

**The Department of English**  
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**Study Material--3**  
**On**  
***The Iliad by Homer***  
**(Discussion on Some Relevant Issues)**

**For**  
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The story of Homer's *The Iliad* is based on the Trojan War and the central theme is the 'wrath of Achilles'. In the following paragraph the major themes and some relevant issues are discussed.

### ❖ Analysis of Important Issues and Characters:

#### • Main Focus of *The Iliad*:

According to Aristotle, Homer didn't want to depict the whole Trojan War of almost ten years, rather his narrative is based on a single theme—the wrath of Achilles. How that anger is originated and its aftermath are illustrated in the epic. The very first line of Book 1 declares the anger and reason behind that anger of Achilles is depicted in Book 1. The whole story is based on the lives of the aristocratic people, the aristocratic heroes. The human actions in the story take place in the Greek camps, or in the battlefield or in Ilium whereas the gods and goddesses stay on the Mount Olympus and they continue to engage themselves internally or externally in the human affairs. Though the narrative illustrates only a few weeks in the last year of the Trojan War, Homer generates the impression that he is covering the whole war, and even the times before and after it, as we can come to know many of the events that took place many years ago and it also foretells the upcoming events towards the end of the narrative.

#### • Major Themes of *The Iliad*:

**i) Pride:** Sense of pride of all the characters has proved itself to be the central issue in the development of the plot. Pride from all sides brings flow to the plot. Agamemnon's sense of pride forced him to take Achilles' prize Briseis after he returned his prize Chryseis to her father. Achilles' sense of pride forced him to refuse to fight with the Greeks After Agamemnon's act of taking away his prize. Later he requested his mother to ask Zeus to bring defeat to the Greeks until Agamemnon realized how much harm he had done to Achilles. But could overcome his pride and joined the army after the death of his dearest companion Patroclus by Hector. Again, at another point of time he could overcome his pride when he returned Hector's body to Priam. The Trojans' pride compelled them to stay with Paris though they knew that by returning Helen to her husband would bring glory to them.

**ii) Anger or wrath:** "Wrath of Achilles" is the main theme of Homer's epic. Everything in *The Iliad* starts with that wrath. Out of that anger Achilles wanted to kill Agamemnon but later he stopped due to divine intervention; he rejected to obey orders from Agamemnon; he called

his mother to ask Zeus for divine intervention; later he behaved brutally with the dead body of Hector. His anger compelled him to stop thinking about the Greek army.



Angry Achilles dragging Hector's body

**iii) Fate:** Fate plays significant role as it propels most of the events in the poem. Achilles' early death is predetermined and that we come to know from his mother. Hector's death by Achilles' death is also pre-determined and that hint is given by Patroclus. Fate does not always determine each and every act of life but it controls the outcome of life.

**iv) Hubris:** This is the excessive pride or self-confidence. Agamemnon, Achilles and the Trojans behaved wrongly only because of their hubris. By giving importance to their hubris all of them brought destruction to themselves.

- **Main Characters in Book I of *The Iliad*:**

**The Greeks:**

**i) Achilles:** Achilles is the son of the mortal king Peleus and the divine sea-nymph Thetis from Phthia in Thessaly. He is the leader of the Myrmidons. He is the central character of the *Iliad* and the greatest warrior in the Achaean army. The most important flaw in the nature of Achilles is his excessive pride, his hubris. He is ready to destabilize the good of the whole army and to bring danger to the lives of those who are closest to him to give importance to his pride. His chief virtue is that he is a great fighter and humanity stems from his great passion. He is called 'swift-footed' because of his speed while chasing the enemy.



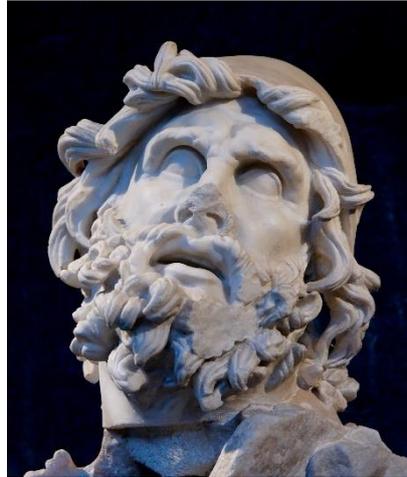
Achilles

**ii) Agamemnon:** Agamemnon is the son of Atreus and ruler of Mycenae in Argos. He was the leader, the commander-in-chief of the expedition to Troy. His brother Menelaus asked for his assistance to bring Helen back from Troy. Agamemnon was killed by his wife Clytemnestra after his return to Greece. He was benevolent but irresolute king.



Mask of Agamemnon, discovered by Heinrich Schliemann in 1876 at Mycenae

**iii) Odysseus:** Odysseus, son of Laertes, was the ruler of Ithaca and hero of Homer's *Odyssey*. He was famous for his quick thinking. He went to return Chryseis back to her father.



Head of Odysseus made of marble

**iv) Nestor:** Nestor, son of Neleus was the ruler of Pylos. He was the oldest of the Greeks fighting against the Trojans. He was famous for his wisdom. Athena's guidance and Nestor's wise advice helped Achilles to overcome his anger when he was arguing with Agamemnon.

**v) Calchas:** He was the son of Thestor: the soothsayer, the chief arguer and prophet of the Greeks.

### **The Gods and Goddesses:**

**Apollo:** God Apollo was the son of Zeus and Leto. He was the god of prophecy, sickness and health and stringed instruments. He could give sudden death to humans. He was on the Trojan side. He brought plague to the Greek camp as found in the very beginning of the poem.

**Hera:** Hera, goddess of marriage and motherhood, was the daughter of Cronus and Rhea, sister and wife of Zeus. She is the most dedicated of all the Olympian supporters of the Achaeans and is eager to go to any lengths, including the deception of her husband, to achieve the downfall of Troy. She was always plotting with Athene against Zeus and sometimes she was also punished by Zeus.

**Zeus:** Son of Cronus and Rhea, Zeus was the supreme deity and 'Father' and king. He was sky and weather god. He agreed to help Achilles in his feud with Agamemnon after the request of Thetis. But he showed sympathy for Paris and Hector.

**Thetis:** Daughter of the Old Man of the Sea Nereus, Thetis was a divine sea-nymph and mother of 'swift-footed' Achilles. She was married to mortal Peleus. She always helped her son when he needed.

**Athene:** She was the daughter Zeus and goddess of war, wisdom and arts and crafts. She was a strong supporter of the Greeks as she and Hera together were against the Trojans because of their defeat in the judgement of Paris. Zeus gave birth to her from his head and then she was brought up by River Triton in Greece.

(In Book I the Trojans heroes do not appear.)

- **The Significance of the Quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles:**

The very first book in *The Iliad* opens with the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon and the story takes a completely different track because of the quarrel. Actually, the quarrel between the two great heroes sets the motion of the narrative. After Agamemnon returns back Chryseis to her father as Apollo brought plague to the Greek camp listening to the prayer of Chryses, Agamemnon takes away Achilles' concubine Briseis to his camp. A silly matter can also create a big problem of everyone. As a result, Achilles requested his mother to meet Zeus so that he can help him by throwing the Greeks in danger. He again joins the Greek army only after he is enraged by the death of his dearest friend Patroclus by Hector. After Achilles joins the army in Book 19, the Greek were revitalized.

The quarrel shows another factor of the Greek culture. Personal honour is more important than the well-being of the community. Both Achilles and Agamemnon gave importance to their personal honour and values. They thought of themselves and behaved as well. Achilles' pride comes to our notice only after this quarrel as he withdrew himself from the battle.

- **The Relationship between the Gods and the Mortals:**

The relationship in between the gods and the mortals is quite interesting. The gods have the power to always poke their noses into the affairs of the mortals: they can instigate the mortals; they have the ability to give different shapes to the activities of the mortals and even they can manipulate them. They do play complicated but important roles in the human lives. One example is found in Book I. Apollo brought plague to the Greek camps to give punishment to Agamemnon as he kept Chryseis with him as his concubine. The gods can use their power anywhere they like. Another important aspect is their relationship with the humans. The gods can have children with the human beings. They are like humans in terms of characters and weaknesses. In the story of the Trojan War gods, goddesses and even the minor deities compete

with themselves and in those competitions and fights, sometimes they use the humans to counter the opponent. Psychologist Julian Jaynes proposed that the divine intervention in the mortal affairs in *The Iliad* can be analyzed using the theory of Bicameral mind. Before the time *Iliad* was written, the minds of humans were completely different from the modern minds. Those ancient people lacked the present concept of consciousness. The mortals used to obey the commands of those whom they called gods and goddesses. He suggested that almost all the actions in the *Iliad* is influenced by the divine intervention.

- **Epic Conventions in *The Iliad*:**

Being a classic example of an epic, Homer's *The Iliad* conforms to the structure of traditional epis poetry. The narrative begins with the invocation to muse, which is one of the most important features of epic. Again, the story opens *in medias res*, or in the middle of things, that means here the Trojan War is not depicted from the beginning. It starts with the theme or subject of the story, that is the anger of Achilles, the Greek hero. The hero Achilles is outstanding and legendarily significant. He is the son of a mortal king and a sea-goddess. He has superhuman qualities. Even the other main characters were also not normal human beings. They do have also superhuman qualities. The setting of the story is very large. And the actions in the story is also made of deeds of great valour. Supernatural forces like gods and goddesses and deities play significant roles in the ongoing events. The style of the narrative is also very high: main characters give long speeches; epic similes are used. The narrative presents before us the cultures of the them heroes and also the contemporary people.

- ❖ **Conclusion:**

Many writers over the years have used the story of the Trojan War. In *The Iliad* Homer presented Helen as sorrowful and she wanted to be reunited with her husband Menelaus. But many other accounts give a different story where Helen loved Paris. Many writers depicted the story of Trojan War with some alternations keeping the main theme intact.

❖ **Reference for Further Studies:**

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4. <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/i/the-iliad/>
5. <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/iliad/>

(Read the following attachment for your better understanding.)



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Achilles and the Iliad

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## ACHILLES AND THE ILIAD

The first question and answer of Porphyry's *Quaestiones Homericae* run: »Were anyone to ask, noting the worth and excellence of Achilles, why Homer called his work the *Iliad* and not the *Achilleid*—as he did the *Odyssey* after *Odysseus*—, we would answer that, in one case, the story concerned a single man; while in the other, even if Achilles excelled the rest, yet they too were excellent, and that Homer wished to show us not only Achilles but also, in a way, all heroes, and what sort of men they were: so unwilling to call it after one man, he used the name of a city, which merely suggested the name of Achilles«. Achilles is a hero in a world of heroes; he is of the same cast as they, though we might call him the first impression, that has caught each point more finely than later copies. He holds within himself all the heroic virtues that are given singly to others (he has the swiftness of *Oilean* and the strength of *Telamonian Ajax*), but his excellence is still the sum of theirs. We do not need a separate rule to measure his supremacy. But before we can come into the presence of Achilles and take his measure, we must first be presented with the common warrior, who is not just something vaguely but specifically heroic, with whom Achilles shares more in common than he knows. The common warrior is the armature on which Achilles is shaped and the backdrop against which his story is played. Homer assumes our ignorance of what the heroes are, the heroic world from which Achilles withdraws and yet to which he still belongs. And it is our intention here to show how this world circumscribes though it does not completely define Achilles.

### *I: Men and Heroes*

When Hector's challenge to a duel found no takers among the Achaeans, »as ashamed to ignore as afraid to accept it«, *Menelaus*, after some time, adopting a rebuke invented by *Thersites* (*B* 235), berates them thus: ὦ μοι, ἀπειλητῆρες Ἀχαιῖδες οὐκέτ' Ἀχαιοί (*H* 96, cf. 235 ss., *A* 389, *Ψ* 409). Warriors ought to believe that to be a woman is the worst calamity; and yet Homer seems to mock their belief, in making *Menelaus*, who warred to recover the most beautiful of women, and *Thersites*, the ugliest person who came to *Troy*, the spokesmen for manliness. However this may be, both the Achaeans and *Trojans* not only insist on being men as opposed to women, but also on being ἀνδρες as distinct from ἄνθρωποι.

*ἄνθρωποι* are men and women collectively, and men or women indifferently, and whatever may be the virtues of an *ἄνθρωπος*, it cannot be martial courage, which is the specific virtue of men. Nestor urges the Achaeans to stand their ground (*O* 661–663):

ὦ φίλοι ἀνέρες ἔστε, καὶ αἰδῶ θέσθ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ  
 ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, ἐπὶ δὲ μνήσασθε ἕκαστος  
 παίδων ἢ δ' ἀλόχων καὶ κτήσιος ἢ δὲ τοκήων.

The Achaeans themselves must be *ἄνδρες*, or »he-men«; others, their own children, parents and wives, are *ἄνθρωποι*. *ἄνθρωποι* are the others, either those who lived before—*πρότεροι ἄνθρωποι*—(*E* 637, *Ψ* 332, 790, cf. *A* 250, *Z* 202, *Y* 217, 220, 233, *Ω* 535)—or those yet to come—*ὀπίγονοι ἄνθρωποι* (*Γ* 287, 353, 460, *Z* 358, *H* 87); and if the heroes employ it of the living, they are careful not to include themselves (cf. *I* 134, 276). Others are *ἄνθρωποι*, but never is another an *ἄνθρωπος*. If you wish to be an individual, you must be either *ἀνῆρ* or *γυνή*; but if you belong to a crowd, indistinguishable from your neighbor, you are both catalogued together under »human beings« (*Γ* 402, *I* 134, 328, 340, 592, *K* 213, *O* 662, *Π* 621, *Σ* 288, 342, *Y* 204, 357, *Ω* 202). The singular occurs but thrice in the *Iliad*, twice in a general sense and perhaps once of an individual, but in all three cases Homer speaks in his own name, and two of them occur in similes (*Π* 263, 315, *P* 572). And not only do human beings in the heroic view lack all uniqueness and belong more to the past or the future than the present, but even Odysseus seems to young Antilochus, as a member of a prior generation, more *ἄνθρωπος* than *ἀνῆρ* (*Ψ* 787–791). Old age is as absolute as death, which deprived Hector and Patroclus of their *ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἡβην* (*Π* 857, *X* 363, cf. *Ω* 6), an heroic manhood that lasts but an instant, and with its end consigns Odysseus to the world of *ἄνθρωποι* and Hector to Hades.

Achilles in the ninth book is found »pleasing his heart with the clear-toned lyre and singing the famous deeds of men« (*κλέα ἀνδρῶν*, *I* 189, cf. 524–527); whereas Aeneas, before, declaiming his genealogy to Achilles, remarks that »we know each other's lineage and have heard the famous words of mortal human beings« (*πρόκλυτα ἔπεα θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων*, *Y* 203ss., cf. *Z* 490–493 with *a* 356–359). Deeds are done by *ἄνδρες*, words are spoken by *ἄνθρωποι*; and if human beings do anything, it is only the tillage of the fields (cf. *Π* 392, *P* 549ss., *T* 131, but cf. Hesiod *Th.* 100). The heroes' contempt for speeches is but part of his contempt for *ἄνθρωποι* (cf. *O* 741, *Π* 620–630, *Y* 356–368, 248–257), and yet they depend on them for the immortality of their fame (*Z* 357ss., *H* 87–91, cf. *θ* 579ss.). *ἄνθρωποι* are the descendants of *ἄνδρες*, the shadows, as it were, that the heroes cast into the future, where these poor copies of themselves live on; and as the adulation they will give would seem to justify their own existence, it is proper that these later generations, extolling the heroes beyond their worth, should look on them as demigods: so the word

*ἡμίθεοι* occurs but once, in a passage on the future destruction of the Achaeans' wall, and not accidentally it is coupled there with *ἄνδρες* (*ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν*, *M* 23, cf. W. SCHADEWALDT, *Iliasstudien*, p. 118, n. 1).

Under one condition are the heroes willing to regard themselves as *ἄνθρωποι*: if they refer at the same time to the gods. Achilles makes the two heralds, Talthymbius and Eurybates, witnesses to his oath: *πρὸς τε θεῶν μακάρων πρὸς τε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων* (*A* 339). The gods are blessed and immortal, while *ἄνθρωποι* are mortal, and it is only his weakness, when confronted with the power of the gods, that makes hero resign himself to being human. »Shall there be evil war and dread strife«, ask the Achaeans and Trojans, »or does Zeus bind us in friendship, Zeus who dispenses war to *ἄνθρωποι*« (*Δ* 82–84, *T* 224). Whenever the heroes feel the oppressive weight of their mortality, they become, in their own opinion, like other men who are always human beings (*A* 339, *Γ* 279, *Δ* 84, 320, *Z* 123, 180, *I* [460], 500, 507, *Σ* 107, *T* 94, 131, 224, 260, *Φ* 566, 569, *Ψ* 788). And the gods also, if they wish to insist on their own superiority, or no longer wish to take care of the heroes, call them in turn *ἄνθρωποι*; as Athena does, in calming Ares, who has just heard of his son's death (*O* 139–411, cf. *Δ* 45, *E* 442, *Φ* 462–466, *Ω* 49):

*ἦδη γάρ τις τοῦ γε βίην καὶ χειῖρας ἀμείνων  
ἦ πέφατ' ἦ καὶ ἔπειτα πεφήσεται ἀργαλέον δὲ  
πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἶσθαι γενεὴν τε τόκον τε.*

If anyone had the right to be called a hero, surely this Ascalaphus, a son of Ares, had; but Athena wishes to point out his worthlessness and deprive him of any divine status, so that Ares' regret at his loss might be diminished. For the gods are not concerned with men in so far as they are mortal, but on the condition of their possible divinity.

How far apart the Achaeans and Trojans are from ordinary men, the word »hero« shows; which Homer identifies with *ἄνῆρ* (the phrase *ἦρωες ἄνδρες* thrice occurs, *E* 747, *I* 525, *N* 346, cf. Hesiod *Op.* 159), and which clearly has nothing to do with *ἄνθρωποι*: even we can feel how jarring the union *ἦρωες ἄνθρωποι* would have been (Hesiod, in his five ages of men, never calls the heroes, unlike the other four ages, *ἄνθρωποι*, *Op.* 109, 137, 143, 180). But in what consists the heroic distinction? First, in lineage: the heroes are either sons of gods or can easily find, within a few generations, a divine ancestor; and second, in providence: the gods are concerned with their fate. Zeus is a father to them—*πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε*—, who pities them and saves them from death, while he is not the father but the king of human beings, *ὅς τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι ἀνάσσει* (*B* 669). Zeus acts toward the heroes as Odysseus is said to treat his subjects—*πατὴρ ὧς ἦπιος ἦεν*—and he acts toward us like Agamemnon toward his men, distant, haughty, indifferent. As the providence extended over human beings is unbenevolent (cf. *Z* 1, 12–19), Zeus dispenses

war to *ἄνθρωποι*, himself careless of its consequences; but it is a »father Zeus« who, Agamemnon believes, will aid the Achaeans and defeat the perfidious Trojans; and as father Zeus he later pities Agamemnon and sends an eagle for an omen (*Δ* 84, *T* 224, *Δ* 235, *Θ* 245, cf. *E* 33, *Θ* 132, 397, *Λ* 80, 201, *Π* 250, *P* 630).

*ἄνδρες* and *θεοί* belong to the same order; they may be built on different scales, but they are commensurate with one another (cf. *T* 95ss.). Achilles is a *θεῖος ἀνὴρ* (*Π* 798, cf. *E* 184ss., 331ss., 839): *θεῖος ἄνθρωπος* would be unthinkable. The direct intervention of the gods seems to elevate man to *ἀνὴρ*, whereas the flux of fortune, in which no caring providence can be seen, degrades him to *ἄνθρωπος*. »Of all the things that breathe and move upon the earth«, Odysseus tells Amphinomus, »the earth nurtures nothing weaker than a human being (*ἀκιδνότερον ἀνθρώποιο*); for as long as the gods grant him virtue and his limbs are strong, he thinks he will meet with no evil in the future; but whenever the blessed gods assign him sorrows, then he bears them, though struck with grief, with a steadfast heart« (*σ* 130—135; cf. *Ω* 49). When, however, Zeus pities the horses of Achilles, who weep for Patroclus, he regrets that he gave to mortal Peleus horses ageless and immortal, for »of all the things that breathe and move upon the earth, nothing is more pitiful than a he-man« (*δύζυρότερον ἀνδρός*, *P* 444ss., cf. *Υ* 21). Odysseus talks of *ἄνθρωποι*, Zeus is concerned only with *ἄνδρες*, those among us whom the gods favor and try to raise above the common lot of men. It is not the uncertainty in man's life which seems to Zeus man's sorrow; for the gods can put an end to chance and ensure his success; but even the gods are powerless to change his fate, no matter how many gifts they might lavish on him. Mortality and mortality alone makes for the misery of man. Odysseus, on the other hand, did not find man's burden in mortality (already implied in *ἄνθρωπος*) but in his inability to guarantee, as long as he lives, his happiness. Not his necessary death, in spite of the gods' attention, but his necessary helplessness, because of the gods' wilful despotism, seems to Odysseus the weakness of man.

Even as the word *ἄνθρωπος* is more frequent in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*, while the word *ἦρωες* occurs almost twice as often in the *Iliad* (*ἄνθρωπος*: 118 in *Od.*, 70 in *Il.*: *ἦρωες*: 73 in *Il.*, 40 in *Od.*; the same ratios apply to *ἀνὴρ*, *φῶς*, *βροτός*), so Odysseus saw the cities of many human beings, and Achilles cast into Hades the souls of many heroes. The *Odyssey* takes place after the Trojan War, when those upon whom the heroes had relied for their fame are now living and remember in song the deeds of the past (cf. *α* 347—352, *ϑ* 479ss. 492ss. with *α* 358ss., *φ* 352ss.). Phemius among the suitors and Demodocus among the Phaeacians celebrate an almost dead wholly heroic world; and Odysseus also, since he shared in that past but never belonged to it, recounts rather than acts out his own adventures. As Odysseus' deeds are only *μῦθοι*, so he himself is an *ἄνθρωπος* (*α* 219, 236, *η* 212, 307, *θ* 552, *λ* 363—366, *χ* 414ss.), not only as opposed to the gods, which even Achilles might allow to be true of

himself, but absolutely so<sup>1</sup>. War is the business of *ἦρωες ἄνδρες*, peace of *ἄνθρωποι*; and as Odysseus never did quite fit into the Iliad and was an obscure figure (his greatest exploit occurred at night, cf. Ovid *Met.* 13, 9—15), he becomes in the Odyssey preeminent, while the former great are mere ghosts in Hades, who depend on Odysseus for their power of speech.

The heroes are survivors in the Odyssey; they no longer dominate the stage; they are old-fashioned and out of favor. Menelaus is a hero (he often uses the word, δ 268, 312, 423, 617, ο 117, 121), but Telemachus becomes a hero only at his court (δ 21, 303, 312, ο 62), where the spell of the past still lingers. Laertes is a hero, or rather »hero-oldman« (*γέρον ἦρωας*, α 189, β 99, τ 144, χ 185, ω 134), who putters about in his garden. Other old men are heroes: Egyptius, Halitherses, Echenus (β 15, 157, η 155, λ 342, ω 451); and Eumaeus calls Odysseus, when disguised as an old man, hero (ξ 97). The word has been preserved in the country and remains on the lips of a swineherd. It has become an empty title, without any suggestion of force, nor even as an indication of rank; for Mulius, a servant of Amphinomus, can now lay claim to it (σ 423, cf. Eust. ad loc.).

## II: Achaeans and Trojans

To Agamemnon's demand for an equal prize in return, were he to give Chryseis back to her father, Achilles objects: »Most worthy Atreides—most rapacious of all—how will the magnanimous Achaeans give you a prize?« (*A* 122ss.). The phrase *μεγάθυμοι Ἀχαιοί* would not at first draw us to examine it, though we might doubt its suitability, were it not that, after Agamemnon has used it in echoing Achilles (*A* 135), it never again occurs in the Iliad (cf. ω 57). Not the Achaeans but the Trojans are *μεγάθυμοι* (*E* 27, 102, *Θ* 155, *K* 205, *Λ* 294, 459, *N* 456, 737, *P* 420, *Ψ* 175, 181). Why then did Achilles employ it? As Achilles himself is often *μεγάθυμος* (*P* 214, *Σ* 226, *T* 75, *Φ* 153, *Ψ* 168, 498, cf. *I* 184, 496), he transfers his own epithet to all the Achaeans, in the hope that, as his anger rises against Agamemnon, the Achaeans, carried along by his rhetoric, will side with him. »High-spirited« is, as the BT Scholiast remarks, demagogic. The Achaeans should also revile Agamemnon's presumptuousness; they should show as much fury as himself; a fury that characterizes the Trojans as a whole without even being persuaded.

The Trojan leaders use *μεγάθυμοι* as an exhortation (*E* 102), even as Hector urges them as *ὑπέρθυμοι* to fight in his absence, or not to let Achilles frighten them (*Z* 111, *Y* 366). They are »over-spirited« as well as »high-spirited« in Homer's opinion (*I* 233, *Λ* 564, *E* 15, *O* 135, *P* 276). Their spirit is not only great but excessive; their exuberance in war turns easily into pure fury (cf. *N* 621—639). They are in the opinion of others, though not in Homer's, *ὑπερφί-*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. SEILER, *Glotta*, 32, 233, who notes that the expressed opposition of *ἄνθρωποι-θεοί* is more common in the Il. than in the Od.

*αλοῖ*, »over-proud« and »arrogant« (*Γ* 106, *N* 621, *Φ* 224, 414, 459), a vice attributed to Penelope's suitors (*α* 134, cf. *ν* 291 ss., *φ* 289); who are also called *ἀγῆνορες*, »super-men« or »muscle-bound«; and this the Trojans also are (*K* 299, cf. *Δ* 176, *α* 106 passim; see HOFFMANN, Glotta, 28, 32). Magnanimity may be a vice or a virtue. It contains, for example, the intransigence as well as the fearlessness of Achilles (*I* 496, *Y* 498). It recognizes no obstacles and knows no bounds. It is so high-keyed that the slightest jar untunes it; it has no slack to take up nor any reserve to expend. It is all action and no recoil. Thus the Trojans are »high-spirited« both when they see the blood of Odysseus, and when they see one son of Dares killed and the other in flight (*Δ* 459, *E* 26–29). In one case they are spurred to charge and cluster round Odysseus, while in the other they are crestfallen. Men who are high-spirited flourish on success but cannot withstand adversity. »Their courage rises and falls with their animal spirits«, to adopt MACAULAY's description of Monmouth, »it is sustained on the field of battle by the excitement of action, by the hope of victory, by the strange influence of sympathy«; whereas those more reserved and less outwardly spirited (*μένεα πνεύοντες* Homericly, *Γ* 8, *Δ* 508, *Ω* 364, but cf. *B* 536, 541) might accomplish less in victory but would not fall off so much in defeat. They would possess a resilience and a steadiness the Trojans lack.

After Menelaus and Paris have finished arming themselves, »they walked into the space between the Achaeans and Trojans, and their glances were fearful—wonder held those who beheld them—Trojans tamers of horses and well-greaved Achaeans« (*Γ* 341–343). The Trojans are tamers of horses as the Achaeans are well-greaved; but the epithets are not of the same order. If you see the Trojans, you cannot tell they train horses, if you see the Achaeans, you know they are well-greaved. They appear well-armed, they may or may not be brave warriors; but the Trojans, all of them, from Hector to Paris (who share the same simile of the horse, *Z* 506, *O* 263), are high-spirited in war. The Trojans show more readily their affections than the Achaeans, who can remove their armor and be different in peace than in war; but the Trojans cannot so easily shake off their temper. Their epithets are general and do not particularly belong to an army. If we saw them in peacetime, they would still be »high-spirited« and »tamers of horses«. But the Achaeans' epithets describe only their military aspect and offer no clue to their peaceful appearance. We know at once more about the Trojans than about the Achaeans, who are, as it were, many-sided and *πολύτροποι*: there is no Odysseus among the Trojans. Not only their outward show but the Trojans' inner fibre impresses Homer; he sees it immediately. The Achaeans, however, wear long hair, are well-greaved and bronze-clad, and their eyes flash; while the Trojans, though no doubt they too are bronze-clad and shielded, display more of themselves and have a kind of openness in their nature that the Achaeans lack. The Trojans' epithets tell us what they are, those of the Achaeans only hint at what they are.

We learn about the Achaeans—what kind of men they are—before we ever meet the Trojans, whom we first get to know but briefly at the end of the second book; and yet we may say that our knowledge of them both is complete by the tenth; for it is remarkable how seldom their distinctive epithets appear in the later books. Although the most sustained and violent engagements take place in *A–P*, it is not in these books that the epithets of the Trojans and Achaeans are found most frequently; they abound instead in the early books, of which only the fifth and eighth books include great battles, and cluster round interludes in the war rather than in the war itself. *ἔυκνήμιδες*, for example, occurs nineteen times in *A–K*, but only twelve in *A–Ω*; *χαλκοχιτώνων* seventeen times in *A–K*, eight afterwards; and *κάρη κομόωντες* twenty-two times in *B–I*, four later. In the case of the Trojans, whose high and excessive spirit has more of a place in war (hence *μεγάθυμοι* and *ἑπέρθυμοι* occur throughout the Iliad), only *ἱππόδαμοι* suffers a like decline: seventeen times in *B–K*, seven afterwards. When the epithets had served their purpose—to introduce us to the Achaeans and Trojans—and Homer becomes more concerned with Achilles, they are more sparingly used. Another reason why *ἱππόδαμοι* decreases is that Homer assigns to the Trojans many more similes (which both supplement and replace the epithet) after the tenth book than before: they obtain two in the first half (one in *Γ* and one in *Δ*), but fourteen from *N–X*, and of joint similes—those shared equally with the Achaeans—there are four before *K* and nine after. For the Achaeans the opposite holds true: eighteen similes occur in *B–I*, nine in *A–T*. The similes complete Homer's description of the Achaeans and Trojans, and as we start from the Achaean side and slowly move across the lines to the Trojan (the plague of the Achaeans turns into the funeral of Hector), so the number of the Achaeans' similes diminishes, while that of the Trojans' increases. We must start then, like Homer, with the Achaean host, which is first presented in the second book, where almost half of its similes occur.

When the Achaeans first assemble, at Agamemnon's command, they seem like a mass of bees that issue in a constant stream from a smooth rock, and then fly in grape-like clusters to spring flowers: so the Achaeans at first make the earth groan when they come from their tents, and a hum pervades the host, but then, once seated in serious concentration, they are perfectly quiet (*B* 87–100). But as soon as Agamemnon finished his disastrous speech, they seem like long waves of the sea that east and south winds agitate—they are disturbed contradictorily—and as thick-set wheat, the shrill west wind shakes them—they are pliant and disordered; and with shouts and cries, whose din reaches up to heaven, they drag their ships down to the sea (*B* 144–154). In their desire to return home, they forget all discipline and become the riot and chaos of wheatfield and sea. So much have they been stirred up, that even after Odysseus has checked them, they return to the assembly as they left it, shouting like the

tumultuous ocean which breaks against a shore (*B* 209 ss.): and later, when they scatter to their tents, their shout is the crash of waves against a high-jutting rock that waves never leave (*B* 394—397); and yet they are now more singly resolved than before, for only the east wind (not east, south and west as before) moves them, and they center round one object—Troy's capture—like waves that always drench one rock (cf. H. FRÄNKEL, *Die Homerischen Gleichnisse*, p. 20).

The individuality of the Achaeans, lost after Agamemnon's speech, is slowly restored in the succeeding similes, when they are marshalled and turned once again into disciplined troops. The glint of their arms is like fire, the stamp of their feet like the swelling crash of geese, cranes, and swans; the number of their host like leaves, flowers, and flies in spring (*B* 455—473, cf. 469 with 87). They reacquire in these animal identities their former status, although they are not yet distinct until the next simile: as shepherds easily order their own flock in a pasture, so the leaders ranked the Achaeans for battle (*B* 474—477). Then the catalogue is made, which completes their ranking, and they seem like fire spread across the whole plain of the Scamander, and the earth quakes like thunder (*B* 780—785). The Achaeans are marshalled noiselessly: the necessary clang of their weapons and tramp of their feet alone are heard; as if their high spirits had been purged in the assembly and nothing remained but a quiet resolution. »*Fortissimus in ipso discrimine exercitus est, qui ante discrimen quietissimus*« (Tacitus *Hist.* 1, 84).

Homer made all of the second book as a contrast to the Trojans, who as noisily prepare for war as they advance with cries against the silent Achaeans (*B* 810, *I* 1—9, cf. Thucydides 2, 89, 9). And later when the truce is broken, while the Achaeans, in fear of their commanders, silently move like the continuous roll of waves, and the only sounds are commands, »nor would you say they had speech«; the Trojans shouted, like ewes bleating ceaselessly, »nor was their clamour in concert, for the voices were mixed, as the men had been collected from many lands« (*A* 422—438, cf. *B* 804, 867 ss., Aeschylus *Pers.* 401—407, Polybius 15, 12, 8—9, Plutarch *de aud. poet.* 10, Arrian *Tactica* 31, 5—6). As the Achaeans are silent, they can obey the orders they hear; but the Trojans would drown out in their clamour any command. The simile of the Achaeans is deliberately inexact, for the echoing shore, against which the waves break, has no counterpart in themselves; who, no sooner are they compared to the sea, are distinguished from it. They are, what is inconceivable in nature, an ordered series of silent waves. The Trojans, however, exactly correspond to their similes, myriads of ewes pent up together in confusion. Of the Trojans' other similes in the midst of battle, four signal out the clamour they make, as waves, or winds, or storm (*N* 795—800, *O* 381—384, *II* 364—366, *P* 263—266, cf. *M* 138, *II* 78, 373, *Φ* 10)<sup>1</sup>; but the noise of the Achaeans, even

<sup>1</sup> Once the Trojans attack without shouting (*ἄβρομοι ἀδίαχοι*), and only then are they compared to fire (*N* 39—41); cf. C. ROBERT, *Studien zur Ilias*, 124 ss., WILAMOWITZ,

when they do shout (*A* 50, *Σ* 149), only warrants a simile if the Trojans join in (*A* 452–456, *Ε* 393–401, *P* 736–740), and they are compared but once to water in battle; when their spirit, not any outward sign, shows vexation (*I* 4–8).

It is not difficult to see how the epithets of the Trojans are connected with their disorder, nor how those of the Achaeans indicate their discipline. The high spirit of the Trojans would naturally express itself in cries, and the fine greaves of the Achaeans would indicate a deeper efficiency. The Trojans never equal the Achaeans in the closeness of their ranks, whose spears and shields form a solid wall, and shield and helmet of one rest on helmet and shield of another (*N* 128–133, *II* 212–217); nor do the Achaeans, on the other hand, ever retreat like the Trojans: *πάπτηγεν δὲ ἕκαστος ὄπη φύγοι αἰπὴν ὄλεθρον* (*Ε* 507, *II* 287). They flee, as they attack, in disorder, and more by *θυμός* than by *ἐπιστήμη* are they warriors (cf. Thucydides 1, 49, 3. 2, 11, 8, 87, 4ss. 89, 5–8). They are, in the later Greek vocabulary, barbarians. Thucydides' Brasidas, in urging his troops to face the Illyrians, could be describing the Trojans; who »by the loudness of their clamour are insupportable, and whose vain brandishing of weapons appears menacing, but are unequal in combat to those who resist them; for, lacking all order, they would not be ashamed, when forced, to desert any position, and a battle, wherein each man is master of himself, would give a fine excuse to all for saving their own skins« (4, 126, 5, cf. Herodotus 7, 211, 3. 212, 2. 8, 86).

How then are we to explain the silent efficiency of the Achaeans and the noisy disorder of the Trojans? Has Homer given a reason for this difference? Some one principle whose presence would force the Achaeans into discipline, and whose absence would let the Trojans sink into anarchy? *αἰδώς*, »shame«, seems to distinguish them. There are two kinds of *αἰδώς*: one we may call a mutual or military shame, the other an alien or civil shame (cf. Thucydides, where virtue and shame are coupled: 1, 37, 2. 84, 3. 2, 51, 5. 4, 19, 3. 5, 9. 9, 101). The first induces respect for those who are your equals; or, if fear also is present, your superiors (cf. Sophocles *Ajax* 1075–1080, Plato *Euthphr.* 12a7–c8); the second is respect for those weaker than yourself. The first is in the domain of *ἄνδρες*, the second of *ἄνθρωποι* (cf. Aeschylus *Ag.* 937ss.). Hector shows civil shame when, in speaking to Andromache, he says: »I am terribly ashamed before the Trojans, men and women both, if I cringe like someone ignoble and shun battle« (*Z* 441–443, cf. *Θ* 147–156, *M* 310–321, *P* 90–95). And Hector is killed because he would be ashamed to admit his error (of keeping the Trojans in the field after Achilles' reappearance), ashamed lest someone baser than himself might say, »Hector, trusting to his strength, destroyed his people«

Die *Ilias* und Homer, 252, n. 2. Although Hector numerically rivals Achilles in similes of fire, he is often like a storm, river, or sea, to all of which Achilles is never compared (*A* 297, 305, *M* 40, *Σ* 161 (storm); *E* 597 (river); *E* 593, *A* 307, *O* 624 (waves); cf. *Φ* 273–283, 190–199).

(*X* 104–107, cf. Aristotle *MM* 1191a5–13, *EE* 1230a16–26). As commander of his troops, with no one set above him, Hector must either feel the lash of public opinion or become as disobedient as Achilles; who at first lacks all respect for Agamemnon and later all respect for Hector's corpse (*Ω* 44).

When, however, the Achaeans silently advance against the Trojans, they show another kind of shame, »desirous in their hearts to defend one another« (*I* 9, cf. *B* 362ss.). Their respect is not for others but for themselves. Neither those stronger nor those weaker than themselves urge them to fight, but each wishes to help the other, knowing that in »concerted virtue« resides their own safety (*N* 237), »Be ashamed before one another«, shouts Agamemnon (and later Ajax), »in fierce contentions: when men feel shame, more are saved than killed; but when they flee, neither is fame nor any strength acquired« (*E* 520–532, *O* 562–564). And even when the Achaeans retreat, they do not scatter like the Trojans, but they stay by their tents, held by »shame and fear, for they call to one another continuously« (*O* 657ss., cf. *Θ* 345ss., *P* 357–365). Whatever fear they have before their leaders is tempered by their shame before one another; and as, according to Brasidas, three things make men good soldiers—will, shame, and obedience (Thucydides 5, 9, 9, cf. 1, 84, 3)—, so the Achaeans show their will in preferring war to peace (*B* 453ss., *Δ* 13ss.), their shame in mutual respect (*E* 787, *Θ* 228, *N* 95, 122, *O* 502, 561, ) and their obedience in the fear of their leaders (*Δ* 431, cf. *A* 331, *Δ* 402, *Ω* 435).

Agamemnon as a good king and Ajax as a brave warrior appeal to military shame, when they incite the Achaeans; but the aged Nestor urges them in the name of civil virtue: »Friends, be men and place in your spirit shame of other human beings, and let each of you remember your children, your wives, possessions, and your parents, whether they still live or now are dead; for the sake of those who are not here I beseech you to stand your ground« (*O* 661–666, cf. Tacitus *Hist.* 4, 18, 4, *Germ.* 7–8). Even as Nestor has placed his worst troops in the middle, so that they would be forced, though unwilling, to fight (*Δ* 297–300, cf. Xenophon *Mem.* 3, 1, 8, Polybius 15, 16, 1–4), so here he wishes to regard all the Achaeans as caught between the Trojans in front and their own families behind them; and he hopes by this necessity, of avoiding death at the hands of one and humiliation in the eyes of the other, they would resist. Nestor leaves nothing to personal courage: it is of a piece to rely on necessity and to appeal to civil shame, for to a man who has outlived two generations the bonds of society seem stronger than those of an army, nor would his own weakness give him any confidence in others' strength. As a very old man he has no peers, and all relations seem to him the relations of the young to the old; so that in making the Achaeans respect their parents he covertly makes them respect himself. Unable to inspire his men by fear of himself and unwilling to trust to military discipline, Nestor falls back on the rehearsal of his own past prowess and on his soldiers' recollection of those absent (cf. *Δ* 303–309).

Military shame never once arouses the Trojans, whom the cry »Be men!« always encourages; and once, when Sarpedon tries to rally the Lycians—*αἰδώς, ὃ Λύκιοι· πόσε φεύγετε; νῦν θοοὶ ἔστε*, the appeal is to civil shame; for as warriors they are urged to be vigorous, and shame is only invoked to check their flight (*II* 422—430, cf. BT Schol. *N* 95, *O* 502). The Trojans rely more on their leaders than on their troops (cf. Tac. Germ. 30, 2), for we always read of the »Trojans and Hector« attacking (*N* 1, 129, *O* 42, 304, 327, 449 passim), as if the single virtue of Hector more than equalled the mass effort of his men (cf. *N* 49—54). If the Trojans act in concert, it is rather by the example of one man than by any bravery in themselves; and Hector himself resembles Xenophon's Proxenus, who »was able to rule those who were noble and brave, but was unable to instill shame or fear into his own troops, since he was actually more ashamed before his men than they before him« (An. 2, 6, 19). Aeneas, for example, can rouse Hector and the other captains by an appeal to shame, but it would be unthinkable to employ the same argument before all (*P* 335—341); and in this Nestor's call to the Achaeans, though it is a kind of civil shame, differs from the Trojan's, which only has an effect on their greatest warriors.

LESSING expressed the difference between the Achaeans and Trojans very precisely in his Laokoon (I); and although the passage is well-known, *δὲς καὶ τρις τὰ καλά*:

»Was bei den Barbaren aus Wildheit und Verhärtung entsprang, das wirkten bei ihm (dem Griechen) Grundsätze. Bei ihm war der Heroismus wie die verborgenen Funken im Kiesel, die ruhig schlafen, solange keine äußere Gewalt sie wecket, und dem Steine weder seine Klarheit noch seine Kälte nehmen. Bei dem Barbaren war der Heroismus eine helle fressende Klamme, die immer tobte, und jede andere gute Eigenschaft in ihm verzehrte, wenigstens schwärzte. — Wenn Homer die Trojaner mit wildem Geschrei, die Griechen hingegen in entschloßner Stille zur Schlacht führet, so merken die Ausleger sehr wohl an, daß der Dichter hierdurch jene als Barbaren, diese als gesittete Völker schildern wolle. Mich wundert, daß sie an einer andern Stelle eine ähnliche charakteristische Entgegensetzung nicht bemerkt haben. Die feindlichen Heere haben einen Waffenstillstand getroffen; sie sind mit Verbrennung ihrer Toten beschäftigt, welches auf beiden Teilen nicht ohne heiße Tränen abgeht; *δάκρυα θερμὰ χέοντες*. Aber Priamus verbietet seinen Trojanern zu weinen; *οὐδ' εἶα κλαίειν Πριάμος μέγας*. Er verbietet ihnen zu weinen, sagt die Dacier, weil er besorgt, sie möchten sich zu sehr erweichen, und morgen mit weniger Mut an den Streit gehen. Wohl; doch frage ich: warum muß nur Priamus dieses besorgen? Warum erteilte nicht auch Agamemnon seinen Griechen das nämliche Verbot? Der Sinn des Dichters geht tiefer. Er will uns lehren, daß nur der gesittete Grieche zugleich weinen und tapfer sein könne; indem der ungesittete Trojaner, um es zu sein, alle Menschlichkeit vorher ersticken müsse.

*Νεμεσσοῦμαι γε μὲν οὐδὲν κλαίειν*, läßt er an einem andern Orte den verständigen Sohn des weisen Nestors sagen.«

### III: Achilles and Agamemnon

Achilles and Hector are heroes, one an Achaeon, the other a Trojan; but to know them better, so that even away from their camps, we should not mistake them, forces us to find other traits peculiar to themselves. Who then is Achilles? Homer begs a goddess to sing the wrath of »Peleides Achilles«<sup>1</sup>. Achilles is the son of Peleus. He is marked off from all other men because of his father; as an only son, without brothers, he was entirely Peleus' heir (*Q* 538—540). And were we to ask, who is Peleus? we would be told, »Aeacides«, the son of Aeacus. And if we persisted and wanted to know who he was, Achilles himself boasts it, »Aeacus was from Zeus« (*Φ* 189). Achilles then is »Zeus-born«, »Zeus-nurtured«, or »dear to Zeus«. In three generations he goes back to Zeus, and beyond him it would be foolish to go. To ask Achilles who he is means to ask him his lineage; and as he can only define himself in terms of the past, were his ancestors unknown, he would be a non-entity (cf. *Z* 123 with 145 ss., *Φ* 150 with 153). In Achilles' patronymic is summed up part of his own greatness. He is partly the work of generations.

Achilles is not only the son of Peleus but the grandson of Aeacus; and yet to be called »Aeacides« when he is actually »Peleides«, means that he has inherited something that was common to all his first ancestors. Achilles is called the son of Aeacus first in the Trojan catalogue: Ennomus and Amphimachus were both killed by Achilles in the guise of »swift-footed Aeacides« (*B* 860, 874, but cf. A Schol.). Achilles resembles his grandfather in his ability to kill. As a warrior he is indistinguishable from his forefathers, for killing is a family profession (cf. how each side exhorts their troops in Thucydides, e.g., 4, 92, 7. 95, 3; see also Herodotus 6, 14, 3. 8, 90, 4). But during the embassy, when Achilles is most idle, though ironically most Achilles (for his wrath makes up a great part of him), no one calls him the son of Peleus; rather they point out to him how much he has failed to follow his father's precepts (*I* 252—259, 438—443). When, however, he returns to the fighting, his father's name is almost as common as his own; and as he assumes his ancestral name, he takes up his father's spear, which no more could be hurled by another than »Peleides« could be said of another (*T* 387—391, cf. *Ξ* 9—11, *II* 140—144, *Φ* 174, 178, *Υ* 2); while again, in the last book, where his own name occurs more frequently than anywhere else, his patronymic hardly appears, and he is never called to his face the son of Peleus. Somehow he has outlived it.

<sup>1</sup> Whether »Peleides«, »Atreides«, etc. are patronymica or gentilicia has been much disputed; cf. K. MEISTER, *Die Homerische Kunstsprache*, 148—150; P. CHANTRAINE, *Grammaire Homérique*, I, 105 ss.

As Hector has many brothers, to tell us at first that he is the son of Priam would mean little: so Achilles, who first mentions him, calls him »Hector the man-slayer« (*A* 242). Paris contrariwise does not even deserve his father's name, for his only distinction lies in his theft; he is most of all the »husband of Helen« (*Γ* 329, *H* 355, *Θ* 82, *N* 766), although in his braver moments, which do not last very long, he earns the right that other heroes have without question to be called »Priamides« (*Γ* 356, *Z* 512).

But were we to ask, who is Odysseus? and turn to the first lines of the Odyssey, the answer is quite different: »Tell me of the man, Muse, of many wiles who wandered very far«. Odysseus is a clever man who wandered very far. He is not made distinct from others because he is the only son of Laertes but because he traveled. His genealogy is contained in what he himself did and not in what his father might have been. Laertes' father is known, but his grandfather is unmentioned; tradition indeed gave him two family stems (cf. *RE* XVII, col. 1918). Homer in the Iliad never calls him anything but Odysseus, though other heroes address him as if he were like themselves: »Zeus-born Laertiades, very-crafty Odysseus«; but even here his subtlety belongs to himself, while his divine origins (whatever they may have been) belong to his father. Homer in the Odyssey calls him »Laertiades«, with one exception (*ϑ* 18), only after he has returned to Ithaca (*π* 455, *ρ* 361, *σ* 348, *ν* 286, *χ* 191, 399). For twenty years he is merely Odysseus, but he reassumes his lineage as soon as he lays claim to his kingdom. His patrimony gives him back his piety (cf. *ω* 270). Ovid understood Odysseus when he made him say (*Met.* 13, 140ss.):

*nam genus et proavus et quae non fecimus ipsi/vix ea nostra voco.*

He is what Junot said of himself: »Moi je suis mon ancêtre«.

Odysseus' adventures are his lineage, making his very name superfluous. He is a traveler who »saw the cities of many human beings and knew their mind«; and his name, put almost as an after-thought (without his patronymic, *α* 21), cannot make clearer his identity, nor add much luster to his eminence. He is like Thersites, whose father and country are not given (cf. *BT* Schol. *B* 212), his deformity and outspokenness being title enough; so that to have Odysseus, his closest rival in anonymity, answer his abuses was a master-stroke. Their resemblance is so close that Sophocles' Neoptolemus, when Philoctetes asks him about a man »clever and skilled in speaking«, thinks he must mean Odysseus, whereas he actually means Thersites (*Phil.* 440—442). Moreover, Philoctetes, believing it to be a truer lineage, can even call Odysseus the son of Sisyphus; and Odysseus can tell Eumaeus that he is illegitimate (*ξ* 202ss.).

When Odysseus tells the Cyclops his name, »No-one is my name, my father, mother, and all my companions call me No-one« (*ι* 366ss.), he is almost speaking more truthfully than when he tells Alcinoüs that he is the son of Laertes (*ι* 19, cf. *κ* 325—330). His anonymity is the result of his guile, for

Homer has him pun on the likeness of *οἴτις* and *μῆτις* (ι 414, cf. 408). His wisdom made him no one and cut all his ties with the past.

Although Achilles, if opposed to Odysseus, seems to consist in nothing but his past, yet when opposed to Agamemnon he becomes more unique. Indeed, he stands somewhere in between Agamemnon and Odysseus. Agamemnon does not even appear, at first, as himself but as »Atreides lord of men«, while Achilles is »brilliant« or »glorious« in comparison (*A* 7). Not until he differs from the rest of the Achaeans (who wish to restore Chryseis), although he has been mentioned thrice before, does Homer call him Agamemnon (*A* 24); even as Achilles calls him »Atreides« after he has convened the assembly (*A* 59), but »Agamemnon« when he wishes to single him out for his crime (*A* 90, cf. 94). Agamemnon rises to rebut Achilles, but Homer first clothes him in all possible authority: »Hero Atreides, wide-ruling Agamemnon« (*A* 102, cf. *H* 322, *N* 112). This majesty fails to impress Achilles, who, however, begins his reply as if he agreed with him: »Most worthy Atreides«, but instead of ending the line, as we later realize he should have, he cruelly inserts: »most rapacious of all« (*A* 122). The proper end-tag, »lord of men Agamemnon«, often occurs, mostly spoken by Nestor, who, old man that he is, knows what loyalty and respect must be shown to a king. When the Achaeans are about to be catalogued, Agamemnon must have full power. He must be not only the »most worthy« because of his lineage, but also the »king of men« in his own name (*B* 434, but note *B* 362). Later, when the fortunes of the Achaeans are lowest, Nestor again bolsters Agamemnon with his titles; and the other kings also, after the embassy to Achilles fails, subscribe in the same way their loyalty (*I* 96, 163, 677, 697 with which cf. *Θ* 293). Achilles only much later, when he has sloughed off his rage, addresses him properly (*T* 146, 199, cf. *Ψ* 49).

Not until, however, Achilles swears an oath by Agamemnon's sceptre (if it is the same as Agamemnon's), does the conflict between them come out in the open: »Yes, by this sceptre, which never again shall grow branches or leaves, since it first left its stump on the mountain, nor shall it bloom again, for the bronze blade has stripped it of its leaves and its bark; and now in turn the sons of the Achaeans, the wielders of justice, carry it, those who protect the laws that come from Zeus« (*A* 234–239). Then he flings down the sceptre, »studded with golden nails«, the sceptre whose true origin we learn much later, just before Agamemnon, doing »what is right« (*B* 73, cf. *B* Schol. [Porphyry]; F. JACOBY, SBPAW, 1932, pp. 586–594), tries the Achaeans, fearful lest Achilles' refusal to fight and his desire to return home have infected the whole army: »Up stood strong Agamemnon with the sceptre, which Hephaestus artfully had made: Hephaestus gave it to Zeus lord Cronion, and Zeus gave it to the Treasurer of Riches (who kills with his brilliance), and lord Hermes gave it to Pelops the goader of horses, and Pelops in turn to Atreus the shepherd of his people; and Atreus when he died left it to wealthy Thyestes, and he in

turn left it for Agamemnon to wield—to rule over many islands and all Argos« (*B* 100–108, cf. 453ss.). LESSING again in his *Laokoon* (16) has beautifully brought out the reason why the one scepter receives these two descriptions (or if there are two scepters, why there are two): »Jener, ein Werk des Vulkans; dieser, von einer unbekanntten Hand auf den Bergen geschnitten: jener der alte Besitz eines edeln Hauses; dieser bestimmt, die erste die beste Faust zu füllen: jener, von einem Monarchen über viele Inseln und über ganz Argos erstreckt; dieser von einem aus dem Mittel der Griechen geführt, dem man nebst andern die Bewahrung der Gesetze anvertraut hatte. Dieses war wirklich der Abstand, in welchem sich Agamemnon und Achill voneinander befanden; ein Abstand, den Achill selbst, bei allem seinem blinden Zorne, einzugestehen, nicht umhin konnte.« The conflict between them is between authority and power, between the gifts of nature and those of an heritage. Agamemnon's authority consists in mere words (in the spell of his ancestry), and were Achilles to yield to them, as if they were deeds, he would be thought weak and cowardly (*A* 293ss., cf. *I* 32–39). Briseis is only the pretext for this more serious difference, which must always exist whenever power and position do not coincide. The usurper Bolingbroke and King Richard II, for example, work out in smaller compass the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon; for Richard relies as much on his divine appointment as Agamemnon; and Bolingbroke, like Achilles, trusts more to »blood and bone« than to ancestral right (cf. *Richard II*, 2, 54–62. 3, 39–53, 73–90)<sup>1</sup>.

Achilles swears by the authority of Agamemnon—if his scepter is Agamemnon's—in terms of his own power. He swears by the scepter as he swears by the gods, and only Achilles swears (*A* 86, 339, *Ψ* 43). Agamemnon calls upon the gods more cautiously, as witnesses (as those who know, *I* 276–280, *T* 258–260); whereas the gods to Achilles are no more than his scepter, which is but the extension of his own power, losing all its force as soon as he casts it aside. Though »studded with golden nails«, he holds it in no esteem. Any branch at all would serve him as well. He does not need the past to rally the present.

<sup>1</sup> It is not accidental that Agamemnon alone calls Odysseus »Laertiades«, without adding his proper name (*T* 184); nor that he bids Menelaus »call each man by his lineage and patronymic, glorifying all« (*K* 68ss., cf. *A* 370–412; *E* 635–639, *H* 125–128, *Θ* 282ss.). Nicias, Thucydides' Agamemnon as it were, does the same (8, 69, 2); cf. Xen. *Oec.* 7, 3. There is in the Catalogue of Ships, I suspect, the same contrast between Achilles and Agamemnon. Odysseus is in the center, Achilles and Agamemnon are equally six places away from him; but the number of ships is far greater on Agamemnon's side (732) than on Achilles' (442); and in accordance with that preponderance the wealth rather than the prowess of those who surround Agamemnon is stressed: placenames are twice as frequent there as on Achilles' side, and even the epithets suggest their prosperity. On Achilles' side the cities the warriors rule are neglected for stories about themselves (641–643, 657–670, 673–675, 687–694, 698–703, 721–725); but on Agamemnon's side little besides their ancestry is said about the commanders.

But Agamemnon, who has little confidence in his own strength, must lean upon his sceptre; unlike Hector, Achilles' equal, who leans upon a spear while he speaks (*B* 109, *Θ* 496). Hector's spear is replaceable, while Agamemnon's sceptre is unique, and were it broken, he would be doomed to obscurity. He swears neither by sceptre nor by gods, but rather he holds up the sceptre to all the gods (*H* 112, cf. Aristotle *Pol.* 1285b3–12). His lineage, embodied in the sceptre, connects him with the gods. He looks to them. Achilles looks to himself.

Odysseus alone knows how to combine, in the sceptre, the rank of Agamemnon with the force of Achilles. He stops the general rout of the Achaeans, which Agamemnon's speech had caused, by making a distinction that Achilles would not, and Agamemnon could not, employ (cf. Xenophon *Mem.* 1, 2, 58. 4, 6, 13–15). Taking the ancestral sceptre in his hand, he speaks to the kings thus: »If you disobey Agamemnon, he shall oppress you; the wrath of a Zeus-nurtured king is great; his honor comes from Zeus and counseling Zeus loves him« (*B* 185–197, cf. *A* 174ss., *ABT* Schol. *B* 186). He uses the sceptre as an emblem of power, threatening the kings, who would be unimpressed by mere lineage, with divine vengeance. Authority lies in power. But against anyone of the rank-and-file, Agamemnon's sceptre turns into a weapon: Odysseus drives them before him with it (*B* 199, cf. 266ss.). He speaks to them quite differently: »Sit down without a murmur, and listen to others who have more authority: many-headed rule is bad; let there be one head, one king, to whom the son of Cronus gave rule«. Power lies in authority. As Zeus is Zeus to the kings, but to the common warrior the son of Cronus (cf. *A* 175, *I* 37, 98, 608), so Agamemnon must appear to the kings as authoritative might, but to the warriors as powerful authority.

The three pairs we have examined—human beings and heroes, Trojans and Achaeans, Agamemnon and Achilles—dominate the *Iliad* in a double way. We have taken up only one of them—their evident difference; but their underlying sameness is perhaps even more important. It can only be briefly indicated here. Homer gives in each of these pairs a higher ranking to heroes, Achaeans, and Achilles; but that ranking is only a necessary condition for the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* itself forces us to rethink that ranking, as its plot moves almost contrary to it: from Achilles' wrath to Hector's funeral. Achilles, the Achaean hero, finally yields to his opposites. He acknowledges that his power cannot be a substitute for Agamemnon's authority (*Ψ* 890–894); he comes to respect his Trojan enemies (*Ω* 628–632); and he sees that he is more related as a human being to Peleus and Patroclus than to Thetis and Zeus as a hero (*Ω* 511–512). Thus the *Iliad* moves from the apparently higher to the apparently lower, which then comes to sight as something beyond the original distinctions. To clarify that something completely would be to understand the *Iliad*.