

THE DIVINE AUDIENCE AND THE RELIGION OF THE *ILIAD*

τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς·
 'ἔγνων, ἐννοσίγαιε, ἔμην ἐν στήθεσι βουλήν,
 ὦν ἔνεκα ξυνέγειρα· μέλουσί μοι δαλλύμενοί περ.
 ἀλλ' ἦτοι μὲν ἐγὼ μενέω πτυχὶ Οὐλύμποιο
 ἥμενος, ἔνθ' ὁρώων φρένα τέρψομαι.' (*Il.* 20.19–23)

Eternity is in love with the productions of time (BLAKE)

One of the most striking features of the *Iliad* is that the gods are constantly present as an audience. Not only are they shown intervening and responding to human action, but repeatedly they are explicitly said to be watching.¹ It will here be argued that this is much more than a 'divine apparatus', that it stands in a peculiar and identifiable relation to real religion, and that it is of the greatest importance both for the *Iliad* and for later Greek poetry.

The idea that gods look down and witness human action is of course an ancient one and extremely wide-spread. The very learned work of R. Pettazzoni, *The All-Knowing God* (English tr. by H. J. Rose, 1956), assembles a mass of evidence from cultures all over the world, and his general interpretation of an impressive body of material seems hard to evade. Among 'Indo-Europeans, Semites, Hamites, Ugro-Finns, Ural-Altaic peoples and others' (p.437), we find the idea of a sky-god who knows everything. This conception is surprisingly constant, allowing Pettazzoni to sum up his findings in these words (p.22):

We now find that we have a clear picture of the original ideological complex of Divine omniscience. Its subject is not primarily deity in general, but a determinate category of divine beings. Its object is not the whole range of knowledge, but man and his doings. The manner in which Divine omniscience comes about is quite definite, for it is founded upon a power of universal vision, completed on occasion by similar powers of hearing, by omnipresence and the like. This Divine omniscience is not merely passive and contemplative, but gives rise to a sanction, generally punitive.

The 'determinate category of divine beings' is described (p.5): 'It is mostly sky-gods and astral gods, or gods somehow connected with the heavenly realms of light, to whom omniscience is ascribed'; and sight is the vital sense (p.5): 'Divine omniscience is a visual omniscience.'

Zeus, the far-seeing god of the sky (*εὐρύοπα* occurs twenty-three times in the two epics, always of Zeus; the archaic form confirms its high antiquity), is pre-eminently a god to fit with Pettazzoni's account, and Indian parallels make it pretty certain that in this rôle he continues an ancient Indo-European belief. We observe however that there is one important difference. Sometimes Zeus is indeed presented as a moral and punishing god, but often he is presented, and the other gods with him, simply 'looking on', as if human action were a show put on for the divine diversion.² Sometimes, again, it is a tragedy which is watched in heaven with tears. I give three examples of each. (i) (a) After the

¹ As *Il.* 4.4; 7.61; 8.51, 350; 11.73, 82, 336; 15.12, 599; 16.430, 644; 17.198; 20.22; 21.388; 22.166; 24.23.

² 'Es lässt sich m. E. zeigen, wie in der *Ilias* bisweilen die irdischen Ereignisse als

ein Schauspiel für die Götter empfunden werden', H. Fränkel, *Die hom. Gleichnisse* (1921), p.32 n.1. See also W. Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter in der Ilias* (1956), p.84.

failure of the duel between Paris and Menelaus, on earth (*Il.* 3 *fin.*) both sides try to find the vanished Paris and so put an end to the war, and Agamemnon demands the surrender of Helen; but in heaven:

οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ' Ἰδην καθεήμενοι ἡγορόωντο
 χρυσέῳ ἐν δαπέδῳ, μετὰ δὲ σφίσι πότνια Ἥβη
 νέκταρ ἐκνοχόει· τοῖ δὲ χρυσέοις δεπάεσσι
 δειδέχατ' ἀλλήλους, Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορόωντες (*Il.* 4.1–4).

(i) (b) At *Il.* 7.61 Apollo and Athena, having arranged a duel between Hector and an Achaean champion, sit in a tree to watch, *ἀνδράσι τερπόμενοι*.

(i) (c) At *Il.* 8.51 Zeus, having forbidden any god to intervene in the battle, sits exulting to watch the spectacle:

αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κορυφῇσι καθέζετο κύδεϊ γαίῳν,
 εἰσορόων Τρώων τε πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν.

On the other side, (ii) (a) 16.430: as Sarpedon and Patroclus come together in a duel which will end with Sarpedon's death,

τοὺς δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω,
 Ἥρην δὲ προσέειπε κασιγνήτην ἄλοχόν τε·
 'ὦ μοι ἐγών, ὃ τέ μοι Σαρπήδονα, φίλτατον ἀνδρῶν,
 μοῖρ' ὑπὸ Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιάδαο δαμῆναι . . .'

(ii) (b) As the Achaeans are routed by Hector, *τοὺς δὲ ἰδοῦσ' ἐλέησε θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη . . .* (8.350). (ii) (c) Achilles pursues Hector, running for his life,

θεοὶ δ' ἐς πάντες ὁρῶντο·
 τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε·
 'ὦ πόποι, ἦ φίλον ἄνδρα διωκόμενον περὶ τεῖχος
 ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶμαι· ἐμὸν δ' ὀλοφύρεται ἦτορ
 Ἑκτορος . . .' (22.166–70).

Having shown that Zeus and other gods do in Homer watch human actions as a spectacle, we proceed to add some Homeric and Greek evidence to Pettazzoni's general thesis, that a god who watches is normally a god who intervenes, a patron and an avenger. Both *ἐπίσκοπος* and *μάρτυρος* are used in this sense in the Homeric poems, as they are used of the gods, and especially of Zeus, constantly in later Greek. Hector vainly offers to make a bargain with Achilles, invoking the gods:

ἀλλ' ἄγε δεῦρο θεοὺς ἐπιδώμεθα· τοὶ γάρ ἄριστοι
 μάρτυροι ἔσσονται καὶ ἐπίσκοποι ἀρμονιάων (22.254).

The gods are of course to be active, vindicators of the agreement and punishers of its breach; as they are at *Od.* 14.393 and at *Il.* 3.276 ff.:

Ζεῦ πάτερ, Ἴδηθεν μεδέων, κύδιστε μέγιστε,
 Ἥελίος θ', ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις,

—and you who punish perjurers in the Underworld:

ὅμεις μάρτυροι ἔσθε, φυλάσσετε δ' ὄρκια πιστά.

The same idea is present at *Od.* 17.481: gods go about in disguise,

ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες

—not merely ‘contemplating’ them, but marking them for reward and punishment.

A related sense is that of ‘defence’: so Hecuba urges Priam to pray to Zeus as patron of Troy:

Ἰδαίω, ὃς τε Τροίην κατὰ πᾶσαν ὁράται (*Il.* 24.290),

while Hector was the great ‘defender’ of Troy:

ἧ γὰρ ὀλωλας ἐπίσκοπος,³ ὃς τέ μιν αὐτὴν
ρύσκειν, ἔχεις δ’ ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα (*Il.* 24.729).

so in Solon 4.3:

τοίη γὰρ μεγάθυμος ἐπίσκοπος ὀβριμοπάτρη
Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη χεῖρας ὑπερθεῖν ἔχει.

Cf. also Pindar, *Ol.* 14.4.

It would be easy to trace the same connection, of the divine observation and divine protection or punishment, through Greek poetry. A few examples must suffice:

Hesiod, *Erga* 267: πάντα ἰδὼν Διὸς ὀφθαλμός καὶ πάντα νοήσας.⁴

Archilochus, fr. 177 West:

ὦ Ζεῦ, πάτερ Ζεῦ, σὸν μὲν οὐρανοῦ κράτος,
σὺ δ’ ἔργ’ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων ὀρᾶς
λεωργὰ καὶ θεμιστά, σοὶ δὲ θηρίων
ὕβρις τε καὶ δίκη μέλει.

Solon, fr. 13.17 West:

ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς πάντων ἐφορᾷ τέλος, ἐξαπίνης δέ
ὥστ’ ἄνεμος νεφέλας αἶψα διεσκέδασεν
ἡρυνός—such is the vengeance of Zeus on human ὕβρις.

Aesch. *Suppl.* 1: Ζεὺς μὲν ἀφίκτωρ ἐπίδοι προφρόνως.

ibid. 381: τὸν ὕψοθεν σκοπὸν . . . φύλακα πολυπόνων βροτῶν.

Cho. 985: the sun, ὃ πάντ’ ἐποπτεύων τάδε, can witness to the δίκη of my act.

Words of this meaning (ἐποπτεύειν, ἐφορᾶν, ἐποπτήρ, ἐπισκοπεῖν, ἐπίσκοπος, ἐφορεύειν) are especially frequent in Aeschylus.

Soph. *El.* 823: ποῦ ποτε κεραυνοὶ Διὸς ἦ
ποῦ Φαέθων Ἥλιος, εἰ ταῦτ’ ἐφορῶν-
τες κρύπτουσιν ἔκηλοι;

Eur. *Hipp.* 886 (of an act of sin): τὸ σεμνὸν Ζηνὸς ὅμμι’ ἀτιμάσας (cf. W. S. Barrett, ad loc.).

Callimachus, *b.* 1.82: [Zeus] ἰῆεο δ’ αὐτὸς
ἄκρησ’ ἐν πολίεσσιν, ἐπόψιος οἳ τε δίκησιν
λαὸν ὑπὸ σκολιῷσ’ οἳ τ’ ἐμπαλιν ἰδύνουσιν

³ In the Scholia on this line, ἐπίσκοπος is glossed as φύλαξ. So too at *Od.* 8.163.

⁴ M. L. West remarks, in his Commentary on the *Works and Days*, ad loc.: ‘Nothing that a man does escapes the eye of Zeus, who is πανδερκέτης πανόπτης παντόπτης;

and since he is the guardian of the moral law every wicked action is an affront to him.’ I am grateful to Professor West for letting me see his work before its publication.

Zeus' titles of 'Ακραῖος, 'Επάκριος, 'Ιδαῖος, Πανόπτης, etc. have the same nuance.⁵ The ὀπισ' of the gods generally has this meaning, of an eye to punishment, as when Zeus inflicts storm and flood upon a country of unrighteous rulers,

οἷ βίη εἰν ἀγορῇ σκολιάς κρῖνωσι θέμοντας,
ἐκ δὲ δίκην ἐλάσωσι, θεῶν ὅπῳ οὐκ ἀλέγοντες⁷ (*Il.* 16.384 f.).

So true was this that it is a regular and bitter reproach to a god to say of him that he 'does not see', meaning that he does not prevent or avenge some terrible happening, or to ask him 'Do you see?' In the *Iliad*, Ares says this to Zeus, 5.872:

Ζεῦ πάτερ, οὐ νεμεσίῃσιν ὁρῶν τάδε καρτερὰ ἔργα;

This becomes a highly characteristic criticism of the gods in Euripides: thus the dying Hippolytus, *Hipp.* 1363:

Ζεῦ Ζεῦ τὰδ' ὁρᾶς;

and the despairing Amphitryon, *H.F.* 1127:

ὦ Ζεῦ, παρ' ἧρας ἄρ' ὁρᾶς θρόνων τάδε;

while the conventional Talthybius is moved by the sight of Hecuba's misery to wonder whether Zeus or merely Chance looks on human life, *Hec.* 488:

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω; πότερά σ' ἀνθρώπους ὁρᾶν,
ἢ δόξαν ἄλλως τήνδε κεκτῆσθαι μάτην,
Τύχην δὲ πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς ἐπισκοπεῖν;

The pious Sophocles, at the end of the extant play most affected by the technique of Euripides,⁸ makes Hyllus go no less far, *Trach.* 1264 ff.:

αἶρετ', ὀπαδοί, μεγάλην μὲν ἐμοὶ
τούτων θέμενοι συγγνωμοσύνην,
μεγάλην δὲ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνην
εἰδότες ἔργων τῶν πρασομένων,
οἳ φύσαντες καὶ κληζόμενοι
πατέρες τοιαῦτ' ἐφορῶσι πάθη . . .

Here again the bite in the word ἐφορῶσι is that it means 'passively viewing' (cf. Jebb on *S. El.* 823):⁹ Zeus, the father of Heracles, has looked on and allowed his destruction, a result which is αἰσχρά to the gods (1272).

Of men, too, it is expected that shameful or pathetic sights will produce action:

Agamemnon reproaches the Athenian leaders and Odysseus for hanging back and allowing others to fight before their eyes:

⁵ Neither the Greek evidence nor that of comparative religion confirms the view of A. B. Cook, *Zeus* ii.502, that 'later writers [sic] usually lay stress on the eye of Zeus as the wakeful witness of right and wrong, the avenger of impious deeds' (cf. also *ibid.* ii.1130), implying that this was not original.

⁶ In Homer ὀπισ 'always means vengeance or visitation of the gods for transgressing divine laws', L.S.J. *s.v.*; cf.

Frisk, *Griech. etym. Wörterbuch s.v.*, for the development from 'Aufsicht' to 'animadversio, Strafe'.

⁷ On this passage see H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (1971), p.6 n.27 and *reft.*: add W. Elliger, *Landschaft in gr. Dichtung* (1975), p.78.

⁸ See E. Fraenkel, *Kleine Beiträge* 1.188.

⁹ 'ἐφορῶσι: "sono spettatori", e implica indifferenza', Longo, *ad loc.*

νῦν δὲ φίλως χ' ὀρόωτε καὶ εἰ δέκα πύργοι Ἀχαιῶν
 ὑμείων προπάροιθε μαχοίατο νηλεεῖ χαλκῷ (*Il.* 4.347),

Athena says that any good man would be outraged to see the shocking behaviour of Penelope's suitors:

νεμεσσήσαιτό κεν ἀνὴρ
 αἴσχεα πόλλ' ὀρόων, ὅς τις πίνυτός γε μετέλθοι (*Od.* 1.228),

and Achilles fears that at the sight of Hector's corpse Priam would not be able to contain his χόλος:

ὥς μὴ Πρίαμος ἴδοι υἱόν,
 μὴ ὁ μὲν ἀχνυμένην κραδίη χόλον οὐκ ἐρύσαιοιτο
 παῖδα ἰδὼν . . . (*Il.* 24.585).

So too Theognis 58, of the unnatural promotion to gentility of the Megarian serfs:

τίς κεν ταῦτ' ἀνέχουτ' ἐσορῶν;¹⁰

It seems clear enough from all this that the notion of Zeus as observing human action with a view to defence of his own and punishment of wrongdoers is already familiar to Homer, as it was to the ancient Indo-European tradition and to many other comparable early societies. In the *Iliad*, however, it is often replaced by a different one, that of the sky-god, and the other gods with him, looking on without any necessary implication of action; of the gods, in fact, watching men as spectators of a drama or a sporting competition.

The two conceptions are not of course in reality as sharply opposed to each other as I have here made them. The Zeus who sits 'exulting in his splendour' to watch the fighting at *Il.* 8.51 has just made a great speech forbidding any god or goddess to intervene in defiance of his general plan (Διὸς βουλή) for the future shape of the war; and when he looks down and 'pities' the disastrous position into which Hera and Poseidon have brought the Trojans and Hector at *Il.* 15.12:

—τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε—

he at once goes on to outline the future and to enforce obedience to his will (15.14–77). There may be an overlap between gods 'looking after' heroes and cities, and 'looking on' at their sufferings; but in some important passages the second idea emerges clearly.

The ancient commentators were shocked by the apparent heartlessness of some of them. We have quoted the beginning of *Iliad* 4: the gods drinking toasts to each other from golden cups and Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορῶντες. The T-Scholion on 4.4 states the difficulty and attempts, rather touchingly, to solve it: ἀπρεπές φασι, εἰ τέρπει τοὺς θεοὺς πολέμων θέα. ἢ οὐκ ἀπρεπές· τέρπει γὰρ τὰ γενναῖα ἔργα· ἄλλως τε πόλεμοι καὶ μάχαι ἡμῖν δεινὰ δοκεῖ, τῷ δὲ θεῷ οὐδὲ ταῦτα δεινὰ· συμπληροῖ γὰρ ἅπαντα τὴν ἁρμονίαν τῶν ὄλων (citing Heraclitus, V.S. 22 B 102). The first explanation, that the gods take pleasure in noble doings, is repeated by ΣΤ in *Il.* 21.389, where Zeus laughs with pleasure at the sight of the gods closing in mutual combat:

¹⁰ See also the passages collected by Robinson Ellis in his *Commentary* on Catullus 29.1, 'quis hoc potest videre, quis

potest pati?' Ellis cites no passage from Homer; to those mentioned above add *Il.* 8.397, 17.93, 19.16; *Od.* 7.306, 16.277.

σὺν δ' ἔπεσον μεγάλῳ πατάγῳ, βράχε δ' εὐρεῖα χθών,
 ἀμφὶ δὲ σάλπιγξεν μέγας οὐρανός. αἶε δὲ Ζεὺς
 ἥμενος Οὐλύμπω· ἐγέλασσε δὲ οἱ φίλον ἦτορ
 γηθοσύνη, ὅθ' ὀράτο θεοὺς ἔριδι ξυνιόντας.

'Zeus is pleased because he sees them competing in martial virtue', *περὶ ἀρετῆς ἀγωνιζομένους*, says one hopeful scholiast (so too Eustathius 1242.48 says Zeus is *φίλερις ἐν καλῷ*). The second, that fighting makes up part of the harmony of the whole world and so is not really *δεινόν* at all, is evidently anachronistic; the first, which has perhaps more superficial plausibility, can hardly withstand comparison with such passages as *Il.* 2.270, delighted laughter of the Achaeans at the beating-up of Thersites; *Od.* 8.78, Agamemnon 'rejoicing at heart' (*χαίρει νόῳ*), at a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles;¹¹ and the laughter of the suitors ('holding up their hands they died laughing', *Od.* 18.100) at Odysseus' chastisement of Irus. The 'inextinguishable laughter' (*Il.* 1.599) with which the gods see Hephaestus bustling about in incongruous substitution for Hebe or Ganymede, and with which they enjoy the sight of Aphrodite and Ares detained in *flagrante* (*Od.* 8.326), also must fit here, and the 'sweet laughter' which arises when Aias falls in the cow-dung (*Il.* 23.786). This mirth proceeds from a delighted sense of one's own superiority; at ease oneself, one enjoys the spectacle of others struggling or humiliated for one's pleasure. It is a short step to the hateful laughter which is dreaded by the heroes and heroines of Tragedy, and which, we must remember, was in certain circumstances allowed by Attic law at the expense of criminals undergoing execution.¹²

In this way we are brought face to face with the question: what is the attitude of the gods towards men in the *Iliad*? I think it will turn out that the conception here discussed provides an important clue to the answer. The question is a vital one, because only in the light of the nature and perspective of the gods is human life intelligible, and the conception of life and death which characterizes the *Iliad* is the poetic heart of the poem and of its greatness.

The subject of heroic song is given by Penelope as

ἔργ' ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, τά τε κλείουσιν αἰοδοί (*Od.* 1.338).

Both gods and men have mighty deeds, which can form epic songs;¹³ in the *Iliad* a number of stories are alluded to¹⁴ of the battles and sufferings of the gods in

¹¹ The subtle glosses put on this passage by W. Marg in *Navicula Chiloniensis* (1956), pp.16 ff., and K. Deichgräber, *Das letzte Gesang der Ilias* (S. B. Mainz 1972), p.18, suffer from disregarding the related passages here compared. Another note in ΣΤ in *Il.* 21.389 already makes the comparison with *Od.* 8.78. An important article by P. Friedländer, *Lachende Götter*, in *die Antike* 10 (1934), 209–26 = *Studien zur ant. Lit. und Kunst*, pp.3–18. Cf. Eustath. 1243.60 (in *Il.* 21.408) πολλὸς ἐν τοῖς παροῦσι μύθοις ὁ τῶν κρείττονων γέλως καὶ ἡ διάχυσις.

¹² Aeschines 2.181, cf. Dem. 23.69. The motif of pleasure in watching others in distress, 'suave mari magno', is both exploited and softened by Lucretius,

Book 2, *init.*

¹³ The attempt of W. Kullman, *Das Wirken der Götter*, to argue that originally there were on the one hand songs purely about gods, and on the other songs purely about men, seems to me to be built in the air. See the review by W. Burkert, *Gnomon* 29 (1957), 166, who points out that the *Song of Gilgamesh* and similar works add to the *a priori* unlikelihood that heroic songs ever existed in which the gods played no part. Perhaps Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is the first heroic epic to be wholly without gods or religion.

¹⁴ Myths to which allusion is made in the Homeric poems are listed by G. M. Calhoun in *AJP* 60 (1939), 4 ff.

the old days, as when Hera was wounded by Heracles (*Il.* 5.392), Hephaestus was flung from Heaven (*Il.* 1.590, 18.395), and Cronos and the Titans were ousted and imprisoned (*Il.* 15.187 ff., 5.898, 8.478). It has often been pointed out¹⁵ that in the *Iliad* such serious sufferings by the gods belong to the past and no longer actually happen.¹⁶ Once, Zeus hung up Hera between Heaven and Earth with anvils tied to her feet (*Il.* 15.18¹⁷); now, he reminds her of it, and at her apology he smiles (15.47). Once, Zeus flung gods from Heaven to Earth (*Il.* 1.590, 15.23, 18.395¹⁸); but now a tactful piece of clowning by Hephaestus or a climb-down by Hera restores good humour. Lines like those which in the *Theogony* of Hesiod form part of the tremendous struggle between Zeus and Typhoeus (847 ff.)—heaven, earth, and sea all shake, Hades leaps from his throne in fear—serve in the *Iliad* (20.56 ff.) only to introduce the abortive Battle of the Gods, which ends not with the overthrow of a mighty god (*κρατεροῦ θεοῦ*, *Theog.* 824), but with Apollo declining battle sententiously, Hermes declining it with a witty compliment, and Artemis having her ears boxed and going home in tears.¹⁹ The poet of the *Iliad* even invents archaic-sounding myths of divine conflict in the olden days, such as the story which Achilles 'often heard Thetis tell', of the conspiracy against Zeus by Hera, Poseidon, and Pallas Athena (1.400). This *ᾠροσχεδίασμα*, isolated and inexplicable as a serious myth, was seen by Aristarchus to be an Homeric invention²⁰—the three gods who favour the Achaeans in the *Iliad*, and who have nothing else in common, are combined as those from whose evil plans Thetis rescued Zeus, and whose hostility to Troy should now be frustrated by Zeus in gratitude granting Thetis' prayer for a great Trojan victory. The *Theogony* gives us an idea of the deadly serious poems about War in Heaven, and that they were numerous is confirmed by Xenophanes fr. 1.21 ff., on songs about the 'battles of Titans, Giants, and Centaurs', all alike out of place at the festive board. In those days gods fought with each other, and the losers might be castrated or hurled into Tartarus, never to emerge; but now Zeus reigns secure on Olympus, and immortal battles are soon and easily composed.

Thus Ares, hearing of the death of his son, cries that he will go off to avenge him and defy the thunderbolt of Zeus (*Il.* 15.115), but he is consoled with a cliché ('better men have died before and will again', 15.139–41), and takes his place again at table. In a moment of anger Zeus threatens Ares that 'If you were not my son, you would be lower than the Titans in Tartarus' (5.898)—but since he is, he must be cured of his hurt and dressed in splendour among the gods—

¹⁵ Eloquently by K. Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist*, pp. 24 ff.

¹⁶ The late and special character of *Il.* 5 is convincingly argued by H. Erbse in *RM* 104 (1961), 150 ff.

¹⁷ The speculations of C. Whitman, *HSCP* 74 (1970), 37 ff. about this passage suggest to me the excesses of allegorical interpretation of Homer in late antiquity.

¹⁸ On the ancient poem which described the expulsion and return of Hephaestus to Olympus, Wilamowitz, *NGG* 1895.217 ff.; W. Nestle in *NJbb* (1905), p. 180; Friedländer, *Stud. z. ant. Lit. und Kunst*, pp. 4 ff.

¹⁹ *Il.* 21.462, 498, 492. See Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter*, p. 446, on the transposition of the Titanomachy into *Unernt* in Book 21.

²⁰ ΣΑ in *Il.* 1.400, ἐπιτηδες τοὺς τοῖς Ἑλλήσι βοηθοῦντας: cf. Σ in 1.399–406, τί ποτε βουλόμενος ταῦτα ἔπλασε; W. Bachmann, *Die ästhetischen Anschauungen Aristarchs* (1901) 18; M.-L. von Franz, *Die ästhetischen Anschauungen der Iliasscholien* (Diss. Zürich 1943), pp. 17 f.; M. M. Willcock in *CQ* N.S. 14 (1964), 144. W. Kullmann on the other hand (*Das Wirken*, p. 14) believes the story is really ancient.

τὸν δ' Ἥβη λούσεν χαρίεντα δὲ εἵματα ἔσσαν·
παρ δὲ Διὶ Κρονίῳνι καθέζετο κύδעי γαίῳν.

A great attempt is made in the *Iliad* to depict all the gods as living together on Olympus with Zeus, although it emerges here and there that gods actually have quite separate local homes—Poseidon at Aegae (*Il.* 13. *init.*), Aphrodite on Paphos (*Od.* 8.363), Athena at Athens (*Od.* 7.81), while Hera has three favourite cities (*Il.* 4.52), Argos and Sparta and Mycenae of the broad streets. The conception of a unified 'Götterstaat' is alien to later Greek religion, and doubtless Nilsson is right to regard it as essentially a creation of the epic.²¹ It had the effect of concentrating and contrasting the gods as a whole with the human world as a whole; no longer is it simply Zeus the Sky-father of gods and men who looks down from heaven upon us, but all the gods together turn their eyes upon human doings, while those gods who would be too irreconcilably out of place on Olympus (fertile Demeter, raging Dionysus), are as far as possible stylized out of the poem and the world. The gods, now unified in heaven, are intensely aware of their difference from men, and men are in the *Iliad* repeatedly raised almost to the height of gods and then thrust crushingly back again into their mere mortality. The human is that which is imperfect, that which falls short in beauty and power in comparison with the divine;²² it is by comparison with the gods that we learn what human life is. Conversely, the gods must look at men in order to understand their own nature and blessedness; 'it is only by contrast with mankind that the gods become aware of their grandeur and their oneness'.²³ 'All men need the gods,' says Pisistratus, Nestor's son, that prudent and righteous young man (*Od.* 3.48); the gods feast on nectar and ambrosia, and yet they demand burnt-offerings from men. We are not told why, but gods in their turn need men,²⁴ and Hermes complains of the disagreeableness of a long journey over sea, where there is no city of men to make offerings and hecatombs to the gods (*Od.* 5.100).

The great difference between men and gods is that between mortality and immortality. Not only are the gods exempt from death; a god is ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήραος ἡμᾶτα πάντα, ever youthful. No god is old.²⁵ And everything belonging to the gods is superior to the belongings of men,²⁶ simply because it is immortal. Achilles' horses are supreme:

²¹ *The Mycenaean Origins of Greek Mythology* (1927), pp.221 ff. *Contra*, G. Jachmann in *Maia* 6 (1953), 241; the probability of Eastern influence is stressed by A. Lesky in the Hesiod volume in the series *Wege der Forschung* (1966), pp.598, = *Saeculum* 6 (1955), 50. B. Fenik, *Battle-Scenes in the Iliad* = *Hermes Einzelschriften* 21 (1968), 42, argues that it is unlikely that 'Homer created the divine world as it appears in the *Iliad*', because he is so dependent on tradition in other areas, such as language, legend, and narrative style; but such an argument does not tell against the supposition that it was in the epic tradition that it was created.

²² 'Das Unvollkommene, das an Schönheit und Leistung abfällt gegenüber dem Göttlichen', Snell in *Gnomon* 19 (1943), 72. W. F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods*,

p.164, calls the gods 'primal forms of reality' ('Urgestalten der Wirklichkeit' in the original, *Die Götter Griechenlands* 211).

²³ W. F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, p.129.

²⁴ See H. Schrader, *Götter und Menschen Homers* (1952), p.58: 'Erst das Widerspiel zwischen Beiden [sc. Göttern und Menschen] bezeichnet für Homer die ganze göttliche Wirklichkeit.' I take the occasion of a footnote to deplore the disregard which seems to have been the fate of this rewarding book, never apparently reviewed in Britain. The important notice by W. Marg, *Gnomon* 28 (1956), 1–17, brings out the strong and weak points of the work.

²⁵ Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, p.128.

²⁶ Cf. Nägelsbach, *Homerische Theologie*², p.38.

ἴστε γὰρ ὅσσον ἐμοὶ ἀρετῇ περιβάλλετον ἵπποι·
ἀθάνατοί τε γάρ εἰσι (Il. 23.277).

Men cannot harm the armour made by gods:

ὥς οὐ ῥηίδι ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα
ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι οὐδ' ὑποείκειν²⁷ (Il. 20.265).

Hephaestus' handiwork is such as a god should make, not a mortal man:

μῆτερ ἐμή, τὰ μὲν ὅπλα θεὸς πόρεν οἷ' ἐπιεκές
ἔργ' ἔμην ἀθανάτων, μηδὲ βροτὸν ἄνδρα τελέσσαι (Il. 19.22).

Achilles, son of an immortal mother, can manage horses intractable to other men,

οἱ δ' ἀλεγεωοὶ
ἀγδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι ἢδ' ὀχέεσθαι,
ἄλλω γ' ἢ Ἀχιλῇι, τὸν ἀθανάτη τέκε μήτηρ (Il. 10.403 = 17.76).

Gods are more beautiful than men: Ganymede's beauty leads to his abduction from earth,

κάλλεος εὔνεκα εἶο, ὦν' ἀθανάτοισι μετεῖη (Il. 20.235),

while Priam pathetically boasts that his son Hector was so splendid that he seemed a god among men, or the child of a god, not of a mortal man:

Ἔκτορά θ', ὃς θεὸς ἔσκε μετ' ἀνδράσιν, οὐδὲ ἐΰκει
ἀνδρός γε θνητοῦ πάϊς ἔμμεναι, ἀλλὰ θεοῖω (Il. 24.258).

That is the view on earth: Hector is *δῖος*, he is in battle βροτολογιῶ ἴσος Ἄρηι, in Troy he is honoured like a god²⁸—but in heaven he is seen very differently. Even the proposal that his body be buried is an offence to the superiority of heaven, in Hera's view,

εἷη κεν καὶ τοῦτο τεὸν ἔπος, ἀργυρότοξε,
εἰ δὴ ὁμῆν Ἀχιλῇι καὶ Ἔκτορι θήσετε τιμὴν.
Ἔκτωρ μὲν θνητός τε γυναικὰ τε θήσατο μασόν·
αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεύς ἐστι θεᾶς γόνος (Il. 24.56).

And Zeus replies that there is no question of equal honour for the two,

οὐ μὲν γὰρ τιμὴ γε μί' ἔσσεται (Il. 24.66).

Gods hate death and have nothing to do with it (Il. 20.65: *τά τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ*), and Apollo leaves the doomed Hector (22.213). Gods have immortal clothes, *ἄμβροτα εἵματα* (16.670 etc.) and immortal armour (*ἄμβροτα τεύχεα*, 17.194 etc.); their everyday possessions are made of imperishable gold (8.41–4 = 13.23–6). They eat immortality, *ἄμβροσσία*, and drink nectar, which may have the same etymological meaning;²⁹ goddesses anoint themselves with

²⁷ Cf. Il. 21.594:

πάλιν δ' ἀπὸ χαλκὸς ὄρουσε
βλημένου, οὐδ' ἐπέρησε, θεοῦ δ'
ἠρύκακε δῶρα.

Cf. also Il. 22.291 and P. J. Kakridis, *Achilleus' Rüstung*, Hermes 89 (1961), 288–97.

²⁸ Il. 6.515, 7.192, etc.; 1.295, 13.802,

17.72; 22.394.

²⁹ Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch s.v. νέκταρ*, Chantraine, *Dict. étymologique de la langue grecque, s.v.*, set out but regard as uncertain the old derivation, which would give the word the meaning 'deliverer from death'.

ambrosia (*Il.* 14.170) and with 'immortal beauty' (*Od.* 18.193). Menelaus sums up by saying that no man can compete in possessions with Zeus:

τέκνα φίλ', ἧ τοι Ζηνὶ βροτῶν οὐκ ἄν τις ἐρίῃσι·
ἀθάνατοι γὰρ τοῦ γε δόμοι καὶ κτήματ' ἔασω (*Od.* 4.77).

Gods are also distinguished from men in power—*θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται*, (*Od.* 10.306). Their prowess and honour and strength are greater, *τῶν περ καὶ μείζων ἀρετὴ τιμὴ τε βίη τε* (*Il.* 9.498). This is regularly brought out by their being able to do all things easily. Aphrodite rescues Paris *ρεῖα μάλ'* ὥς τε θεός (*Il.* 3.381); just so does Apollo save Hector (*Il.* 20.444). The will of Zeus puts a valiant man to flight and robs him of victory, when he chooses, *ρηϊδίως*. (*Il.* 16.689 = 17.178). Athena sends back Hector's spear when he casts it at Achilles, blowing it gently, *ἦκα μάλα ψύξασα* (20.440); Apollo kicks down the Achaean wall as a playful child kicks down a sand-castle, *ρεῖα μάλα* (15.362: cf. also 10.556, 13.90, 14.245, 16.846; *Od.* 3.231, 10.573, 14.348, 16.197, 211, 23.185, Hes. *Erga* 5). Even more than being easy, their actions are irresponsible; gods have no consequences to fear. So Thetis says to Zeus, as he is silent on hearing her prayer:

νημηρτὲς μὲν δὴ μοι ὑπόσχεο καὶ κατάνευσον,
ἧ ἀποίειπ', ἐπεὶ οὐ τοι ἔπι δέος (*Il.* 1.515).

So too Achilles storms at Apollo:

νῦν δ' ἐμὲ μὲν μέγα κῦδος ἀφείλεο, τοὺς δὲ σώωσας
ρηϊδίως, ἐπεὶ οὐ τίς τίσω γ' ἔδειςας ὀπίσω·
ἧ σ' ἂν τεισαίμην, εἰ μοι δύναμις γε παρείη (*Il.* 22.18).

Such 'easiness' is a complaint, a criticism, on the lips of the victim;³⁰ the god has no need to justify what he does, and the ease which is part of the praise of the power of the god has another aspect when the sufferer feels the action to have been unjust. Here too the line is a straight one to the divine criticisms of Euripides. The dying Hippolytus says to his patron goddess as she leaves him:

χαίρουσα καὶ σὺ στείχε, παρθέν' ὀλβία·
μακρὰν δὲ λείπεις ῥαδίως ὁμιλίαν (*Hipp.* 1441).³¹

The contrast between human misery and the radiant unconcern of the gods is like that in Creusa's bitter aria in the *Ion*, where after accusing the god of rape and of abandoning his child she goes on

σὺ δὲ κιθάρα κλάζεις
παιᾶνας μέλπων (905).³²

³⁰ Cf. H. L. Ahrens, 'Pq. *Beitrag zur gr. Etymologie und Lexikographie* (1873), p.11: 'Ferner zeigt *ρεῖα* den Anfang einer tadelnden Bedeutung *Il.* 22.19 und *Od.* 1.160'.

³¹ 'No word of rebuke in this: only his yearning for her and a resigned acceptance of his mortal lot', W. S. Barrett, ad loc. But such an objective statement—she is a goddess, and so this action, like all others, is easy to

her—inevitably carries an emotional weight; to him it is life and death, to her something 'easy'. It is not 'the puritan's ideal' which is criticized here. 'Es gibt kaum eine zweite Szene, die unter dem Mantel des Heiligen und Rührenden so anklagt', is the perceptive comment of Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist*, p.234.

³² Cf. also *H.F.* 1115, 1127.

But what Euripides makes an attack on the divine is in Homer something different, a statement of the nature of the world and human life, terrible but dispassionate.

All the actions of the gods are easy; so then is their whole life. The gods 'live at ease': not merely *μάκαρες θεοί*, but *θεοὶ ρεῖα ζῶντες*.³³ Their physical circumstances are those of delight; on Olympus,

τῷ ἐνὶ τέρπονται μάκαρες θεοὶ ἥματα πάντα (*Od.* 6.46).

There they feast and drink, and have to entertain them the music of Apollo and the Muses (*Il.* 1.603). To complete their bliss they need only one thing more: a subject to interest them. That subject is provided by the existence of mortal men and their *πόννοι*. The nature of men and of gods is exactly calculated to set off and define that of each other. Thus as the life of gods is blessed, so that of men is miserable: as they are typically *μάκαρες θεοί*, so *οἰζυροῖσι βροτοῖσι* is an Homeric phrase for 'men',³⁴ and *δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι* is a common one (three times in the *Iliad* and three times in the *Odyssey*).

Zeus states the rule that 'of all the things which breathe and move on the earth, not one is more miserable than man':

οὐ μὲν γάρ τί πού ἐστιν οἰζυρώτερον ἀνδρός,
πάντων, ὅσα τε γαῖαν ἐπὶ πνεῖει τε καὶ ἔρπει (*Il.* 17.446).

And the context in which he says it adds, if possible, yet more point; he is moved to pity by the unhappiness of Achilles' immortal horses, which are mourning for Patroclus. The horses belong to heaven, and their grief moves Zeus more than Patroclus' death. The only comfort for death is that all must die, and that truth has a different ring according as it is spoken on earth or in Heaven. Among the gods Zeus laments for the imminent death of Hector, who is *φίλος ἀνὴρ* and a generous maker of offerings:³⁵

θεοὶ δ' ἐς πάντες ὀρώωντο·
τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἤρχε πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε·
ὥ πόποι, ἦ φίλον ἄνδρα διωκόμενον περὶ τείχος
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμαι· ἐμὸν δ' ὀλοφύρεται ἦτορ
Ἐκτορος, ὅς μοι πολλὰ βοῶν ἐπὶ μηρί· ἔκηνεν
Ἰδης ἐν κορυφῇσι πολυπτύχου, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
ἐν πόλει ἀκροσάτη·

Shall we save him from death?

Athena replies shortly that Hector is a mortal and doomed to die; and Zeus at once says, 'I didn't mean it, my dear child—do what you like',

θάρσει, Τριτογένεια, φίλον τέκος· οὐ γὰρ τι θυμῷ
πρόφρονι μυθέομαι, ἐθέλω δέ τοι ἥπιος εἶναι·
ἔρξον ὅπῃ δὴ τοι νόος ἔπλετο (*Il.* 22.166 ff.).

³³ See Wilamowitz, *Glaube der Hellenen* 1.332 f.; W. Burkert in *RM* 103 (1961), 140; R. Spieker in *Hermes* 97 (1969), 149 ff.

³⁴ Eustath. 947.1: ἐν τῷ καθόλου φησὶν οἰζυροῦς τοὺς βροτοὺς ὑπερπαθῶν τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀσθενείας.

³⁵ On the *φιλία* of gods for men and its meaning, A. W. H. Adkins in *JHS* 92 (1972), 10 ff. It is surprising to find no reference to the important paper by F. Dirlmeier, *Θεοφιλία und φιλοθεία*, in *Philol.* 90 (1935).

For the children of gods, a little more concern is shown. We have seen how readily, at *Il.* 15.139 f., Ares is consoled for the death of a son; that of Sarpedon, son of Zeus, is indeed more tragic, and Zeus honours him with a supernatural fall of rain like blood, (16.459). But Sarpedon is not mentioned again on Olympus, and the contrast is great with the shattering effect of Hector's death upon those who love him, or with that of Patroclus' death on Achilles. The god who mourns as a mortal mourns is Thetis (*Il.* 18.51–96, 24.83–102; *Od.* 24.47–64), who has entered by her marriage into human life; and she of course is not at home on Olympus. The only time she is shown entering its bright society makes the point with all the clarity imaginable, for when she is summoned by Zeus (*Il.* 24.83), she is grieving for her son and reluctant to come among the immortals—

τίπτε με κείνος ἄνωγε μέγας θεός; αἰδέομαι δὲ
μίσγεσθ' ἀθανάτοισιν, ἔχω δ' ἄχε' ἄκριτα θυμῶ.

Dressed in the blackest of garments—*κυάνεον*, τοῦ δ' οὐ τι μελάντερον ἔπλετο ἔσθος (*Il.* 24.94)—she comes among the gods, who receive her with a golden cup and cheering words:

Ἥρη δὲ χρύσειον καλὸν δέπας ἐν χειρὶ θήκε
καὶ ῥ' εὐφρην' ἐπέεσσι· Θέτις δ' ὤρεξε πούσα.

Among these gods, even a mourner must drink and be of good cheer.

With Thetis we have come to men and their acceptance of mortality. When Achilles tells Lycaon that 'all must die', the words take on a deep and tragic significance: 'Patroclus is dead, who was a much better man than you; even I shall be killed, for all my strength and my mother the goddess; come, my friend, you must die too. Why all this lamentation?' It is one thing for a god to say 'All men must die'; it is another for a great hero to say 'I must die', knowing that it will be soon. Eustathius (1226.19) comments on 21.107, *κάτθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος*, that οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἐπλάσθη ἀλλὰ κατὰ βαθὺν οἶκτον, while the T Scholiast on *vs.* 106 points to Achilles' own acceptance of death as the source of the power of the passage: *θανάτου κρείσσων ὦν παραμυθείται τὸν ἀγεννώς τοῦ ζῆν ἐφιέμενον*.³⁶ So too when Achilles speaks to Priam he gives the same personal application to the terrible generalization that 'the gods have allotted to miserable mortal men a life of suffering, while they themselves are free from care':

ὥς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι,
ζῶειν ἀχρυσμένους· αὐτοὶ δέ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσὶν (*Il.* 24.525).

—'So to Peleus, too, the gods have given much suffering, and I his son shall not live long, but here I sit in Troy, far away from him, a grief to you and to your children.' Achilles' acceptance of death transforms a cliché into a truly tragic insight, just as it is also that acceptance which ennobles and makes bearable his slaughter of Trojans in the last Books.³⁷

But the gods live at ease and are strangers to death. Consequently they do not

³⁶ Cf. W. Marg in *Die Antike* 18 (1942), 177; W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*⁴ (1965), pp.260 ff.; and *CQ* N.S. 26 (1976), 186.

³⁷ Otherwise they would be, I suppose, merely repulsive or meaningless, like the

massacres of Indians by an invulnerable Dionysus in Nonnus. Virgil had the insight to see that since Aeneas could not be killed in the fighting in the *Aeneid*, his fate must be made tragic by other means.

possess the heroic qualities which men must learn by accepting μοῖρα,³⁸ and their 'life of ease' has a sinister side. Three times the phrase appears, and twice the gods ρεία ζῶντες are described as killing a mortal who has overstepped his limits and trespassed on the divine world (*Il.* 6.138, Lycurgus: τῷ μὲν ἔπειτ' ὀδύσαντο θεοὶ ρεία ζῶντες, and *Od.* 5.122, Orion: τόφρα οἱ ἡγάασθε θεοὶ ρεία ζῶντες). In the *Odyssey*, where the gods are morally on the defensive as they are not in the *Iliad*, and in which Zeus' first words (*Od.* 1.32), are a justification of the ways of heaven to men, it is notable that the nearest approach to the life of the gods ascribed to any mortals is given to the wicked suitors, 1.159:

τούτοισιν μὲν ταῦτα μέλει, κίθαρις καὶ αἰοδή,
 ρεῖ', ἐπεὶ ἀλλότριον βίον νήπουρον ἔδουσιν.

Leisure, music, a life of ease, no πωνή: all this is the divine existence presented as an evil. And a cynical view of the joys of heaven seems to underlie the comparison at *Od.* 6.309: the throne of Alcinous,

τῷ ὃ γε οἶνοποτάζει ἐφήμενος ἀθάνατος ὥς.

We seem to be well on the way to that conception of the divine blessedness so elegantly expressed in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* 182 ff.: the gods dance as the Muses sing of their own immortal happiness and the misery of men:

Μοῦσαι μὲν θ' ἅμα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὅπ'ι καλῇ
 ὑμνεῦσιν ῥα θεῶν δῶρ' ἄμβροτα ἦδ' ἀνθρώπων
 τλημοσύνας, ὅσ' ἔχοντες ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
 ζῶουσ' ἀφραδέες καὶ ἀμήχανοι, οὐδὲ δύνανται
 εὐρέμεναι θανάτοιο τ' ἄκος καὶ γήραος ἄλκαρ.

and the gods and goddesses dance, and Apollo plays his lyre among them, stepping high, and a shining is all about him; and Zeus and Leto are delighted as they watch their son dancing among the immortal gods. Such a passage, in which divine gaiety has become wholly an end in itself and mortal misery is actually the subject of the singing of the gods (contrast in the *Iliad* 1.604)³⁹ leads to the 'immortality of drunkenness' denounced by Plato and to the serenely self-absorbed gods of Epicurus.⁴⁰

In the *Iliad* the blessedness of the gods never quite topples over into mere self-indulgence of this sort.⁴¹ The gods look on and delight in the spectacle, but they are not shown as resembling a blood-thirsty audience at a gladiatorial orgy

³⁸ The point is well made by H. Erbse, *Antike und Abendland* 16 (1970), 110.

³⁹ ΣΤ in *Il.* 1.604: εὖ τὸ μὴ ἀπειροκάλως ἐπιμηκῶναι, τίνα ἦδον αἱ Μοῦσαι. The divine archer Apollo who slew the Achaeans from heaven in the early part of Book 1 is in heaven the divine singer who reflects order and beauty. Cf. W. Marg. *Homer über die Dichtung*, p.10.

⁴⁰ μέθη αἰώνιος, Plato, *Resp.* 363 d. 'Comprehende igitur et propone ante oculos deum nihil aliud in omni aeternitate nisi Mihi pulchre est, et Ego beatus sum, cogitantem'—Cicero's cruel portrayal of the gods of Epicurus, *de Nat. Deorum* 1.114.

⁴¹ Despite such assertions as that of Rachel Bespaloff, *On the Iliad*, trans. Mary McCarthy (1947), p.68: 'The one sin condemned and explicitly stigmatised by Homer: the happy carelessness of the Immortals.' 'Explicitly' here seems to mean 'implicitly'. By contrast, another short work translated by Mary McCarthy, *The Iliad: or, The Poem of Force*, by Simone Weil (n.d.), seems to me a profound and true account of the poem, and of other things besides (reprinted, in a different translation, in: *Intimations of Christianity among the Ancient Greeks*, ed. E. C. Geissbuhler (1957, 1976)).

of carnage, but in a complex light. The idea of the divine watcher of whom justice and indignation are expected is sometimes applied to them, but sometimes they resemble the spectators at a sporting event, and sometimes they are the audience of a tragedy. The Achaean heroes themselves are keen watchers of sporting contests, as we see from *Iliad* 23, and Homer's audience is assumed to share their taste, an universal aristocratic one. The excitement among the watchers of the funeral games of Patroclus, vividly recorded in the poem,⁴² with the quarrelling about who is winning in the chariot race and the lively partisanship in other events, forms a parallel to this aspect of the divine audience. It is, as has been pointed out, one of the ways in which the gods themselves form an aristocratic society which reflects and glorifies the human society for which the poem was composed.⁴³ This is brought out with especial clarity at a high point of the poem, when gods and men watch Achilles' pursuit of Hector. 'Not an ordinary prize was at stake, such as men compete for in foot-races; they were running for the life of Hector, tamer of horses. As when race-horses compete for a prize, a tripod or a woman, at some funeral games: even so did they run three times round the city of Priam; and all the gods looked on', (*Il.* 22.159–66, compressed); *θεοὶ δ' ἐς πάντες ὁρῶντο*. That is to say, it almost *was* an athletic spectacle of the conventional sort—except that the gods were among the audience, and the stake was the life of Hector. The poet must explicitly tell us what were the points of difference.

It is a remarkable fact that in the Funeral Games of Patroclus a real duel is envisaged, which Achilles announces in language which means a fight *à outrance*:

ὀππότερός κε φθῆσω ὀρεξάμενος χροά καλόν,
ψαύσῃ δ' ἐνδύνων διὰ τ' ἔντεα καὶ μέλαν αἶμα,
τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ δώσω . . . (*Il.* 23.805).

Scholars both ancient and modern have been horrified by this reckless plan (806 ath. Aristarchus, cf. Leaf, ad loc.), and it is fair to add that the Achaeans took a similar view, halting the contest before blood was shed (822 f.). But passages which refer to fighting as 'dancing', 'dancing to Ares', as when Hector says to Ajax:

οἶδα δ' ἐνὶ σταδίῃ δηίω μέλπεσθαι Ἄρην (*Il.* 7.241)⁴⁴

make one think of a non-rational conception of fighting, in which it *is* a game,⁴⁵ and one which is watched with keen and critical interest and delight. And indeed just as gods look on, *ἀνδράσι τερπόμενοι*, we find that a god 'would not criticize'

⁴² The vividness of the sporting reports in *Il.* 23 is praised for example by the T Scholiast on 362: *πάσαν φαντασίαν ἐναργῶς προβέβληται, ὥς μηδὲν ἦτον τῶν θεατῶν ἐσχηκέναι τοὺς ἀκροατάς*: the listener loses nothing which the onlookers can see. See also the ΣΤ in 23.458, 476 (*ἀγροικώδης ἡ λοιδορία, ἀλλὰ μμειῖται διαθέσεις θεατῶν*).

⁴³ 'Die Götter des Homer sind sozugen eine Adelsgesellschaft, die unsterblich ist', W. Jaeger, *Paideia* i.32. See W. Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter*, pp.84–6; P. Cauer, *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*, p.358.

⁴⁴ Cf. Usener, *Kleine Schriften* iv.186;

Schrade, *Götter und Menschen Homers*, p.110; E. K. Borthwick in *Hermes* 96 (1968), 64 and 97 (1969) 388. Σ in *Il.* 7.241: *ὀρχήσις καὶ παιδιὰ γενναίων δὲ πόλεμος*. Cf. Eustath. 926.3, 939.65. Von der Mühl regards the single combat in the Games for Patroclus as 'sehr altertümlich'.

⁴⁵ J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, Ch. 5: Play and War. The chapter 'Jeux meurtriers' in A. Severyns, *Homère III: L'Artiste* (1948), pp.106–15, is not concerned with this aspect. For another side, see K. Meuli, *Der griechische Agon*, and W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (1972), p.65.

the ferocity with which, at a particular moment, men are fighting. As the battle rages over the body of Patroclus.

περὶ δ' αὐτοῦ μῶλος ὀρώρει
ἄγριος· οὐδέ κ' Ἄρης λαοσσόος οὐδέ κ' Ἀθήνη
τόν γε ἰδοῦσ' ὀνόσασαί, οὐδ' εἰ μάλα μιν χόλος ἔκοι (Il. 17.397).

Men, too, have the same taste:

ἐνθα κεν οὐκέτι ἔργον ἀνὴρ ὀνόσαστο μετελθών,
ὅς τις ἔτ' ἄβλητος καὶ ἀνούτατος ὀξείῃ χαλκῷ
διευοὶ κατὰ μέσσον,⁴⁶ ἄγοι δέ ἐ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
χειρὸς ἐλοῦσα (Il. 4.539),

for many Trojans and Achaeans were killed that day.

The gods, then, in this aspect of their contemplation of human fighting, do no more than share the taste of the heroes themselves and the poet's own audience. But the last aspect remains: the tragic. The gods in Book 22 look on at the pursuit of Hector, which is so like a sporting event, but the feelings which Zeus expresses are different:

θεοὶ δ' ἐς πάντες ὀρώντο·
τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε·
'ὦ πόποι, ἦ φίλον ἄνδρα διωκόμενον περὶ τείχος
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμαι, ἐμὸν δ' ὀλοφύρεται ἦτορ
'Ἐκτορος . . .' (22.166).

Hector, we are repeatedly told, is 'dear to Zeus' (e.g. 6.318, 8.493, 10.49, 13.674), but Zeus plans his death⁴⁷ and must watch him die; Sarpedon is Zeus' own son, and he too must be allowed to meet his death at Patroclus' hands, though he is φίλτατος ἀνδρῶν (16.433) to his father, who looks on in pity (ἐλέησε, 16.431) but does not save. Sarpedon is indeed honoured with a supernatural sign of the grief of Zeus, a fall of bloody rain, and is given posthumous honours in Lycia; but this is such cold comfort that the hero's friend Glaucus cries bitterly:

ἀνὴρ δ' ὤριστος ὄλωλε,
Σαρπηδῶν, Διὸς υἱός· ὃ δ' οὐδ' οὐ παιδὸς ἀμύνει (Il. 16.521).

A god, even a god who 'lives at ease', feels passionate emotions as he watches his favourites on earth in triumph or defeat. We have already seen the 'pity' they feel for their sufferings; no less common is anger.⁴⁸ And the two goddesses defeated in the Judgement of Paris⁴⁹ feel for Troy an implacable hatred which

⁴⁶ Cf. Il. 18.604, in the dance depicted on the shield:

δοῖω δὲ κυβιστητῆρε κατ' αὐτοῦς
μολπῆς ἐξάρχοντες ἐδίνεον κατὰ
μέσσους.

Again the similarity of dancing and fighting; and here too a crowd of spectators stand watching the dance, *τερπόμενοι* (604).

⁴⁷ Especially 15.68; 15.596 ff., 610–14; 17.207. Zeus also causes the reckless impulse which leads to the death of Patroclus, 16.688 f., whom he describes (17.204) as Achilles' *ἑταῖρον* . . . *ἐνθά*

τε κρατερὸν τε.

⁴⁸ Thus Il. 12.179,

θεοὶ δ' ἀκαχῆατο θυμόν
πάντες, ὅσοι Δαναοῖσι μάχης
ἐπιτάρροθοι ἦσαν:

13.352 (Poseidon) *ἦχθετο γὰρ ῥα*
Τρωσὶν δαμναμένους, Διὶ δὲ κρατερῶς
ἐνεμέσσα.

Cf. 13.206 and 24.33, Apollo's indignant address to the gods.

⁴⁹ Notoriously the Alexandrians were concerned to deny that Homer 'knew' this story, cf. ΣΑ in 24.25, ΣΤ in 24.31. The

nothing can satisfy but its destruction.⁵⁰ *Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* Blake said that 'Eternity is in love with the productions of Time'; the eternal gods suffer and rejoice because of their involvement with men, who pass away like the leaves and are gone. As the ancient commentator points out, on the lament of Zeus for the inexorable death of his son Sarpedon, οὐ μεμπτόν τὸν ποιητήν· ἡ γὰρ ἀφίεναι δεῖ τὴν συγγένειαν τῶν θεῶν τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, ἢ τὰ ἐπόμενα αὐτῇ λέγειν (ΣΤ in 16.433). Such things are the unavoidable consequence of blood relationships between gods and men.

The divine watching can thus be tragic,⁵¹ and all the gods, not least Zeus, are shown to us at times suffering as they look on; their presence and attention also serves as a device to heighten for us the emotional significance of terrible events.⁵² But the men in the poem do not know of this suffering. ὁ δ' οὐδ' οὐ παιδὸς ἀμύνει, says Glaucus of Zeus, and even the favourites of the gods must struggle and die. No wonder that they reproach Heaven, as Menelaus does (*Il.* 3.365, 13.631 ff.), with its indifference. The same cry comes also in the *Odyssey*, 20.201:

Ζεῦ πάτερ, οὐ τις σείω θεῶν ὀλοώτερος ἄλλος·
οὐκ ἐλεαίρεις ἄνδρας, ἐπὴν δὴ γείνεαι αὐτός,
μοσγόμεναι κακότητι καὶ ἄλγεσι λευγαλέοις . . .

The men of the *Iliad* are greater than we are (οἷοι νῦν βροτοὶ εἰσι), and they do concern the gods—μέλουσί μοι ὀλλύμενοί περ, says Zeus; but he takes pleasure in watching them struggle, and they do not touch him as deeply as did his son Heracles, as Hera points out to Hypnos:

ἧ φῆς ὥς Τρώεσσιν ἀρηξέμεν εὐρύοπα Ζῆν
ὥς Ἡρακλῆος περιχώσατο παιδὸς ἐοῖο; (*Il.* 14.265).

And even Heracles had to suffer a life of toil and humiliation, as he bitterly tells Odysseus in the World of the Dead,

ἄ δειλ', ἧ τινα καὶ σὺ κακὸν μόρον ἡγηλάεις,
ὄν περ ἐγὼν ὀχέεσκον ὑπ' αὔγας ἡελίοιο.

demonstration by Karl Reinhardt that it does underlie the *Iliad* (*Das Parisurteil* (1938) = *Tradition und Geist*, pp.16–36) is, or should be, a landmark in Homeric studies. Regarded as certain in some quarters ('Man hat längst erkannt', Erbse in *Ant. und Abendland* 16 (1970), 106: see also, independently, J. A. Scott in *CJ* 14 (1919), 226–30, E. Drerup, *Das Homerproblem* (1921), p.360 n.1; V. Magnien in *REG* 37 (1924), 145, and G. M. Calhoun in *AJP* 60 (1939), 10 n.23), it is still by some denied (F. Focke in *Hermes* 82 (1954), 274; G. Jachmann, *Homerische Einzellieder* (1949), pp.16 f.), while in English writing it seems not to have made the impact that it should. More of Reinhardt's work should be made available in English.

⁵⁰ Especially *Il.* 4.28; 7.31 f.; 18.367; 20.313.

⁵¹ Many remarks in the Scholia treat the *Iliad* as akin to tragedy. Such words as ἐπεισόδιον and περιπέτεια are quite common (reft. conveniently in J. Baar, *Index zu den Ilias-Scholien* (1962)), and Homer is said to be the first to introduce κωφὰ πρόσωπα (*Il.* 1.332), divine μηχαναί (*Il.* 2.156), and παῖδες (*Il.* 6.466). The *Iliad* itself consists of 'tragedies', ΣΑ in *Il.* 1.1. Plato calls Homer the first tragedian, *Resp.* 595 b, 598 d, 605 c.

⁵² ΣΑ in 22.201, ὡς ὥστε ἐν θεάτρῳ νῦν μείζονα κωήσῃ πάθη. Cf. also ΣΤ in 4.541: θεατὴν ἑαυτῷ ἀνέπλασε τῆς μάχης. It is a pity that Baar (n.51) did not include θεατῆς when he included θεάτρον in his *Index*.

Ζηνὸς μὲν πάϊς ἦα Κρονίωνος, αὐτὰρ οἷζὺν
εἶχον ἀπειρεσίην . . . (*Od.* 11.618).⁵³

No wonder that Zeus is prepared to surrender Troy, 'consenting but against my will' (*Il.* 4.43), although he admits that 'I honoured it above all mortal cities'. In return he claims the right to destroy any favourite city of Hera; and she agrees, saying that he can destroy Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae when he chooses.⁵⁴ 'For I too am a god as well as you,' says Hera, and so she has a right to have her will respected: Troy must fall. 'Come now, let us give way to each other in this; I shall yield to you and you to me.' And Zeus agrees, 4.37: 'Do as you will; let us two not quarrel over the destiny of Troy.' This scene, which immediately precedes the outbreak of fighting in the *Iliad*, is a nightmare picture for men. Punctilious service of the gods, even divine affection, is no defence; the will of another god (καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ θεός εἰμι) overrules any human claim. 'What has Troy done to you?' Zeus asks Hera, and she need not even answer. Justification is not the point, and the gods are not limited to a tragic attitude towards the sight of human suffering: they can always change their viewpoint and enjoy the spectacle. Finally, they can turn away their attention altogether.

At the beginning of Book 13 Zeus has brought Hector and the Trojans up to the Achaean ships. He then turns away his shining eyes,

Ζεὺς δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν Τρώας τε καὶ Ἑκτορα νηυσὶ πέλασσε,
τοὺς μὲν ἕα παρὰ τῇσι πόνον τ' ἐχέμεν καὶ οἷζὺν
νωλεμέως, αὐτὸς δέ πάλιν τρέπεν ὅσσε φαινώ,
νόσφω ἐφ' ἵπποπόλων Θρηκῶν καθορώμενος αἶαν . . .
ἐς Τροίην δ' οὐ πάμπαν ἔτι τρέπεν ὅσσε φαινώ (*Il.* 13.1).

The plot requires Zeus not to be on the watch; but the passage⁵⁵ is far more than a mere hinge necessary for the action. Zeus can turn his shining eyes on to what happens at Troy, if he chooses (cf. *Il.* 16.645), or he can look away and leave men to their misery, strikingly juxtaposed with his own serenity. Again, as battle rages in Book 11, only Eris is present to enjoy the sight; all the other gods are at ease, at home in their lovely houses on Mount Olympus:

οἱ δὲ λύκοι ὥς
θύνον· Ἔρις δ' ἄρα χαῖρε πολύστονος εἰσορώωσα·
οἷ γάρ ῥα θεῶν παρετύγχανε μαρναμένοισιν,
οἱ δ' ἄλλοι οὐ σφω πάρεσαν θεοί, ἀλλὰ ἔκηλοι
σφοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι καθήατο, ἥχι ἐκάστω
δῶματα καλὰ τέτυκτο κατὰ πτύχας Οὐλύμποιο (*Il.* 11.72).

At other times the gods go off in a body to be entertained by the Ethiopians (*Il.* 1.423, cf. *Od.* 1.23, *Il.* 23.206), and the world must get on without them.⁵⁶

⁵³ Here we have the original of the passages in Tragedy which criticize Zeus for his indifference to the sufferings of his offspring, especially the *Trachiniae* and the *Heracles*.

⁵⁴ Presumably this corresponds to the fact that in the poet's time these cities had in fact been sacked. Their patron goddess allowed this to happen, in a gruesome bargain with Zeus. Cf. F.

Codino, *Introduzione a Omero* (1965), p.66.

⁵⁵ Cf. also *CQ* N.S. 26 (1976), 179, and H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie*, p.61.

⁵⁶ 'It is quite evident that the Ethiopians serve as a convenient refuge for the gods when the poet wishes to keep them away from Olympus', J. T. Kakridis *Homeric Researches*, p.79.

From God the All-Knowing Watcher we have thus reached the god who is *not* watching, and who by not watching defines the position of mortals still more crushingly. The gods, it seems, have other things to interest them, apart from the struggle even of great heroes, in which when they choose they immerse themselves with passion; to such an extent that Nestor in the *Odyssey* says that he never saw gods 'loving' men so openly as Athena helped Odysseus at Troy (*Od.* 3.221 f.).⁵⁷ The gods are involved in human life, they love and pity men; but also they enjoy the spectacle, and at will they can turn away from it. There is no contradiction here, just as we must accept everywhere in Homer that aspects of the divine which seem to us disparate or irreconcilable are in fact inseparable. 'It is difficult for us to see the dread Zeus on the mountain, whose nod shakes Olympus, as identical with the hen-pecked head of a jovial society; but for Homer he is both.'⁵⁸ Thetis finds Zeus sitting alone, away from the other gods, on the highest peak of Olympus, a grand figure (*Il.* 1.498); his answer to her supplication is anxiety about the trouble he will have with his wife (518), and the hope that she will not observe what is happening—an unimpressive response, until he adds the terrific nod of his head which marks his promise to Thetis as irrevocable. This was the scene which tradition said inspired the Olympian Zeus of Phidias, the greatest of all Greek representations of the divine. At his return to the other gods, they all rise to greet him; but the expected row with Hera at once breaks out, leading Zeus to threats of violence (565), and the harmony of heaven is restored only by Hephaestus' tactful praise of his father's irresistible power, with a plea that they should not quarrel over mortals, as this will spoil the pleasure of the feast, ἐπεὶ τὰ χερεῖονα νικᾷ (576). Hera smiles, and the gods laugh as Hephaestus bustles about in the rôle of Ganymede or Hebe (595–600). This bald summary gives an idea of the utter impossibility of separating 'higher' and 'lower' ideas of the gods in the *Iliad*, or serious ones from frivolous ones. Men are of enough importance to make Zeus incur trouble for their disputes; at the same time they are beneath the serious notice of the gods, who apply to them the words which the haughty suitors use (*Od.* 18.404) when their princely banquet is disturbed by the quarrels of beggars. And gods pass with all imaginable abruptness from sublimity to frivolity; neither is truer or more vital than the other, and neither is true without the other. Reinhardt coined the phrase 'sublime frivolity', *erhabener Unernst*, for the gods of the *Iliad*, and he was right.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ It is no doubt more than a coincidence that striking effects are produced in the *Iliad* also both by the presence and by the absence of human watchers. Helen is brought out to watch the duel of Paris and Menelaus; Patroclus cannot bear to watch the disasters of the Achaeans; Priam and Hecuba watch Hector's death—and Andromache, yet more pathetically, is ignorant of it. See also the pleasure with which the other Achaeans imagine Achilles to be looking on at their sufferings, *Il.* 14.140.

⁵⁸ H. Schrader, *Götter und Menschen Homers*, p.70. The puzzle about Homer's gods is their 'Protean qualities', the 'curious intermingling of the sublime with the vulgar', says G. M. Calhoun, *TAPA* 68 (1937), 11; he thinks to resolve the difficulty

by distinguishing the crude old myths on the one hand, and the progressive views of the poet on the other. This is not only a doomed enterprise but also a profoundly wrong one; it is the coexistence of both aspects which makes Homer's gods what they are. Not every compound is the better for being resolved into simple elements—even if it were possible to agree on the means of doing so. Schrader also emphasizes (p.94) the identity of Hephaestus the πέλωρ αἴητων who controls destructive fire (as in *Il.* 21) and the supreme artificer who controls the πῦρ ἐν τεχνῶν: cf. especially 21.366, τεῖρε δ' αὐτῇ | Ἥφαίστοιο βλήφι πολύφρονος, where the two aspects are brought into immediate juxtaposition.

⁵⁹ K. Reinhardt, *Das Parisurteil*, p.25.

The rest of the *Iliad* shows that the greatest humiliations and disgraces of the gods are intimately and regularly linked with the greatest exaltations of their power and splendour. Amid the startling scenes of *Iliad* 5, where the mortal Diomed attacks and wounds two gods, we find on the lips of Apollo the most impressive statement of the unbridgeable gulf between gods and men, 440:

φράξεο, Τυδείδη, καὶ χάξεο, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν
ἴσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποτε φύλον ὁμοῖον
ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων.

It is Apollo again⁶⁰ who refuses to join in the undignified fighting of the gods in Book 21:

ἐννοσίγαι', οὐκ ἄν με σαόφρονα μυθήσαιο
ἔμμεναι, εἰ δὴ σοὶ γε βροτῶν ἔνεκα⁶¹ πτολεμίῳ
δειλῶν . . . (*Il.* 21.462).

Here again the same calm and absolute superiority and dignity are set amid the most undignified scenes; and the lines which introduce the Theomachy were singled out by 'Longinus' for their sublimity (*περὶ ὕψους* 9.6). Amid the seduction and fooling of Zeus in the *Διὸς ἀπάτη* of Book 14, we yet find that the union of guileful goddess and gullible god is also the Sacred Marriage which invigorates all nature (*Il.* 14.346–61); and when Zeus awakes, what follows is a reassertion of his invincible power (15.33, 104–9), and the longest and most explicit enunciation of his whole plan for the Trojan war and the eventual fall of Troy (15.56–71). When Zeus insults his son Ares, telling him that he is the most hateful god on Olympus and but for the family connection would long since have been lower than Tartarus (*Il.* 5.889–98), the immediate consequence is that Ares is healed of his wound, bathed, and dressed in lovely garments: *πὰρ δὲ Διὶ Κρονίῳ καθέξετο κύδει γαίῳν*. In the *Odyssey*, too, the mortification of Ares and Aphrodite,⁶² exposed to view by Hephaestus and mocked by all the gods, is followed by Aphrodite's departure for Paphos, where she assumes all the splendour of her divinity:

ἡ δ' ἄρα Κύπρον ἔκανε φιλομειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη,
ἐς Πάφον, ἔνθα τέ οἱ τέμενος βωμός τε θυήεις.
ἐνθα δέ μιν Χάριτες λούσαν καὶ χρίσαν ἐλαίῳ
ἀμβρότῳ, οἷα θεοὺς ἐπενήνοθεν αἰὲν ἔόντας,
ἀμφὶ δὲ εἴματα ἔσσαν ἐπήρατα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι (*Od.* 8.362).

The gods can always reassert their divinity, show their superiority to men, and retire from the realm of suffering and passion into their blessedness. Now that they no longer have serious wars in heaven, their divine energy might be at a loss without the interest which human history has for them. Their attitude can lead them to suffer, and they watch at times as spectators of a tragedy, rather than a comedy, feeling pity and sorrow (though not of course terror); but their concern cannot rival in intensity that felt by such human watchers as Priam or Achilles. The divine audience both exalts and humbles human action; it is exalted by being made the object of passionate concern to the gods, and at

⁶⁰ Cf. W. F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, pp. 66–7 on this Apollo.

⁶¹ Cf. *Il.* 1.574 *ἔνεκα θνητῶν*: 8.428

βροτῶν ἔνεκα.

⁶² On this episode see W. Burkert in *RM* 103 (1960), 130–44.

the same time it is shown as trivial in the sublime perspective of heaven.⁶³ The ancient commentators were fully alive to both sides of this, and we find in the Scholia both well expressed. By his use of divine myths the poet 'exaggerates the significance of his subject-matter by bringing in divine alliances and battles,' but 'when he looks at the divine nature, then he holds human actions very cheap'.⁶⁴

It seems perhaps most natural to us to think of all this as being far more a matter of literature than of real religion; but the ancients thought of Homer as one of those who formed their theology, for good (Hdt. 2.53) or ill (Xenophanes). So it may be less *outré* than might at first sight appear, to point out that this aspect of the *Iliad* could be described in the words used of his own religion by so passionate a religious thinker as Pascal: 'Il est dangereux', he writes, 'de trop faire voir à l'homme combien il est égal aux bêtes, sans lui montrer sa grandeur. Il est encore dangereux de lui trop faire voir sa grandeur sans sa bassesse. Il est encore plus dangereux de lui laisser ignorer l'un et l'autre. Mais il est très avantageux de lui représenter l'un et l'autre.'⁶⁵ Both the *basses* and the *grandeur* of man are vital to the *Iliad*, and they are brought out with equal force and emphasis. The poet could say of his poem what Pascal says of his own work: 'Si l'homme se vante, je l'abaisse; s'il s'abaisse, je le vante.' Pascal means that men are like animals because of sin and the Fall, Homer that they are like leaves because of their insignificance and lack of divinity; that is a difference which it would be flippant to minimize. But I think the comparison helps to show that the Iliadic presentation is compatible with a view of the world and human life which is both tragic and truly religious. If the poem did not rest on such a view, one both universal and serious, it could hardly be the great and profound work which it is.

That the gods, especially Zeus, observed human actions, was a natural and universal idea. That they contemplated them as a moving but also entertaining spectacle, was not; and the gods had to pay a certain price for the great benefits it gave the poem in literary terms. Already in Homer it is at moments on the point of becoming a reproach to them that they 'look on' at injustice or suffering. I shall not pursue that theme here, but instead shall conclude with a couple of examples of the sort of effect made possible by the Iliadic conception. Sometimes dramatic, sometimes small and inconspicuous, they and their like are of great importance for the poem.

We have already discussed *Il.* 13. *init.*, Zeus turning away his shining eyes and leaving men to their unending labour and pain. Similar is the contrast, all the more effective for being unstressed, in a passage like 13.345, of the partisanship of Zeus and Poseidon for the two warring sides:

τῷ δ' ἄμφις φρονέοντε δῶν Κρόνου νῆε κραταιῷ
ἀνδράσιν ἠρώεσσιν ἐτεύχετον ἄλγεα λυγρά . . .

⁶³ 'Das tief Ergreifende erscheint, aus dem Abstand des Göttlichen gesehen, auch wieder als gleichgültig', Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*⁴, p.293.

⁶⁴ ΣΤ in *Il.* 8.429: ὅταν δὲ ἐπιλογίσσεται τὴν ποιητικὴν, ἔπεται τοῖς μύθοις καὶ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐκτραγωδεῖ, συμμαχίας καὶ θεομαχίας παράγων. ΣΤ in 21.465: ὅταν

δὲ ἀποβλέψῃ εἰς τὴν θεῶν φύσιν ὁ ποιητής, τότε τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πράγματα ἐξευτελίζει. Cf. ΣΒΤ in 4.1: πιθανῶς ἐκ τοῦ κάτωθεν θορύβου εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν τὴν σκηνὴν σεμνύνων μετήγαγε . . .

⁶⁵ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Pléiade, p.1170.

At 15.305 Apollo destroys the Achaean wall as a child destroys a sand-castle:

ὥς ῥα σὺ, ἦε Φοῖβε, πολὺν κάματον καὶ δῖζὺν
σύγχεας Ἀργείων . . .⁶⁶

Such details bring out the full complexity of human and divine action and suffering: the frightful impact on men of the intervention of immeasurably superior gods. We see this again in passages which bring out the difference between a man who is 'god-like' and a real god. In a simple form:

ἐνθ' αὖ Μηριόνης Τρώων ἔλεν ἄνδρα κορυστήν,
Λαόγονον, θρασὺν υἱὸν Ὀνήτορος, ὃς Διὸς ἱρεὺς
Ἰδαίου ἐπέτυκτο, θεὸς δ' ὥς τίετο δῆμῳ.
τὸν βάλ' ὑπὸ γναθμοῖο καὶ οὐατος . . . (Il. 16.603).

He was honoured like a god—but now hateful darkness seizes him. The motif appears as a taunt at 22.393, the triumphant paean of Achilles:

ἡράμεθα μέγα κῦδος· ἐπέφνομεν Ἑκτορα δῖον,
ὦ Τρώες κατὰ ἄστυ θεῶ ὥς εὐχετόωντο.

They treated him like a god—but we have killed him; and at once Achilles dishonours his corpse.

More deeply moving is the famous speech of Sarpedon, 12.310 ff.:
'We are honoured in Lycia like gods: so we must fight. But if we could really be gods—

εἰ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντες
αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλομεν ἀγῆρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε
ἔσσεσθαι

—then I should not fight; but we are mortals and must die—so let us win or lose with glory'.⁶⁷ The poet uses the idea of being 'treated like gods' in order precisely to show how far the heroes really are from being gods. Sarpedon will not live to the end of the *Iliad*, and the significance of his life and death is brought out in this divine perspective. Most compressed and most dispassionate is the account of Patroclus' first entry into action. Achilles summons him to send him on the errand which will lead directly to his death:

ὁ δὲ κλισίηθεν ἀκούσας
ἔκμολεν ἴσος Ἄρηι, κακοῦ δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή (Il. 11.604).

He is like Ares in his strength and prowess—but we see him also as the gods see him; as a mortal man, advancing to his doom.

These last passages derive their power from the existence of the divine audience. The gods look on, and under their shining gaze human achievements and human suffering are seen in a certain unique way. We are able to share their viewpoint and to see human life as they see it, in its double aspect of greatness and littleness. And the gods themselves acquire not least from their rôle of watchers their own complex nature: sublime heavenly witnesses and judges, and at the same time all-too-human spectators. The development of

⁶⁶ Cf. Il. 12.29, the eventual complete effacement by the gods of the wall, τὰ θέσαν μογέοντες Ἀχαιοί

⁶⁷ Cf. Gilgamesh to Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh, *ANET*² 79, column 2: p.69 of the Penguin Classic translation.

the real and simple religious conception into a complex literary device was momentous for the later literature and religion of antiquity.

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Appendicula

In addition to the use made in the *Iliad* of the divine watcher, it lent itself to other developments. The activity of the gods could be said to be *θεωρεῖν*, contemplation: Anaxagoras said the aim of life was to contemplate the heavenly bodies (V.S. 59 A30), and for Plato it is obvious that *θεωρία* goes with setting a very slight value on our human life (e.g. *Rep.* 486 a), a thought which relates neatly to the effect in Homer of divine contemplation of men and its effect in making human doings less significant. Among men, too, spectators are the noblest: the image which compared human life to one of the great games, where some go to compete, some to buy and sell, and some to watch—and these last are the most noble—traditionally went back to Pythagoras but in reality probably belongs to Plato.⁶⁸ It connects with the superiority we have observed as part of the pleasure felt by the gods as they contemplate human struggles.

It can be used to explain human suffering: god as a trainer sends out the virtuous man to earn the crown of virtue, not without dust and heat. So Epictetus 1.24.1: ὁ θεός σε, ὡς ἀλείπτῃς, τραχεῖ νεανίσκῳ συμβέβληκεν . . . ἵνα Ὀλυμπιονίκης γένη· δίχα δὲ ἰδρώτος οὐ γίνεταί. We recall the view expressed in the T Scholia on *Il.* 21.389, that gods exult in the contemplation of noble deeds.

Marcus Caelius went so far as to regard civil war as a 'great and enjoyable spectacle', Cic. *ad Fam.* 8.14.4: 'video magnas impendere discordias, quas ferrum et uis indicabit; uterque et animo et copiis est paratus. Si sine summo periculo fieri posset, magnum et iucundum tibi fortuna spectaculum parabat.' A more frightful variant is that which Seneca uses, *de Providentia* 2.9: God delights in the gladiatorial spectacle of a good man matched with harsh fortune: 'ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo deus, ecce par deo dignum, vir fortis cum fortuna mala compositus'; his example is the suicide of Cato. This stands to the Homeric view of things in the same relation as the lurid battle-scenes and hysterical suicides of Lucan to the Homeric epic.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Protrepticus* B44 Düring, with his note: W. Jaeger, *Scripta Minora* i.355: W. Burkert in *Hermes* 88 (1960), 159 ff. On the life of contemplation, F. Boll, *Vita Contemplativa*, SB Heidelberg

1920.8 = *Kleine Schriften zur Sternkunde des Altertums* (1950), pp.303–31. I find paradoxical Boll's view (p.307) that not the gods but Odysseus provided the archetype of the βλος θεωρητικός.