MYTHOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN THE *ILIAD*

THE *Iliad* is rich in references to stories that have only incidental relevance to the main narrative. These digressions, as they are often called, have usually been assumed to reflect a wealth of pre-Homeric legend, some of which must have been embodied in poetry. The older Analysts tended to explain the digressions in terms of interpolation. Whether regarded as genuinely Homeric or as interpolated these myths were considered as something existing in an external tradition. More recent scholars have been prepared to admit that Homer may invent from time to time. For example, Sir Maurice Bowra observes that 'the poet seems sometimes to invent a detail which looks as if it referred to some story outside his immediate subject but is in fact an invention brought to serve a passing need'.[1]

If we try to isolate Homeric innovations in myth, we immediately encounter a methodological difficulty. Though we may suspect that a myth or at least a particular detail of it has been invented by the poet to serve a passing need, we have no external, independent testimony by which we might conceivably isolate the peculiarly Homeric contribution. This arises from the simple fact that we possess no Greek literature except possibly Hesiod which could not have been influenced by the *Iliad*.[2] Thus if we find a reference to the same myth or detail in another author, we cannot be sure he is not influenced by the *Iliad*. On the other hand, when we find a different version we cannot be certain whether the author employing it is going back to an independent, pre-Homeric tradition or differing from Homer consciously or unconsciously by introducing innovations himself. Moreover, there are a number of instances in which we have no other evidence or at least none for five hundred or more years after Homer. About what has not been preserved we can say nothing. In view of these difficulties there is only one practical method to adopt, namely that of internal evidence. We shall try to see how certain myths fit their context and especially to observe contradictions and inconsistencies in them whenever these occur within the *Iliad*.

There are several sources of mythological innovation in the *Iliad*. One of these, paradeigmatic reasoning, has been studied in some detail by M. M. Willcock,[3] who has performed a useful service to Homeric scholarship by

[1] See *A Companion to Homer*, ed. A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings (London, 1962), p. 71.

[2] For a recent discussion of this traditional problem with strong arguments in favour of Hesiod's priority, see Hesiod, *Theogony*, ed. M. L. West (Oxford, 1966), pp. 40–8. Even if the view that some of the Cyclic poems, especially the *Aethiopis*, are older than the *Iliad* is in fact correct, we would not have enough evidence to undertake a useful comparison. On the value of such attempts, see the review of G. Schoeck's *Ilias und Aithiopis* (Zürich, 1961) by D. L. Page in *C.R.* N.S. xiii (1963), 21–4.

[3] 'Mythological Paradeigma in the *Iliad*', *CQ* N.S. xiv (1964), 141–54. The first draft of the present paper was written some years ago, in fact before the appearance of Willcock's article. His recognition and study of another type of mythological innovation has encouraged me to publish my original observations, which will, I believe, further strengthen his main argument. I should like here to express my thanks to Professor G. P. Goold for reading the first version of this article and for encouraging me to publish it as well as to Dr. M. L. West and Dr. R. M. Ogilvie, from whose criticism this later version has much benefited.

making clearer than before the extent of Homer's innovations in mythology. Willcock has shown that some curious details of myths, e.g. in *Iliad* 24. 613 that Niobe ate after her children had been killed, have been invented by the poet to provide a model or paradeigma for one character to use in trying to exhort or console another. Thus in the passage just mentioned Niobe, who had lost twelve children, is said to have eaten because Achilles wishes to provide an *a fortiori* argument why Priam, who has lost one son, should eat in a similar situation. In the case of the Niobe episode Willcock's analysis is completely convincing. He then goes on to discover other mythical details in the *Iliad* which, he argues, have been invented to provide paradeigmata for exhortation or consolation. While most of these cases are clearly instances of paradeigmata and nothing more,[1] two of them, 1. 393–407 and 18. 394–405, involve a feature of Homeric thought which, when it appears, gives an argument far greater weight than a simple paradeigma ever could and is in fact, as I shall attempt to show, another important source of mythological innovation. This source comes from the poet's desire to establish an adequate motive for one individual's performing a service for another. For convenience we may refer to it as a demand for compensation, that is, of past services. Our consideration of this source begins with an aspect of Homeric religion that has often been observed, namely that the principle of *do ut des* is operative in man's dealing with the gods.[2] Actually the spirit of *do ut des* is even more pervasive. There are few areas of divine or human relations in Homer which are not permeated by this spirit of *quid pro quo*.[3] Homeric society assumes a principle of compensation. We see this in the importance which gift-exchange played in so many aspects of personal relations, e.g. in marriage there was a bride-price to be paid by the successful suitor (usually the man who bid the highest) and a counter-gift in the form of a dowry, and in ordinary social intercourse gift-exchange served the dual function of exchange of goods, which we in a market economy associate with buying and selling, and the establishment or maintenance of personal ties of obligation. However, this is not the place to discuss this aspect of Homeric society in detail.[4] Considering its fundamental importance in his society it is not surprising that Homeric man's dealings with the gods often reveal the same principle of *do ut des*. We observe it constantly at work in the *Iliad*, e.g. in Chryses' prayer to Apollo in 1. 37–42. The pattern is constant: If ever I did or will do X, then you do Y. In fact wherever we look in the *Iliad* we almost always find an element of *do ut des* at work in both divine and human relationships.

The pervasive influence of this principle in Homeric thinking has the result that if anyone wishes to make a demand upon another, whether man or god, he must be able to point to his past or present services to the individual concerned or the promise of future ones. Accordingly, when one individual must

[1] Namely 1. 259–74, 4. 370–400, 5. 382–404, 7. 124–60, 9. 524–605. To these additional examples of paradeigmatic reasoning in the *Iliad* could be added others, e.g. 7. 109–15.

[2] See, e.g., J. T. Beckmann, *Das Gebet bei Homer*. Diss. Würzburg (Würzburg, 1932), 46. However, the older view of early Greek religion which equated sacrifice with gift requires considerable qualification: compare M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, i, 3rd ed. (Munich, 1967), pp. 45–6.

[3] Or, as Hesiod said, δῶρα θεοὺς πείθει, δῶρ' αἰδοίους βασιλῆας, fr. 361 Merkelbach and West.

[4] For an excellent account of the mechanism of gift-exchange and the underlying notions of reciprocal obligation, see M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, rev. ed. (London, 1956), especially pp. 68–76.

ask another for a favour, the poet must establish an adequate motive for the latter's performing the action requested. Such a motive would normally be a previous service performed by the petitioner to the petitioned or else the promise of a service to be performed. In the case of previous services cited the poet would have an especially good opportunity for mythical innovation. Let us now consider some instances in which this may have happened.

A good example is found in *Iliad* 1. After the heralds sent by Agamemnon have taken Briseis away, Achilles goes apart on the beach and prays to his mother Thetis (348–56). When she appears to him from the sea, Achilles tells her of his quarrel with Agamemnon. He then asks her to go to Olympus and request Zeus to turn the battle against the Achaeans so that they will realize how much they miss him (393–412). However, Achilles does not simply ask his mother to go to Zeus and make this request. After explaining his own situation he turns abruptly to her and says

> ἀλλὰ σύ, εἰ δύνασαί γε, περίσχεο παιδὸς ἑῆος·
> ἐλθοῦσ' Οὔλυμπόνδε Δία λίσαι, εἴ ποτε δή τι
> ἢ ἔπει ὤνησας κραδίην Διὸς ἠὲ καὶ ἔργῳ. (393–5)

The actual request is not stated until 407–12 where it rounds off the whole section or, as we may say in terms of a well-known feature of archaic composition, it closes the ring. Achilles' request for his mother's help is made in a hypothetical sentence with two protases. The first, εἰ δύνασαι, is general, the second explanatory of the first. Thetis' power to influence Zeus will lie in her having done something for him in the past. Beginning with an explanatory γάρ in 396 Achilles tells his mother and us just what she did that would allow her to make a considerable demand on Zeus. At one time Zeus was hard pressed when the other Olympians, who are specified as Hera, Poseidon, and Pallas Athene, attempted to bind him. Thetis saved Zeus by bringing Briareus, the Hundred-hander, to Olympus, who so frightened Zeus' assailants that they gave up their attempt.

There are two ways we might explain this passage. First, we might say that Thetis was the heroine who rallied the loyalists in a traditional story of some palace revolution against Zeus and that Homer has made use of the tale here to give an adequate motive for the granting of Thetis' request. It may be true that such a myth existed and that Homer used it. Even if he found it ready-made, the way Homer employed it is significant. He does not have Thetis simply go and ask Zeus for what is a very great favour, especially since it will inevitably involve him in a quarrel with Hera. Instead, the poet equips Thetis with a strong argument why Zeus should grant her request. The principle of *quid pro quo* is clearly at work even if we assume that Homer made use of an existing myth. Secondly, we might explain this passage by saying that since Homer was to have Thetis ask Zeus for a great favour, he must have provided her with a correspondingly large service. This he did by inventing the myth of the palace revolt or at least Thetis' role in it. I should suggest that the latter is the more likely explanation, that the whole story is Homer's own invention to fit this particular situation, though it was probably modelled on some version of the war of the gods and the Titans.[1] Because of the natural limitation of the method of internal evidence I cannot prove there was not such a myth

[1] Hesiod, *Theogony* 713–21, makes Briareus along with the two other Hundredhanders the key allies of Zeus and the younger gods in their battle against the Titans.

before Homer. It is interesting to note, however, that Zenodotus athetized the mythological part of this passage (396–406). He probably thought the myth was inconsistent with the rest of the tradition. Indeed the scholia have great difficulties in trying to explain why Hera, Poseidon, and Athena (of all gods) should be in revolt against Zeus. It has been suggested that these three gods are mentioned here because they are the ones who support the Greeks and would most oppose Zeus' granting of Thetis' request.[1] Still, all of this does not prove that Homer did not make use of pre-existing myth, but it does lend a greater probability to an explanation in terms of Homer's own invention.[2] The degree of probability will be increased if we can find other instances in which the same thing seems to have happened.

A most instructive parallel to Thetis' request to Zeus in book 1 is provided by the same goddess's visit to Hephaestus in book 18. Patroclus has been killed and Achilles' armour lost. Thetis goes to the divine smith with a request for new armour for her son. Since it is going to be particularly splendid equipment, the poet with his *do ut des* mentality feels he must justify Hephaestus' favour by showing how much he was under obligation to Thetis. This will be the case whether Homer found the myth ready-made or invented it himself. On this occasion he prepares the way for the granting of Thetis' request by having

[1] Suggestion by C. J. Carter in Willcock, loc. cit. 144 and n. 1. Willcock has treated this passage (*Il.* 1. 393–407) as an example of paradeigmatic reasoning (loc. cit. 143–4). There is obviously a paradeigmatic element in any example of what I have called 'a demand for compensation'. The petitioner points to a paradeigma, namely his own past services, when he asks for a favour by way of compensation. However, this kind of argument is different from that in the example which Willcock uses as his model, namely Achilles' exhortation to Priam to eat in *Il.* 24. 599–620. I should prefer to restrict the term 'mythological paradeigma' to that sort of argumentation, that is, one in which a mythical example is proposed as a model of action for someone else. A demand for compensation differs in that it contains a new element not present in a simple mythological paradeigma, namely the claim on another because of a past favour. It is this that makes Thetis' request to Zeus an example of the latter and not simply a mythological paradeigma. The poet thus gives Zeus a stronger motive for acting than a mere example would have done.

[2] Willcock, loc. cit. 143, suggests that the argument for mythological invention in *Il.* 1. 393–407, 'is to some extent supported by the fact that Thetis does not think it worth repeating the story when she actually makes her appeal to Zeus later in the book'. I am not sure we are justified in using this fact to support an argument for mythological innovation. Repetitions, it is true, are characteristic of Homeric epic, but they do not always occur where we might expect them. Thetis does in fact imply some past service to Zeus when she says (1. 503–5):

> *Ζεῦ πάτερ, εἴ ποτε δή σε μετ' ἀθανάτοισιν ὄνησα*
> *ἢ ἔπει ἢ ἔργῳ, τόδε μοι κρήηνον ἐέλδωρ·*
> *τίμησόν μοι υἱόν, . . .*

This is a more general form of the demand for compensation made by Chryses to Apollo (1. 39–42):

> *Σμινθεῦ, εἴ ποτέ τοι χαρίεντ' ἐπὶ νηὸν ἔρεψα,*
> *ἢ εἰ δή ποτέ τοι κατὰ πίονα μηρί' ἔκηα*
> *ταύρων ἠδ' αἰγῶν, τόδε μοι κρήηνον ἐέλδωρ·*
> *τείσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσσιν.*

The pattern is the same: addressee (dactyl or spondee) *εἴ ποτε* (past service), *τόδε μοι κρήηνον ἐέλδωρ* (service requested). The reason Thetis does not use the specific form, that is, repeat the story, is not necessarily the poet's desire to avoid drawing attention to his mythological innovation. More likely he regarded a general reference as sufficient, since the audience would still have Achilles' speech in mind. In any case, the myth is tacitly assumed in Zeus' granting of the request.

We might note that Aristotle alludes to this problem in the *E.N.* 4. 8 (1124^{b}15–16). He remarks that the *μεγαλόψυχος* does not wish to be reminded of past services done to him by others and, characteristically interpreting earlier evidence in terms of his own doctrine, suggests that 'this, it seems, is why Thetis did not mention to Zeus the services she had done him'.

Hephaestus himself, when he hears of her arrival, tell of his obligation to her (394–407). He explains how his mother Hera wanted to hide him because of his lameness and how Thetis saved him *ὅτε μ' ἄλγος ἀφίκετο τῆλε πεσόντα / μητρὸς ἐμῆς ἰότητι κυνώπιδος* (395–6). Unknown to the other gods and men he stayed with Thetis and her sister Eurynome for nine years practising his trade as a smith. He concludes his account by handing Thetis, as it were, a blank cheque:

> *ἦ νῦν ἡμέτερον δόμον ἵκει· τῷ με μάλα χρεὼ*
> *πάντα Θέτι καλλιπλοκάμῳ ζῳάγρια τίνειν.* (406–7)

In this context it is not surprising that Hephaestus readily grants her request, which unlike that made to Zeus in book 1, can be fulfilled without further complications (in Zeus' case, that of another quarrel with Hera). Hephaestus, no less than Zeus, clearly recognizes his obligations in a society in which the principle of *do ut des* obtains.

As in the story of Thetis' saving Zeus we could argue that her rescue of Hephaestus is a myth which Homer has conveniently used to account for the god's willingness to produce new armour for Achilles. In this case, however, we have a parallel instance, which, by its inconsistencies, allows us on our method of internal evidence to establish with an even greater probability that Homer was innovating.

At the end of book 1 Hephaestus appears in the role of peacemaker between Hera and Zeus in the quarrel which follows Zeus' acquiescence in Thetis' request. After a plea for divine solidarity he tells his mother to restrain her anger lest Zeus strike her down while he himself has to stand helplessly by. He would be no match for the Olympian (586–9):

> *ἤδη γάρ με καὶ ἄλλοτ' ἀλεξέμεναι μεμαῶτα*
> *ῥῖψε ποδὸς τεταγὼν ἀπὸ βηλοῦ θεσπεσίοιο,*
> *πᾶν δ' ἦμαρ φερόμην, ἅμα δ' ἠελίῳ καταδύντι*
> *κάππεσον ἐν Λήμνῳ, ὀλίγος δ' ἔτι θυμὸς ἐνῆεν·*
> *ἔνθα με Σίντιες ἄνδρες ἄφαρ κομίσαντο πεσόντα.* (590–4)

We might note first that we find here a negative aspect of the *do ut des* principle. Hephaestus sets out in advance the reason why he cannot help Hera in these circumstances. We shall observe another example of this later. The important thing to note here is the inconsistency of this story of Hephaestus' fall with that in book 18. Clearly they are doublets and may both have their origin in some story of Hephaestus being hurled from heaven. In book 18 Hera is responsible for the fall (the agent is not mentioned), and the motive is given as her desire to hide Hephaestus because of his lameness. In book 1 it is Zeus who throws him out of Olympus for siding with Hera. The central difference, however, is that Thetis is absent from the version of the myth in book 1. The befrienders of Hephaestus are there said to be the Sintian men on Lemnos, an island well known as a cult centre of Hephaestus. Because the Sintians have no place in the immediate context (that is, they are not asking the god for anything), we may suspect that they were the ones who in some pre-Homeric myth rescued the god. Homer in complete disregard of the story in book 1 has in book 18 made Thetis the rescuer in order to provide her with a claim on Hephaestus. Concentrating as he does on the need of the moment the poet can allude to a myth in book 1 and then give a different and conflicting version of

it in book 18 without being in the least troubled by it. It is the very inconsistencies that provide us with evidence not of interpolation as the older Analysts thought but of Homer's own inventions and modifications.[1] We shall see the fuller implications of these observations later when we have examined further instances of such inconsistencies.

The evidence for mythological innovation is further strengthend by the existence of two parallels: (1) to Thetis' saving of Hephaestus and (2) to his fall from heaven. In book 6, when he encounters Glaucus, Diomedes says he will not fight with him if his adversary is a god. He then tells of what happened to Lycurgus, the son of Dryas, who attacked the nurses of Dionysus (6. 128–43). Dionysus escaped by leaping into the sea where he was protected by Thetis. Both in 18. 398 (the saving of Hephaestus) and here (6. 136) the same phrase occurs: *Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ*. It could be argued that the saving of Hephaestus by Thetis was adapted from a story of her saving Dionysus. The myth of Dionysus would be the original version, since there is no motive for Thetis to have a share in it as there is in that of Hephaestus. In book 18 it has been adapted to form the part of the story that supplies the reason for Hephaestus' indebtedness to Thetis.[2]

A parallel to Hephaestus' fall from heaven is provided by the story told by Sleep in book 14. I have suggested that we find a negative aspect of the *do ut des* principle in what Hephaestus says to Hera in book 1 about not being prepared to defend her against Zeus. We see this same negative aspect here. Hera has come to ask Sleep to dispose of Zeus temporarily so that she can turn the battle

[1] Willcock, loc. cit. 146–7, has included 18. 394–405 among the examples of mythological paradeigmata, but since the principle of *do ut des* is paramount here as in 1. 393–412, it too should be considered as an example of a demand for compensation (compare p. 19, n. 1 above).

[2] Although Thetis' rescuing of Dionysus in book 6 may have been the model for her rescue of Hephaestus in book 18, we may legitimately wonder whether Thetis originally had anything to do with the story of Dionysus. The phrase *Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ* could be simply a formula to express the idea that someone entered the sea. In book 6 it appears to be such since there is no elaboration of what Thetis actually did as there is in the case of Hephaestus in book 18. The formula would have come first, and the poet would then have developed it to suit his purposes in book 18.

Against this negative argument there is external evidence that may be taken to indicate that Homer has alluded to an independent myth in book 6 and adapted it to another purpose in book 18. The Scholia Ven. A. on *Il.* 6. 131, report that along with many others the early Corinthian poet Eumelus treated the story of Lycurgus' pursuit of the infant Dionysus in his *Europia*. One detail about Dionysus is particularly interesting: *ὁ δὲ ὑπὸ δέους εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καταδύνει, καὶ ὑπὸ Θέτιδος ὑπολαμβάνεται καὶ Εὐρυνόμης*. (Eumelus fr. 10 Kinkel.)

Why is Eurynome mentioned here? Two explanations are possible. First, we could argue that Eumelus (or whichever poet it was from whom this detail was taken) or, possibly, the writer of the scholion has been influenced by *Il.* 18. 405 (where Thetis and Eurynome save Hephaestus). Secondly, we could argue that, in an early myth followed by the author of the *Europia* or some other such work, Thetis and her sister Nereid (or Oceanid) cared for Dionysus. In book 6 Homer has alluded to it, omitting Eurynome, while both have been mentioned in the adaptation of the motif to Hephaestus in book 18. Taken by themselves both explanations seem possible, but when we recognize the function that the story of Thetis' service to Hephaestus plays in book 18, we must surely conclude that the original story linked Thetis and doubtless Eurynome with Dionysus. G. L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis* (London, 1969), p. 76, thinks 'since the Eumelian fragment adds the detail that Dionysos took refuge with Thetis and *Eurynome*, it cannot come solely from the *Iliad*'. This overlooks the possible influence of the Hephaestus passage in book 18.

in favour of the Achaeans. Naturally she has to put it on a *quid pro quo* basis. She offers him a golden throne and footstool made by Hephaestus (14. 238–40) in return for his putting Zeus to sleep. Sleep refuses and cites as an example what happened when he did the same thing to Zeus after Heracles had sacked Troy and Hera wanted to destroy him. When Zeus awoke, he tried to do to Sleep what he had done to Hephaestus, but Sleep was lucky enough to escape. We should probably be right in suspecting that this story is invented, though not of course Heracles' sacking of Troy, to account for Sleep's refusal. Hera then goes on to make use of the positive aspect of the *do ut des* principle: she raises her offer. When she proposes to give him one of the younger Graces for a wife, Sleep readily assents to do what he had just declared was impossible.[1]

Another example of mythological innovation with a resultant inconsistency can be seen in the account of Achilles' education. During the embassy in book 9 Phoenix reminds Achilles that he was the one who raised him to be the great man he is and then goes on to describe at some length his role as male nurse (9. 485–95), concluding with the request ἀλλ', Ἀχιλεῦ, δάμασον θυμὸν μέγαν (496) and, specifically, the plea that he should accept Agamemnon's offer.[2] This is clearly a kind of demand for compensation of past services, and the poet has accordingly equipped Phoenix with a strong claim on Achilles. However, in book 11 we learn quite casually in another context that Chiron had been the tutor of Achilles:

> ἐσθλά, τά σε προτί φασιν Ἀχιλλῆος δεδιδάχθαι,
> ὃν Χείρων ἐδίδαξε, δικαιότατος Κενταύρων. (11. 831–2)

Since there is no ulterior motive in this context for making Chiron the teacher of Achilles, we should probably be right in assuming that he was his original teacher. Indeed other accounts tend to ignore Phoenix and make the Centaur his tutor.[3] We may well be right in suspecting that the character of Phoenix

[1] M. L. West has pointed out to me that the parallel is further strengthened by Hephaestus having a Grace as wife, and by the interview with Sleep taking place on Lemnos (14. 230).

[2] The possible consequences of not accepting the offer are set out in the story of Meleager, the most elaborate mythological paradeigma in the *Iliad*. See Willcock, loc. cit. 147–53.

[3] Compare Hes. fr. 204. 87–9, in Merkelbach and West; Pind. *Nem.* 3. 43–53, *Pyth.* 6. 21–3; Paus. 3. 18. 12. On the Χείρωνος ὑποθῆκαι, the Precepts of Chiron to Achilles, traditionally ascribed to Hesiod, see the testimonia and fragments (nos. 283–5) in Merkelbach and West, pp. 143–5. We should remember too that Chiron was in fact Achilles' great-grandfather: his daughter Endeïs was the wife of Aeacus and the mother of Peleus; compare Sch. Pind. *Nem.* 5, 7. The assumption that Phoenix cared for Achilles as an infant and Chiron educated him later, especially in medicine, is a piece of modern rationalism quite out of place in Homer. Compare the article by H. von Geisau on Chiron in *Der kleine Pauly*, i (Stuttgart, 1964), col. 1149: 'Gegen die alte Tradition, daß Ch. nach der Trennung der Thetis von Peleus die Erziehung Achills übernommen habe (Hes. frg. 96, 49) führt Hom. Il. 11, 830 Phoinix als Erzieher ein und beläßt Ch. nur die ärztliche Belehrung,' and also the article of Ernst Wüst on Phoenix in Pauly–Wissowa, *R.-E.*, 39. Halbband (Stuttgart, 1941), col. 407, who most improbably suggests the reverse order: 'Vor allem aber übergab er [Peleus] ihm [Phoinix] seinen jungen Sohn Achilleus, den bisher Cheiron erzogen hatte, zur weiteren Ausbildung.' It is doubtful whether the poet or his audience would have been aware of any inconsistency in the two passages. Certainly they are unlikely to have attempted a reconciliation. Older Analysts, e.g. Leaf and Bayfield in their edition of *Iliad*, i, p. 468, naturally interpreted the inconsistency in terms of separate authorship of the books. Rather, I should say we have a further example of how the *do ut des* principle leads to mythological innovation and, as often, a resultant inconsistency.

was either invented or adapted by the poet to give the embassy a greater weight.[1] The fact that Achilles refuses the request emphasizes all the more the strength of his anger.

It would be possible to find many instances of details in myths that have been invented to fit the occasion, that is, to provide the motivation of an action. Some examples of mythological innovation do not strictly fit either the category of mythological paradeigma or of a demand for compensation but have an element of both in them. Here I shall discuss only one such case, since its implied inconsistency with an early passage makes the likelihood of mythological innovation even greater. In book 24 all the gods except Hera, Poseidon, and Athena (compare pp. 18 f. above) feel pity for the dead Hector and want Hermes to steal his body away from Achilles, who is continuing to maltreat it. When Apollo makes a speech of protest at Achilles' brutality (24. 33–54), Hera rounds on him and declares that the gods should not give like honour to Achilles and Hector. For, she says, Hector was merely a mortal while Achilles is the child of a goddess and, in fact, of one whom she herself had raised and given in marriage to Peleus. She further reminds the gods that they all attended the wedding festivities and that Apollo himself performed there on the lyre (24. 56–63). The statement that Hera gave Thetis in marriage to Peleus may reflect the well-known myth of Zeus' love for Thetis and his avoidance of a liaison with her because of the warning that she would bear a child greater than its father, and thereby put Zeus in the same position in which Cronus was in relation to himself.[2] The presence of the gods at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis with the further detail of Apollo's playing at the feast was a theme often treated in literature and art.[3] But where else in early literature do we hear of Hera's having raised Thetis?[4] This detail is surely an invention to explain Hera's interest in the goddess and her son.[5] Hera's real interest is obviously in the destruction of Troy, so when Achilles is a useful instrument in this plan, she favours him, but when he is an obstacle, as he was in book 1 by his withdrawal, she is hostile. Accordingly in book 24 Homer shows Hera as friendly to

[1] That Phoenix was an afterthought in the Embassy is further indicated by the consistent use of duals to refer to three envoys.

[2] The story is found in Aesch. *P.V.* 907–27 and Pind. *Isth.* 8. 26–47; compare also Aesch. fr. 321b Mette. Philodemus reports that the author of the *Cypria* says that Thetis avoided Zeus to please Hera, see Hes. fr. 210 in Merkelbach and West. Willcock, loc. cit. 144, is probably right in suggesting that the detail in *Il.* 1. 404 of the Hundred-hander, Briareus–Aegaeon, being stronger than his father is an intrusion from the story connecting Thetis with Zeus.

[3] Compare *Cypria*, fr. 2 Kinkel (fr. 3 Bethe, *Homer* ii [1922], p. 155; fr. 3 Allen) (from Schol. Ven. A. on *Il.* 16. 140); Pind. *Pyth.* 3. 86–96, *Nem.* 4. 65–8, 5. 22–39, *Isth.* 8. 46–7, and the François Vase. For more on the monumental evidence, see M. Mayer, 'Thetis', in Pauly-Wissowa, *R.-E.*, 2. Reihe, 11. Halbband (Stuttgart, 1936), coll. 206–42. Compare also A. Lesky, 'Peleus und Thetis im frühen Epos', *S.I.F.C.* 27/8 (1956), 216–26 (= *Gesammelte Schriften* [Bern, 1966], pp. 401–9).

[4] Apoll. Rh. 4. 790–4, is clearly an allusion to this passage in Homer. Compare also Apollod. 3. 168–70.

[5] Hera's speech is interesting as an illustration of an aspect of Greek religion seen, as it were, from a divine point of view, which is most familiar to us from a human point of view in certain types of prayers. The god is considered obliged to help a person not because that person has necessarily performed or promises to perform a service for the god but because the god has given aid in the past. This attitude is well reflected in Sappho's prayer to Aphrodite, fr. 1. 5–8 Lobel and Page, on which compare D. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford, 1955), p. 17 along with n. 3, and also F. Schwenn, *Gebet und Opfer* (Heidelberg, 1927), pp. 57–60. Thus we see that persuasive as the *do ut des* mentality may have been it does not explain every form of obligation between man and god.

Thetis (compare also 101–2) and invents a story or, rather, a detail of it to show why in that context she should be friendly, while in book 1 the poet shows Hera as suspicious of Thetis and generally hostile (compare 536–43, 552–9). This ambivalence arises from the conflicting attitudes toward Thetis that are natural for Hera to adopt in each situation. The further interesting feature about the passage in 24. 56–63 is that, as we suggested at the beginning of this discussion, it does not fit neatly into the categories of either a demand for compensation or of mythological paradeigma. The poet has invented the detail of Hera's raising Thetis to provide an element of obligation in the relation of the older goddess to the younger, and in this sense the situation is not unlike those that exemplify the first category. At the same time by appealing to how the gods (and in particular Apollo) honoured Thetis on an earlier occasion, Hera is employing a kind of mythological paradeigma. In the case of Hera's raising of Thetis we suspect mythological innovation because it is a detail not found elsewhere and is precisely of the kind that would have been invented to suit a passing need, namely to provide a motive in the context. The other two details, the bestowal of Thetis upon Peleus by Hera and the presence of the gods at the wedding, are less likely to have been invented because of their popularity elsewhere, although we must reckon with the possibility that these were stories taken from Homer and subsequently elaborated by later poets and artists.

We are now in a position to draw some more general conclusions about mythological innovation in the *Iliad*. Willcock's study had the merit of calling attention to the fact of mythological innovation and further of studying one type of it in detail, the mythological paradeigma. In this paper I have argued that there are other types as well and have investigated a number of instances of one of them, the category I have called 'demand for compensation'. Some passages treated by Willcock as mythological paradeigmata I have included under this second category because they exemplify the principle of *do ut des*, which is its distinctive feature. That these two categories do not exhaust the sources of mythological innovation I have tried to show by an analysis of *Iliad*, 24. 33–54. This last example, which does not fit neatly into either category, though it could in a sense be analysed into them, provides a clue to our understanding of the more general principles at work behind all these instances of mythological innovation. In each of these cases the poet is trying to give what he and his audience would regard as adequate motivation for action. If Achilles wishes to induce Priam to eat, one way to try to persuade him is to cite an example of someone else who was in as bad, or indeed worse, situation and yet went ahead and ate. He does this by adding an otherwise unknown and improbable detail to the Niobe story. Priam now has an adequate motive for the course of action Achilles has proposed. If Thetis wishes to induce Zeus to allow the Trojans to win for a time so that the Achaeans may see how much they miss Achilles, she must supply him with a motive for so doing. A mythological paradeigma would not be strong enough. She has to have done Zeus some great service in the past which will oblige him to grant her request. The poet supplies one by making Thetis a key figure in saving Zeus' throne during a revolt. Another kind of obligation is implied in *Iliad* 24. 33–54. What all of these have in common is the motive they supply for performing the action being urged at that particular point. Behind this lies the tacit assumption in Homer that everything must have a cause and that the cause is divine or

human will. Some events are of course not explained; but if they are, it is in these terms. In Homer there is simply no place for the indeterminate or chance.

In the extensive discussions of the relative roles of divine and human will in Homer the absence of indeterminate or chance action has often been overlooked. We shall seek in vain for a single instance in which chance is said to cause anything.[1] When Homer wants to explain an event, and events are usually a part of a causal chain, he says that a god or a man decided to do something. In the case of the much-discussed 'overdeterminism' both a divine and a human will are said to be responsible.[2] Let it suffice here to remark that the whole *Iliad* is a long *catena* of causes, so that at any stage of the action we can almost always find an immediate cause for a given event. We may suspect that this kind of causal thinking arises not from any reflection by the poet or his society on the relative roles of divine or human will, since for the *catena* it is irrelevant which is responsible, though the whole can in some sense be ultimately attributed to Zeus. Rather it would seem more likely that the poet constantly supplies reasons because he has to tell a story and his audience will expect to know why a given character acts as he does in a particular situation. The source of Homer's causal reasoning lies, then, in the demands of his narrative art. It is a simple art which we may observe when children or unsophisticated people attempt to account for an event by going through each of the causes that led to it step by step.

Having said that the source of Homer's causal reasoning lies in his narrative art we must immediately qualify this statement if we are to avoid giving the misleading impression that the demands of his story create his rationality. Obviously rational thinking already exists in the poet and his audience, otherwise a rationally ordered story would not be expected. The concatenation of reasons we find in the *Iliad* are there because the poet must supply them if he is to tell the story, but he would not have to tell his story in that way unless this rather naïve kind of rational thinking was not a part of his intellectual world. So, while we may say that Homer's narrative art is a source of the causal reasoning we find in the *Iliad*, we should not lose sight of the fact that such a narrative art presupposes the rationality implied in it.

I have reached my conclusions about the essentially rational nature of the thinking implied in the *Iliad* by examining certain literary phenomena. It is interesting to note that C. Mugler in a study made from a very different approach, namely an analysis of Homer's treatment of physical and natural phenomena, has been led to a similar appreciation of the rational nature of Homeric thinking.[3] Although we should not forget the limitations of Homer's naïve rational thinking which are revealed, for example, in the many inconsistencies of myth we have discussed above, still we are surely justified in seeing already present in Homer the essential elements of causal reasoning which were ultimately to develop into the much more sophisticated thinking of Ionian science.

When the poet's desire to provide adequate grounds for all human and divine

[1] I am indebted to M. L. West for having first made me aware of this fact.

[2] For a sane account of the roles of divine and human will in Homer, see A. Lesky, 'Göttliche und menschliche Motivation im homerischen Epos', *S.H.A.W.*, 1961, 4, pp. 1–52. Lesky, however, does not consider the more general problem of causal reasoning in Homer.

[3] See his *Les Origines de la science grecque chez Homère: l'homme et l'univers physique*, Études et commentaires, xlvi (Paris, 1963), p. 153.

actions combines with another feature of Homeric composition, the disregard of all save the immediate situation, then the result is not infrequently an inconsistency.[1] As we read the *Iliad* we are aware of these inconsistencies, but it is doubtful whether the poet or his audience would ever have felt them. The older Analysts pointed to such contradictions as evidence of multiple authorship and incompetent editing. Rather, they provide us with the touch-stone by which we may discover innovations. If two mythical accounts are at variance and one provides a strong motive for action in a given context and is elsewhere poorly attested, while the other is merely mentioned in passing and well known in other literature, we may feel sure that the former is the poet's own invention. Thus we have reasonable grounds for believing, for example, that it was Homer who made Phoenix the tutor of Achilles and thereby a major figure in book 9; the traditional account, which Homer does not completely ignore, made Chiron his tutor. Where we do not have actual inconsistencies to help us as, for example, in the Niobe myth, we may still be justified in believing the poet has been innovating if we find unusual features of the story—in this case Niobe's eating—which are not elsewhere attested and fit perfectly the poet's need, that is, by providing a paradeigma, as in this case, or a past obligation which requires compensation, as in Thetis' request to Zeus in book 1. Thus in such cases the much maligned inconsistencies of the *Iliad* reveal not an incompetent poet or a bungling editor but a creative spirit at work.

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[1] Compare Bowra, op. cit., p. 49: 'What counts is that the poet concentrates on the moment and gives everything to it', and p. 50: 'Each point is made emphatically in its own place because it is relevant to the context, and though we may complain that insufficient notice is taken of what is said elsewhere, there is in fact no real contradiction.'