

HOMERIC VALUES AND HOMERIC SOCIETY

DR LONG's interest in my work (*JHS* xc [1970] 121–39; hereafter referred to as 'Long') is naturally very welcome; but it seems to me to require further comment in its turn. In order to advance the discussion, I shall be compelled to refer on a number of occasions to what I have written elsewhere in articles, and indeed on other pages of *Merit and Responsibility*. I shall begin with some very general points, some concerned with philosophy, some with interpretation.

First, can 'an historical reference for Homeric society' be found 'in the individual *oikos*, such that Homeric values can be seen to derive consistently from its needs'?¹ The 'facts of Homeric life' to which I endeavour to relate my analysis of Homeric values are those contained in Professor M. I. Finley's admirable *The World of Odysseus*.² My very occasional disagreements³ are concerned with interpretations within an agreed framework: Professor Finley's framework. I shall turn to the historicity of the society in a moment; but there seems in any case to be no *prima facie* absurdity in employing the tools of the social anthropologist on an *overtly* fictional society, say More's *Utopia*, with the intention, perhaps, of displaying incongruities and discrepancies: however fictional it might be, there would still be a society and values to discuss. In the case of the Homeric poems, I agree with Professor Finley⁴ in being willing to doubt the historicity of any and every person and event therein portrayed, including, if need be, the Trojan War; and it is to persons and events that his doubts are directed. I find it impossible to believe, on the other hand, that the bards of the oral tradition invented out of their own imaginations a society with institutions, values, beliefs and attitudes all so coherent and mutually appropriate as I believe myself to discern in the Homeric poems.⁵ This aspect of the poems is based upon some society's experience. (The identity of the society is an interesting question, but not relevant to the present discussion.) Even were it not, the kinds of discussion offered by Professor Finley and myself would be possible; and they would be relevant to the study of ancient Greek values and society, since the ancient Greeks of later periods certainly regarded the society and behaviour of the poems as historical,⁶ and as teaching them valuable lessons.

As to the 'glimpse of community'⁷ beyond the *oikos*, it seems to me that Professor Finley (*passim*) and I⁸ agree with Dr Long in discerning this. Where we differ from him is in holding⁹ that in a conflict the *oikos* takes precedence, and that its claims are always primary even when its interests harmonize with those of the wider community.

The distinction¹⁰ between 'literature' and 'life' would indeed be untenable if I attempted to use it in the manner suggested. I actually use it to draw the distinction between what one can know from experience about (say) human behaviour, and what one cannot: for example, that Zeus and Hera are at any given moment debating an individual's destiny. *MR* p. 20: 'These lines are all spoken by gods; which is to say that they are drawn from the

¹ Denied by Long, 137, n. 58.

² London 1956, New York 1965. Dr Long (n. 58) accepts, as I do, the general conclusions of this work.

³ *Merit and Responsibility*, Clarendon 1960 (hereafter referred to as *MR*), footnotes to chapters ii and iii.

⁴ *JHS* lxxxiv (1964) 2. Cited by Long, n. 6.

⁵ See my "Honour" and "Punishment" in the Homeric Poems' in *BICS* vii (1960) 23 ff. (hereafter referred to as 'Honour'); "Friendship" and "Self-Sufficiency" in Homer and Aristotle' in *CQ* n.s. xii (1963) 30 ff. (hereafter referred to as 'Friendship'); 'Εὐχομαι, εὐχωλη and εὐχος in Homer' in *CQ* n.s. xix

(1969) 20 ff. (hereafter referred to as *Eὐχομαι*); 'Threatening, Abusing and Feeling Angry in the Homeric Poems' in *JHS* lxxxix (1969) 7 ff. (hereafter referred to as 'Threatening'); and *From the Many to the One: a study of personality and human nature in the context of Ancient Greek society, values and beliefs*. London: Constable and Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970 (hereafter referred to as *FM*).

⁶ See *FM* 13.

⁷ Long, 138, n. 58.

⁸ *MR* 20 ff., 46, 54.

⁹ E.g. *MR* 35, 'Honour' 31.

¹⁰ Long, 122.

poet's imagination, not from life. In life, one does not know what one's fate may be, and so cannot reasonably claim to be acting against it: it is only the poet who is privileged to see his world from more than one level, for he has created it.' The distinction seems valid to me; and it is concerned to distinguish one *type* of situation, either factual or fictional but based on human experience, from another type, of which no bard—or anyone else—had any experience.¹¹

If it is granted that no person or event portrayed in the Homeric poems can be shown to be historical, what follows? Dr Long, p. 122: '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. 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".' As I have already said, the conclusions of *The World of Odysseus* are the 'facts of Homeric life' on which I take my stand. If Professor Finley's account of Homeric society is acceptable, then surely I or anyone else may discuss whether or not other phenomena of the Homeric poems are related to it. If Dr Long means that the *plot* requires that Agamemnon deprive Achilles of Briseis, that Achilles sulk in his tent and so on, so that the evaluation of these events is necessitated by literary considerations, this seems to me to rest on a confusion. It would not be difficult to rewrite the *Iliad* in such a manner that, while no action or event was altered, all the evaluations were made in terms of (say) Judaeo-Christian values. (After all, students not infrequently interpret the poem thus.) There would be no problem in distinguishing the resulting narrative from Homer's *Iliad*, by means of the kind of analysis I have attempted for the poems as we possess them. If we confine ourselves to existing examples, the three Greek tragedians' evaluations of events in the House of Atreus differ from each other and from that of the Homeric poems; and the evaluations of Sophocles' *Antigone* do not resemble those of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, though the key incidents of the plot are the same in each play.

'Homer speaks primarily from the perspective of the *ἀγαθός*'.¹² I agree; I have in fact maintained, with reference not only to Homeric society but also to later Greek¹³ that the views of the *agathoi* are, for the most part, all that we know. (Nor is this an unusual situation: it remains true for the most part in all cultures until the present century, and the extent to which the situation has now changed is debatable.) Dr Long also says 'How far the common people felt themselves bound by the same system is something which cannot be determined'. If 'Homeric society' is the society actually depicted in the poems, the common people of the society exist only so far as they appear there; and *they* support the system: Thersites (*Iliad* ii 239 ff.) is not beaten about the head for saying that he is as *agathos* as Agamemnon. What he says is that Achilles is more *agathos* than Agamemnon; and he seems to be beaten for speaking out of turn, or even speaking at all. I have already said that I do not dispute the contention that Homer—and Greek literature generally—conveys the views of the *agathos*; but, as I shall try to demonstrate in a forthcoming book, there are powerful inducements to the *kakoi* to accept the evaluations of the *agathoi* in 'real-life' contexts in later Greece; and the situation is not dissimilar in Homer, and might be expected to evoke a similar response from *kakoi*.

Dr Long alludes also¹⁴ to Professor Hare's analysis of ethical language. For my own part, I find myself in agreement with, and indeed with admiration for, chapter vii of *The Language of Morals*, to which Dr Long refers. To quote p. 122: 'In general, the more fixed

¹¹ The assertion that we must remove the deities from the poem to leave something that the social anthropologist can interpret is Dr Long's, not mine: I am prepared to attempt an interpretation of the

whole, gods included, in these terms, and will do so shortly.

¹² Long, 137.

¹³ 'Friendship' 30 f., *FM* 66 n. 2.

¹⁴ Long, 126 n. 16.

and accepted the standard [in the light of which a value-term is employed] the more information is conveyed. But it must not be thought that the evaluative force of the word varies at all exactly in inverse proportion to the descriptive. The two vary independently: where a standard is firmly established and is as firmly believed in, a judgment containing “good” may be highly informative without being the less commendatory.’ And p. 147: ‘... we may suppose that, after generations of officers had always commended people who played polo, it came to be assumed that, if an officer said that another officer was a good man, he must mean that, among other things, he played polo; and so the word “good”, as used by Indian Army officers, came to be, to this extent, descriptive, without in the least losing its primary evaluative meaning’.

Professor Hare certainly also discusses (124 ff.), very subtly and elegantly, undoubted uses of ‘good’ where there is no commendatory function: the ‘inverted commas’ use, in which we are ‘not making a value-judgment ourselves, but alluding to the value-judgments of other people’; the ironic use; and the conventional use, ‘in which the speaker is merely paying lip-service to a convention, by commanding, or saying commendatory things about, an object just because everyone else does’. He also says, as a rider to the Indian Army usage quoted above, ‘Of course the evaluative meaning might get lost, or at least wear thin . . .’.

Certainly it might. It sometimes happens in English, and could evidently happen in ancient Greek, or any other language, as could the other phenomena of ethical language discussed in Professor Hare’s elegant and clear exposition;¹⁵ but what Dr Long has to demonstrate is that, for example, when *agathos* is used of the suitors it has no commendatory function. The words of Odysseus to Telemachus, *Odyssey* xxiii 117 ff., are significant:

‘ἡμεῖς δὲ φραζώμεθ’ ὅπως ὅχ’ ἄριστα γένηται.
καὶ γάρ τίς θ’ ἔνα φῶτα κατακτείνας ἐνὶ δήμῳ,
φῷ μὴ πολλοὶ ἔωσιν ἀδοσητῆρες ὀπίσσω,
φεύγει πηγός τε προλιπών καὶ πατρίδα γαῖαν·
ἡμεῖς δ’ ἔρμα πόλησ απέκταμεν οἱ μέγ’ ἄριστοι
κούρων εἰν ’Ιθάκῃ· τὰ δέ σε φράζεσθαι ἀνωγα.’

Odysseus knows he has killed ‘the bulwark of the city’, the *aristoi* whose fundamental claim to such commendation is that they are the bulwark. This suggests to me the other situation characterised by Professor Hare: the standard is firmly established and firmly believed in, for sound practical reasons: Odysseus knows the needs of the kind of society that he is living in, and here adverts to them. Words like *δῆτος* and *ἀγανός* differ from *ἀγαθός* in that they are never used to affect action: no one says, for example, ‘*ἀγανοί* behave/do not behave in this way, therefore as an *ἀγανός* you should behave/not behave in this way’.¹⁶ They might therefore more readily come to be ‘purely descriptive’, or in an oral poem figure in ‘misapplied formulae’. However, this does not entail that they *do* become purely descriptive: even here proof seems necessary, since the words certainly describe admired qualities, and there is need of demonstration that no admiration is evoked by their use.

Next, competitive and co-operative values and excellences. The words are, of course, to be understood as defined in *MR* 6 f.; but I should be the first to acknowledge that as technical terms they have defects. I have not been able to devise anything more satisfactory, however; and possibly something like ‘*x*-values’ and ‘*y*-values’ would be least misleading, though it would not render *MR* noticeably easier to read. Nevertheless, it still

¹⁵ An ‘inverted commas’ usage of *agathos* seems to me to occur in Sophocles, *Antigone* 31 and *Philoctetes* 873, which are termed ‘ironical’ by Jebb *ad locc.* At

MR 193 n. 23 I express doubts about ‘ironical’ as an appropriate description, and describe the function

that the usages seem to me to discharge. To my regret, I was not then aware of ‘inverted commas usage’ as a classification.

¹⁶ For such a usage of *ἀγαθός* and *κακός*, see *Iliad* xi 408 ff.

seems to me that the distinction is a real one. In any society there are ‘activities in which success is of paramount importance’; and in these, ‘commendation or the reverse is reserved for those who *in fact* succeed or fail’ (*MR* 6). This does not, and is not intended to, debar members of the same group co-operating with each other for a competitive end. The important point is that, if they fail, however loyal they have been to one another, their collective failure is evaluated in terms of results, not intentions. I discussed the claims of society in *MR*; and later attempted to analyse the co-operative *philotes*-relationships of Homeric man.¹⁷ The requirement ‘to avenge a kinsman, an ally or a *xeinos*’¹⁸ is a requirement upon the *agathos* in terms of the claims of society and his *philotes*-relationships there discussed.

Let us consider Aeneas, one of Dr Long’s examples, who seems to me to reinforce the point I was trying to make in ‘Friendship’. Aeneas has been given inadequate *time* by Priam, is angry, and is holding back from the fighting, for reasons discussed in ‘Honour’; but when Deiphobus points out that it is a brother-in-law, a *philos*, that he is failing to help, Aeneas acts at once. It should be noted, however, that Aeneas is not moved by the plight of non-*philoī*, or of the army in general, any more than is Achilles; and it is not suggested that he should be so moved. The examples given by Dr Long indicate the primacy and objective character of *philotes*-relationships, which subsist between members of an *oikos* and between them and their *philoī*, as I argued in ‘Friendship’: relationships which persist, of course, when one is in an army. His examples, however, seem less striking to me than that of Diomedes and Glaucus,¹⁹ where a *philotes*-relationship set up by the grandfathers of those concerned, who have themselves never met before, constitutes a claim on them more powerful than their membership of opposing armies.²⁰

Dr Long makes a number of points about co-operative excellences. First, that *δίκη* in Homer consists in actually returning Briseis to Achilles. But so it does for us: the difference between competitive and co-operative activities lies not in the demand that one should perform the action if possible (and if its performance is the most powerful claim upon one in the circumstances), but in the willingness to accept excuses if it is not possible. To demonstrate that there is no valid distinction to be drawn between co-operative and competitive excellences in Homer, it would be necessary to demonstrate that no excuses are accepted for breaches of co-operative excellences under any circumstances. Now I have tried to demonstrate²¹ that where the success or failure of the unit is concerned, there is no distinction: it does not matter whether Hector is cowardly or a poor tactician, if failure is the result in either case.²² Furthermore, ‘Friendship’, p. 34: ‘In fact, in these examples at all events, *φιλεῖν* requires of the subject of the verb not primarily emotions or intentions . . . but actions or results. In the context of Homeric society, this is a familiar situation. In order to be a Homeric *ἀγαθός* or to display Homeric *ἀρετή*, actions and results were necessary, not emotions or intentions. The reason lay in the nature of Homeric society; and this is so also in the case of Homeric *φιλότης*. The essence of the *φιλότης*-relationship is co-operation, not competition, so that we might expect intentions to be relevant; but it is co-operation to meet the harsh demands of Homeric life.’ P. 35: ‘But *ἀρετή*, the quality of the *ἀγαθός*, is also shown in protecting one’s dependents, whether permanent residents or transients; and *φιλεῖν*, which, as we can see from the examples quoted above, includes giving food, lodging and protection to transients, characterises this activity, at all events in its less violent manifestations.’ The last eight words are added to indicate what seems to me to be the case, that if the *agathos* had to use his strong right arm actively to protect his *philos* he would think of it as an exercise of *arete*, though he would of course be exercising it because the person had been drawn by him within the *philos*-group. This I believe, and have stated, to be true of Homeric society:

¹⁷ *MR* 47. For *φιλότης*, see ‘Friendship’ *passim*.

¹⁸ Long, 125.

¹⁹ ‘Friendship’ 36.

²⁰ For the reasons for this, see ‘Friendship’ 36 f.

²¹ *MR* 46 ff.

²² For homicide-contexts, see *MR* 52 ff.

a shame-culture and a results-culture. In the field in which the success of the group, and the defence of its members against outsiders, is concerned, cowardice is not distinguished from error, and to allow a dependent to be harmed by enemies, whether from cowardice, error or malice and injustice, is *aischron*, and no excuse is acceptable. Again, the gods, for reasons evaluated in terms of their *arete* and *time*, pay little attention to human intentions: omission to offer *time* is punished, whether from deliberate slight or error. But does this (large) category include all Homeric actions? Phemius the minstrel²³ can be excused as *anaitios* because the suitors compelled him by force to sing at their feasts. Phemius can offer the excuse of *force majeure*, though Telemachus cannot, for the safety of the group is not in the hands of Phemius. It is not that Homer and his characters cannot distinguish intellectually in any circumstances between a moral error, a mistake and an act committed under compulsion: it is that the pressures of Homeric society, and the accompanying values, make the distinction irrelevant where the security of the group, *oikos* or army-contingent, is concerned. Different types of homicide can be intellectually distinguished, though the penalty for each seems to be the same;²⁴ and Telemachus in reply to Penelope's rebuke (*Odyssey* xviii 223 ff.) makes it clear that he knows what to do; but the fact that he is unable to do it, rather than wilfully not doing it, does not make his situation any the less *aischron*. As soon as success is not demanded, however, the distinction can not only be drawn, but effectively drawn. So one can not only draw the intellectual distinction between being carried out of one's way on a ship by wind and weather, and being wilfully taken to the wrong destination on a ship (*Odyssey* xiii 276 ff. and 209 ff.; two passages mentioned by Dr Long, 124 n. 9) but take a different attitude to the situations; for though one naturally wishes to reach one's destination, and though disaster at sea renders one as *kakos* and subject to *elencheie* as do other kinds of disaster,²⁵ the captain and crew of a ship are evidently not expected to guarantee the safe arrival at their destination of those in their care, and it is not *aischron* to fail to secure this for them. *Arete* is not in general displayed by skill in seamanship. (It is a Phaeacian *arete*, *Odyssey* viii 247 ff., but we never see the Phaeacians fail; and even if we had an example, its evaluation, where the poems are explicitly concerned with unusual values, is one that I should expect few authors to treat consistently.)

The σώφρων/πιστός/νήπιος cluster of words have 'calculative' implications, because the goal of Homeric action is a desired ἀγαθόν, and all activities are valued insofar as they appear to conduce to it.²⁶ However, it should not be concluded that they are 'simply calculative words':²⁷ emotion is abundantly present; and the philosophical problems which can arise²⁸ from the possession of a 'calculative' ethical vocabulary do not trouble oral bards. *Sophrosune* from Homer onwards is 'calculative', calculative/emotional, precisely because if co-operative excellences are to be valued, they must be valued as conducive to the desired end of prosperity and stability, and being 'prudent' is being able to see when they are so.²⁹ 'Ought' and κατὰ μοῖραν will be discussed below.

²³ *MR* 10.

²⁴ *MR* 52 ff.

²⁵ See *Odyssey* viii 182 and x 72 ff. It is Odysseus' disaster when everything seemed to be in his favour that both renders him *elenchistos* and shows him hated by the gods. Divine hatred is an empirical matter, proved by one's fall to disaster, *MR* 139; and where gods are so frequently amoral and capricious, the fall need be in no way linked with one's deserts.

²⁶ See *nepios* in *MR* 29, n. 15.

²⁷ See M. J. O'Brien, *The Socratic Paradoxes and the Greek Mind*, Chapel Hill 1969, 22 ff.; and *FM*, 47 f., 90, 126, 160 f., 187 f., 223, 229 f., 267, 271. I had completed *FM* before reading Professor O'Brien's

work, and was very heartened to discover my agreement with him in this matter.

²⁸ See especially Plato *Laws*, 861e ff., and *MR* 299 ff.

²⁹ This was a theme of *MR*. I quote one passage, related to *sophrosune* 246 f.: 'From the days of Homer prudence in one's own interests has been commended as *saophron*. This prudence may entail the quieter virtues, and yet *sophrosune* not be a moral word; but it had by this time [the later fifth and earlier fourth centuries B.C.] become so much attached to the practice of such virtues, even from the most prudential of motives . . .'

'Effectiveness' and 'Justification'

Dr Long says:³⁰ 'In any case, there cannot be any *necessary* connexion between the "effectiveness" of a moral statement and the justification of its utterance.' But here we must enter some distinctions: propositions of this nature, which may have relevance when one is considering one's own culture in its own terms, require careful handling when one is studying another culture, and apt to slip without noticing it between its standards and our own. 'Justification' in Dr Long's proposition may tacitly evoke our own standards; and 'justification' must be referred to the standards of the culture we are studying, insofar, that is, as we are engaged on anthropology or comparative ethics, not moral suasion. Let us take a moral judgment, say 'eating people is wrong', and imagine its being uttered ineffectually, (*a*) in twentieth-century England, (*b*) on a cannibal island. If I pass this judgment in our own society, and someone flouts it, it would certainly not be appropriate to say that because the judgment was in this case ineffective it was unjustified in terms of the values of our society. But if I pass this judgment to restrain a cannibal from eating an enemy he has killed in a society in which it is believed that it is glorious to eat one's slain enemies, and also, let us say, beneficial to oneself since it renders their spirits incapable of harm, and increases the valour of the eater, then I am uttering a 'persuasive definition' which, if he holds the beliefs I have imagined, he is most unlikely to accept. I shall of course adhere to my own values, and shall still not regard the judgment as unjustified because it failed to persuade the cannibal; but it would surely be rather strange to say—if one is an anthropologist rather than a missionary, and is studying the cannibal's society in its own terms—that the statement was ineffective but justified in the cannibal's own society, even if no one in the society had ever thought of passing it, and it flew in the face of the society's most powerfully-held beliefs and values. Again, 'justified' here does not raise the question of the possibility of evaluating an action or person in more than one way, for example 'poor but honest', 'clever but shifty'. It may be entirely *justified* to term the same person 'clever' and 'shifty'; but the important point for the kind of analysis in which I am engaged is the *relative importance* of the two judgments in any society. That the suitors are *anaideis* may be a perfectly justified judgment without its being the most important judgment that can be passed to evaluate their situation.

'Persuasive Definitions'

My view of *Odyssey* xxi 331 ff., Penelope's attempt to persuade Eurymachus that his breaches of quiet values are *elenchea*, is as follows:³¹ 'The definition cannot succeed. Eurymachus could well reply, relying both on "ordinary language" and on the facts of Homeric life, "certainly it is possible for us to enjoy a fair reputation if we behave in this manner and *succeed*; and we call our failures *elenchea* because they are *elenchea*." No matter what his character, estimated in terms of the quieter virtues, any Homeric hero would answer in these terms. Hence any such persuasive definition 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*.' The 'facts of Homeric life' are of course the social anthropological data of Professor Finley, linked with observable Homeric usage of value-words. But 'tidiness is notoriously not a feature of moral discourse'.³² True; as Aristotle remarks, *EN* 1094b19, '. . . since we are concerned in ethics with premisses relating to the $\omega\varsigma \epsilon\pi\iota \tau\delta \pi\circ\lambda\nu$, we should content ourselves with drawing conclusions of a similar kind'. A very reasonable warning; but we should not recoil too far in the other direction. It may be felt that 'the definition cannot succeed' is too strong. Maybe. But let me ask my readers to imagine themselves trying to persuade Mr Ian Smith that it is right that all those who live in Rhodesia should have the same voting rights, or one of Professor Hare's Indian Army

³⁰ Long, 138.

³¹ *MR* 39.

³² Long, 134.

officers (*op. cit.* 147) of the ‘goodness’ of a young man with long hair and sandals. Successful persuasion is evidently not so unlikely as my successfully throwing a cricket ball into orbit round the earth; but I should accord it a very low degree of probability myself, and relate the low degree of probability to other observable facts about the culture of Rhodesia and the Indian Army respectively. This is precisely what I was endeavouring to do for Homeric (and later Greek) society in *MR*; and since the ‘observable facts’ have in fact been observed by others, I am not immediately disposed to treat them as an hallucination.

For this reason, I adhere to the distinction between words of the *arete*-group used in ‘persuasive definitions’ when applied to co-operative situations, and words like *ἀεικής* and *αιδώς*, which seem to me to be applied quite unselfconsciously in competitive and co-operative contexts alike. I have argued the case for three examples of ‘persuasive definitions’, to which I refer my readers,³³ and in discussing one of them, that of Penelope quoted above, Dr Long³⁴ concedes Penelope’s persuasive intention.³⁵ Lest anyone should be inclined to say in reply ‘but all ethical language is always persuasive’, let me quote Professor Hare’s discussion of ‘persuasive definitions’ (*op. cit.* 119): ‘What is happening is that the evaluative meaning of the word is being used in order to shift the descriptive meaning; we are doing what would be called, if “good” were a purely descriptive word, redefining it. But we cannot call it that, for the evaluative meaning remains constant; we are rather altering the standard. This is similar to the process called by Professor Stevenson “persuasive definition” (*Ethics and Language*, ch. ix); the process is not necessarily, however, highly coloured with emotion.’ (The last clause is necessary because Professor Hare’s discussion includes changing the standards for good motor-cars and good mousetraps as well as for good men. I suspect that the latter is coloured with emotion in most cases.) The phrase ‘persuasive definition’ seems rather out of favour with philosophers; but the phenomenon so clearly described by Professor Hare has not ceased to exist as a result, even if philosophers use different terminology when discussing it.

Very different is the usage of *ἀεικής*³⁶ in such examples as *Iliad* xxii 395, where it is said of Achilles that he “*Εκτορα δίον ἀεικέα μῆδετο ἔργα*;”³⁷ or when Aegisthus is *ἀεικέα μερμηρίζων* to Agamemnon, *Odyssey* iv 533. There seems to be no effort, no attempt to ‘use the evaluative meaning of the word in order to shift the descriptive meaning’; and this suffices to distinguish such usages from ‘persuasive definitions’.

It seems to me that any reader willing to survey the Homeric usage of the *ἀρετή*-group and the *ἀεικής*-group for himself is likely to see this distinction. But even if, having done so, he is not convinced, he has still to consider the following possible, weaker statement of the position: ‘in Homeric society, when a value-word is used in a competitive situation, it has a high persuasive power; when used in a co-operative situation, its persuasive power is much reduced; and this ethico-linguistic phenomenon is closely linked with other phenomena related to the structure of Homeric society’. I have given my reasons for holding that the

³³ *MR* 38 ff.

³⁴ Long, 134.

³⁵ Some of his other examples seem to proclaim their persuasive intent by their form and context, e.g. *στρεπται μέν τε φρένες ἐσθλῶν*, *Iliad* xv 203.

³⁶ As to *ἀεικής* ‘meaning’ ‘ugly’, it evidently ‘means’ neither ‘ugly’ nor ‘shameful’, since the ranges of usage are different. But even if we so mistranslate it, are we to suppose that when e.g. Tydeus, *Iliad* iv 396 καὶ τοῖσιν ἀεικέα πότυμον ἐφῆκε, Tydeus recoiled from the ‘ugliness’ of the πότυμος he brought upon his enemies? Surely not (see Homeric fighting *passim*); so that in competitive usages it is the victim and/or his friends for whom it is ‘ugly’, even if we thus mistranslate *ἀεικής*. (For remarks on the range of

αἰσχρόν and *καλόν*, see *MR* 163 f., *FM* 131 f. with n. 1.) The use of *τεικέτειν*, *ἀπειλεῖν* throws light on *αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσσι*; see ‘Threatening’.

³⁷ Dr Long says that Hector’s death was ‘glorious’ (136, n. 53); Homer says οὐ κακιζόμενον, ‘not behaving as a *κακός*’ merely, *Iliad* xxiv 214/6. Death in battle, where even if one’s army succeeded one had oneself failed, posed a problem for traditional Greek *ἀρετή* at all times. (See *MR* 66 and n. 13.) For progressive ‘up-valuations’, not of dying for one’s country, but of even fighting for it, see Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, Eng. trans., Blackwell 1953, 173. It is not yet *καλόν* to die for one’s country: that has to wait for Tyrtaeus.

stronger statement is correct; but it should not be thought that its rejection immediately entails rejection of the position in its entirety, for the weaker statement will suffice to sustain the essential framework of my account of Homeric values.

Now to a more detailed discussion of particular points. First, Eumaeus and his dogs (*Odyssey* xiv 37 f.). I, like Dr Long,³⁸ should be very upset if my dogs devoured a passing stranger; but I should not express my regret in words at all similar to those I should use if I lost a battle; and this is surely the important point: Homeric ethical language reveals that his characters 'see' resemblances between situations which appear to us quite different. In Eumaeus' situation, if there was not merely no intention but I were satisfied that I had omitted no precaution that a reasonable person could be expected to take, I think my most likely response would be 'of course I didn't mean it, but I shall *feel* morally responsible for the rest of my life'. I cannot translate this judgment into Homeric Greek; and it certainly is not what Eumaeus says.

Second, 'trying one's best to succeed'. Dr Long says³⁹ 'I do not agree that Homer has no room for intentions where that term means trying one's best to succeed'; and he cites, among other passages, *Iliad* xiii 232 ff. Now in *MR* I said, with reference to this very passage:⁴⁰ 'Presumably if, despite all efforts, he fails to attain his end, the Homeric hero assumes that the gods are not propitious; but no matter what may happen, he must not relax his efforts.' In *Iliad* xiii (222 ff.), Idomeneus attempts to excuse the present failure of the Greeks: no man can be the cause, *aitios*, since all are skilled warriors, and none has displayed fear or hesitation. No; it must be the will of Zeus that the Greeks should perish ingloriously far from home. To this Poseidon makes the reply already discussed: that anyone who ceases to fight of his own accord will become food for the dogs. The tide is against them: but a man must keep swimming while he has the strength.⁴¹ I do not deny that Homer 'has room for intentions'; but I try to discover how much room; and where the result is *aischron*, intentions do not matter.⁴² When a failure to defend the group is concerned, one cannot say, 'Ah well, we did our best'; while still fighting, with no result yet achieved, one can say, 'Well, we are doing our best'; but that is a different situation.

Thirdly, Agamemnon's being told by Odysseus 'you will be *dikaioteros* in future', *Iliad* xix 181;⁴³ and Agamemnon's agreement that Odysseus spoke *ēn μοίρῃ*. We must consider the whole situation; and we have in Agamemnon's 'apology' not long before a clear indication that 'Agamemnon, under the influence of anger, has made a mistake; he is "wrong" in the sense that he has miscalculated the effect of the loss of Achilles.'⁴⁴ When Agamemnon replies to Odysseus' speech of advice—which is concerned at some length with the fact that an army marches on its stomach, and with practical proposals for the compensation of Achilles that Agamemnon (136 f.) has already admitted to be necessary—that he finds his words pleasing, 186, *ēn μοίρῃ γὰρ πάντα δύκεο καὶ κατέλεξας*, I hold⁴⁵ that the 'meaning' is 'you have spoken all this with due regard to the facts of the situation'; and I see no reason to confine *πάντα* to one line of a speech of 29 lines, for all Odysseus' advice is concerned with dealing with the situation in practical terms. (I shall discuss the general usage of *μοίρα* below.)

Next, *Iliad* i 275 f.

*μήτε σὺ τόνδ' ἀγαθός περ ἐών ἀποαιρεο κούρην,
ἀλλ' ἔα, ὡς οἱ πρῶτα δόσαν γέρας νῖες Ἀχαιῶν.*

Dr Long renders *ως* by 'since'.⁴⁶ I had taken it as 'as', 'in the manner in which'; but

³⁸ Long, 125.

³⁹ Long, 124, n. 9.

⁴⁰ *MR* 14.

⁴¹ Cf. also *MR* 47.

⁴² Cf. also 'Threatening' 18.

⁴³ Long, 125 f.

⁴⁴ *Iliad* xix 78 ff.; discussed in *MR* 50 f.

⁴⁵ *MR* 20.

⁴⁶ Long, 127.

the translation ‘since’ seems to me not to affect the position: we must distinguish between a reason and a sufficient reason; and that it is not a sufficient reason seems indicated by the rest of the passage. Dr Long: ‘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, *vai δὴ ταῦτα γε πάντα, γέρον, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες . . .* but directs his refusal to the ὀνείδεα (291) of Achilles.’ Evidently *in some sense* neither the fact that the Achaeans gave Briseis to Achilles, nor the fact that Nestor has spoken *κατὰ μοῖραν*, are sufficient reasons since Agamemnon does not accept them; but what is being set against them? Dr Long: ‘The failure of the appeal illustrates not the poverty of Homeric restraints upon the ἀγαθός, but the fact that power in any society can override another’s rights.’ (I take it that ‘restraints upon’ means ‘sufficiently powerful ethical language to restrain’.) Despite ‘power’, however, Dr Long speaks of the ‘claims’ of Agamemnon’s position, which are also acknowledged by Nestor; so that *prima facie* there seems to be a case for considering whether Agamemnon’s ‘claims’ are being set against Achilles’ ‘claims’, and enquiring how the situation is expressed and evaluated in Homeric Greek. Achilles thus evaluates his own position, 293 f.:

ἢ γάρ κεν δειλός τε καὶ οὐτιδανός καλεοίμην,
εἰ δὴ σοὶ πᾶν ἔργον ὑπείξομαι ὅττι κεν εἴπης.

Achilles is not a king, but he is an ἀγαθός; and if he yielded to Agamemnon he would ‘be called’—which in a shame-culture is equivalent to ‘be’—δειλός and οὐτιδανός, which I need hardly say is incompatible with being ἀγαθός. Agamemnon is both an ἀγαθός and a king: if Achilles can give any impression of being able to get away with insulting Agamemnon, will not Agamemnon, who ‘feels himself threatened’ and is a king, also feel that he will be called δειλός and οὐτιδανός in that case? It is the pull of ἀρετή, the need to achieve success and avoid failure, *κακότης*, to defend one’s *τιμή* and not be deprived of any, that is driving Achilles; and the situations of Achilles and Agamemnon appear to be not dissimilar.

In an endeavour to clarify the position I quote a passage I have written elsewhere:⁴⁷ ‘We may conclude by discussing the relationship between *time* and *arete*. We may still be tempted to say something like this: “It is wrong that *time*, in the full sense that this word has been shown to possess, should not be paid to that manly excellence which society needs.”’ But “it is wrong” in this English sentence has two characteristics: it is drawn from our most powerful group of value-terms, and it decries a breach of co-operative justice. The judgment cannot be translated by any term from the most powerful Homeric group, for this decries shortcomings in the competitive virtues. *Aischron* is the only word powerful enough; and this is never used to decry injustice in Homer.⁴⁸ It was certainly not *aischron* for Agamemnon to *atiman* Achilles, though it was *aischron* for Achilles to suffer in this way. Accordingly, *arete* and *time* are not bound together so closely as ‘it is right’ or ‘it is wrong not to’ would suggest. Agamemnon, behaving as he does, is certainly *anaides*, *Iliad* i 149; but I have argued elsewhere⁴⁹ that the *aidos* felt by men for their breaches of co-operative virtues is relatively weak. It does exist, of course, and is what binds Homeric society together, insofar as it is bound together; and where it exists it ensures that the presence of *arete* appears to be a claim for *time*. This claim is, in fact, largely founded on the power of the *agathos*; though it is never *aischron* to *atiman* an *agathos*, it will usually be foolish; and this greatly reinforces the weak restraint that *anaides* provides. But since the strongest Homeric terms of value are *not* used to censure anyone who *atiman* an *agathos*, and it is only foolish to do so in virtue of the reprisals which the *agathos* will probably take, it is truer to say that in the last resort the Homeric hero employs his *arete* to defend, recover or increase his *time*, with all the

⁴⁷ ‘Honour’ 31.

⁴⁸ I discuss Dr Long’s ‘exception’ below.

⁴⁹ *MR* 43 ff.

implications that the word has been shown to possess, than that *time* is an acknowledgment of *arete*.⁵⁰

Both Dr Long and I hold that power is vitally concerned with the situation of the *agathos* vis-à-vis his *time*. Where, then, is the point of disagreement—for assuredly there is one. It lies in the rendering of *arete* by ‘power’ and *time* by ‘rights’. ‘In this society powerful men can set at naught the rights of the individual’ is a judgment that can be passed in our own terms of value of many societies; but it does not follow that all these societies evaluate the situation in a similar manner. The judgment may be interpreted as implying that human beings have rights *qua* human beings; but in Homer human beings only have rights in virtue of some definite relationship;⁵⁰ and it is better to say *time* than ‘rights’, since the *time* of both *agathos* and the other members of the *oikos* depends on the ability of the *agathos* to defend it. One has no ‘right’ to one’s *time* otherwise. It is in this situation that Homeric men feel it impossible to value any characteristic of the *agathos* more highly than his *arete*: they need the power of the *agathos*, so that *arete* is not merely ‘power’ but needed, socially valuable power; and it is to this situation that the *agathoi* Achilles and Agamemnon are responding in *Iliad* i. ‘Honour’ 29: ‘The emotive charge on [time] can only be understood in terms of Homeric *arete*, and the fact that in Homeric society as Homer depicts it—no matter what may or may not have been the case in Mycenaean society—the property, prestige, status and rights of an *agathos* depend strictly on his ability to defend them. Accordingly, Achilles’ attitude to the loss of Briseis is not childish, but—until he refuses compensation, at all events—the natural attitude of an adult *agathos* in this type of society. The Homeric hero not merely feels insecure, he is insecure. To be deprived of *time*, even in the slightest degree, is to move so much nearer to penury and nothingness, *kakotes*—a change of condition which is *aischron* and, in the society depicted by Homer, quite possible’. And *MR* 52: ‘Such are the implications of the competitive scheme of values. Moral responsibility has no place in them; and the quieter virtues, in which such responsibility has its place, neither have sufficient attraction to gain a hearing nor are backed by sufficient force to compel one. In some cases the gods guarantee the quieter values. . . . On the human level, chieftains can settle disputes among their own followers, their position being strong enough to enable them to do it; but disputes between chieftains of equal power, if they are sufficiently angry to refuse arbitration, as, given their competitive scheme of values, they are only too likely to do, cannot be settled easily. The organisation to coerce them does not exist; and since any concession might be regarded by public opinion as a sign of failure or weakness, and failure is *aischron*, than which nothing is worse, there is always the danger that such a situation as arose between Agamemnon and Achilles will occur again.’

On the one side, *arete* is not merely power but power necessary to and valued by the society, so that its members will not regard injustice to another individual as more important than *arete*. On the other side, his *arete* and *time* is so important to the individual *agathos* that he must see any action that diminishes them as *aischron* to him, and respond vigorously. The characters in the poems accept these values, and expect their fellows to behave in accordance with them. (See also the concluding paragraphs of this article.)

Next, *Iliad* xxiv 50 ff.

οὐ μήν οἱ τό γε κάλλιον οὐδέ τ' ἄμεινον.
μὴ ἀγαθῷ περ ἐόντι νεμεσοσηθέωμέν οἱ ἡμεῖς·
κωφῆν γάρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀεικίζει μενεάνων.

Dr Long quotes⁵¹ from *MR* 38, ‘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.’ The argument is continued, as Dr Long says, in terms of *time*, and, he might have added, *philotes*. Let us follow the debate through step by step. Apollo, after complaining that

⁵⁰ See ‘Honour’ 24 ff.

⁵¹ Long, 128.

Achilles' behaviour is excessive, ends his speech with the lines quoted above. As Dr Long observes, not all the gods take this view. Hera, 56 ff., angrily observes that Hector and Achilles should not have the same *time*; that Hector is a mere mortal, Achilles the child of a goddess in whose upbringing Hera herself took a share; and all the gods and goddesses went to the wedding. Now why does Hera take this very different view? Because she regards Achilles as a *philos*, 'related to the family' almost, while Hector is a mere mortal; and *she* does not regard Hector as a *philos* at all. Now to be a *philos* is what gives one rights in Homer. (One has no rights *qua* human being, as I have already said.) Zeus advances the argument by admitting the difference in *time* between Hector and Achilles, but contending that Hector had established as powerful a claim as any mortal in Troy, by offering sumptuous sacrifices. By so doing he has established the best *philos*-relationship with deity (or some deities, including Zeus, 67 f.) that a mere mortal can; and since that relationship⁵² does not rest primarily on feeling but on action, Hector has a claim to some beneficial action from the deities he has benefited. Accordingly, Hector has established a claim to a lesser degree of *time*, which also must be expressed in action. This is the manner in which the argument is conducted; and it has nothing to do with Apollo's evaluation at 50 ff. Hector's claims under a definite *philos*-relationship have to be established.⁵³

When Thetis appears, 109 ff., Zeus says he has not allowed Hector's body to be stolen away. No, he is giving this *κῦδος* to Achilles, 111 ff.,

αἰδῶ καὶ φιλότητα τεὴν μετόπισθε φυλάσσων.
αἴψα μάλ' ἐσ στρατὸν ἐλθὲ καὶ νιέϊ σῷ ἐπίτειλον.
σκύζεσθαι οἱ εἰπὲ θεούς, ἐμὲ δ' ἔξοχα πάντων
ἀθανάτων κεχολώσθαι, ὅτι φρεσὶ μαινομένησιν
"Ἐκτορ' ἔχει παρὰ νησὶ κορωνίσιν οὐδ' ἀπέλυσεν,
αἱ κέν πως ἐμέ τε δεῖσῃ ἀπό θ" Ἐκτόρα λύσῃ.

Zeus has observed the claims of *philotes* towards Achilles and Thetis, and also towards Hector. Achilles is to receive *κῦδος* and an abundant ransom, Hector decent burial, which is less *time* than Achilles, but some *time*, as his *philotes* warrants. Now the behaviour of *time*, *tinesthai* and similar words is not governed by co-operative excellences in Homer.⁵⁴ Zeus promises to Thetis that he will give *time* to Achilles in *Iliad* i 505 ff., as a favour to a *philos*; and he gives that *time* 'in an indirect manner, by creating a situation in which the Greeks will have to give *time* to him in a direct manner'.⁵⁵ So here, Zeus gives *time* to Hector indirectly by threatening Achilles, who will give it directly. We should beware of equating divine wrath with righteous indignation in Homer. When Athena in *Odyssey* i 60 ff., says

οὐ νύ τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς
Ἄργειων παρὰ νησὶ χαρίζετο ιερὰ βέζων
Τροίη ἐν εὐρείῃ; τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὀδύσσαο, Ζεῦ;

she is stating the usual Homeric view: if sacrifice is offered, the Olympians should not be angry, should not, that is to say, allow the sacrificer to fare ill; and it is on this basis that Zeus has decided to give some *time* to Hector. The appropriate treatment for him does not depend on any relationship between Achilles and Hector, but on Hector's and Achilles' relationships with deity; and once Zeus has determined the appropriate treatment for each, he can of course *impose* the solution through his power. I said in *MR*:⁵⁶ 'Apollo and the other gods would like to pass effective censure upon Achilles (but cannot).' They have, of course, the power to annihilate him; but that is not the point at issue.

⁵² See 'Friendship' *passim*.

⁵³ The general attitude of Homeric deity to Homeric man is illustrated at *Iliad* i 573 ff.; and note why Zeus wishes to save Sarpedon, *Iliad* xvi 433 ff.; and that

here in Apollo's eyes the gravamen of the charge, 52, seems to be what Achilles is doing to the earth.

⁵⁴ See 'Honour' 30 f.

⁵⁵ See 'Honour' 31.

⁵⁶ *MR* 38.

Passing on now to *aἰσχεα* in *Od.* i 228 ff., Athena certainly shows sympathy for Telemachus; but it is characteristic of a results-culture, whether that of Homer or later Greek, that an action remains *aἰσχρόν*, or a person *κακός*, irrespective of the sympathy or otherwise of the person judging. If one is an *ἐχθρός* observing someone in an *aἰσχρόν* situation, one laughs; if one is a *φίλος*, one sympathizes and grieves.⁵⁷ We need go no further than *Iliad* ii 283 ff., where Odysseus speaks *ἐὐφρονέων*, 283, and says, 285, that the Greeks are willing to make Agamemnon *ἔλεγχιστος* in the eyes of all mortal men. He speaks *ἐὐφρονέων*, he admits, 291 ff., that long campaigns are hard, so that he does not *νεμεσίζεσθαι* at the Greeks; but, 297 f., nevertheless it is *aἰσχρόν* to remain a long time and return empty-handed. Thus is one situated in a results-culture.

I am puzzled by Dr Long's comment⁵⁸ on *Iliad* xxi 436 ff. I take *ἴουκε* to be one of the words which span competitive and co-operative situations, taking its persuasive power accordingly. When associated, as here, with *aἰσχιον*, it is powerful, as *aἰδώς* is when associated with *ἔλεγχεα*. (I shall discuss *φρένες ἐναίσιμοι*, etc., below.)

Next, *Iliad* vi 344 ff. Dr Long says that the lines refer not only to Paris' cowardice, but also to the adultery *and its consequences*; and he compares *Iliad* iii, where Paris has carried off a woman, 49 ff.,

ἐξ ἀπίης γαίης, νυὸν ὀνδρῶν αἰχμητάων,
πατρί τε σῷ μέγα πῆμα πόληῃ τε παντὶ τε δήμῳ,
δυσμενέσιν μὲν χάρμα, κατηφείην δὲ σοὶ αὐτῷ.

Paris has carried off a woman whose abduction has set in train the Trojan War, a disaster for the Trojans, a *πῆμα*. The Trojans' enemies are rejoicing at the *πῆμα*, not at the abduction; and it is the *πῆμα* that occasions Paris' *κατηφείη* too. In a results-culture one evaluates an action, where the success or failure of the group is in question, in terms of *the actual result of the action or sequence of actions viewed as a whole*. In this field a moral error cannot be distinguished from a mistake.⁵⁹ Both are *aἰσχρόν* if they have led to disastrous consequences.

Certainly Odysseus associates 'abandoning strife' by Achilles with the allocation of *time*. But this does not mean that if Achilles co-operates the Achaeans will think highly of him, but that if he co-operates he will get valuable gifts.⁶⁰ This is undeniably true, since the gifts are already promised; and it is prudential advice.

As to 'the standard of appropriateness', I broadly agree with Dr Long about the existence and functioning of these terms; but they seem to me not to affect the discussion of *MR*, which is directed to the study of different questions. *MR* 46: 'Naturally, to say that this distaste, this *aidos*, is weaker when the quiet virtues are in question is not to say that it does not exist; and it must be such *aidos* which holds Homeric society together, insofar as it is held together, for a society of *agathoi* with no quiet virtues at all would simply destroy itself. But . . . as soon as a crisis forces the essential framework of values into view, the competitive values are so much more powerful than the co-operative that the situation is not treated in terms of the quiet values at all; and as it is precisely with such crises that the concept of moral responsibility is concerned, it is evident that such terms as *aidos* and *aeikes*, *however useful to society in general*, cannot affect the development of the concept of moral responsibility, for they are ineffective at the crucial moment. Accordingly, in future chapters it will be unnecessary to discuss these terms, for their value in commanding quiet moral excellences is precisely that of the words which specifically commend these excellences.'⁶¹ That was, and is, my position;⁶² and it seems to me that Dr Long's position is not very different.

To speak or act *kata moiran*, for example, is to act⁶³ 'with due reference to the present

⁵⁷ For the *χάρμα* of enemies in Homer, cf. *Iliad* iii 46–51, cited by Dr Long elsewhere.

⁵⁸ Long, 132.

⁵⁹ See *MR* 46 ff.

⁶⁰ See 'Honour' 29, where I discuss this passage.

⁶¹ See also *MR* 20 f., on *moira* and 'ought'.

⁶² I have, however, almost completed a book in which *moira* is discussed in its own right.

⁶³ *MR* 20.

situation and/or to your place in society'. Now even *prima facie*, in a stratified society is it not the upper stratum, the *agathoi*, that is likely to determine what is 'appropriate'? I have no space to discuss a large number of examples: I confine myself to some crucial ones.

In *Iliad* xv 206 ff., Poseidon says

Ἴρι θεά, μάλα τοῦτο ἔπος κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.
ἔσθλὸν καὶ τὸ τέτυκται, ὅτ' ἄγγελος αἴσιμα εἰδῆ.
ἀλλὰ τόδ' αὐνὸν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἵκανει,
ὅππότ' ἂν ἰσύμορον καὶ δύμη πεπρωμένον αἴση
νεικείειν ἐθελῆσι χολωτοῦσιν ἐπέεσσιν.

In the last three lines (and cf. 185 ff., where the *moirai* of *time* are enumerated) Poseidon is saying as vigorously as he can that his *allos* is equal to that of Zeus; and in 185 f. he said

ὦ πόποι, ἦ β' ἀγαθός περ ἐών νέπεροπλον ἔειπεν,
εἴ μ' δύστιμον ἐόντα βίῃ ἀέκοντα καθέξει.

Zeus' attempt to restrain Poseidon, who is *δύστιμος*, has an equal *allos* of *τυμή*, is *νέπεροπλον*, not in accordance with 'the present situation and/or the place in society' of Zeus and Poseidon reckoned in *allos*-terms. So we may conclude that Zeus' behaviour is *οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν*. Nevertheless, when Iris says both 203,

στρεπταὶ μέν τε φρένες ἐσθλῶν

—not persuading an *ἀγαθός* here to be merciful when he might be ruthless, but counselling caution in one's own interest—and 204,

οἶσθ' ὡς πρεσβυτέροισιν ἐρινύες αἰὲν ἔπονται,

Poseidon, as we have seen, says that *her* words are *κατὰ μοῖραν* and *αἴσιμα* (though, 208 ff., he is certainly not mollified, and continues to be angry).

Now why does Poseidon say that Iris' words are *κατὰ μοῖραν* and *αἴσιμα*? Possibly the mention of the *ἐρινύες* of an elder brother have their part to play: Poseidon, 197 ff., had told Iris to tell Zeus to confine his attentions to controlling his own children, *οἱ ἔθεν δτρύνοντος ἀκούσονται καὶ ἀνάγκη*; and Iris' rejoinder is to remind Poseidon of the 'rights' of an elder brother. So, though Zeus is *θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων*, *Iliad* viii 17, there is an element of 'constitutionality' here, so far as Homeric society knows of such a thing: Zeus' action is not *merely* based on 'needed power'. But there is no indication of any limit upon the extent to which Zeus could encroach upon Poseidon, of any situation in which Iris' counsel that Poseidon should yield to his elder brother would *not* be *αἴσιμα*; and if this is so, it is the claims of the person of superior status that here determine 'appropriate' advice and behaviour.

In *Odyssey* ii 251, however, as Dr Long himself observes, when Leocritus rejects Mentor's attempts to stir up the people against the suitors,⁶⁴ 'they are inappropriate because the suitors know themselves to have the upper hand'. In other words, the suitors are in a position of power. Even here, 'might is right' is an unsuitable account of the situation: inferior to Odysseus as they may be, the suitors are *ἀγαθοί* and the best bulwark Ithaca has in his absence. 'Needed power is able to make dispositions in society to suit itself, provided it uses its power *also* to secure the valued ends when needed' seems more accurate. And for the most part the inferiors, the *kakoi*, do not challenge the 'shares' of society,⁶⁵ which are part of 'things as they are': we should not forget that though *moira* is improperly translated 'Destiny' or 'Fate', its usage has nevertheless tempted translators so to render it in many contexts.

To act *κατὰ μοῖραν*, then, is to act as the *agathoi* would have one act; but what is the reaction of an *agathos* faced with a situation in which to yield would be both *κατὰ μοῖραν*, because he is faced by superior *arete*, and also *aischron*, since to yield is *aischron* for the *agathos*?

⁶⁴ Long, 137.

⁶⁵ In my forthcoming book I shall endeavour to

show the power of *μοῖρα* in societies whose actual existence cannot be disputed.

In *Iliad* viii 146 ff., Diomedes says, when Nestor counsels him to retreat, since Zeus is manifestly helping Hector,

‘ναι δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα, γέρον, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.
ἀλλὰ τόδ’ αἰνὸν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἵκανει.
“Ἐκτωρ γάρ ποτε φήσει ἐνὶ Τρώεσσος ἀγορεύων.
“Τυδεῖδης ὅπ’ ἐμεῖο φοβεύμενος ἵκετο νῆσας.”
ὡς ποτ’ ἀπειλήσει· τότε μοι χάνοι εὐρεῖα χθών.’

If Hector were to say this, the situation would undoubtedly be *aischron* for Diomedes; and we might compare Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* i, each of whose situations might appear to be *aischron* if they yielded to the *arete* of the other. Where the action called for by *arete* is different from the action that is *κατὰ μοῖραν*, the most powerful values of the society demand that one acts in accordance with the behests of *arete*. For the weaker, then, the *arete* of the stronger establishes what is *κατὰ μοῖραν*; but if the weaker regards himself as an *agathos*, he must act in accordance with *arete* rather than *moira*; and both aspects are what I meant by saying that the *arete* group of values is the more powerful, and affects the answers given to the questions I discussed in *MR*.

Now Dr Long⁶⁶ comments ‘Both Agamemnon and Diomedes accept remarks by Nestor as *κατὰ μοῖραν* (*Iliad* i 286; vii 146); but for both a belief that appropriate action would involve loss of personal *time* 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, they are all too conscious of it. They fear that acceptance of Nestor’s pleas will involve more opprobrium than ignoring them.’

So far as I can see, Dr Long is saying that Homeric society values behaviour in accordance with competitive *arete* more highly than other, co-operative behaviour; which I argue at some length in *MR*,⁶⁷ and come to the same conclusion. On the other hand, *MR* 61: ‘[Co-operative excellences] cannot be completely unvalued in any society. To say that they are less valued is to say that an observer, in considering his fellows in Homeric society, more readily sees the need for their *arete* than for their moderation, *saophrosune*: it is not to say that, if he is himself wronged, he does not resent it and set a high value on the quieter values in others.’ Not only do I think myself to be saying in *MR* what Dr Long is saying, I also draw a distinction which he seems not to draw. In the case of Diomedes on the battlefield, the demand of society is simple: succeed, do not retreat. But in the case of Agamemnon, the demand of society is that he shall succeed as army-leader. Society does not ‘expect’ that he shall take Briseis from Achilles, though it does expect that he will do nothing *aischron*, and he himself, like Achilles, is likely to regard failure in this project too as *aischron*. It does not ‘expect’, that is to say, in the sense of ‘morally require’, though it may ‘expect’ in the sense of finding nothing unusual in such behaviour, which indeed the values of the society cannot effectively curb. Other Greeks in fact *νεικείεσκον* Agamemnon, *Iliad* xix 86, apparently before the disastrous effects of Achilles’ withdrawal had become evident; and indeed Agamemnon is *ἀναιδῆς*. Public opinion may in fact ‘expect’—in the sense of ‘require’—one not to be *ἀναιδῆς*; but it ‘expects’ this much less strongly than it ‘expects’ one not to fail in one’s important tasks; and if one does not fail in those tasks, one cannot, as I said in *MR*, be effectively censured for being *ἀναιδῆς*. In the passage quoted, however, Dr Long is giving more scope to the demands of competitive values than seems to me to be appropriate.

A. W. H. ADKINS.

University of Reading.

⁶⁶ Long, 137.

⁶⁷ *MR* 46 ff.