

ture—contradictions which come to the surface in a situation of stress. Hard cases make bad law, and bad kings.¹⁸

When Achilles is ready to kill Agamemnon, Athena intervenes. The rest of the story springs from this divine inhibition of Achilles' act. Achilles' wrath is not acted out directly but with massive indirection; Achilles' appeal to Thetis sets in motion the plan of Zeus. Thus the initial error spreads until it encompasses in its destructive consequences Troy and the leader of the Trojans, Hector. The tragedy is in motion.

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Nature and Culture
in the Iliad

THE HERO

THE HEROIC EPIC

The epic picture of the world was formed and transformed during the Greek dark ages, during the gap or vacant space in Greek history between the fall of citadels—Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Troy—and the revival of towns in the eighth century B.C. Whatever details of Minoan or Mycenaean culture may persist in the poems, the Homeric picture of society in general belongs to the dark age and the early age of recovery. Homer shows us people living in small groups, dependent on one another for their mutual security against a hostile world.¹

When the background condition of life is a condition of war—when men feel themselves free to steal from anyone with whom they are not acquainted and to plunder and exterminate any town against which they have a grievance—men must place great trust in those close to them. Thus combat generates a tight-knit community. A Homeric community consists, in effect, of those who are ready to die for one another; the perimeter of each community is a potential battlefield. Under these social conditions, war is perceived as the most important human activity because the community's ability to wage defensive war is perceived as the precondition of all other communal values.² Within the community there can be families, productive labor, property, religious and social ceremonies, but all these depend for their existence on the valor of the warrior.

The burden of a Homeric battle falls on a few leading men. The anonymous mass may appear on the battlefield, but they are insignificant in the course of the war; battles are won and lost by those who step forward from the mass, the *promachoi*, those who "fight among the foremost." These are the *aristoi* or princes, men who own armor and chariots, who are trained to the art and labor of war. To these leading warriors the Homeric language gives the name of *hērōes*, heroes.³

Thus heroism is for Homer a definite social task, and the heroes are a definite social stratum. The name is given to those who are, have been, or will be warriors. This is the Homeric governing class, the propertied class, and also the class on which the burden falls of maintaining the community. The most lucid statement of the hero's role and task is Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus, spoken in the depths of the battle by the ships:

Glaucus, why is it we two are most in honor
 In our place at the feast, with meats and many cupfuls,
 In Lycia? Like gods all men behold us.
 Why hold we a great grant-farm by the banks of Xanthus,
 Fair with orchard and corn-rich plow-land?
 For this: that we now with the foremost Lycians
 Must stand and exchange the blows of searing battle
 So that one may say, some Lycian with his armor:
 "They are not so fameless, that rule in Lycia,
 These kings of ours, that eat the fattened flocks
 With the honey-sweet choice wine. It seems their force
 Is good, since they fight with the foremost Lycians."
 Sweet fool, if only escaping this one war
 We two would be able, ageless, immortal,
 To live, then I'd neither fight with the foremost
 Nor would I send you to battle that wins renown.
 As it is, since the winged death-bringers stand beside us,
 Countless, which mortals cannot escape or shun,
 Let us go, to work our boast or submit to another's.

(XII.310-28)

Sarpedon sees that the privileges of the warrior serve both to mark the warrior's special status and role and to hold him to the execution of his task. The warrior's privileges are a kind of reward granted in advance; the community accumulates a debt which it collects from the warrior on the battlefield (IV.338-48). The warrior's advantages and prestige thus serve to maintain in time of peace a social class which properly functions only in time of war, on the battlefield.

But as the community's need of warriors generates a social organization, it generates also a paradox. War is initially an unhappy necessity, the precondition of protected community. But as the warriors become a class or caste, the advantages—and more important, the prestige—of the warrior become in themselves desirable. War thus acquires for the warrior a certain positive value. Heroism is initially a social task; it then becomes a definite set of virtues associated with the performance of this task. The warrior's virtues, further, entitle him to claim a social status. But he can claim that status only if he can show that he has the virtues, and he can demonstrate the warrior's virtues only on the battlefield. If his own community is not at war, the warrior will seek out combat elsewhere. Glaucus and Sarpedon are not fighting in defense of the Lycians; they are far from home, fighting, not on behalf of their community but on behalf of their own status within it. Thus the young

Nestor also traveled far to prove himself a hero among heroes (I.260 ff.). And so it happens that the community's need for security and for defensive warfare generates a warrior ethic, which then gives rise to aggressive warfare—which is a threat to security. This double meaning of combat—defensive and aggressive, altruistic and egoistic—is fundamental to the *Iliad*.

All this is commentary on the first half of Sarpedon's speech; the tragic power of the speech is in the ending. In the first half Sarpedon praises the warrior's role; in it, he says, a man becomes godlike. In the second half Sarpedon (as it were) steps back from his own picture and says: all this is only a social illusion. The hero may appear godlike, but he is only mortal.

But this shift of perspective enables Sarpedon to justify heroism in another way. Man dies in any case, but he can choose to die well. He becomes a hero because he cannot be a god. In his nature the hero remains like other men, but culture bestows on him a value; he does not survive, but he is remembered. The hero knows this, and his knowledge enables him to go forward. It is a curious kind of knowledge, however; for if the hero knows what he is receiving, he cannot forget that the price he pays is his own existence.

All men are born to die, but the warrior alone must confront this fact in his social life, since he fulfills his obligations only by meeting those who intend his death. The community is secured by combat, which is the negation of community; this generates a contradiction in the warrior's role. His community sustains him and sends him to his destruction. On behalf of community he must leave community and enter a realm of force. The warrior can protect the human world against force only because he himself is willing to use and suffer force, "to work his own boast or submit to another's." The warrior stands on the frontier between culture and nature.

The power of Sarpedon's speech lies in its implicit recognition of the contradiction. To die for something, he says, is better than to die for nothing—and that is, after all, the alternative. In accepting death he shows himself searingly aware of it. The hero is in a sense rescued from mortality; he becomes godlike in status and immortal in the memory. At the same time he is uniquely conscious of his own mortality.

The greatness of Homer's heroes is a greatness not of act but of consciousness. There is not much nobility in the act of war, which is in itself a negation of human things, barbaric and impure. But there is a nobility in men's capacity to act and at the same time compre-

hend themselves and their situation. Homer's heroes have the power to step back and conceive themselves, suspended between culture and nature, as godlike and mortal.

Sarpedon and Glaucus, in particular, form a kind of chorus on the Trojan side. To Sarpedon's speech in Book Twelve corresponds Glaucus' speech in Book Six:

Tydeus' son, great-hearted, why do you ask my breeding?
Like to the breed of leaves is that of men—
Leaves that the wind pours earthward, and others the tree
In its strength puts forth, as the season of spring goes forward—
Thus the breed of men puts forth and withers.
If you wish even so to learn, then you may know
My breeding; there are many men that know it.

(VI.145–51)⁴

For a moment Glaucus moves back and sees men as the gods see them (cf. XXI.464)—creatures as ephemeral and insignificant as all the other creatures of nature. Yet Glaucus goes on to recite his genealogy, and concludes:

Hippolochus bred me, and I say I am from him.
He sent me to Troy, and gave me much instruction:
Always to excel and be held beyond others,
Nor to shame the race of my fathers, who were much the best
That grew in Ephyre and in broad-plained Lycia.
Of this breeding and blood I claim to be.

(VI.206–11)

As the theme of Sarpedon's speech is community, the theme of Glaucus' speech is kinship. Kinship and community generate the institutions of *oikos* and *polis*, household and city, and thus the whole fabric of the human world. Within this fabric, men have identities and roles, relations and obligations, and thus are capable of the virtues.

Glaucus' speech is implicitly a praise of kinship; he displays his pride in his lineage, his breeding. Yet Glaucus also reminds us that kinship, which appears to be founded on nature, is really a fact of culture and another social illusion. Only within the order of culture do men have proper names and individual identities; as creatures of nature they are perfectly ephemeral. Nature cares nothing for the life of the individual and everything for the life of the species. To speak of the generations of men as like the growing of leaves is to see oneself as, after all, insignificant.

Thus the warrior, placed on the edge of culture, is in a position to form a view of culture as a whole. Culture has created a human world within which men can live. The warrior knows that world to be in-

substantial. Culture, which appears to us in our social lives so solid and enduring, reveals itself on the battlefield for what it is. The values conferred on life by culture are the only values we have, but they are a secondary product, sustained only by men's common assertion of them. For the warrior, culture appears as a translucent screen against the terror of nature. The heroic vision is of meaning uncertainly rescued from meaninglessness.

HEROIC WRATH

This discussion brings us back to the wrath of Achilles, which we are now able to see as a specific version or transformation of the heroic consciousness. Heroism presumes a reciprocity between hero and community. By Agamemnon's act in Book One this reciprocity is broken. Achilles' spontaneous response is the wish to kill Agamemnon; this would be a social act and would file a *de facto* claim with the community of his own righteousness against Agamemnon. "He would break up the assembly and kill Agamemnon" (I.191)—that is, Agamemnon would die and the rest would go home, giving silent consent to an act of excusable violence.

Athena prevents Achilles' spontaneous response; Hera has sent her "in care and concern for both together" (I.209). Athena promises the threefold gifts and expects a reconciliation between Achilles and Agamemnon. For Achilles, however, the quarrel has reached a point where the community must choose: either Agamemnon or himself. To attempt a reconciliation is in effect to choose Agamemnon, for a reconciliation would leave the king in place, unpunished for his unfairness to the greatest of the princes.

Achilles' great speech in Book Nine, then, is the speech of a man who feels himself evicted from his community. Furthermore, every attempt made by his friends to bring him back is felt by Achilles as a further eviction. This paradox gives the whole embassy scene in Book Nine its peculiar tone of passionate frustration and mutual incomprehension.

The hero, I have said, is a man on the margin between culture and nature. Achilles has, as it were, been pushed over the edge; he looks back at culture from the outside. He becomes a social critic, even a satirist. Menelaus' wife, it seems, was worth a whole war, but his own wife was not worth one murder. Now he is supposed to rejoice in the patronage of a man he despises. "Let him find some son-in-law *more kingly*," he says (IX.392), implying that these kings deserve each other, and that, as Agamemnon is valueless himself, so there is no value in Agamemnon's valuation of another.

In culture things have symbolic value as they function in social relations, as people believe in them and rely on them. Once belief and reliance are withdrawn, the flag is only a bit of cloth and the Constitution a scrap of paper. So Agamemnon's gifts, which when Agamemnon listed them had seemed a massive act of symbolic reparation, change in Achilles' hut back into mere things. Achilles heaps them up in his mind with all the other things in the world, heaps them into a heap of sand and dust. Achilles is driven back on the bare truth: that he himself is alive and strong. He can (in this sense) assert himself, but it remains a bare assertion; once he is excluded from the fabric of culture, Achilles can find no meaning in his life, no uses for his strength. He has become a mere creature in nature.

In the story of Achilles the poet dramatizes a fundamental contradiction: communities, in the interest of their own needs, produce figures who are unassimilable, men they cannot live with and who cannot live with them. This contradiction is not less puzzling for being familiar. It is a theme in many stories; Plutarch, for example, built on it his paired stories of Alcibiades and Coriolanus.⁵ Of Alcibiades, another poet wrote: "They love him, they hate him, they cannot do without him" (Aristophanes *Frogs* 1425). In such stories the hero and his community stand as problems to each other. The hero behaves in a way he has been told is admirable and then is baffled to find that, in meeting the declared expectations of his community, he comes into conflict with it. Thus Shakespeare's Coriolanus, like Achilles, constantly asserts that he is acting only as he has been taught to act. Both heroes are led to the conviction that not they themselves but their communities have been faithless to the communal norm. Banished by the Roman state, Coriolanus responds: "I banish you." So also Achilles, in the picture he draws of the Greek army in his absence, implicitly asserts: It is not I who have been deprived of your company, but you of mine.

The warrior's role, as I have said, generates the warrior ethic. The community asks of some members that they leave the community and enter the anticomunity of combat. There they must overcome mercy and terror and learn to value their honor above their own lives or another's. The community praises and honors those who have this capacity. As this praise is internalized, it becomes a self-definition. Achilles is trapped by this self-definition, which permits him neither reconciliation nor retreat.

Achilles in his great speech in Book Nine draws a picture of two communities; against his satiric picture of Agamemnon's army he sets a romantic picture of Phthia at peace and himself at home there as

son, husband, and man of property. But this picture of a peaceful Achilles is a fantasy. There is no path to Phthia from the place where Achilles is now; Achilles' quarrel with Agamemnon was founded on his claim to a warrior's honor, and to go home would be to abandon that claim and to admit that Agamemnon was right. To accept Agamemnon's gifts would equally be an admission that Agamemnon was right, since they would be given as the gifts of a superior to an inferior. Achilles' friends, in calling him back to the warrior's role, implicitly ask him to modify his commitment to the warrior ethic. Achilles' response to this contradictory demand can be only an outcry—the baffled rage of the great speech.

The contradiction is further clarified—for us and for Achilles—by a contradiction in Phoenix' speech (IX.434–605). Phoenix tells the story of Meleager as an example of heroic reconciliation, but in fact the story tells us that Meleager, once wronged, refused all reconciliation, refused prayers and gifts, and was brought back to battle only by the helpless tears of his wife. Without wishing to, Phoenix gives the true pattern of heroic rage; the hero cannot choose to be reconciled, he can only come back under compulsion (*anangkēi*, XVIII.113 = XIX.66), overpowered by the irresistible claims of those closest to him. The next stage of the action is here foreshadowed; Meleager's weeping wife foreshadows the weeping Patroclus, who the next day appeals to Achilles like a little girl crying to her mother to be picked up (XVI.7–11).

Achilles' story, in fact, is not a departure from the heroic pattern but an enactment of that pattern; in his great speech Achilles states the heroic ethic as it appears to a hero for whom it cannot be made to function. The result is, as it were, Sarpedon's speech inside-out or in negative print. Sarpedon says that only honor can soften the necessity of death. Achilles says, first, that honor cannot be conferred by a mere heap of objects and, second, that when true honor is absent, nothing can soften the necessity of death. Achilles' refusal of the warrior's role is an affirmation of the warrior ethic; the absoluteness of that affirmation makes Achilles the greatest of the heroes. Achilles, then, is a marginal figure in his society, but a hero's place is on the margins; as so often happens in social systems, Achilles' uncertain status makes possible for him a kind of ethical fundamentalism and purity of spirit.

In what sense, then, does Achilles do wrong in refusing the gifts? Both Ajax and Diomedes (IX.628–42, 697–703) are certain that he is wrong. And of course he is wrong: a norm is supposed to function. Adherence to principle cannot be right when it brings disaster on

both the actor himself and those to whom he is obligated. Achilles has no transcendent God or next life to which he can appeal; his act must be justified in terms of this world, and in this world his moral absolutism is disastrous. Ajax (IX.624-42) does not quite know how to say this; he can only bring into play the counternorm of *philotēs*, of loyalty to one's friends. This also is part of the heroic norm, and Achilles is shaken. Ajax' speech provokes from Achilles his ill-considered vow to wait until Hector reaches his own ships. More than that he cannot do, says Achilles; he is helpless (IX.644-47). Achilles is the victim of his own ethic.

ACHILLES AS TRAGIC HERO

Achilles' story is certainly a tragedy in several meanings of that polyvalent term. It is a story of suffering and insight. But it is not a tragic action in the narrow Aristotelian sense. We can clarify this point if we ask: Where is Achilles' error? In calling the assembly? But he is simply doing what Hera had told him to do. In his rage with Agamemnon? But everyone in the story, from Thersites to Athena, and including Agamemnon himself, agrees that Agamemnon was in the wrong and Achilles in the right. Was it then in failing to kill Agamemnon? Again Hera—and Athena—made that choice for him. Was it an error to refuse the gifts? Perhaps—but we should notice that this particular error, if error it was, did not advance the catastrophe. It simply left things as they were. Perhaps Achilles was in error in not going home, but we have seen that this was not a real choice. Perhaps he was in error in his ill-considered vow. But here again the connection with the catastrophe is indirect. Achilles brought the catastrophe down upon himself by sending Patroclus into battle—but here we should remember, first, that this plan was suggested by wise Nestor and, second, that the proximate cause of Patroclus' death was Patroclus' own error (carefully marked by the poet: XVI.685-87), against which Achilles had explicitly warned him (XVI.80-96). Surely Achilles makes errors, and surely Achilles suffers; but the poet has not been at pains to construct a clear relation of cause and effect.

Homer, in fact, marks only one error in Achilles' story, in a scene which otherwise would seem rather casually included. Machaon is being carried by, wounded, at some distance, and Achilles, curious, sends Patroclus for news—"and this was the beginning of trouble for him" (XI.604). On this errand Patroclus meets Nestor, and the fatal scheme is proposed. Achilles (who in this point also resembles Coriolanus) brings the catastrophe upon himself because he is not, after all, as detached from his community as he had supposed.

The crucial errors in Achilles' story, however, are the errors of others—of Agamemnon, of Nestor, of Patroclus. The tragedy is Achilles' own in that another man—a man less purely a hero—would not have allowed these errors to bring him destruction. But the tragedy of Achilles is not so much a tragedy of action as of reaction. Achilles is the central figure as a kind of arena of forces, a focus of the contradictions of his world. And his story, from this point of view, is a profound revaluation of the heroic ethic.

The tragedy of Achilles is in a sense complete by the beginning of Book Eighteen. Achilles, when he hears of Patroclus' death, speaks and acts as if his own life were over.⁶ There remains one more task: to bury Patroclus and, as part of that burial, to kill Hector. This task Achilles single-mindedly completes through the rest of the poem; having killed Hector, he tries, as it were, to kill him again by despoiling and mutilating and befouling his body.

Throughout these scenes of action Achilles remains, oddly, a kind of victim. The intensity of his suffering is only partly hidden by the brilliance of his act. He achieves in his *aristeia* what for any other hero or for himself at another moment would have been the summit of happiness yet for him now is only an act of mourning.

In Book Sixteen, when Achilles first decides to send Patroclus to the battle, he concludes his speech with a strange prayer:

If only, father Zeus and Athena and Apollo,
No Trojan would flee death, of all there are,
Nor any Argive, but we two escape destruction
So that we alone could loose the crown of Troy.

(XVI.97-100)

This prayer is so strange that most of the Hellenistic grammarians omitted it from their texts. But we should notice that it is in a way granted. When Patroclus dies, Achilles in a way dies with him. When Achilles returns to battle, it is on behalf of Patroclus, not the Greeks; he speaks to his mother only of his obligation to his dead friend. In Book Nineteen Achilles undergoes a ceremony of reconciliation; he says a few frigid words (XIX.56-73) and thereafter remains uninterested in Agamemnon's apology and gifts.⁷ He refuses to eat, and with difficulty Odysseus gets him to allow the rest of the army to be fed:

These things are of no concern to my heart,
But murder and blood and the harsh crying of men.

(XIX.213-14)

On the battlefield Achilles appears not as a leader of men but as an isolated destroyer—a kind of natural force, like fire or flood. Once,

after Hector's death, he thinks of the battle as part of a war between cities; but then he calls himself back:

Come, let us make trial of this city with arms,
That we may know the intent the Trojans have:
Whether they will leave their citadel, now he is fallen,
Or be ready to stay, although Hector is no more.
But why does my own heart speak with me thus?
There lies by the ships a corpse unwept, unburied—
Patroclus. I'll not forget him, not while I
Stay with the living and my own limbs bear me.
Yet if the dead forget, down there in Hades,
I for my part will remember my friend even there.

(XXII.381-90)

Achilles speaks as if he were already among the dead, alone with the dead Patroclus.

In Book Twenty-three Achilles celebrates the complex ceremony of funeral and funeral games. These ceremonies do not serve to reunite Achilles with his community. At the beginning he refuses to wash and calls the necessary feast *stugerê*, "hateful" (XXIII.48). At the end, when everyone else sleeps, Achilles is still awake, restless in his grief (XXIV.2-12). The final reconciliation with Priam, I shall argue later, does not take place within human community but in a sphere apart. Achilles, once evicted, does not return.

In the often-quoted phrase of Aristotle, the man without a city becomes "either a beast or a god." Achilles, as we shall see, becomes both. He gives himself to battle with such a whole heart that his acts cannot be called courageous; they are too easy and spontaneous. He has become a natural warrior and kills men as a weasel kills ducks, for sport. At the same time he looks on at his own scene and describes it with dispassionate clarity; nothing there is of any special value to him any more. Achilles thus achieves the perfection of the heroic consciousness. He sees the cultural world only to see through it, to see its insignificance, and his own insignificance, against the ground of nature.

In Achilles the poet has created a figure who by the end of the poem can function as hero and chorus at once, who dominates the action and yet remains detached from it. Achilles is himself a tragic figure and is the cause of tragedy to others, but he remains with us most as a voice, as a prophet of the tragic vision.

That vision, I have suggested, implies a revaluation of the heroic. We shall return to this revaluation at the end, where we speak of the mingling in the heroic of beast and god together. Here it is appropriate to note that if we are to revalue the heroic, we must know what it

is; and if that revaluation is to be serious, we must know why the heroic is, after all, necessary. These themes are conveyed in the poem primarily through the story of Hector.

Hector's story, I shall argue, is a tragic action in the classic mold; it is the story of a man somewhat better than ourselves who falls through his own error. It is a mark of the ethical complexity of the *Iliad* that the true tragic hero of the poem is a secondary character; the poet of the *Iliad* has set a finished tragedy as a subplot within a design yet more ambitious and grand.

HECTOR

The hero, we said, tests the limits of life and experiences the contradictions of life with heightened awareness. For Achilles this heightened awareness entails the rejection of community and culture, the rejection of life itself. In this way Achilles survives, though his survival lacks meaning for himself. Hector, on the other hand, tests the limits of loyalty. His loyalty, like Achilles' wrath, leads him into an impasse, and when he can no longer solve the riddle of his situation, he ceases to live. In asserting the value and meaning of human things, he finds death. The resolution of the conflict between these opposite figures is the impossible task which the poet has set himself; at the end of his poem he achieves (as is the way of poets) the impossible. But to understand this achievement will require of us close and extended attention, particularly to the figure of Hector.

In contrast with the monstrous potencies of Achilles, a human creature like Hector might easily seem trivial. In fact the poet has taken great trouble with his secondary hero, compensating for his secondary status with a profusion of detail. Achilles' heroic consciousness sets him against his community; he passes judgment on it *en bloc*. He therefore does not have to make distinctions among its members. Hector remains within his community; his story is shaped by a delicate structure of diverse relations—with father and mother, wife and brother's wife, brother and cousin, kinsman and ally. In Hector's story we see that "the heroic" is not a single thing but a set of virtues and obligations—diverse relations sometimes in conflict with one another.

The poet brings Hector on the scene very slowly. We are well into Book Six before it becomes clear to us that Hector is going to be an important character. His story does not properly begin until Book Seven. With respect to his character, the first six books of the epic are an extended introduction, showing Hector first among men, then among women.

The first to mention "man-killing" Hector's name is Achilles (I.242), for whom he is simply the leading adversary. Similarly, Pandarus, on the other side, says that he came to Troy "doing a favor to Hector" (V.211), while Sarpedon addresses him as the supreme commander, responsible for the Trojans and the allies alike (V.472-92). In the Catalogue of Ships, Hector is named first, as the commander of the finest detachment (II.816-18), yet at the same time he is one commander among many, at most *primus inter pares*. In the battle scenes of Books Four and Five, Hector is the most important warrior on the Trojan side, and his power is marked by a notable simile when he confronts Diomedes:

As when a man is baffled, crossing a plain,
And he stands by a fast-flowing river that flows on seaward;
He sees it swirl with foam, and steps backward—
So Diomedes drew back.

(V.597-600)

Yet, for all his force, Hector says little in these books and does little on his own initiative. Iris tells him to marshal the troops, and he does so (II.802 ff.); Paris proposes a duel, and Hector arranges it (III.67 ff.); Sarpedon calls upon him, and he goes where he is needed (V.472 ff., 683 ff.); Helenus sends him to the city (VI.77 ff.). Hector's heroism in these books is primarily responsive; he appears as a hero of responsibilities.

There is a certain modesty in Hector which reflects his role in the war. Hector is the field commander, but he is still subject to his father, Priam, who is king. The relation between father and son is presented as cooperative. Hector first appears on the scene in the assembly at Troy; Priam presides at this assembly, but Hector adjourns it (II.786-808). Later, when Hector arranges the duel between Paris and Menelaus, he sends for his father from the city (III.116-17). Priam and Agamemnon exchange the oath, while Hector and Odysseus make the practical arrangements (III.264-317). Hector does not ask his father's consent, but in the formal working-out of the occasion he steps down to the second rank.

FATHER AND SON

It is perhaps a feature of preurban societies that the ethical system is age-graded, so that different virtues are expected at different life stages.⁸ In Homeric society a distinction is made between the young man and the mature man, a distinction correlated with the distinction between council and battle as arenas of excellence and with the con-

trast between the word and the deed. Excellence in both speech and combat are required of the perfect hero (IX.443; cf. xi.510-16), but speech develops later in life (IX.53-61). In a culture where physical strength and beauty are so important, old age can only be hateful—*stugeros*, *lugros*, or *oloos*—but there are certain partially compensating advantages. The young man's mind is hasty, and his wits are slight (XXIII.590). The elder "knows more" (XIII.355, XXI.440); there is an authority which belongs to age (I.259, IX.160-61). The contrast between the mind which plans and the hand which executes gives rise to the diverse public roles of king and warrior—a diversity which in the Greek army generates the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles (cf. I.280-81) but at Troy generates the cooperative division of roles between Priam and Hector.

The cooperative relation between father and son is an outgrowth of the special character of inheritance in the Homeric world. Inheritance secures the continuity of the household, which is the fundamental social institution. Through the continuity of institutions, culture rescues some stability from the flux of nature; the household continues, and each householder has his household, as it were, in trust for his heirs.⁹ Thus Odysseus speaks the private prayer of each Phaeacian householder when he asks the gods to give them prosperity in their lifetime, and "that each should commit to his sons the possessions in their halls and the *geras* the folk have granted" (vii.148-50)—as we would say, their property and status. Because successful inheritance is the completion of the householder's social task, each householder is (in effect) dependent on his heir. The most powerful type of affection in the poems is that felt by a father for his sole grown son (XXIII.222-23, xvi.17-21), especially the son who has been raised "among many possessions" (IX.481-82; cf. 143=285). The father's greatest hope is that his son will surpass him.¹⁰

In Homeric society, property can hardly be distinguished from possessions; the householder's economic status depends on his authority over *dmōes*, "servitors," and dependent smallholders, and these latter respect his authority out of personal loyalty and the habit of obedience.¹¹ Under these conditions the transfer of property is secure only when it occurs *inter vivos*, so that the father can use his authority to establish the authority of the son. This pattern gives us three roles for adult males of the propertied class: the son who has not yet inherited, the active householder, and the father who has retired from possession—Telemachus, Odysseus, Laertes. All three are *hērōes*, but only in the second is heroism actual. The old, however great their wisdom, lack the strength for those deeds which assert the validity of usage. They

thus become dependent on the young for their livelihood (the *threptai*: IV.478=XVII.302) and their status. Thus Achilles in the underworld asks after Peleus (xi.494-502), and Odysseus inquires:

Tell me of my father and son, whom I left,
Whether they still hold my *geras*, or already
Some other man has it, since they say I won't return.
(xi.174-76)

Laertes cannot convey the inheritance to Telemachus; both are dependent on the acts of the vigorous, established Odysseus.

Hector is Priam's heir (XX.240). This is not a statement about property, for where there are many brothers, the property is shared among them equally (xiv.208-9).¹² Hector is heir to Priam's kingship, as Aeneas is heir to Anchises; both have in a sense inherited the *geras* of king *inter vivos*, in that each acts as field commander of troops during his father's lifetime. Kingship, however, is a public role, and the succession to it is determined by factors beyond the relations within the family.

Among brothers, the eldest is "attended by Erinyes" (XV.204). He is equal in property, but his greater authority is marked by the power to curse—a power which also belongs to the parent (IX.454, 571, XXI.412, ii.135, xi.280). Other things being equal, the eldest son will inherit the *geras* of kingship. Priam is the eldest (legitimate: VI.23-26) son of Laomedon (except for Tithonus, who is otherwise occupied: XX.237, XI.1). Priam is king in Troy, with his brothers around him in council (III.148). It may be that Hector is the eldest of Priam's sons, but this point is not made about him. Hector is not the favorite son; that status belongs to his half-brother, the youngest, Polydorus (XX.407-10). We are told that the people called Hector's son "prince" because "Hector alone protected Ilium" (VI.403; cf. XXII.507). Hector is heir because he has earned the succession.

The *geras* of kingship is in the gift of one king to the next, and he can give it to anyone he wishes (XX.182). It is no easy matter to be king; the king is father to the whole folk (ii.47, 234, v.12), and they honor him as a god. A good king brings prosperity (xix.109-14); a bad king can bring down divine destruction (XVI.384-92). The king must be wise and strong; in order to find such an heir, a king may even consider going outside his own community and adopting an heir from elsewhere, as Alcinous considers adopting Odysseus (vii.309-16). When Alcinous receives Odysseus, he moves Laodamas aside, his favorite son (vii.170-71). No wonder Laodamas later tests Odysseus and

provokes a friend to insult him (viii.145-64). The kingship will go, by heredity or adoption, to a man judged qualified to hold it.

In his despair at the end of the poem, Priam says that the death of Hector has deprived him of his last qualified heir:

He called his sons in rebuke,
Angry with Helenus, Paris, bright Agathon,
Pammon, Antiphon, Polites good at the war cry,
Deiphobus, Hippothous, bright Agauus,
Rebuke the nine, the old man called them to him.
"Hurry, you wretched sons, you disgraces. If only
You all could have died by the ships in exchange for Hector.
I am left with nothing, since the best sons I bore
In broad Troy—not one of them is left,
Not godlike Mestor or Troilus, lover of horses,
Or Hector, who was a god among men—not like
The child of a mortal man, but of god.
Ares killed him, and left me with this refuse,
Liars and dancers, foot-tappers in the chorus,
Filchers of lambs and kids among the folk."

(XXIV.248-62)

Priam's line is being slowly exterminated; finally his inheritance will pass to Aeneas in the collateral line (XX.303). While Hector lives, he is the hope of Ilium; as future king, he embodies the continuity of the state. As such he is also his father's hope for the maintenance of royal privileges within the family.

Nemesis and Aidōs

Hector's primary social role is that of the worthy son. As such, he is most clearly defined in contrast with Priam's most worthless son, Paris. Paris' crime has made the defense of Troy necessary; Hector's virtues make the defense possible. The poet seems to have intended the contrast between them and to have marked it by certain parallel features. The two men share one simile (VI.506-11=XV.263-68) and part of a speech (VII.357-60=XII.231-34). Both fight duels with picked Greek heroes in the arena between the two armies. The two first speak in the poem in conversation with each other; they are introduced as a sort of pair. Their likeness, however, is that of opposites.

Hector never speaks to Paris except to denounce him; Paris always replies with respect and admiration. In Book Three, their first conversation, Hector accuses Paris of cowardice; this accusation is quite

unjustified,¹³ as Paris proves by offering to fight in single combat with Menelaus. In this interchange Paris defines the difference between them:

Hector, you fitly abuse me, not unfitly.
 Ever your heart is like an ax, hard-tempered,
 Which a man drives through a board, who with art
 Cuts ship timber, and it fulfills his blow—
 So, within you, unflinching is your mind.
 Do not throw up against me the gifts of Aphrodite.
 The gifts of the gods are not to be rejected,
 Whatever they give, and a man does not take them freely.

(III.59-66)

Hector's hard-driving, focused energy is contrasted with the easy spirit of Paris, who accepts situations, however they develop. Later, after Aphrodite has transferred him from the battlefield to his wife's bedroom, Paris responds with similar calm to his wife's contumely:

Wife, do not scold my heart with bitter insults.
 This time Menelaus beat me, he and Athena;
 Next time I'll beat him—we have gods on our side too.
 But now, let us make love in bed together.

(III.438-41)

In the battle by the ships, Hector, full of impatient rage, comes upon Paris, who is "encouraging his companions and urging them on to fight" (XIII.767). Hector speaks to him wildly, and Paris responds mildly that Hector likes "to accuse the guiltless" (XIII.775):

I deny
 Any lack of valor, as far as my powers extend.
 One can't fight past his power, try as he may.

(XIII.785-87)

Paris accepts himself as he is; he did not make himself, he says, and he cannot be otherwise. For the poet of the *Iliad* such an attitude is fundamentally unheroic—because it is unsocialized. Paris, content with his own knowledge of himself, is unaffected by other people's opinion of him; he is aware of their contempt, but it does not touch him. Helen says of him to Hector:

Since the gods ordained these evils to me thus,
 Would that I'd been the wife of a better man,
 Who knew the outrage and many shames of men.
 His wits are not steady, nor in time to come
 Will they ever be.

(VI.349-53)

Paris is insensitive to *nemesis*, the moral disapproval of others, and has no sense of *aíschos*, shame. Hector feels both acutely; thus his "wits are steady," he is held to his obligations by his feeling for the feelings of others. He says of himself:

Most dreadfully
 I shrink [*aideomai*] from the Trojan men and long-robed women
 If, like a coward, I draw back from the battle.
 Nor does my heart so instruct me; I've learned to be good
 And ever to fight with the foremost of the Trojans,
 Winning great fame for my father and myself.

(VI.441-46)

Hector inherited his warrior's role "among the foremost," and he has schooled himself to play it. His virtues are the outcome of his responsiveness to society. Paris, in his duel with Menelaus, goes cheerfully to combat and cheerfully accepts his defeat and his salvation by Aphrodite. Hector in his duel with Ajax shows no such spontaneity:

A dread trembling in his limbs came over each Trojan;
 As for Hector, his heart cowered within him,
 But not even so could he tremble or shrink back
 Into the crowded folk, since he'd invited to battle.

(VII.215-18)

Hector's fear of death is overcome by his greater fear of disgrace.

The fear of injury and the fear of disgrace are of course quite different kinds of fear, and in Homeric Greek they have different names—*deos* and *aidōs*.¹⁴ *Aidōs* is the most pervasive ethical emotion in Homeric society; it is basically a responsiveness to social situations and to the judgments of others.¹⁵ Thus *aidōs* can manifest itself as simple shyness; Thetis says that she feels *aidōs* to go among the immortals, "for I have not sorted out my own feelings" (XXIV.90-91).¹⁶ Odysseus feels *aidōs* to be seen naked by young girls (vi.221); the goddess feels *aidōs* to see the lovers caught in the act of love (viii.324); Nausicaa's *aidōs* prevents her from mentioning her marriage to her father (vi.66); because of *aidōs* Penelope does not want to appear alone among men (xviii.184), and Odysseus does not want to be seen crying (viii.86).

In contrast with *aidōs* is the feeling of *nemesis*. *Aidōs* shrinks away and draws back; *nemesis* is an invasive passion that drives one to intervene in the affairs of others. When Hera feels *nemesis*, she rocks in her chair and makes Olympus shake, she smiles with her lips but not with her eyes, and she speaks maliciously and without proper

control (VIII.198–200, XV.101–3). *Nemesis* is an excited condition, a feeling of outrage.

Aidōs and *nemesis* are a reflexive pair (cf. XI.649, XIII.122). The *nemesis* of others evokes *aidōs* in oneself (XVII.91–95). Just as Odysseus feels *aidōs* to weep, so also he fears lest his excessive weeping provoke the *nemesis* of others (xix.121). The *aidōs* Diomedes feels before Agamemnon inhibits his feeling of *nemesis* in response to Agamemnon's rebuke (IV.402, 413). Diomedes' annoyance with Agamemnon the man is inhibited by his respect for the royal office.

Aidōs inhibits action by making the heroes feel that if they acted thus they would be out of place or in the wrong. *Nemesis* drives one to attack those who have shown themselves lacking a proper *aidōs*.¹⁷ *Aidōs* is thus a kind of hypothetical anticipation of *nemesis*. One often acts in order to avoid *nemesis*; thus Penelope says she must complete her father's shroud "lest someone among the folk should feel *nemesis* against me" (ii.101 = xix.146 = xxiv.136). One can put oneself in the position of others and ask how one's own action is likely to look; thus Nausicaa says: "I would feel *nemesis* toward another girl who acted in that way" (vi.286). One can even feel *nemesis* toward oneself, considering one's own acts (as it were) from the outside (cf. ii.64, iv.158–60).

The Homeric culture, in other words, is a "shame culture."¹⁸ The heroes do not distinguish personal morality from conformity; in a world where "what people will say" is the most reliable guide to right and wrong, the two are practically identical. The feeling of *aidōs* is reinforced by the *dēmou phēmī*, the "voice of the folk" (xvi.75 = xix.527). *Aidōs* is thus nothing like conscience—a concept which is certainly post-Homeric and perhaps makes its first tentative appearance in the fragments of Heraclitus. *Aidōs* is a vulnerability to the expressed ideal norm of the society; the ideal norm is directly experienced within the self, as a man internalizes the anticipated judgments of others on himself. As such, *aidōs* is the affective or emotional foundation of virtue.

The Homeric Greeks, further, make no distinction between propriety and morality. *Nemesis* can be used to describe the petty strains of social intercourse; thus Athena (disguised as Mentēs) says, "Are you going to feel *nemesis* at what I will say?" (i.158)—as we might say: "I hope you won't think me out of line" (cf. ii.138). The application of the ideal norm, furthermore, is modified by the descriptive norm; some behavior is *ou nemesis* (does not invite *nemesis*) in that, while unfortunate, it is within the pattern of social expectation—as we would say, it is "perfectly understandable." It is *ou nemesis* to weep when a

dear one dies (iv.195, xix.264); "no one could hold it against you." Ares tells the other gods not to feel *nemesis* when he goes off to avenge his son; it is as if he were asking, "What do you expect me to do?"¹⁹ Odysseus explains that even to stay away from home for a month provokes impatience; therefore he feels no *nemesis* against the army for rioting (II.296; cf. III.156–57). Agamemnon says (perhaps employing a proverb), "There is no *nemesis* in running from trouble, even by night" (XIV.80). But *nemesis* is provoked by any act which is both improper and unexpected, ranging from failures of tact to cowardice and betrayal.

Aidōs and *nemesis* (which, as we have seen, are inner and outer aspects of the same thing) have a specific relation to the other emotions. *Nemesis* is closely connected with anger, and the two emotions can be felt at the same time (II.223, VI.335, VIII.407, 421, xxiii.213). *Nemesis* is in fact a specific kind of anger; we might call it "righteous indignation." *Nemesis* is thus different from *achos* or *cholos*; those *pathēmata* come upon a man immediately, as pain comes with a blow. *Nemesis* is anger mediated by the social sense; a man not only feels it but feels himself correct in feeling it.

When two parties quarrel, *nemesis* is evoked, not in the parties, but in the bystander who disapproves of the whole quarrel (V.872, XXIII.494). Justified anger does not provoke *nemesis*; but as soon as anger goes beyond the point of justification, *nemesis* arises (IX.523, xviii.227, xxii.59). *Nemesis* may be felt for actions which are simply foolish, like wandering about in the dark (X.145), or negligent, such as standing about talking when there is fighting to be done (XIII.293). But there is always some implication of categorical judgment: the behavior is not merely annoying but wrong. The suitors feel *nemesis* when Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, offers to draw the bow (xxi.285), for a beggar is an improper person to take part in such a contest; it would also be *nemessēton*, a cause of *nemesis*, for Odysseus to appear before his wife in rags (xxii.489). The behavior of the suitors is generally *nemessēton* (ii.64, xxi.147, xxii.40). They are also lacking in *aidōs* (xx.171). The folk are subject to *nemesis* for not resisting the suitors (ii.239). It is *nemessēton* for a common man to speak in the assembly (II.223) or for a god to appear too friendly with a mortal (XXIV.463). It is *nemessēton* to send one's mother away against her will (ii.136), to give someone poison for arrows (i.263), or to commit wanton destruction (V.757). In all these cases there is some sense of crossing lines or transgressing limits. On the other hand, annoying behavior is not subject to *nemesis* so long as it corresponds to some propriety; as long as Telemachus had some hope of his father's return, it was *ou nemesis*

to put off the suitors (xx.330), and it is *ou nemesis* for Phemius to sing of the return of the Argives (i.350)—he is just doing his job. Only in the case of Achilles is *nemesis* purely personal; Achilles would feel *nemesis* toward Patroclus if Patroclus felt sorry for Achilles' enemies (XVI.22) or simply lingered about an errand (XI.649). Achilles has made of his own will a moral law.

To return to *aidōs*: *aidōs* accompanies a variety of other emotions. *Aidōs* may be joined to pity (XXII.82); *aidōs* and *eleos* cause one to accept the suppliant instead of killing him (XXI.74–75, XXII.123–24, v.447–50, ix.266–71, xxii.312–24; cf. vii.165=vii.181). Achilles' defilement of Hector shows Achilles to be lacking in *aidōs* and in pity (XXIV.44 [cf. XXII.419], 207–8, 503). *Aidōs* is thus specifically connected with restraint in treatment of the helpless.

But *aidōs* is also connected with fear, particularly with fear of one's superior officer (I.331; cf. XXIV.435, xvii.188–89). Hence the saying: "Where there is fear, there also is *aidōs* (quoted from the *Cypria* in Plato *Euthyphro* 12a). If *aidōs* is a shrinking from cruelty, it is also a shrinking from disobedience. Penury constitutes a claim on the *aidōs* of others, but so does wealth (xi.360, xiv.234).

Aidōs, finally, is connected with friendship and affection (X.114, XIV.210, XXIV.111, v.88). The close friend, especially the friend to whom one owes an obligation, is at once *philos*, *deinos*, and *aidoios*—dear, dread, and a source of *aidōs* (XVIII.386, 394, 425, viii.21–22; cf. III.172).

Thus we can see that *aidōs* is in general an emotion provoked by the perception of one's place in the social structure and of the obligations which accompany that place.²⁰ One should pity one's inferiors and shrink from mistreating them; one should fear one's superiors and shrink from disobeying them; one should treasure one's friends and shrink from disappointing them. *Aidōs* accompanies an immediate emotion when that emotion is mediated by the social sense.

Aidōs is in general felt toward persons in the exercise of their social roles or when they are perceived as having a social relation to oneself. *Aidōs* is felt toward one's uncle (XXI.468–69, vi.329–30), one's mother (xx.343), an elder (iii.24). *Aidoiē* is a fixed epithet of the *tamiē*, the senior female house servant. *Aidōs* is felt toward a king (IV.402), a bard (viii.480), a priest (I.23 = 377), and a dependent (xiv.505). Here again we see that the sense of rightness, of fitness, pervades the entire social order; it is morally right for a bard to be a bard—because he is one.

Aidōs and *nemesis* are most frequently mentioned in connection with the three types of social situation which most test the moral sense: situations involving sexuality, the entertainment of guests, and standing

one's ground in battle.²¹ In all three the worth of a man is tested by his power to overcome selfish impulses which might lead him to be self-indulgent, miserly, or cowardly. Of the three, the battlefield is the most testing and the most important.

Combat is the crucial social act, for in combat the survival of the collectivity is at stake. The *aidōs* felt in battle is an experience of the collectivity; a man stands his ground because he shrinks from betraying his fellows. Thus the bare word *aidōs* is a battle cry (V.787 = VIII.228, XIII.95, XV.502, XVI.422); the Homeric proverb says: "When men feel *aidōs*, more are saved than perish" (V.531, XV.563). Hector refers to *aidōs* in this sense when he tells Andromache that he has "learned to be good."²²

Hector is a warrior not because he loves war but because he is before all else a hero of *aidōs*. He has devoted his life to its dictates and to the avoidance of *nemesis*. Hector thus embodies the ideal norm of Homeric society. In his story we see that norm tested, and we come to see its limits.

In his speech to Andromache, Hector says that he feels *aidōs* before both Trojan men and "the long-robed Trojan women." *Aidōs* is particularly associated with women (see II.514, for example), who, as structural inferiors, have the same sort of claim to *aidōs* as the guest, the suppliant, and the beggar. In order to understand Hector's *aidōs*, we must see Hector in relation to his women. This picture occupies the greater part of Book Six.

WOMEN

The battlefield is inhabited solely by men, and heroism is a superbly masculine role. Manly himself, the hero is also the son of heroes; in his breeding he recapitulates the masculinity of his fathers. Yet the hero is also born of woman, and there are in Homer traces of a notion that a person's innate qualities, as opposed to those conferred by his social role, are his inheritance from his mother (see, e.g., vi.25, xxi.172). It is as if the father were the social or cultural parent, the mother the natural parent; *mētēr* can be used of animal parents, while *patēr* cannot.²³ The son's social task is to replace his father; he may or may not have the natural capacity to do so (see IV.399–400, V.800–801). The mother is the source of these natural capacities. Thus Paris says: "My mother did not bear me (*geinato*) completely without valor (*alkē*)" (XIII.777). When Achilles boasts of his high lineage, he traces his origins through Peleus back to Zeus (XXI.184–91); but his personal greatness comes to him from his divine mother (I.280, XXI.109). Aeneas has his status among the Dardanidae by his descent from Anchises, but

it is his descent from his divine mother Aphrodite that will preserve him through the war (see XX.300-305).

A woman cannot be a hero, but she can be the mother of heroes. Her participation in combat is thereby vicarious. When the warrior "has killed his man in battle, his mother would joy in her heart" (VI.481). Thus, in terms of his audience or social referent, the hero has a double sense of his role; while his bravery in battle is *like* that of his father and his other menfolk, it is *from* his mother and *for* her and his other women. When Meleager's wife roused him to action,

she told him all
The sufferings of a people whose city is taken:
They kill the men, the city is razed with fire,
The children go to others, and the handsome women.
And his spirit rose as he heard of these evil acts;
He went forth.

(IX.591-96)

The men are killed, the women and children enslaved. A grown man cannot be enslaved;²⁴ if he is taken prisoner, he may undergo a fiction of slavery (XXIV.751-53), but he is in fact held to be resold to his own people; his price is a ransom (VI.46-50 = XI.131-35; X.378-81; XXI.34-44, with 80). A child can be enslaved (XXIV.732-34), as Eumaeus was enslaved; he was young and could be raised to the life (xv.363-70), but a grown man is no longer so pliant. But a woman is; she has been one man's and can be another's. In this limited sense the woman is a permanent child. Women, children, and slaves are alike in that all are dependent and thus differentiated from the active warrior on whom they must all rely. All together, along with his material possessions, are the warrior's property, and combat is on their behalf:

It is not unfitting, defending one's homeland,
To die. Then your wife is safe and your children after;
Your house and lands are undesploiled.

(XV.496-98)

The warrior defending his city obviously and "by necessity" (VIII.57) fights for those who cannot fight. But the invader fights for his women and children also; thus Nestor says:

Friends, be men; put *aidōs* in your heart
Of other people; remember each of you
His children, wife, property, and parents,
Both those who live and those who are with the dead.

On their behalf I beseech you, though they are absent,
Stand firm.

(XV.661-66)

The memory of the weak gives rise to *aidōs*; thus, by a basic principle of social differentiation, the weakness of some generates strength in others. The masculinity of the warriors has its source in the femininity of the unwarlike. The very closeness of the relation between the warrior and his women, further, requires their separation in time of war. Cowards turn into women (II.235, VII.96, VIII.163) or may run to the arms of their women (VI.81). The worthless Paris is commonly found among women (see XIII.769). The warrior's place is in the masculine world of war. When Hector leaves the battlefield and enters the city, he appears as a messenger from one world to the other:

Around him the wives of Troy ran, and the daughters,
Asking after their sons and brothers and kinsmen
And husbands. But he told them to pray to the gods,
As each came up. But sorrow was certain for many.

(VI.238-41)

Hector goes to the city on Helenus' instructions (which are specifically endorsed by the poet, so that we know that Hector is acting rightly [VI.73-76]). Hector's mission is to the Trojan women, and he carries it out. But when he speaks to his army before leaving, he also says that he will speak "to the elders, the councilors" (VI.113-14); in the event he makes no attempt to do so. It has been thought that this anomaly is a trace of multiple authorship.²⁵ One may, however, prefer to think that Hector, embarrassed to be seen going among the women in time of war, therefore asserts that his mission is also to the men.

There is an undercurrent of tension in Hector throughout the book. His mother assumes that he has come himself to pray to Zeus; she offers him wine—"when a man is tired, wine much revives his force" (VI.261). Hector replies:

Bring me not wine that honeys the heart, lady mother,
Lest you strip my limbs of force, and I forget valor.
With unwashed hands to pour the wine to Zeus—
I shrink from that. It's wrong to go in prayer
To cloudy Zeus when smirched with blood and gore.

(VI.264-68)

He tells her that, although he is present in her house, he still belongs to the battlefield; he is only a messenger and cannot come home. If he forgets and allows her to care for him, he will lose his *alkē*. So also

he says to Helen: "Don't ask me to sit down, Helen, though you love me. You will not persuade me" (VI.360). Any strong "no," in poetry as in life, is likely to conceal a "yes." Hector lingers a moment among the women, repeatedly asserting that he must not stay. He sees his mother on Helenus' instructions; he sees Helen because he improvises a need to speak to Paris. Finally, he searches the city until he finds his wife. The conversation between Hector and Andromache is the crown of Book Six. It is the one moment in Hector's story in which he acts, not from a sense of obligation, but from the fullness of desire.

As Hector and Paris are a kind of opposite pair, so are Helen and Andromache. Andromache is the faithful wife who completes and motivates the hero; Helen is woman as source of danger and social disorder (III.156-60). Yet Helen is no villainess; she does harm passively, it is not her fault. Helen and Hector are close; she, with his wife and mother, is the third mourner at his funeral, where she says that, of the Trojans, Hector and Priam alone were always kind to her (XXIV. 767-72). Helen does not think of herself as deserving kindness; she is filled with self-distaste and regret for all she has caused. In her weakness Helen reaches out to Hector. A woman must be dependent on some man or men; and as her own husband is weak, Helen reaches out along the chain of kinship to the next men over, to Priam and Hector. In effect she says to Hector: "If only you were my husband instead of Paris" (see VI.349-51).

In Homer's world a woman's social position is defined by her relations with men. These are of two kinds: consanguineal and affinal; more concretely, she has a father and can have a husband. A married woman remains a part of her father's family. If she is to be ransomed from captivity, her father will pay the ransom (I.13, VI.427). The father gives his married daughter a dowry, which is the mark of her continuing relations with him; if she is sent away, the dowry must be repaid (ii.132-33). The dowry belongs to the woman in trust for her sons (XXII.50-51). It gives a married woman some independent standing in her husband's house.

Helen and Andromache, however, are alike uprooted—Helen because her marriage with Paris was not a proper transaction, Andromache because Achilles has killed all her consanguine male kin and destroyed her father's house. Thus Andromache's words to Hector are, in a social sense, literally true:

Hector, you are now my father and lady mother
And brother; you are my strong-grown husband.
(VI.429-30)

All of her relations have been reduced to one; Hector is her sole link with the fabric of kinship. As her dependence on Hector is absolute, so is his response:

Well I know this in my heart and spirit:
The day will come when sacred Troy will perish
And Priam and ash-speared Priam's folk.
Not for Troy do I care for the pain to come
Nor for Hecuba herself nor Priam the king,
Nor for my brothers, who so many and brave
Shall roll in the dust before their enemies,
As much as for you, when some armored Achaeans
Will take you in tears and strip you of your freedom.
(VI.447-55)

HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY

Hector's meeting with Andromache is a parting.²⁶ Her first words to him are a reproach:

You strange creature, your strength will fail, you've
No pity for your son, for me, ill-fated, soon your widow,
As I shall be. Soon they will kill you, these Achaeans
Massing against you. And then I'll find it better,
Once I have lost you, to sink within the earth.
(VI.407-11)

In the conversation between Hector and Andromache the poet dramatizes the pain of the warrior's role, of the man who, on behalf of his family, must leave his family, so that his very defense of them becomes a betrayal. The community can defend itself only with the loss of some of its members; the warrior when he goes to war immerses himself in the collectivity. There is thus a tension between obligations to household and to city, for in defending everyone the warrior must set aside his special obligations to those who are most truly his own. Hector in his armor is a terrifying, alien figure to his own son; for a moment he can set aside the costume of his role and play with the child, but he must then again put on his helmet and his task.²⁷

The conflict between personal loyalty and collective loyalty is an element of the generic situation of the warrior; it arises in many epic stories, for instance in the stories of Meleager and Patroclus. Hector's situation is more complex; "a man of great reputation and prosperity," he is more than a member of the collective: he is its focal point. As the leading warrior, he protects his city for the present; as Priam's heir, he is its hope for the future. He thus has two conflicting sets of

obligations. To meet the first set, he must be ready to die; he can meet the second set only if he survives.

The life of communities is in their continuity, but excellence in combat requires one to forget continuity. The warrior must be given over to immediacy, ready to stake everything on the success of the moment. The warrior ethic is therefore egoistic; it is an ethic of glorious victory or glorious death. The householder, the king, the commander—and the warrior may be all these things as well—must be able to look forward to another day. His ethic is one of communal responsibility. In Homeric society this contradiction was to some extent mediated by the age-grading of the virtues; planning and forethought belonged to the elders, immediate action to the young. Inheritance *inter vivos*, however, tends to produce an overlap of social roles. As battlefield commander, Hector is both king and warrior; he must be cautious and reckless at once, act well himself and direct the action of others. This contradiction is already dramatized, quietly, in Book Five, in Hector's two meetings with Sarpedon. First Sarpedon tells him that he is failing as a commander, that his own personal courage is not enough (V.485–86). A little later Sarpedon himself is wounded; he calls on Hector, who advances, “bringing terror to the Greeks, and Sarpedon rejoiced to see him” (V.682–83). In his own moment of need Sarpedon relies, not on Hector's leadership, but on his personal valor. In neither case does Hector say anything; he responds to the conflicting demands on him simply by doing his best to meet them. The contradiction latent here becomes increasingly explicit in the course of Hector's story, until at the end it leaves him, alone outside the walls, paralyzed before Achilles' advance.

In their parting in Book Six Hector and Andromache speak together of Hector's death. Andromache speaks of her personal loss; Hector speaks of the fall of Troy. Hector does not have the privilege of dying that his community may live; the burden on him is greater than that. When he dies, his community falls with him. The fall of Troy (like the death of Achilles) is not part of the story of the *Iliad*; it is, however, part of the fatality of the poem. We know that Troy will fall, and this knowledge is, for us, part of the meaning of the death of Hector. His death is not a private matter; it has its meaning in its effect on all those others who have relied on him and by their reliance have made him what he is.

There are many anticipations in the story of Hector, and they are not consistent with one another. Andromache in her mourning in Book Twenty-two speaks of Astyanax' orphanhood:

You will not be for him,
Hector, his blessing, since you're dead—nor he to you.
Should he escape this wept-for war of Achaeans,
Ever for him the toil and sorrow after
Remain. For others will mark his fields.
The day of orphanhood makes the child friendless;
Ever he hangs his head, the tears run down;
In lack the child goes to his father's friends,
Plucking the cloak of one, and another's shirt.
In pity one hands him a drop in a cup
To moisten his lips, but his mouth it doesn't moisten.
At the flourishing feast, too, they insult him
With a blow of the hand and the harsh sting of an insult:
“Go along. *Your* father does not feast among us.”

(XXII.485–98)

This speech does not fit our picture of Priam's polygamous household, maintained by supporting bonds of extended kinship. Andromache does not make a realistic prediction of the future; rather she states with vivid concreteness the meaning of Hector to herself as the mother of a son. At the moment of loss her overpowering awareness is of the son's dependence on his father.

Hector in Book Six—just after he has described so vividly the fall of Troy—has a different vision of his son's future:

Zeus and other gods, grant that he become,
My son, as I am, famous to the Trojans,
As great in force, by might the prince of Troy.
Someone might say: “He far exceeds his father.”
Coming from war he'd carry the bloody armor
When he's killed his man; his mother would joy in her heart.

(VI.476–81)

But this speech is no realistic prediction of the future; Hector is simply stating the meaning of his son to himself. At a moment of deep affection his central awareness is of the son as a recapitulation of the father, of the son who, by continuing, completes the father's social task.

Hector's vision of the fall of Troy (VI.447–55, quoted above) is not a realistic prediction either; it appears so to us only because we know that it describes what (in legend) actually occurred. Hector is denied a knowledge of the future; the various anticipations which run through his story express various aspects of his present situation. These anticipations are inconsistent with one another because his obligations—and therefore his various definitions of himself—are self-contradictory. Hec-

tor is caught between household and city, between youth and age. He is both king and warrior; he is son and brother and also father and husband. In these contradictions the tragedy is latent. All of them, further, are aspects of the relation between nature and culture; or better, we could say that that relation is the general source of contradiction.

Nature is eternal; the things of culture are transient. But from another point of view it is also true that the creatures of nature are ephemeral, while the institutions of culture—its families, cities, traditions—are in principle immortal. They will survive as long as the generations of men maintain them. Culture therefore confers on finite life a meaning; it offers a man something to live for, something beyond himself.

But culture does not thereby redeem man from death. Rather it imposes on him the burden of choice. Society asks of a man much more than he can do; when some paths are chosen, others are rejected. At the moment of death much remains undone. Thus culture, precisely because it offers purposes to life, shows each life to itself as incomplete. In culture, in his relations with others, man encounters his own mortality. However much he lives for others, he must always fail them in the end.

As a free, choosing being, the hero looks to the future; as a mortal creature, he looks away from it. That is the inner contradiction of Hector's farewell to his wife. He leaves her to go toward action, heavy with consciousness of the limits of action. His parting words to her are words of submission—submission to the order of nature and to the determining force of his social role:

You strange girl, do not grieve so for me;
No one will send me to death beyond my portion.
But the portion no man, I say, has escaped,
Neither coward, nor brave man, from the moment he is born.
But go into the house and take up your own works,
The loom and the distaff, and direct the servants
About their work. We men will care for war,
All of us—I the most—men born to Troy.

(VI.486-93)

The contradiction remains unresolved; here it is merely set aside. Hector's social role requires of him more than submission; it requires initiative, leadership, and choice. Choice entails the possibility of error; and since man is mortal, his errors are irremediable. Without freedom, however, and thus the possibility of error, there is no heroism. The

Hector of the first six books—responsive, responsible, and submissive—is as yet only a hero *in potentia*. He becomes actual in action.

Yet in a sense the end is present at the beginning: Hector's action and his error are an enactment of his situation. The poet has taken great care to show us that situation in its complexity, its inner conflicts, and its pathos before he sends his hero into action. We are on Hector's side, we understand him well, and we are prepared to follow his story. Each of his acts, even at his moments of greatest blindness, rises exactly from the admirable kind of man he is. When Hector departs, the women raise the keening.

While he still lived, they mourned Hector in his household.

(VI.500)

Hector's story begins, as it ends, with his funeral.