THE HOMERIC HYMN TO APHRODITE: EROTIC *ANANKE*

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RECENT CRITICS WHO HAVE EXAMINED the Fifth Homeric Hymn as myth, as hymnal celebration, or as considered art have consolidated Hermann's judgement long ago that it is *carmen Homeri nomine dignissimum*.[1] Most notably Peter Smith, in his detailed study of the hymn's mythic function, to express and mediate between man's desire to escape death and his knowledge that he must die, and of the narrative art serving that function, has confirmed the artistry and power of the hymn beyond reasonable doubt.[2] A number of critics have also argued the importance of the hymn as a document in the history of love literature, particularly Bickerman, who finds in it the first European expression of the romantic lover, the femme fatale, and the deification of the beloved.[3] The present paper examines the hymn's representation of a subject of some significance in Greek thought, that of erotic "necessity," especially in the male lover's ambivalent experience of heterosexual *eros*. Lyric and tragic contexts tend to dwell exclusively on the irresistible element in sexual passion. The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* goes farther, tracing in the sexual encounter a sequence of emotions (including humour), choices, actions, and reactions that both builds toward the climax of erotic *ananke* and extends beyond it to the aftermath of a more sober, postcoital state of mind. In that sense the hymn offers a more balanced account of *eros* than do the selective flights of the lyric and tragic imaginations.

Aphrodite herself yields to necessity, but we must distinguish between

The following are cited by author's name: E. J. Bickerman, "Love Story in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*," *Athenaeum* 54 (1976) 229–254; H. Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (Oxford 1975) 247–250; J. C. Kamerbeek, "Remarques sur l'hymne à Aphrodite," *Mnemosyne*[4] 20 (1967) 385–395; L. H. Lenz, *Der homerische Aphroditehymnus und die Aristie des Aineias in der Ilias* (Bonn 1975); H. Podbielski, *Le structure de l'hymne homerique à Aphrodite à la lumière de la tradition littéraire* (Wroclaw 1971); H. N. Porter, "Repetition in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*," *AJP* (1949) 249–272; C. P. Segal, "*The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*: A Structuralist Approach," *CW* 67 (1974) 205–212; P. Smith, *Nursling of Mortality: A Study of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (Frankfurt 1981); C. A. Sowa, *Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns* (Chicago 1984); J. Van Eck, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (diss., Utrecht 1978).

[1]G. Hermann, *Homeri Hymni Epigrammata* (Leipzig 1806) 252.

[2]Smith, a complete refutation of Suhle's description of the hymn as the work of *permediocris poetae* (cited by T. W. Allen and E. E. Sikes in *The Homeric Hymns* [Oxford 1904; revised by T. W. Allen and W. R. Halliday in 1934] 197).

[3]Bickerman, see too Fränkel, 248; Smith, especially 41–61, and most recently Sowa: "the [fertility] Goddess symbolizes the man's first sexual experience, part of his initiation into adulthood" (42).

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levels of meaning. On the level of narrative motivation, we can summarily dismiss the claim that the poet makes the goddess submit to necessity out of scruple for her sexual "purity." Purity is not an issue in this hymn.[4] Shame, Aphrodite's *oneidos* (247), most certainly is. But it has nothing to do with Aphrodite's submission to *eros* as such, as if this involved some form of besmirched purity. Archaic shame is always loss of standing in a culture that measures worth hierarchically.[5] In the *Iliad* Aphrodite proves to be an ineffective fighter, and so is considered by Diomedes as "weak" herself (5.331) and advised to limit her activities to those appropriate to "weak women" (5.349). That the goddess embodies *eros* is relevant in this passage. Diomedes' disparaging remarks, echoed later by Zeus himself, confirm the subordinate place of *eros* within the heroic code.

The *Homeric Hymn*, on the other hand, does not belittle erotic values; Athena's preference for the "works of Ares" is not commended as some ideal standard. Aphrodite's shame here is not her embodiment of *eros* and certainly not her submission to *eros*. It is, rather, her passion for the wrong thing, imposed on her by a vengeful Zeus. The god, tired of being himself tamed by *eros*, turns the tables on the goddess of *eros* by making her a victim of her own power. At this level, her shame is "among the immortals" (247), a matter of power politics in the Olympian hierarchy. Second, she loses face by conceiving a passion for a mortal man. It is a standard complaint among female deities that dalliance with men is frowned upon by their male counterparts, that it is therefore shameful; the double standard operated in heaven no less than on earth. And for all her awful power, for a goddess to mate with a mortal is to lower herself and so risk losing face with mortals too. The equivalent on earth would be a noble woman bestowing her favours on a slave. So Aphrodite enjoins Anchises not to tell anyone that they slept together (281–288). It is not sex itself that is shameful.

At the same time the poet transforms her humiliation into an extended and subtle encounter between maid and man that invites us to see in the hymn a psychological as well as political concatenation of forces. Among these is the energy of the appetitive instincts. Aphrodite's own reference to κρατερὴ ἀνάγκη (130) and the words θεῶν ἰότητι καὶ αἴσῃ (166) at the moment of sexual consummation seem to echo the state of unmitigated compulsion so familiar to us in lyric and tragic accounts of *eros*. But other factors are at

[4]There have been some curious attempts to defend Aphrodite's purity in this hymn: "Gemoll [against Baumeister] rightly points out that Aphrodite shews shame and modesty. Her passion for Anchises is no wantonness, but has been forced upon her by Zeus" (Allen and Sikes, above, n. 2, [1904] 196; in the 1934 edition the argument is reworded slightly but its substance remains the same.) Cf. F. L. Lucas, *Aphrodite* (Cambridge 1948) 4.

[5]On "shame" culture, see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1951) 28–63. On the theme of the hierarchical ranking of the gods within divine society, see Lenz 269. On Aphrodite's *oneidos* see Bickerman 239 and Smith 90–92.

work in the hymn that encourage a rather less narrow interpretation of ἐρωτικὴ ἐπιθυμία (as Apollodoros described the driving force of this myth, 3.12.2).[6]

"The problem of human dispositions," observed Francis Bacon, ". . . is one of those things wherein the common discourse of men is wiser than books."[7] The archaic Greek man had at his disposal a vocabulary of *eros* and attendant states of mind that was well able to accommodate the complexity of these dispositions. The poet of the *Hymn to Aphrodite* employs a traditional phraseology of sexual impulse, including metaphors of aggressive interference. The verbs δαμάζειν/δαμνᾶν (3, 17) and such expressions as "putting ἵμερον in the heart" (45, 53) and "ἵμερος seizes . . ." (57) suggest external agency. Δαμάζειν and cognate terms compare the effect of sexual drives to the external force that tames wild animals, rendering them helpless. The implied metaphor is essentially that of enslavement. Δμώς means "slave" and δαμάζειν can mean to "make [a virgin] subject to a male" (to a husband, *Il.* 18.432; to a rapist or seducer, *Il.* 3.301; *Od.* 3.269). ἄδμητος means "unbroken" of cattle, horses, and mules (*Il.* 23.266, 655), sometimes of maids (so here, 133), ἀδμής "unwedded" of maids (*Od.* 6.109, 228), sometimes "unbroken" of mules (*Od.* 4.637). In our hymn (3; cf. 251) Aphrodite as *eros* "overpowers" (ἐδαμάσσατο, gnomic aorist) the tribes of men, birds, and beasts, in making them submit to the enslaving force of a natural law.

However, where animals have no choices, human beings (and anthropomorphic gods) do. Even the attempt to δαμάζειν another by *eros* may fail, since in human experience attempts to "tame" by *eros* may be almost synonymous with attempts to "persuade" and to "deceive" by *eros*: so in our hymn οὐδὲ . . . δάμναται (16 f.) is glossed by οὐ δύναται πεπιθεῖν φρένας οὐδ' ἀπατῆσαι (7, 33). Each verb expresses a failed attempt to impose *eros*. Such failure is an account of what the world simply is in certain of its aspects. Aphrodite cannot δαμνᾶσθαι Athena who represents the "male" virtue of intelligence, free of erotic distraction, applied to the shaping and ordering of the world; nor Hestia, the essential παρθένος ἀδμήτη by nature; nor what is wild, untameable, namely Artemis, the virgin huntress. However, these goddesses are described as anthropomorphic beings and the poet interprets their states in the language and so on the level of human experience not as determined by necessity but as the choice of a certain kind of pleasure.

[6]Apollodorus' allusion to this myth is very brief: he is perhaps recalling *Theog.* 1008 ff., or summarizing either a lost version of the myth or, possibly, the Homeric Hymn's version understood to be about *erotike epithymia*.

[7]Cited by S. Chatman, in *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1978) 124. Chatman cites Ludwig Klages on the same point: "Language excels in unconscious insight the acumen of the most talented thinker, and we contend that whoever, having the right talent, should do nothing but examine the words and phrases which deal with the human soul, would know more about it than all the sages who omitted to do so."

The archaic poet knows that "persuasion" and "deception" and even divine magic are not necessarily irresistible forces, since they may fail: so Odysseus enters the bed of bewitching Circe only on his own conditions (*Od.* 10.342–348). And so in the Homeric Hymn Hestia, courted by Poseidon and Apollo, "was unwilling," . . . "refused" (οὐκ ἐθελεν . . . ἀπέειπεν), "swore an oath" (ὤμοσε . . . μέγαν ὅρκον, 26) to remain a virgin. Even if archaic man finally describes choice as illusory, he can up to a point, like ourselves, think, talk, and act as though it were not. When *eros* does prove to be irresistible, whether as inner experience or as outer force, the *attitude* of the human actor determines accountability, as it does more formally later in Athenian law and in Aristotelian ethics. Calypso forced Odysseus to sleep with her, she willing, he unwilling (παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ, *Od.* 5.155). And whatever "fate of the gods" (μοῖρα θεῶν) bound (ἐπέδησε) Clytemnestra that she should be "tamed" (δαμῆναι), Aegistheus led her to his house, both of them "willing" (τήνδ' ἐθέλων ἐθέλουσαν, [*Od.* 3.269–272])

The story of these goddesses, then, has at least three functions that help illuminate the hymn's "celebration" of *eros*:[8] it represents the trio as the exceptions that test the rule of the universality of the sexual instinct; it pointedly contrasts Aphrodite with exempla of committed virginity ("nor to αἰδοίη[9] Hestia were the works of Aphrodite pleasing"); and it introduces the language of "choice" and "pleasure" into the realm of preferred behaviour.[10] These functions establish a context for what follows. Anchises and Aphrodite fall in love with each other's godlike beauty, but that act of submission does not exhaust the meaning of *eros* nor even of erotic *ananke*. The affair can be said to begin with the long passage in which Aphrodite goes off to Cyprus to array herself in her finest attire and then completes her journey. The episode introduces and guides our responses to the erotic encounter. It

[8]Smith also shows how the three goddesses, even Artemis, exemplify the "social and institutional side of our experience" over against the world of natural and personal *eros* (32–37).

[9]Even if the author of the Fifth Hymn had called her αἰδοίη, which she is called in the Sixth Hymn (1), the effect might have been less to defend her against a charge of wanton behaviour than to focus attention on the possible echo of τὰ αἰδοῖα: cf. the pun between φιλομμειδης and φιλομμήδης in Hes. *Theog.* 180, 194 (but see too M. L. West's rejection of a possible reference to αἰδοῖα at *Theog.* 194 in *Hesiod: Theogony* [Oxford 1966] 223). In fact, our poet wants αἰδοίη to focus the awe resident in virginity (Hestia, 21) and in the institution of marriage (Hera, 44), and so to bring out the contrast, "nor to αἰδοίη Hestia were the works of Aphrodite pleasing (21)." That contrast contextually is between complementary realities and is not judgmental; Aphrodite is what she is, a universal force that requires no apologist. On αἰδοῖος see W. J. Verdenius, "Hesiod, *Theogony* 507–616," *Mnemosyne*[4] 24 (1971) 1–10, at 5.

[10]There are other indications in Greek literature that explicit sexual orientation (which the divine mirrors) is a matter not of genetics or environment or other kinds of constraint but of choice. In the *Hippolytus*, for example, Aphrodite accuses the frigid prince of deliberately rejecting her and so meriting his punishment (*Hipp.* 6, 14, 21, etc.). The meaning works on two levels: Hippolytus chooses not to perform ritual worship, but the ritual actions are in this instance acts of *eros*.

represents the goddess as beauty and grace, the embodiment of good and pleasurable sexuality symbolized by the Graces, the sanctuary, and the fragrant altar, and, on her reaching Ida, draws attention not only to her power manifested in the mating of animals but also to the pleasure she takes in their sport. The seduction scene itself ironically matches goddess and mortal. It is also a variation on the traditional scene of nature fertility ritual. At the level of ἐρωτικὴ ἐπιθυμία, however, it is played out in terms of plausible human psychology.[11] It includes elements of persuasive deception and self-deception. And it is notable how welcome both lovers find their condition. During the entire affair Aphrodite herself makes no mention of Zeus' compulsion, apart from her single and indirect allusion to κρατερὴ ἀναγκή, and throughout expresses no unwillingness.

What, then, of her appeal to κρατερὴ ἀναγκή (130) and the editorial reference to θεῶν ἰότητι καὶ αἴσῃ (166)? The hymn belongs to an era only a little later than that of Homer and Hesiod[12] so that the earlier meanings of ἀναγκή, ἰότης, and αἶσα establish controls for their meanings in the hymn. Several centuries ago Chapman translated line 130: "Necessity / With her steel strings, compelling me t' apply / To her high pow'r my will."[13] But that lofty personification is not an archaic notion. *Ananke* in Homer means essentially "force," as applied by someone or something in the position of master over slave. Submission to such force is implicitly an unpleasant condition. That sense of *ananke* as "hateful constraint" is primary, for example, when Odysseus, in disguise, bids Eumaeus give him a guide into the city and there "I myself will wander ἀνάγκῃ" (*Od.* 15.311 f.). The force in question is poverty, and the emphasis is on the beggar's state of dependency.[14]

[11]On the sophisticated naturalism of the seduction scene, see Bickerman 237–241; Fränkel 248; Smith 41: "psychologically natural . . . culturally expected." On the scene as a type of seduction, a variation of fertility ritual, see Sowa 68–82.

[12]On the dating of the hymn see K. Reinhardt, "Zum homerischen Aphroditehymnus," *Festschrift Bruno Snell* (Munich 1956), 385–393, *passim*, who argues for Homeric authorship, and the convincing counterarguments of Kamerbeek *passim*, Lenz *passim*, Smith 2–5. A Hesiodic or slightly post-Hesiodic date for the hymn seems most defensible (see especially Richard Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns* [Cambridge 1982] ch. 8), although Van Eck would tentatively place the composition of the hymn in "the hey-day of Greek lyric poetry," 24. Cf. F. Solmsen, "Zur Theologie im grossen Aphroditehymnus," *Hermes* 88 (1960) 1–14. On Homeric parallels see P. G. Preziosi, "*The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*: An Oral Analysis," *HSCP* (1966) 171–204. Fränkel is no doubt right to argue (250) that "None of the hymns is tied to a ceremonial or harnessed to a cult;" they probably served as *prooimia* to the rhapsodic contests of epic song at a variety of divine festivals; cf. *H. Hymn* 6.19 f. (see Lenz 270).

[13]George Chapman, tr., *Homeric Hymns and Epigrams* (London 1616; reprinted 1888) 86.

[14]Occasionally *ananke* in Homer with the infinitive approaches the more generalized sense of "must" (equivalent to δεῖ or χρή), as in the question τίς τοι ἀνάγκη / πτώσσειν; (*Il.* 5.634 f.) but even here the military context implies "what threat (of force) constrains you to cower?" At *Iliad* 10.418, οἷσιν ἀνάγκη . . . *may* apply to the watchmen, defending their homes, something

The phrase κρατερὴ ἀνάγκη occurs twice in Homer, once in Hesiod, and once in the *Cypria*. To one who accepts Milman Parry's theory of Homeric formulae without reservation, κρατερὴ ἀνάγκη is a metrically convenient alternative to ἀνάγκη, not a refinement. To one who does not, it is legitimate at least to make the case that the epithet accentuates the unpleasantness of the victim's bondage. Κρατερὸς means "powerful," "able to master" in a good or bad sense: of heroic qualities (e.g., *Il.* 14.324), of strong feelings (τρόμος, λύσσα, δέος), of "tight" bonds (*Il.* 5.386; *Od.* 8.336—the net Hephaestus throws over Ares and Aphrodite; cf. 360), of fire (*Od.* 11.220). In the *Iliad*, Hector predicts the day when Andromache will be led away to slavery, to work another's loom or bear water—πολλ' ἀεκαζομένη, κρατερὴ δ' ἐπικείσετ' ἀνάγκη (*Il.* 6.458), a phrase that combines the idea of subjection to another's power and deep resentment of that ignominious condition. In Hesiod Atlas holds up the broad heaven κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης (*Theog.* 517): Zeus is the master in this case, meting out painful punishment in a series of humiliations he inflicts on Menoetius, Atlas, and Prometheus. In the *Cypria* (*fr.* 7, Allen), κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης expresses the revulsion with which Nemesis submitted to the embraces of the supreme god: so unwilling and ashamed was she, she fled over land and sea, changing her shape, doing everything possible to avoid the inevitable (412).

The point of the formula in the tenth book of the *Odyssey* is the least clear. Odysseus tells Eurylochus that he must go to Circe's house despite the danger: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν εἶμι, κρατερὴ δέ μοι ἔπλετ' ἀνάγκη (*Od.* 10.273). It is a strange assertion, for which neither Odysseus nor the context offers a direct explanation. To what does he submit? The will of the gods, presumably, though we cannot read Vergilian *fatum* or Chapmanesque Necessity into the passage. Perhaps the very obliqueness here of the notion of "masterful necessity" as the will of the gods makes possible a complementary reading of the passage. As the exchange between Odysseus and Athena (*Od.* 13.296–301) seems to imply, the will of the gods and the heroic will may at times be two sides of the same truth. The context of Odysseus' painful submission to force is one that also accentuates the hero's sterling qualities, the distance that separates the leader from his cowardly crew, men like Eurylochos whose "spirits were broken" when they recalled the deeds of Laestrygonians and Cyclops (10.198–200); Odysseus finally rejects Eurylochus' cowardly advice that they both flee now. Here is a disagreeable situation where divine force and heroic purpose seek the same goal.

When Aphrodite admits the force of κρατερὴ ἀναγκή in the Homeric Hymn, there is no doubt what that force is. As παρθένος ἀδμήτη her com-

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of the heroic *ananke* that sends Odysseus to Circe's hut (*Od.* 10.273); but the meaning may simply be, "who are assigned." On *ananke* generally see H. Schreckenberg, *Ananke: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Wortgebrauchs* (Munich 1964).

plaint to Anchises is in effect, "Hermes compelled me, a virgin dedicated to Artemis, to seek you out for the purpose of matrimony, and I feel all the understandable reluctance of the shy virgin forced to act thus against her will." The larger audience will also remember that it was Zeus who forced her into her painful situation (Aphrodite ironically invokes the name of Zeus immediately after her reference to *ananke*!). But her complaint also expands our understanding of the works of *eros* embodied in the person and the acts of the goddess. She concocts the false tale of Hermes' κρατερὴ ἀνάγκη as a weapon of wilful erotic deceit. And at the same time she alludes to the kind of painful pressure that underlies all forms of submission, from the beggar's constrained circumstances (similarly fictitious, *Od.* 15.311), to the hero's resolve (*Od.* 10.273), to affairs of the heart, without in any instance eliminating the role played by choice, action, and attitude.

Later in the poem, as the couple proceed irreversibly toward the consummation of their union, the poet refers to θεῶν ἰότητι καὶ αἴσῃ (166). For Homer ἰότης means "desire" or "will," usually, though not exclusively, of the gods. When attributed to mortals and to gods conceived "comically," that is, in their most human representation, it implies the unwelcome, even unnatural application of willpower: of Hera as a shameful mother (*Il.* 18.396); of a bad woman (*Od.* 11.384), of the suitors (*Od.* 18.234). The will of the gods, on the other hand, however unpleasant for mortals, is beyond good and evil. Αἶσα means "measure," especially as decreed by the gods (cf. Διὸς αἶσα, *Il.* 9.608, 17.321), and so shares much of the meaning of μοῖρα as "portion," "due lot," "constraining limits," "cosmic necessity." The poet of the Homeric Hymn joins together, as Homer never does, θεῶν ἰότης and (θεῶν) αἶσα, a doubling up that (again, *pace* Milman Parry, where does the freedom to reshape traditional elements, the secret of the superior epic poet's craft, necessarily end?) creates a notable emphasis. We might compare Hesiod's ὑπ' ἀνάγκης / ἀθανάτων βουλῇσιν (*WD* 15–16). The phrases are roughly equivalent, divine ἰότης and βουλή being particularly close in meaning. Furthermore, Hesiod's *ananke* is perhaps a little nearer to αἶσα than it ever is in Homer though it still carries the implication of painful submission to superior force, appropriate to the context of men who must wage evil war or suffer the consequences, for that is the way the world is. Hesiod seems to resort to the double-barrelled phrase—κρατερὴ ἀναγκή might have served the same end here—to emphasise and give authority to his impassioned claim[15] that mortals must favour *Eris*, strife, not only in the form of noble emulation but in the form also of "evil war and struggle: the latter no man loves, but he honours strife ὑπ' ἀνάγκης / ἀθανάτων βουλῇσιν."

[15]E. A. Havelock sees in this passage Hesiod's creative struggle toward a new topic of discourse forged out of the Homeric formulae available to him (*The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* [Princeton, N.J. 1982] 213).

The hymn's author similarly finds in his doubling of formulae a way to underline the momentous point of his passage, to achieve several effects at once. At the level of narrative, the poet recalls Zeus' intention to humiliate Aphrodite, but the role and significance of Zeus range, as in Homeric epic, from "comic" idiosyncratic actor, affronted and vengeful, to the "cosmic" collective power and omniscience of the θεοί.[16] Zeus' wilful trick becomes the expression of some cosmic plan, culminating in the moment when that most extraordinary of men, the hero, is conceived. And necessity not only bears on Aphrodite's situation as victim of Zeus' plan and on the larger intentions of that plan, it also informs the erotic experience of Anchises and so reflects an aspect of male psychology in the archaic age. For Anchises αἶσα is the "necessary" moment of erotic consummation where all uncertainties end; where, in mythic terms, immortal and mortal[17] and all the states of body and mind they imply come together. It is a transfiguration, however, that cannot last. Whatever else it does at this point, the hymn also finds in this moment of "compelled" climax the pivot between the male's precoital and postcoital experience of *eros*. Sexual submission, the finale to a sequence of largely joyous alternations of choice and reaction, proves finally to be the tragic prelude to a rude awakening and a painful reassessment.

There are other, cogent explanations for the sense of loss that runs through the hymn after the sexual encounter of goddess and man; the suggestion, therefore, that postcoital disillusionment might be added to them is one to be advanced cautiously. But myths have many functions. It is not unreasonable to find that descriptions in myth of intercourse between unusual partners are able to reflect deep-rooted human concerns of various kinds. Acts between divine males and human females are least complex. In all cases the "lover" takes the initiative and will prevail, whether seduction suffices or force becomes necessary. The sexually masterful god behaves as social norms expect all males to.

On the other hand, a more complex psychology is likely to inform intercourse between female god and mortal man and between god and goddess. In the latter instance human fears can be projected onto others who are utterly different, in the former rationalized (who can be blamed for what a goddess may do to one?), and so in each case accommodated. What fears, and why such indirection? Fears, surely, of female erotic aggression and

[16]Cf. in the *Iliad* the shift from the deceived husband who hurls angry threats at Hera when he learns how she tricked him (*Il.* 15.13–33) to the god of fate who weighs in golden scales the life and death of Hector and Achilles (22.209–212). On the Zeus motif in the Homeric Hymns see Lenz 31 f., 270. In the *Hymn to Aphrodite* the role of Zeus, offended and vengeful male in an erotic episode, may have been influenced by the role of Hephaestus in the lay of Demodocus. The terms "cosmic" and "comic" were coined by G. M. Calhoun, in "Homer's Gods: Prolegomena," *TAPA* 68 (1937) 11–25, at 21.

[17]Among discussions of the theme of mortality and immortality, see Segal; Smith; Sowa 49 f., 80.

with it the loss of μένος, of vital force, in all intercourse—fears that may have conflicted with archaic notions of virility and the honourable standing which virile confidence helped sustain.

After they have made love, Anchises pleads with Aphrodite that he not be left ἀμενηνόν for the rest of his life (188). Anne Giacomelli has most skilfully confirmed that the epithet must mean "sexually impotent," dried out with the loss of μένος, the vital fluid of procreation. She emphasizes that the danger is sex with a goddess, of the kind that threatens to render Odysseus ἀνήνορα (*Od.* 10.301). The threat is the confounding of mortal and immortal spheres.[18] But all acts of love result in loss of μένος; cf. Archilochus, [λευ]κὸν ἀφῆκα μένος (*Cologne Epode* 52). And some are so described as to emphasise the theme of delight changing, after intercourse, to darker moods. We turn to the evidence of Homer.

Aphrodite awakens Anchises to impart information. This is a familiar motif (see Smith 64), but a special kind of sleep can invest a passage with special significance. There are passages in Homer which refer in sequence to night, bedlove, and dawn (cf. *Od.* 5.225 ff.). In a few passages postcoital sleep plays a role. Most pertinent for our present purpose are episodes involving gods in their more "comic" guise: Zeus and Hera in the *Iliad* and Poseidon and the mortal nymph Tyro in the *Odyssey*. Both episodes seem to have influenced the poet of the Homeric Hymn.[19] In the *Odyssey* (11.241–252) the god Poseidon lies with Tyro, seals her eyes in sleep, then announces the coming birth of their child. However useful this pattern was for the poet of the Fifth Hymn, it suggested to him no aspects of male sexual experience itself.

In the *Iliad* the god Sleep, approached a second time by Hera to help her deceive Zeus, recalls the earlier occasion when Zeus awoke from his slumber to discover how Hera had tricked him, taking advantage of his somnolent condition to slip away and attack Heracles (*Iliad* 14.242–261). On the second occasion, Zeus' "submission to sleep and sex" (353) improves Poseidon's chance to help the Trojans and so to further Hera's own interests. In the earlier passage "Zeus awoke, angry . . ." and Sleep was saved from Zeus' wrath only by the intervention of Night "whom Zeus feared to offend" (261). The passage underlines the perils of sex-sleep-night for a male seduced into submission by an erotic female. But also of importance is the change in the awakening male's state of mind, in these passages a change

[18]A. Giacomelli, "Aphrodite and After," *Phoenix* 34 (1980) 2–19. The fear of castration might be relevant here. Giacomelli (13) notes Ares' fear that a wound to "the lowest part of the belly" (*Il.* 5.885–887) might result in loss of *menos*. Hesiod links Aphrodite directly to castrated genitals in the account of her birth (*Theog.* 200); he also presents her as a more generalised, mystified image of sex as the human game of smiles, whispers, and deceit (*Theog.* 205).

[19]On these passages see Podbielski 50–58; Van Eck 55. On intercourse, sleep, reawakening, and dressing as a traditional sequence, see Sowa 68 f.

from erotic delight to anger. In the later episode, Zeus says with a scowl: "Unmanageable one, your ill-contriving deception [has caused these evils]" (15.14–16). He will make her give up her deceptions by reminding her of his power to punish: "see if lovemaking will aid you then, how you slept with me and deceived me" (15.31–33).

Each passage in fact depicts a male's progress from precoital illusion, manufactured by an erotically deceptive female, to postcoital sleep, finally to an awakening to rude reality and a sense of loss. The Homeric Hymn too shifts through its centre from a dreamlike experience of anticipated bliss to a harsh reckoning with reality. But where the supreme god awakes on his own and responds with outbursts of anger, Anchises, a mere mortal deceived by the divine, is roused by a god and resorts to fearful lament when confronted with the reality of his situation. Affairs between female gods and mortal men are potentially richer ground for psychological insight. During the seduction scene Anchises indulges in hopes of a favorable future for himself—for prosperity (ἐὺ ζώειν, 105) and for a pleasant old age, and he also indulges in the almost romantic fancy that death would be an acceptable barter for a moment's joy with his beautiful consort. The passage combines, with psychological plausibility, a willingness to be so deceived on the one hand and on the other imagery of a mind-clouding sexual passion so strong he would willingly die to consummate it. Awakening to somber truth, he now must accept as certain what previously he had refused to admit, namely that the beautiful girl is in fact an Olympian who could unman him (an appalling threat to a Greek male) and also that he faces a bleak future culminating in a painful old age. "I knew you were a goddess," he laments, "but you deceived me" (186).[20] Joyful trust yields once again to the realization that the male has been deceived in sex; but the accompanying emotion now is not anger but fear, together with a sense of irremediable loss.

Not that Aphrodite "triumphs" here as Hera does in the *Iliad*; she is *eros*, and as such her own anthropomorphic experience extends the meaning of human experience, including the postcoital sense of loss.[21] Part of what distinguishes this scene of divinity revealed from other examples of the type is precisely the goddess' mortification, her ambivalence in both wanting Anchises (241 f.) and yet feeling that she herself, used to compelling, deceiving, and humiliating, has herself been compelled, deceived, and humiliated in the strange process of erotic conquest. Her epiphany as true prophet is in marked contrast with her disguise as false prophet; not only does fiction yield to truth, but pleasure yields to pain. Only during her true prophecy does she refer to the unpleasant consequences of her affair with Anchises,

[20]Sowa points out that Anchises asks only for mortal goods and gets exactly what he asked for (51). What changes is his perception of their worth.

[21]Sowa sees reflected in Aphrodite's shame and humiliation the condition of the woman after marriage, her "death" and emergence as a different person (42).

the point of her lament here being, at least on one level, to reflect human experience by emphasising the gulf between the hope of extended, even timeless joy glimpsed briefly in sexual congress, and the painful accommodation that must follow to such timebound realities as aging and dying (cf. 241–246).

According to Herodotus (2.53), Homer and Hesiod played a large part in the formulation of the Greek pantheon. They were "teachers," who both transmitted and developed the traditional myths as sources of "information," including the gods as embodiments of the world as human beings experience it and invest it with meaning and value.[22] No other Greek god, with the possible exceptions of Dionysus and Ares, represents so sharply focussed an experience as Aphrodite, goddess of *eros*. Her *erga*, therefore, mean both the "deeds of the goddess," the famous episodes in which she is leading actress, but also the "works of *eros*," erotic experience in the lives of human actors.[23] Appropriate epithets help focus these different works, but in the last analysis the entire narrative of the Homeric Hymn constitutes her *erga*. On one level the hymn "celebrates" the *erga* of Aphrodite by narrating her adventures, involving her submission to the vengeance of a jealous Zeus, her mating with a mortal, and her conception of a hero. On another, it "celebrates" her by unifying discrete but not anomalous levels of the archaic vision of love. Especially noteworthy among studies of love in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* is Bickerman's demonstration of the extent to which the hymn both reflects contemporary courting practices and turns them into the stuff of romantic idealization. The present paper has focussed on the complementary roles of choice, action, attitude, and compulsion as they give shape to the pattern of precoital passion, consummation, conception, and postcoital awakening in the archaic erotic experience.

The heart of the pattern is the still centre, the moment of consummation represented as the perceived absorption of the timebound mortal into the timeless immortal. The aftermath of that union makes it increasingly clear that, to his sorrow, the only form of immortality mortal man can truly know is perpetuation of the species. And so not least for this reason the final mood of the celebration of Aphrodite is somber. The hymn has its moments of charming humour in its reduction of the goddess to victim of her own *eros*[24] and in the masking of her as παρθένος ἀδμήτη. However, in myth as

[22]On the aims and methods of oral poetry as instruction, see Havelock (above, n. 15) 138. On oral techniques in the hymn see Preziosi (above, n. 12) *passim*; Smith 3–5, 10–12.

[23]On ἔργα Ἀφροδίτης see H. N. Porter, "Repetition in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*," *AJP* 70 (1949) 249–272 at 252, 258; Podbielski 92; Bickerman 229; Van Eck 104 f.: he discusses the interchangeability of the gods and their provinces—the "deification of things" and "reification of gods;" Sowa 53 f.

[24]Kamerbeek 4; Podbielski 30; Fränkel 250; A. N. Athanassakis, *The Homeric Hymns* (Baltimore 1976) 92.

elsewhere humour may finally be serious stuff.[25] While *eros* in the hymn's account has its lighter side, the sobering *exempla* in the long final section underline the painful meaning of Aphrodite's epiphany for Anchises, the recognition that the lover-father, having flirted with a vision of immortality, must return to time, to age and die and find his immortality only in his descendants and his fame (and so, only so, prove to be φίλος θεοῖσι, 195).

At the end of the goddess' journey from Cyprus to Ida she observes and "rejoices in" the coupling of wild animals (69–74). Ida, of course, is "mother of beasts," and the passage reminds us of Aphrodite's cosmic power as a goddess of fertility (Sowa 82). It also emphasises the joyfulness of sexual union and reflects seductive Aphrodite's own feelings at this moment. Finally, its account of beasts mating serves implicitly as a contrastive prelude to the human experience that follows immediately. For these beasts erotic *ananke* is simple and merely joyful; they have no choices to make, no experience of past and future, no knowledge of mortality, no balance sheet of illusion and reality. Not true for *them* that *post coitum omne animal triste*. The human male, on the other hand, once willingly or unwillingly seduced, proceeds fitfully through the hopes, doubts, fears, and joys of the ritual of courtship until he is irreversibly sunk in the delights of erotic *ananke*. Thereafter he must turn to thoughts of endangered manhood and the claims of his mortal destiny.[26]

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[25]The tone of the hymn becomes increasingly solemn. Among the touches that help deepen the hymn's theme of mortality are Hermes' funereal associations. He appears first as the fictitious sender of Aphrodite to Anchises, prompting Anchises to comment, "If you came through Hermes, immortal guide (διακτόρου), I would go to Hades if I could sleep with you" (147–154). Later, Hermes turns up as the messenger of the bitter-sweet fortunes of Tithonus, who will be deathless but age forever (220–224).

[26]See J. Fontenrose on the motif of women who bring disaster to males (*Python* [Berkeley, Calif. 1959] 107 f., 169 f., 406); also P. Slater for a Freudian sociopsychological interpretation (*The Glory of Hera* [Boston 1968)] *passim*). Odysseus, exemplary family man and resourceful hero, doesn't fear or regret sex with these "allomorphs" of Aphrodite (see P. Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite* [Chicago 1978] 47) Circe and Calypso—nor with Penelope, weaver of the shroud!—but potential menace underlies all such encounters, including Zeus' with Hera.