HOMER'S METAPHYSICS:

THE CONCEPTION OF REALITY IN THE ILIAD AND ODYSSEY

by

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ABSTRACT

The Iliad and the Odyssey contain a unified, consistent, and comprehensive view of reality. At no point in the poems is this view definitively and systematically expounded, but it does extend implicitly throughout both works and affects the representation of everything within them. In this essay an attempt has been made to extract, define, and illustrate this conception of reality.

The conception may be designated as supernaturalism. Reality in the poems is not considered to be confined within the natural order and, so, bounded by time, space, and materiality directly perceptible to the senses. The natural order is conceived to be an "open," discontinuous system, characterized ultimately by mystery and undefinableness, through which it merges with the supernatural. Moreover, the supernatural does not consist of a mere abstract extension to the natural; the former is in fact the hypostasis of the latter, that is, it sustains and controls it, a relation that is represented by the rule of the gods over natural phenomena. The supernatural is the perfect, absolute centre of reality of which the natural constitutes the dependent, imperfect, physical crystallization.

The supernatural order is connected to the natural realm primarily through "essence." Essence is the most characteristic and most real property of every natural phenomenon and so it constitutes the absolute, ultimate being of the natural order. Because of its absolute nature, it cannot be defined. As a result, the identity of no natural phenomenon can be fixed; it can only be outlined or suggested. The very undefinableness of essence leaves the natural system open to the ulterior metaphysical

dimension.

This particular fusion of the natural and supernatural orders renders the latter a duality. The supernatural consists not simply of spirit but of spirit and essence in a variable ratio. In the regions of the supernatural nearer the natural order, essence predominates over spirit; in the regions remote from the natural world, however, spirit is pre-eminent. The essential element in the divine nature gives the gods form and substance, and associates them with particular natural phenomena. The duality of spirit and essence in their natures permits them to pass between the natural and supernatural realms without impediment.

The rule of the supernatural hypostasis over the natural order in the Iliad and Odyssey is effected both immanently, that is, within the course of events, and transcendently, outside the course of events. In the former case, the gods, in their immanent manifestations, wield supreme but limited power over natural phenomena. All natural phenomena, however, as well as the immanent gods themselves, also fulfil the transcendent plan of history established by the universal principle of order, designated as Fate, by the transcendent gods, and, ultimately, by the transcendent Zeus. The transcendent government of the world is absolute, but it is fulfilled spontaneously; as a result the integrity and freedom of the natural order are preserved. The supernatural rules the natural order in two dimensions.

The principle of order at the heart of the supernatural determines the relations of all phenomena. It fuses them into a whole while preserving to a limited degree their individual identities. It apportions to each of them in the great order of things a particular lot consisting of individual and corporate attributes, the bounds of which may not be exceeded. Any

transgression of these bounds upsets the universal order and activates an inexorable compensatory force which restores equilibrium. The maintenance of this principle of order, Moira, constitutes Homeric justice, Dikē.

The fundamental idea in the Homeric conception of reality is that of hypostasis, the belief in an ulterior, transcendent dimension that binds together, controls, and invests with meaning all real phenomena.

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TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

All references to the Iliad and Odyssey in this paper are based on Monro's and Allen's third edition of the Iliad (1920) in the Oxford Classical Text series and on Stanford's second edition of the Odyssey (1958 - 1959) in the Macmillan Classical Series.

For interpretation of the texts I have referred to the translations of Lattimore (University of Chicago Press, 1969), Murray (Loeb, 1965, 1946), and Rieu (Penguin Books, 1954) for the Iliad, and to the translation of Rieu (Penguin Books, 1963) for the Odyssey. All translations in this essay, however, with the exception of several specified passages, are my own.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURAL ORDER IN ITS SUPERNATURAL CONTEXT

The Supernatural Hypostasis

Reality is represented in the Iliad and Odyssey from a supernaturalistic point of view. It is not comprehended by the natural order, the realm of finite, physical beings and processes, both animate and inanimate, bounded by space and time, and apprehensible to the senses. This natural system is shown to have order and integrity, but it is considered to be limited and "open." Its basic elements, including all physical beings constituted of earth, air, fire, and water, its multiple forms, both spatial and temporal (that is, sequences of events), and the very dimensions of space and time, are all, ultimately, in essence and provenance, undefinable--in natural terms. Precisely at the point of undefinableness the natural realm becomes discontinuous and "open," and the physical merges with the metaphysical. This metaphysical, or supernatural, dimension complements the natural order, and serves as its immediate context. This relation has a profound effect upon the conception and portrayal of reality in the Iliad and Odyssey.

The Homeric heroes are endowed with a metaphysical sense that allows them to perceive the ultimate mystery and "openness" of the natural system, and hence to infer the ulterior existence of the supernatural. They most readily discern points of transition between the natural and supernatural realms in infinite entitles, such as the sky. It is appropriate, then, that the sky should often be linked with Olympus or considered alone when reference is made to the home of the gods. In Book I of the Iliad Thetis

ascends to "great heaven and Olympus" (497); the gods receive the formulaic designation, "they who hold the broad heaven," as at line 150 of Book VI in the Odyssey; and when men pray to Zeus they frequently look up to the sky rather than in the direction of the mountain. So Menelaus, in frustration at the destruction of his sword, "... looked into the broad heaven and groaned loudly: 'Father Zeus, there is no other god more malevolent than you'" (Il. III, 364 - 365). Nor do men pray only to Zeus, the traditional sky and weather god, when they look to heaven. Telemachus, in order to communicate with Athene, places himself before the infinity of sea and sky: "Telemachus went far off to the shore of the sea where he washed his hands in the grey water and prayed to Athene" (Od. II, 260 - 261). Often Homer's imagery is sufficiently vivid to suggest by itself the contiguity of the natural with the supernatural when men attempt to reach out from the finite into the infinite, as in the description of a sacrifice to Apollo in Book I of the Iliad: "They sacrificed to Apollo complete hecatombs of bulls and goats by the shore of the barren sea. Intertwining with smoke the savour reached the sky" (Il. I, 315 - 317).

Men also consider the boundless, mysterious sea to be a principal realm of the gods. Sacrifices to Poseidon, such as Nestor's in Book III of the Odyssey, are conducted on the sea-shore, and Achilles turns to the sea in Book I of the Iliad when he wishes to appeal to his mother for divine intervention. Ocean is designated as the origin of the gods (Il. XIV, 201). The sea also serves as the point of contact between the natural and the supernatural, the finite and the infinite, in Menelaus' account of his detention on the island of Pharos, in the fourth book of the Odyssey. In natural terms his situation seems hopeless. Without a wind to propel his ships he must remain stranded on an island with insufficient resources,

watching helplessly as he and his followers waste away from hunger. The solution to the problem must come from beyond the natural order; and so it does--out of the depths of the boundless sea. Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, possesses the supernatural knowledge necessary for Menelaus' escape. The whole episode may serve as a symbol for the Homeric conception of the natural order; finite and deficient in itself, dependent upon the supernatural for meaning and direction. The incompleteness or "openness" of its system is suggested by the juxtaposition between the small, barren island and the vast, mysterious sea.

The earth, too, is considered to be connected with the supernatural. Its dark, boundless mystery is easily associated with the dark, "infernal" powers, such as the spirits of death, headed by the appropriately named Hades, the "Unseen," and the mighty, elemental, impersonal forces of monstrous form, the Titans, bound in Tartarus. Partly out of recognition of this spiritual realm men pour libations and burn and bury their dead. In fact, the combination of mystery and vital power possessed by the earth is sufficient to exalt it to a goddess in the minds of men.

The supernatural is conceived to be spiritual at its heart. Most of the supernatural entities that appear in the Iliad and Odyssey possess spiritual qualities as their fundamental attributes. This spiritual reality occupies the very centre and core of the universe; it is the original, animating, governing reality behind all existent phenomena. Natural phenomena emanate from it and revolve around it. Homeric men recognize the supremacy of this spiritual reality in their religious rites, in their worship of the multitude of divinities both great and small that they perceive beyond the physical appearance of things. They

even consider human life itself to be an ultimately spiritual phenomenon, since they value such abstract entities as glory, honour, and justice, and since they treat men, even in death as having supernatural worth, as they demonstrate by their elaborate burial ceremonies. Whenever possible, they attempt to trace their ancestry back to the supernatural, the origin of all.[1] Many of the heroes are considered to be diogeneis, sprung from Zeus, while others ascribe their generation to lesser gods, such as the River Alpheios from which Diocles claims descent (Il. V, 544 - 545). The natural order may be described as the imperfect, physical crystallization of the supernatural realm. The supernatural, at its heart, is the refined, spiritual origin of all.

The gods are responsible for ordering and initiating events in the natural realm, although they themselves are obedient to fate. The pattern of history is largely determined in their councils. At the beginning of the Odyssey and later in Book V the gods convene to determine what amounts to the whole story of the poem. In the Iliad similar important meetings take place, as between Zeus and Thetis and then Zeus and the rest of the gods in Book I, in which Zeus first intimates his plan to give glory to Achilles and Hector; in Book IV, in which Zeus reluctantly agrees to the doom of Troy and continuation of the fighting; in Book VIII, in which he effectively takes direct control over the course of battle, and in Book XX, when he unleashes the gods into the fighting for the final, climactic struggle. When the gods have laid their plans they proceed to instigate action in the natural order where matters would otherwise remain in a state of inertia. At the beginning of the Iliad a virtual stalemate exists between the Greeks and Trojans. The Greeks have the upper hand to be

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[1] W. F. Otto, The Homeric Gods, trans. Moses Hadas (London: Thames and Hudson, 1954), p. 236.

sure, but cannot press home their advantage. They cannot mount any kind of productive offensive beyond limited raids into Trojan territory, which they undertake more for the personal gain of the Achaean chiefs than for any substantial benefit to the whole war effort. The Trojans for their part, hemmed within their city walls, are constrained to play a waiting game, venturing no farther than the "Scaean gates and the oak-tree" as Achilles says (IX, 354), while he and the rest of the Greeks oppose them. Into this stagnant situation comes the god Apollo, who is specifically designed by Homer as the instigator of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles: "Who then of the gods was it that united these to fight with strife? The son of Leto and Zeus" (I, 8 - 9). The plague that he sends upon the Achaeans for dishonouring his priest sets in motion the whole tragic series of events that results in a drastic reversal of fortunes for both the Achaeans and Trojans, including the desperate battle at the ships, the glorification of Hector and, later, Achilles, the loss of many men's lives, especially those of Patroclus and Hector, and the confirmation of Troy's eventual destruction.

Apollo's is one of the most influential divine interventions, but others frequently occur in the story to propel the action. Zeus is usually directly or indirectly responsible for initiating and steering historical movements. At the beginning of Book II in the Iliad he stirs up Agamemnon through a false dream to take the field in spite of Achilles' absence. By the end of Book III the action seems again likely to grind to a halt when the Trojans are obliged to acknowledge Menelaus victor in his duel with Paris and so, in obedience to their oaths, to return Helen to the Greeks with worthy compensation. An abrupt end to the war appears possible, even inevitable, unsatisfactory and ignominious though it may be after so much

striving and suffering. Extraordinary, even "supernatural" intervention is required to ensure the continuation of the war, and so, at the beginning of Book IV, Zeus commissions Athene to cause the Trojans to break their oaths and so to increase the nemesis against them, which is what happens when Pandarus wounds Menelaus with an arrow. Athene also resolves a difficult situation at Hera's bidding in Book II, when, after Agamemnon has tested the mood of his men by suggesting they return home, the Achaeans actually try to board their ships. She promptly induces Odysseus to check their flight and so salvages the Achaean expedition. These are some of the principal instances in the Iliad in which the course of history in the natural order is most clearly shown to be dependent upon divine direction.

Supernatural intervention is required as well in the Odyssey, in which, at the beginning of the story, a state of stagnation exists. After all his hardships and wanderings Odysseus has remained confined to Calypso's island for seven years. In Ithaca, Telemachus and Penelope watch in helpless, hopeless frustration as the suitors devour the royal estate at their ease, while the day of the mother's forced marriage and the son's disinheritance appears increasingly inevitable. Telemachus' inaction is broken by Athene's descent into Ithaca after the first council of the gods. There she inspires him to adopt a more responsible attitude and to take positive action to learn news of his father's fate. Hermes complements her activity when he flies to Ogygia at Zeus's command and orders Calypso to release Odysseus. These two divine interventions initiate the pattern of events constituting the Odyssey.

The Homeric heroes are aware that the supernatural, represented by the gods, has supreme, irresistible control over the natural world and, in

particular, that it overrules human thought and action. Often the divine will is opposed to that of men; so Menelaus found himself stranded on the island of Pharos: "The gods still confined me to Egypt, although I yearned to come home, for I had not sacrificed perfect hecatombs to them; the gods ever wish men to be mindful of their laws" (Od. IV, 351 - 353). The gods in fact operate according to their own rules, often inscrutable to men. Priam lays the blame for the Trojan War not upon Helen, or even on the Achaeans, or, for that matter, on Paris himself and his Trojan supporters, but upon the malevolent gods: "it is the gods who are to blame in my opinion; it was they who roused against me the dolorous onslaught of the Achaeans" (Il. III, 164 - 165). Telemachus attributes the disappearance of his father to the gods' mysterious designs: "they have made him utterly vanish" (Od. I, 235 - 236). Moreover men recognize that the power of the supernatural beings is such that they determine and steer history itself. After the inconclusive ending of Paris' and Menelaus' duel Athene appears as a portent in the sky, and immediately the men in both armies passively concede the resolution of the uncertain situation to Zeus: "To be sure, there will again be evil war and terrible battle, unless Zeus, who is the dispenser of war for men, is establishing friendship among both sides" (Il. IV, 82 - 84). Divine influence is perceived as the ultimate motivating factor for events in the natural world.

This is not to suggest that the gods wield unlimited, unqualified power over the natural realm. When they intervene to direct the course of events they act according to a preconceived plan, either established by Zeus or agreed upon in council. This plan concurs with the designs of fate, which rules over all historical phenomena, including the gods in their historical manifestations. Occasionally they attempt to carry out their

own wishes, for example in their partisan bias for either the Trojans or Greeks in the Iliad, but even these actions fulfil the higher plan of fate. The nature of their powers will be examined more closely in the next two chapters.

The rule of the supernatural over the natural is not confined to the direct, personal influence of the gods. Certain mysterious "objects" also have supernatural power, such as the aegis of Zeus, Apollo, and Athene, the deadly bows and arrows of Artemis and Apollo, Aphrodite's girdle, Poseidon's trident, the wand and sandals of Hermes, or the "helmet of Hades" which Athene dons in Book V of the Iliad to acquire invisibility (845). The armour of Achilles, given originally to Peleus by the gods, is particularly intriguing in this respect. It endows its bearer with might, but it also brings destruction upon those to whom it does not belong. So both Patroclus and Hector prosper in battle when they first put it on, but eventually perish while wearing it. Its fatal associations are indicated in the narrative at the time of Patroclus' death:

> Phoebus Apollo struck the helmet from his head. The tubed helmet rolled ringing beneath the feet of the horses, and its crests were stained with blood and dust. Before, the gods had not willed that the horse-hair helmet be defiled with dust, but it had protected the head and handsome brow of a godlike man, Achilles. And then Zeus gave it to Hector to wear upon his head, and death was near to him. (Il.XVI,793-800)

Thus the supernatural can be seen to penetrate what would normally be considered inanimate objects.

Not only does the supernatural control the natural, but in its operation reflects occurrences in the natural world, and so provides a standard of measurement of their importance. When Odysseus and Diomedes come upon the camp of the Thracians in their night raid, recounted in Book X of the Iliad, they slaughter the regular Thracian soldiery indiscriminately, but the death of the king, Rhesos, is rendered more terrible

by the fact that it is accompanied, or seems to be, by a nightmare:

> When the son of Tydeus reached the king he robbed him, the thirteenth, of his life sweet as honey while he lay gasping. For a terrible dream appeared over his head that night in the form of the son of the Oeneid, by the device of Athene.
> (Il.X,494-497)

The supreme experience that men encounter in the Iliad and Odyssey is that of war and battle; therein men meet both death and glory. Consequently the gods and their supernatural influence appear most vigorously and obtrusively in combat. So eager, in fact, are they to participate that Zeus has great difficulty in restraining them. It is therefore to be expected that in the final climactic battle of the Iliad, in Books XX to XXII, the gods should play a major role. In this particular episode the premier warrior of the Achaeans, Achilles, returns to the fighting to avenge Patroclus, and the fate of Hector and, by extension, that of Troy hang in the balance. The ferocity and importance of the battle are reflected in the divine upheaval that occurs simultaneously. All the gods are summoned by Zeus to Olympus and from there sent into battle on the opposing sides. There, mingling with the mortals, they fight among themselves, the gods supporting the Achaeans ultimately triumphing over the defenders of the Trojans, and foreshadowing the ultimate fall of Troy, just as the Achaeans prevail over the Trojans and slay Hector. Such concurrence of the supernatural with the natural adds significance and gravity to events.

For an efficacious undertaking men must have divine approval and guidance. Ideally, all successful action is complemented by the influence of the gods, whether directly or indirectly. So, for example, in the Iliad, after the Achaean envoys have returned Chryseis to her father and propitiated Apollo, he ensures the success of their mission by aiding their return voyage

with a favourable wind (Il. I, 479 - 480). Diomedes' prowess in Book V is explained by the fact that Athene has increased his strength and courage: "And now Pallas Athene gave strength and courage to Diomedes, son of Tydeus, in order that he should be distinguished among all the Argives and win noble fame" (V, 1 - 3). When the tide of battle turns in the Trojans' favour after the departure of Achilles it is not simply the Trojans and Hector who triumph but the Trojans and Zeus, and Hector and Zeus and Apollo. When Achilles faces Hector for the last time he acknowledges Athene's aid: "No longer is there any escape for you, but Pallas Athene shall overcome you by my spear" (Il. XXII, 270 - 271). Throughout the Odyssey Athene supports the cause of Telemachus and Odysseus, except of course when Poseidon wishes to oppose the latter at sea, in his own province. Her divine guidance is typically represented in the scene in Book XIX in which the eerie light of her golden lamp illuminates the palace hall for the father and son as they remove weapons to the store room. Odysseus accepts her assistance quite naturally, informing his startled son that "this is truly the way of the gods who dwell on Olympus" (42 - 43). Such divine influence is simply to be expected in successful human endeavours.

In fact, at times the divine portion of action seems to take precedence over the human part. So the divine nemesis inherent in Odysseus' plot against the suitors occasionally eclipses the king's own desire for revenge and recovery of his estate. For instance, when he makes a genuine effort to save Amphinomus by warning him of impending catastrophe Athene's will overrules his:

> Then Amphinomus went through the hall, heavy-hearted, shaking his head, for he presaged evil in his heart. Not even so, however, did he escape his doom. Athene had bound him utterly to be overcome by the hands and spear of Telemachus.
>
> (Od.XVIII,153-156)

Since the supernatural controls the course of history, all successful human undertakings must of necessity be attended and even dominated by divine power.

The corollary of this principle is that action without divine help is likely to have unfruitful or even disastrous consequences. Eurylochus' reconnaissance party on the island of Aeaea enters Circe's house without supernatural assistance, with the result that its members are promptly turned into swine. Odysseus, however, with the help of Hermes' intervention and instruction, is able to save both himself and his men (Od. X). In the tenth book of the Iliad Diomedes and Odysseus receive a propitious omen from Athene before they embark upon their night-time scouting expedition and both pray to her, entreating assistance and promising sacrifice. Their efforts then meet with overwhelming success. Dolon, on the other hand, greedily takes no thought for anything other than the prize and glory he will win from Hector on completion of his mission, and so he is slain in the most shameful fashion after betraying to Diomedes and Odysseus crucial information on the disposition of the Trojan camp. When Zeus weighs the fates of Achilles and Hector to confirm the former's triumph over the latter, Pallas Athene joins Achilles, but doomed Hector is left alone: "The fatal day of Hector sank down towards Hades and Phoebus Apollo abandoned him" (Il. XXII, 212 - 213). The Phaeacians' failure to obtain the approval of Poseidon for the entertainment and escort that they grant to Odysseus also meets with dire results. The metamorphosis into stone of the escort ship and the threatened encirclement with mountains of the Phaeacians' city demonstrate the severity with which the gods judge and punish the slightest infringement, even one made in good faith, of their dominion. The Achaeans' failure to consecrate the protective wall and

trench that they build around their ships on Nestor's advice singularly provokes the gods, particularly Poseidon. The Achaeans are motivated by fear and prudence; the gods, however, have no regard for motives. In their jealous concern for their own power and glory they can only view independent human action on the scale of such construction as a direct threat to themselves, as Poseidon claims:

> "Father Zeus, is there anyone of mortals on the boundless earth who will still declare his mind and planning to the immortals? Do you not see that the long-haired Achaeans have now built a wall for their ships and drawn a trench around it without offering splendid hecatombs to the gods? Without a doubt the fame of it will extend as far as the dawn spreads. Then men will forget the wall that I and Phoebus Apollo toiled to build for the hero Laomedon."
>
> (Il.VII,446-453)

As a result the gods ensure that the wall is an utter failure. The fortifications do not prove as impregnable as desired; at the critical time Hector and his Trojans burst through them to hem the Achaeans in among their ships. Finally, after the war, the wall is obliterated under the combined assault of the gods. Its fate may serve as an admonitory symbol of the inefficacy of all human endeavours unsupported by the divine powers.

Homer's fundamentally spiritual view of reality results in animism. Since the natural realm is controlled by the supernatural its phenomena become easily spiritualized and personalized. Caves, groves, springs, and rivers are particularly suggestive of a supernatural presence. In the cave at the head of the cove of Phorcys, mentioned as the landing place of Odysseus in Book XIII of the Odyssey, the shadows and eroded stone intimate the habitation of nymphs:

> At the head of the cove is a long-leaved olive and near it a beautiful dark cave sacred to the nymphs who are called Naiads. Within it are mixing bowls and amphorae of stone in which bees store their honey. And in it are immense stone looms on which the nymphs weave their sea-purple cloaks, a marvel to behold. And in it are ever-flowing springs.
>
> (Od.XIII,102-109)

A similar "numinous" aura surrounds the spring and grove of the nymphs that Odysseus and Eumaeus encounter on their way to town in Book XVII: "Around the spring was a grove of water-nurtured alders that formed a perfect circle, and cold water poured down from the rock above on which an altar had been fashioned for the nymphs" (208 - 211). The circular pattern of the alders, and the image of cool water issuing from a rock are suggestive in their arrangement and nature of a reality that transcends the purely physical. The immaterial fleetness and mystery of the wind suffice to suggest a spiritual presence which can engender more corporeal beings, such as the horses, Xanthus and Balius (Il. XVI, 150). Every river, too, is informed with a spirit which so animates its physical substance that it can restrain or increase its waters at will and even copulate with women. The Phaeacian river checks its flow to permit the suppliant Odysseus to enter its mouth (Od. V). The Scamander, a tutelary god of the Trojans, overflows its banks to fight with Achilles. Some heroes claim descent from rivers, as does Asteropaios from the Axius. Rivers also seem to have the same suggestive, "numinous" quality as groves and springs since they are not only inhabited by gods but attended by nymphs as well, such as those in Sipylos who "dance about the Achelous" (Il. XXIV, 616). Everything, in fact, in nature is spiritually animated, as the assembly of gods in Book XX of the Iliad reveals: "No one of the rivers was absent, except Ocean, or any of the nymphs who inhabit the beautiful groves, the springs of the meadows, and the grassy lawns" (Il. XX, 7 - 9). It is not surprising, then, that Odysseus, after Athene has proved to him that he has landed in Ithaca, should express his joy at returning home by addressing the nymphs, the spiritual inhabitants of the island:

> Rejoicing in his land, he kissed the fruitful earth. Then he immediately lifted his hands and prayed to the nymphs: "Naiads,

daughters of Zeus, I thought that I should never see you again. Please now accept my loving prayers."
(Od.XIII,354-358)

Spiritual essence is the intrinsic reality of Homer's world.

The "Essential" Connection between the Natural and Supernatural Realms

The natural phenomenon is thus connected to the supernatural through its essence, the fundamental, most characteristic and intrinsic part of its nature. Precisely at this point the phenomenon become irreducible and undefinable, and, hence, mysterious and "open" to the metaphysical, spiritual dimension.

This conception of natural beings profoundly affects the portrayal of reality in the Iliad and Odyssey. It releases the poet from the need to employ "poetical" imagery, refined and abstracted from reality, since it endows everything with its own ineffable, incorruptible beauty,--the beauty of its undefinable essence, its fundamental mystery. In this "essentialist" view, natural phenomena are not defined by finitude and materiality; precisely in the most essential, the most real, portions of their natures they possess the unlimited depth and dimension, and beauty, of the supernatural.[1] Consequently the beauty and vividness of the poet's descriptions increase in direct proportion to his concentration upon and success in conveying the essential natures of natural phenomena rather than to his proficiency in refining or avoiding them. The excellence of his art depends upon his realism, not his idealism.

In the Homeric view of reality, then, everything is naturally refulgent with beauty. Consequently, the range of the poet's description is unlimited. Even the presentation of situations that would, in normal

[1] Otto, The Homeric Gods, p. 7.

circumstances, be dismissed as quotidian and trivial strikes the imagination with inexplicable charm, or even magnificence, as does the relation of Telemachus' preparations for sleep:

> He opened the doors of the strongly made room, then sat down on the bed and took off his soft tunic which he placed in the hands of the wise old woman. When she had smoothed and folded the tunic and had hung it up on a peg by the inlaid bed she went out of the room, pulled the door shut by its silver handle, and pushed home the bolt by its thong.
>
> (Od.I,436-442)

Under usual circumstances one would expect the concentration upon detail that appears in this passage to render an already uninteresting description even more tedious. Yet the opposite effect occurs; the emphasis upon details, including things, such as "doors," "room," "bed," "tunic," "peg," "handle," "bolt," and "thong;" attributes, such as "strongly made,""soft," "wise," "inlaid," and "silver;" and actions, such as "opened," "sat down," "took off," "placed," "smoothed," "folded," "hung up," "went out," "pulled shut," and "pushed home;" demonstrates not a desire on the part of the poet to achieve maximum mediocrity in his description, but to capture and convey the essence, and hence the elemental mystery and beauty of the situation. His efforts succeed. The picture penetrates the senses to stir the imagination; it has the appearance of a dream.

The poet follows the same purpose when he concentrates upon details in his description of the "lever du roi" in Book II of the Iliad:

> He sat up and put on his soft tunic, beautiful and new, and cast about him his great cloak. Then he bound his beautiful sandals beneath his feet and placed his silver-studded sword about his shoulders. He grasped the ancestral sceptre, imperishable ever.
>
> (42-46)

By focusing upon things, attributes, and actions that might at first be considered of inferior import the poet strives to establish the essence of

the scene. He is thus able to illuminate the fundamental beauty and splendour of an occurrence that might otherwise be considered totally unremarkable and insignificant. The rising from bed, even of a king, would not normally be thought of as a special occasion. The poet's conception, however, of the ultimate mystery and essential beauty of all phenomena and his ability to capture this mystery and beauty combine to exalt everything to the level of the divine.

Because the supernatural penetrates the natural order through "essence," nothing within the natural world can ever be trivial or irrelevant and, conversely, everything is meaningful for its own sake. The interest that the gods have in the Trojan War, or in human history in general for that matter, derives from no other source than the irreducible, inexhaustible grandeur and beauty of the essence of the object itself of their interest. The mere sight of the Greek and Trojan hosts assembled in full armour opposite each other, not even fighting, is sufficient to fill Athene and Apollo with delight:

> Athene and Apollo of the silver bow sat down in the form of vultures on the lofty oak of father Zeus of the aegis and took pleasure in the men whose ranks were settled in close formation, bristling with shields and helmets and spears.
>
> (Il.VII,58-62)

In fact everything in the Homeric world may be considered "holy." Hence the night may be termed "ambrosial," as in line 41 of Book X of the Iliad, while the day and darkness may be called "sacred" as in Book XI, lines 84 and 194 respectively.

The Homeric Conception of Identity

Since essence is undefinable no phenomenon can have an identity that is completely fixed. It may be outlined or suggested but never defined; everything is ultimately and, in the deepest sense of the term, mysterious.

This fundamental, inherent inscrutability of identity may partially explain the rich use of epithets in the Homeric poems. To maintain some precision in identification the poet must set the object of consideration within some sort of context by affixing a qualifier to it. At the simplest level the qualifier may consist of short, formulaic epithets. Such examples as "swift-footed" Achilles, "long-suffering" Odysseus, "blue-eyed" Athene, "man-slaying" Hector, "far-shooting" Apollo, and "horse-grazing" Argos spring to mind. In this category one may include patronymics, such as "Kronides," "Atreides," and "Tydeides," to mention a few. All such epithets serve to place at least some limitations on the undefinable identities of things animate and inanimate; they link them, no matter how tenuously, to contexts that prevent them from remaining complete enigmas.

It should be stressed that this interpretation provides only a partial explanation of the Homeric use of epithets. One may not acquire a full understanding of it without taking into account the more technical characteristics of oral poetry, such as the establishment of formulaic patterns through tradition and exigencies of metre. Such a comprehensive study is, however, beyond the scope of this discussion. The only point that is to be emphasized here is that the poet's frequent and varied use of epithets is necessitated by his conception of the ultimately undefinable nature of all real phenomena, regardless of all other reasons.

The simile often represents a type of extended qualifier. Homer's similes are notorious for their apparently inexact comparisons and frequent outright incongruities. They are consequently often condemned as irrelevant or even detrimental to the main themes. Close examination of them in context, however, reveals that they are, in general, functional. For the mistake is made of expecting them to correspond exactly to their subjects of comparison

which are, in essence, enigmatic and hence insusceptible to precise comparison. They can only be suggested. To appreciate Homer's similes one must examine them through an aesthetic of impressionism rather than naturalistic description; one must consider the suggestion or impression made by the simile rather than the accuracy of correspondence between it and its subject. An arresting simile is used in connection with the death of Gorgythion: "He drooped his head to one side like a poppy in a garden, laden with fruit and spring rains. So he bowed down to one side his head laden with his helmet" (Il. VIII, 306 - 308). If the simile is considered as a strict, definitive comparison then the image of the poppy weighed down with fruit and water, in the prime of life and fertility, clashes with that of the warrior weighed down with death, and the comparison fails. If, however, one looks first to the principal impression created by the simile, that is, of a body drooping down and on the verge of collapse, an impression intensified by the rich, luxuriant qualities associated with the garden, the rains of spring, the poppy, and the water-laden fruit, then the whole simile captures in a surprising, moving fashion some of the essence of the scene of Gorgythion's death. The contrasts between the life-giving rain and death-dealing arrow, the luxuriant plant in the garden and the dying warrior on the battlefield serve only to heighten the pathos and strangeness of the scene. The poet has not embarked upon an unwarranted and tasteless digression but has sought to suggest an aspect of the slaying of a warrior which could not otherwise be represented. So an impressionistic painter will use colours and forms not normally associated with a particular object to portray some part of its essence that would otherwise remain intangible. "The simile catches the temper of the occasion and illuminates it."[1]

[1] C. M. Bowra, Homer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p.64.

In Book IV of the Odyssey Menelaus expresses in a simile his view of the crime of the suitors and their inevitable punishment:

> "To think of it!--that these men who are themselves weaklings should really want to sleep in the bed of a lion-hearted man! Just as when a hind puts to sleep her new-born, unweaned fawns in the wooded lair of a mighty lion and then ranges over the mountain ridges and grassy valleys to graze, and then the lion comes into his lair and inflicts terrible destruction on both of the fawns, so Odysseus will inflict terrible destruction upon those men."
>
> (Od.IV,333-340)

A direct, detailed correspondence cannot be drawn between the suitors and the fawns. Not only do the suitors not share the fawns' helplessness and innocence but they are certainly more than two. The comparison, however, is more indirect; it is drawn between the carnage that the lion wreaks upon the fawns and the destruction that Odysseus will bring upon the suitors. Moreover, there is no accumulation of inappropriate or irrelevant details in this simile. The poet fashions it in the same, careful manner in which he moulds all his imagery, heightening and ordering certain details that will combine to produce a concentrated, vivid impression. He deliberately contrives the extreme contrast between the helpless, unwitting fawns and the mighty lion in order to present a picture of utter destruction, which will be automatically associated in the mind of the reader with the impending doom of the suitors and will add terror and dimension to it. An aspect of the punishment of the suitors and Odysseus' revenge is intimated which could not otherwise be expressed.

This is not to suggest that exact correspondence does not exist in the Homeric similes; obviously it does. For example the lion that Menelaus conjures up in the passage quoted above is an ideal metaphor for Odysseus. But such correspondence is usually of secondary importance; all that matters ultimately is the impression that the simile produces.

One might object that, regardless of the aptness of the impression,

incongruities of detail between the simile and its subject must still mar the poem. In adopting this position one presupposes that the subject of comparison is already well enough defined that the comparison itself must be subordinate to and governed by the pre-existent definition. Nothing, however, in Homer's world is ever ultimately defined; it can only be intimated and so the simile's prime function is not to elaborate upon the subject of comparison but to qualify and limit it through suggestion. The undefined subject of comparison must be subordinated to and governed by the simile so that its impression may dominate the reader's mind. The simile determines some part of its subject's nature that would remain unknown without some such qualification. Thus, evaluation of the artistic quality of a simile should not be based upon the symmetry between the simile and its subject but the success of the former at sharpening and deepening an impression of the latter.

The impressionistic portrayal of situations of superior moment entails even greater incongruities of detail between similes and their subjects. For such a portrayal requires an intensification of the impression that in turn necessitates an augmentation of the use of the simile, both in number and variety.[1] The marshalling and advance into battle of the Achaean host has outstanding significance both as a spectacle and as an incident in the development of the story of the Iliad. The poet attempts to capture and convey the exceptional import of this scene through a sequence of three similes that compare the flashing of the army's bronze armour with a great forest fire (Il. II, 455 - 458) and the numbers and noise of the host with flocks of birds and swarms of flies (459 - 473).[2] These nonhuman entities

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[1] Ibid., p. 65.

[2] Ibid.

might seem to have little in common with a martial host in their particulars. In their essences, however, in their fundamental realities, the modes of being that they represent, they reflect different aspects of the essence of the scene of the advancing army.[1] Fire, flocks of birds, and swarms of flies each suggest fundamental traits of the reality of the marching mass of warriors. Any one of them would suffice to suggest to a limited degree this reality. In combination they illuminate it even more, in a degree appropriate to its significance. The result of their association is not a random sequence of bizarre, discordant correspondences but an impressionistic picture of great splendour and import. Theoretically, any number and variety of analogies could be applied to a phenomenon to suggest different asepcts of its essence and so, essentially, to mould its identity.

The fundamental mystery and even amorphism of essence produce a flexibility of identity that is expressed in the mutations and metamorphoses of the Odyssey and Iliad. The gods, of course, as pure spirits can take on any forms they like. Even when they do seem to manifest themselves without disguise they are generally only described as resembling a particular form. When Athene reveals her true identity to Odysseus shortly after his return to Ithaca she only "seems in form like a woman beautiful, tall, and highly skilled" (Od. XIII, 288 - 289). The appearance of men changes as well, on a much smaller scale, under varying circumstances. In the Odyssey Athene easily transforms Odysseus' aspect according to the demands of each situation. She may disfigure him with ugliness and old age to permit him to carry out his designs unimpeded under disguise, as in Books XIII and XVI, or she may refine and improve his figure to reveal his true identity and to win him admiration, as in Books VI, XVI, and XXIII. In the last instance, in fact,

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1 Paolo Vivante, The Homeric Imagination (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 85.

the goddess has to enhance his appearance in order that Penelope may recognize him. He explains the malleability of his form to Telemachus in Book XVI:

> "Athene makes of me what she wishes --for she has the power.
> At one time she causes me to resemble a beggar, but at
> another a young man with beautiful clothes upon his skin.
> It is easy for the gods who own the broad heaven both to
> glorify and to abase a mortal man."
>
> (Od.XVI,208-212)

Nor are his disguises limited to externals. He adopts as well a persona suitable for each situation; hence the fantastic yarns about his adventurous past that he spins out to Athene, Eumaeus, the suitors, and Penelope. Indeed it sometimes becomes difficult for the reader to distinguish between the falsehood and truth of his stories and to discern his real identity.

Elsewhere in the Odyssey Penelope and the men in Eurylochus' scouting party also undergo changes in varying degrees. Athene beautifies Penelope in Book XVIII to ensnare further the suitors. Circe changes Eurylochus' twenty-two companions into swine --and back to men again. Whatever symbolic significance the latter instance may import the easy transmutation that occurs demonstrates the unfixed nature of identity that appears in an "essentialist" view of reality.

In the Iliad Agamemnon and Hector possess this flexibility of identity. Agamemnon, as an individual among other men, often appears weak and petulant and not at all extraordinary; yet when he acts in his social function as king of the Greeks the appropriate power and glory are ascribed to him, as in the description of the marshalling of the host in Book II:

> Among them was lord Agamemnon, in eyes and head like thunder-
> loving Zeus, in waist like Ares, in breast like Poseidon. Like
> a bull that is greatly pre-eminent over all in the herd, since

> he is distinguished among the gathered cattle, such did Zeus make Agamemnon that day, so that he was outstanding in the multitude and supreme among heroes.
>
> (Il.II,477-483)

Agamemnon here acquires the proportions of a god and, as before, the change is due to divine influence. (The prestige attendant upon royalty is also manifested in the Odyssey, in which Nausicaa describes her father seated on his throne: "and there he sits drinking his wine like a god" (VI, 309)). Hector, too, though by nature a great warrior, is exalted while fighting under divine influence. When Zeus has strengthened the Trojans to rout the Achaeans his aspect is supernaturally altered to inspire fear: "He had the eyes of the Gorgon and of Ares, bane of mortals" (Il. VIII, 349). In the fighting near the ships in Book XV his battle fury gives him an even more terrifying appearance:

> He was raging like Ares, or as when destroying fire rages in the mountains, in the thickets of the deep forest. Foam appeared around his mouth, and his eyes blazed beneath his grim brows. His helmet shook terribly about his temples as he fought.
>
> (Il.XV,605-610)

The characters of the Iliad, as of the Odyssey, possess identities which are, in essence, unfixed.

In the view of the Homeric heroes one of the most important attributes of identity is glory. Since it, like the rest of identity, is not inherently fixed, it must be established externally. It is, in fact, the conception of one's glory held by other men, that is, one's fame or renown. Thus the Greek word for fame, "kleos," represents glory as well. The close dependence of personal glory and self worth upon fame is reflected in the heroes' ardent pursuit of it. Hector designates its acquisition as a major motivation behind his participation in warfare: "I have learnt ever to be brave and to fight in the front ranks of the

Trojans to gain the great renown of my father, and my own" (Il. VI, 444 - 446). So valuable does Achilles consider this ornament that he prefers an abbreviated life to a long one without it. He cites the early death of Heracles as a precedent for his own; "so I, too, if a similar fate has been fashioned for me, shall fall in death; but now I would win glorious renown" (Il. XVIII, 120 - 121). The Homeric heroes seek to assert and, if possible, to enhance their fame and glory mainly through six external standards of personal worth: genealogy, social status, heroism, divine interest, wisdom, and wealth. They are interrelated; divine interest and wealth in particular often appear to be derivative from the other four qualifications. Most of the heroes possess all six of these virtues in varying degrees. They gain particular distinction from only a few.

The importance that the heroes place upon their family connections has already been noted in their frequent use of patronymics. Those descended from gods and outstanding heroes are assigned commensurate glory. Achilles, for instance, is a direct descendent of Zeus and the son of a goddess, and so vaunts his superiority over the fallen Asteropaeus, who could name only the River Axius, his grandfather, as an immortal ancestor:

> "The man who begot me was...Peleus, son of Aeacus, and Aeacus was the offspring of Zeus. Therefore, as Zeus is mightier than the rivers that flow to the sea, so is the race of Zeus mightier than that of a river."
> (Il.XXI,188-191)

Aeneas, before battling Achilles in Book XX of the Iliad, takes great pains in tracing his descent from Aphrodite and Zeus to prove his worth. Usually, in fact, the assertion of one's identity takes precedence over all else. Tlepolemus seeks to establish his superiority over Sarpedon through comparison of genealogies:

> "They lie who say that you are the offspring of Zeus of the aegis since you fall far short of those men who were born of Zeus in the time of the men of old. Of a different kind, men say, was the might of Heracles, my father, bravely steadfast, lion-hearted, who once came here after the horses of Laomedon with only six ships and very few men and sacked the city of Ilium."
>
> (Il.V,635-642)

Diomedes, son of Tydeus, must find his father's reputation burdensome at times, for he is expected and constantly exhorted to equal his matchless deeds, as when the Greeks enter battle in Book IV. Yet he does not fear to invoke his lineage and expects to be held by the gods in the same honour as his father; so he prays to Athene: "If ever you thought well of my father and stood by him in terrible war, favour me now also, Athene" (Il. V, 116 - 117). If one extends the qualification of genealogy to include all family connections then one may mention the case of Menelaus as well. The Greeks undertake the Trojan expedition on his behalf because he is the brother of the High King, Agamemnon, and the husband of Helen, daughter of Zeus. His marriage to Helen also assures him of a privileged fate: translation to Elysium and immortality (Od. IV, 561 - 569).

Few of the principal heroes in the Iliad can claim outstanding distinction for their social status; as kings they are more or less of equal rank. Agamemnon is an exception, though, as supreme Lord of the Greeks. His primacy is based upon his superior natural nobility and political power, as the reference to him in the catalogue of ships indicates: "With him followed the most and noblest people. In their midst he put on the flashing bronze, exulting, pre-eminent among all the heroes, because he was the noblest and led by far the most men" (Il. II, 577 - 580). So in Book IX Agamemnon claims as his due the respect of Achilles, after he has made the offer of lavish gifts of appeasement: "Let him submit to me, since I am more royal and claim to be the elder in age" (160 - 161). Hector

and Priam may also claim distinction as, respectively, the crown prince and general of the Trojans, and the Trojan King.

Many of the Greeks and Trojans acquire glory through their heroic deeds. Indeed heroism offers a greater possibility for advancement than any other heroic qualification, apart from the acquisition of wealth. Hector occasionally gives indications that he fights as much to increase his own glory as to defend Troy; such is the implication of his address to the Trojans after they have driven the Greeks behind their barricade and appear to have victory within their grasp: "Would that I would be immortal and ageless forever, that I would be honoured as Athene and Apollo are honoured, as now this day brings ill to the Argives" (Il. VIII, 538 - 541). He desires, in effect, the stature of a god for his triumph over the Achaeans. Achilles bases his claim to preeminence on his prowess. When he considers himself dishonoured before the Greek host he conceives the disrespect to be ingratitude for his fighting ability and so departs from the army, refusing to return at any price: "I think that neither Agamemnon, son of Atreus, nor the rest of the Danaans shall sway me since there were no thanks for fighting ever relentlessly against hostile men" (Il. IX, 315 - 317). In fact, Achilles and Agamemnon quarrel and refuse to yield to each other because they adduce different values to prove their worth. Nestor, in his attempt to reconcile the two, also tries to harmonize their different claims to distinction. He first addresses Achilles:

> "Though you are stronger and the mother who bore you was a goddess, still, this man is superior since he rules over more people. But you, son of Atreus, restrain your vehemence. In fact, I entreat you to put away your anger against Achilles who is a great defence for the Achaeans against evil war."
>
> (Il.I,280-284)

Both Telemachus and Odysseus must resort to heroic action to prove their identities in the Odyssey. Telemachus, as Athene first finds him in

Book I, is helpless and insignificant within his father's own house; he is not even sure whether Odysseus is his father: "My mother says that I am his son, but I am not sure. For no one has yet been certain about his own descent" (215 - 216). He must strive throughout the Odyssey to establish his true identity and heroic pedigree. Odysseus, too, must continually prove himself. He must toil to return to Ithaca from Troy and once there he must fight again to regain his throne. The heroic action of Telemachus and Odysseus is ultimately the measure of their heroic status and the justification of their ranks as King and Prince of Ithaca and as husband and son of Penelope.

The hero's prowess may itself be measured by the magnitude of the obstacles he encounters. In battle, the number of men slain and the prominence of the opponents, the quantity and quality, as it were, of the enemy, gauge the individual's heroism. Achilles and Diomedes are two of the greatest heroes because they slay the enemy in large numbers and contend with the chief warriors of the foe and even with gods, such as Scamander, or Xanthus, Apollo, Ares, and Aphrodite. Ironically Achilles himself considers it no honour to fight with a river, even one possessed of such a mighty divinity as the Scamander. In complaining to Zeus of the ignominy of perishing in a river he defines the conditions of death that he considers appropriate to his own glory:

> "Would that Hector had slain me, since he is the best of the men brought up here. Then would a brave man have slain me, and a brave man would he have slain. But it was ordained that I should now be overwhelmed by a wretched death, trapped in a great river like a swineherd boy whom a winter torrent swept away as he was crossing it."
>
> (IL.XXI,279-283)

In the Odyssey Odysseus' greatness is measured by the peril and magnitude of his adventures, such as his journeys to Hell and through Scylla and

Charybdis, his victory over the Cyclops, his endurance of the elements and intolerable situations in general. Of course, a man's heroism may also be judged by his ability to overcome the obstacles and dangers he meets, that is, to survive.

The greater the hero, the greater will be the interest the gods show for him.[1] So Achilles, Diomedes, and Odysseus are constantly attended by Athene while Apollo protects and helps Hector, and Aphrodite and Apollo, and even Poseidon watch over Aeneas. Zeus, more indirectly, to be sure, honours the outstanding heroes of the Iliad, such as Achilles and Hector, who have central importance in the story, and Odysseus, the central figure of the Odyssey.

Wisdom, especially in counsel, is greatly admired by the Achaeans. Nestor and Odysseus attain pre-eminence for it. In Book II of the Iliad the latter brilliantly demonstrates his powers of organization and persuasion when he prevents the Achaeans from fleeing Troy and encourages them to continue fighting. In particular, his humiliation of Thersites acquires the proportions of a fable representing the triumph of "right" over "wrong" thinking. His use of the royal sceptre to beat Thersites has particular symbolic import. The Achaeans show proper approval:

> "In truth, Odysseus has excelled on countless occasions at initiating good plans and preparing war. But now this deed is by far the best thing that he has done among the Argives; - he has stopped this abusive slanderer from ranting."
> (Il.II,272-275).

Nestor, whose counsel frequently helps the Greek leaders to regain control of unstable situations, receives the special commendation of Agamemnon:

> "To be sure, old man, you have again outshone the sons of the Achaeans in the council. Father Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, would that I had ten such counsellors among the Achaeans! Then soon would the city of lord Priam have fallen, taken and sacked under our hands."
> (Il.II,370-374)

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[1] G. M. A. Grube, "The Gods of Homer," Phoenix V (1951): 62-78.

In the Odyssey Odysseus must depend upon his wits as much as his courage to survive and triumph. It is no doubt his peculiar combination of heroism and intelligence that so endears him to Athene and makes him one of the outstanding Homeric characters.

Finally, the Homeric heroes also measure their glory by their wealth. Menelaus, recognizing the prestige and glory imparted by affluence, made deliberate efforts to secure wealth even before returning home from Troy, as he tells Telemachus and Peisistratus: "Few men, if any, can rival me in wealth. For I suffered much and travelled widely to bring it home in my ships, and I did not arrive until the eighth year" (Od. IV, 80 - 82). His prosperity is reflected in the splendour of his palace which seems to rival the very home of the gods for opulence, as Telemachus remarks to Peisistratus:

> "Behold...the gleam of bronze through the echoing halls
> and the lustre of gold and amber and silver and ivory! The
> court of Zeus must be like this inside so great is the
> inexpressible splendour of the place! The sight of it
> fills me with awe."
>
> (Od.IV,71-75)

Odysseus' reinstatement as king in Ithaca would be incomplete without accompanying riches, and so Zeus ordains that the Phaeacians supply him liberally with them (Od. V, 37 - 40). Agamemnon's rank as High King of the Greeks is also appropriately matched by the abundance of his wealth.

The Homeric characters consider that quality and quantity of gifts represent the worth both of the distributor and the receiver. So Agamemnon seeks to appease Achilles with lavish presents as well as to demonstrate his own greatness and magnanimity. Achilles honours both the dead Patroclus and those attending his funeral with costly prizes for the funeral games, thus manifesting at the same time his own liberality. The Phaeacians endow

Odysseus on two separate occasions. In the first instance, in Book VIII of the Odyssey, they make the presentation of gifts as much to acknowledge his esteem of them for their dancing as their respect for him after his victory in their games. They honour him for the second time in Book XIII to show their increased admiration for him after he has revealed more of his heroic character in his account of his glorious deeds and wisdom. Odysseus accepts them all quite naturally as if they were his due. One may include in this category of veneration the sumptuous offerings that the Homeric characters make to the gods to demonstrate their reverence and their own worth and worthiness of divine patronage.

If one subsumes armour under the general heading of "wealth," then the magnificence of a man's arms may also reflect his excellence. At any rate the dazzling appearance of Agamemnon's armour, described near the beginning of Book XI, is sufficient to elicit the approval of Athene and Hera themselves, who act, along with Zeus, as his patron deities: "the bronze shone from him far into heaven, and Athene and Hera thundered at the sight to honour the king of Mycene, rich in gold" (44 - 46). Achilles' armour, too, is a measure of the greatness of the man. His first suit of armour holds supernatural powers that bring glory and disaster to Patroclus and Hector, while his second has such divine perfection and beauty that it enhances his valour and prowess in the final great battle of the Iliad.

Such are the main, external standards that may indicate the true identity of a man. There are others of less importance. One may mention for instance the magnificence of the funeral that a man receives. The outstanding heroes such as Patroclus, Hector, and later, Achilles, all receive elaborate burial rites on an enormous scale. Ignominious death without proper burial is accordingly judged to be a great outrage, as Achilles' ghost implies when he speaks to the shade of Agamemnon:

> "Would that you had enjoyed your share of honour due to your rank and had met your death and doom in the land of the Trojans! Then would the Panachaeans have made your grave, and you would have won great glory for your son to inherit. But at the time it was ordained that you be overwhelmed by a most pitiful death."
>
> (Od.XXIV,30-34)

In the face of annihilation a man's funeral provides the last opportunity to his friends to measure his worth and fix him in the memory of future generations. The splendour of Achilles' funeral guarantees him immortal fame, as Agamemnon's ghost informs him: "So, in dying, you did not lose your renown, but your glory will be admired by all men forever, Achilles" (Od. XXIV, 93 - 94).

The ultimately unfixed nature of human identity compels Homeric men to place great value upon external identification. The catalogue of ships in the second book of the Iliad does not appear in the poem as mere ornamentation. It is entirely necessary for the identification of the Greeks and Trojans, and particularly their leaders, participating in the war. The scene in Book III in which Priam and Helen discuss and identify some of the principal Achaean heroes serves a similar function. They not only name the individual warriors but provide essential information about their characters and backgrounds. Most importantly, their descriptions of the men as well as the wonder and interest they show for them furnish objective standards of measurement for their heroic stature; they provide "objective correlatives" for the assessment of the heroes' characters. Priam's and Helen's discussion of Odysseus is representative:

> Seeing Odysseus next the old man inquired,"Tell me now also, dear child, who this man may be. He is shorter than Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, by a head, but he appears broader in the shoulders and chest. His armour lies on the

> bounteous earth but he goes like a ram through the ranks of men. I should liken him to a young ram thick of fleece who ranges through a great flock of white sheep."
>
> Then Helen, offspring of Zeus, replied to him, "This man is the son of Laertes, Odysseus of many wiles, who was raised in the land of Ithaca, though it is a rocky place, and who knows stratagems of every kind and profound counsels."
>
> (Il.III,191-202)

As it has been noted, in the battle scenes the heroes are often ready to identify themselves in detail to their foes while their curiosity about their opponents' backgrounds occasionally exceeds their pugnacity. Such an exchange of identification occurs in Book VI of the Iliad in the encounter between Diomedes and Glaucus. Glaucus in particular, at Diomedes' request, recounts his genealogy in great detail, with the result that Diomedes recognizes between them bonds of friendship dating from their grandfathers' days, bonds strong enough to overrule their enmity:

> "Therefore I am now a close guest-friend of yours in the heart of Argos and you are mine in Lycia whenever I come to the land of the people there. So let us shun each other's spears, even in the thick of the fighting."
>
> (Il.VI,224-226)

Glaucus' meticulous delineation of his ancestry and Diomedes' assertion that he and an enemy should be bound by an alliance made two generations before both demonstrate the Homeric hero's desire to establish firmly in an external context his otherwise undefinable identity. This desire is further manifested in Diomedes' insistence that they renew their ancestral friendship not merely with words but with concrete, objective action: "Let us exchange armour with each other in order that these men may also know that we claim to be ancestral guest-friends" (230 - 231). Of course, in this instance, Diomedes' asseverations of friendship may be somewhat obreptitious. The prospect of obtaining Glaucus' golden armour would no doubt render amiable his most hostile enemy. Nevertheless Glaucus'

acceptance of Diomedes' claims demonstrates the seriousness with which the Homeric hero regarded ancestral links. He viewed his lineage as a concrete dimension of his identity.

Identification and recognition have similar importance in the Odyssey. Before anyone can accept him and treat him as he deserves, Odysseus must furnish proof of his identity. Athene must embellish and refine his appearance to reveal his true, heroic stature and glory to Nausicaa, Telemachus, and Penelope. Before the Phaeacians can properly esteem him he must demonstrate his skill at athletics and provide a lengthy and detailed account of his background, including all his adventures from the time he left Troy. In effect his history serves as a symbol of his identity and the Phaeacians can wholly honour him only when they see the whole symbol. Similarly Eurycleia, Philoetius, and Phemius only recognize him when they can perceive and feel the scar on his leg, which has itself a history that the poet is careful to relate in full detail. Neither Penelope nor Laertes can completely accept his claims until he displays knowledge of certain intimate domestic information with which only he could be acquainted. Throughout the story Odysseus must take great pains to establish his identity.

The Supernatural Depth and Meaning of Natural Phenomena

The Homeric conception of the fundamentally supernatural, spiritual nature of reality influences the physical imagery of the poems to the extent that it quite often takes on symbolic, spiritual significance. Usually such imagery serves not only to describe a situation, but to suggest its spirit and mood. Sympathetic portents function most effectively to this end. The darkness with which Ares shrouds the battle in Book V of the Iliad aptly suggests the fury of the Trojans as well as the terror

and confusion of the fighting: "They bore the might of their hands straight forward. Furious Ares, ranging everywhere, shrouded the battle all around with night to help the Trojans" (Il. V, 506 - 508). The darkness that Zeus sends upon the battle for Sarpedon's corpse also indicates and heightens the horror and importance of the issue, and even the god's own grief:

> When the Trojans and Lycians, and Myrmidons and Achaeans had strengthened their ranks on both sides, they clashed to contend over the lifeless corpse and shouted terribly, and the armour of the men rang loudly. Zeus stretched evil night over the mighty battle in order that the toil of the fighting for his dear son should be deadly.
>
> (Il.XVI,563-568)

The portent of darkness also suggests indirectly the greatness of the hero over whom the strife is wrought; so too the battle over Patroclus' body in Book XVII is accompanied by the same awesome obscurity. The prodigy that occurs before the battle in Book XI vividly portends its horror and destruction: "The son of Cronos roused an evil din among them and sent down from high heaven a dew dripping with blood, because he intended to send forth many mighty heads to Hades" (Il. XI, 52 - 55). Theoclymenus' terrible vision in Book XX of the Odyssey has a similarly ominous nature:

> "Ah, wretches, what is this horror that you are suffering? Your heads and faces above and knees beneath are shrouded with darkness, lamentation has burst out, cheeks are wet with tears, the walls and beautiful alcoves have been spattered with blood, the porch is full of ghosts - the court is full of them - they are hastening to Erebus under darkness, the sun has perished from the sky, a horrible mist has spread over all!"
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> (Od.XX,351-357)

Such portents draw their impressive power not so much from their depiction of the future as from their revelation of the moral and spiritual contexts of situations. At the time of Theoclymenus' vision the mean, frivolous

behaviour of the suitors and the apparent helplessness and abjection of Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope before their bullying insolence threaten to submerge the narrative in mediocrity. The true dimensions of the suitors' sacrilegious iniquity and their corresponding guilt, as well as the power and glory of the Ithacan royal house, have become obscured. The sudden, horrific flash of inspiration experienced by Theoclymenus and the suitors throws the whole situation in Ithaca into sharp relief against its supernatural context and so exposes the real significance of what is happening. The suitors' arrogance and the royal family's humiliation do in fact constitute in the larger scheme of things a grave moral offence that requires correction of equal gravity, on the level of tragedy. Through this momentary illumination the poet rectifies the reader's perspective on the story. For the portents in his poetry do not serve merely to enhance incidents in the natural order; the concept of the "pathetic fallacy" would probably be foreign to him. He employed them to reveal the real meaning of events, which was, for him, spiritual and moral.

Conclusion

The supernatural profoundly influences the natural order in Homer's world. It governs it, spiritualizes it, and provides it with meaning. It adds dimension to it; it imbues it with grandeur and magnificence and exalts it out of mediocrity to the level of tragedy. In fact, Homer's representation of the natural world can only be understood in its supernatural context.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Spirit and Essence

The supernatural is portrayed in the Iliad and the Odyssey as a duality. It consists, in the traditional sense, of a spiritual realm, as opposed to the purely material order of the natural world. As such, however, it is not divorced from the world of material things; it exists also as the original, hypostatic reality that animates and governs the natural order. Its vital power is clearly manifested in the generative, and for that matter, degenerative influence that the gods exert upon natural phenomena. The love-making of Zeus and Hera induces the efflorescence of the earth: "Beneath them the glorious earth sent forth fresh sprouting grass, dewy lotus, crocus, and hyacinth, thick and soft, that held them above the ground" (Il. XIV, 347 - 349). The sea and its creatures respond vigorously to the presence of Poseidon, their informing spirit: "On all sides beneath him gambolled the monsters of the sea from their depths, and they did not fail to recognize their lord; and the sea opened for him in its joy" (Il. XIII, 27 - 29). The gods have also the power to invigorate and heal men, and conversely, to debilitate and inflict sickness and death upon them, as the Achaeans discover to their chagrin when they slight the priest of Apollo in Book I of the Iliad. In general this original reality is seen to penetrate the natural order through essence, the absolute, undefinable, and hence mysterious being that is the most characteristic property of every natural phenomenon and by which that phenomenon subsists. Since no discontinuity occurs in the transition from physical existence through essence to the spiritual

realm, every natural entity is perceived to be connected with a spiritual entity, while every supernatural being is endowed with "essential" qualities in addition to its fundamentally spiritual nature. No supernatural entity may be reduced either to an unencumbered, free-floating spirit or to a mere allegorization of natural phenomena.[1] In the supernatural spirit and essence are fused inseparably together. This duality constitutes the higher, archetypal, hypostatic reality of which the forms in the natural order are but the imperfect, physical expressions.

The material connection of the supernatural greatly facilitates the depiction of it. As a purely spiritual realm it would not be susceptible to description. Due, however, to its original, hypostatic relation to the natural order, the natures of its entities may be deduced from their imperfect representations in the natural world. To be sure, the supernatural realm of the Iliad and Odyssey is structured largely according to traditional mythology. The references to the Olympic pantheon, the subjugated Titans, the myriad of pantheistic divinities associated with natural phenomena, as well as the metaphysical extensions of heaven, earth, and hell, all correspond to the system expounded in Hesiod's Theogony. Even these traditional forms, however, must have been inferred originally from natural entities, and the practice is continued in the Iliad and Odyssey. Even in its fundamental forms the supernatural reflects the natural world. The limitation and differentiation of divine powers correspond to the finitude and variety of natural entities. The immortality of the gods is partly reflected in the permanence of most

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[1] George Grote, Greece, vol. 1 (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1899), p.2.

phenomena - if not in particulars, then at least in types - within human experience. Superior power and control over human affairs is ascribed to them partly in accordance with the fundamental human experience of forces in nature that exceed men's strength and influence human destiny.[1] The natures of physical phenomena are matched, to some extent, by the characters of the divinities associated with them; love and war and their counterparts, Aphrodite and Ares, are cases in point. Most conscious supernatural beings share in particular the human, personal qualities, both individual and social, of men. The gods eat and drink, albeit ambrosia; they sleep; they display emotions such as love, hatred, anger, and envy; they feel pain and pleasure; they may be wounded and healed; they laugh, rage, and quarrel; they think and express themselves in human terms; and they bear human form and dress. Although they can transport themselves with superhuman swiftness, they still frequently travel with the slower human gait, whether walking or running. On the social level they hold councils and feasts. They are fascinated by war. Their social structure, as Nilsson has observed, closely resembles that of the human aristocracy portrayed in the Iliad and Odyssey.[2] It consists of a high king holding an inherited suzerainty over a group of self-seeking, contumacious, but ultimately deferential princes. Moreover the arrangement of the gods' dwellings on Olympus mirrors the typical setting of aristocratic homes at the beginning of the historical age in Greece and in earlier Mycenaean times. Just as

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1 C. H. Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 227-229.

2 M. P. Nilsson, Homer and Mycenae (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1968), pp. 268-271.

the king's palace was situated on the acropolis and surrounded by the houses of his retainers, so Zeus's palace stands on the topmost peak of Olympus above the encircling homes of the lesser gods.[1] In fact the gods, and particularly the Olympians, represent the supernatural archetype of humanity in form, nature, social organization, and even setting. In its "essential" aspects the supernatural parallels the natural order.

Spirit and essence are combined in different proportions within the supernatural. Their unfixed duality is recognized in invocations that embrace the whole supernatural realm for the solemnization of oaths of supreme importance. Before the duel between Paris and Menelaus Agamemnon cries

> "Father Zeus, guardian of Ida, most glorious, most great, and you, O Sun, who beholds everything and hears all, and you rivers and earth, and you below who punish dead men, whoever has sworn a false oath, be witnesses and guard our trusted oaths."
> (Il.III,276-280)

The king addresses divine entities, Zeus and the infernal Powers, in whom the spiritual predominates as well as those, the Sun, Rivers, and Earth, much more closely associated with physical phenomena. Yet even the more spiritual beings have physical attachments - Zeus to Ida and the spirits of retribution to Hell, while those of a more physical nature, due to their primeval, elemental character, remain, through essence, mysterious and suggestive of the spiritual dimension beyond the natural order, and so are personified. The measures of spirit and essence vary from deity to deity, and sometimes from manifestation to manifestation of a single divinity. A supernatural being will be relatively autonomous according

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[1] M. P. Nilsson, The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp.249-250.

to the proportion of spirituality in its nature, and, conversely, it will be restricted in its behaviour by physical attributes according to the strength of its connection through essence with natural phenomena.

Of all supernatural beings presented in the Iliad and Odyssey the Olympic deities possess the highest degree of spirituality, which distinguishes them in majesty and influence. Besides partaking of immortality and perfection they can change their forms and corporality at will, they may move with the speed of thought, little hampered by distance and obstructions, and they have the ability, to a greater or less extent, to operate outside those domains to which they are connected through essence. Other gods may possess in their own limited spheres of influence a concentration of power and sovereignty that the Olympians may not overrule; even Zeus forbears to oppose the will of Night, "who overpowers both gods and men" (Il. XIV, 259), and the gods must appease Hyperion when he threatens to withdraw his light from the world and shine only for the dead, after the slaughter of his cattle (Od. XII, 377 - 388). The influence, however, of these gods is confined to their own jurisdictions, while the autonomy of the Olympians enables them to have a greater total effect upon the course of events. The greater degree of spirituality in their natures is also manifested in their possession of the most distinct, spontaneous personalities among all the inhabitants of the supernatural realm. Consequently they are the divinities most receptive to communication with men. The conjunction in their characters of independence, general efficiency, and personality elevates them to the highest level of human reverence. The superior spirituality of the Olympians makes them the most important of the gods.

Among the Olympians themselves, Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, followed by

Poseidon and Hera, possess the highest degree of spirituality and so exhibit the greatest independence and versatility in their operations. The first three certainly exert the greatest influence upon the course of events in the Iliad, while Zeus and Athene direct matters in the Odyssey. As a result, Zeus, Athene, and Apollo are distinguished as a group within the Iliad. On several occasions they are linked together in invocations, and they alone share the privilege of deploying the aegis.

The greater spirituality of the Olympians is also manifested in their closer proximity to transcendence, the ability to rise above the course of events and control it from without, as opposed to the greater immanence, the containment within the course of events, that characterizes the other gods. These particular attributes will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter.

Even the Olympians' natures, however, are determined to some degree by essence; yet their essential attributes do not diminish their importance. For they serve as the archetypes of the most important and valued elements of human life, including wisdom, courage, love, war, order, and skills of every kind, which exalt them in the reverence of men and accord them a central role in the direction and enactment of human history. Moreover, the natures of some of the gods, particularly Zeus, Apollo, and Athene, are considered to reflect the essential qualities of the numerous natural phenomena over which their spiritual versatility permits them to extend their influence. As a result, their characters are further enriched and enhanced in the eyes of men.

The "Essential" Attributes of the Gods

Some of the salient "essential" or allegorical aspects of the natures

of the Olympic deities may be easily identified. Zeus, the most powerful of the gods, is also the most spiritual, and so the most removed from events in the natural realm. He intervenes personally and immanently within the natural order much less often than the other gods, although he does wield supreme, transcendent control over both the natural and supernatural orders on a par with, and ultimately with pre-eminence over fate. Even his nature, however, is conditioned by the properties of natural entities. His dominion over the gods is appropriately reflected in his literal, physical supremacy as the "highest" of the divinities; he is the one most closely associated with the sky. It is fitting, moreover, that the awesome presence and power of the sky-god should find expression in equally awesome meteorological phenomena, particularly those inherent in the thunder-storm. Formulaic weather epithets, such as "loud-thundering,""delighting in thunder," "high-thundering," "cloud-gatherer," "lightning-gatherer," and "lightener," become so inseparably attached to his name that they acquire permanent association with his nature. He is also the divine archetype of royalty, and so patronizes earthly kings: "Great is the soul of kings fostered of Zeus; their honour is from Zeus, and Zeus the counsellor loves them" (Il. II, 196 - 197). He also possesses, supremely, the faculties of wisdom and counsel. He it is who convenes the councils of the gods and who plans the course of events. Consequently he has great influence over the faculty of thought in men, which he may obfuscate as well as illuminate. Hence in Book II of the Iliad he sends a false dream to Agamemnon, and when Glaucus exchanges his golden armour for the bronze of Diomedes, his folly is attributed to the god's influence (Il. VI, 234 - 236). Since he is the highest and noblest of the gods, his character must constitute the ideal

for the Homeric hero; hence his supremacy in counsel is matched by his supremacy in the province of war, and so he personally supports the premier Greek and Trojan warriors, Achilles and Hector, during the rise of their fortunes. Hospitality is also ascribed to his jurisdiction, and so Odysseus refers the responsibility for the blinding of the impious Polyphemus to him (Od. IX, 479). The limitation of Zeus's power is manifested in his lack of dominion over Night, an elemental phenomenon which is, appropriately, dark and impenetrable by nature, fortunately for Sleep, who escaped to her in his flight from the god: "Though enraged, he stopped. For he shrank from offending swift Night" (Il. XIV, 260 - 261). Many aspects, then, of Zeus's nature are reflected in the natural order.

Athene's character is also determined, to some extent, by essence. She is primarily connected with wisdom, courage, and efficiency, qualities that she shares, to a smaller degree to be sure, with her father, Zeus, which explains his partiality towards her even when she opposes his will. Her close relation to him is illustrated by her private epithet, "obrimopatrei," "Daughter of a mighty sire." Since these qualities have such general applicability, Athene is able to excel at whatever activity she undertakes. In the theatre of war, her wisdom, courage, and efficiency are translated into the cunning, prowess, and deadliness of a mighty warrior goddess. Consequently she prevails over Ares, who is, naturally enough, endowed only with the valour and bluster of war, as well as over Aphrodite whose power is limited to love. In fact, among the lesser gods, excluding Poseidon and Hera, her only rival in power and intelligence would appear to be the other member of the Olympian trinity, Apollo, with whom she never comes into direct conflict, even though he takes the Trojans' side. Since her wisdom, courage, and efficiency are regarded by men as virtues, she occupies a high place in their reverence.

Indeed her possession of these virtues makes her virtually a model of excellence, inferior only to Zeus.

As a result of her essential connection with these particular qualities, Athene is closely associated with the Greek heroes outstanding for their wisdom and prowess, the qualities that make the ideal hero, such as Achilles, Diomedes, and Odysseus.[1] Usually, when they take counsel or embark upon some important endeavour, her presence is virtually presupposed. When Achilles has need of clear, controlled thinking to subdue his violent desire to slay Agamemnon in Book I of the Iliad, Athene conveniently arrives on the scene just in time to restrain him. Indeed her influence often has the appearance merely of the supernatural extension to a man's thinking and power. In Book XXII of the Iliad, when Achilles must beguile Hector to induce him to stand and fight, Athene effects the necessary deception. When Diomedes and Odysseus require both courage and discernment for their night raid into the Trojan camp in Book X Athene appropriately sends them a propitious omen and supports their undertaking. As Odysseus prepares to persuade the Achaeans to remain at Troy, Athene, goddess of wisdom and counsel, attends him:

> Then Odysseus, sacker of cities stood up holding the sceptre, while beside him bright-eyed Athene in the appearance of a herald commanded the people to keep silence so that both the nearest and the farthest sons of the Achaeans might hear his speech and mark his counsel."
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> (Il.II,278-282)

Throughout the Odyssey Athene helps Odysseus with his plans and suggests to him her own. Her interest in the hero is related directly to his cunning, courage, and efficiency.

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[1] Otto, The Homeric Gods, p. 46.

Athene's essential association with the Achaean heroes and the Achaeans in general consists of more than a supernatural complement to their wisdom and prowess. She also acts as their tutelary and patron goddess, in a word, their genius. And so she prevents Pandarus' bow shot from fatally wounding Menelaus. To some extent her partisanship may be attributed to an independent act of will from the more spiritual side of her character. Her hatred of the Trojans, first aroused by Paris's preference for Aphrodite over Hera and herself, explains, in part, her partiality towards the Achaeans. Nevertheless, her passion to defend and advance the cause of the Achaeans exceeds the limited interest in human affairs that one would expect of a deity unaffected by human suffering and mortality.

It is natural that Athene's association with the mind extends to confusion of thought, as in the case of the suitors' irrational response to Telemachus' refusal to force his mother into marriage: "So Telemachus spoke; but Pallas Athene stirred up unquenchable laughter among the suitors and confounded their wits" (Il. XX, 345 - 346). Where wisdom or, for that matter, folly, abounds in the Iliad and the Odyssey, Athene, Zeus, or Apollo cannot be far away.

Athene's association with wisdom embraces as well skill in craftsmanship and the domestic arts. She employs the former faculty, which she shares with Hephaestus, to enhance the appearance of Odysseus: "As when some craftsman whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athene have taught every kind of skill gilds silver with gold and creates works of beauty, so then she poured beauty over his head and shoulders" (Od. VI, 232 - 235). Her influence is perceived in excellence in this field regardless of nationality, such as that of the Trojan carpenter, Phereclus, whom "Pallas Athene loved

pre-eminently" (Il. V, 61), slain by Meriones. Her proficiency in domestic skills she demonstrates in her instruction of the daughters of Pandareus (Od. XX, 72), and by her manufacture of her own and Hera's beautiful dresses. Athene's combination of spiritual autonomy and essential dependence upon human wisdom, courage, and efficiency gives her the richest and most versatile nature after that of Zeus.

Ares' nature is determined by essence on a larger scale. To be sure, he possesses, as an Olympian, a high degree of spiritual independence and free will, which he exercises in his decision to support the Trojans in the series of events recounted in the Iliad. In many ways, however, his character represents the essence of war. Indeed, his very name often stands as a synonym for war. His impetuous, turbulent behaviour reflects the nature of combat. As an individual deity, he may fight for one side in confined, isolated areas of the battlefield. As the essence of war, however, he must be present wherever fighting and killing occur. So the narrator of the Iliad asks in Book V, "Then whom first, whom last did both Hector, son of Priam, and brazen Ares slay?" (Il. V, 703 - 704). Since both parties in a war suffer from its violence and destruction, so Ares in his essential form affects and is a danger to all who enter his domain. In the Iliad, in spite of his championship of the Trojans, such epithets as "dear to Ares" and "henchmen of Ares" are continually applied to the Achaeans, as in the case of Menelaus, whom, at one point, Ares strengthens in order that he might challenge and fall before Aeneas (Bk. V, 561 - 564). When the god learns that Deiphobus has slain his son, in Book XV, he desires to avenge him by opposing his erstwhile favourites, the Trojans. Moreover, Athene, while encouraging Diomedes, levels the accusation of treachery against Ares:

> "Fear not furious Ares, this maniac, this born plague, this traitor! Lately, in speaking to Hera and myself, he pretended that he would fight against the Trojans and support the Argives, but now he accompanies the Trojans and has forgotten the latter."
> (Il. V, 830 - 834)

War is ultimately no respecter of persons, valuing only fighting and killing. Zeus rebukes the god for his undiscerning, unprincipled love of violence when, wounded by Diomedes, he seeks commiseration: "Don't you dare sit by me and whine, you renegade! To me you are the most hateful of the gods who inhabit Olympus, for strife is ever dear to you, and wars and fighting" (Il. V, 889 - 891).

All the negative aspects of war are reflected in Ares' nature and experience. Since war is ultimately self-destructive, it is appropriate that the War-god should be driven from the battlefield at the end of Book V of the Iliad, wounded by a mortal combatant. As the presence of death and corpses is an important element of every battle, it is fitting that Ares should typify all fallen warriors when he collapses at Athene's hands in Book XXI of the Iliad: "He fell, covering seven plethra, and befouled his hair with dust, and his armour rang upon him" (407 - 408). War, or any type of conflict, as they are portrayed in the Iliad and Odyssey, are never determined by fighting alone. Their outcome is always decided ultimately by higher powers. This limitation is transferred to the restrictions placed upon Ares' behaviour and power. In spite of the important rôle that he plays in battle he has little effect upon its issue, and he is inferior in might to the more independent, higher gods, such as Zeus and Athene. In his whole being, in fact, he is inferior to the more sublime Olympians.

Ares' nature, however, does not consist of solely negative qualities.

War also embraces positive values; the Homeric heroes esteem the warrior's might and prowess, and the glory of battle. Consequently Ares, the representative of war, receives the attributes of a mighty, heroic warrior, to whom an Achaean fighter of the stature of Aias may be compared:

> Then, after he had put all his armour upon his flesh, he charged out just as huge Ares goes forth, he who goes to war after men whom the son of Cronos has hurled together to fight with the fury of soul-devouring strife.
>
> (Il. VII, 207 - 210)

The importance and glory of war in the lives of men elevate Ares to the rank of Olympian and son of Zeus, and so, even though he reproves him for his contentious nature, the king of the gods does not cast him out of Olympus. He even preserves his well-being: "I will no longer suffer you to bear pain, for you are my offspring; your mother bore you to me" (Il. V, 895 - 896). Ares sums up in his own character all the splendour and ugliness of war.

Aphrodite's nature is conditioned as much by the phenomenon that she represents, love, as it is by her Olympian spiritual autonomy. Since erotic love would seem to be incompatible with or unrelated to intelligence and prowess, Aphrodite remains inferior to the supreme Olympians. Just as love is antithetical to the hatred and violence of war, so she does not fare well in fighting, and is forced to retire wounded from the battles of Books V and XXI in the Iliad. Zeus himself gently admonishes her to confine her activities to love: "The deeds of war have not been allotted to you, my child; rather, you attend to the lovely affairs of marriage. All these things will be the care of swift Ares and Athene" (Il. V, 428 - 430).

It is in love-related matters that Aphrodite excels and the other gods recognize her supremacy in this field. Hera appeals to her for help in

beguiling Zeus, and Aphrodite responds with the loan of her ornate "zone," which amounts to an emblem of love: "... there all her charms have been wrought. Therein is love, therein desire, therein the allurement of familiar converse which steals away the wits even of the wise" (Il. XIV, 215 - 217). The pre-eminent power of the love-goddess within her own domain is demonstrated by the subsequent efficacy of her girdle in the deception of the greatest of the gods.

The interests of the goddess of love are naturally centred upon love and everything associated with it, and so she tends to exalt it above all else. When she rescues Paris from his duel with Menelaus in Book III of the Iliad, her concern is not for his battle honour or for the possible critical and even disastrous results of her intervention, but for uniting Helen and her favourite in love. When she addresses Helen in the Trojan tower she seems oblivious to the war and the gravity of Troy's situation. Her mind is preoccupied with the qualities of Paris conducive to erotic desire: "He is in his room and inlaid bed, radiant in his beauty and clothing. You would not think that he has come from a duel, but that he is going to a dance or that he is sitting down after recently ceasing to dance" (Il. III, 391 - 394). It is to be expected that the divine principle of erotic love should have the tendency towards promiscuity that she displays in the song of Demodocus. Indeed, she sums up in her person all the qualities, both good and bad, associated with love. As the deceived Hephaestus observes, she is indeed the daughter of Zeus, and beautiful, but incontinent (Od. VIII, 320).

It is natural that Aphrodite be also considered the divine principle behind beauty, the assistant of love. In this capacity she dispenses beauty wherever she goes, even among the dead, as W. F. Otto observes:

"Just as her "beauty" endows Penelope with the fresh charm of youth, so with unguents and ambrosial attar of roses she protects from disfiguration the body of Hector which was abused by Achilles, and day and night keeps the dogs away from it."[1] In the appearance of comeliness of form the power or the presence of Aphrodite can be inferred.

The characters of the other Olympians are also partly determined by deduction. Hera, as the inferior female counterpart of Zeus, shares his royal privileges and exercises his functions to a limited extent. She has the power to command the gods, such as Athene and Iris, independently. Moreover, when Zeus is preoccupied with the fighting around Troy, she deputizes for him by ordering the departure of the sun at the end of the day (Il. XVIII, 212 - 239). As the supreme goddess on Olympus she represents also the feminine principle in the universe. She is the mother of the goddesses of childbirth and controls their activities to some degree, as she demonstrated when she compelled them to withhold their services from Alcmene (Il. XIX, 119). To Hades is attributed an implacable, merciless nature, appropriate for death (Il. IX, 158 - 159). So closely is he linked with the dead, that his name is often synonymous with Hell (e.g. Il. XXIII, 244). Hermes' nature is determined not only from his function as messenger of the gods but from his association with guile, lying, and thieving. When Odysseus requires deception to overcome Circe, Hermes appropriately appears on the scene, apparently from nowhere, to provide him with the necessary cunning stratagem and antidote to her magic. To Artemis is ascribed the skill of hunting with the bow. Consequently Scamandrius' skill in this field is due to her instruction (Il.

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[1] Ibid., p. 100.

V, 51 - 52). Her brother, Apollo, is also closely associated with the bow. The accuracy of the Trojans, particularly Pandarus and Paris, with this weapon may be related to the patronage that Leto's children accord them. To be sure, Pandarus prays to Apollo before shooting his fateful arrow at Menelaus (Il. IV, 119 - 121); it is even recorded that Apollo gave him his bow (Il. II, 827). Teucer, the outstanding archer on the Achaeans' side, also holds this distinction (Il. XV, 441). The reference to the feast of Apollo (Od. XX, 276 - 278) on the day of Odysseus' revenge suggests that his influence may be present in the disaster that befalls the suitors, initiated by the king's great bow. Skill with the bow is also attributed to both gods in a more figurative sense in the fatal afflictions of natural death and plague. Apollo is also considered to be a divine representative of the same noble qualities, wisdom and courage, with which Athene is associated. His intelligence is manifested in his proficiency with lyrical poetry, with which he entertains the gods at their feast in Book I of the Iliad and which prompts Odysseus to assert that Demodocus must have been instructed by either the Muse or the god (Od. VIII, 488). His association with courage is displayed in his championship of the Trojans and their outstanding heroes. Hephaestus and Athene are the divine patrons of craftsmanship. In the Iliad Hephaestus is appropriately married to Charis, grace, the perfect complement to manufacturing skill. Perhaps because of his connection with metal-working and the forge he is also closely associated with fire, so closely, indeed, that at times he appears virtually to personify it, as when he contends against the waters of Xanthus. His name may even be metonymically substituted for fire (Il. II, 426). Poseidon has the attributes of the sea. As the sea is physically inferior to the sky, so Poseidon is inferior to Zeus. The

impersonality, inscrutability, and intermittent, uncontrollable violence of the sea upon which Odysseus spends much of his time and suffers so much, are to some extent allegorized in the god's hostile behaviour towards the hero. Moreover these qualities are transferred to the monstrous progeny of Poseidon, such as Otus and Ephialtes (Od. XI, 307 - 316), and Polyphemus. Iris, the female messenger of the gods, is generally presented in the process of receiving and delivering messages. Themis, as her name indicates, represents the principle of law and order in the universe, and so exercises her authority to convoke that organization most concerned with the establishment of social order and policy, the council, whether human or divine. The most important elements of human experience are traced back, through essence, to the Olympic gods.

The spiritual and essential sides of the gods' characters occasionally come into conflict, or, at least, give to the behaviour of some gods a rather erratic appearance. Ares in particular suffers from such an anomaly. As an actual combatant in the Iliad he is shown to have killed by himself only Periphas near the end of Book V, and Isander at a point in time previous to the Trojan War, in the days of Bellerophon (VI, 203 - 204). He also makes an attempt upon the life of Diomedes (V, 842 - 849). Yet the deaths of many warriors, including Trojans, are ascribed to him, the personification of war, both by characters in the story, who may be excused their ignorance of his real activities, and by the narrator who is aware, presumably, of everything that occurs in the poem. Priam attributes the deaths of his sons to Ares (XXIV, 259) and Glaucus the death of Sarpedon, albeit, by "the spear of Patroclus" (XVI, 543). On the great third day of battle in the Iliad, after Zeus has confined all

the gods to Olympus, Ares is referred to as a participant in the slaying of Alcathous, a Trojan: "The spear stuck fast in his heart, which throbbed and shook the butt-end of the spear; but then mighty Ares sapped its strength" (Il. XIII, 442 - 444). The expression concerning Ares' staying of the spear is demonstrated to be formulaic by its repeated application to missed spear throws in Book XVI, line 613, and in Book XVII, line 529. It would appear to be more a metonymic definition of a regular battle-phenomenon involving the essential side of Ares' character than a reference to the independent Olympian restricted by the command of Zeus. The incongruity, however, remains awkward. Ares also appears in Book XVII, lines 210 - 212, again, ostensibly, in contravention of Zeus's behest, after Zeus has helped Hector to don Achilles' fatal armour, stripped from Patroclus: "Ares the dread, the warlike, then entered him and his limbs were filled within with courage and strength." Here again the manifestation of Ares would seem to be more the personified essence of war than the independent god.

Hera, Athene, and Apollo also appear at convenient but incongruous times when the presence of their more essential attributes and powers is required. On the tenth day of the first episode of the Iliad Hera and Athene intervene in the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles in their capacities as geniuses of the Achaeans and deities of counsel and wisdom, in order to prevent their dissension from becoming irreparable. Similarly, Apollo, as the god of Chryses and the source of plague, at last averts his wrath from the Achaeans at Chryses' supplication (Il. I, 456 - 457), and takes pleasure in their conciliatory paean (472 - 474). Yet Thetis reports to her son that the entire company of the gods followed Zeus to a feast of the Ethiopians on the previous day, and that they will not

return for another twelve days (423 - 425). After Zeus's express interdiction, imposed upon the gods at the beginning of Book VIII of the Iliad, Apollo intervenes as the tutelary divinity of the Trojans to save Hector from a bow shot made by Teucer (VIII, 311). Apollo's protection in this case extends only to Hector; the arrow that misses him strikes Archeptolemus instead, and Teucer is able to bring down a number of other Trojans as well. Athene also violates the prohibition of Zeus when, in her function as genius of the Greeks, she prevents Socus' spear from fatally wounding Odysseus (Il. XI, 437 - 438). Later, she helps Nestor to rally the Achaeans at the ships: "So speaking he roused the strength and spirit of each man, and Athene thrust away the terrible cloud of mist from their eyes" (Il. XV, 667 - 669). One might mention as well the activities of Athene and Apollo in the night raid of Diomedes and Odysseus recounted in Book X. Since, however, this episode occurs outside the normal daily course of battle, presumably the gods are no longer bound by Zeus's restriction. In all of the genuine incidents mentioned above the divine interventions appear sudden and disjointed, as though they were merely supernatural extensions of natural events. To be sure, to the extent that the natures of Hera, Athene, and Apollo constitute the personal, ulterior, sustaining realities of the Greek and Trojan armies and their outstanding heroes, they must act in conjunction with them. Consequently their behaviour occasionally appears inconsistent.

The natures of the gods not associated with Olympus are much more closely connected, through essence, to natural phenomena. The elementary phenomena of reality, such as the Earth, Sky, Ocean, Sun, Night, Dawn, and Time are considered to be the physical manifestations of the elementary, original divinities of the universe. The more limited, less crude and

impersonal entities, such as trees, meadows, springs, rivers, and caves are, accordingly, informed by spirits, specifically nymphs and gods, of inferior power but of greater refinement than the elemental gods. Although their natures are dominated by essence, they too have a measure of spiritual independence, as evidenced by the threatened revolt of Hyperion in Book XII of the Odyssey and the congregation of the gods and nymphs from every river "except Ocean," forest, stream, and meadow in Zeus's grand council in Book XX of the Iliad (7 - 9).

Because everything in the natural order is considered to be supported by an ulterior spiritual reality, many natural phenomena, with which no deities are traditionally associated, are personified. These personifications, like all divinities in the Iliad and Odyssey, consist of spirit and essence in combination. In this instance, however, spirit is far outweighed by the essence of the thing personified, which, consequently, largely determines the nature and behaviour of the personification. Generally personifications are applied to abstract entities within subjective human experience. Terror, panic, and strife, essential but intangible ingredients of any battle, are all personified. The close connection of these elements with war is reflected in the close relation of their personifications to Ares. They usually attend him when he enters battle. Panic, Phobos, is even designated as his son (Il. XIII, 299) and Strife, Eris, his sister (Il. IV, 441). Yet Homer's personifications rarely remain extended, completely dependent abstractions and conceits. They are all accorded sufficient degrees of autonomy and objectivity to render credible their existence as real, supernatural beings. Through their association with Ares, a real god, Terror, Panic, and Strife acquire

the status of real divinities. When Strife appears by the ships of the Achaeans in Book XI of the Iliad, her presence seems logical enough for the mere personification of an element of war, but not for a goddess, after Zeus's special interdict in Book VIII. Yet her status as a divinity is confirmed through the ascription of her intervention to a special command from Zeus (XI, 3 - 4). The death-spirits, kēres, which are closely associated with fate because of their destructive power and which are referred to by Sarpedon in his famous exhortation to Glaucus in Book XII of the Iliad (310 - 328), also appear in myriads on the battlefield, representing the sudden, violent, and omnipresent killing prevalent in fighting. This personalization of death as a numberless host of deadly, malevolent demons sets in relief the true terror and horror of battle; it stresses the magnitude of killing on the battlefield and elevates impersonal destruction to a conscious, malevolent force.

War-phenomena do not constitute the only subjects for personification. Zeus sends an evil dream to deceive Agamemnon (Il. II, 8 - 10). It has sufficient autonomy to deliver Zeus's message by itself. Rumour receives distinction by serving in the appropriate rôle of messenger of Zeus (Il. II, 93 - 94). Much of Sleep's behaviour harmonizes with the phenomenon he represents. He successfully exercises upon Zeus his power to induce sleep at a critical stage in the fighting around the Achaean ships (Il. XIV, 353). Sleep and Death, closely related in their physical manifestations, are fittingly personified as brothers (Il. XIV, 231). It is fitting, then, that the former helps the latter in the removal of Sarpedon's corpse to Lycia (Il. XVI, 682 - 683). Moreover, Sleep once fled to the protection of Night, since, of course, sleep and night are closely associated. Nevertheless he, too, possesses a degree of spiritual autonomy. Both Zeus and

Hera treat him as a distinct divinity; Hera goes so far as to offer him lavish material gifts (Il. XIV, 238 - 241) and one of the Graces as his wife (267 - 269), hardly the sorts of things likely to arouse the interest of a purely abstract personification. He also appears to reside in a single place, Lemnos (Il. XIV, 230 - 231), and thus does not manifest the omnipresence that one would expect of the universal phenomenon that he represents.

The Litai, or Prayers, are presented as personifications in Phoenix's beautiful allegory, related to Achilles in Book IX of the Iliad. They, too, are largely conditioned by essence. Yet they are also accorded some degree of spirituality and independence. In nature they closely resemble prayer. Just as repentance must, by nature, always follow after folly and sin, so the Litai are obliged to trail Atē at a distance to correct the havoc she has wreaked (Il. IX, 502 - 507). Since prayer represents one of man's noblest activities and expresses his most sincere and humble supplications, the Litai are exalted to the status of Daughters of Zeus (IX, 502). A man's prayers, or lack of them, and his responsiveness to the entreaties of others will decide his own reconciliation with the gods. The Litai, correspondingly, have the power to bless or condemn a man according to his reception of their requests (Il. IX, 508 - 512). They demonstrate most strikingly their spiritual autonomy in their objective, independent existence, since the real phenomenon of prayer would seem to be inseparable from the agent issuing it. Moreover, they are endowed with distinct power, honour, and responsibility as the special envoys of Zeus, with whom they have great influence.

Every natural phenomenon, even the most intimate and subjective, is considered to emanate from a real spiritual entity. This belief explains

the vividness, vitality, and credibility of personifications in the Iliad and Odyssey. They far exceed the limited dimensions and pallidity of mere abstract extrapolations.

Even such a supernatural "object" as the aegis is deduced, in form and nature, from its influence in the natural world. Whatever may be its precise mythological character, that is, as it was inherited by Homer, it is closely linked in the Iliad and the Odyssey with the terror and panic of battle. It is described as having been given by Hephaestus to Zeus "for the routing of men" (Il. XV, 310). When it is unfurled and shaken, as against the Achaeans in Book XV of the Iliad and against the suitors in Book XXII of the Odyssey, it unmans them completely and discomfits them. The horrors that are either imprinted symbolically upon it, or that are inherent within it, represent and explain its dreadful power. "Rout is wreathed all around it; on it is Strife, on it is Might, on it is the cold terror of Pursuit, on it is the head of the dread monster, the Gorgon, terrible and terrifying, a portent of Zeus of the aegis" (Il. V, 739 - 742).

The Establishment of Moral Values

If different gods are associated with the various provinces of human experience, the gods in turn sanctify the experience from which their powers and interests are deduced. Zeus, the highest of the gods, possesses the highest human faculties of wisdom and authority. He in turn, through the symbol of the royal sceptre which, as Achilles says, "the sons of the Achaeans who are judges and who guard the laws from Zeus now bear in their hands" (Il. I, 237 - 239), consecrates the councils of men that seek wisdom and order. Men ascribe to Aphrodite characteristics of love that

they detect in their own experience. She, for her part, authorizes men to indulge their passions. Her active support for the rape and adultery of Helen explains in part the Trojans' reluctance to restore Helen to her husband and to chastise Paris. Ares shares the violence and battle-lust of warriors and, since war is within his jurisdiction, he permits fighting and killing on a scale that would be intolerable in different circumstances. To Hermes is imputed cunning with the arts attendant upon that quality, deception and thievery. Consequently under his patronage one may steal and lie. Autolycus, Odysseus' grandfather, is specifically mentioned as having achieved success with his aid: "He outstripped mankind in theft and chicanery. The god Hermes himself inspired him. For he burned thigh-pieces of lambs and kids that were pleasing to him. The god readily attended him" (Il. XIX, 395 - 398). Athene, like her father, is associated with cunning and wisdom. She has no compunction about using deception to achieve her ends. Her frequent interventions in the natural order in the Odyssey, when she is variously disguised as Mentes, Mentor, a herald, a common Phaeacian, or an Ithacan shepherd-boy, are all functional and so foreshadow and justify Odysseus' own disguise upon his return home. Retributive justice, in the form of Nemesis and Atē, is considered a property of the gods in general. When men execute it they believe themselves to be acting under divine authorization. In this frame of mind Odysseus wreaks righteous vengeance upon the suitors. He tells Eurycleia that "the fate of the gods and their own wicked deeds overwhelmed these men" (Od. XXII, 413). The gods, with their separate spheres of influence, secure the various aspects of human behaviour and experience within moral law.

This system does have a weakness. Different values, adduced in the same circumstances, may come into conflict. Stealing may be sanctioned

for votaries of Hermes, but it also constitutes an outrage for those who are its victims. Autolycus acknowledges that his brigandage has not been free from such moral complications: "Hated by many men and women throughout the all-nourishing earth have I come to this age" (Od. XIX, 407 - 408). By the same reasoning Paris and the Trojans may regard the pursuit and maintenance of his passion in the rape and detention of Helen to be fully justified by the laws of Aphrodite. Yet the Achaean chiefs consider this behaviour of sufficient enormity to warrant their combined assault on and eventual destruction of Troy, with the full sanction of Zeus (Il. II, 324 - 325) and many of the other gods. Nevertheless, regardless of the conflict of values, and gods, the divine sanctification of all human experience provides its particulars with moral absolutes by which they may be measured, related, and interpreted. It gives them pattern and significance.

The Fusion of the Natural and Supernatural

It was observed at the beginning of this chapter that no discontinuity can be detected in the connection of the natural and supernatural orders through essence. Essence does not merely place them in contiguity; it fuses them together. As a result it permits an easy transition between the two realms. The gods, to the extent that they are spiritual beings, may remain indiscernible to the natural observer; but inasmuch as they share in the "essential" half of the supernatural they may acquire form and substance, and move with ease through the natural order. Calypso and Circe always appear in human form and are associated with physical (or at least partly physical) places. Even entities that are nothing more than personifications may acquire concrete, objective reality in the

natural world through the essential connection of the supernatural. At the beginning of Book XI in the Iliad Strife is sent from Olympus into a real, physical situation by the ships of the Achaeans to rouse the men to battle. The "great and terrible" shout that she utters there (10 - 11) does not remain a complete abstraction as it elicits the correct response from the Greeks. Many divinities are closely associated with physical objects. Zeus handles lightning, and so receives the epithet terpikeraunos (Il. I, 419). Hyperion is shown in Book XII of the Odyssey to possess a herd of cattle. Poseidon, god of the sea, is naturally attended by waves, such as that which covered Tyro and himself (Od. XI, 243 - 244). Men and gods easily and frequently communicate and interact. In Book I of the Iliad Achilles asks his mother in the natural world to petition Zeus in the supernatural. Odysseus, in Book V of the Odyssey, girds himself with the veil of Leucothea to gain supernatural protection from the raging sea. The gods, as spiritual beings, may affect men spiritually by encouraging them, reviving them, or even unmanning them. They may supernaturally heal them, as Leto and Artemis heal Aeneas in Book V (447 - 448) of the Iliad and as Apollo heals Glaucus in Book XV (528 - 529). Through their essential connection with the natural world, they may also deal with them physically, by leading them into battle, by smiting and killing them with real weapons, or even by caressing them, as Athene touches Odysseus in Book XIV of the Odyssey. Gods and mortals may also engage in sexual intercourse. The true proximity of the supernatural to the natural realm is strikingly illustrated by the divine contentions that occur in the midst of human strife, as in Book XXI of the Iliad. The two orders of reality intersect and overlap.

The fusion of the supernatural and natural orders explains the divine

interest in the natural world. As spiritual creatures the gods should be expected to have only spiritual interests, and to feel complete indifference to material phenomena. To the extent, however, that the supernatural is the original, absolute reality behind the natural world, from which the natural order emanates, the gods must also have a real interest in the material, mortal phenomena of that order. For this reason they value and respond to human prayers, libations, sacrifices, and votive offerings, both for their symbolic, spiritual aspects and their material qualities. Consequently the sacrifice that the Achaeans make and the paean that they sing to propitiate Apollo in Book I of the Iliad are pleasing to him and prove efficacious. So important, moreover, do the gods consider the offerings of men that Hermes attributes to the lack of them, in part, his reluctance to cross the sea, as he informs Calypso:

> "Zeus ordered me to come here, though I was unwilling. For who would voluntarily traverse so great an expanse of boundless salt water? There is nowhere in the vicinity any city of mortals who offer sacrifices and sumptuous hecatombs to the gods."
> (Od. V, 99 - 102)

They also appreciate the objects without particular religious significance that are esteemed by men, such as armour and arms, chariots, horses, wealth, fine clothing, palatial homes, food, and drink, inasmuch as they have possessions similar in nature, though refined and ethereal. Most of all, however, they are fascinated with men themselves, and their destinies, mortal and mundane though they may be, in both their physical and spiritual aspects, since men reflect, imperfectly to be sure, the gods themselves. Hence they value heroic magnificence and glory, by which men most closely approach the gods. Athene and Hera thunder in approval of Agamemnon's martial appearance in Book XI (45 - 46) of the Iliad, while

Athene, in Book XIII of the Odyssey, praises Odysseus for his intelligence and character. Men are the representatives of the gods in the natural world.

The "Openness" of the Natural Order

The fusion of the natural order with the supernatural leaves it an "open" system. It is not "closed" to those supernatural influences that may interrupt the regular pattern of natural cause and effect. Consequently form and identity are subject to mutability, which was demonstrated in the first chapter. Moreover, the normal course of events may be disrupted at any time by supernatural prodigies. When Athene enters the natural world she often preserves its continuity by adopting natural, human form under an appropriate disguise. Occasionally, however, after maintaining appearances, she shatters the normal order of things by casting off all natural limitations and transforming herself into a bird, as when she changes in appearance from Mentor into an eagle before the astonished gaze of Telemachus, Nestor, and the assembled Pylians (Od. III, 371 - 373). Frequently in the Iliad the gods upset the normal course of events by removing their favourite Trojans, such as Paris, Aeneas, and Hector from danger on the battlefield. Xanthus' prophetic reply to Achilles so radically violates the natural order that it elicits an immediate response from the Erinyes, who restrain the horse and so correct the abnormal situation (Il. XIX, 418). In the world of the Iliad and the Odyssey anything can happen.

In the instances cited above, the gods manifest the spiritual more than the essential side of their natures when they intervene since they act as independent entities, having no close essential relation with the

phenomena that they affect. In other cases, however, their behaviour corresponds much more closely to the essential portion of their natures, thereby acquiring an allegorical tinge. When Apollo removes Sarpedon from the battlefield in Book XVI of the Iliad, his action seems independent enough. When, however, Sleep and Death transport him from Troy to Lycia, their action is entirely appropriate to the phenomena that they represent, for it is the corpse of Sarpedon which they handle. When Aphrodite, the goddess of love, snatches up Paris out of Menelaus' fatal grasp in Book III, her action is entirely in keeping with her essential character. She not only releases him in safety, but in love, with Helen. It is appropriate that Paris, who prefers love to fighting, should be sent from defeat in combat to victory in the bedchamber. When Scamander attacks Achilles in Book XXI his assault consists of more than the defensive action of a tutelary divinity of the Trojans. For, fittingly, he harries Achilles with his own water, a tactic that is entirely feasible, since the Achaean hero has filled the river's course with enough corpses to flood it. The supernatural interventions of the gods may harmonize with as well as disrupt natural processes.

Once the natural order has been determined to be an "open" system, its openness may be observed everywhere that definition is lacking and mystery exists. The mist that attends the gods wherever they go, shrouding them from mortal sight, possesses an opacity and an undefinable, almost intangible substance and form that provide the necessary lack of definition and mystery for the transition from the natural to the supernatural. The sanctity accredited to strangers may be derived from the mystery of their identities and origins since such mystery would automatically connect them with the supernatural.[1] So the gods are considered to visit men in the

[1] M. P. Nilsson, A History of Greek Religion, trans. F. J. Fielden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 160.

guise of strangers; when Odysseus appears suddenly in the assembly of the Phaeacians Alcinous is quite as ready to believe him to be a divinity as a man (Od. VII, 199). Undefined distance offers another entrance to the supernatural, existing, as it was noted in the first chapter, in the vast mysteries of sky, earth, and sea. It is in the uncharted paths of the sea that Odysseus departs from the known world of men and encounters all manner of strange sights and marvels. His experiences are never removed from the province of the credible, as there are always sufficient recognizable natural forms along his course to give his adventures the appearance of reality. Once, however, he has entered the mystery of the sea the restraints of the natural world are no longer absolute, and any quantity and inordinateness of supernatural occurrences may be mingled with natural events. Odysseus is able to enter the supernatural world of the dead simply by sailing over the sea in a particular direction. Upon leaving Egypt Menelaus is confined to the Island of Pharos, which is a day's sail away from the mouth of the Nile (Od. IV, 354 - 357), and hence sufficiently remote to be comprehended in the mystery of the sea. Thus he is able to converse with Eidothea, a goddess of the sea, and with her father, Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea. The same spatial vagueness characterizes mountains. Their heights seem particularly remote, jutting into the infinite sky, and so they, too, are considered to intrude into the supernatural. Olympus, or rather its summit, is regarded as the principal home of the gods. Yet every mountain peak may be reckoned to have a numinous quality about it, and so Zeus is also associated with Ida by the Trojans. Neither Olympus nor Ida exists entirely in the supernatural. Just as every natural phenomenon subsumes both physical existence and essence without discontinuity, so a mountain, or the sea, or any other entity characterized by remoteness, passes without inter-

ruption into the supernatural in the mystery of distance.

Spatial vagueness does not offer the only medium for transition from the natural to the supernatural. Mountains, and, for that matter, sky, sea, and earth are as much endowed with undefinable essence as any other phenomenon. The mystery and numinous nature of mountains may be attributed to their awesome appearance as much as to their height and inaccessibility. The mysteries of space and essence combine to intensify the supernatural auras of such phenomena.

The Constitution of the Supernatural

The remoteness of supernatural entities from the natural world affects their ratio of spirit and essence. On the border between the natural and supernatural, phenomena are dominated by the physical and physical laws, being only spiritually animated. Deeper within the supernatural, however, the relation changes, and phenomena become more likely to bear the nature of materialized spiritual beings. As this change occurs the physical laws of the natural order become distorted or even replaced by spiritual laws, with the result that the depiction of supernatural scenes may appear exaggerated or inconsistent in natural terms. It is deep within the supernatural that many of the more fantastic and outlandish creatures and occurrences of the Iliad and Odyssey appear. It was there that Thetis freed Zeus from the chains that other Olympians had cast upon him, and summoned the hundred-armed monster, Briareus, to protect him from their further machinations (Il. I, 401 - 406). It was there, too, that Ares suffered the indignity of imprisonment within a bronze urn at the hands of the giants Otus and Ephialtes (Il. V, 385 - 387), and that Hades was wounded by the audacious Heracles (V, 395 - 397). As Odysseus journeys farther into remote waters, and hence, into the supernatural,

the world becomes increasingly outlandish and unintelligible. The natures of the gods, monsters, men, and things that he encounters exceed normal human experience, while regional geography and the course of his voyage become impossible to ascertain. Within that part of the supernatural dominated by the spiritual, anything conceivable to the imagination may exist.

The details of Odysseus' journey to Hades in Book XI are particularly perplexing. Although Hades lies, supposedly, beneath the earth, his course takes him over the earth's surface to its very outskirts, in the North. Once he has reached Hades' kingdom, he is permitted to converse with the spirits of the dead, again, apparently, on the surface of the earth, until he has spoken to Aias, at which point he is suddenly presented with scenes from the depths of Hell, including Minos judging the dead, Tityos out-stretched on the ground and constantly assaulted by vultures, Tantalus attempting to drink from his pool and eat from his tree, and Sisyphus struggling with his boulder upon his hill. It is very difficult to resolve and reconcile the details of this adventure in strictly natural terms and to conceive of the topography of its setting. When, however, one considers that the setting is a supernatural one and, hence, fundamentally spiritual in nature, the inconsistencies and uncertainties become less objectionable. In fact, the story has a core of physical details that make it credible in spite of the distortions and ambiguities. A definite voyage by sea is undertaken to a definite place in which a real disembarkation occurs, followed by a real sacrifice and a real conversation with the dead upon the earth's surface. If the adventure is to have concrete form and not simply to dissipate into a metaphysical abstraction it must consist partly of such elementary physical details. Nevertheless, as a journey into the supernatural,

the adventure must also have spiritual attributes. Consequently, its physical features must appear incomplete and symbolic. A voyage by sea is not only undertaken to a foreign country, but to the "mist and cloud-shrouded land and city of the Cimmerian men" (Od. XI, 14 - 15), which is also covered with the darkness of perpetual night (XI, 15 - 19). The mist and darkness symbolically signalize through their vagueness and opacity the end of the known and the beginning of the unknown and mysterious, the supernatural, and they provide the appropriate atmosphere for the death and sorrow of Hell. Since Hell consists not only of the spirits of the dead, but of judgment and punishment, Odysseus receives a panoramic view of that whole world despite the fact that it cannot be represented in purely physical terms. This perfect combination of the spiritual and physical renders the account of the journey to Hades real and significant at the same time. In fact, far from detracting from each other, the spiritual and physical enhance each other when so connected. Both, however, must be taken into account for a proper understanding of supernatural places.

In the heart of the supernatural the spiritual predominates. The depiction of it in physical, formal terms must therefore have symbolic as well as purely descriptive significance. The home of the gods must be a spiritual as well as a physical place, and so Olympus is occasionally portrayed in terms that hardly accord with the normal physical conditions of a mountain summit. There

> ...men say, is the eternally secure abode of the gods. It is neither buffeted by winds nor ever drenched by rain, nor does snow approach it; but clear sky stretches out unclouded, while the sun's white radiance suffuses all. There the blessed gods live in happiness forever.
>
> (Od.VI,42-46)

The imagery of this passage represents a state of spiritual bliss rather than the top of a mountain. Yet the deliberate vagueness of other passages offering a more topical description prevents the natural and supernatural aspects of Olympus from becoming dissociated or incongruous. The total portrayal of the mountain is constructed to comprehend the gradual, continuous transition from the imperfect, concrete forms of the natural order, through the refinement and perfection of essence, into the purely spiritual dimension of the supernatural. The representation of Elysium in the passage referred to in the first chapter concerning the fate of Menelaus is strikingly similar to the description of Olympus cited above. It is the land "at the ends of the earth... where life is easiest for men. No snow storm occurs there, or great tempest, or ever rain, but Ocean ever sends forth gusts of the West Wind's whistling breath for the refreshment of men" (Od. IV, 563 - 568). It, too, is at least as much a symbolical representation of a spiritual reality as the depiction of a real, physical place. In fact, the spiritual and physical aspects of Elysium are perfectly, inseparably fused together, so that Menelaus is promised not only the spiritual happiness of the place, but the physical enjoyment of it. He is not to enter it as a disembodied spirit; he is to travel physically to it in physical form, fully alive (Od. IV, 561 - 564). Even in its more spiritual regions the supernatural is generally depicted in concrete terms. It is never presented as an abstraction but as a higher, purer reality of which the natural order is the imperfect reflection.

Descriptions of the life of the gods on Olympus possess a symbolical character of a more indirect kind. When Artemis has been struck by Hera in Book XXI of the Iliad she flies to Olympus to seek consolation from

Zeus. The contrast between the picture of Zeus displaying fatherly affection to his daughter, comforting her on his knees, and reducing, through laughter, her injury to insignificance, and the scene of bitter, desperate fighting in the world below serves to emphasize the blissful condition of the gods (Il. XXI, 506 - 510). The depiction of the feasting of the gods transcends purely topical description to represent, virtually, the ideal of conviviality,so harmonious and joyful are its activities: "So, then, they feasted for the whole day until the setting of the sun, and their heart lacked nothing of the perfect feast, of the very beautiful harp that Apollo held, and of the Muses, who sang alternately with beautiful voice" (Il. I, 601 - 604). Xenophanes' ideal symposium would have been harmoniously situated in this Olympian scene.[1] So important is such conviviality to the gods, so natural is such ideal behaviour to their natures, that Hephaestus takes great pains to extinguish the quarrel between Zeus and Hera and to arouse joviality among the other gods. This divine merry-making is then set in relief by the contrast between it and the discord and bitter feeling in the world of men, particularly between Achilles and Agamemnon. The councils of the gods also have symbolic import. It was observed in the first chapter that these meetings occur usually at critical times in the Iliad and the Odyssey when they play a major role in initiating and guiding events in the natural world. In a way, then, these assemblies, consisting mainly of thought, consensus, and action under the control of Zeus, represent the intelligent determination of history, better known in its transcendent form as fate. In fact, most

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[1] Xenophanes, "Fragment I," in Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Vol. 1, ed. H. Diels and W. Kranz (Zurich/Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1952), pp. 126-128.

divine affairs have some symbolic significance since the gods are, primarily, spiritual beings.

As essence constitutes the absolute, irreducible, and hence mysterious identity of a natural phenomenon, it represents the perfect, absolutely refined condition of that phenomenon. Consequently, those supernatural entities that bear a close, hypostatic relation, through essence, to natural phenomena will possess this essential perfection, and so have the nature of ideal archetypes.

The depiction of divine excellence rarely involves elaborate, analytical description. Rather, it consists of limited impressionistic effects that quicken the imagination to a greater conception of beauty, and that avoid definition of spiritual, "essential" entities that are ultimately undefinable. As a result, the poet is able to suggest ideal feminine beauty by referring to a few outstanding traits in Aphrodite's form, namely, "her exceedingly beautiful neck, lovely breast, and sparkling eyes" (Il. III, 396 - 397), or by a simple description of Athene when she manifests her true nature to Odysseus in Book XIII of the Odyssey: "In form she was like a woman beautiful and tall and skilled at beautiful work" (Od. XIII, 288 - 289). Certainly the traits of Aphrodite's form, recorded in the former passage, are sufficient to fill Helen with wonder (Il. III, 398). Perfection of beauty is also ascribed to Hera in Book XIV of the Iliad (170 - 186) in a more detailed passage that produces a correspondingly more vivid impression. Tallness appears to have particular importance as a qualification for ideal beauty, both for gods and goddesses, and for men and women. It is certainly the extra feature that distinguishes Artemis from her attendant nymphs. Rieu's rendition of the passage concerning her pre-eminence is felicitous:

"They too are heaven-born, but Artemis overtops them all, and where all are beautiful there is no question which is she" (Od. VI, 105 - 108; p. 105).[1] Hermes represents the ideal of youthful, masculine comeliness in his encounter with Odysseus in Book X of the Odyssey. He looks, in Rieu's translation, like "a young man at that most charming age when the beard first starts to grow" (278 - 279; p. 163). The impressionistic representation of the gods is extended in epithets and short descriptions that impart to their subjects their splendour, very often associated with gold, silver, and bronze. Zeus's majestic appearance is suggested by his "dark brows" and "ambrosial locks" (Il. I, 528, 529). Poseidon's dark hair (Il. XV, 201) produces a similar effect. The rich beauty of Hera is suggested by her white arms (Il. I, 595), her "ox eyes" (Il. I, 568), her beautiful hair (Il. X, 5), and the golden throne (Il. I, 611) frequently associated with her; that of Aphrodite is expressed in her frequent epithet, "golden" (Il. III, 69), and by her beautiful crown (Od. VIII, 267). Athene is noted for her blue or flashing eyes (Il. IV, 439), and her beautiful hair (Il. VI, 303), Artemis for her "golden spindle" (I. XVI, 183), fair tresses (Od. XX, 80), and beautiful crown (Il. XXI, 511), Thetis for her silver feet (Il. I, 538), Iris for her golden wings (Il. VIII. 399), Dawn for her rosy fingers (Od. II, 1), her saffron robe (Il. VIII, 1) and beautiful throne (Od. VI, 38), and Charis for her bright head-band (Il. XVIII, 382). Apollo's splendour is signalized by his silver bow (Il. II, 766) and golden sword (Il. V, 509). Finally, Ares' martial brilliance is emphasized by his epithet "brazen" (Il. V, 704), his flashing helmet (Il. XX, 38), its waving plume (Il. XXII, 132) and his "golden reins" (Od. VIII, 285). Such rich, vivid,

[1] Homer, Odyssey, trans. E.V. Rieu (London: Penguin Books, Limited, 1963).

concentrated imagery kindles in the imagination an overwhelming impression of divine glory.

The excellence of the gods is as inherent in their natures as their appearance. Their excellence of character is also indicated by flashes of impressionism from epithets that have, generally, appropriate superlative meaning. Zeus's supreme majesty is suggested by the spatial epithet, "high-throned" (Il. IV, 166), and the descriptions, "supreme in might" (Il. II, 350) and "highest of lords" (Il. VIII, 31). His awesome might and sovereignty over the weather are diversely set in relief by such epithets as "the cloud-gatherer" (Il. I, 511), "lord of the black cloud" (Il. II, 412), "lord of the lightning" (Il. VII, 443), "delighting in thunder" (Il. VIII, 2), and "lord of the bright lightning" (Il. XXII, 178). In his capacity as the possessor and distributor of wisdom he is called "the counsellor" (Il. I, 175), or "the all-wise" (Il. I, 175). Poseidon's great might, associated with his support of the world, is manifested in such epithets as "the Earth-shaker" (Il. VII, 445), and "Girdler of the Earth" (Il. XX, 34). Hades, the god of death, is fittingly called "loathed" (Il. VIII, 368), and "the mighty gate-keeper" (Il. XIII, 415). Apollo, renowned for his deadly bow, is appropriately described as "famous for the bow" (Il. IV, 101). His deadly power and accuracy are summed up in such epithets as "the far-worker" (Il. I, 479) and "the one who smites from afar" (Il. VII, 83). To Ares, the War-god, are ascribed the attributes of war. He is called "the bane of mortals," "blood-stained," and "the stormer of walls" (Il. V, 455), as well as "furious" (Il. V, 904), "swift" (Il. VIII, 215), "fierce" (Il. VII, 330), "wielder of the spear" (Il. XV, 605), "loud-voiced and mighty" (Il. XIII, 521), "rouser of hosts" (Il. XVII, 398), and "piercer of shields" (Il.

XXI, 392). Hermes is designated "the luck-bringer" (Od. VIII, 322), and so he proves to be to Odysseus. Hephaestus, the god of craftsmanship and the plastic arts, is, appropriately, "renowed for his art" (Od. VIII, 286) and called "very wise" (Il. XXI, 367). On the goddesses' side, Athene, the representative of wisdom and skill, receives the description "rich in counsel" (Il. V, 260); as a war goddess, she is termed "the rouser of hosts" (Il. XIII, 128), and "driver of the spoil" (Il. VI, 269); and, as a tutelary deity, she is addressed as "the Unwearied One" (Od. VI, 324), and "Protector of the City" (Il. VI, 305). Artemis, the supreme huntress, is designated "showerer of arrows" (Il. V, 447) and described as "fond of the hunt" (Il. XXI, 471). Aphrodite, responsible for love and its pleasures, is evocatively called "laughter-loving" (Il. III, 424). Iris, the speedy messenger of the gods, is fittingly "wind-footed," "swift" (Il. V, 368), "swift-footed" (Il. XXIV, 87), and even "storm-footed" (Il. XXIV, 77). The gods are virtually personal archetypes of the qualities that they represent.

The conception of the supernatural as, in part, a sublimation of the natural order is dramatically demonstrated in the contest between Hephaestus and the river, Xanthus, in Book XXI of the Iliad. The battle between the Greeks and Trojans is elevated to one between Achilles and a river god and refined ultimately to a struggle between the elements of fire and water, represented respectively by Hephaestus and Xanthus. Thus the merely human, mortal strife acquires cosmic significance.

Since the gods partake of perfection they have the power to refine and perfect whatever they wish. The products of Hephaestus' craftsmanship possess consummate formal and functional excellence. Achilles' armour is matchless in beauty and efficacy, as are the tripods that Thetis finds

him in the process of fashioning, which have golden wheels attached to their legs "that they might enter the assembly of the gods of their own accord and go back home again, a wonder to behold" (Il. XVIII, 373 - 377). Similarly Athene so excels in domestic skills that when Hera seeks to beguile Zeus with her beauty she puts on "an ambrosial robe, which Athene had fashioned for her with delicacy and covered with embroidery" (Il. XIV, 178 - 179). The gods can also refine the human form. Athene's enhancement of Odysseus' appearance has already been noted. She also bestows superhuman beauty upon Penelope "that the Achaeans might marvel at her" (Od. XVIII, 191):

> First she purified her lovely cheeks with ambrosial beauty,
> of that kind with which Cythereia of the beautiful crown
> anoints herself whenever she goes to the lovely dance of the
> Graces. Next she made her taller and sturdier to behold, and
> she made her whiter than sawn ivory.
>
> (Od.XVIII,192-196)

Aphrodite, according to Hector, supplied Paris with his "locks and comeliness" (Il. III, 54-55).

The possessions of the gods also manifest divine beauty and perfection. Mention has already been made of Hera's golden throne, Artemis' golden spindle, Apollo's golden sword, and Ares' golden reins, as well as the beautiful crowns of Aphrodite and Artemis, the saffron robe and beautiful throne of Dawn, the bright head-band of Charis, Apollo's silver bow, and Ares' bronze armour and plumed helmet. Other items of particular brilliance include the golden flying sandals of Athene and Hermes, referred to in Books I and V of the Odyssey, Athene's golden helmet, "double-crested and four-plated, adorned with infantry from a hundred cities" (Il. V, 743 - 744), the teams of bronze-hoofed horses with "flowing golden manes" that belong to Zeus and Poseidon, together with their golden armour and golden whips (Il. VIII, 41 - 44; XIII, 23 -

26), the golden hobbles that Poseidon places on his horses (Il. XIII, 36), the frontlets of gold on Ares' horses (Il. V, 358), and the golden cups of the gods (Il. IV, 3). Nor should one forget the beautiful lyre of Apollo (Il. I, 603).

As in the case of the divinities, the poet generally depicts the inanimate elements of the supernatural with isolated, concentrated, impressionistic effects, strong enough to suggest their splendour and excellence, but fragmentary enough to leave in the imagination a beautiful, but vague idea of an essentially undefinable reality, whose mystery and ethereality would be undermined by analytical description. Olympus is portrayed with such fragmentary sketching. At no point in the Iliad or the Odyssey is a detailed description embracing the whole home of the gods presented. Only its outstanding features are set down. Every god is reported to have his own beautiful house fashioned by Hephaestus, in the folds of Olympus (Il. I, 606 - 608). Generally the gods congregate on golden thrones in the main hall of the palace of Zeus, which has a threshold of bronze (Il. I, 426), a golden floor (Il. IV, 2), and polished colonnades (Il. XX, 11 - 12). It also has automatic gates kept by the Horai, who, as guardians of "great heaven and Olympus," bear the additional responsibility of "opening and closing the thick cloud," the natural barrier between earth and heaven (Il. V, 749 - 751). Not much more information is offered. The details that are supplied, however, are sufficient to establish in the imagination an overwhelming impression of great splendour. The reference to the house of the West Wind, referred to in Book XXIII of the Iliad, is even more devoid of detail, and appropriately so, due to the impossibility of portraying wind with concrete form. In fact, the only precise, concrete feature supplied in the whole

account is that of the house's stone threshold (XXIII, 202), which provides the scene with just enough substance to confirm its reality. The depiction of Hephaestus' house in Book XVIII of the Iliad has details insufficient in their precision and number to provide a clear picture of the edifice, but vivid and rich enough to create a strong impression of extraordinary magnificence. The house is described as "imperishable, glittering, distinguished among the houses of the immortals, and brazen" (Il. XVIII, 370 - 371).

Some supernatural scenes and objects possess finitude and substance sufficient to permit the poet to describe them in detail without undermining their supernatural ideality. Indeed, elaborate description sets in relief their true beauty and perfection. Such enhancement results not so much from analysis as from intensified impressionism. The chariot that Hebe prepares for Hera offers a brilliant spectacle:

> Hebe quickly fitted the curved wheels, bronze and eight-spoked, to the chariot on opposite ends of the iron axle. Of these, the felloe consists of real, imperishable gold, and above the felloes bronze tires are snugly fitted, a wonder to behold. The naves, which rotate on either end of the axle, are made of silver. The chariot-board is braced with gold and silver straps, and there are two rims that run around it. A silver pole projects from it. On the end of the pole Hebe bound the beautiful golden yoke and put upon it the beautiful golden breast-straps.
>
> (Il.V,722-731)

Calypso's home possesses sufficient magnificence to make the god Hermes pause in wonder and admiration. It reflects the divine beauty of the nymph herself (Od. V, 59 - 75).[1] The divine Circe's maids collectively organize the ideal household:

> One of them laid beautiful purple rugs on the chairs, having placed linen cloths beneath them. Another drew up silver tables before the chairs and placed golden bread-baskets upon them. The third mixed sweet wine in a silver mixing-bowl, and set out cups of gold. The fourth brought forth water and kindled a large fire under a great tripod.
>
> (Od.X,352-359)

1 Norman Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p.150.

Intense concentration upon certain details of description, such as "beautiful purple rugs," "linen cloths," "golden bread-baskets," "sweet, refreshing wine," "silver mixing-bowl," "cups of gold," and "great tripod," as well as the recording of simultaneous, ritualized domestic activities, render the whole scene vivid and harmonious, so that it acquires an unearthly beauty, entirely fitting for the divine housemaids and their immortal mistress. The concentrated magnificence of such detailed imagery stirs the imagination.

Like the gods, supernatural objects are endowed with immortality and perfection in their natures as well as their forms. To preserve their immortality the gods drink nectar and eat ambrosia instead of the food and drink suitable only to mortal men. Even the divine horses consume ambrosia, as opposed to the ordinary fodder of their natural counterparts (Il. V, 369). In addition, the gods anoint themselves with immortal oil, and they wear immortal clothing and sandals. Circe even operates an indestructible loom (Od. X, 222). Even the things that the gods manufacture for men remain imperishable, such as Achilles' divine armour.

Since the essence of a natural phenomenon must contain within itself every property of that phenomenon in absolute form, it must comprehend in refined form its negative as well as positive attributes. Those supernatural entities whose natures consist largely of essence must also share these refined negative qualities. The correspondence between the limitation and differentiation of divine powers and those of natural phenomena has already been observed. In addition, the gods are, like men, restricted by time and space, though to a less degree, being able to overcome such obstacles through their immortality, mutability, and

lightning speed. The gods, like men, feel pain. Both Aphrodite and Ares suffer grievously in Book V of the Iliad. Far from being incorporeal creatures of ghostly form and substance they are quite substantial, having refinements of human flesh and blood that may be disrupted even by the weapons of men. When Diomedes' spear strikes Aphrodite's wrist it pierces her flesh and draws forth ichor, the immortal blood of the gods. Later, when he drives his spear at Ares' stomach, he achieves the same results. Due, however, to the immortality and perfection of the divinities' natures their wounds do not linger and fester. Dione quickly heals Aphrodite's injury simply by wiping away its ichor while Ares' wound, under the influence of Paeeon's salve, is stanched in the same short time "as when the juice of the fig quickly thickens the liquid white milk so that it is very swiftly curdled when stirred" (Il. V, 902 - 904). The lameness of Hephaestus, the supreme craftsman, may symbolically represent the natural human insecurity and insufficiency that oblige men to acquire and develop technological skills. The ghosts that Odysseus encounters in Hades are characterized by qualities appropriate for the dead. Stripped of life, vigour, and their corporeal bodies, they are shiftless, strengthless, and insubstantial. As the body requires blood for life, so they must drink it even to communicate. As the corpse is but a grim vestige of the living body, so the ghosts of the dead are but sorrowful, despondent shadows of living men. As Anticleia tells her son, at the time of death "the soul flys away like a dream, floating on the air" (Od. XI, 222). The dead, in their nature and existence, are comprehended almost entirely by the essence of death; to such an extent indeed that Achilles claims that he (in Rieu's translation) "would rather be a serf in the house of some landless man, with little enough for himself

to live on, than king of all these dead men that have done with life" (Od. XI, 489 - 491; p. 184). Divine armour corresponds so closely to its natural counterpart that, although it may not be destroyed, it may certainly be dented. Aeneas' spear cannot pierce Achilles' shield to wound him, but it does penetrate two of its layers (Il. XX, 269). The supernatural entities, in their essential aspects, correspond exactly, in sublimated form, to those natural phenomena of which they constitute the hypostasis.

The Approximation of Men to the Gods

According to their greatness and favour among the gods men gain divine favour and, consequently, they may approach them and share their characteristics and powers. All the great Greek and Trojan heroes, particularly Achilles, Diomedes, Odysseus, and Hector enjoy patronage from one or more gods. They are also permitted to encounter them undisguised. So Athene appears in her own form to Achilles, Diomedes, and Odysseus, while Apollo manifests his true identity to Aeneas and Hector. Athene, in fact, permits Diomedes to perceive supernatural phenomena: "I have taken away from your eyes the mist that was previously upon them, that you may clearly discern both god and man" (Il. V, 127 - 128). The remoteness of Phaeacia in the mystery of the sea qualifies the land and its people for at least semi-supernatural status. Alcinous attests the close relations between his people and the Olympic deities:

> "Up to now the gods have ever openly manifested themselves to us whenever we have offered glorious hecatombs, and they have feasted with us in the very place where we sit. If some traveller walking all by himself meets them, they hide nothing, since, just like the Cyclopes and the wild tribes of the Giants, we are close to them."
>
> (Od.VII,201-206)

The great heroes contend with the gods. Diomedes, in his exalted martial state, wounds Ares and Aphrodite grievously enough to drive them from battle; he even attempts to break through Apollo's defence to slay Aeneas (Il. V). Patroclus, too, dares to strive against Apollo (Il. XVI, 702 - 704). Both Patroclus and Hector gain the negative distinction of being slain by the direct intervention of the gods, Apollo and Athene, respectively. Moreover, by virtue of their proximity to the deities, the heroes acquire godlike qualities both in character and form. Antitheos, "godlike," and similar epithets provide standard descriptions of heroes, such as Aias and Sarpedon. Athene invests Achilles with awesome supernatural attributes: "About his mighty shoulders Athene cast the tasseled aegis; around his head the glorious goddess ringed a golden cloud from which she kindled an incandescent flame" (Il. XVIII, 203 - 206), attributes which suffice to terrify the Trojans (222 - 227). It was observed in the first chapter that Zeus glorifies Agamemnon during the initial marshalling of the host by according him the divine characteristics appropriate for the High King of the Achaeans: "He resembled Zeus, lover of thunder, in head and eyes, Ares in waist, Poseidon in breast" (Il. II, 478 - 479). When Athene removes Odysseus' disguise in Book XVI of the Odyssey in order that he might reveal his true identity to his son he acquires perfect masculine comeliness, including the all-important tallness of stature: "She first placed a well-washed mantle and a tunic around his chest then she increased his stature and youth. He became swarthy again, and his jaws were filled out; his beard became blue-black about his chin" (Od. XVI, 173 - 176). So splendid are his features and so radical is the change in his appearance that Telemachus responds in wonder: "Truly you are one of the gods who hold the broad heaven" (Od. XVI, 183).

As men approach the gods in divinity of attributes their possessions acquire the beauty and perfection of the gods' belongings. The splendour of Rhesus' horses, chariot, and armour should suffice to rouse divine envy in Dolon's opinion:

> "I have beheld his very beautiful and large horses. They are whiter than snow; they run like winds. His chariot has been well fashioned with gold and silver. He has brought with him armour golden and huge, a wonder to behold. It is in no way fitting for mortal men to possess these things, but the immortal gods."
>
> (Il.X,436-441)

The possessions of the semi-divine Phaeacians fall into the same category. The splendour of Alcinous' palace and gardens reflects the proximity of the Phaeacians to the gods. The inside of the king's palace rivals Olympus itself for superhuman magnificence:

> It was as if the radiance of the sun or moon filled the high-roofed hall of great-hearted Alcinous. Walls of bronze ran opposite each other into the heart of the house from the threshold; they were crowned with a blue cornice. Golden doors protected the impregnable house within. Silver door-posts stood on the bronze threshold beneath a silver lintel. The door handle was golden. Gold and silver dogs were situated on either side of the door. With skilful mind had Hephaestus fashioned them to guard the home of great-hearted Alcinous as they were deathless and ageless forever...
>
> (Od.VII,84-94)

The abundance of gold, silver, and bronze in this scene demonstrates the close association throughout the Iliad and Odyssey between material beauty and metallic splendour. Alcinous' garden possesses the perfection of paradise:

> There the trees grow tall and luxuriant, pears and pomegranates and apples of beautiful fruit, sweet figs and rich olives. Of these the fruit never perishes or ceases during winter or summer. It lasts all year. Indeed, the constant breath of the West Wind brings forth some fruit while ripening others. Pear after pear ripens, apple after apple, cluster after cluster of grapes, fig after fig.
>
> (Od.VII,114-121)

Nor does such superhuman perfection embrace only domestic things in Phaeacia. Even the ships possess qualities that would satisfy a sailor's conception of the ideal vessel:

> "The Phaeacians have no pilots and no type of rudder which other ships possess, but the ships themselves know the plans and minds of men, and they know the cities and fertile fields of all men. Concealed by mist and cloud they traverse very quickly the gulf of the sea. Fear of any type of harm or destruction never besets them."
>
> (Od.VIII,557-563)

As the natural order blends with the supernatural it becomes transfigured.

CHAPTER III

IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

Immanence

In the Iliad and Odyssey the Olympic gods are portrayed as the planners and rulers of history. Their administrative power has two fundamental modes of execution. On the one hand they may govern transcendently, that is, outside the course of events, in which case they direct the course itself rather than the individual events. On the other hand they may rule immanently, that is, within the course of events, and so directly influence the individual events themselves rather than the whole pattern of history that the events constitute. This immediate type of divine contact with the world occurs more frequently than the remote influence.

The immanent manifestation of divinity imposes a major restriction upon divine behaviour. It requires, by definition, that the god be contained within the course of events, that his influence actually be a part of history rather than the director of it. Since the part cannot in any way comprehend the whole the immanent divinity cannot possess omniscience, omnipresence, or omnipotence. Although the immanent gods may survey everything from Olympus they cannot be aware and in control of everything, everywhere, at the same time. This holds true even for the greatest of the gods. In the beginning episode of the Iliad Thetis must wait for eleven days before approaching Zeus since he is absent for that period from Olympus (Il. I, 423 - 427). When he averts his attention from the fighting at the beginning of Book XIII Poseidon is able to insinuate himself into the Achaean ranks without his knowledge. Hera is able to enslave him to erotic passion in Book XIV and so

to deceive him, thereby giving Poseidon a free rein to influence the course of battle around the ships in contravention of Zeus's ostensible plan. According to Agamemnon, she and Atē also tricked Zeus at an earlier time into giving precedence to Eurystheus over Heracles (Il. XIX, 95 - 133). Zeus, the supreme Olympian, is definitely limited in knowledge, presence, and power in his immanent form, as are all the other immanent deities.

The attention of the immanent divinities tends to be limited and topical, focused upon immediate, individual phenomena without their complete contexts. Often the gods devote their interest, for good or for ill, to individuals rather than large groups. Athene and Apollo deliberately stop the general fighting near the beginning of Book VII in the Iliad to determine the day's victory by means of a duel between Aias and Hector. The gods' disposition to patronize individual heroes, on either their own or human initiative, is one of their outstanding features. Athene's devotion to Odysseus throughout the Odyssey never wavers. Apollo's concern for one of his favourite votaries, Hector, extends even to his corpse, which he protects with his aegis.

Because they are borne along in the stream of history, like everything they affect, the immanent gods often react to events instead of anticipating them. Athene and Hera do not attempt to avert the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in Book I of the Iliad. Athene only intervenes when their contention has reached an extremity that threatens the life of the High King himself and the success of the whole expedition. Similarly, Athene and Hera do not anticipate Agamemnon's disheartening address to the Greek host in Book II. Only when the men are actually flocking around their ships to return home and so to abandon their enterprise does Athene appear on the

scene to check their rout. In their immanent manifestation the gods do, in fact, direct the course of events, but their control is collective and cumulative. Their individual actions are limited and secondary.

A close connection exists between the dualities of transcendence and immanence, and spirit and essence. To the extent that the immanent gods act in direct contact with natural events and phenomena their operations will tend to originate in that area of the supernatural with the greatest proximity to the natural order, that is, in the region of essence. Conversely, as they acquire transcendence the gods' influence will proceed from that portion of the supernatural more remote from the order of events and phenomena, in the area of spirit. It should again be stressed that no divine manifestation ever consists exclusively of spirit or essence. The predominance of either element in a particular appearance of a god will, however, correspond to the transcendence or immanence of that manifestation.

Since the supernatural realm is conceived to be hypostatic in its relation to the natural order, that is, determining and controlling the natures and behaviour of natural phenomena whether immanently or transcendently, there is a tendency towards the predominance of essence and immanence in the divine manifestations. The gods tend to be connected to the phenomena over which they rule. This tendency is apparent even in references to the influence of fate, which should be, almost by definition, entirely transcendent. Yet it, like the gods, becomes connected with the things over which it rules, and so it is transformed into a female deity and even divided into a number of Moirai (Il. XXIV, 49), or "Spinners" (Od. VII, 197), to reflect the nature and plurality of the particulars within its single, grand plan.

In the state of immanence and essence the behaviour of the gods will

tend to conform to the physical laws of the natural order. They will operate within the confines of time and space. When Poseidon wishes to strengthen the resistance of the Achaeans in Book XIII of the Iliad he does not externally manipulate events in their favour. He abandons his vantage point in Samothrace to travel swiftly, but physically all the same, to Troy, where he can only inspire the Achaeans by entering their very ranks. The influence of the immanent gods tends to be physical in nature. They affect the physical beings of men through sickness, healing, enfeeblement,and invigoration, as when Athene passes through the Greek army: "Flashing forth the aegis Athene rushed through the host of the Achaeans and spurred them to advance. She stirred up strength in the heart of each man to war and fight relentlessly" (Il. II, 450 - 452). So physically do Hera and her divine horses exert themselves on behalf of the Achaeans that they actually sweat and tire, as she informs Zeus when he suggests that peace might be established between the Greeks and Trojans: "How can you wish to render vain and unfulfilled my toil and the sweat that I have sweated in my striving while my horses have grown weary in my gathering of the host for the bane of Priam and his children?" (Il. IV, 26 - 28). In the state of immanence the gods often seem more like supermen than spirits.

The Power of the Immanent Gods

In fact, when they operate immanently, in direct contact with things and events, the gods depend upon their superior physical power more than their supernatural, spiritual faculties to uphold their supremacy. When, in Book VIII of the Iliad (133 - 156), Zeus desires to check the onslaught of Diomedes and Nestor, he is obliged to demonstrate his power by thundering

and hurling lightning before the heroes. This stark exercise of strength alone suffices to daunt them. Calypso attributes the gods' ability to determine the success of Odysseus' return to Ithaca not primarily to their transcendent power, but to their pre-eminence in planning and execution: "You may reach unscathed your fatherland if the gods wish it, they who hold the broad heaven and who are mightier than I at planning and fulfilling" (Od. V, 168 - 170). Men usually recognize the superiority of the gods only in their greater strength. Hector tells his men that he would be prepared to argue with the gods, but not to fight with them "since they are indeed much stronger" (Il. XX, 367 - 368). Yet, because divine superiority is believed to rest solely upon physical power, the idea of attaining equality with the gods is not inconceivable. Under Athene's authorization, Diomedes does not hesitate to attack, wound, and drive from the battlefield both Aphrodite and Ares. Indeed, Aphrodite is specifically designated as a "weakling goddess" not to be compared for fighting ability with Athene or Enyo (Il. V, 331 - 333) or, apparently, even with great mortal heroes. Menelaus, in awaiting Hector's onset, acknowledges that his foe is supported by a god, and so not to be withstood by a single man; "If, however, I should hear the battle-cry of brave Aias we should both again advance and remember our battle-lust, even though we should oppose a god" (Il. XVII, 102 - 104). Achilles, enraged at the deception of Apollo, even goes so far as to threaten the god: "Truly, I should pay you back, if I had the power" (Il. XXII, 20). The immanent gods master men primarily by virtue of their physical strength.

Relative power determines as well the eminence of the gods among themselves. It has already been observed how most of the divinities prevail only in their own spheres of influence, while some, such as Zeus, Apollo,

Athene, Poseidon, and Hera excel in many fields and so have superior influence. Generally they describe their superiority in terms of strength. Poseidon claims greater might for the gods allied with the Achaeans than for those supporting the Trojans: "Very quickly, I think, shall they return to Olympus and the assembly of the rest of the gods when they have been parted from battle, overpowered perforce by our hands" (Il. XX, 141 - 143). Sure enough, in Book XXI the Trojans' gods are compelled to withdraw before the power of the Greeks' patrons after a purely physical struggle. Hephaestus subdues Xanthus in a veritable battle of the elements, as the god's fire overwhelms the river's water. Athene stretches out Ares with a blow from a rock, and Aphrodite with a blow to the chest. Apollo retires before Poseidon's challenge while Hera boxes Artemis' ears. Only Hermes on the Achaeans' side withdraws from a Trojan supporter, in his case, Leto. The net victory of the Achaeans' gods, through sheer physical strength, appropriately reflects the Achaeans' physical superiority over the Trojans, and their ultimate victory. It also establishes the relative eminence of the individual Olympians.

Zeus's relation to the other gods is well defined by Grote:

> All the other gods have their specific potency and peculiar sphere of action and duty, with which Zeus does not usually interfere; but it is he who maintains the lineaments of a providential superintendence, as well over the phaenomena of Olympus as over those of earth.[1]

He is the divine power most concerned with ordering and directing events in heaven and earth and both gods and men acknowledge his authority. They obey his commands and even, frequently, seek his approval or direction for their own actions. So in Books I and V of the Odyssey Athene proposes before Zeus and the other gods divine assistance for Odysseus before actually going to his aid herself, while Poseidon seeks permission from Zeus in Book XIII to punish the Phaeacians for their hospitality to Odysseus.

[1] George Grote, Greece, vol. I (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1899), p. 3.

The gods give precedence to Zeus in their social functions. When they return from Ethiopia they are led by him (Il. I, 493 - 495) and when he enters their assembly they rise before him (Il. I, 533 - 535). They may claim certain rights for themselves but these are usually subsumed under his ultimate control. So Apollo informs Hector: "Take courage now, so great a helper has the Son of Cronos sent forth to stand by and protect you, even Phoebus Apollo of the Golden Sword, I who, even before, have protected both you and your sheer citadel" (Il. XV, 254 - 257). Zeus's will reigns supreme.

Nevertheless, his immanent supremacy over the gods, just as over mortals, is limited. Although they always, perforce, defer to his judgment, they do not hesitate to assert their rights. When, at the beginning of Book IV in the Iliad, Zeus ponders whether to establish peace between the Trojans and Achaeans Hera boldly asserts the defiant will of the gods in her party: "Go ahead. But, in truth, not all the other gods approve of your action" (Il. IV, 29). She repeats this formula when Zeus considers preserving his son, Sarpedon, beyond his fate (Il. XVI, 435 - 443). When he wonders at Hera's hostility to Troy, his favourite city, she justifies her independent attitude on the grounds of her high rank:

> "But my labour should not be rendered ineffectual. For I, too, am a god of the same stock as yourself, and cunning Cronos begot me as the greatest of his daughters both because of my age and because I am called your wife, since you rule among all the immortals."
> (Il. IV, 57 - 61)

Poseidon commits the greatest act of defiance when he refuses to obey Zeus's command to leave the Achaean host. He claims equal status with his older brother:

> "Truly, indeed, when the lots were shaken I received as my portion the eternal habitation of the grey sea, Hades got the murky nether darkness, and Zeus won the broad heaven in the sky and clouds. Yet

> the earth and lofty Olympus are common to all. Therefore I will in no way act according to the will of Zeus, but, though he be imperturbable and mighty, let him remain in his third portion." (Il. XV, 190 - 195)

There is also in Book I the story of the gods' successful attempt to chain Zeus who, subsequently, only achieved and retained liberty through the aid of Thetis and Briareus (Il. I, 396 - 406). Zeus's powers, then, in his immanent manifestation, may be circumscribed.

Naturally, he prefers to avoid provoking the gods. When, in Book I of the Iliad, Thetis asks him to honour her son by supporting the Trojans he shows genuine reluctance to accede to her demand since it must anger Hera (518 - 519). In many of the councils of the gods, particularly in the Odyssey, he does not simply declare his will and demand obedience to it but delegates responsibility to the other divinities. He is especially deferential to Athene and Poseidon in the Odyssey. When the latter demands punishment for the Phaeacians' hospitality to Odysseus, Zeus replies: "Do whatever you want, whatever is your heart's desire" (Od. XIII, 145). Only after Poseidon has stated his own plan of action does Zeus declare his will, which concurs with his brother's proposal. In the Iliad he defers to Hera's determination to destroy Troy, stipulating only that she be prepared to surrender to destruction one of her own cities in compensation (Il. IV, 40 - 41). He openly admits the personal sacrifice he must make to concede to her: "... I have yielded to you of my own will, but with heart unwilling" (Il. IV, 43). When he considers saving Sarpedon from his fate, Hera openly threatens him with similar interventions on the part of the other gods as well as their bitter hostility (Il. XVI, 445 - 449). Instead of rebuking his wife and following his own desire, he obeys her instructions (Il. XVI, 458). Such compliance relegates his status among the gods to that of "primus

inter pares."

Yet even these voluntary restrictions on his power do not always pacify the gods; they occasionally seek to transgress his commands. Consequently he, too, is obliged to rely ultimately upon physical might. When Hera quarrels with him in Book I he settles the argument with the threat of laying upon her his "irresistible hands" (Il. I, 567). When Athene and Hera prepare to disobey his commands and enter the fray in Book VIII he threatens them with a dire punishment which reveals his formidable power:

> "I will lame the swift horses attached to their chariot, and I will hurl them from the chariot-board and shatter the chariot. Nor for ten returning years shall they be completely healed of their wounds that the thunderbolt will inflict."
> (Il.VIII,402-405)

After Poseidon has finally submitted to his brother's order that he quit the Achaean army, Zeus comments to Apollo about the terrible strife that would have arisen had he further resisted: "For indeed even the other gods who dwell in the nether regions, those in the company of Cronos, would have heard of our strife" (Il. XV, 224 - 225). Moreover "the affair would not have been concluded without sweat" (228). He reveals the full extent of his strength, however, in his warning to the gods about disobedience:

> "Hang a golden chain from heaven, all you gods and goddesses, and fasten it to yourselves. Even so you could not pull supreme Zeus, the counsellor, out of heaven to the earth, no matter how hard you tried. But when I really wanted to pull you, I should draw you up together with the earth and sea themselves. Then should I bind the chain about a peak of Olympus and all these things would be suspended in space. By so much am I greater than gods and greater than men."
> (Il.VIII,19-26)

When aroused, Zeus claims access to strength that appears virtually unlimited; strength that is so great that it would seem to approach transcendence of the finite and the immanent.

Nevertheless, regardless of his potential for unlimited power, Zeus, in his immanent form, is always limited in strength, knowledge, and presence, and confined within the course of events, as are all the other immanent gods. They are, in the final analysis, particulars, not universals. They may serve as the primary agents of the plan of history but they, like everything else within the course of events, conform to that plan. The formulation - and formulator - of the plan must be sought elsewhere, in the transcendent.

The immanent gods themselves acknowledge a higher authority in their obedience to certain restrictions upon their behaviour. Zeus recognizes the law of familiar loyalty when he declines to banish Ares from Olympus in spite of his intolerable character, and even ensures his well-being:

> "I will no longer endure that you suffer pain. For you are of my stock and your mother bore you to me. But if you had been born of any other god, so violent is your nature, then would you long ago have been lower than the heavenly gods."
> (Il.V,895-898)

When Iris reminds Poseidon that Zeus's primacy as the eldest of the gods is upheld by the Erinyes (Il. XV, 204) he acknowledges their higher authority and finally submits to Zeus's command. In the passage cited earlier, in which Poseidon claims equality with Zeus, the definition and distribution of "portions" to the gods presupposes a higher, providential principle in the universe. The immanent gods are themselves part of a greater plan.

Transcendent Fate

The higher, ordering principle is fate. In the various words used to refer to it or its function it seems to be most closely associated with apportionment. Everything that exists or occurs in the natural

order and the supernatural realm receives its own fixed character, influence, and significance, and is related to everything else under the direction of this principle. Its control is transcendent; it operates outside the dimensions of time and space, moulding everything that exists and occurs within them externally as it were, rather than immanently, in the province of the gods. Consequently its power comprehends everything within these dimensions.

Because fate embraces everything within its transcendent plan, the total plan must possess such complexity and magnitude as to be an impenetrable mystery. Consequently, reference to the rule of fate is limited to specific, finite events and phenomena. Yet even such restricted examples of its power may indicate the amplitude of its transcendent scheme. Such is the effect of Apollo's warning to Patroclus when he attempts to storm a Trojan wall: "Yield, Zeus-born Patroclus! It is not fated that the city of the lordly Trojans be laid waste by your spear, or even by Achilles who is much greater than you" (Il. XVI, 707 - 709). This single description of the plan of fate places not only Patroclus' actions, but those of Achilles and, indeed, of the whole Iliad in a much broader context. The Iliad is concerned with a single episode in the life of Achilles, but the supreme plan of fate is shown to comprehend his whole life and the whole Trojan War. Its total scale is unfathomable.

The plan of fate places everything within a larger pattern and gives everything greater meaning than it possesses in its immediate context. In the catalogue of ships in Book II of the Iliad Achilles is reported to be prostrate with grief for Briseis (688 - 689). Just as, however, the catalogue places the individual Greek and Trojan heroes in the contexts of their respective forces, so Achilles' distress is shown to be merely

part of a greater pattern; it is supplemented by the affirmation, "but soon was he to rise" (Il. II, 694). Zeus frequently experiences great irritation at Hera's contumacy and shrewishness, but after the attempted insubordination of Athene and herself in Book VIII he rationalizes her behaviour as something not totally lawless, incomprehensible, and reprehensible, but fixed as though by a higher law: "But I am not so much angered or vexed with Hera. For she has ever been wont to frustrate whatever I decree" (Il. VIII, 407 - 408). Even evil and suffering are subsumed under the rule of fate, and so are invested with the same significance and beauty as everything else. Demodocus' lay concerning the end of the Trojan War comprises both the glory of heroic action and the tragedy of destruction. Both elements constitute a single, beautiful story, the memory of which causes Odysseus to weep with nostalgic grief. His emotion is compared to that of a woman stricken with grief at the violent death of her husband on a battlefield, a form of suffering that the Achaeans, including Odysseus, inflicted upon the wife of many a Trojan (Od. VIII, 521 - 531). That the causes of their sorrow are different, indeed, almost diametrically opposed, is of no consequence. The point of the simile is to suggest the depth of Odysseus' feeling. In fact, far from appearing incongruous, the simile actually enriches Odysseus' own experience, for in the comprehensive plan of fate pain and suffering are of equal validity with heroic action and glory. In the world as it is presented in the Iliad and Odyssey nothing is ever meaningless. Everything is comprehended in a grand design and drama known as fate.

Fate, the all-inclusive transcendent plan of history, provides order and meaning to the individual lives of men. The fact that every man's existence has its own precisely defined, inviolate "portion" means that it can never be ultimately subject to chance or ended prematurely. So

Hector comforts Andromache: "No man shall send me forth to Hades beyond my fate" (Il. VI, 487). Odysseus is able, on Aeaea, to lift his men out of their distress and despair at their suffering and loss of comrades by appealing to the same belief: "My friends, although we may feel miserable, we will not be going down to the Halls of Hades just yet, before the appointed day arrives" (Od. X, 174 - 175). "Death is not a problem for the Homeric hero; his death concludes his story and completes his fate."[1] However awesome and dangerous the situation in which men find themselves, their belief in the higher, comprehensive plan of fate enables them to transcend their sense of insecurity.

Fate is naturally associated with death since it is only death that fixes a man's destiny. It thus becomes connected with the kēres, the spirits, or forces, of death, such as those that Sarpedon perceives, in myriads, everywhere (Il. XII, 326 - 327), or such as the hateful one that Patroclus' ghost claims was assigned to him as soon as he was born (Il. XXIII, 78 - 79). Moira herself accompanies Death in Achilles' slaying of Echeclus (Il. XX, 476 - 477).

The gods, and occasionally men, are permitted foreknowledge of fate's plan. So Athene is always confident about Odysseus' fate: "I, for my part, never doubted it, but knew in my soul that you would return home, though with the loss of all your companions" (Od. XIII, 339 - 340). Although, however, the gods may know the predestined course of events, as immanent creatures they remain bound within it, helpless to change it. In his discussion with Agamemnon concerning the Achaeans' desperate situation

1 James M. Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975), p. 175.

after the breaching of their wall, Nestor asserts that Zeus himself could not have altered the pattern of events: "Such a state of affairs has indeed already developed, and Zeus himself could not have fashioned it otherwise" (Il. XIV, 53 - 54). Athene, under disguise, informs Telemachus that the gods cannot break the inexorability of death: "But truly, the gods cannot ward off the common fate of death even from a man they love, whenever the deadly fate of prostrate death overpowers him" (Od. III, 236 - 238). According to the attachment of a god to a man such helpless foreknowledge must prove burdensome. So Thetis spends a great deal of time sorrowing for her foredoomed son.

Fate is not simply presented as the pattern into which every process naturally falls. It is shown actively, though transcendently, influencing the course of events. So it directs the actions of Amphius: "Fate led him to bring aid to Priam and his sons" (Il. V, 613 - 614). In such an active role it usually has negative consequences. It in fact leads Amphius to his death at the hands of Aias. When Hector remains outside the Scaean gates, thereby ensuring his destruction at Achilles' hands, his disastrous action is referred to the influence of fate, which is actually described as "baneful" and is reported to have bound him there (Il. XXII, 5 - 6). Fate wields absolute control over the lives of men and everything else within history.

The plan of fate presupposes some ulterior, personal intelligence responsible for its formulation. Consequently fate is frequently personified. Hecuba ascribes Hector's death to the predestined plan of the dread goddess: "Such, no doubt, was the destiny that mighty Fate spun for him with her thread at the time of his birth, when I bore him to glut the swift-footed dogs far from his parents in the presence of a cruel man"

(Il. XXIV, 209 - 212). So closely is the life of a man associated with a thread spun according to the design of a transcendent intelligence, that the personal power behind fate is even designated as the Clothēs or "Spinners" to whom Alcinous refers as the authors of Odysseus' destiny (Od. VII, 196 - 198). This ulterior, personal reality is also referred to in the plural by Apollo who attributes to the "Moirai" such comprehensive control over the lives of men that he describes them as establishing human nature itself: "the fates have placed an enduring soul in men" (Il. XXIV, 49).

The Transcendent Gods

The gods possess characteristics that qualify them as well for transcendence and the personal determination of fate and direction of history. Certainly the general concept of divinity, in its elementary, unqualified form, is frequently elevated to the level of the personal, intelligent, and transcendent author and ruler of all things. As such it is designated by the terms theos and daimon which are generally interchangeable, although, as Martin Nilsson observes, in some measure "daimon ... has its centre in the undefined, in power, whereas theos centres in the individual and personal."[1] Hector uses both words in his address to Aias at the end of their duel in Book VII of the Iliad, in which he refers to the hypostatic power at the heart of reality in both its transcendent creative and regulatory capacities:

> "Aias, since the god (theos) gave you stature, might, and wisdom, and since you are by far the best of the Achaeans with the spear, let us now leave off from fighting and strife for today. Later we will fight again, until the god (daimon) should decide between us and grant victory to one side or the other."
>
> (Il. VII, 288 - 292)

Whenever situations arise that appear to exceed the control of the immanent gods, or even men, and that seem to be subject to chance, their resolution

[1] Nilsson, A History of Greek Religion, p. 165.

is attributed to a transcendent power, such as the unspecified god to whom Achilles ascribes the selection of Trojans who will encounter him: "Now there is no one who will escape death, whoever, at any rate, the god (theos) will cast into my hands before Troy" (Il. XXI, 103 - 104). Indeed so closely are theos and daimon associated with the transcendent rule of fate that Hector, in taunting Diomedes, depersonalizes daimon into a synonym for destiny: "... you shall not mount upon our towers without my opposition, and carry off our women in your ships. Before that I will give you your doom (daimona)" (Il. VIII, 164 - 166).

In their immanent manifestations the individual gods have limited natures and powers and thus cannot attain transcendence. In a collectivity, however, their combined power affects all phenomena, which would eminently qualify them for the transcendent control of everything. In fact, this exalted position is often accorded to them in the Iliad and Odyssey. So Thetis attributes Patroclus' doom to the will of the gods (Il. XIX, 8 - 9). Achilles, referring to the gods as the Ouraniones, or "heaven-dwellers," lays to their collective charge the Trojan War itself, as he attempts to console Priam: "But since the gods brought this woe upon you, there is ever fighting and slaughter around your city" (Il. XXIV, 547 - 548). When men wish to refer their own actions to the execution of a higher plan, they may designate the gods, as does Odysseus in his yarn about his escape from Thesprotian brigands. After they bound him in their ship it was not he who freed himself, but the gods: "the gods themselves easily loosed my bonds" (Od. XIV, 348 - 349). Later, his success at hiding on land from his captors is also attributed to divine influence: "the gods themselves had no trouble in hiding me" (Od. XIV, 357 - 358).

The transcendent power of the gods is distinguished from their

immanent activities. In the latter part of Book XIV in the Iliad Zeus, in his immanent form, lies asleep in the arms of Hera, oblivious to the course of the fighting at the Achaean ships, while the other gods, except for Poseidon, remain confined in ineffectiveness on Olympus. Poseidon alone plays a limited role in the battle, stirring up the Achaeans. The immanent gods, then, wield very little control over events at this point in time. Yet their transcendent direction of the natural order is never slackened, as the death of Archelochus from Aias' spear reveals: "Archelochus, son of Antenor, received the spear, since the gods planned his destruction" (Il. XIV, 464). Whenever an issue is considered to be indeterminate in the light of all possible immanent influences, only the transcendent control of the gods is admitted. So Hector refers to them the result of his struggle with Achilles when he refuses to accept his victory as a foregone conclusion: "But, to be sure, these matters lie on the knees of the gods, whether I, though inferior to you, shall take away your life with a blow from my spear, since my weapon has also been sharp before" (Il. XX, 435 - 437). The gods, conceived as a single, hypostatic entity rather than distinct, anthropomorphic, "essential" personalities, are considered to control reality comprehensively and transcendently.

Even individual gods of extraordinary power and influence, such as Poseidon, Athene, and Zeus, may be exalted to positions of transcendence. Upon Odysseus' departure from the island of the Cyclopes Polyphemus calls down an imprecation upon him and entreats his father, Poseidon, to execute it. Poseidon, it is reported, "hears" his prayer (Od. IX, 536). Since it is subsequently fulfilled, even to the smallest details, some degree of transcendent control over the course of events must be attributed to

the Sea-god. Athene demonstrates possession of similar power in her predestination of Amphinomus, whom Odysseus attempts to warn of his impending revenge, yet who, though presaging disaster, does not avoid destruction: "But not even so did he escape his fate. Athene, rather, compelled him to fall violently under the hands and spear of Telemachus" (Od. XVIII, 155 - 156). Her transcendent power is most clearly revealed in Book III of the Odyssey when, disguised as Mentor, she prays to Poseidon for a blessing upon Nestor and his sons, the other Pylians, and Telemachus and herself: "So, then, she prayed, and she herself fulfilled every prayer" (Od. III, 62).

The Transcendent Zeus

It is natural that Zeus, the most powerful, supreme deity, should have his power extended indefinitely, even to the point of transcendence, to the extent that he can ordain whatever he wills with a mere nod of his head. So he promises to accomplish Thetis' request:

> "Come then, I will bow my head in consent to you, that you may believe. For this action on my part is the surest sign among immortals. For, anything of mine to which I shall bow my head shall not be revocable or deceptive or unaccomplished."
> (Il. I, 524 - 527)

So inexorable is his will that Hermes tells Calypso plainly: "It is in no way possible for another god either to transgress the will of Zeus of the aegis or to frustrate it" (Od. V, 103 - 104). So absolute and comprehensive is Zeus's control that he can hide Odysseus' fate from all men, as Telemachus informs Nestor (Od. III, 88). He establishes the destinies of men from their very birth, as Agamemnon tells Menelaus: "Thus, no doubt, did Zeus send heavy woe upon us at the time of our birth" (Il. X, 70 - 71). By ascribing to Zeus the long suffering of the Achaeans,

Odysseus reveals the magnitude of his transcendent plan: "Zeus has laid it upon us to wind off grievous wars from youth even to old age, until each man of us perish" (Il. XIV, 85 - 87). Hector attributes the whole Trojan War to the anger of Zeus: "Now the beautiful treasures have perished utterly from the homes and many goods have been sold abroad to Phrygia and lovely Maeonia since great Zeus became angry" (Il. XVIII, 290 - 292). The transcendence of Zeus's power is demonstrated by its efficacy without physical, immanent intervention. He can control the course of events externally, as it were, by moulding history itself from without rather than directing its events from within. So Tlepolemus' failure to kill Sarpedon is ascribed to Zeus's influence: "Tlepolemus had struck his left thigh with the long spear, and the blade sped through it eagerly, grazing the bone, but still his father warded off destruction" (Il. V, 660 - 662). So, too, Idomeneus does not consider the Achaeans' reverses as the result of inferior battle skill or of cowardice:

> "Thoas, no man is to blame, as far as I know. For we all know how to fight. Nor does fear hold anyone back demoralized nor does anyone shrink back from terrible war by yielding to terror. But I think that this must be dear to the son of Cronos, supreme in might, that the Achaeans perish in oblivion here far from Argos."
> (Il.XIII,222-227)

Zeus exercises absolute control over the natures of things as much as over events. So he is credited with causing the dimunition of will and motivation experienced by slaves: "Far-seeing Zeus takes away half the good of a man whenever the day of slavery seizes him" (Od. XVII, 322 - 323). One of the outstanding marks of Zeus's transcendence is his ability to foretell and simultaneously to ordain the future in detail, as though it were entirely his own creation. In one particular prophetic passage he not only traces the future course of events in the present

episode of the Trojan War, but the end of the War itself, which lies beyond the scope of the Iliad. This combination of prediction and predestination is illustrated in the following section of the prophecy, beginning with the death of Patroclus:

> "Glorious Hector shall slay him with the spear before Ilium after he has slain many other youths, including my god-like son Sarpedon. In anger for him the noble Achilles shall kill Hector. From that time forth I will cause the Trojans to turn from the ships in continuous rout, until the Achaeans shall take steep Ilium through the counsels of Athene."
>
> (Il.XV,65-71)

Zeus's transcendence is manifested in many ways.

Zeus's control over fate is also illustrated by his frequently transcendent relation to the other gods. Both immanent gods and men appear to affect situations directly and physically, yet their actions may be subsumed under the higher direction of Zeus. So Apollo alone of all the gods is represented as actually physically participating in the slaying of Patroclus, together with Euphorbus and Hector, yet Patroclus recognizes the will of Zeus as well in his killing, as he tells Hector: "To you have Zeus the son of Cronos and Apollo, who conquered me easily, granted victory" (Il. XVI, 844 - 846). Since Zeus was not physically involved in this action his influence must have been transcendent. Zeus exercises similar suzerain rule over Athene. As the Trojan War drew to a close, some Achaeans provoked the wrath of the god. It was his daughter, Athene, however, who meted out the appropriate punishment to them. (Od. III, 130 - 136). Throughout the Odyssey, in fact, Zeus makes few appearances. Athene alone intervenes physically in the course of events to aid Odysseus and Telemachus. Yet references to Zeus suggest that everything she does harmonizes with his will. So, in planning for the struggle in the hall, Odysseus informs his son that they will be able to depend upon both gods: "Then will Pallas Athene and Zeus the counsellor confound them"

(Od. XVI, 297 - 298). Telemachus is impressed not so much by the patronage that Athene has shown his father as by the support of Zeus implied by that patronage. He counsels Odysseus that they should not seek the help of other Ithacans, "if it is true that you know some sign of aegis-bearing Zeus" (Od. XVI, 320), not just of Athene. The transcendent Zeus, is also considered by Agamemnon to be the authority behind Atē's blinding of him since the god is referred to in the same context as having removed his wits from him (Il. XIX, 137). Similarly the will of Zeus is perceived behind the physical actions of men. The immediate cause of Aias' withdrawal before the Trojans in Book XVI is shown to be the extreme pressure exerted upon him by enemy missiles. Yet the invisible influence of Zeus is also reckoned as a factor: "Aias no longer stood fast, for he was hard pressed by the weapons. Both the mind of Zeus and the assault of the noble Trojans overwhelmed him" (Il. XVI, 102 - 104). The gods, and men, are the immanent agents of the transcendent Zeus.

The transcendent resolution of problems that are subject to chance in the natural, immanent order is also ascribed to Zeus. The uncertainty in Hector's mind as to the issue of his looming conflict with Achilles is demonstrated by his reference of it to the supreme god's authority: "Let us know to which of us the Olympian will grant glory" (Il. XXII, 130). Similarly, when neither Odysseus nor Aias can acquire the advantage in their wrestling match, the outcome is laid at Zeus's charge: "Scion of Zeus, son of Laertes, resourceful Odysseus, either lift me up or I will lift you; but the whole matter will be the care of Zeus" (Il. XXIII, 723 - 724). The resolution of a problem would seem totally subject to chance when it must be reached by the casting of lots. Yet this activity may also be comprehended by the transcendent control of the god. As the lots are shaken

to determine which of the Achaeans will confront Hector the assembled Greeks pray to the god as the transcendent arbiter of the lots:

> Each man marked his lot and cast it in the helmet of Agamemnon, son of Atreus. The people then prayed and held up their hands to the gods. So would one of them speak, looking into the broad heaven: "Father Zeus, grant that Aias receive the lot, or the son of Tydeus, or the king himself of Mycene, rich in gold."
> (Il.VII,175-180)

The men of the Iliad and Odyssey refuse to accept the ultimate fortuity of anything.

Even suffering, or any unintelligible, chaotic experience, may be subsumed under the higher plan of a transcendent god. Agamemnon blames his quarrel with Achilles upon Zeus: "But Zeus of the aegis, the son of Cronos, has laid much distress upon me, since he has hurled me into useless strife and quarrels" (Il. II, 375 - 376). Achilles also lays to Zeus's charge the dissension between himself and Agamemnon and the ensuing suffering and disorder experienced by the whole Achaean host:

> "Father Zeus, great indeed is the confusion that you send upon men. Surely the son of Atreus would not have stirred up lasting anger in my breast, or implacably removed the girl against my will. But Zeus, I think, wanted death to come upon many Achaeans."
> (Il.XIX,270-274)

In accomplishing his own comprehensive, unfathomable designs, the supreme god may harm as well as bless, as Aeneas informs Achilles: "Zeus both increases and diminishes the valour of men according to his will. For he is the mightiest of all" (Il. XX, 242 - 243).

This unequal, incomprehensible distribution of bane and boon does not necessarily imply divine caprice and indifference to human suffering. It simply reflects the dispensation of the transcendent plan of fate, which must include both good and evil. This transcendent plan is a mystery, since good and evil would seem to be incompatible and mutually

destructive. Their mysterious unity is symbolically represented in Achilles' explanation of human suffering recounted to Priam:

> "For the gods have spun the thread for wretched men to live in distress while they themselves are untroubled. For two urns rest on Zeus's floor with the sorts of gifts that he gives, one of bad things, one of good things. The man to whom Zeus who delights in thunder may grant a mingled portion at one time meets with evil, at another with good. But the man to whom he gives baneful things he renders a victim of outrage,and bitter, grinding poverty drives him over the holy earth, and he wanders honoured by neither gods nor mortals."
>
> (Il.XXIV,525-533)

In fact all reality is the execution of a transcendent, mysterious, and meaningful plan that only Zeus, in his transcendent nature, can understand. So, though men are doomed to suffering and mortality, he cares for them (Il. XX, 21), and, sitting apart from the other gods who are limited by their sectarian interests, he rejoices in the fighting around Troy with its combination of horror and glory: "Of them the father took no heed, but turned aside and sat down far away from the others, exulting in his glory, looking upon the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans, and gleam of bronze, and slayers and slain" (Il. XI, 80 - 83). The supreme Olympian directs the course of events according to an inscrutable plan, but a plan nevertheless.

Several incidents suggest that his power exceeds that of fate. Helen ascribes to him the faculty of distributing men's destinies, as to herself and Paris, upon whom, she says, "Zeus has laid an evil doom (moron), that, from henceforth, we may be sung about to men who are yet to be" (Il. VI, 357 - 358). When Zeus ponders whether or not to save Sarpedon from death, Hera, in rebuking him, implies that he may indeed overrule fate:

> "Most dread son of Cronos, what are you saying? Do you wish to release again from grievous death a man who is mortal and long since consigned to his doom? Go ahead; but be sure that not all the rest of us who are gods commend you for it."
>
> (Il. XVI, 440 - 443)

Athene reproaches her father in similar fashion when he considers saving Hector from Achilles in Book XXII (178 - 181). In fact Zeus's will is supreme. He has, in his transcendent form, full power to ordain the future. He is indeed frequently portrayed as the creative, guiding intelligence behind fate.

In several instances Zeus's transcendence is dramatically confirmed through symbolism. His direction of fate, particularly in battle where the issue may seem subject to chance, is often represented by the image of weighted scales, as Odysseus tells Achilles: "Quickly to men comes surfeit of battle... when Zeus who has been made dispenser of war for men inclines his scales" (Il. XIX, 221 - 224). In the fighting recounted in Book VIII he determines the course of the battle by comparing the fates of the Greeks and Trojans:

> When Helios had bestridden the midst of heaven, even then did the Father extend his golden scales. In them he placed two fates of prostrate death for both the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-armoured Achaeans, and grasping the scales in the middle he lifted them up. The fates of the Achaeans sank down upon the bounteous earth, while those of the Trojans were raised up to the broad heaven. Then Zeus himself thundered loudly from Ida and hurled blazing lightning at the host of the Achaeans. They, beholding it, were appalled, and green fear stole upon them.
>
> (Il.VIII,68-77)

At this point in the narrative the fighting begins to turn in the Trojans' favour. Zeus employs the scales again in Book XXII to determine the outcome of the contest between Hector and Achilles and again defeat is decided by the decline of one side of the balance (Il. XXII, 209 - 213). It might be objected that, in these instances, the inclination of the scales occurs independently from Zeus's influence and thus that their determination of destiny is due to chance rather than to the will of Zeus. The full meaning of the symbol of the scales, however, can only be perceived when they are viewed in context. It is, in fact, Zeus who employs them, holds them, and

places the fates of men upon them. The total image thus represents his supervision of and control over blind chance itself. His transcendent control over even such an uncertain phenomenon as violent warfare is figuratively represented by the image of him applying tension to the conflict as he would tauten a rope, as he does in the struggle over Sarpedon's corpse: "And many men fell over him when the son of Cronos stretched tight the mighty strife" (Il. XVI, 661 - 662). The same image is used to explain the fury of the fighting for Patroclus' body: "Such a terrible struggle for both men and horses did Zeus stretch out on that day over Patroclus" (Il. XVII, 400 - 401). This imagery suggests that the strain and toil of fighting are not so much due to the opposing strengths of enemies, and thus uncontrolled and unpredictable in their effects, as they are the products of the transcendent might of Zeus alone and thus entirely subject to his will. Such symbolism gives concrete expression to the abstract idea of the supreme god's absolute, transcendent control over the most apparently uncertain phenomena and occurrences.

There are other significant indications of Zeus's transcendence. Prayers of supreme importance not involving single, limited actions but whole episodes with great import for the future are addressed to his personal agency. At the marshalling of the Achaean host in Book II of the Iliad the ordinary soldiers pray each to a different god "for escape both from death and the moil of Ares" (400 - 401). Their prayers express a limited, purely individual and personal concern. Agamemnon, however, because he is not only interested in his immediate safety, entreats Zeus himself to permit the Achaeans to sack Troy on that very day (412 - 418). Only a transcendent god with the power to mould the future according to

his will could effect such a prayer. In Book III, Menelaus prays only to Zeus for victory and vengeance upon Paris as he moves against him (349 - 354), yet the single invocation is entirely appropriate in the circumstances, as the issue of their duel, they think, will end the Trojan War. Zeus's intervention may also be requested for the resolution of a problem of only immediate relevance, provided that it is sufficiently pressing. So, when Diomedes wreaks havoc upon the Trojan ranks after Athene has invigorated him, Aeneas asks Pandarus to shoot him down after first praying to Zeus, who may be the only god who can prevail against him, since the hero's destructiveness is so great that he may actually be "some god angered over sacrifices and bearing a grudge against the Trojans" (Il. V, 171 - 178). When, however, Diomedes desires to kill Pandarus, a warrior of less account, only for wounding him, he prays merely for the support of Athene (Il. V, 115 - 120). Zeus's transcendent supremacy renders him the god most likely to accomplish petitions of the greatest magnitude, whether they require transcendent or immanent fulfilment.

If values are to have weight they must be based upon some absolute, unshakeable authority. In the Iliad and the Odyssey they are attributed to the transcendent Zeus, the ultimate judge and ruler of all. Kings claim the support of the Olympian for the royal prerogative; so the epithet "Zeus-nurtured," diotrephēs, is frequently attached to the word for king, basileus. Agamemnon, as High King of the Achaeans, claims, as it has been seen, special honour from the god. When, in their quarrel, Achilles threatens to abandon his expedition, Agamemnon tells him to proceed: "There are others with me who will honour me, especially Zeus the counsellor" (Il. I, 174 - 175). In Hades Achilles remarks to Agamemnon that the Achaeans deemed him the everlasting favourite of the god, "because

you ruled over men great in numbers and strength in the land of the Trojans" (Od. XXIV, 24 - 27). The delivery of information is also considered a sacred function, and so heralds and messengers are given special status by Zeus. Their persons are, consequently, treated as inviolable. So when Talthybius and Eurybates fearfully approach Achilles to demand the surrender of Briseis, he does not vent his wrath upon them, but their master. He in fact greets them with the reverence due to their consecrated position: "Hail, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of men, draw nearer! It is not you who are in any way guilty in my eyes, but Agamemnon" (Il. I, 334 - 335). Law and order are also founded on Zeus's inexpugnable authority the visible symbol of which is the royal sceptre that originated with the gods. This, says Achilles, "the sons of the Achaeans who are judges bear in their hands, they who guard the laws from Zeus" (Il. I, 237 - 239). Achilles considers this object sufficiently august to swear upon. Zeus is also the guardian of morality. Hector ascribes some degree of holiness to him by refusing, while unclean, to pour a libation to him: "I shrink from pouring flaming wine to Zeus with unwashed hands. Nor should one in any way pray to the son of Cronos, lord of the black cloud, while defiled with blood and gore" (Il. VI, 266 - 268). Zeus is also the ultimate judge of sin. So the Prayers, the daughters of Zeus in Phoenix's allegory, demand of their father punishment of the proud and hard-hearted (Il. IX, 510 - 512). Zeus is credited with the punishment of the unjust state by natural catastrophe, such as floods, "when he is angry and bears a grudge against men who give crooked judgments in the assembly and drive out justice, heedless of the vengeance of the gods" (Il. XVI, 386 - 388). After Pandarus has violated the Trojan oaths by wounding Menelaus after his duel with Paris, Agamemnon comforts his brother by reminding him of

the inexorability of divine justice, however belated its execution: "For even if the Olympian has not immediately effected justice, eventually he will, and men make atonement at great cost, with their own heads, their wives, and their children" (Il. IV, 160 - 162). Zeus also maintains the sanctity of hospitality, as Menelaus asserts while railing against the Trojans for the rape of Helen:

> "You did not at all fear in your heart the harsh wrath of loud-thundering Zeus, the god of hospitality, who will some day destroy your steep city. For you went your reckless way, bearing off my wedded wife and many possessions after you were welcomed by her." (Il.XIII,623-627)

The ultimate triumphs of Achilles over Hector and of the Greeks over the Trojans depend upon the transcendent execution of the will of Zeus, the holy god of justice and morality.

Zeus's transcendence is also revealed in the omens that he sends forth. He is actually called panomphaios, the "author of all divination" (Il. VIII, 250). He may dispatch omens that do not amount to much more than purely physical signs of encouragement or discouragement, such as peals of thunder during the day and night. In many instances, however, his omens are of such complexity and coincidence as to require a transcendent origin. Some are cryptic, such as that of the two eagles that the god sends to fight over the heads of the assembled Ithacans as a sign of Odysseus' imminent return and the impending disaster for the suitors (Od. II, 146 - 167). In others, however, the pattern has obvious symbolic significance. When the Achaeans were conducting a sacrifice to the gods before setting out for Troy, the Olympian stirred up a large snake to devour a family of nine birds, the mother last of all. In Chalcas' interpretation the ingestion of the birds represents the number of years that the Achaeans must fight for Troy (Il. II, 308 - 329). One might add

that the rapacious serpent signifies the Achaean army while the death of the mother bird stands for the climax and conclusion of the Trojan War. It is noteworthy that the Trojans and Achaeans are again represented, respectively, by birds and a serpent, though in a different relation, in the portent that occurs during the fighting at the Achaeans' wall (Il. XII, 200 - 207). An eagle appears overhead holding a snake in its talons, a phenomenon that is designated "an omen from Zeus of the aegis" (208). Polydamas correctly interprets the eagle's subsequent failure to convey the serpent to its young for food as a sign that the Trojans will not succeed in destroying the Greek camp in their present assault (217 - 227). Both omens appear to evolve for the most part within the bounds of natural law. Only in the former instance does anything particularly unusual occur: the snake, upon consuming the family of birds, is changed to stone (Il. II, 319). For the rest, these natural processes only acquire symbolic significance through Zeus's transcendent manipulation of the natural realm.

The immense, virtually unlimited range of Zeus's ownership and influence in both natural and supernatural realms indicates an omnipresence that would seem to exceed the capabilities of a finite divinity. In fact, this omnipresence is an attribute of the transcendent aspect of the god's nature. It is most clearly revealed in the numerous applications of the genitive inflexion, "Dios," "of Zeus," which, in aggregate, show that he enjoys possession of a wide variety of things, such as the floor of the Olympic palace (Il. V, 734), the sky and beams of the sun (Il. XIII, 837), an oak tree in the Trojan plain (Il. V, 693), and time itself, as Agamemnon implies in his address to the Achaeans in Book II of the Iliad: "In truth, nine years of great Zeus have passed by" (134). Moreover, Zeus is considered the origin

of all. One of his principal titles is "father," and often the word is expanded beyond the limited meaning of an ordinary parent. His progeny among the gods do indeed address him as "father," but so does everyone else, including his sister and wife, Hera, (Il. V, 757), and brother, Poseidon, (Od. XIII, 128), and Priam (Il. XXII, 60). Indeed, he is often called "the father of gods and men" (e.g. Il. I, 544). His title reflects the reverence that all creatures, both divine and mortal, feel for the supreme god, but it also implies that he is the author and ruler of everything in the universe in at least one aspect of his nature, that he is, in fact, not only the finite, immanent King of the Olympians but the transcendent First Cause.

His influence and presence pervade the world, as the frequent usage of epithets bearing his name, such as diogenēs, "Zeus-born," and diotrephēs, "Zeus-nurtured," demonstrates. The latter not only designates individuals, but embraces whole groups as well, such as kings (Il. II, 445) or the companies of youths that follow the two Aiantes (Il. IV, 280). As Polydamas tells Hector, Zeus influences the lives of all men in a variety of ways that reveals the limitless range of his own qualities:

> "For to one man the god has given battle skill, to another ability in dancing, to another skill with the lyre and song, and in the breast of another far-seeing Zeus places noble discrimination, and many derive profit from him, and he saves many, as he himself knows well."
>
> (Il.XIII,730-734)

The sheer abundance of all manner of references to the god creates an overwhelming impression of his omnipresent, hypostatic substantiality. Apollo may be the immediate agent in the instigation of suffering and strife in the Greek camp at the beginning of the Iliad, but mention of the fact at his first appearance in the text that he is the son of Zeus

establishes an ineradicable impression of his constant presence and participation, no matter how remote, in the story, and places Apollo's intervention in the larger context of his will. Similarly, Athene may be the principal divine agent in the events recounted in the Odyssey, but the frequent description of her as the daughter of Zeus serves as a constant reminder of his ulterior presence and of her subordination to him. The transcendent Zeus is everywhere, including Hell, as Phoenix's remarkable reference to Hades as "Zeus of the Underworld" reveals (Il. IX, 457). Zeus, in his transcendent form, is the spiritual hypostasis under-pinning the whole of reality.

Even in his immanent manifestations Zeus displays attributes that suggest, at least, his transcendence. Generally a distinction is maintained between him and the other gods through his primacy among them and his frequent aloofness from their company. When the gods return from Ethiopia to Olympus in Book I of the Iliad, they appear together in a throng, but Zeus alone is described as leading the way (495). When Thetis goes to supplicate him she finds him sitting apart from the other divinities on the very summit of Olympus (498 - 499). Hera and Athene discover him in similar isolation in Book V (753 - 754). Moreover he is not only physically distinct from the other gods, but mentally and spiritually as well, as he thinks and plans independently and always remains to some degree self-contained and secretive. He does not respond immediately to Thetis' request but maintains an awesome silence (Il. I, 511 - 512). At the beginning of Book II, while all other gods and men slumber in oblivion, he remains awake, pondering by himself the future course of events (Il. II, 1 - 4). His independence and inscrutability irritate and alarm Hera exceedingly as she shows in her outburst against

him after his conversation with Thetis:

> "Who, then, of the gods, O wily one, has once again taken counsel with you? You always prefer to make decisions by planning secretly apart from me. You have never yet in any way readily undertaken to inform me about what you have purposed." (Il. I, 540 - 543)

Zeus's aloofness and mystery combine to project him beyond the limits of nature and experience that constrain the other gods.

His freedom and elevation above other immanent beings are confirmed by his detachment from the course of events. To be sure, he directs all natural and supernatural processes, but usually at a distance. A mere nod from his head shakes Olympus (Il. I, 530). When he wishes to convey information to men or gods beyond Olympus he employs messengers. When he wishes to accomplish something away from the mountain, he commissions other gods to act as his agents. His residence on mountain peaks aptly reflects his separation from events in the external, immanent world. He may remove from Olympus to acquire a better view of earthly affairs, as he does in Book VIII of the Iliad, but he does not become directly, physically involved in the situation in which he is interested. In Book VIII he does not actually enter the fighting between the Greeks and Trojans. He goes no farther than to position himself on another mountain, Ida, for better observation. From that remote location he appears to control matters in a manner that can only be described as transcendent. Certainly his separation from other immanent beings, even in his immanent form, adumbrates the transcendent part of his nature.

The Immanent Execution of the Transcendent Plan of Fate

The corollary of fate's transcendent rule is that immanent gods and men fulfil its plan by acting spontaneously and independently. Towards the

end of Book XVIII in the Odyssey the suitors' feasting is set in an uproar, apparently by the disguised Odysseus' scornful attitude towards Eurymachus and Eurymachus' violent response. Yet Telemachus attributes the tumult to divine influence: "You madmen! You are out of your senses and you no longer control the effects of eating and drinking. Some god, then, is stirring you up" (Od. XVIII, 406 - 407). Such an interpretation places an ostensibly natural occurrence with a natural cause in a transcendent context. It also elevates Odysseus in importance by implying that he is the agent of the gods in the execution of the suitors' fate. In Book II of the Iliad, after Agamemnon's disheartening speech, the Achaeans prepare to abandon Troy, thereby threatening to annul Zeus's transcendent plan for the Trojan War which was revealed in the omen of the snake and the birds and interpreted by Calchas before the departure for Troy, and, on a more immediate level, his agreement to accomplish Thetis' request which stipulated the abasement of Agamemnon and the Achaean host, not its dissolution or destruction. Something must happen to preserve Zeus's plans. In fact Hera and Athene intervene, not out of any concern for the supreme plan of history, but in support of their own finite, immediate, biased interests. As Hera remarks to Athene: "They (the Argives) would abandon to Priam and the Trojans their boast, Argive Helen, on whose account many Achaeans perished in Troy, far from their dear native land" (Il. II, 160 - 162). They restrain the Achaeans not through any overwhelming supernatural prodigy, but by inspiring Odysseus to check them. Zeus's transcendent plan is sustained by the spontaneous, immanent, divine action which becomes thereby comprehended within it. The duel between Menelaus and Paris also threatens to resolve prematurely the Trojan War. Again, however, the gods intervene opportunely, not through any prearranged policy of regulation

according to the plan of fate, but through spontaneous, independent reactions to an immediate state of affairs not in accordance with their own limited, partial interests. Just as Menelaus prepares to slay Paris, Aphrodite bestirs herself to rescue her favourite, and so leaves the issue of the combat in some doubt. Agamemnon claims the victory for his brother, and the gods proceed to debate whether to have the Trojans acknowledge him as victor, and so to end the war. They argue as though Troy's fate has not already been determined, and Zeus agrees to the destruction of the city only at Hera's strident insistence (Il. IV, 25 - 38). Again, the gods do not openly effect their will through sheer might, but by prompting Pandarus to shoot and wound Menelaus, and so to invalidate the oaths and treaty of the Trojans and Achaeans. The transcendent order of fate and Zeus's will are established through finite, apparently totally spontaneous, immanent decisions and actions, -- or perhaps it would be more accurate to say "reactions." This relation imparts meaning to the lives of men and gods without depriving them of free will. They fulfil the plan of fate without appearing constrained to do so. The inexorability of fate is transcendent, not immanent.

The impression of immanent freedom and spontaneity is intensified by references to contingencies that would disrupt the predestined order of things. Zeus has foretold that Hector will die only at the hands of Achilles (Il. XV, 68), yet Teucer receives the opportunity of killing him himself: "Teucer drew another arrow for Hector armed with bronze and he would have stopped him from fighting at the ships of the Achaeans if, having struck him, the great hero, he had taken away his life" (Il. XV, 458 - 460). At one point in the fighting over Patroclus' corpse, the Achaeans threaten prematurely to roll the Trojans back to Troy:

> Then had the Trojans retreated demoralized into Ilium before the Achaeans, beloved of Ares, and the Argives had won glory exceeding the allotment (aisa) granted by Zeus through their own courage and strength, had not Apollo himself spurred on Aeneas.
> (Il. XVII, 319-323)

Of course nothing ever does happen beyond the design of fate in spite of the potential aberrations. The mere speculation, however, about their existence suffices to reinforce the impression that the immanent dimension of history has unlimited possibilities of development.

Men and gods do recognize the inexorability of fate but rarely do they passively accept it. To be sure, Achilles displays a somewhat fatalistic attitude in conversation with Odysseus when he questions the worth of his efforts for the Achaeans' cause in the light of their ingratitude:

> "I think that neither Agamemnon, son of Atreus, will persuade me, nor the rest of the Danaans, since there were no thanks for fighting against hostile men ever relentlessly. There is an equal fate for the man who holds back and the warrior, however hard he may fight. Both the coward and the brave man are held in one honour. The idle man and the toiler perish alike."
> (Il.IX,315-320)

In fact, his fatalism derives more from self-pity than despair, as he attempts to rationalize his determination to remain aloof from the Achaean army before Agamemnon's embassy of propitiation. Elsewhere, men and gods make a complete distinction between transcendent predestination and immanent spontaneity. When the Achaeans turn in rout from the Trojans in Book VIII of the Iliad Hector acknowledges the influence of Zeus's will, but then talks as though the defeat of the enemy will be accomplished through the Trojans' superior strength:

> "I perceive that the son of Cronos has readily granted victory and great glory to me, but woe to the Danaans. What fools they were to construct these weak, worthless walls! They shall not ward off our strength. Our horses shall easily leap over their hollowed trench."
> (Il.VIII,175-179)

In Book XX Aeneas seems imperilled in his duel with Achilles. Poseidon states that he will need special divine assistance to escape death, while paradoxically asserting that he has already been fated to survive the war:

> "But come, let us draw him away from death lest the Son of Cronos possibly become angry if Achilles should kill him. It is fated for him to escape in order that the race of Dardanus may not perish in oblivion without issue;"
> (Il. XX, 300-304)

Regardless of their knowledge of the future men and gods may yet hesitate before the immanent uncertainty of the course of events. In spite of Zeus's explicit injunction and assurance of safety delivered to Priam through Iris, Hecuba seeks to restrain him from approaching Achilles to ransom Hector's body: "Your heart is of iron. For if he lays hold of you and beholds you with his eyes such a bloodthirsty, treacherous man is he that he will not pity you and in no way respect you" (Il. XXIV, 205 - 208). In fact immanent gods and men will even act without consideration for or contrary to the revealed plan of fate. When Poseidon perceives Odysseus approaching Phaeacia in Book V of the Odyssey, he admits that he is destined to end his suffering, yet he persists in hindering his passage:

> "So! the gods completely changed their minds about Odysseus while I was among the Ethiopians! And now he is near the land of the Phaeacians, where it is his fate finally to escape the terrible hardship that has overwhelmed him. But I think that I will yet afflict him with his fill of suffering."
> (Od.V,286-290)

Hector informs Andromache of his certainty of the eventual destruction of Troy (Il. VI, 447 - 449) but continues to fight unwaveringly, as though the Danaans actually could be driven into the sea. Then, in Book XII, when Polydamas counsels that the Trojans hold back from the Achaeans' ships in accordance with the omen of the eagle and the snake Hector repudiates all

consideration of presages of the plan of fate: "One augury is best: to defend the fatherland" (Il. XII, 243). When Achilles replies to Xanthus' prophecy concerning his death he does not display the passive fatalism of his earlier conversation with Odysseus:

> "Xanthus, why do you prophesy my death? There is absolutely no need for you to do so. For I myself know well that it is my fate to perish here far from my dear father and mother. But, nevertheless, I will not let up until I have hounded the Trojans to surfeit of war."
>
> (Il.XIX,420-423)

Whatever the design of fate and however ineluctable its execution may be, immanent men and gods are never deprived of free will and the fundamental belief in their ability to influence the course of events.

The freedom inherent in the immanent dimension of reality affords a degree of complexity and individual integrity to its inhabitants that would be impossible were the rigid order of fate enforced within rather than without the course of events. Consequently both gods and men do not act in the Iliad and the Odyssey as mere stereotyped automatons. They possess personality traits that render them credible as distinct individuals. They often behave emotionally, petulantly, and irrationally according to their own selfish desires. So Agamemnon dishonours Apollo's priest and refuses to exchange his daughter for the generous ransom that he offers. When an assembly of the Achaeans is convoked to discuss the plague that afflicts them Agamemnon remains silent until Calchas lays the blame upon him for angering Apollo. In accordance with the god's will Agamemnon agrees to restore Chryses' daughter to him but in a most ungracious manner, with a violent outburst against Calchas, as though his communication were a matter more of malice than divination; "Prophet of evils, never yet have you spoken good to me. Ever is it dear to your heart to prophesy evil and never yet have you declared or accomplished a good word" (Il. I,

106 - 108); and with a demand for compensation from his fellows. His bad temper and stubborn pride then help to precipitate the quarrel and subsequent breach between himself and Achilles for which the Achaeans pay so dearly. Pride and stubbornness are also qualities exhibited by Achilles in his quarrel with Agamemnon in which his resentment at the High King's superior rank becomes increasingly evident, a resentment that is first intimated in his pledge to protect Calchas:

> "While I am alive and can see on the earth no one of all the Danaans shall lay his heavy hands upon you by the hollow ships, not even if you should designate Agamemnon, who now boasts that he is by far the best of the Achaeans."
> (Il.I,88-91)

His disinclination to avoid provoking Agamemnon at the height of his wrath, and his subsequent justification of himself rather than acknowledgement of the King's authority, further demonstrate his resentment and pride. He appears, however, most conceited, unfeeling, and unreasonable in his later rejection of Agamemnon's generous and humble suit of appeasement. Indeed, as Achilles himself reveals, his recalcitrance is due more to his wounded pride than his loss of Briseis: "But my heart swells with anger when I consider those matters, how insolently the son of Atreus treated me among the Argives, as though I were some despised vagabond" (Il. IX, 646 - 648). Achilles, of course, suffers for his excessive pride through the death of Patroclus. The gods, too, are subject to pride and fits of passion. Hera, Athene, and Poseidon all zealously pursue their own interests and causes to the extent that, often when Zeus restricts their activities, they either barely contain their anger and frustration or actually rail against him. Even Zeus does not remain at all times sublimely detached and unemotional; he, too, occasionally reproaches and threatens the other gods and even attempts to provoke them,

as when he suggests to Hera the possibility of establishing peace between the Greeks and Trojans (Il. IV, 5 - 19). Due to the freedom of will allotted to them gods and men in the Iliad and Odyssey can be selfishly and emotionally motivated.

In pursuit of their ends they do not hesitate to use deception and guile. Agamemnon confides to the Achaean chiefs his plan to assure himself of the devotion of the army after the departure of Achilles by surreptitiously obliging them to decide between staying at or leaving Troy while masking his true intentions (Il. II, 53 - 75). Odysseus, the master of craft, beguiles Dolon into revealing the disposition of the Trojan camp, and employs cunning extensively in the Odyssey to achieve his ends, as in his escape from the Cyclops and dealings with the suitors. The gods, too, are quite prepared to deceive each other to accomplish their designs, as when Poseidon insinuates himself into the fighting in Book XIII while Zeus's back is turned, and when Hera distracts Zeus in Book XIV to allow Poseidon to operate effectively among the Achaean ranks. The behaviour of both gods and men can be quite subtle and sophisticated due to their immanent freedom.

They also possess the capacity for positive feelings that are equally independent from the determinism of fate. Agamemnon may at times act selfishly and ungraciously, but he may also exhibit genuine love and concern, as towards his brother after Pandarus has wounded him: "But I will have terrible grief on your account, Menelaus, if you die and fill up the lot of your life" (Il. IV, 169 - 170). He also shows real contrition, humility, and conciliatoriness in his attempts to appease Achilles in Book IX. Achilles, too, has noble qualities beyond selfish appreciation of his own worth and glory, as he demonstrates in his grief for Patroclus and his remorse for quarrelling with Agamemnon. The gods,

too, are capable of feeling, as Athene and Hera demonstrate by their zealous support of the Achaeans, as Thetis shows by her continual sorrowing for her son's untimely fate, and as Zeus proves by his desire to save his son, Sarpedon, from his fate. Immanent gods and men display an autonomy of thought, feeling, and action that distinguish them as real, credible individuals.

The Combination of Divine Immanence and Transcendence

There is an apparent contradiction in the ascription of both immanence and transcendence to the gods. The former implies possession of limited power and inclusion in the course of events. The latter requires virtually unlimited power and comprehension of the course of events. The two would seem to be incompatible in a single entity.

This combination, however, does not prove, ultimately, to be an intolerable inconsistency since the divine nature is never fixed as an entirely immanent or transcendent phenomenon. The mixture is closely related to the variable duality of essence and spirit of which every divinity consists. Just as the ratio of spirit and essence may vary in the different manifestations of a single god, so a divinity may appear more confined in immanence on some occasions, and closer to transcendence on others. No manifestation of any deity is ever definitive since there is always another of the same god, or of a different one, of greater nature and power. The nature of divinity, as it is represented in the Iliad and Odyssey, is not ultimately inconsistent since divine manifestations form a continuous progression from the finitude of immanence to the infinity of transcendence.

The natures and actions of the gods fall into larger contexts and patterns in the grand transcendent plan of fate. Their collective will

may not reflect the individual preferences of each divinity; it may correspond instead to the prevailing opinion among them, which is usually that of Zeus. Apollo and Zeus pity Hector's dishonoured corpse, while Hera shows herself to be implacable and indifferent towards him even in death (Il. XXIV, 56 - 61). Because Zeus's view is decisive, he commissions Thetis to inform her son that the gods in general are angry with him for his obstinate retention of Hector's body (Il. XXIV, 113 - 116). Hera's personal opinion disappears in the consensus of the gods. When, in Book XIII of the Iliad, Poseidon takes advantage of Zeus's lapse of attention to enter secretly the army of the Achaeans in order to aid them, subsequent events in the episode are not simply resolved into the fortuitous results of the separate influences of two gods pursuing independent, finite interests. They are shown to be the ordered results of the deliberate execution of a single, higher plan: "The two (Zeus and Poseidon) stretched out the cord of mighty strife and equal war, tugging in opposite directions, a cord that was not to be broken, not to be loosed, which loosened the knees of many" (Il. XIII, 358 - 360). The manifestations of the two gods in this description surpass their appearances elsewhere in the episode in both power and understanding; they are, in short, much less immanent. The imagery in this passage is metaphorical, but it nevertheless represents a higher principle of order that subsumes the limited and apparently independent activities of Zeus and Poseidon. The "depth" of reality is unlimited.

Since he resides at the top of the divine hierarchy, Zeus faces no barriers to his attainment of absolute power and control of the universe, except within the realms of other divine beings, such as Night. Indeed it has been seen that he does exercise transcendent rule over the world in his

higher manifestations more often than any other god. Yet he never becomes totally removed from the course of events; he holds a definite place in the scheme of things as an Olympian god, and so he is always immanent to some degree and a participant within, as well as the formulator of, history. To be involved and immanent he must accept limitation, either consciously or unconsciously. So he, who has the ability to ordain the future merely by nodding his head, does not always simply tell the gods what is to happen, as at the beginning of Book VIII of the Iliad, but gives some semblance of sharing the determination of events with them. The omen that he sent to the Greeks before their departure for Troy revealed that he had already decided upon the course of the whole Trojan War. Yet as the war develops he intermittently proposes to the divine assembly that it define its future direction. Moreover, he listens to individual prayers as though their objects had not already been determined. In this manner he attends to Achilles' supplication requesting glory and safety for Patroclus, whose fate has, in reality, already been fixed: "Zeus the counsellor heard him. The father granted a part of his prayer to him, but denied the other. He permitted him to thrust back war and fighting from the ships, but he did not allow him to return safe from battle" (Il. XVI, 249 - 252).

Every manifestation of Zeus is transcended by one more powerful and more comprehensive. After the death of Patroclus reference is made to the god's desire not to have the hero's corpse fall into the hands of the Trojans (Il. XVII, 270 - 273). One would presume, then, that he would take measures to ensure the performance of his will. Yet, later, when Iris rouses Achilles to frighten off the Trojans and so to allow the retrieval of the body, the divine action is reported to have occurred

without Zeus's knowledge (Il. XVIII, 184 - 186). The implication is, then, that the god's manifestation in the latter instance is more limited in knowledge and power than that in the former; the latter may even be considered to be contained by the former. The petition of Thetis to which Zeus nods in assent in Book I only concerns the elevation of the dishonoured Achilles through the advancement of the Trojan cause and the dejection of Achaean fortunes. Yet the subsequent course of events involves a great deal more than this simple antithesis. The Achaeans are indeed driven to desperation by Achilles' absence, but, in the meantime, many Achaean heroes gain distinction, such as Diomedes, Aias, and Patroclus, while many Trojans perish. Nor does the Iliad consist only of Zeus's fulfilment of Thetis' and Achilles' request. It recounts as well the quarrelling and chastisement of Agamemnon and Achilles, and, indeed, the whole Achaean army, as well as the tragic rise and fall of Troy's greatest hero and, together with him, of the fortunes of Troy in the War. Achilles comes to recognize that Zeus responded to his request in fulfilment of a much greater plan:

> "Father Zeus, in truth you bestow great folly upon men. Surely the son of Atreus would never have roused anger so thoroughly in my breast, and he would not so implacably have taken the girl against my will. But Zeus undoubtedly wanted death to befall many Achaeans."
>
> (Il.XIX,270-274)

The manifestation of the god to which Achilles refers in this passage transcends that which Thetis approached in Book I.

In the council of the gods described in Book I of the Odyssey Zeus, appearing merely in his limited role as president of the divine assembly, asserts his own benevolence towards Odysseus, while attributing to Poseidon the divine hostility to which he is subject (65 - 69). Yet Eurycleia later

lays her master's suffering to the charge of the supreme god:

> "Alas, my child, that I cannot help you! Zeus truly hated you above all men although you had a god-fearing soul. For no one among mortals ever burned as many fat thigh pieces or choice hecatombs for Zeus who delights in thunder as you gave to him while you prayed that you might come to a comfortable old age and rear your glorious son. But now from you alone he has utterly removed the day of return."
>
> (Od.XIX,363-369)

Odysseus himself blames Zeus and his attendants for his long hardship and exile: "But Zeus and the other gods bound me in suffering against my will far from my fatherland" (Od. XXIII, 352 - 353). The sympathy for Odysseus that Zeus expresses in his more limited manifestations is ultimately superseded by his transcendent control over the whole of the hero's fate.

Zeus has merely to nod to ordain the future; such limited but omnipotent involvement in the course of events would seem to be sufficient. Yet he doesn't hesitate to act as the primary, immanent agent in the execution of his own plan, as he demonstrates by sending a false dream to Agamemnon after considering "how he might honour Achilles while destroying many men by the ships of the Achaeans" (Il. II, 4 - 5). Zeus himself acknowledges the flexibility of his power and manifestations when he tells Hera that he will strengthen the Trojans:

> "If you wish, O ox-eyed royal Hera, you shall surely behold at dawn the son of Cronos with even greater overwhelming power destroying the multitudinous army of the Argive spearmen. For mighty Hector shall not cease from war until the swift-footed son of Peleus rise up by his ships, on that day when, in the most terrible distress, they fight by the sterns of the ships for the dead Patroclus, for so is it ordained."
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> (Il. VIII, 470 - 477)

By equating his own efforts with those of Hector and the Trojans Zeus, while in an immanent manifestation, ascribes to himself transcendent direction of the events that constitute most of the remaining story of the Iliad. Every finite, immanent action that he undertakes is always

comprehended by a greater, more transcendent one. He, and to a less extent, the other gods, through a progression of manifestations resolve in their own persons the dichotomy of diversity and unity in the world. They fuse together the apparently independent, spontaneous parts into a patterned, intelligible whole.

The relation between transcendence and immanence within the Iliad and the Odyssey is vividly illustrated in the account of Hephaestus' fashioning of Achilles' shield. The scenes that he engraves, or embosses, upon the shield represent the universe, centred upon the world of men, in all its richness and variety. The complete picture that they form includes the three dimensions of heaven, earth, and ocean; pastoral life and city life; the activities of war and those of peace; life and death. Its analogy with the real world is confirmed by the circumscription of the River of Ocean around the rim of the shield. The minuteness and accuracy of detail in the portrayal of life increase its verisimilitude and impart to the figures within it the appearance of spontaneity and independent existence. Yet the whole picture forms a pattern, fixed in metal, planned and wrought by the god Hephaestus. The figures within it thus correspond to phenomena immanent within the universe, the shield parallels the framework of the universe itself, and the craftsman god resembles the transcendent divine creator. Just as divinity has both immanent and transcendent manifestations, so gods such as Ares and Athene (Il. XVIII, 516), as well as the divine personifications, Strife, Tumult, and Fate, appear within the picture (535) while Hephaestus, the maker of the shield, works outside it. The shield of Achilles serves as an apt symbol of reality, as it is portrayed in the Iliad and Odyssey.

CHAPTER IV

ORDER AND UNITY

The Organic Nature of the World of the Iliad and Odyssey

The extra dimension that the supernatural adds to reality connects phenomena on a level deeper than the purely physical. It extends the limits of their association beyond physical qualities, such as contiguity or attachment, so that they may conjoin in patterns of unlimited variety and complexity. Their aggregate constitutes an organic, ordered unity.

The course of events, as it is presented in the Iliad and Odyssey, does not have the appearance of an arbitrary conglomeration of unordered, unrelated incidents. Rather it shows a strong tendency to crystallize into patterns and formulae, particularly where certain incidents recur. A highly systematic picture of reality thus emerges. Events acquire the aspect of ceremony, as Norman Austin observes:

> Whether it be a noble scene like Priam's meeting with Achilleus in the Iliad or a more mundane description - Agamemnon's sceptre, an arming scene, preparations for morning's battle or the evening meal - everywhere there is the sense of the processional: orderly arrangement of events within a sequence, stylized exaggeration of gesture, a reverence for detail.[1]

Some activities, such as sacrifice and feasting, entail such rigorously conventional forms of behaviour that they take on the appearance of rituals. Reference to the regularity of repetition of natural processes, such as the advent of dawn and that of night, the behaviour of Scylla and Charybdis--"Three times during the day she sends forth her water, and three times she sucks it down again" (Od. XII, 105), and the toll taken of the doves of

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[1] Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon, p. 130.

Zeus at the Wandering Rocks--"Neither the birds nor the shy doves that bear ambrosia to father Zeus ever pass by there without the smooth rock diminishing their number. The father, however, adds another to make up their complement" (Od. XII, 62 - 65)--emphasizes the cyclic nature of reality.[1] Formulaic phrases, especially those descriptive phrases and epithets that are fastened inseparably to certain phenomena, also stress the orderliness of the world. In many instances these applications seem to bear little relevance to their contexts, but they nevertheless emphasize the fundamentally fixed, unchanging nature of reality.[2] Sarpedon, in attempting to rouse Hector to greater valour, makes a passing reference to the great wealth that he left at home in Lycia, concerning which he comments, apparently superfluously, that "the man who lacks it desires it" (Il. V, 481). Yet such a statement does have value, for it accentuates the fact that the world, regardless of circumstances, is ruled by fixed laws, and thus it firmly establishes the situation in which it appears within the context of a higher order and stability. The same may be said of the epithet, "much-nourishing" (poluboteira), applied to the earth. It would seem to belong solely in an agricultural context but it is yet used, paradoxically, in a situation that involves the slaughter of men, who fall upon the "much-nourishing earth" (Il. VII, 277), or it may be said of the Dawn, which, regardless of the vicissitudes of human existence, always appears "saffron-robed," "rosy-fingered," or "with beautiful tresses," as during Odysseus' sufferings at sea (Od. V, 390).[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 133.

2 C. S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 22.

3 Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition, p. 115.

Reality in the Iliad and the Odyssey is very much a system; it does not tolerate permanent anarchy or chaos.

Unity through Analogies

The organic nature of the Homeric world is reflected in analogies.[1] Phenomena among which no physical or spatial links exist are yet bound together because they possess some similar properties. Often the spiritual or psychological condition of a person is reflected symbolically in his physical condition. In such circumstances the two are merged inseparably together in a unity, yet each retains its integrity. Often spiritual desolation is mirrored and accentuated in images of physical isolation, as in the picture of Odysseus looking out in yearning over the sea from Calypso's island: "He was sitting on the shore, in the same place, weeping, breaking his heart with tears and groans and agony. While pouring out his tears he stared out over the barren sea" (Od. V, 82 - 84). The description of Odysseus sitting alone and motionless in the vast expanse of sea and shore makes him appear insignificant and helpless and so conveys his feelings of frustration and despair. Similar imagery reifies sentiments of helpless frustration and injury in the scene in which Chryses wanders silently along the shore of the sea after being rebuffed by Agamemnon (Il. I, 34) and in the account of Achilles' behaviour after the removal of Briseis: "Then Achilles, weeping, withdrew far from his companions and sat down on the shore of the grey sea, looking out over the wine-dark water" (Il. I, 348 - 350). Apollo's majesty and formidable power are strongly suggested in his wrathful descent from Olympus: "Angry at heart he went down from the peaks of Olympus, bearing on his shoulders his bow and close-covered quiver. And the arrows rattled on the shoulders

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[1] Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon, p. 105.

of the angry god as he moved; and he came like the night" (Il. I, 44 - 47). He resembles a mighty hunter pursuing his prey, and so evokes terror and awe, which are sharpened by his association with darkness. The rattling of his arrows indicates the violence of his passage and hence his great wrath. The physical and spiritual are also perfectly blended in the episode involving Priam's recovery of Hector's corpse (Il. XXIV). It is carried out under the cover of darkness, the appropriate atmosphere for the king's sorrowful and unpleasant mission. It is fitting that Hermes, the god of deception and conductor of the souls of the dead (as he appears in the final book of the Odyssey), should guide Priam through the Greek camp to his dead son and out again with his corpse. Laertes' despair and grief at the long absence of his son are reflected in his physical circumstances as depicted by Anticleia's ghost:

> "Your father remains rooted in the country and does not go to town. There are no beds for him, or cloaks, or shining blankets, but during the winter he sleeps in the house with the servants in the dust by the fire, and wears ragged clothing on his skin. Then, when summer comes, and luxuriant late summer, he has a bed of fallen leaves scraped together for him on the ground anywhere on the slope of his wine-producing vineyard. There he lies sorrowing, fanning his grief in his longing for your return. He has attained to a harsh old age."
>
> (Od.XI,187-196)

Achilles' wrath, indignation, and alienation from Agamemnon find expression in the single, simple action of casting down the sceptre of judgment (Il. I, 245 - 246). In an organic world the physical becomes the symbolic representation of the spiritual.

Nor do only negative emotions have symbolic, physical analogies. Agamemnon's conciliatoriness towards Achilles is matched by his physical humility in Book XIX of the Iliad when he remains, uncustomarily, sitting

while apologizing to Achilles (77).[1] The natural shelter that Odysseus discovers on Phaeacia after his harrowing struggles at sea creates a perfect harmony between his internal and external conditions:

> He entered a copse that he found in an open space near the water. Then he crawled under two bushes that were growing from the same stem; one was a wild olive, the other an ordinary one. The damp blast of blowing winds did not blow through them, nor ever did the brilliant sun pierce them with its beams, nor did rain penetrate right through them, so thickly did they grow together. Odysseus ducked beneath them. Then he scraped together a spacious bed with his trusty hands. For there was a very great pile of leaves, large enough to cover two or three men in the winter season, no matter how harsh it might be.
>
> (Od.V,475-485)

Cedric Whitman identifies and explains the effects of this imagery: "The passage is full of an overwhelming sense of relief and salvation, but it arises not from anything Odysseus says about it, but from the nature of the things which he encounters."[2]

Nor do analogies exist only between the emotional and the physical. In an organic world the condition of any phenomenon must be mirrored by its context. When, after Hera's seduction of Zeus, Poseidon gains a free hand to support the Achaeans against the Trojans, the account of the renewed onset of the opposing sides is accompanied by a reference to a similar phenomenon in the battle's immediate context, the surging of the sea against the shore (Il. XIV, 392 - 393). The assault of waves upon the beach corresponds to the clash of the armies both in energy and regularity, as well as in inspiration: the Sea-god impels both the Greek host and the water. Agamemnon's martial glory is, appropriately, measured

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[1] Ibid., p. 102.

[2] Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition, p. 120.

in terms of the magnitude, both in size and importance of the city he destroyed, as Odysseus tells Polyphemus:[1] "Surely his fame is the greatest under heaven, for so great a city did he sack, and many were the people that he killed" (Od. IX, 264 - 266).

Society in particular is portrayed as an organic whole. When its heart and head are healthy, the rest of it flourishes. The realm of a good king must be prosperous, as Odysseus indicates in praising Penelope:

> "Truly your fame has reached the broad heaven, like that of some blameless king. A god-fearing man, he rules among men numerous and mighty and upholds justice; the black earth bears wheat and barley and the trees are weighed down with fruit; the sheep give birth continually, and the sea supplies fish, - all from his good government. And so the people prosper under him."
> (Od.XIX,108-114)

The moral, physical and economic dimensions of society are shown by this passage to be fused indivisibly together.[2] Ironically, although Odysseus compares Penelope's reputation with that of an excellent king, the condition of Ithaca in no way matches that of the dominions of the latter. In fact, if the health of the monarchy is in any way impaired, that of the rest of the state must also be undermined. The disorder in Ithaca is the inevitable result of Odysseus' prolonged absence and the inability of the other members of the royal family to rule strongly and efficiently in his place. A vacuum exists in the centre of the land, typified by Laertes' withdrawal from the palace to the country.[3] Where the centre does not hold, things may be expected to fall apart, as the upheaval of the normal social order in the royal palace indicates. On the one hand,

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[1] Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon, p. 89.

[2] H. D. F. Kitto, Poiesis: Structure and Thought (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 134.

[3] Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon, p. 164.

Penelope and Telemachus are powerless, virtually imprisoned in their own home, while the body of their servants is split between loyalty and disobedience. On the other hand, the extremely abnormal situation has arisen in which two servants, Eurycleia and Eumaeus, are obliged to shoulder the management of the royal household.[1] The dejection of the House of Odysseus is represented by the abject condition of Laertes. It is analogously expressed as well in the degradation suffered by Argus, once Odysseus' sleek, favoured hunting dog but, in his absence, a diseased, neglected shadow of his former self, at the extremity of misery in the manure outside the palace. Eumaeus draws the connection between the conditions of Argus and the royal household, contrasting his present circumstances with those of happier times:

> "Most certainly this is the dog of a man who died far away. If he were in form and ability such as he was when Odysseus left him behind to go to Troy you would soon see his speed and strength. No wild animal that he pursued escaped him in the depths of the deep wood, and he was highly proficient in following tracks. But now he is bound in misery while his master has perished outside his fatherland and the negligent women do not tend him. Servants, when their masters no longer supervise them, no more then wish to do their work properly."
>
> (Od.XVII,312-321)

The ruin of Odysseus' home is summed up in the ruin of Argus. It is highly appropriate that Athene disguise Odysseus as a beggar. A king who returns home after much suffering to discover his household subjected to outrage at the hands of arrogant men and to find himself incapable of immediately remedying the situation suffers humiliation that can only be approximated by the wretchedness of a beggar.

In the organic Homeric society private justice, especially that of

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[1] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

royalty, must have a public counterpart. So Telemachus brings his complaint against the suitors before an assembly of Ithacans in Book II of the Odyssey. Similarly, Odysseus' private revenge and reassertion of domestic control must be followed by a confrontation with the suitors' kinsmen and supporters among the Ithacan public and by the extension of his rule over the whole realm. So the strife and final truce that occur in Book XXIV must follow the events of Books XXII and XXIII. As Kitto remarks, "no Greek audience could think that the tale had reached its conclusion in a bedroom, when over a hundred young men of Ithaca were lying dead just outside the house."[1] Social unity must be preserved.

Analogies not only reflect the natures of individual phenomena; they also determine them. Since human experience is conceived to be a unity, the interpretation of situations in the present is based upon paradigms of mythical or historical content.[2] So Agamemnon seeks to diminish his responsibility for his churlishness towards Achilles by imputing it to divine powers, since they are considered to be the hypostasis of everything:

> "It is not I who am guilty but Zeus and Moira and Erinys, who walks in darkness. It was they who injected wild madness into my wits in the assembly on the day when I wrested from Achilles his prize. But what was I to do? The god brings about everything" (Il.XIX,86-90)

Similarly, he attempts to mitigate the gravity of the offence by comparing his own folly with the infatuation, wrought by Atē, of the greatest being, Zeus (Il. XIX, 95-96). Phoenix tries to influence Achilles' behaviour through appeal to the story of Meleager who, though alienated from his

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1 Kitto, Poiesis, pp. 139-140.

2 Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon, p. 125.

people by his mother's curse, was yet placated in time to save his city from destruction. Phoenix expects Achilles to behave similarly with regard to the Achaeans. In an organic world such examples are considered to possess efficacy in moulding human action.

The Unlimited Potentiality for Correspondence

In an organic world relations among different phenomena need not be confined to strict analogies. In fact, correspondences may be drawn between any two entities. Everything is, as it were, related to everything else. The configuration of phenomena in reality is thus, theoretically, of unlimited complexity and depth. Such is the nature of reality as Baudelaire depicted it in his poem, "Correspondances":

> La Nature est un temple ou de vivants piliers
> Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
> L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
> Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.
>
> Comme de longs echos qui de loin se confondent
> Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
> Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
> Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.[1]

The interrelation of all things accords meaning to everything; nothing can be without significance. The omen depends upon this universal interrelation for its meaning and efficacy. The correspondence between the omen and the future event may be explicit, as in the dream that Penelope recounts to the disguised Odysseus, in which the eagle slaughtering the geese represents her husband avenging himself upon the suitors (Od. XIX, 535-558), or it may be obscure, like the skirmish between the two eagles above the assembly of the Ithacans, which again foreshadows Odysseus' revenge (Od. II, 146 - 167). In either case the omen reflects the under-

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[1] Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du Mal, ed. Marcel Galliot (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1961), vv. 1 - 8, p. 19.

lying order and unity of the world. In fact, any occurrence whatsoever may have the quality of an omen. Telemachus has only to sneeze for his mother to seize upon the incident as a sign of the suitors' impending doom: "Do you not see how my son has sneezed at all that I have said? Therefore the destruction of every one of the suitors will not be left incomplete; not one of them shall escape death and the fates" (Od. XVII, 545 - 547). As Norman Austin remarks,

> Characters within the Homeric poems find what we should call "symbol" in any phenomenon at all, in a word or exclamation, a sneeze, a dream, a shout, in thunder or lightning, in the movement of birds, in any chance coincidence of two events.[1]

The organic nature of the world permits different phenomena to be fused together into new entities. Homophrosynē, oneness of mind, is a virtue of great value, as Odysseus tells Nausicaa in blessing her:

> "There is nothing of greater benefit and excellence than when a man and woman keep house in unity of thinking and disposition. They cause great distress to their enemies and great delight to their friends, as they themselves know best."
>
> (Od.VI,182-185)

Of a similar nature and worth is the state of being of one "thumos," or soul, or heart, experienced by two or more counsellors or warriors who have attained singleness of purpose and feeling. Nestor, in speaking to Telemachus, fondly recalls how he and Odysseus, sharing a "single soul," were able to offer the best advice to the Achaeans at Troy (Od. III, 128 - 129). In the Iliad Telamonian Aias describes himself and his companion in arms, Aias son of Oileus, as having "equal soul with equal name" (Il. XVII, 720), with which they have withstood fierce Ares in the past (720 - 721). When special resistance is required to ward off the Trojan onset, the Achaeans rally with oneness of heart, as when they protect Patroclus' body (Il. XVII, 266 - 267). When Idomeneus and his companions abide Aeneas' assault to regain the body of Alcathous, they, too, "take their

1 Austin, Archery, p. 118.

stand in a throng, having one soul in their breast" (Il. XIII, 487 - 488). Significantly, such fusion of spirit is accompanied by physical proximity, even contiguity.[1] At one point during the fighting at the ships both Achaean and Trojan hosts are animated by a single will: "They stood hard by each other, having one soul, and they fought with their sharp axes and battle-axes, and great swords and double-pointed spears" (Il. XV, 710 - 712). Trojans and Achaeans alike are united in location, hatred, and battle-lust, and so share a single soul. Social units that possess similar physical and spiritual conditions are easily fused together.

The Exchange of Qualities in an Organic Association

Even when no striking similarity exists between separate phenomena their connection results in an organic relation in which they impart their individual attributes to each other. The exchange of qualities creates a corporate identity for each phenomenon, in addition to its original, individual identity. Each phenomenon thus enriches the other with extra dimension and depth. When the poet wishes to enhance anything he has recourse to imagery in which this principle of enrichment operates. Achilles describes the royal sceptre of the Achaeans in detail that may seem irrelevant at first sight:

> "But I will speak out to you and swear upon it a great oath on this very staff, which shall never grow leaves and branches since it first left its stump in the mountains, nor shall it sprout afresh; for the bronze stripped it utterly of leaves and bark; and now the sons of the Achaeans who are judges bear it in their hands, the men who watch over the laws from Zeus; but this will be the great oath..."
> (Il. I, 233-239)

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[1] Bruno Snell, Poetry and Society (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 16.

In fact, however, Achilles provides a detailed record of the sceptre's history to illuminate it and stress its importance, and hence the gravity of his oath. The description is inextricably fused with its subject and so enriches it, bestowing upon it its own qualities. It seems a natural extension to the subject rather than an incongruous appendage; it is in effect an extended qualifier. So, too, the long "digression" on the infliction of Odysseus' scar adds enormous dimension to both the scar and its bearer. Of course, it is not only the scar, the small irregularity of tissue on Odysseus' skin, that causes Eurycleia to recognize her master, but also her acquaintance with the personal experience of Odysseus that brought about and was associated with the rent in his flesh. Indeed, without this knowledge, she would probably find the scar itself as insignificant in import as it is in size. The long elaboration imparts to Odysseus dimensions that render him recognizable. The place, Dorium, receives similar enhancement from the anecdote concerning the meeting between Thamyris and the Muses recounted in the catalogue of ships (Il. II, 594 - 600). The name ceases to be just the designation of a particular location; it acquires significance and substance. Nothing in the descriptions of the Iliad and Odyssey is ever irrelevant or insignificant; everything establishes the corporate identity of everything else. Reality is represented as a whole the totality of which exceeds the sum of its parts, and from which no part may be removed.

The Corporate Identities of Organically Related Phenomena

The process of fusion that accompanies juxtaposition of different details in the imagery of the poems gives certain scenes a symbolic, suggestive form. The appearance of Penelope in Book I of the Odyssey has

a haunting quality: "When she, a woman of divine beauty, arrived before the suitors, she stood by a pillar of the great, well-made roof and held her shining veil before her cheeks, while a loyal handmaid stood on each side of her" (332 - 335). A very distinct pattern appears in the organization of physical features within this picture, yet the pattern is bound into a single entity that transcends a mere physical arrangement. The combination of pattern and unity gives the scene a symbolic, suggestive aspect. Both the disposition of details and their corporate influence suggest and enhance the beauty, aloofness, and majesty of the queen. She first occupies the centre of the reader's attention by her relative isolation opposite the suitors. This solitude also emphasizes her aloofness and, together with her veil, increases her mystery. Her beauty is heightened by her symmetrical relationship to the other elements of the picture, including the suitors, the pillar, and the maids. The pillar communicates to her its own solitude and, together with the roof, indomitable strength and majesty. Her importance is further magnified by her central location between her two maids. Exclusion of irrelevant material accentuates and concentrates the individual details and their physical arrangement and hence facilitates their unification. The whole scene thus acquires the appearance of an archetype.

The details of a description in Book VI of the Odyssey concerning Nausicaa asleep also concur in a unified pattern:

> Athene went into an elaborately fashioned chamber in which lay asleep a girl like the immortals in stature and appearance. She was Nausicaa, the daughter of great-hearted Alcinous. On each side of her, by the door-posts, were two maids who had received their beauty from the Graces. The shining doors were shut together.
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> (Od.VI,15-19)

As in the previous passage the exclusion of all extraneous information

induces the reader to focus his attention only on essential details which, in combination, amplify the beauty and majesty of Nausicaa. One's vision centres first upon the divinely beautiful princess whose beauty is increased by that of the room, the two attendants, and the general symmetry of the picture. The situation of the three figures emphasizes Nausicaa's importance; she occupies the centre of the scene while her two maids lie beside the door-posts. The imagery has the idealized, suggestive form of a dream.

The communication of individual qualities in such unified imagery is vividly demonstrated in a passage involving Nestor in Book III of the Odyssey: "The Gerenian knight Nestor arose from his bed, went out, and sat down upon the polished marble throne, white and shining with oil, which had been placed for him before his lofty doors" (Od. III, 405 - 408). Due to the coalescence of details, the beauty and lustre of the marble bench as well as the might and magnificence of the doors are imparted to Nestor. The features of the picture, unobscured by superfluous detail, unite in a pattern that pierces the senses and stirs the imagination, leaving an overwhelming impression of Nestor's royal splendour.

Such symbolical configurations may acquire limitless variety and complexity. The description in Nausicaa's instructions to Odysseus is particularly detailed:

> "But when the buildings and courtyard have enclosed you pass very quickly through the great hall until you reach my mother. She sits at the hearth in the light of the fire, spinning the sea-purple wool while leaning on a column with her serving maids sitting behind her, a wonder to behold. There the throne of my father rests against hers, and there he sits drinking his wine like a god."
>
> (Od.VI,303-309)

At first the viewer's attention fixes upon the queen, who is first to appear in the great hall. Her importance and majesty are emphasized by

her proximity to the hearth, the heart of the palace, and to the column which, as it supports the building, is expressive of strength, as well as by placement in front of her attendants. The act of spinning and the purple colour of the yarn accentuate her feminity and royal beauty. The unity and dimension of the picture do not end here, however, for the reader's gaze is expanded to comprehend the king. The presence of the queen, the king's throne, and his magnificent quaffing of wine exalt him with regal glory. He does not appear apart from the queen, or superior, or inferior to her; rather, they and their surroundings complement each other in an organic unity that amounts to a celebration of royalty, or even an archetype of the Homeric conception of royalty.

Correspondence through the Simile

The impressionistic function of the Homeric simile was commented upon in the first chapter. It also, however, offers another way of establishing correspondences without particular regard to similarity. Indeed, its open conjunctive element permits, in theory, the connection of any two phenomena, no matter how naturally disparate they may be. The simile is ever able, by nature, to effect an organic unity in which the parts share their individual characteristics.

The organic fusion of simile and subject renders impossible complete analysis of their union, but the principal effects of the simile upon the subject may be noted. When Panderus wounds Menelaus the flow of blood receives an ostensibly incongruous comparison:

> As when some woman, Maeonian or Carian, stains ivory with crimson to be a cheek-piece for horses, and it lies in a store-room, and many horsemen pray to own it, but it remains there a treasure for the king and both an ornament for his horse and a glory for the charioteer, even so, Menelaus, were your shapely thighs stained with blood, as well as your legs and fine ankles beneath.
>
> (Il.IV,141-147)

The similarity of nature and context between Menelaus' thighs streaming with blood as the result of a wound, and an ivory cheek-piece painted crimson by a woman, would seem to be rather slight. Yet, in the fusion of elements effected by the simile the depiction of Menelaus' wound receives an extra dimension that renders it real and vivid to a degree that could not otherwise be attained. Without losing its own individual identity, the wound gains that of the ornament. In particular, the simile heightens the contrast between the blood and skin on Menelaus' thighs.

The metaphysical poets,blessed with a unified sensibility, achieved similar effects. In "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" John Donne compares the souls of parted lovers both to thin gold foil and to a pair of compasses:

> Our two souls therefore, which are one,
> Though I must goe, endure not yet
> A breach, but an expansion,
> Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.
>
> If they be two, they are two so
> As stiffe twin compasses are two,
> Thy` soule the fixt foot, makes no show
> To move, but doth if the other doe.
>
> And though it in the center sit,
> Yet when the other far doth rome,
> It leaves, and hearkens after it,
> And growes erect, as that comes home.[1]

At first sight the relation between separated lovers would seem to have little in common with either gold foil or "stiffe twin compasses." In fact, the qualities of the two similes are superimposed upon the relation, thus giving the intangible phenomenon concrete form and reality.

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[1] John Donne, "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," in The Complete Poetry of John Donne, ed. John Shawcross (New York: New York University Press, 1968), v. 6 - 8, ll. 21 - 32, p. 88.

In the Iliad, the might and grandeur of a violent storm at sea enhance the might and glory of Hector in action: "He went among the foremost ranks courageous in spirit and charged into battle like a blustering storm wind, which rushes down and stirs up the purple sea" (Il. XI, 296 - 298). In another passage wave, fire, and wind impart their different types and qualities of noise to that of the onset of the Trojans and Greeks, and thus enrich and magnify it:

> They clashed with great clamour. The wave of the sea does not crash so loudly against the land when it is stirred up from the main by the harsh wind of the North; moreover the roar of blazing fire is not so great in the wooded glens of a mountain when it breaks forth to burn the forest; nor does the wind howl so greatly about the high-leafed oaks, the wind that rages most violently, as then was the cry of the Trojans and Achaeans terribly shouting, when they charged each other.
> (Il.XIV,393-401)

The sudden serenity of a mountain peak appearing clearly in the midst of dissipating clouds accentuates the Achaeans' sense of relief after their thwarting of the Trojan attempt to fire the ships:

> As when from the lofty summit of a great mountain Zeus the lightning-gatherer removes a dense cloud and all the peaks appear, and highest headlands, and wooded glens, and the limitless sky is revealed from the depth of heaven, so the Danaans caught their breath for a short time when they had thrust back consuming fire from the ship.
> (Il.XVI,297-302)

The simile provides the poet with virtually unlimited possibilities for the intensification and enrichment of a subject.

The extra dimension that the simile applies to its subject may serve to impose order upon its details when they appear chaotic or indistinguishable. The image of leaves and flowers imparts individual detail to the promiscuous mass of the Achaean army without obscuring its multitude: "They stood in the flowery meadow of Scamander in their myriads, as many as the leaves and flowers in their season" (Il. II, 467 - 468). Similar

imagery gives order and meaning to the apparently random and meaningless cycle of birth and death:

> "Just as the generation of leaves, such also is that of men. The wind sheds some leaves on the ground but the burgeoning forest grows others when the season of spring arrives. So one generation of men comes forth while another ceases."
>
> (Il.VI,146-149)

In this passage the seasonal patterns and order of nature embrace the life of men. The effects of winds which, though impetuous, yet operate within the laws of nature, give expression and order to the agitation raised in the Achaean host by the despairing address of Agamemnon:

> The assembly was stirred like the long waves of the sea, of the Icarian Main, which the East Wind or even the South Wind has raised after rushing upon the sea from the clouds of father Zeus. As when the West Wind comes and moves the deep cornfield rushing upon it furiously, and its ears bend down, so the whole assembly of men was moved.
>
> (Il.II,144-149)

The straightness of the carpenter's line, superimposed upon a battle scene, serves to emphasize the stalemate in the fighting between the Trojans and Greeks as well as the orderliness of their ranks:

> But as the carpenter's line in the hands of a skilled craftsman straightens a ship's timber, a craftsman who is well trained in every skill through the influence of Athene, so upon them were stretched equal fighting and war.
>
> (Il.XIV,410-413)

Penelope's relief and joy at being reunited with her husband are given substance and depth through comparison with the similar sentiments of shipwrecked sailors who have escaped the sea:

> As when the welcome land appears to swimmers whose well-wrought ship Poseidon has shivered in the sea, crushed by wind and mighty wave; few have escaped from the grey sea and swum to land, and much brine has become encrusted upon their skin, and joyfully do they set foot on the earth, having escaped danger; so then was her husband a welcome sight to her as she gazed upon him.
>
> (Od.XXIII,233-239)

This simile, however, provides more than a measurement of the queen's feelings. It unites the experiences of herself and Odysseus, since he has personally experienced the suffering and feelings of the ship-wrecked sailor.[1] The simile places its subject in a larger order.

In similes describing weather phenomena reference is often made to Zeus. These not only accord order and dimension to their subjects but suggest the transcendent control of Zeus over all. The Achaeans are described as resisting the assaults of the Trojans

> ... like clouds, which the son of Cronos sets in calm weather motionless upon lofty mountains while sleeps the might of the North Wind and the other raging winds that blow and disperse the shadowy clouds with their whistling blasts. So the Danaans unceasingly withstood the Trojans and did not flee.
>
> (Il.V,522-526)

A direct correspondence is established between the Achaeans and the clouds of the simile. Thus, since Zeus controls the motion of the clouds, the implication is that the unyielding Greeks are also effecting his will. When Achilles leads the army forth from the ships, its spirited onset is compared to a snowstorm:

> As when the snowflakes of Zeus fly forth thick and fast, cold beneath the blast of the ether-born North Wind, so then the brightly gleaming helmets were borne out thick and fast from the ships, as well as the bossy shields, strong-plated breastplates, and ashen spears.
>
> (Il.XIX,357-361)

The main correspondence here is fixed between the wind-blown snowflakes and the jostling articles of armour. Zeus's control over the former is thus extended to the latter. As he produces the snow-storm, so he is the transcendent author of the Achaeans' attack. The order, then, that the simile applies to its subject may include the very will of Zeus.

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[1] A. J. Podlecki, "Some Odyssean Similes", Greece and Rome, Vol. XVIII, 1971, p. 90.

The Adherence of the Part to the Whole

Once phenomena have been merged into an organic unity they can be separated only with great difficulty. The corporate identity that they acquire connects them to their context by an unbreakable bond. So Odysseus strives to return home because that is where he belongs; it is a part of his identity. It holds an irresistible, unceasing attraction upon him which not even the blandishments of Calypso and Circe can overcome, as he tells the Phaeacians:

> "The beautiful goddess Calypso kept me confined in her cavernous caves since she earnestly desired me to be her husband. So, too, Circe, the cunning Aeaean, detained me in her halls, longing for me to marry her. But never did she persuade the soul in my breast. For there is nothing sweeter than a man's fatherland and parents, even if he should dwell afar in a wealthy house in a foreign land, far from his parents."
>
> (Od.IX,29-36)

An entity belonging to an organic unity can no longer exist independently.

The Retention of Individual Identity in a Corporate Relationship

The great unity of reality does not, however, eliminate or diminish the integrity of its components. It merely adds an extra dimension to them. Everything retains a measure of individual identity and worth. The supernatural, in both its transcendent and immanent aspects, rules over and unifies the natural order without obliterating its integrity. On the one hand, it was demonstrated in the third chapter that the transcendent plan of history is effected spontaneously within the natural order and the immanent portion of the supernatural, with the result that they appear to have freedom and autonomy. On the other hand, since the forms, natures, and developments of the immanent supernatural and natural dimensions are transcendently fixed, no immanent power may exercise absolute control over any immanent phenomenon. Thus the natural order has its own distinct

portion or "moira" and destiny which the immanent gods do not so much ordain as fulfil, according to the higher direction of fate and the transcendent Zeus. Men have destinies that the gods, in their immanent manifestations, may not affect. So the immanent Zeus must accept the deaths of Sarpedon and Hector against his will, although he, as a transcendent god, determined their destinies and has the power to alter them. Before returning to Ithaca Odysseus learns from Circe that he must visit Hades to inquire of Teiresias. Avoidance of the journey is impossible; it is part of his destiny. The prospect causes him a great deal of distress (Od. X, 496 - 498) but he accepts it. When he asks Circe if he might bring his crew and ship unharmed through the terrors of Scylla and Charybdis by fighting off the former she rebukes him as though he were challenging fate itself: "You are perverse! Are you really eager for strife and toil? Will you not yield even to the gods?" (Od. XII, 116 - 117). He has his own distinct destiny the preservation of which causes him to prefer a hard struggle to return home and the rigours of mortal existence over a life of ease and immortality in the company of the nymph, Calypso. Cohabitation with Calypso, in spite of the material benefits that it would hold, would deprive him of his destiny and the meaning that it gives to his life. Moreover, it would render all his previous experience and suffering incomplete and pointless. Zeus himself implicitly acknowledges the speciality and independence of his fate when he foretells the prominent details of the final stage of his journey, which he must travel "... with escort neither of gods nor mortal men" (Od. V, 32).

In fact, although immanent gods and men do interact, and though the supernatural and natural realms are fused together they nevertheless

constitute two different orders of being with different "apportionments" according to the dispensation of fate. The gods differ from men not only quantitatively, in their physical strength, but qualitatively as well. Apollo warns Diomedes of the distinction between them when the latter attempts to breach even the god's defence to slay Aeneas: "Beware, son of Tydeus, and give way! Do not aspire to match the gods in spirit (phroneein), since the race of men who walk upon the ground can never be the same as that of the immortal gods!" (Il. V, 440 - 442). His words drive home to the hero the fact that, regardless of human might, the gods exist ultimately on a plane of reality superior and inaccessible to men. When they find themselves becoming too deeply involved in human affairs they remind themselves of the gulf fixed between them. So Hera restrains Hephaestus from continuing to burn the river, Xanthus, for his assault upon Achilles and support of the Trojans: "It is not fitting thus to smite an immortal god on account of mortals" (Il. XXI, 379 - 380).

To preserve the sanctity and continuum of the natural order, as well as the mystery and secrecy of the supernatural, the gods prefer to become invisible or to disguise themselves in human or animal form when they approach men. Of course, as spiritual beings they have no form at all, but as essential beings they must have some sort of appearance. Occasionally they do reveal their true identities to individuals whose origins, natures, or actions approximate them to the level of the divine; but these are only a select few, and the gods may hide their identities even from these, as Athene occasionally does from Odysseus in the Odyssey. Even when they do reveal themselves their manifestations may not be classified as human. As supernatural, superhuman beings they possess a presence that is invested with a numinous power that inspires awe. So Athene terrifies

the farm dogs when she enters Eumaeus' hut (Od. XVI, 162 - 163). Indeed, the difference between the supernatural and natural renders direct, unrestricted intercourse between gods and men difficult. It may only occur under special circumstances. Hermes, thus, having only lately revealed his true identity to Priam refuses to accompany him into Achilles' quarters: "I will not go before the eyes of Achilles. It would be a matter for indignation for an immortal god thus to exchange greetings with mortals" (Il. XXIV, 462 - 464).

The gods may affect human destiny, but only according to the terms of that destiny. They may expedite or hinder it only in accordance with the demands of fate. Consequently they never release men from their destinies or provide them with short-cuts to their goals. Athene helps and strengthens Odysseus in his adventures; she never resolves his problems without his participation. When he arrives back in Ithaca, Athene tells him that he will have to undergo hardships and endure them of necessity; she does not remove them for him (Od. XIII, 306 - 307). When they begin plotting the punishment of the suitors and the recovery of his throne the goddess lays upon him the responsibility for developing a plan of action (Od. XIII, 375 - 378). When the battle in the hall occurs between Odysseus' company and the suitors Athene does not overwhelm the latter with her supernatural might; she leaves most of the fighting to the men; she participates only by enhancing and complementing their efforts. At one point, in fact, she appears in the form of Mentor, ostensibly to bring aid to Odysseus' party; in fact, she only encourages them before vanishing again: "She spoke, and did not yet give decisive victory to either side but still she tested the strength and might both of Odysseus and of his glorious son" (Od. XXII, 236 - 238). The goddess does not simply inform Telemachus of his

father's whereabouts and destined return; she merely encourages him to seek information about these matters and to regain hope. Thus she compels him to exercise his own mind, will, and character, and so to fulfil his own destiny. Similarly, Eidothea does not reveal to Menelaus the reason for his confinement to the island of Pharos. She only tells him how to discover it, thus obliging him to act on his own and to take responsibility for his own destiny. The ghost that Athene sends to Penelope to remove her fears for her son's safety cannot reassure her about her husband (Od. IV, 836 - 837), no doubt because such a revelation would dissolve the destined secrecy of Odysseus' return and undermine his own demonstration of his identity.

If fate limits the gods' ability to help men, it also restricts their power to harm them. Poseidon strives to hinder Odysseus' progress from Ogygia to Phaeacia in the full knowledge that he is fated to reach the land and find safety there (Od. V, 288 - 290). He cannot alter the hero's destiny; he can only complete it by inflicting upon him part of the suffering that is his lot, which Odysseus later attributes to the plan of the transcendent Zeus, which is fate (Od. XXIII, 350 - 353).

The influence of the gods on human life is typified by the limitation of their ability to alter human appearance. They can embellish and refine it or disfigure it; Athene works both effects upon Odysseus. They cannot, however, destroy or recreate the man himself unless it is part of his destiny to experience such radical changes. Men are closely, even inseparably related to the gods, but they retain a measure of independence according to the allotment of fate.

Parallel occurrences, examples of which were discussed in the first chapter, preserve the integrities of both the natural and supernatural

orders while revealing their close, complementary relation. While Odysseus is enduring the fury of the storm sent upon him by Poseidon in Book V of the Odyssey the goddess Leucothea supplies him with a magic veil which, she tells him, will preserve him from injury and death (Od. V, 347). Yet Odysseus does not passively rely upon the veil but actually works out his own salvation, waiting in his boat for as long as possible, apparently under the constant threat of death. The whole situation is rendered more complex by Athene's interventions, as when she calms the storm (Od. V, 382 - 387) and inspires him with ideas that enable him to avoid destruction on the rocks of the Phaeacian coast (426 - 429; 436 - 440). Yet even with Athene's help the hero must endure the battering of the sea and make his own decisions. His final escape from the water appears to be due more to his own efforts than to those of the two goddesses. The divine interventions complement the man's experience; they do not dominate it. Odysseus perceives a similar dual dimension to the terrible fate of the suitors, as he tells Eurycleia:

> "The fate of the gods and their wicked deeds overwhelmed these men. For they respected no one of earth-dwelling men whether good or bad, whoever should come upon them. Therefore, through their arrogant deeds they encountered an unseemly end."
> (Od.XXII,413-416)

The punishment of the suitors was both divine and human, since they angered the gods through their violation of the moral law and since they outraged the family and household of Odysseus. In Book IV of the Iliad the gods decide to break the treaty between the Achaeans and Trojans and so to confirm the eventual destruction of Troy. They do not, however, enforce their will in a high-handed manner without regard for the human participants in the drama. Zeus ensures that the Trojans justify the gods' decision by breaking their oaths of their own volition. To be sure, Athene tempts

Pandarus with the promise of glory if he should strike Menelaus, but the responsibility for the action devolves upon the man, since it is he who makes the final decision to shoot. Again, the course of events is given both divine and human dimensions. In fact, it is not uncommon for human action to be attributed to a dual inspiration: human will and divine inducement. Odysseus explains Eurycleia's discovery of his identity as the result of personal observation and the revelation of a god (Od. XIX, 485). Diomedes reckons that Achilles will return to battle when his desire for combat overmasters him and a divinity spurs him on (Il. IX, 702 - 703). Such parallel occurrences maintain the proper balance between the opposing demands of unity and diversity.

The high conception of both gods and men presented in the Iliad and Odyssey precludes the obliteration or even depreciation of their individual worth and integrity in the comprehensive, transcendent plan of fate. This high conception is revealed in the great value accorded to individual honour, timē. Each god and man receives his own measure of timē, which he strives to uphold and expects everyone else to respect.[1]

The Balance between the Part and the Whole

The principle of order, apportionment, which is closely associated with the terms, moira and aisa, and which rules reality in the Iliad and Odyssey, has thus been demonstrated to have a dual nature. It accords to every phenomenon a specific quantitative and qualitative "portion" which consists of a particular individual identity and a particular relation to everything else. The ultimate reality is not the part, or the whole, but the part and the whole.

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[1] W. H. Adkins, Merit and Responsibility (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p.64.

This duality permits the poet an easy variation in scope from the particular to the whole and vice versa. So the narrative alternates harmoniously between descriptions of individual warriors or gods and panoramic depictions of whole armies or of the gods in assembly. In Book II of the Iliad the centre of attention shifts from the individual Achaean chiefs involved in the sacrifice of supplication to Zeus, to the entire Achaean host, vividly described in the three successive similes before the catalogue of ships (Il. II, 455 - 473). Moreover the catalogue itself expands the interest of the narrative from the immediate incidents in the Greek camp to the background and history of both Greek and Trojan forces. Then, near the beginning of Book III, the range of the narrative contracts back to the immediate and particular in the confrontation between Paris and Menelaus. Such alternation enriches the narrative.

The duality of order appears most strikingly in the representation of the living human body. It is not portrayed in terms of the whole but of the parts. Each member is assigned a distinct identity, according to the particular function that it performs. When Poseidon invigorates the Aiantes in Book XIII of the Iliad the effect is not abstractly associated with the whole body, but is distributed concretely to the individual limbs (59 - 61); in fact, it is distributed to the more spiritual as well as the physical aspects of the men. So the son of Oileus remarks: "My own heart within my dear breast is more stirred to war and to fight while my feet below and hands above are equally eager" (Il. XIII, 73 - 75). Yet the individual limbs do not become totally autonomous. To balance their individuality the adjective of possession, emoi, is present; they are always related to the person himself. As Hermann Frankel observes, "Every individual organ of Homeric man can deploy an energy of its own, but at the same time each

represents the person as a whole,"[1] and again, "Homeric man is ... a whole. But of this whole, specific portions, or better, organs, can sometimes occupy the foreground. All individual organs appertain directly to the person."[2] In the Homeric representation of reality a perfect balance is maintained between the part and the whole.

Homeric Justice

The maintenance of this principle of order constitutes justice in the Homeric world. So the term dikē, besides having an association with the general, abstract idea of justice, possesses a very concrete denotation as the preservation of the established order.[3] When justice prevails, every entity remains confined within the bounds, be they moral, social, or physical, of its own apportionment, and harmoniously related to all the other entities with which it is organically united. It is no accident that the harmonious, smooth operation of this state of apportionment, whether in speaking (e.g. Il. I, 286), military organization (Il. XVI, 367), listening (Il. XIX, 256), erection of a ship's mast (Od. IV, 783), milking of sheep and goats (Od. IX, 245), hospitality (Od. IX, 352), augury (Od. XV, 170), or making a promise (Od. XV, 203), should be designated by the expression kata moiran, "as is due," "as is meet." When, however, injustice exists, a transgression of this apportionment occurs that not only upsets the symmetry of the individual entity but of the whole organic system to which it belongs. The universal principle of order then asserts itself by setting forces in motion that will inexorably and exactly cancel the imbalance. The former limitation and harmony are restored and justice prevails.

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1 Hermann Frankel, Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy, trans. Moses Hadas and James Willis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), pp. 76 - 77.

2 Ibid., p. 76.

3 Hugh Lloyd-Jones, The Justice of Zeus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 4.

Insofar as the gods are considered to represent this principle of order, they are believed to be just. Their justness does not depend upon their personal morality - or immorality - but upon their strict regulation of the state of apportionment in the world. As long as they compensate among themselves for their own excesses their justness is not impugned. In their judgment of human affairs they are as much concerned with human moderation and propriety as righteousness per se. Eumaeus tells the disguised Odysseus that "the blessed gods do not love wicked deeds but they value dikē (justice) and the deeds that are aisima (proper, meet, or agreeable to fate)" (Od. XIV, 83 - 84). The gods are primarily a force for order rather than righteousness alone. They are truly the agents of the transcendent plan of fate, Moira.

Eumaeus demonstrates in his comportment the close relation between righteousness and order in the Homeric world. Not only do the suitors commit a moral outrage by violating the sanctity of Odysseus' home; they also throw it into virtual anarchy and confusion. By contrast, Eumaeus, the righteous, obedient servant, runs, within his means, an orderly, tidy farming operation.[1] Righteousness is only one aspect of a nature that behaves kata moiran.

Breaches in the order of the universe occur most often in the province of human morality. Generally, men are restrained from acting immoderately by aidos, a sense of private honour or shame, and by nemesis, the public and divine indignation aroused by sin.[2] Due, however, to their high conception of their own worth, rooted in their thumos, the heroes may easily succumb to pride and act with hubris, or wantonness, thus transgressing the bounds of moral propriety and evoking human and divine wrath,

1 Charles R. Beye, The Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Epic Tradition (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 171.

2 B.C. Dietrich, Death, Fate, and the Gods (London: Athlone Press, 1965), pp.18-19.

and punishment.[1]

Homeric justice is dispensed with adamantine rigour. In order for the former harmony and rectitude to be restored after the overstepping of moira, a degree of counteraction must be taken that will fully neutralize or compensate for the transgression. So Helios demands the punishment of Odysseus' men in terms of a "fair exchange," epieikes amoibē, for his slaughtered cattle (Od. XII, 382 - 383).[2] The immoderate behaviour of such figures as Agamemnon, Achilles, Patroclus, and Hector in the Iliad, and the suitors, Melantheus, the disobedient maids of Odysseus' household, his men, and Aias in the Odyssey, elicit equally immoderate forms of punishment. The punishment must always exactly fit the crime.

The necessity for an exact compensation in the execution of justice leaves little room for mercy in the world of the Iliad and the Odyssey. So Odysseus ruthlessly executes upon the suitors the precise measure of vengeance to which he is entitled even when they grovel before him and supplicate him, as does Leodes. He does spare Phemius, but not so much because of his plea for mercy as because Telemachus clears him as anaitios, "guiltless" (Od. XXII, 356).[3] Moreover he has no compunction whatsoever about slaughtering the suitors while they are unarmed, since they are only receiving their just deserts. Indeed he is outraged that they should even attempt to resist their own destruction: "My friends, now I would speak and we should cast our spears into the throng of the suitors who desire to slay us in addition to their previous crimes" (Od. XXII, 262 - 264). Yet Odysseus is careful not to exceed the bounds of his righteous revenge. He is

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1 Ibid., p. 18.

2 Charles Mugler, Les origines de la science grecque chez Homère (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1963), p. 171.

3 Adkins, Merit and Responsibility, p. 11.

implacable and cruel while accomplishing it, but when he has filled up its full measure he rigorously checks himself and his partisans. So he rebukes Eurycleia for gloating over the dead: "Keep your joy in your heart, old woman, and contain yourself. Do not cry out. It is sinful to exult over dead men" (Od. XXII, 411 - 412). Justice in the Iliad and the Odyssey is simply the preservation and restoration of equilibrium.

To be sure, all suffering does not come upon men as punishment for crimes. Every man receives an allotment of pain and misery, as well as death, as a part of his destiny, as Achilles' allegory of the two urns of Zeus reveals (Il. XXIV, 527 - 533). Zeus himself remarks upon the naturally wretched state of men: "There is nothing more pitiable than a man among all things that breathe and walk upon the ground" (Il. XVII, 446 - 447). Yet men can certainly bring extra woe upon themselves by infringing the moral order of the universe. Such is the observation of Zeus to the other gods near the beginning of the Odyssey:

> "It is astonishing, the sort of thing that mortals blame on the gods! For they say that suffering comes from us; but they themselves suffer beyond their due because of their own arrogance, as, even now, Aegisthus improperly married the legitimate wife of the son of Atreus whom he killed upon his return home though he knew that this would bring about his own utter destruction."
> (Od.I,32-37)

Sin and consequent suffering are not, however, inevitable. Most of the heroes are quite capable, most of the time, of maintaining self-control and prudence. Odysseus, in particular, is one of the most successful heroes because he generally manages to keep a tight rein on his thoughts, feelings, and actions regardless of external pressures. He rarely transgresses the bounds of moderation. In the funeral games for Patroclus the various contestants demonstrate such correctness in their emulation for the prizes that they serve as foils to the other characters in the Iliad. When a disagreement arises between Antilochus and Menelaus over the second prize in the

chariot race, the former graciously concedes it to the latter, and the latter in turn restores it to the former (Il. XXIII, 586 - 611). Their comportment stands in marked contrast to that of the quarrelling Agamemnon and Achilles who lose control of their tempers and refuse to compromise. Moreover the games are conducted for the most part smoothly without inordinate distress being caused for anyone, while the quarrels of Agamemnon and Achilles bring disaster on all.

The compensations that the principle of order makes for excess are not even necessarily negative in nature. The great hardships that Odysseus and, to a less extent, Penelope and Telemachus undergo are redeemed by the eventual triumph of the family over their enemies and their reunion in peace and prosperity. Odysseus loses all the prizes from his long sojourn at Troy but the Phaeacians give him wealth in such abundance "as he would never have carried off from Troy even if he went his way unharmed having gained his portion of the spoil" (Od. V, 39 - 40). Whatever may be the imbalance in the natural order of things, it is always corrected.

The Homeric moral order applies not only to men but to all other entities as well. It has already been noted how the gods are confined within their own "apportionments," and, consequently, how they follow a strict code of behaviour towards each other. The inferior gods may be occasionally refractory towards their superiors but they rarely rebel outright. Zeus may possess supreme power among the gods, but he generally shows consideration for their desires and opinions and rarely exercises an unrestrained tyranny over them. It has also been noted how their relations with men are limited, both in their contact with them and in their power over them. They, too, are subject to the particular order of the great plan of Fate.

The moral equilibrium, that is, justice in the narrow, moral sense of the term, is also maintained among all entities. Any transgressions of the limits of their "portions," however infrequently they may occur, meet with redress. Aphrodite is punished for interfering in warfare, a domain outside her own jurisdiction, while both Ares and Artemis are discomfited for opposing divinities of superior rank and power, respectively, Athene and Hera. Zeus threatens the other gods with dire chastisement when confronted with their insubordination, while Iris goes so far as to warn Poseidon of retribution from the Erinyes if he should reject the authority of his older brother (Il. XV, 204). In Calypso's view, the gods order her to release Odysseus because of the impropriety of marriage between a goddess and a man: "You are cruel, you gods, and jealous beyond compare, you who begrudge a goddess to sleep by a man without dissimulation even if she should make him her beloved husband" (Od. V, 118 - 120). As examples of other divine and human couples who have broken propriety and roused divine anger she cites the relations of Dawn and Orion, and Demeter and Iasion. When the semi-divine monster, Polyphemus, breaks the law of hospitality by murdering his guests, he is punished for his crime through blinding. Finally, when the horse, Xanthus, defends himself and Balius against Achilles' rebuke for their neglect of Patroclus, and prophesies the hero's death, he violates the order of nature, a transgression that is immediately cancelled by the Erinyes, the moral guardians of the universe: "When he had spoken thus the Erinyes checked his voice" (Il. XIX, 418). The moral equilibrium is maintained in everything.

The state of balance is not confined to the area of morality. Any form of excess or incongruity elicits the opposition of forces that seek to establish moderation and harmony. When the river Scamander overflows

his banks in pursuit of Achilles his waters are resisted by their antithetical element, fire, wielded by Hephaestus, until they return to their proper course. Thersites lacks moderation and symmetry both in form and nature. He is ugly, arrogant, disrespectful, and irrational. When his offensiveness becomes intolerable, after he reviles both Agamemnon and the rest of the Achaeans, he is chastised by Odysseus. The latter employs, appropriately, the sacred royal sceptre to punish him (Il. II, 265 - 269). The whole episode thus becomes something of an allegory. The symbol of authority and order subdues the representative of anarchy and discord. In everything the universal principle of order removes or restrains disorder. Justice prevails in the Homeric world.

Conclusion

The consideration of justice brings to its conclusion this study of the conception of reality in the Iliad and the Odyssey. The particulars of this conception are not presented explicitly or systematically within the poems. They are, however, implicit throughout them. The depiction of the world in the Iliad and Odyssey is based upon a consistent, comprehensive idea of reality. An attempt has been made in this study to extract and formulate this implicit idea.

The fundamental principle of the Homeric view of reality may be described as hypostasis. Every phenomenon is considered to issue from and to depend upon an ulterior, greater, and ideal reality. Beyond the natural order lies the supernatural, whose original relation and superiority to the former is revealed by its mergence with natural phenomena through essence. Beyond essence is an even greater, more sublime reality, spirit. Beyond the immanent portion of the supernatural are transcendent divinity and fate which constitute the ultimate origin and authority of reality.

They determine the natures, relations, and behaviour of all phenomena, and unify them without destroying the identities of the parts. They establish the principle of order that gives meaning and purpose to all things. They occupy the heart of reality in the Homeric poems. They are the ultimate hypostasis.

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