they will, if they hear themselves so described, feel ashamed. For that depends on their sensitivity to αἰδώς, which is weak, in the absence of any effective coercive power. But it does mean that others *may* use the strongest language to denigrate their conduct. In its context αἴσχρα can be taken as an objective description of 'ugly' acts, like the murder of Agamemnon and the maltreatment of Hector's body. Like ἀεικής, which occurs frequently in narrative, αἴσχος may be used to describe and judge the action of persons who are not actually present. Indeed, Penelope complains to Medon of the suitors' ἀεικέα ἔργα (*Od.* iv 694 f.), a phrase surely synonymous with Athene's αἴσχρα. Adkins however attempts to distinguish these two expressions, arguing that ἀεικέα ἔργα are

<sup>34</sup> So von Erffa, *op. cit.* 21 ff.

<sup>35</sup> The persuasion in Athene's remarks is directed at Telemachus in this respect. He should react with νέμεσις, as he does in his speech at the assembly (*cf.* μένος ἄσχετε 85, κεχολωμένον, 185).

<sup>36</sup> I have been unable to find any adequate discussion of this passage. Merry-Riddell and the Budé editor, Bérard, appear to take lines 64–9 as a particular reference to the suitors, whereas the λάος is addressed from σχέσθε, φίλοι 70 ff. Eustathius and the schol. take the addressees as the λάος throughout

and many modern editors and translators follow suit. Since Telemachus is appealing to national sentiment at the destruction of 'his house' this seems, on balance, preferable. νεμεσσήθητε will then mean 'be angered at yourselves' (*sc.* for allowing the suitors a free hand), *cf.* νεμεσσήθητε δὲ θυμῶ (*Il.* xvi 544), an exhortation to military prowess; or 'share my anger', active for passive, *cf.* Ebeling on νεμεσσηθέωμεν, *Il.* xxiv 52 and n. 20 above. My argument is not affected by this problem, though it gains a supplement if the reference is to the suitors.

discreditable to their agents (as well as patients?), whereas *αἴσχα* reflect only on the person who suffers them (p. 43). But instead of concluding that this flexibility of *ἀεικής* shows a parallel attitude of distaste in Homer towards excess and deficiency, Adkins draws the doubtful inference that *αἰσχρόν(ς)* is a more powerful word than *ἀεικής* because (in its two instances) it is associated purely with failure in competitive excellence. In fact both *αἰσχρός* and *ἀεικής* are expected to evoke an attitude of aversion towards what is 'unseemly' or 'inappropriate'. So Poseidon in the theomachy (*Il.* xxi 436 ff.) challenges Apollo,

Φοῖβε, τίη δὴ νῶϊ διέσταμεν; οὐδὲ ἔοικεν  
ἀρξάντων ἑτέρων· τὸ μὲν αἴσχιον, αἶ κ' ἀμαχητὶ  
ἴομεν Οὐλυμπόνδε Διὸς ποτὶ χαλκοβατῆς δῶ.

This association of *οὐδὲ ἔοικεν* and *αἴσχιον* is important,<sup>37</sup> for *οὐκ ἔοικε* is the root-meaning of *ἀεικής*.

The overlap of function between *αἰσχος* (*αἰσχρόν*) and *ἀεικής* is a feature of other words associated with them. *θέμις* as well as avoidance of *ἐλεγχείη* is involved in Eumaeus' treatment of Odysseus (*Od.* xiv 38, 56). And Aeacus links *ἐλέγχιστε* with *οὐ θέμις* (*Od.* x 72 f.). In addition to *αἰσχος* and *λώβη*, Telemachus' failure to protect the beggar, Odysseus, from the insults of the suitors, brings from Penelope a charge, *οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὐδὲ νόημα* (*Od.* xviii 215, repeated in almost identical words, 220). It is hard to establish the force of all these terms, but their use to reinforce the *agathos* standard is clearly related to a reciprocal function in which excessive action is decried. For instance, Achilles' maltreatment of Hector's corpse is also due, in the judgment of Apollo, to *φρένες οὔτε ἐναίσιοιμοι οὔτε νόημα/γναμπτόν* (*Il.* xxiv 40 f.); as well as being unjust, the suitors, in Athene's words, are *οὐ τι νοήμονες* (*Od.* ii 282). Negative *ἔοικε* spans such different situations as Agamemnon's not having a prize (*Il.* i 119), the inappropriateness of rejecting a request (*Od.* viii 358) and the reason adduced by Achilles why 'Ajax and Idomeneus should not upbraid each other with angry words' (*Il.* xxiii 492 ff.).

If 'lacking sense' and 'behaving inappropriately' are charges which may be brought against both defective and excessive behaviour it is worth asking whether Adkins is correct to place such weight on expressions which he finds confined to judgments of failure in competition. Again, while he is undoubtedly right to draw attention to the power of *αἰσχρόν*, *αἰσχος* and *ἐλεγχείη* in judgments of this kind, I have argued that *αἰσχος* may be used to refer to actions by heroes which are successful *but* exceed acceptable behaviour.

A further case in point here seems to be the treatment of Helen and Paris. Helen, certainly, is the object of *αἰσχος*: as she says, Castor and Polydeuces have not joined the expedition from Mycenae, *αἴσχα δειδίστες καὶ ὀνειδέα πόλλ' ἄ μοί ἐστιν* (*Il.* iii 242). Her brothers have been deterred from coming to Troy by the shame and reproach attaching to her. Now we might expect a woman's conduct in this situation to be judged differently from a man's. But is this so? After commenting that death as an infant would have been preferable to her present position (*Il.* vi 344 ff.) Helen remarks to Hector,

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάδε γ' ὦδε θεοὶ κακὰ τεκμήρατο  
ἀνδρὸς ἔπειτ' ὠφελλον ἀμείνονος εἶναι ἄκοιτις,  
ὃς ἤδη νέμεσίν τε καὶ αἴσχα πόλλ' ἀνθρώπων.  
τοῦτ' ὄτ' οὔτ' ἄρ νῦν φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω  
ἔσονται.

349-53

<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, Apollo, under the promptings of *αἰδώς* (468 f.) tells Poseidon, 'You would not think me *σαόφρονα* if I fought with you for the sake of pitiful mortals' (462 ff.); this shows that *σαόφρον* (confined to the 'quiet' sphere in Adkins' view) could be used of someone who had good grounds for

fighting. For the parallelism between gods and men, as this affects motives, see G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge 1966) 195 ff. Athene's rebuke of Ares (*Il.* xv 129) for his loss of *αἰδώς* and *νῆος* is a good example, *contra* Wilamowitz, *Glaube der Hellenen* i 353 f.

Clearly Paris is attacked for his cowardice, but that is not all that is involved here. Helen concludes by observing that Zeus has brought upon them a *κακὸν μόνον*,

ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω  
ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' αἰδιμοὶ ἐσσομένοισι. 357-8

This looks like a variant on *αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι*, and must refer to the adultery and its consequences. In fact, Paris's success in this exploit is singled out by Hector as something which has brought *πῆμα* to the Trojans, *χάρμα* to enemies and *κατηφείη* to Paris himself (*Il.* iii 46-51).<sup>38</sup> *κατηφείη* is equivalent to *ἐλεγχος* or *αἰσχος*, for *κατηφέες* is used by Eupitheos (*Od.* xxiv 432) to denote what the relatives of the suitors will become for failure to avenge them;<sup>39</sup> he goes on, *λώβη γὰρ τάδε γ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι*. Menelaus, the object of Paris's breach of hospitality, is insulted by the Trojans with *αἰσχος* and *λώβη* (*Il.* xiii 622). But this seems to have a parallel in the judgments made by Trojans about Paris and Helen. *νέμεσις*, sometimes resulting in charges of *αἰσχος*, may be expressed by commentators on excessive or unco-operative actions, just as the person affected by such actions may experience shame.

Odysseus explicitly associates 'abandoning strife' (*ληγέμεναι δ' ἔριδος κακομηχάνου*) by Achilles with the allocation of *τιμῆ*, *ὄφρα σε μάλλον/τίωσ' Ἀργείων ἡμὲν νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες* (*Il.* ix 257 f.).<sup>40</sup> Eumaeus (*Od.* xiv 83 f.) asserts that:

οὐ μὲν σχέτλια ἔργα θεοὶ μάκαρες φιλέουσιν,  
ἀλλὰ δίκην τίουσι καὶ αἴσιμα ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων.<sup>41</sup>

These passages show that the highest form of commendation, which is based upon *τιμῆ*, can be used to commend quiet excellence and to condemn certain breaches of it. To be sure, we do not find people becoming *κακοί* as a result of aggression or injustice. *ἀρετή* as such remains unaffected. But *ἀγαθοί* do not become *κακοί* in Homer as a result of failures in competition. The most that ever happens is charges of acting like a *κακός*, a very different thing.

Nevertheless, there are passages in which 'abandoning strife' is specifically called a characteristic of the *ἐσθλός*. *στρεπταὶ μὲν τε φρένες ἐσθλῶν*, says Iris to Poseidon (*Il.* xv 203) and the god abandons his quarrel with Zeus. Phoenix tells Achilles that he should not maintain an inflexible heart, *στρεπτοὶ δέ τε καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοί* (*Il.* ix 497). And a variant of these phrases is used by Poseidon in his appeal to the Achaeans to recover their spirits, *ἀλλ' ἀκεώμεθα θᾶσσον ἀκεσταί τοι φρένες ἐσθλῶν* (*Il.* xiii 115). These passages are important, for they imply that the *ἐσθλός* is someone open to persuasion, an essential characteristic of any concept of a moral agent. They are not typical assertions, and may be late entrants to our text. But the same principles are enunciated in essence by Achilles, in the reconciliation, when he says, *οὐδέ τί με χρῆ/ἀσκελέως αἰεὶ μενεαινέμεν* (*Il.* xix 67 f.); and again by Odysseus

<sup>38</sup> Here again, the main burden of Hector's speech is Paris's cowardice. But *κατηφείη*, in its context, must refer to 'reproaches' brought against Paris for the consequences of his abduction of Helen, cf. *κακῶν ἐνεχ' ὅσσα ἔοργας* *ibid.* 57.

<sup>39</sup> For *κατηφείη* coupled with *ὄνειδος* in hypothetical statements involving military failure, cf. *Il.* xvi 498; xvii 556.

<sup>40</sup> Professor Page has convincingly shown that elements of *Iliad* ix, especially the speech of Phoenix, introduce the language and moral thought of a time later than the rest of the poem, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley, California, 1963) 300 ff. (The passage quoted above is immediately preceded by the unique phrase, *φιλοφροσύνη γὰρ ἀμείνων* 256.) I am

not concerned here with the undoubtedly late introduction of sentiments based on a 'guilt culture', but those which relate restraint and malleability to the heroic code of *τιμῆ*.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. R. Mondolfo, *Problemi del Pensiero Antico* (Bologna 1935) 8 ff. As Mr J. H. Kells points out to me, in *Il.* xxiii 570 ff. Menelaus, having been cheated in the chariot-race by Antilochus, does not enforce his superior *ἀρετή* by seizing the prize, lest he should be thought to have compelled Antilochus by lies. Instead, Menelaus offers Antilochus either arbitration (by the Achaean elders) or evidentiary oath (presided over by Poseidon) as to the facts of the case. Menelaus is here bowing to *δίκη* of some kind and *θέμις*, cf. line 581 and comments by Adkins 56.

when he tells Agamemnon, οὐ μὲν γάρ τι νεμεσητὸν βασιλῆα/ἄνδρ' ἀπαρέσασθαι, ὅτε τις πρότερος χαλεπήγη (*ibid.* 182 f.).

Adkins recognises three passages which might seem counter to his general classification of powerful and weak words for praise and blame.<sup>42</sup> These he calls 'persuasive definitions', that is, passages in which someone attempts 'to alter the normal usage of Homeric terms of value in his own interest' (pp. 38 ff.). E.g., after Eurymachus has objected to Penelope's speech in favour of the beggar, Odysseus, being permitted to try the bow, on the grounds that his success would bring them ἐλέγχεα (*cf.* line 255), Penelope replies:

Εὐρύμαχ', οὐ πως ἔστιν εὐκλείας κατὰ δῆμον  
ἔμμεναι οἳ δὴ οἶκον ἀτιμάζοντες ἔδουσι  
ἄνδρὸς ἀριστῆος· τί δ' ἐλέγχεα ταῦτα τίθεισθε;

*Od.* xxi 331–334

Adkins comments: 'Evidently Penelope wishes by implication to term the suitors' breach of the quiet virtues *elenchos*, and indeed more of an *elenchos* than to fail in drawing the bow: a use of words which I have said to be impossible. In fact, neither *euklees* nor *elenchos* is so used anywhere else in the Homeric poems; and the situation explains their use here. Penelope is at the end of her tether; and in these circumstances she (or rather the poet) attempts a new use of language, a 'persuasive definition', which, if accepted, would effectively restrain the suitors. The definition cannot succeed . . . [it] must fail, as it fails here, to affect the action of an *agathos*; for in performing an action in which he remains *agathos* he cannot incur *elencheie*.'

Adkins is surely right to call attention to this passage, and I would accept his interpretation of Penelope's persuasive intentions. But I fail to see how it is impossible for Penelope to use words in a particular way, unless what she says is ungrammatical or nonsense; which it clearly is not. Penelope is saying that it is inconsistent for men to be concerned about projected ἐλέγχεα (if the beggar were successful where the suitors have failed) whose ἀτιμία to the estate of an *aristos* makes εὐκλεία among the people impossible.<sup>43</sup> And Odysseus, in his judgment on the suitors, accuses them of fearing neither the gods, οὔτε τιν' ἀνθρώπων νέμεσιν κατόπισθεν ἔσεσθαι (*Od.* xxii 39 f.). He also refers to Eurymachus' associates, which cannot exclude the suitors, as οὐκ ἀγαθοί (see p. 126, n. 16). In the absence of any decisive evidence to show what the δῆμος was saying about the suitors appeal to 'the facts of Homeric life' is an argument from silence. Since we have no reply from Eurymachus, but a speech from Telemachus, the effect of Penelope's remarks cannot be judged.

One of the main functions of moral discourse is to persuade or to dissuade. In Homer, especially in the *Iliad*, we meet a large number of relatively stereotyped situations. On the basis of these it is clear that short-coming in battle is something which earns severe reproof, ἔλεγχος, ὄνειδος, νείκεα, etc., such that this or the fear of it tends to promote stalwart behaviour. But such a usage of words does not licence the conclusion that Homer's audience would have found the 'reproach' implied by Penelope's remarks totally anomalous or necessarily ineffectual. If the suitors' εὐκλεία was affected by their behaviour in Odysseus' house then Penelope's statement would be well-grounded. If it was not, I should prefer to take Penelope's comments as an indication of the considerable flexibility, characteristic of most languages, in the application of words evaluating action. Tidiness is notoriously not a feature of moral discourse.

<sup>42</sup> In addition to *Od.* xxi 331 ff. discussed above, he refers to *Od.* xvi 418 ff., and *Il.* ix 341 f., pp. 39–40.

<sup>43</sup> Of possible interest here is the remark by Zeus to Poseidon (*Od.* xiii 41 f.) that it would be difficult or dangerous (χαλεπὸν) πρὸς βύτατον καὶ ἄριστον ἀτιμίησιν ἰάλλειν. Odysseus himself attacks the

suitors on the argument that crime does not pay, *cf.* *Od.* xviii 125 ff., where he presents a grim warning, based on his own feigned experience, of what happens to ἀθεμίσσιοι, the doers of ἀνάσθαλα, and then relates this to the suitors' conduct, see Adkins 65 ff. on 'moral gods'; Hoffmann, *Ethische Terminologie* 39 ff.

A further concession which Adkins wisely makes is the remark: 'in most cases, of course, the claim of *arete* remains a claim, for his fellows will give the individual *agathos* no opportunity of overstepping the mark' (p. 61). But, as Adkins goes on, an *agathos* will be restrained by his fellows, should he wish to flout their interests, if and only if they have the power to restrain him. In such situations the claims of *arete*, whatever they may be, are irrelevant; for what is at stake is neither values nor ethics, but power and coercion.

### *The standard of appropriateness*

To come to a thoroughly clear understanding of Homeric values is a formidable, perhaps an impossible, task. Thanks to Professor Adkins we are undoubtedly clearer about certain things: the gods enter relatively little into Homeric 'ethics', the sanctions of which are not duty or conscience but primarily public opinion. I should like to conclude this paper with a few suggestions concerning the values in Homer which may help to show my agreement and disagreement with Professor Adkins' position.

I believe that we see in Homer the application of a standard of 'appropriateness'. The term is a vague one, but it gains content and some degree of precision from the wide range of expressions which may be classified by it. These include words already discussed, whose primary reference is to conduct in battle. But the appropriateness which this requires should not, I think, be divorced from acts commended or disparaged by such terms as *κατὰ κόσμον* and *οὐ κατὰ κόσμον*; *θέμις* and *οὐ θέμις*; *κατὰ μοῖραν* and *οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν*; *ἔοικε* and *οὐδὲ ἔοικε*; *χρή* and *οὐ χρή*. What these words express may also be denoted in certain situations by adjectives such as *αἴσιμος*, *ἐναῖσιμος*, *ἀθέμιστος*, and nouns like *ὑβρις* and *ὑπερβασία*. 'Appropriateness' is closely, if not logically, related to social status and the behaviour this demands in a wide range of circumstances.<sup>44</sup> It is a name for what Finley calls 'strongly entrenched notions regarding the proper ways for a man to behave, with respect to property, toward other men'.<sup>45</sup>

Many of these terms may be treated as formulae, in the sense that they occur repeatedly in the same or similar contextual and metrical situations: e.g. *ὡς ἐπιεικές* closes lines concerned with gift-giving;<sup>46</sup> the adjective *ἄρτιος* is confined to the terminal phrase, *φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν* or *φρεσὶν ἄρτια ἦδη*.<sup>47</sup> *θέμις* is sometimes related to activities which involve the gods; but under it comes also treatment of guests or strangers (who come from Zeus), greeting one's father, lamenting for a husband, making a reply, etc.<sup>48</sup> The common phrases, *κατὰ κόσμον*, *κατὰ μοῖραν*, and *ἔοικε*, have considerable overlap of function: they may all be used to commend 'speaking',<sup>49</sup> and in general cover what we should call moral and non-moral spheres of activity. Thus 'cowering like a *κακός*' is *οὐ σε ἔοικε* (*Il.* ii 190); Polyphemus' destruction of Odysseus' men is *οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Od.* ix 352);<sup>50</sup> Hector's stripping of Patroclus is *οὐ κατὰ κόσμον* (*Il.* xvii 205);<sup>51</sup> Achilles did not do this to Eetion, *σεβάσαστο γὰρ τό γε θυμῷ*

<sup>44</sup> So Adkins on *κατὰ μοῖραν*, '“You have spoken with due reference to the present situation and/or to your place in society” is implied', 20 f.

<sup>45</sup> *The World of Odysseus* (London 1962, Penguin Books) 79; 122.

<sup>46</sup> *Il.* xix 147; xxiii 537; *Od.* viii 389.

<sup>47</sup> *Il.* v 326; xiv 92; *Od.* viii 240; xix 248.

<sup>48</sup> *Il.* i 286; x 169; *Od.* iii 268; xvi 202, etc. Absence of or failure to acknowledge *θέμιστες* (and *δίκαι*) is a characteristic of the Cyclopes singled out by Odysseus, *Od.* ix 112; 215. But it is notable that this does not exclude maintenance of order in each family-group: 'the Cyclopes issue mandates (*θεμιστεύει*) over their wives and children as individuals, without regard to one another'. In other

words, *θέμις* normally covers wider spheres of activity than internal family relationships.

<sup>49</sup> *Il.* ii 73; ix 33; *Od.* iii 268; xi 451; xiv 56; xxiv 286.

<sup>50</sup> *μοῖρα* has a sense which it is impossible to fix precisely; but its social reference is well illustrated by this passage. Odysseus denounces Polyphemus for his cannibalism by observing, 'how would anyone from the cities of men come near you in the future? For you have acted *οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν*'. G. Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens* (London 1941) 50, makes the economic and social functions of *μοῖρα* primary.

<sup>51</sup> The same expression is used to comment unfavourably upon Thersites' taunts (*Il.* ii 214); Ares' destruction of the Achaeans (*Il.* v 759); Odysseus'

(*Il.* vi 417). But Demodocus sings *λίην γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον* (*Od.* viii 489); wedding-gifts are *ῥοσσα ἔοικε* (*Od.* i 278 etc.); and Menelaus wonders how to judge an omen *κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Od.* xv 170). From a linguistic and stylistic standpoint the differences between these words may be of considerable interest. But, at the risk of appearing to over-generalise, I would suggest that in a philosophical context most of the differences are minimal or unimportant. For one sense or function of all these expressions is to comment favourably or otherwise on modes of behaviour.

The fact that radically different (as we would say) situations are evaluated in the same or similar way, or by the same expression, does not entail that they are rated at the same value. There is an appropriate way of stowing gear, of preparing a feast, of behaving towards strangers, etc. In every case it is the external aspect of the situation which receives evaluation. If it looks right, or sounds right, then it is right. And the criterion for what looks right or sounds right is common opinion or social precedent. This aesthetic manner of judgment is clearly behind expressions such as *κατὰ κόσμον* or *ἔοικε*, and it extends to *αἰσχρός*, *καλός* and *ἀεικής*.<sup>52</sup> With regard to *ἀεικής* Professor Adkins writes, 'anyone defeated and killed in Homer may be said to have met an end which is *aeikes*; and here naturally it is the vanquished . . . who is discredited' (p. 42). But the fact that *ἀεικής* occurs in some contexts which we should call moral does not show that it discredits *anyone* in a description of death. In fact, of course, death in battle can be glorious, as it is for Hector.<sup>53</sup> *ἀεικέα πότμον ἔπεσπον* is but one of many formulae for being killed. The relation between *ἀεικέα πότμον*, *ἀεικέα πήρην* and the use of *ἀεικής* in *ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο* or *ἀναίνετο ἔργον ἀεικές* is not easy to define. But I think the common denominator is not 'discredit' but the 'ugly' look of the thing or situation. To say of death that it is *ἀεικής* is to take up the attitude of aversion which Achilles as a *ψυχή* describes to Odysseus (*Od.* xi 488 ff.). We should probably say that it is the 'ugliness' of what Clytemnestra did to Agamemnon, or Achilles to Hector that involves the agent in discredit.

The violation of 'quiet' virtue expressed by *ὑβρις* or *ὑπερβασία* may fetch a corresponding charge of lacking *αἰδώς* or *νόημα*.<sup>54</sup> To do what is *αἴσιμος* or *ἐναίσιμος* is to avoid both excess and deficiency. As Menelaus says:

νεμεσῶμαι δὲ καὶ ἄλλω  
ἀνδρὶ ξεινοδόκῳ, ὅς κ' ἔξοχα μὲν φιλέησιν,  
ἔξοχα δ' ἐχθαίρησιν· ἀμείνω δ' αἴσιμα πάντα.

*Od.* xv 70 f.

Eumaeus endorses the same sentiments, *ἀλλὰ δίκην τίουσιν (sc. θεοί) καὶ αἴσιμα ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων* (*Od.* xiv 84). Poseidon observes, *ἐσθλὸν καὶ τὸ τέτυκται, ὅτ' ἄγγελος αἴσιμα εἶδη* (*Il.* xv 207). If we examine the range of *αἴσιμος* and *ἐναίσιμος* we find that these words are applied to a variety of activities; but they are found particularly in contexts where some aspect of *τιμῆ* is involved: e.g. showing hospitality to guests or strangers (*Od.* vii 299; xviii 220), or being a good commander (*Od.* x 383 f.). Failure here may be attributed to *φρένες* which are *οὐκ ἐναίσιμοι* (or *οὐκ ἔμπεδοι*), and the same phrase is also used by Apollo to condemn Achilles for his breach of *τιμῆ* with regard to Hector (*Il.* xxiv 40). Priam takes the special protection accorded to Hector's body by the gods as a due return for his *ἐναίσιμα δῶρα*, as in fact it is (*Il.* xxiv 425 ff.). The familiar practice of making amends by lavish presents is nothing but

begging (*Od.* xx 181) and Euryalus' challenge of Odysseus (*Od.* viii 179). J. Kerscheneiner, *Kosmos* (München 1962) 5 ff., rightly associates (ὃ) *κατὰ κόσμον* with such expressions as *κατ' αἴσαν*, *κατὰ μοῖραν*. She observes 'Es wird vor allen von der Tätigkeit des Heerführers gebraucht', p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, California 1951) 109, n. 26.

<sup>53</sup> *Il.* xxiv 214-16.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Od.* xx 170 f.; ii 282; see in general W. C. Greene, *Moirā* (Camb. Mass. 1944) 17 ff.



the concrete application of the principle of 'appropriateness';<sup>55</sup> gifts help to restore the balance; they add to the 'injured' man's *τιμή* at the expense of the aggressive party.

To act appropriately is to show *αἰδώς*, to be sensitive to *νέμεσις* or 'what people will say'. It is expected of the hero that he will display courage and prowess; hence the effectiveness in battle of appeals to his *αἰδώς* as a means of coercion. Certain family and social obligations are regarded in the same light; to fail to meet them is to risk depreciation of *τιμή*. But it is also expected of the hero that he show some respect for the *τιμή* of others. Alcinoos tells Euryalus to apologise to Odysseus for insulting him *οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Od.* viii 396), and the apology is to be backed up by gifts; the respect which Achilles shows to Nestor by making him a present at the games is also *κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Il.* xxiii 626). Antilochus, though he successfully cheats Menelaus in the chariot-race, asks for indulgence, when challenged, toward his youthful *ὑπερβασίῃ* (*Il.* xxiii 589), and he offers the horse he has won.

The fact that breaches of the respect expected towards another's *τιμή* can be amended by gifts may help to explain why such aggressive actions are not held to involve *ἐλεγχείη*. Nothing can repair a defeat once it has been suffered: it stands as a perpetual reproach. But insults or acts of injustice may be repaired by suitably generous gifts, and in such cases the adjustment of *τιμή*, if it is accepted, wipes out the reproach of the injured party.<sup>56</sup> Eurymachus makes such an offer to Odysseus (*Od.* xxii 54 ff.) though without success. No such compensation would be available to Agamemnon if he returned to Greece without victory.

Just as a man's worth is estimated in terms of what others think of him, so what a man can get away with depends on what others will permit. An appeal for fair-play by a minority is unlikely to prove successful: thus Mentor's attempts to stir up the *demos* against the suitors are rejected by Leiocritus as *οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Od.* ii 251). They are inappropriate remarks because the suitors know themselves to have the upper hand. Somewhat similarly, Euryalus tells Laodamus that he has spoken *κατὰ μοῖραν* in challenging Odysseus (*Od.* viii 396). Such an expression looks to the general approval of the relevant group of people. To flout it is to set up some superior principle. Both Agamemnon and Diomedes accept remarks by Nestor as *κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Il.* i 286; viii 146) but for both a belief that the appropriate action would involve loss of personal *τιμή* is sufficient reason to act otherwise. In fact, Diomedes is eventually persuaded and Agamemnon learns through events of his mistake. But it would be wrong, I think, to see a clash here between moral standards and personal autonomy. Agamemnon and Diomedes opt for what they think people expect. Far from ignoring public opinion, both heroes are all too conscious of it. They fear that acceptance of Nestor's pleas will involve more opprobrium than ignoring them.

'Homeric values', says Adkins, 'suit Homeric society' (p. 55). But the fact is, as Finley observes, that we know scarcely anything beyond the values of the aristocracy.<sup>57</sup> How far the common people felt themselves bound by the same system is something which cannot be determined.<sup>58</sup> Homer speaks primarily from the perspective of the *ἀγαθός*. Hence, as I

<sup>55</sup> On this aspect of *τιμή* and 'giving' see Adkins' valuable paper, 'Honour and Punishment in the Homeric Poems', *BICS* vii (1960) 26-8. See also W. J. Verdenius, 'Aidos bei Homer', *Mnemosyne* xii (1944) 58 ff.

<sup>56</sup> As Adkins puts it, *BICS loc. cit.*, 'in phrases like *τίθειν τιμήν* or *ἀποτίθειν*, *τιμή* is thought of as something concrete, some commodity which may be transferred from one person to another', p. 27.

<sup>57</sup> *The World of Odysseus* 130 f. Jaeger, *Paideia* i 6, considered it improbable that in living speech *ἀρετή* had the narrow Homeric sense. See also von Erffa, *op. cit.*, 36, 'nur der Stand der *ἀγαθοί* ist für den Dichter von Bedeutung'.

<sup>58</sup> I do not accept with Adkins that an historical reference for Homeric 'society' can be found in the individual *oikos*, such that Homeric values can be seen to derive consistently from its needs (see above p. 122). No doubt Homer gives us much valuable evidence on this and other institutions of his own past, which have been so skilfully analysed by Dr Moses Finley (*The World of Odysseus* [London, 1962]; 'Homer and Mycenae: Property and Tenure', *Historia* vi [1957] 133-59; 'Marriage, sale and gift in the Homeric world', *Seminar* xii [1954] 7-33). But the plain fact is that a consistent pattern of society does not emerge from Homer. In addition to the autonomous household the poems also recognise

have already observed, it is misleading to regard *ἀγαθός* as the supreme term of commendation in contexts where the interrelations of *ἀγαθοί* are involved. For the heroes would not be heroes, *ἀγαθοί*, unless they acknowledged in one another the possession of *τιμή*. All *ἀγαθοί* are superior to all *κακοί*, and it is expected of the *ἀγαθός* that he will not behave like a *κακός*. But the gulf between *ἀγαθοί* and *κακοί* is unbridgable and in a sense irrelevant to much of the 'moral' language of Homer. What motivates the *ἀγαθός* is not merely showing himself superior to the *κακός*, but outstripping his fellow *ἀγαθοί*.<sup>59</sup> Hence the sensitivity of the heroes to their own *τιμή*. Prowess in war, status, wealth, due observation of the basic social conventions—these are the marks of *τιμή* and the targets of public opinion. Any derogatory comment in this context is likely and expected to evoke some competitive action or remark. But the language used to decry an *ἀγαθός* for some deficiency is often used to condemn him for some excess. And in the latter case the gods are sometimes introduced to endorse a code which cannot be effectively enforced by the human victims. *αἰδώς*, *αἰσχος*, *ἐναίσυμος*, *ἀεικής*, *νέμεσις* and the range of phrases based upon *μοῖρα*, *θέμις*, etc., allow no clear distinction to be drawn between the conduct appropriate to heroes and the preservation of some basic social or moral norms. The very rare word *αἰσχρόν*, and *ἐλεγχείη* are restricted to the public response to defeat. *ὑβρις*, *ὑπερβασία* and some other words are attached only to excess. But the restriction of some terms to one side rather than the other does not show that only deficiency can be adequately condemned by the poet. Where the group of *ἀγαθοί* is sufficiently strong its own condemnation is enough to induce one member to make reparations for excessive action. And this is precisely what we should expect. For the logic of *τιμή* requires attention to the rights of some others, though not of course equal rights. Finley says, 'it is in the nature of honour that it must be exclusive, or at least hierarchic'.<sup>60</sup> That is quite correct. But every *ἀγαθός* must possess *τιμή*, to qualify as such, and some *τιμή* is not confined to *ἀγαθοί*. The clash between Agamemnon and Achilles evokes a crisis in Homeric morality because the two possess such great *τιμή*. No higher human authority exists. In the case of Patroclus, whose ranking is considerably lower than that of Achilles, the latter can simply say, without argument, that Patroclus is not to storm Troy without him because this would bring dishonour (*Il.* xvi 90).

Within such a system (which is by no means systematic) there is clearly nothing comparable to a *purely moral* concept of responsibility such as we find in the ethics of Kant. Of course Homer was not a Kantian! But an attempt to prove this with the categories of later moral thought may distort Homeric ethics. Professor Adkins has pointed out some central concepts which Homer lacks; he has not described certain others which Homer knows and uses. Similarly, neglect of the poet's main theme and the tradition of oral epic may produce misunderstanding. If we say that the suitors cannot be effectively condemned unless they fail we overlook the poet's knowledge that they will fail. In any case, there is not and cannot be any *necessary* connexion between the 'effectiveness' of a moral statement and the justification of its utterance. Stupidity and recklessness are the qualities singled out in the suitors because in this way their eventual downfall is made more dramatic. Telemachus attempts to appeal to the assembly of Ithacans' sense of shame at what neigh-

different political groups with their shepherds of the people or kings of men. A function of kingship appears to be the administration of *δικη*, though the application of this function is not called upon by the events of either epic (cf. Bonner and Smith, *The Administration of Justice from Homer to Aristotle* i [Chicago 1930] 30-42) unless we count Menelaus' decision to *δικάζειν* in his suit with Antilochus, *Il.* xxiii 579 f., cf. *ibid.* 486. The voice of the people in assembly at Ithaca has not been heard in the twenty years since Odysseus' departure; but on the shield of

Achilles the *laoi* are assembled to hear a dispute over manslaughter (*Il.* xviii 497 ff.). At the same time concepts like *themis* and *moira* invoke something wider than the security and well-being of the *oikos*. The poet gives us glimpses of a sense of community, perhaps drawn from his own experience, which is only a glimpse because, I would argue, his heroic world demands the elevation of great individuals.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ὑπέροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων*, *Il.* vi 208; ix 783.

<sup>60</sup> *The World of Odysseus* 137.

bouring peoples will say (*Od.* ii 64 ff.) and the ineffectiveness of this appeal, for all the sympathy it rouses, is surely part of the epic plot. For the suitors' crime, involving as it does a flagrant breach of appropriate social conduct, is painted in far worse colours than anything from the *Iliad*.<sup>61</sup> ὕβρις and ὑπερβασία play little part in the Trojan scene; nor are threats of divine punishment forthcoming. But the suitors are cast throughout as ἀναιδεῖς. Since the only coercion, short of force in Homer, is through αἰδώς, the intention of the poet is to paint them as little better than the Cyclopes, the ἀθέμιστοι, men who have put themselves beyond the pale of acceptable human conduct. In Odysseus' words (*Od.* xxii 413 ff.) the suitors' crime was a failure to τίνειν any human being, whatever his social class:

τούσδε δὲ μοῦρ' ἐδάμασσε θεῶν καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα·  
οὗ τινα γὰρ τίεσκον ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων,  
οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸν, ὅστις σφέας εἰσαφίκοιτο·  
τῶ καὶ ἀτασθαλίησιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐπέσπον.

This grim verdict must be central to Homeric ethics. The preservation of one's τιμή is fundamental, but it depends on respecting the τιμαί of others, strangers, kin, as well as on acts of prowess. Excess and deficiency, judged by the general standard of appropriateness, court disaster. For failure involves loss of τιμή, and excess, if not forced directly to make tangible amends, brings αἰσχος to Paris and Helen, a subsequent payment of compensation from Agamemnon, a threat of future failure to Achilles, and death to the suitors.

I have sought to show that the function in Homer of ἀγαθός/ἀρετή to commend achievement and status is not inconsistent with, or necessarily superior to, a standard of appropriateness which condemns excess and deficiency. τιμή and quiet excellence may clash, but there are important attempts to set them together. The ethical values which result are complex and often difficult to describe in modern terminology; nor can they be isolated from the limited and stereotyped situations of heroic poetry.<sup>62</sup> In Greek too they raise considerable difficulties if we think in terms of the later usage of ἀγαθός and ἀρετή. Only men subject to social degradation in Homer are specifically said to suffer loss of ἀρετή. But among ἀγαθοί social elevation is not a quality which earns sufficient commendation in itself. For that the ἀγαθός must act, and if he is sensitive to αἰδώς, with its sanction νέμεσις, he will conform to a standard of appropriateness in his relations with other men that steers clear of excess as well as deficiency. Not only Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος but also his doctrine of the ethical 'mean' gains some illumination from Homer.

A. A. LONG.

*University College London.*

<sup>61</sup> See W. Allen, 'The Theme of the Suitors in the Odyssey', *TAPhA* lxx (1939) 104-24.

<sup>62</sup> For a very good account of the standardised

forms of description in the portrayal of ἀρετή, see Gisela Strasburger, *Die Kleinen Kämpfer der Ilias* (Stuttgart, 1954).