

ΨΥΧΗ IN HOMERIC DEATH-DESCRIPTIONS

JOHN WARDEN

As ODYSSEUS SETS SAIL FROM the island of the Cyclopes, he fires this parting shot at Polyphemos:

αἶ γὰρ δὴ ψυχῆς τε καὶ αἰῶνός σε δυναίμην
εὖνιν ποιήσας πέμψαι δόμον Ἄιδος εἴσω,
ὥς οὐκ ὀφθαλμόν γ' ἰήσεται οὐδ' ἐνοσίχθων

[*Od.* 9. 523–525]

For different reasons this remark should disturb our composure as much as it does that of Polyphemos. For, according to our accepted beliefs of Homeric eschatology, it is man's *ψυχή* that proceeds to Hades on the death of the body, not man bereft of his *ψυχή*. The passage makes sense only when we realise that each phrase, the deprivation of *ψυχή* and *αἰών*, and the despatching to Hades, are here used as conventional equivalents for "to kill." *ψυχή* means nothing more than life.

But perhaps this should not surprise us too much. For I believe that, if we look closely at the phrases involving *ψυχή* that describe death in the Homeric poems, we shall find that in the large majority of them *ψυχή* is innocent of eschatological content and means nothing more than that which is lost to man at death, i.e. life; that there is in fact a marked semantic distinction between usage in death-descriptions and what one might call *Totengeist* usage, where *ψυχή* is regarded as an entity that survives the death of the body, a pale and insubstantial shadow leading its unenviable half-life in the world of the dead. I should emphasize that I am not making any assertions about the etymology or root sense of *ψυχή*; nor am I attempting to reconstruct the chronology of its semantic development (though I shall offer some speculative suggestions about this at the end of the paper). All I am saying at this juncture is that if we look at the two main areas of usage of the term in the Homeric poems, death-descriptions and descriptions of life after death, we find in the majority of cases a fairly clear distinction in semantic content.

I should start by admitting that there is a small group of death-descriptions whose affinity to *Totengeist* usage is obvious in their metrical and lexical behaviour. Such passages are: *Il.* 16.856 f. = 22.362 f.; *Il.* 7.330; *Od.* 10.560 = 11.65.¹ Here *ψυχή* is fully personified and re-

¹There are a few passages which show linguistic affinity to *Totengeist* usage where the psychological term involved is *θυμός* rather than *ψυχή*. An instance is *Il.* 23.880: ὡκύς δ' ἐκ μελέων θυμός πτάτο, which recalls *Il.* 16.856, etc.: *ψυχή* δ' ἐκ ρεθέων πταμένη. Compare also *Il.* 16.469; *Od.* 10.163; 19.454. In these cases it may be the desire of the

garded as a separable entity. This is apparent from the verbs employed, which are appropriate only to an animate being capable of independent motion;² they do not occur with other psychological terms used in death-descriptions, such as *θυμός*;³ they are however freely used of *ψυχή* in a Totengeist context.⁴ The affinity is especially visible in *Il.* 16.856 f. = 22.361 f.:

ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ρεθέων⁵ πατάμενη "Αιδόσδε βεβήκει
δν πότμον γούωσα, λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτήτα καὶ ἥβην

The metrical position of *ψυχή*, 1 – |, occurs only twice in death-descriptions, but is regular in Totengeist usage;⁶ the use of *πατάμενη* recalls *Od.* 11.222: *ψυχὴ δ' ἥτ' ὄνειρος ἀποπατάμενη πεπότηται* and *γούωσα*, good evidence of total personification, recalls *Il.* 23.106: *ψυχὴ ἐφειστήκει γούωσά τε μυρομένη τε*.

Yet a consideration of the contexts in which this passage occurs might suggest that there are special factors operating which impel the poet to use an unusually elaborate mode of expression: in 16.856 f. the personified usage prepares the listener for the reappearance of Patroclus' *ψυχή* as Totengeist in Book 23. It is not unnatural that the poet should at this point use language appropriate to the Totengeist. More importantly perhaps, the passage occurs at two of the main crises or turning-points of the plot, the death of Patroclus and the death of Hector; one might suspect that it has in part a stylistic or structural function to perform.

Similarly in *Od.* 10.560 = 11.65, the context would appear to provide

poet to avoid using *ψυχή* of an animal that precipitates the confusion. A more celebrated example is *Il.* 7.131: *θυμόν ἀπὸ μελέων δῶναι δόμον "Αἶδος εἴσω*. Here a regular formulaic usage involving *θυμός* (*Il.* 13.672; 16.607) is adapted to a verbal environment to which it is not appropriate, and which involves an unacceptable personification (for a normative use, where the subject is properly personified, see *Il.* 3.322: *τὸν δὸς ἀποφθίμενον δῶναι δόμον "Αἶδος εἴσω*).

²A comparison with *Il.* 20.294 (*ὅς τάχα Πηλείωνι δαμείς "Αιδόσδε κάτεισι*) would suggest that the *ψυχὴ* of 7.330 is fully identified with the animate self.

³The nearest thing is perhaps the use of *οἰχομαι* in the repeated phrase *θυμός/ῶχετ' ἀπὸ μελέων* (*Il.* 13.671 f.; 16.606 f.). The verb is used of *ψυχή* fully personified, at *Il.* 23.101, but it is more easily extended to non-personal usage than *ἐρχομαι/βαίνω* (see *Il.* 22.213, where it is used of *"Εκτορος αἵσιμον ἡμαρ*—a non-personal use, but still within the context of death-descriptions). It seems to have acquired early the sense of "is gone," "finished," "dead," thus being appropriate to the moment of death, but not entailing any locomotion.

⁴*Il.* 23.65; *Od.* 10.530; 11.51,84, etc., 150,563; 24.20.

⁵Snell's argument that *ρέθη* means "face" in this context seems convincing (*Discovery of Mind* 10 ff.; see also E. Schwyzer, *Glotta* 12 (1922) 23).

⁶In death-descriptions only at *Od.* 22.444 apart from this passage; in Totengeist usage: *Il.* 23.104,106,221; *Od.* 10.492, etc., 530; 11.37, 222, 564; 24.100.

special reasons why language appropriate to the Totengeist should be used. The passage occurs first in a description of the death of Elpenor, and again at the meeting of Odysseus and Elpenor among the dead. In the second case there is a clear motive for the use of an expression that evokes the full eschatological environment: Odysseus is in the world of the Totengeist; the *ψυχαί* whom he encounters are fully personified entities; indeed it is the *ψυχή* of Elpenor that speaks the line in question. D. L. Page in *The Homeric Odyssey*⁷ has suggested that the Elpenor episode at the end of Book 10 is introduced as a device to attach the *Nekuia* to a poem to which it did not originally belong. If this is the case, the repetition of our line at 10.560 can be seen to have a structural function.

Another case where *ψυχή* appears to be regarded as Totengeist is *Il.* 1.3: πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν. This is closely related to *Il.* 11.55: πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους κεφαλὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν. As *Il.* 1.3 is the only passage in the Homeric poems where *ψυχή* is qualified by a descriptive epithet, while ἰφθίμος is used of "heads" on several occasions, it is reasonable to infer that 11.55 is the prototype. κεφαλὴ and other words for "head" are regularly used by Homer to mean the *person* of the dead man.⁸ There can be no doubt then that *ψυχή* in *Il.* 1.3 is used in a personified way.⁹ But equally, if substitution has occurred, this cannot be regarded as a "normal" use of *ψυχή* in death-descriptions.

Next a group of phrases which have been commonly assumed to have eschatological content, but which on closer examination appear to be the product of "literary" and linguistic factors:

1) *Il.* 5.654 (=11.445, cf. 16.625): εὖχος ἐμοὶ δώσειν, ψυχὴν δ' Ἄϊδι κλυτοπόλῳ. To me at least this passage smacks of wordplay and zeugma; it reads more like a literary jeu d'esprit than an eschatological statement. The use of the verb seems comparable to *Il.* 23.21: Ἐκτορα δεῦρ' ἐρύσας δώσειν κυσὶν ὦμά δάσσασθαι. The zeugma-like expression is somewhat similar to *Il.* 16.505 (see below). In both one can detect the same "black humour."

⁷*The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford 1955) 44 ff.

⁸For a discussion and further references see J. Warden, *Phoenix* 23 (1969) 153 f.

⁹See *Il.* 6.487: οὐ γὰρ τίς μ' ὑπὲρ αἴσαν ἀνὴρ Ἄϊδι προΐαψει, where the verb in identical context is given a personal subject. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Milman Parry (*HSCP* 40 [1931] 133) suggests a formulaic similarity between this phrase and *ψυχαὶ δ' Ἄϊδοσδε κατῆλθον*; in the latter phrase *ψυχή* is clearly personified as Totengeist. However, these phrases may not be quite as innocent as they appear. The meaning of the verb is far from clear. It has been suggested that it contains the sense of "hurt or damage" (see F. Kuiper, *Glotta* 21 [1933] 282 ff.). Hesychius relates it to βλάπτω; cf. *Od.* 2.376 and the meaning of ἵπος, ἵπτομαι in *Il.* 1.454; 16.237; 2.193. If this is the case, the passage may look forward to types of expression that involve the destruction of the *ψυχή*.

2) *Il.* 14.518 f.: *ψυχὴ δὲ κατ' οὐταμένην ὠτειλήν/ἔσσυτ' ἐπειγομένη...* The verbs of this passage are not closely paralleled in any other death-description. *ἐπείγομαι* and *σέομαι* are both freely used in an extended way to refer to inanimate objects.¹⁰ *σέομαι* is particularly used of the gushing forth of blood (cf. *Il.* 21.167: *σῦτο δ' αἷμα κελαινεφές* and later medical usage).¹¹ *ἐπείγομαι*, whose root sense involves physical pressure,¹² here, I would suggest, combines with *σέομαι* to describe the pressure of blood through the aperture of the wound. If we compare 14.518 with *Il.* 17.86: *ἔρρει δ' αἷμα κατ' οὐταμένην ὠτειλήν*, we are led to think that what is really being described here is the spurting of the blood from the wound. It is a natural extension of thought from "his blood gushed forth" to "his life gushed forth." *ψυχὴ* here means life; and one of the outward and visible signs of loss of life, especially in the context of war, is loss of blood. It is not necessary to assume any psycho-physiological relationship between *ψυχὴ* and blood, or to infer that *ψυχὴ* "leaves through a wound and then flies off to Hades."¹³ There is only one other passage in the Homeric poems that gives any support to this contention. This will be considered next. *Il.* 14.518 f. at any rate is devoid of eschatological content.

3) *Il.* 16.505: *τοῖο δ' ἄμα ψυχὴν τε καὶ ἔγχεος ἐξέρυσ' αἰχμήν*. Are we to think of *ψυχὴ* in this passage as a separable "physical" object like a spear that can be removed from the body and survive in a different environment? That is what the verb *ἐξέρω* would appear to entail. But it is important to notice that it is the verb regularly used in the *Iliad* to describe the removal of weapons from the body. This might lead us to think that the verb really belongs to *αἰχμή* and by an unnatural extension or zeugma has been made to cover *ψυχὴ*. It is commonly observed that a man may survive a wound until the moment that the weapon is removed. With the removal of the weapon life departs. This is what the poet is describing here. "He removed the spear and his life." We would not be tempted to interpret literally "You have stolen my heart and my pocket book." Homer's "black humour" is at work again. It is this passage that is used, together with *Il.* 14.518 f., as evidence for the theory that the eschatological life-soul can depart through a wound.¹⁴ Such an interpretation is based on a failure to understand the "literary" and stylistic function of the phrase.

¹⁰*ἐπείγομαι*: *Il.* 5.501,902; 21.362; *σέομαι*: *Il.* 21.167; 23.198; *Od.* 10.484.

¹¹Hipp. *Mul.* 1.36, 2.138; Aretaeus Medicus, *περὶ αἰτιῶν καὶ σημείων χρονίων παθῶν*, 1.9.

¹²*LSJ*⁹ 1: e.g., *Il.* 12.452. See *Il.* 21.362—the verb here describes the pressure of water that has reached the boil and moved from a state of rest to urgent motion (surely not "propped over a great fire," as Lattimore has it in *The Iliad of Homer* [Chicago 1961] 428).

¹³Snell, *op. cit.* (above, n. 5) 10; E. L. Harrison, *Phoenix* 14 (1960) 76.

¹⁴See previous note.

In the remaining passages, if we rid ourselves of *a priori* assumptions, there is no evidence of eschatological content. Consider first a passage that occurs three times in the *Iliad*:¹⁵ τοῦ δ' αἰὲς λίθη ψυχὴ τε μένος τε. Now λύνειν has the following range of meanings in Homer: *a*) to detach one thing from another (horses from the yoke; armour from the shoulders; a prisoner from his chains);¹⁶ *b*) to disengage something at the joints so that it no longer holds together (γυνῆα);¹⁷ *c*) to pull apart or detach the constituent parts of something so that it ceases to exist (agora, a quarrel);¹⁸ *d*) to dissipate or destroy—more commonly καταλύνειν, but see *Il.* 2.118, 9.25.

Meanings *b*, *c*, and *d* are obviously closely related, and all differ in one significant point from *a*. They do not describe the separation of one object from another (as meaning *a* does), but rather the destruction, dissipation or dismantling of a single object. This is the sense in which the verb regularly occurs with μένος.¹⁹ It seems reasonable to suppose that this is true of 5.296 etc.—i.e., that we are not here concerned with the separation of soul and body, each departing to its appropriate region or destiny, but that the sense appropriate to μένος has been transferred to ψυχὴ. Thus we should not read into this phrase any eschatological statement about the departure of ψυχὴ to Hades on the death of the body, but rather interpret ψυχὴ and μένος as contributing to the general sense of life which is “destroyed” at death.

There is another group of passages involving the verb λείπειν.²⁰ This verb is used regularly with θυμός in death-descriptions;²¹ in such passages unless we are willing to posit the transmigration of θυμός to another world, there is no assumption in λείπειν that whatever it is that departs takes up its abode elsewhere; it is simply a way of describing loss, deprivation, or failure. It seems unlikely that the semantic content of the verb is different when ψυχὴ is the subject from what it is when θυμός is the subject, particularly as in three cases where ψυχὴ is the subject (*Il.* 16.453; 5.696; *Od.* 14.426) there is a morphological resemblance to a group of phrases involving both θυμός and αἰών (these are discussed below, page 100 f.), and in one case (*Il.* 16.453) ψυχὴ is actually used together with αἰών.

Finally²² there are those passages that involve compounds of ἐλεῖν

¹⁵5.296; 8.123; 8.315.

¹⁶E.g., *Il.* 4.215; 8.504, 543; 15.22; 16.804; 17.318; 23.27.

¹⁷E.g., *Il.* 4.469; 7.12; 11.240; 16.312.

¹⁸*Il.* 1.305; 2.808; 19.276; 14.205,304.

¹⁹*Il.* 6.27; 16.332; 17.298.

²⁰*Il.* 5.696; 16.453; *Od.* 14.134,426; 18.91.

²¹E.g., *Il.* 4.470; 12.386; 16.410, 743; 20.406.

²²Not quite. There are three passages (*Il.* 11.334; *Od.* 21.153 f., 170 f.) which involve forms of the verb χάζειν. As with λείπειν and λύνειν, there is no suggestion that that which is lost continues in existence.

and *δallύvαι*.²³ Both verbs are semantically ambiguous, implying not only removal, but in many cases the destruction of that which is removed. This is particularly apparent in the case of *δallύvαι*,²⁴ and in one example, *Il.* 22.325, where the noun *δλεθρος* replaces the verb, there is no room for doubt. This, combined with the fact that both verb-groups are used freely with *θυμός* in death-descriptions, would suggest that *ψυχή* in these phrases means nothing more than "life."

One could sum up like this: out of twenty-nine uses of *ψυχή* in death-descriptions,²⁵ only six possess any genuine eschatological content, and in at least four of these there may be a stylistic or structural reason for the particular usage. The least that one could conclude from this is that as the semantic base of *ψυχή* shifts within the Homeric poems, it is dangerous and misleading to take it as a constant in an attempt to interpret "Homeric" psychology or "Homeric" religion.

This is perhaps also the most that one can conclude; but I should like for the rest of the paper to embark on a speculative reconstruction of the sequence of these semantic shifts. This is a rash endeavour. Given the nature of the evidence I cannot hope to do more than outline possible hypotheses. The two main contenders would seem to be the following: 1) that usage in death-descriptions is derived directly from a root sense of breath, and that the eschatological content of a few of the death descriptions is the result of confusion with the sense of Totengeist, which is itself a secondary development (the lack of such content in the rest would then of course require no explanation); and 2) that the use of *ψυχή* in death-descriptions is originally derived from Totengeist usage, and retains the semantic, lexical, and formulaic characteristics of this usage in a few cases; in many of the other cases it has been drawn into the orbit of phrases descriptive of death which are properly associated with other psychological terms, and whose verbal content is inconsistent with the eschatological environment of Totengeist usage. This leads to "doctrinal" inconsistencies, and eventually to a loss of *ψυχή*'s specific content.

An argument in favour of the first hypothesis would be the use of *ψυχή* in syncope description (*Il.* 5.696; 22.467; *Od.* 24.348 has *ἀποψύχοντα*). Here *ψυχή* cannot simply mean "life," and there is no Homeric evidence

²³ *ἐλείv*: *Il.* 22.257; 24.754; *Od.* 22.444; *δallύvαι*: *Il.* 13.763 = 24.168; 22.325.

²⁴ The active verb regularly has the sense "destroy" in the *Iliad* except in death-descriptions involving *θυμός*, *μένος*, *ἦτορ*, where the patient is the subject; 24.46 is the exception, and here that which is lost is clearly destroyed. Compare for a metrically and semantically similar phrase P. Friedlander & H. B. Hoffleit, *Epigrammata* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1948) 135.3; 136.3: *ἡβην ὀλέσαντα*.

²⁵ *Iliad*: 1.3; 5.296 (= 8.123, 8.315); 5.654 (= 11.445); 5.696; 7.330; 11.334; 13.763 (= 24.168); 14.518; 16.453; 16.505; 16.625; 16.856 (= 22.362); 22.257; 22.325; 24.754. *Odyssey*: 9.523; 10.560 (= 11.65); 14.134; 14.426; 18.91; 21.153 f.; 21.170 f.; 22.444.

for the temporary departure of an eschatological soul. Nehring²⁶ in an analysis of syncope descriptions has shown convincingly that the meaning of *ψυχή* in these phrases is "breath," the loss of which is a regular ingredient of the description.

However, I believe that the balance of the arguments favours the second hypothesis, and that in those death-descriptions where *ψυχή* could have the meaning "breath" it is in fact an interloper replacing or being assimilated to other psychological terms (*θυμός*, *μένος*, etc.). I would state the arguments as follows: 1) If this is not the case, it is hard to understand the fact that *ψυχή* does not establish its own independent formulae of death-description. *ψυχή* occurs in two types of repeating phrase: *a*) those in which it retains some affinity to the Totengeist (e.g. *Il.* 16.856 f.; 22.361 f.; 5.654 etc.; 7.330; *Od.* 10.560; 11.65) and *b*) those where it is combined with another psychological term (e.g., *Il.* 5.296, etc.; *Od.* 21,153 f., 170 f.).²⁷ 2) Passages like *Il.* 1.3 and 5.654, etc. seem to represent an intermediary stage which could only be properly explained by a *ψυχή* whose function was the same as the Totengeist, but whose eschatological content was progressively weakening. 3) The fact that the poets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* appear to avoid the use of *ψυχή* in descriptions of the death of animals²⁸ would suggest that the term had residual eschatological associations. (The only exception is *Od.* 14.426, which may strictly be a description of syncope rather than death: see Stanford's comments on *Od.* 3.455 and compare the two passages.) 4) Passages like *Il.* 7.131 and 23.880, where *θυμός* is used in phrases whose language is derived from the description of the Totengeist (the passages are discussed in note 1) are most easily explicable as the result of the convergence of two types of death-description—those where the Totengeist (*ψυχή*) departs for Hades, and those using other psychological terms where there are no eschatological implications. 5) There are intriguing but inconclusive indications of the corollary of this, i.e., the replacement of *θυμός*, etc. by *ψυχή*, in the morphology of certain groups of passages. If we look first at death-descriptions involving the verb *λείπειν*, we can set them out as in table 1 (see page 102).

One gets the impression that there is some sort of phrase-pattern underlying these formations. It has to be admitted that the pattern does not display metrical regularity, and varies in its position in the line. It could not therefore qualify as a formula or formular group in the normal sense of the term. But it would be rash to assume that our knowledge

²⁶CP 42 (1947).

²⁷There is one exception, *Il.* 13.763 = 24.168: *ψυχὰς ὀλέσαντες*.

²⁸See B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (New York 1960) 11, J. Boehme, *Die Seele und das Ich im homerischen Epos* (Leipzig, Berlin 1929) 102 ff.

TABLE 1

	A	B	C	D	
<i>Il.</i> 4.470	τὸν	μὲν	λίπε	θυμός	$\frac{1}{-} - \frac{2}{-} \vee - \frac{3}{-} \vee$
<i>Il.</i> 16.410	[πесόντα]δὲ	μιν	λίπε	θυμός	$[\vee - \vee] \vee - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-} \vee$
<i>Il.</i> 5. 685	με	καὶ	λίποι	αἰών	$\vee - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-}$
<i>Il.</i> 5.696	τὸν	δὲ	λίπε	ψυχῇ	$- \frac{1}{-} \vee - \frac{2}{-} \frac{3}{-}$
<i>Od.</i> 14.426	τὸν	δ'	ἔλιπε	ψυχῇ	$- \frac{1}{-} \vee - \frac{2}{-} \frac{3}{-}$
<i>Il.</i> 16.453	τόν	γε	λίπη	ψυχῇ τε καὶ αἰών	$- \frac{3}{-} \vee - \frac{4}{-} - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-}$

of Homeric methods of composition is so great that we can disqualify word-patterns of this sort from consideration. A comparable pattern seems to emerge from an examination of usages involving ὀλλύναι:

TABLE 2

	A	B	C	
<i>Il.</i> 16.861 (12.250; 8.90)	ἀπὸ	θυμόν	ὀλέσσαι (ὀλέσσεις; ὀλεσσεν)	$\vee \vee - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-}$
<i>Il.</i> 1.205	[ποτε]	θυμόν	ὀλέσση	$\vee \vee - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-}$
<i>Il.</i> 5.250	[φίλον]	ῥτορ	ὀλέσσης	$\vee \vee - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-}$
<i>Il.</i> 8.358		μένος θυμόν τ'	ὀλέσειε	$\vee - \frac{4}{-} - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-} \vee$
<i>Il.</i> 13.763 (=24.168)		ψυχὰς	ὀλέσαντες	$- - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-}$

The effect of such patterns, if they exist, would seem to be to obliterate the distinctions between individual psychological terms, or rather within these specific complexes of phrases to induce the different terms to converge on the sense of "life." Of course this does not in any way entail that ψυχῇ is a late-comer or intruder in the phrase-pattern (though it does reinforce the conclusion that it is in these phrases devoid of eschatological content). However, there is one further group of phrases where there is perhaps a hint that this is what has happened:

TABLE 3

	A	B	C	D	
<i>Il.</i> 5.296, etc.	τοῦ δ'	αἰθι	λίθη	ψυχῇ τε μένος τε	$- - \frac{3}{-} \vee - \frac{4}{-} - \frac{5}{-} \vee - \vee$
<i>Il.</i> 17.298	τοῦ δ'	αἰθι	λίθη	μένος	$- - \frac{3}{-} \vee - \frac{4}{-} \vee$
<i>Il.</i> 16.331 f.	ἀλλὰ οἱ	αἰθι	λῦσε	μένος	$- \frac{5}{-} \vee - \frac{6}{-} \vee - \frac{1}{-} \vee -$

The position of μένος in *Il.* 17.298, (4 5), is extremely common (more than half of nominative uses); and given the terms of the hypothesis it makes sense to suggest that the 4/5 position is non-traditional for ψυχή.²⁹ In this phrase then one might speculate that ψυχή has been drawn into the orbit of a death-description to which it does not traditionally belong; the effect of this on the metre has been to force μένος out of its normal position to 5/6 (perhaps under the influence of *Il.* 7.457, 15.510: χείρας τε μένος τε —|— 5 5 |—6 5) and to introduce ψυχή in an unusual position in the line.

The evidence is admittedly fragile; but it is perhaps worth offering these hypothetical stages in ψυχή's semantic career within the Homeric poems: 1) ψυχή as Totengeist, a separable and personified entity, with identifiable physical and linguistic characteristics, eking out its half-life in the world of the shades; 2) ψυχή in death-descriptions, derived in the first instance from Totengeist usage,³⁰ but increasingly freeing itself from the eschatological context of the Totengeist, in part at least as the result of assimilation to other modes of death-description where there is no such context. In the few cases where ψυχή retains in death-descriptions the characteristics of Totengeist there may be stylistic and structural factors at work; this is a conscious archaism, the oral poet's equivalent of the purple passage.

SCARBOROUGH COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

²⁹ψυχή occurs in 4 positions: 1/, 2/3, 3/4, and 4/5; of these 1/ is regular in Totengeist usage (9 times), rare in death-descriptions (twice)—see note 6; 2/3 is common in both usages (17, 9); 3/4 occurs in both usages, though in neither frequently (4 in Totengeist, 6 in death); 4/5 does not occur in Totengeist usage at all, while in death-descriptions it occurs 4 times: twice in expressions involving a second psychological term (αἰών: *Il.* 16.453; μένος); in the repeated phrase ψυχὰς ὀλέσαντες (13.763 = 24.168), an expression which involves the destruction of ψυχή in death and thus, in terms of the hypothesis, runs counter to the traditional mythology of the Totengeist; and at *Od.* 14.134: ῥινὸν ἅπ' ὀστέφιν ἐρύσαι, ψυχή δὲ λέλοιπεν, a phrase which looks like a secondary development from the λείπειν phrases discussed above.

³⁰It should be emphasized again that I am not seeking to pronounce on the root meaning or etymology of the term. Thus I am not asserting the etymological priority of the sense "ghost" to the sense "breath," but rather that a specific set of usages describing the Totengeist and its activities happens to be prior, in its development within the Homeric poems, to another set describing what happens to man at the moment of death; or, more accurately, that the latter develop out of the former, so that there is an area of overlap.