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EUBOULIA IN THE *ILIAD*

INTRODUCTION

The word *euboulia*, which means *excellence in counsel* or *sound judgement*, occurs in only three places in the authentic writings of Plato. The sophist Protagoras makes *euboulia* the focus of his whole enterprise (*Prot.* 318e–319a):

> What I teach a person is good judgement about his own affairs – how best he may manage his own household; and about the affairs of the city – how he may be most able to handle the business of the city both in action and in speech.

Thrasymachus, too, thinks well of *euboulia*. Invited by Socrates to call injustice *kakoetheia* (vicious disposition – he has just identified justice as 'an altogether noble good nature (*euetheia*)', i.e. as simple-mindedness), he declines the sophistry and says (*Rep.* 348d): 'No, I call it good judgement'. But Plato finds little occasion to introduce the concept in developing his own ethical and political philosophy. The one place where he mentions *euboulia* is in his defence of the thesis that his ideal city possesses the four cardinal virtues. He begins with wisdom, and justifies the ascription of wisdom to the city on the ground that it has *euboulia* (*Rep.* 428b) – which he goes on to identify with the knowledge required by the guardians: 'with this a person does not deliberate on behalf of any of the elements in the city, but for the whole city itself – how it may best have dealings with itself and with the other cities' (428c–d). It is normally rather dangerous to draw an inference from the absence or rarity of a word to the absence or rarity of the idea expressed by the word. But in the present instance we need have no qualms in doing so. Having assimilated *euboulia* (which was equated with political skill in the *Protagoras* (319a)) to guardianship, Plato can abandon any further enquiry into the arts of good judgement and counsel and concentrate instead on guardianship. The ideal city is constructed as it is precisely to avoid the need for politics and its arts. What the guardians are required to know is how to keep the class structure intact ('how the city may best have dealings with itself') – and that involves keeping the education system going, lying well and truly about the basis of the class system, and maintaining a firm grip on the breeding arrangements. These administrative skills are ultimately grounded in the knowledge of the principles of stability, order and harmony which comes from the study of mathematics and dialectic. They have little in common with the arts of persuasion or the political judgement needed in an actual Greek state.

I begin this paper with these reflexions on Plato because I suspect his motivated neglect (or rather, utopian hi-jacking) of *euboulia* does much to explain its neglect by the most influential writers on early Greek intellectual history. What Plato is interested in is justice and moral excellence and the question of the unity or complexity of the human mind: these are the topics that preoccupy (for example) Snell and Dodds and Adkins.[1] But Protagoras was not the only figure in early Greek literature and thought who found it important to ponder *euboulia*. The qualities needed by a good politician or king or counsellor are explored by Thucydides, by the tragedians and, to begin at the beginning, by Homer – to name only the most important. Nor is it in the least surprising that they should be. It is a commonplace that the *polis* was not only the

[1] B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, English translation by T. Rosenmeyer (Oxford, 1953); E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951); A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford, 1960).

Greeks' distinctive form of community but the indispensable cradle of those unique and extraordinary intellectual and artistic developments of the late archaic and classical periods which have shaped western civilisation. How could the creators of such an intensely political and powerfully creative institution not have reflected on the intellectual as well as the moral virtues required of a statesman or adviser? That tradition of reflexion began with Homer. Yet on the whole Homeric scholars do not appear to be much interested in the *euboulia* of the Homeric hero. Here they differ from the ancient Greeks themselves, who as is well known regarded Homer not only as their greatest poet but as a teacher, a fount of wisdom on all the topics touched on or adumbrated in his poems. This is as true of kingship and *euboulia* as any other subject, as witness the very title of Philodemus' fragmentary treatise *On the Good King according to Homer*, a work in which the names of Nestor and Odysseus evidently figured frequently as paradigms of *phronesis*, practical understanding (col. XI 22ff.), and in which the importance of *sunhedria* (assemblies) and *euboulia* apparently occupied a whole section of its own (col. XIII 22 – XIV).[2] Is kingship strictly speaking or ideally absolute? Or should kings be subject to their advisers? Dio Chrysostom appeals to Homer's treatment of Agamemnon as relying on Nestor and the council of elders to support the latter alternative (*Or.* 56). Should old men engage in public affairs? Certainly, answers Plutarch in his essay on the subject; and he supports his argument that the old are superior in counsel, foresight, *logos*, good sense, prudent thought, soundness and experience by Homeric texts, and above all by the example of Nestor, of whom Agamemnon said (*Il.* 2.372): 'Would that I had ten such advisers among the Achaeans' (see especially *Mor.* 788–90, 795).

In work of recent years I have discovered only one substantial treatment of *euboulia* in Homer: a brilliant, trenchant and provocatively dismissive passage of a few close-packed pages in Sir Moses Finley's *The World of Odysseus*.[3] Finley's view of *boule* (counsel, judgement) in Homer is diametrically opposed to that of a Dio or a Plutarch. It is not just that where Dio expatiates on Agamemnon's submissiveness to Nestor and the elders, Finley lays stress on the fact that the Homeric king was free to ignore the expressions of sentiment voiced in council or assembly and go his own way, although at the risk of revolt;[4] or that where for Plutarch Nestor was 'the prototype of the wisdom of old age, the voice of experience', for Finley he 'was not that at all', but simply a storehouse of heroic exempla useful not for clarifying men's minds but for bolstering their morale.[5] The heart of the matter is that on Finley's interpretation of Homer's system of values, there is no room for *euboulia*, or more accurately for anything Thucydides or Aristotle would have recognised as genuine *euboulia*, at all.

In what follows I shall first present a survey of the evidence in the text of the *Iliad* that prima facie tells against Finley's account, which I then go on to report and discuss. The rest of the paper will develop an alternative analysis of the themes he introduces. I make no apology for approaching the subject *via* a book that is now over thirty years old. Perhaps the very authority of *The World of Odysseus* has helped to create an impression that *euboulia* not only has little weight in the Homeric scheme of values but is not even worth investigation. I am sure Finley hoped rather to provoke curiosity and argument.

It will already have been becoming apparent that I come to Homer as a student of Greek intellectual history and political theory, not as a Homeric scholar. In my patchy reading of the secondary literature the work I have found much the most helpful

[2] See O. Murray, 'Philodemus on the good king according to Homer', *JRS* 55 (1965), 161–82.

[3] References are to the second revised edition published by Penguin Books (London, 1979).

[4] *World*, pp. 80–2.

[5] *World*, pp. 114–15.

and stimulating in exploring Homeric *euboulia* is James Redfield's 'long, subtle and complex' book *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*.[6] Indeed, anyone familiar with the method and main theses of that work could probably construct the argument of this paper for himself. At the same time, I must acknowledge a more general debt to some recent studies of the quality of human rationality in early Greece, notably books by G. E. R. Lloyd, G. S. Kirk, and – on *metis* – M. Détienne and J.-P. Vernant.[7] *Metis*, cunning intelligence, is not identical with *euboulia*: it has roughly the same relationship to it as *deinotes*, cleverness, has to *phronesis* in Aristotle's plotting of the intellectual virtues.[8] But it is an essential ingredient of the *euboulia* of a Nestor or an Odysseus, and consequently the present essay should be read as complementary to chs. 1 and 10 (especially) of *Cunning Intelligence*.[9]

SOME EVIDENCE

The *Iliad* is full of assemblies (*agorai*) and councils (*boulai*), in heaven, in Troy, and above all in the Greek camp before Troy. To rehearse them all would be tedious and needless for our purposes; let it suffice simply to recall six Greek parleys particularly notable for their length or their weight in the development of the poem. First of these, of course, in position and in significance is the assembly to which Achilles summons the host at the beginning of Book 1 (53ff.), for it is the forum in which his great quarrel with Agamemnon takes place. It is followed by a council and then a further assembly in Book 2: at the council Agamemnon reports his dream and explains to the Achaean chieftains his plan to stir the Greeks to battle again; when that plan fails disastrously, Odysseus and Nestor address Agamemnon before the assembled forces and advise him and them on what to do next. Third, and a direct sequel to the assembly of Book 1, is the assembly of Book 9, followed by a council, at which the Argives look for remedies for their worsening position and Nestor prevails upon Agamemnon to send an embassy to Achilles – which in turn engages in a massive parley with the sulking hero. Immediately afterwards, in Book 10, the nocturnal prowlings of the Greek leaders culminate in the council that results in the Doloneia. Book 14 begins with an informal council at the point in the story when Greek fortunes are at their lowest ebb; as in Book 9, so here once again Agamemnon is dissuaded from returning home (or more strictly from making as if to do so). Finally, balancing the assembly of Book 1 is the further assembly called by Achilles at the opening of Book 19, at which Agamemnon and Achilles are reconciled and Achilles is restrained from taking immediate revenge for Patroclus. All these discussions and debates have this at least in common: they are not mere episodes, relaxations from the real action of the poem; they are its motive

[6] J. M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: the Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago, 1975), so described by Finley in the bibliographical essay in *World*, p. 184.

[7] G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience* (Cambridge, 1979); G. S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (London, 1974), ch. 12; M. Détienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (Hassocks, 1978).

[8] So Détienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence*, pp. 316–17.

[9] I have restricted my attention to the *Iliad*, principally because the *Iliad* is much richer in councils and assemblies than the *Odyssey*, but also because I want to avoid the complications raised by the problem of whether the poet of the *Odyssey* is different from the poet of the *Iliad* – for if they are different (as the arguments of G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962) and more recently J. Griffin, *Homer* (Oxford, 1980) persuade me), then it may be prudent method not to assume that the social and intellectual worlds of the two poems are the same. I have also tried to avoid begging questions about the poetics and compositional techniques of Homer, and about the extent to which we are justified in seeing the *Iliad* as a monument of tragic architecture, every detail controlled by a conception of the whole.

forces, of greater intrinsic interest, and generating more tension, than most of the passages which retail the actual fighting. Assemblies and councils have a similar structural and dynamic function in much heroic poetry.[10] For example, the plot of *The Song of Roland* is launched and in part shaped by the sequence of deliberations which begin the poem: Marsilion's council at Saragossa, Blancandrin's embassy to Charlemagne, and then – at much greater length – 'that council which came to such sore grief', when Roland and Ganelon quarrel at Charlemagne's court.

The prominence of councils and assemblies, and in general parleys, in the *Iliad* reflects the fact that life, and in particular life at the front, is a difficult practical business, demanding intelligence and judgement as well as prowess. And since parleys are needed to cope with that business, it comes as no surprise to find *euboulia* recognised as a pre-eminent virtue of the Homeric chieftain.[11]

Excellence in counsel is often coupled with prowess in fighting as one of the two chief ways in which a man may outshine his peers. Nestor, attempting to reconcile Achilles and Agamemnon, describes them flatteringly to their faces as excelling the Danaans equally in counsel and in fighting (1.258). He employs a similar technique with Diomedes (9.53–4), when in response to a stirring speech made by him he establishes the tone and something of the direction of his reply with the words: 'Son of Tydeus, you are exceedingly valiant in war, and in counsel you are the best among all your contemporaries'. Odysseus likewise employs the same contrast in upbraiding the plebeian loudmouths of Book 2 with the charge (200–2): 'My good man, sit still and listen to the words of others who are better than you, whereas you are a weakling, not fit for war, of no account either in war or in counsel'. He himself, on the other hand, earns extravagant admiration for his beating of Thersites, and provokes in the common soldier the following words (2.272–4): 'Heavens, Odysseus has in truth performed fine deeds countless in number, initiating good counsels and preparing for war, but now is this deed the best by far that he has done among the Argives'. Here the opposition is less sharp: preparations for war have as much if not more in common with counsels as with war itself; and Odysseus' initiatives in counsel and preparation are implicitly reckoned themselves as notable deeds. Indeed, what these lines reflect is the fact that ability in fighting and excellence in counsel are not so much opposed as interdependent qualities. Let it not be thought that the coupling of *euboulia* and prowess is confined to contexts in which Nestor and Odysseus, Homer's paradigms of *euboulia*, figure. We find Helenus urging Aeneas and Hector to make a stand and rally the Trojan host 'since on you above all of the Trojans and Lycians the burden of toil lies, because in every enterprise you are best both at fighting and at thinking' (6.77–9). And we are told that when Achilles sat in wrath by the swift-plying ships 'he never went into the assembly which brings glory to a man nor ever into the war' (1.490–1), although it was abstinence from war and the war-cry that caused him pangs of longing. Again, Peleus sent Phoenix with Achilles to the war to teach him 'to be

[10] The assembly or council theme in Yugoslav oral epic is studied by A. B. Lord in *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 68–81.

[11] As Lloyd says, 'There can be few societies that do not, in some degree, prize skill in speaking, and the variety of contexts in which it may be displayed is very great. Apart from in the arts of the poet or story-teller and of the seer or prophet, eloquence may be exhibited in a number of other more or less formalised situations, including eulogies of the powerful and contests of abuse such as the song duels reported from the Eskimos.' And he continues: 'Good speaking and good judgement – and the two are often not sharply distinguished – need to be shown wherever groups of individuals meet to discuss matters of consequence concerning the running of the society, its day-to-day life and internal affairs and its relations with its neighbours' (*Magic, Reason and Experience*, p. 59).

a speaker of words and a doer of deeds',[12] because he 'did not yet understand equal war nor assemblies where men win pre-eminence' (9.438–43). Nor does Achilles reject the notion that excellence requires a man to perform superbly in counsel as well as in battle, although he admits that that is not the sphere in which he himself is pre-eminent (18.105–6). In his reply to Odysseus' attempt on the embassy to persuade him to relent he couches his refusal in these words: 'I will not join in considering counsels with him, nor yet deeds' (9.374).

The idea that a hero will ideally be distinguished in both wisdom and valour is one the *Iliad* shares with other heroic poetry.[13] Blancandrin is introduced as 'for valour a mighty knight withal, and fit of wit for to counsel his lord' (*Roland*, 25–6); Marsilion buttresses the resolve of the traitor Ganelon with a speech which begins: 'You are both bold and wise' (ibid. 648); and as the armies are marshalled for the final battle the poet exclaims (ibid. 3172–5):

> A noble sight is the Emir this day:
> White is his beard as any flower on spray,
> He is in council a man discreet and sage,
> And in the battle stubborn and undismayed.

We find the same conception in *Beowulf*: 'Then Wulfgar spoke; the warlike spirit of this Wendel prince, his wisdom in judgement, were known to many' (vv. 348–50). And Ashhere, 'the hero that Hrothgar loved better than any on earth among his retinue' (vv. 1296–7), was not only 'a strong warrior, noted in battle' (vv. 1298–9), but 'my closest counsellor, keeper of my thoughts' (v. 1325). Finally, in his farewell to Beowulf Hrothgar praises the wisdom of his parting words, although of course it has hitherto been his exploits as a fighter that have mattered: 'You are rich in strength and ripe of mind, you are wise in your utterance' (vv. 1844–5); and he declares him therefore fit to be king of the Sea-Geats should need arise.

The importance Homer and his protagonists assign to *euboulia* is also reflected in the titles they are given. They are, of course, *aristees* and *heroes*, heroes and exponents of excellence, *basilees*, kings or princes, *hegetores ede medontes*, leaders and rulers of men.[14] But equally they are *boulephoroi*, counsellors, and *gerontes*, elders, so called not (at least on the Greek side) with much regard to their age but because they are the men 'for whom it is fitting to advise counsels' (10.146–7). Much of their deliberation is naturally about military tactics and strategy – at its broadest the question 'whether to flee or to fight' (10.147; this is the topic of the debates in Books 2, 10 and 14, and initially in Book 9 also), although that question is as complex as life itself, for it involves considerations about the value of the campaign and its objective, about honour and shame, promises and comradeship, and about the will of Zeus. In Book 1, however, the counsel Nestor offers is designed not to propound the solution to a military problem, but to settle a quarrel; and in Book 9 his object is to persuade Agamemnon to eat one half of the humble pie whose other half is offered

[12] The scholia almost invariably comment on the two virtues of thought and action or soul and body they take Homer to be commending in these passages. In the present case an especially interesting inference from 9.442–3 is drawn by Σ b: καὶ ὅτι δὲ πάντων [sc. μύθων τε καὶ ἔργων] κρείττων ἡ εὐβουλία δηλοῖ διὰ τούτου.

[13] For some passages in the *Odyssey*, Hesiod and Pindar similar to those collected above in the *Iliad* see e.g. W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore, 1984), 182 and n. 46. Cf. F. Solmsen, 'The "gift" of speech in Homer and Hesiod', *TAPA* 85 (1954), 1–15.

[14] But this phrase already carries a hint of *euboulia*, for, of course, the verb μέδω seems to imply: 'organise in a thinking way'. Cf. e.g. P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris, 1968) s.v.

to Achilles by the embassy. All these exercises in deliberation fall within the general responsibility of a counsellor as it is defined in the words of the dream in Book 2 (24–5): 'A man who is a counsellor must not sleep all night, when peoples are entrusted to him and he has so many cares'; or again in those of the real Nestor to Agamemnon in Book 9 (96–102; cf. 2.204–6):

> Most noble son of Atreus, Agamemnon king of men, in you will I cease, from you I will begin, because you are king of many peoples and Zeus has entrusted to you sceptre and *themistes*,[15] so that you may deliberate for them. Therefore you above all men must speak and listen, and bring things about for another too, when his heart bids him speak for good; and on you will depend whatever he begins.[16]

It is perhaps tempting to think of Agamemnon just as a weak and indecisive military commander. But Homer is at pains to make us aware that his office is greater than the man and larger than generalship (1.277–81): 'Do not think, son of Peleus', says Nestor, 'to quarrel with a king, might against might, since no equal honour is the lot of a sceptred king, to whom Zeus has given glory. Even if you are valiant, and a goddess mother bore you, yet he is better, since he is king over more men.' His and Odysseus' references particularly to the king's responsibility for administering the customary laws (*themistes*, 2.206, 9.99) take us unobtrusively but emphatically from any purely military conception of Agamemnon's position to the Hesiodic notion of one upon whom 'all the people look as he determines *themistes* with straight decisions (*dikai*); and he by his unerring speech swiftly and skilfully calms a great quarrel; for this is why kings are judged wise, because they accomplish restitution easily for people wronged in their dealings, soothing them with gentle words' (*Theog.* 84–90).

The World of Odysseus takes a different view of Homeric kingship (p. 97): 'The king gave military leadership and protection, and he gave little else, despite some hints of royal justice (and injustice) scattered through the *Odyssey*.' The texts to which we have just referred show that 'royal justice' is a concept known to the *Iliad* too. It might perhaps be argued that since Book 9 is under suspicion of belonging to the latest stratum in the composition of the *Iliad*, 9.95–102 cannot safely be exploited as evidence of the poem's general conception of kingship. And perhaps Odysseus' similar words at 2.204–6 (which include the famous dictum: 'To have many rulers is not good: let there be one ruler, one king') will likewise be thought too exceptional to be pressed into evidence. But Lloyd-Jones notes a couple of more matter-of-fact passages which attest the king's role in upholding something like justice: 'the Achaean chiefs "protect the *themistes* that come from Zeus" (1.238), as Sarpedon protects Lycia "by his judgements and his strength" (16.542)'.[17]

I take it that something must be conceded to Finley: however much or little is made of these texts, there is no denying that the exercise of *euboulia* in justice is something only occasionally mentioned, not presented or explored, in the *Iliad*. But Finley is not entitled to infer very much from this. The *Iliad* is about war, not the life of the

[15] *Themistes* needs explanation rather than translation. Hugh Lloyd-Jones thinks the best definition of *themis* is 'declaration of a divine command or of a command advised by a god' (*The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley, 1971), 116 n. 23). *Themistes* are thought by the Greeks to come from god, but to the armchair anthropological observer they appear as 'customs, usages, principles of justice' (ibid. p. 6). As Finley puts it well (*World*, p. 78 n.): '*Themis* is untranslatable. A gift of the gods and a mark of civilized existence, sometimes it means right custom, proper procedure, social order, and sometimes merely the will of the gods (as revealed by an omen, for example) with little of the idea of right'.

[16] For an interesting comment on the hymnic character of v. 97 and its significance see Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought*, pp. 140–2.

[17] *The Justice of Zeus*, pp. 6–7.

communities governed by the warriors. So one would not expect to see them at work administering the *themistes*. Yet it is scarcely conceivable that, if a Homeric king was (unlike Telemachus) firmly in control of the community he governed, he would not be called upon (or take it upon himself) to settle disputes according to the *themistes* – however real or imaginary the Homeric world is taken to be. Finley takes a simile of the *Odyssey* (19.107–14) which connects the just rule of a god-fearing king with agricultural prosperity to be an anachronism, introducing a carefully controlled contemporary note foreign to the politically more primitive world of Odysseus (p. 97). Let us suppose that he is right about that passage, and that something similar may be true of the description of city and rural life on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* (18.483–608).[18] We can agree to leave such arguably anachronistic passages as these out of the argument for present purposes. What concerns us is something much simpler: the bare idea of kings using good judgement in the dispensation of justice. It is hard to believe that *this* idea is tied to the contemporary eighth-century world, and not perfectly at home in the world inhabited by Agamemnon, Nestor and the rest.

So far our evidence shows simply that *euboulia* is regarded as a pre-eminent excellence of kings and heroes. Other passages must be cited to show the quality of their (and Homer's) attachment to it.

When you love or esteem a thing, you are apt to dwell on its salient features in your conversation. Just so does Homer have his heroes talk about counsel and the assembly. Here, for example, is Nestor endeavouring to bring home to the the Greeks the seriousness of the commitments which underpin their assembly before Troy, and which should govern its conduct (2.337–43):

> Heavens, you are in truth conducting your assembly like children – childish children, who have no care for deeds of war. What will become of our covenants and oaths? The counsels and plans of men might as well be in the fire, and the pure drink-offerings and the right hands of fellowship in which we trusted. For vainly we are struggling with each other in our words, nor can we find any expedient at all, for all our long stay here.

The assembly can be an effective and constructive forum of debate, a *proper* assembly, only if its participants remember the bonds of mutual loyalty, undertaken for a common purpose, which constitute their assembly as an assembly of consenting adults. Those bonds – oaths, covenants, pledges – exercise the force they do because they are the deeply expressive signs which men use quite generally (not just for military purposes) to declare that they have knit themselves together. Here, next, is Agamemnon on the etiquette of the assembly (19.78–82), in an attempt to win sympathy for the excuses he is about to offer: 'Danaan heroes, companions of Ares, friends: it is good to listen to him who stands, nor is it seemly to interrupt; for that would be hard even for a skilled man. In a loud uproar of men how could one hear or speak? Even a penetrating speaker is damaged.' And here is the Trojan Antenor celebrating the different qualities of Menelaus and Odysseus as speakers (3.209–24):

> But when they mingled among the assembled Trojans, while people stood Menelaus was the more conspicuous with his broad shoulders, but when both were sitting Odysseus was the more impressive. And when they were weaving words and counsels before everyone, then Menelaus spoke fluently, a few words only, but very penetratingly, for he was not wordy nor off target; he was in fact the younger. But when Odysseus of many wiles rose up, he stood still, and he looked down, fixing his eyes on the ground, and he did not move his staff either backwards or forwards, but he held it stiff, like a man of no understanding: you would have said he was full of rage and just senseless. Yet when he released his great voice from his chest, and words like

[18] So e.g. G. S. Kirk, *Homer and the Oral Tradition* (Cambridge, 1976), 11–12; *contra* O. Taplin, 'The Shield of Achilles within the *Iliad*', *Greece and Rome* 27 (1980), 1–21.

snowflakes in winter, then no other mortal could contend with Odysseus. Then we were not so astonished as we looked upon Odysseus' bearing.

Like so many passages exemplifying *euboulia* in the Homeric heroes, this famous text was later in antiquity used to argue Homer's interest in questions of political and rhetorical theory: Menelaus was seen as the first exponent of the plain, Odysseus of the grand style (cf. e.g. Cic. *Brut.* 40 and 50; Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.64; Gell. 6.14.7; and other texts collected in Radermacher, *Artium Scriptores*, pp. 6ff.). Finally, here are two passages concerned with *boule* itself, both the more eloquent because of the circumstances in which they were uttered. As he embarks on his nocturnal reconnaissance Diomedes asks for a companion, and gives celebrated utterance to the maxim that two heads are better than one (10.224–6): 'When two go together one sees before the other how advantage may come about; on his own, even if he perceives something, his wit is shorter and his scheme fragile.' Then at the end of the poem, when the ghost of Patroclus visits Achilles he speaks these haunting words (23.75–9): 'Give me your hand, I pray lamenting. For I shall not come again from Hades, since you have given me my dues in the funeral pyre. We shall not sit, living men apart from our dear comrades, giving and taking counsels: the hateful fate has swallowed me which was my lot from when I was born.' Both texts are about companionship, the one appropriate to a nocturnal mission of great danger, the other full of aching nostalgia for pleasures that can never more be enjoyed – pleasures of shared *boule* that are represented as the essence of friendship.

THE HEROIC CODE

The culture of the world portrayed in the *Iliad* is a warrior culture, and (says Finley)

> the main theme of a warrior culture is constructed on two notes – prowess and honour. The one is the hero's essential attribute, the other his essential aim. Every value, every judgement, every action, all skills and talents have the function of either defining honour or realising it... The heroic code [of the Homeric poems] was complete and unambiguous, so much so that neither the poet nor his characters ever had occasion to debate it... The basic values of the society were given, predetermined, and so were a man's place in the society and the privileges and duties that followed from his status. They were not subject to analysis or debate, and the other issues left only the narrowest margin for the exercise of what we should call judgement (as distinct from work skills, including knowledge of the tactics of armed combat)... The significant fact is that never in either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is there a rational discussion, a sustained, disciplined consideration of circumstances and their implications, of possible courses of action, their advantages and disadvantages (*World*, pp. 113–15).[19]

[19] Finley concedes that 'there are lengthy arguments, as between Achilles and Agamemnon, or between Telemachus and the suitors'. But these, he claims, 'are quarrels, not discussions, in which each side seeks to overpower the other by threats, and to win over the assembled multitude by emotional appeal, by harangue, and by warning' (*World*, p. 114). The implication, I take it, is that the quarrel of *Iliad* 1 does not involve the conflict of different *principles*, but only a collision between Achilles' and Agamemnon's quests for one and the same goal: honour. This account has some attractions. But it runs into difficulty as soon as one inquires: what are we to say about the critic who asks himself 'Is Achilles or Agamemnon right?'? The critic could not avoid describing and assessing the quarrel in terms of conflicting reasons – reasons actually offered or capable of being offered in justification or censure of the protagonists' behaviour. How else could he be a critic? It cannot be denied that the critic appears often enough in the *Iliad*: Nestor in 1.254–84 and 9.103–13 is only the earliest of his incarnations. The main thesis I am going to argue in this section of the paper could be put as a point about the protagonist and the critic: Finley's conception of the heroic code is informed exclusively by the protagonist's viewpoint; a more adequate account will need to accommodate the critic's viewpoint too, not least because the protagonist is expected to exercise the *euboulia* of the critic.

Finley anticipates a number of lines of objection to the claims he puts forward, and in particular to his denial that there is rational discussion in the Homeric poems. I mention three of the chief points he makes. First, he argues that most speeches at most Homeric councils and assemblies aim to persuade by threat, by warning, by encouragement; in short, by emotional appeal, not by reasoned reflexion upon experience or analysis of alternative possibilities. Second, he discounts the idea that Nestor and Odysseus are paradigms of wisdom: Nestor's *forte* lies in 'bolstering morale' or 'soothing overheated tempers', Odysseus (in the *Odyssey*) is a clever liar; neither practises the rationality or controlled rational behaviour prerequisite for wisdom. Third, he pours cold water on the sort of evidence for a high valuation of intelligence and good judgement in Homer which was presented in the previous section of this paper. We must not 'be misled by the numerous formulas which, in one or another variant, speak of a man of counsel. For us counsel is deliberation; wise counsel, deliberation based on knowledge, experience, rational analysis, judgement. But counsel for Homer pointed less to the reasons than to the decision itself, and hence to the power of authority' (*World*, p. 115).

I shall examine these latter arguments in due course. It is Finley's fundamental characterisation of the heroic code and the consequences he draws from it that require first attention. I have two observations to make, which both bear on the relation between *euboulia* and the heroic code. The first is in a way a development of some of the things Finley says, but it has a problematic consequence which constitutes my second point.

Peleus sent Phoenix with Achilles to Troy because he 'did not yet understand equal war nor assemblies where men win pre-eminence' (9.440–1). If we try to accommodate Peleus' thinking within the heroic code as defined by Finley, we are surely bound to extend the notion of prowess beyond that of martial performance on the battlefield. Peleus recognises a prowess in counsel and its expression in oratory. So, too, do the warriors of the *Iliad*. Consider Diomedes' speech at the beginning of Book 9 (31–49). Agamemnon has called an assembly, and in despair has urged the Achaeans to flee and return home, on the ground that it is now clear that it is not the will of Zeus that they should take Troy. In his reply Diomedes calls Agamemnon a fool and a coward, and tells him he can go home if he likes, but the rest of the Achaeans will stay until they sack Troy – or if they too go home he and Sthenelus will take it single-handed. Then Homer reports the response: 'So he spoke, and all the sons of the Achaeans shouted aloud, in admiration at the words of horse-taming Diomedes' (50–1). His crude emotional appeal (Finley's general view of the Homeric harangue is palpably right in this instance) is followed by a vastly more subtle exercise in counsel from Nestor. But the crucial point for the present is that Diomedes' speech is in its own way as much a feat of prowess as one of his exploits on the battlefield; and it wins him an immediate reward of honour or glory in the applause of the host (and in a tactful compliment from Nestor). Similar applause greets other speeches in the *Iliad* – as, for example, when after disposing of Thersites Odysseus rallies the Greeks at the beginning of Book 2 in a masterly oratorical performance, the culmination of what has been called his *aristeia* (2.333–5):

> So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great shout, and all around the ships echoed terribly to the voice of the Achaeans as they praised the words of god-like Odysseus.

The prowess which earns glory, then, may be displayed in speech as well as in action. This is an obvious enough point, yet it is surprising how little attention is drawn to it in most accounts of the heroic code in Homer. The reason for the omission is clear

enough: the greatest and the most tragic displays of prowess in the *Iliad* are unquestionably the deeds of Diomedes, Patroclus, Hector and Achilles on the battlefield.[20] But a good two-thirds of the *Iliad* is direct discourse; and Homer surely expects us to revel, as the Achaeans do, in the splendid style of the counsels, pleas, threats and taunts of the chief heroes – much of what is glorious about them is crystallised in the guile or arrogance or nobility of their talk.

It is a virtue of Finley's treatment of heroism that all this is implicitly recognised in it. If 'all skills and talents have the function of... realising [honour]',[21] then the ultimate goal of good counsel or a fine exhortation or taunt is to win honour for the speaker. Hence part at least of the explanation of the emotive character of much of the talk in Homeric councils and assemblies: honour inspires passion, for it matters enormously and is a precarious possession; therefore when a speaker knows that his speech is regarded as a test of his mettle, the speech will often betray or exploit passion and emotion before any other quality.

It may be thought that there is something paradoxical in the idea that the goal of counsel is honour for the counsellor: surely the object of giving counsel is to help solve a practical problem? If there were a difficulty, it would be one that faced any view of life which – unlike modern deontological or utilitarian philosophies – made the attainment or exercise of virtue the chief object of human existence, as do (for example) Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. Such a conception of life is not, in fact, necessarily paradoxical. This can be seen from consideration of one area of life where many people would still subscribe to the view that virtue or excellence is or should be the object of the exercise, viz. sport. In sport we play to win, but the game's the thing – that is, the exercise of our skills and talents it calls forth, and the enjoyment this gives us and perhaps onlookers, too. A distinction effectively forged by the Stoics is useful here.[22] The *intended result* of playing football is winning: the *goal* is to display and enjoy the display of one's footballing skills. The prime object in playing is to achieve the goal, for it matters more than the intended result. Indeed, there would be no point to winning if playing were not intrinsically worth while.

The intelligibility of this common attitude to sport illuminates not only Stoic ethics but Homeric *euboulia*. A heroic counsellor aims to solve the problem in hand. A successful solution is the intended result of his advice. But in so far as he and others see his counsel as a display of prowess, its real goal is something else: the honour accorded to someone who exhibits the appropriate excellences in his advice – pre-eminently spirit and (I would maintain against Finley) wisdom. His solution may be ignored, as for example in Nestor's attempt to reconcile Achilles and Agamemnon in Book 1 of the *Iliad*. The failure does little to detract from the esteem Nestor wins from every reader (as presumably from the assembled Greeks) for his splendidly sensible intervention. The world of the *Iliad* has sometimes been called a 'results

[20] The *Iliad*'s imaginative sympathies, like *The Song of Roland*'s, are with the rash young men who are the focus of the narrative and whose rashness indeed sustains it. But the heroic ethic is not entirely geared to their point of view: it demands an old head on young shoulders. Probably it would only occur to someone middle-aged to write a paper on a poem about youth pointing this out.

[21] *World*, p. 113.

[22] I am following Gisela Striker's fascinating paper on Antipater's subtle defence of the coherence of Stoic ethics against Academic criticism: see 'Antipater, or the Art of Living', in *The Norms of Nature*, ed. M. Schofield and G. Striker (Cambridge, 1986). There is, of course, a more general affinity between the views of life characteristic of Stoicism and the *Iliad*, noted e.g. by Griffin, *Homer*, p. 40, despite the massive difference between the optimism of Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, vv. 1–6 (*SVF* i. 537), and the pessimism of the Homeric model of vv. 4–5, 17.446–7.

culture', in the belief that for the Homeric hero what matters much more than anything else is success or failure in his enterprises. But the keynote of the heroic code, as Finley says, is honour or glory. And (as we shall see further presently) achieving honour is compatible with a certain amount of failure. Indeed, recent writers such as Redfield and Griffin have done much to show how the peculiar magnificence of Achilles consists in his pursuit of glory at the same time as he recognises the ultimate futility of all human endeavours. To resume the analogy of sport: Homeric heroes are risk-takers, more like competitive amateurs than professionals; if glory were a simple function of success, they would be more prudent – all Olivers, no Rolands.

I have been arguing that giving counsel is for the Homeric hero a form of prowess: that is its place in the heroic code as defined by Finley; and so interpreted it can be expected to be an emotional affair often enough. Thus far the argument is compatible with *The World of Odysseus*. Now we come to a difficulty. If *euboulia* is a form of prowess comparable in significance only with martial valour, the prospect opens of conflict between the values which constitute the code, despite Finley's claim that it is complete and unambiguous. The warrior may find his heroically impulsive pursuit of martial glory opposed by his heroic good judgement.

This possibility would presumably be disallowed by Finley, for a reason reported at the beginning of this section: for the Homeric hero an excellent performance in the assembly does not (according to Finley) involve exercise of the judgement which might oppose martial heroism, but the sort of rhetoric which would encourage it. There *is* a consideration, Finley concedes,[23] which is sometimes raised against the heroic course of action: prudence. But prudence is not a heroic virtue. Its promptings do not indicate conflict of values *within* the framework of the heroic code. Without challenging the code head on, it introduces a point of view *external to it*. It is significant that its personification in the *Iliad* is not the great hero Nestor, but the Trojan Polydamas. Both Nestor and Polydamas offer counsel: Nestor's is 'emotional and psychological', heroically preoccupied with honour and glory; Polydamas unheroically urges caution.

Here we see Finley making a further application of the dichotomy between emotion, honour and the heroic, on the one hand, and reason, prudence and the non-heroic or unheroic, on the other. My contention is that the *Iliad* works with a more complex conception of the heroic than this. Why and how could be argued in a number of different ways. I restrict myself to considerations derived from examination of *euboulia*.

Euboulia is itself a many-faceted virtue. A good counsellor must be able to work both on the reason and on the emotions, if only because all deliberative oratory must appeal directly or indirectly to passions and desires, but in all except the crudest cases by presenting considerations – that is, reasons – of one sort or another to the audience. He must have the gift of persuading his audience a lot more often than not, but at the same time he must usually be right. He must concentrate on what is to be done now, but this will involve drawing on past experience and thinking about the future. Heroic *euboulia* does, therefore, sometimes appear in the guise Finley has identified: sometimes Homer holds up a Nestor for admiration because he succeeds in stirring men to bravery by appeal principally to their sense of honour (e.g. 7.123–74) – that is what his *euboulia* here consists in. On other occasions, however, the considerations it urges upon the mind are more numerous and various than honour: prudence, pity, justice and a sense of propriety.[24] It is often intent on being reasonable. And what

[23] *World*, pp. 115–16.

[24] On propriety see A. A. Long, 'Morals and values in Homer', *JHS* 90 (1970), 129–39.

then makes a counsellor admirable may not be the success and spirit of his persuasion (he perhaps fails) but his good judgement and his courage and eloquence in expressing it.

I have suggested that a commitment to *euboulia* already imports into the heroic code the possibility of a conflict of values. Here is the argument for this thesis: The hero's esteem for *euboulia* (as I shall show) commits him to listening to reason. Listening to reason is not treated as if it were to be defined simply in terms of the pursuit of honour; i.e. it is not decided in advance that the only considerations which count as reasonable are those that favour the course of honour. Nor could it very well be defined in such terms. For being reasonable must imply being ready to give weight to any considerations which deserve to be given weight. And how can anyone tell which these are until he has thought about them? It is a crucial assumption of and about rationality that one cannot: that there is or may be more to discover about oneself and the world than one yet knows.[25] The hero committed to *euboulia*, then, has to reckon with the fact that he may find himself having to take seriously claims upon him other than honour and perhaps opposed to honour. Esteem for *euboulia* thus introduces an openendedness into the heroic code, which accordingly lacks the high degree of determinacy ascribed to it by Finley.

The hero's moral universe undergoes further complication if what *euboulia* presents him with on a given occasion is a reasonable appeal to justice or pity or propriety or prudence which actually does conflict with the dictates of honour – so that he cannot simultaneously act prudently or justly etc. *and* do what his sense of honour demands. The difficulties can best be explored by asking: are justice, prudence, pity, propriety – the claims which *euboulia* typically introduces – themselves intrinsically heroic qualities?

One might argue: No. For heroism is to be seen as defined by honour; a quality only counts as heroic if and when it helps to realise honour. But justice, prudence and the rest exert the pull they do on us independently: it is not true that they can register with us only when they also represent the claim of honour. On this view of the question, it is no longer just the heroic code which supplies the hero with a guide to conduct. In so far as he is attentive to the thoroughly heroic excellence of *euboulia*, he is obliged on occasion to attach serious importance to non-heroic considerations; and it cannot be assumed that he will always decide in favour of the course of honour. A hero may swallow his pride and decide to let caution or pity for his dependants (for example) govern his behaviour. It is conceivable that the excellence of the judgement which leads him to do so will earn him honour, but the factors which figure in his judgement range beyond honour.

One might, however, construe the heroic code more liberally, and argue that such qualities as justice and prudence are best accorded a place within it. There are two distinct grounds on which this strategy might be defended. First, justice at least is more intimately connected with honour than we have so far allowed. It may sometimes consist in giving honour where honour is due, as we shall see when examining Nestor's intervention in the quarrel of Book 1. In such a case a concern for justice *is* a concern for honour, although an altruistic concern which may (and on this occasion does) conflict with naked egoistical pursuit of glory. This possibility of conflict shows that, if there is reason to treat justice as a properly heroic value, there is at the same time reason to judge that considerations of honour may themselves point in different

[25] Cf. Heraclitus fr. 18 [*KRS* 210]: ἐὰν μὴ ἔλπηται ἀνέλπιστον οὐκ ἐξευρήσει, ἀνεξερεύνητον ἐὸν καὶ ἄπορον ('If one does not expect the unexpected one will not find it out, since it is not to be searched out, and is difficult to compass').

directions, and so yield the hero no unambiguous guide to conduct. (A hero might, of course, decide to dissolve the ambiguity by adopting an ordering principle: always prefer the immediate claims of your own honour to any other consideration. But he would thereby be effectively abandoning any respect for *euboulia*, which heroes are supposed to value. So the ordering principle, attractive though it is to a Hector or an Achilles, should not be regarded as something built into the heroic code itself.) Secondly, even if (by contrast) prudence, for example, is not a matter of honour, it is certainly a value recognised as having claims on the hero; so why deny it a place in the heroic code? There is surely some advantage in identifying the code as the whole system of values which govern the hero's behaviour, and which he shares with others (such as his wife and other dependants) who may attach more weight to prudence and less to honour than he does himself. If we take this view of the code, then honour will still have to have the *dominant* position in it – if it is to count as a *heroic* code. But once again, there could be no presumption that the claims of honour ought always to silence those of other values which find a place in the code.

Finley claimed that 'the heroic code was complete and unambiguous' (*World*, p. 113). I have argued that, if narrowly defined in terms of honour, it is far from complete; but if it is more liberally construed, it is plainly not unambiguous. The argument (whose conclusion is not new) has confined itself to consideration of what follows from the pre-eminent status of *euboulia* as a heroic virtue. It has made some assumptions about *euboulia*, particularly its rationality and the scope of its concerns, which must now be justified. Therefore I turn to some detailed case studies of Polydamas, Nestor and the rest as counsellors.[26]

HECTOR AND POLYDAMAS

A great hero often has a close companion: Achilles has Patroclus, Gilgamesh has Enkidu, Roland has Oliver. The companion is himself a hero of stature, but he lacks the consummate arrogance and heedlessness of danger that mark the greatest heroes. He has a compensating excellence in which he outshines them – wisdom:

> Roland is fierce and Oliver is wise
> And both for valour may bear away the prize.
>
> (*Roland*, 1093–4)

His function is to act as the voice of wisdom in his friend's ear, sometimes to be heeded, but ultimately to be disregarded with consequences simultaneously disastrous and supremely glorious.

It may be that the epic tradition on which Homer draws knew of a Trojan warrior called Polydamas son of Panthous. But there is every reason to suppose that as Hector's companion or adviser he is entirely Homer's creation[27] – a colourless and artificial creation, it must be confessed. As two excellent discussions by Reinhardt and Redfield[28] bring out, Polydamas achieves no individuality. He has no interesting associations or history, no distinctive personality, no memorable acts of valour to his credit. 'He exists in the *Iliad* only on the Great Day of Battle'; and his existence is

[26] It will by now be apparent that on my account the Homeric ideal of the hero prefigures the Aristotelian *phronimos*. I have said and shall say nothing about Aristotle's conception of *euboulia* (for which see *EN* VI 9 (1142a32–b33); cf. (on deliberative oratory) *Rhet.* I 4–6). But in a sense the whole paper is an Aristotelian reading of the *Iliad*.

[27] But the argument of this section does not depend on the truth of this claim.

[28] K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter* (Göttingen, 1961), 272–7; Redfield, *Nature and Culture*, pp. 143–53. The quotations that follow are from p. 143 of Redfield's discussion.

entirely functional. He is in the poem solely to perform 'as Hector's *alter ego*', almost as a projection of prudent misgivings on Hector's part about his own impulsiveness: 'He was Hector's companion, and they were born on a single night – but the one was far superior in words, the other with the spear' (18.251–2).

There is no doubt about Polydamas' heroic stature. His father is one of Priam's counsellors (3.146), and he is presumably a brother of the Euphorbus (probably no less a Homeric creation)[29] who wounds Patroclus. He is given enough in the way of martial exploits, including at one point a boast over a fallen adversary (14.453–7), to establish his credentials as a leading Trojan warrior.[30] Nor is there doubt about what his excellence as a counsellor consists in. He is adept at sizing up a military situation and its tactical possibilities, and then presenting a sensible assessment of their advantages and disadvantages (particularly the disadvantages) in support of his preferred solution. Thus the Trojans halt in their advance at the ditch planted with stakes outside the Greek camp. Polydamas advises that they proceed on foot: it would be difficult to drive chariots through the stakes; opposite is the wall of the camp; there is no room for charioteers to manoeuvre and fight; and if they did get through but then had to withdraw, the rush back into the ditch would be disastrous (12.61–79). After a period of great Trojan success the two Ajaxes and the Locrian archers put them in some disarray, and Polydamas foresees a disorderly retreat by the generality of the Trojans. He points out to Hector that, although the battle still rages about him, the other Trojans have either withdrawn from the fighting or continue isolated from each other and against superior numbers. What is needed is a tactical withdrawal by Hector so that he can convene a council of war which can then make a decision on a concerted attack or (as Polydamas hints is more prudent) a general withdrawal (13.726–47). When Achilles at last returns to the field, the Trojans are panic-stricken, and meet in assembly at the end of the day before even taking supper. Polydamas advises an immediate withdrawal to the city. If they stay, Achilles will wreak havoc on the morrow. But if they make use of the night and retire, they will have the physical protection of the fortifications of the city and the tactical advantage of a nocturnal council. Achilles may attack the city, but if so he will fail and return to the ships in frustration (18.254–83). Polydamas' talk is all of advantage and safety and never of honour. As he puts it himself in some lines critical of Hector (13.727–34):

[29] This is the suggestion of S. Farron in his interesting article on Hector's mediocrity as a warrior, 'The character of Hector in the *Iliad*', *Acta Classica* 21 (1978), 39–57, at p. 49 n. 35: 'It is possible that the reason why Euphorbus... is killed soon after he performs his great deed [*sc.* of wounding Patroclus] is that originally he did not exist in the tradition but was introduced precisely in order to diminish Hector's accomplishments. Since there were no traditional stories about him, he was eliminated after he had served his purpose'.

[30] At 12.211–15 Polydamas says (according to the *textus receptus*): 'Hector, always you rebuke me in assemblies, although my counsel is good – since it is not in the least seemly for one of the people (δῆμον ἐόντα) to speak beside the mark, neither in council nor in war, but always to increase your power. But now once again I will speak out as seems to me to be best'. On the ground that Polydamas is a noble, not a commoner, T. W. Allen (*CR* 20 (1906), 5) proposed to emend δῆμον to δήμον', from δήμων (otherwise not attested), and meaning 'knowing', 'prudent'. This was a desperate remedy for the real problem that Polydamas seems to refer to himself as a commoner if δῆμον is read. I think the solution (which was suggested to me by James Diggle) is to take his words as bitterly sarcastic: 'since... power' represents the attitude to himself that Polydamas takes to underlie Hector's rebukes – Polydamas is as good as a commoner, whose job if he speaks at all is to support Hector's cause with appropriate deference, not to say anything 'beside the mark', i.e. anything independent which might not be in line with Hector's own view. Redfield (*Nature and Culture*, p. 144) avoids the difficulty by translating the received text differently: 'Since it suits you not at all that our speeches differ among the folk'. But I cannot see how to get that out of the Greek.

Hector, you do not know how to listen to persuasion. Because God has given you feats of war, in counsel too you want to excel others in knowledge. But you will not be able to succeed in everything at once yourself. God gives one man feats of war, but in the heart of another far-seeing Zeus places a good understanding, and from him many men get advantage and he saves many, and he himself knows it very well.

Polydamas represents it as a fault in Hector that he rejects good advice (cf. 12.211–12) and good advisers, and charges him with something like megalomania (12.214). This is Homer's assessment, too. In an earlier interchange, when Polydamas' interpretation of an omen is not to Hector's liking (12.195–250), the rights and wrongs of the argument are by no means clear.[31] But when it comes to the assembly that meets after Achilles' return to the fray, the poet introduces Polydamas as 'wise Polydamas', who 'alone saw before and after', and he stresses his good intent and his superiority to Hector in speech (18.249–53). After Hector rejects his advice, Homer comments (18.310–13):

So Hector spoke and the Trojans applauded – fools, for Pallas Athene took away their wits. They gave assent to Hector although his plan was bad, but no one praised Polydamas, who devised good counsel.[32]

And in due course Hector reproaches himself for ignoring him: 'I have destroyed the host by my recklessness' (22.104). As *euboulia* in a hero is regarded as an excellence, so folly is reckoned a weakness.

Why should Hector's disdain of Polydamas' counsel count as folly? It can only be because he has wilfully ignored something he could and should have taken account of: the likelihood of a Trojan reverse, with the loss of many men, if he remained in the field. Does this show that heroes value very highly something other than honour: the avoidance of heavy profitless losses? Certainly Polydamas would see it that way, to judge from the way he expresses himself in the speech quoted above (13.727–34). Life and security are things he evidently treats as valuable in themselves, as does (for example) Priam when he pleads with Hector not to attempt single combat with Achilles (22.56–9):

No, come within the wall, my child, so that you may save the men and women of Troy, and not give great glory to the son of Peleus but yourself be bereft of dear life.

But does Hector share their concern for life and safety? When he wails 'I have destroyed the host by my recklessness', what he really regrets, it might be said, is his own dishonour: folly is a matter for reproach; and losing men is losing face. But, of course, losing men could not be a matter of losing face unless human life was regarded as precious in itself. Finley himself stresses the hero's love of life (*World*, p. 113): 'The Homeric heroes loved life fiercely, as they did and felt everything with passion, and no less martyr-like characters could be imagined; but even life must surrender to honour'.

The logical structure of Hector's pursuit of honour is much better expressed by the

[31] See Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter*, pp. 273–5, followed by H. Erbse, 'Ettore nell' Iliade', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 27 (1978), 13–34, at pp. 19–20.

[32] Erbse (op. cit. pp. 20–2) ingeniously argues that Hector is *not* here criticised for misjudgement: he has well-founded tactical and strategic reasons, presented in his reply to Polydamas (18.285–309), for rejecting his advice; he merely labours under forgivable ignorance of the divine plan for Troy. Erbse then (p. 23) explains 22.104 away as a sort of representation of what Hector fears will be the Trojan view of his generalship. This interpretation perversely alters the natural meaning of both 18.310–13 and 22.104. Certainly Hector has a military rationale for the course he advocates at 18.285–309: it is just not a very sensible one in the immediate circumstances. Redfield (*Nature and Culture*, pp. 152–3) has a much better balanced treatment of the issue.

idea that other values must *surrender* to honour than by Finley's other formulation, which says that they *define* or *realise* it. Like the heroic esteem for *euboulia*, it can be illuminated by comparison with the Stoic conception of virtue as explicated by Antipater. Hector fights to defend the walls of Troy because they are what stand between the Greeks and the things the Trojans value in and for themselves – children, wives, kin, and a settled and independent way of life. The fact that these are at stake helps to give depth and point to the conflict between the armies, as Homer makes us aware when he takes us behind the city walls. It is what endows the role and character of Hector with a greater density than is found in those of the principal Greek heroes. To revert to our earlier terminology, we may say that the life and safety of Troy is the *intended result* of his military exploits. And it is precisely when Hector bears in mind that the war is waged with an overall intention that he listens to Polydamas and his prudent tactical advice: prudence is sometimes necessary if the Trojans are to achieve their objective. Life, safety, prudence are all, then, concerns that Hector must acknowledge if he is to fight the *Trojan* war at all. But his overriding *goal* is the achievement of glory (e.g. 6.441–6) or (near the bitter end) the avoidance of further dishonour (22.99ff.); and for this he is prepared to surrender his own life and the lives of all he holds most dear. From the point of view of honour, the defence of Troy merely provides the occasion or material for display of valour, just as for the Stoic conforming with nature by selecting the things that are natural for men to do or have simply provides the forum in which virtue can be practised.

At one point (12.243) Hector famously says: 'One omen is best, to fight back for the fatherland.' For want of the distinction between goal and intended result both Finley and Erbse, one of his most thoughtful critics, are led astray in their treatment of this line. Finley, rightly convinced that honour is Hector's overriding goal, wrongly thinks himself forced to the false conclusion that patriotic sentiment is non-heroic and at odds with the whole course of Hector's behaviour.[33] Erbse is no less rightly persuaded that 12.243 expresses something at the core of Hector's heroic ideal – viz. the intention with which he fights. Just as wrongly, he feels he must therefore explain away passages such as 6.441–6 or 22.99ff. where Hector plainly sets his own quest for honour and glory above concern for his family or his city.[34]

Critics of Stoic ethics, ancient and modern, have always found their theory of the goal of life schizophrenic. How can it be both preferable to have a family life and be in good health ('primary natural things') and yet ultimately these not matter *at all*? Is not the preference that of one creature, an embodied animal with affections, and the indifference that of another, a purely rational being?[35] There is a similar tension in the *Iliad* between the keenness of the hero's appetite for life and concern for those he protects, and his ultimate rejection of anything but honour. It is because *euboulia* typically makes the success of an enterprise its focus that the great heroes, intent only (when it comes to the crunch) on their own glory, are deficient in it – and so programmed, contrary to all their desires, for imperfection.

Is it, as Redfield holds, the heroic ethic itself which drives Hector and Achilles to this self-destructively exclusive preoccupation with nothing but honour?[36] Or is Griffin

[33] *World*, pp. 116–17. For discussion of patriotism in Homer see e.g. P. A. L. Greenhalgh, 'Patriotism in the Homeric world', *Historia* 21 (1972), 528–37; S. Scully, 'The polis in Homer: a definition and interpretation', *Ramus* 10 (1981), 1–34. Patriotism is possible without the state, which, as Finley rightly holds, is what the Homeric polis is not (for criteria of statehood see W. G. Runciman, 'Origins of states: the case of archaic Greece', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24 (1982), 351–77).

[34] Erbse, op. cit. pp. 23–4, 29–32.

[35] See e.g. A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (London, 1974), 189–99.

[36] See especially ch. 3, 'The hero', of *Nature and Culture*.

right to object that the cause is rather (in Achilles' case) too passionate emotion or (in Hector's) strategic misjudgement: faults of individual psychology recognisable as such from the standpoint of the heroic ethic itself?[37] We are now in a position to see that these are not genuine alternatives. The heroic code gives a high ranking to *euboulia*, and hence (if for no other reason) ample scope for criticism of Achilles and Hector. But a value system which gives honour the structural position of a goal distinct from the intended results of action clearly has a dynamism of its own. Any goal that is intrinsically desirable exercises an attractive force; where it is a goal whose attainment matters much more than the intended results of actions undertaken for its sake (as honour is in the heroic scheme of things), any other consideration (e.g. safety or prudence) must tend to pale into insignificance. So we must agree with Griffin when (in a passage I take to be incompatible with his criticism of Redfield) he says:[38] 'The hero is trapped by the logic of his heroism.' He *need* not be trapped, if like Odysseus he remains heroically attentive to the demands of *euboulia*; but if he is trapped, we can hold the logic – or, as I should prefer to say, the dynamism – of his heroism responsible.

This general heroic predicament is fully worked out by Homer only in Hector's case. He succeeds in making it a particularly stark instance of the predicament by the pains he takes to establish Hector's very identity as a function of his attachment to his family (e.g. 6.405–39) and his city (e.g. 6.403, 22.410–11). The choice Hector has to make between his honour and the protection of Troy and his kinsfolk is so painful precisely because he is essentially their protector, but yet he is him and not them. Homer prepares us for it by the sequence of encounters with Polydamas, which is sustained through several books (12, 13, 18) and almost constitutes a script of the plot of Hector's downfall. It culminates in the great deliberative monologue of 22.98–131, in which the poet has him rehearse in internal debate his mostly vanished or vanishing options.[39] The external struggle with Polydamas and the interior argument in Hector's own mind are alike symbolic of the dynamic tension within the heroic ethic. Their contrivance to my mind supports both the currently popular reading of the *Iliad* as a tragedy and more particularly Redfield's interpretation of it as an exploration of 'the limitations and self-contradictions'[40] of the heroic ethic. Hector could have been brought to his final defeat by Achilles without committing a lapse of judgement. Homer not only gives him a fatal lapse. He designs a schematic dramatisation of the lapse as the outcome of a struggle between thought and impulse, or again between the hero and his kin and community (represented, of course, not only by Polydamas but much more memorably by Andromache in Book 6 and by Priam and Hecuba in Book 22). If telling a story can (as Redfield proposes) constitute an enquiry, it is (*inter alia*) the presence of this sort of thematic schematism that will have to establish it as such.

THE GREEKS IN COUNCIL

The Greek assembly in Book 1 famously degenerates into a quarrel. The council of gods at the beginning of Book 20 is summoned not for discussion or debate but to receive the issue of an instruction. But sometimes there is a difficult practical problem

[37] *Homer on Life and Death*, p. 74 n. 46 and pp. 145–6 with n. 6.

[38] *Homer*, p. 43.

[39] For discussion of this speech see B. C. Fenik, 'Stylization and variety: four monologues in the *Iliad*', in Fenik (ed.) *Homer: Tradition and Invention* (Leiden, 1978); and R. W. Sharples, '"But why has my spirit spoken with me thus?" Homeric decision-making', *Greece and Rome* 30 (1983), 1–7.

[40] *Nature and Culture*, p. 85.

to be solved, and the point of a council is to find the best answer by means of rational discussion. Just such a discussion occurs at the beginning of Book 14.

At a very low point in Greek fortunes Nestor decides after internal debate not to return to the fray but to seek out Agamemnon. He meets him as he goes back to the battlefield from the ships in the company of Odysseus and Diomedes. All three are wounded and sick at heart, and the sight of Nestor coming away from the fighting makes them fear the worst. A discussion ensues. There are six contributions to it:

(1) **Agamemnon**, addressing Nestor, sums up the state of the battle – or rather (and characteristically) of his own fears about it: he is apprehensive that Hector will succeed in carrying out his threat of burning the ships, and that the Greeks for their part are as angry with him as Achilles is and have no wish to fight by the ships.

(2) **Nestor** in his report on the fighting confirms that the Greeks are being routed. He proposes that they consider what to do 'if wit may achieve anything'. He offers no plan of his own, but advises that the heroes not return to the battle since they are wounded.

(3) **Agamemnon** makes (again characteristically) a rather ambiguous proposal that has defeatism written all over it. He suggests that since their defences have failed and the gods appear to be against them, the Greeks should take the first steps towards putting all their ships to sea.

(4) **Odysseus** upbraids Agamemnon, obviously taking his suggestion to be a thinly-veiled move to abandon the campaign against Troy altogether. He argues that his plan is not appropriate for a proud and grimly determined army such as theirs, which is not prepared to abandon the attempt on Troy now when it has already cost them so much. He condemns Agamemnon's talk as defeatist. And he points out that the outcome of his counsel would be likely to be that the Greeks will panic completely and allow the Trojans to destroy them.

(5) **Agamemnon** accepts the rebuke and acknowledges that Odysseus has captured the mood of the army. He invites 'a better plan than this'.

(6) **Diomedes** takes up the invitation with apologies for his boldness as a young man in doing so. After attempting to prove his fitness to speak by citing the valour of his father and grandfather, he advises that they return to the battle – but only to encourage the fainthearted, nor to fight themselves, since they are wounded.

And that is what they agree to do.

Finley said (*World* p. 114):

> The significant fact is that never in either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is there a rational discussion, a sustained, disciplined consideration of circumstances and their implications, of possible courses of action, their advantages and disadvantages.

The council in Book 14 shows that Finley's fact is not a fact. An assessment is made of the military situation and accepted by all parties to the discussion. Its crucial components are three: (a) the Trojans are routing the Greeks; (b) the Greek ships are threatened; (c) the Greek leaders are wounded. Two main alternative courses of action – returning to battle and saving the ships by other means – are considered. In thinking about them each speaker at least implicitly takes (a), (b) and (c) into account. In view of (c) in particular, Nestor counsels against the return of the leaders to battle. In line with this Agamemnon proposes a solution to (b) that will avoid it. Odysseus insists that this alternative will not do: it is cowardly and it will involve both immediate defeat and the abandonment of the campaign. Diomedes concludes that they must after all adopt the first alternative of a return to the battle. They can cope with (c),

which Nestor had adduced against this option, by encouraging the others, not fighting themselves.

Thus the advantages and disadvantages of the two alternatives are thoroughly explored. Diomedes, it is true, has little to say in favour of his proposal, but then he only needs to point out how it can be made to avoid the disadvantage Nestor had drawn attention to – given that Agamemnon's proposal has been rejected. Every speaker offers reasonable counsel; and counsel is what *boule* is in this context (14.102), not (as Finley claims) decision, for it is Agamemnon's defeatist plan (*metis*, v. 107) that gets called *boule*. In most cases the counsel is supported by explicit reasoning: most notably and elaborately by Odysseus, least so by Diomedes. This fits Diomedes' role and character as the youngest and least experienced of those conferring. It does not detract from the rationality and effectiveness of his solution. What Diomedes *does* present arguments for is his right to be heard. These consist in an appeal to the prowess of his family: 'it is one's stature in the warrior community that confers the expectation of being listened to with respect'.[41] But his counsel is accepted not because it comes from the doughtiest fighter, but because it appears the best way out of the difficulty.

The rationality of the discussion is not compromised by the emotion the heroes evince in its course. Without Agamemnon's fears and the spirit and determination of Odysseus there would be no argument, and Agamemnon loses it because the course he proposes is seen as cowardly, not just counterproductive. The charge of cowardice, however, is tactfully left only half explicit, nor is it meant to settle matters on its own. It forms part of a disciplined and reasoned case.

How much should be made of this passage? It has to be admitted that the council it describes is unusual among the parleys of the *Iliad* in its sustained and single-minded concentration on the rational solution of a problem. That does not mean that it can be dismissed as untypical. It has a significance that makes it much more than one episode among others; and the roles taken in the discussion by the different Greek leaders are so thoroughly in character that some general inference about *euboulia* may legitimately be drawn.

The main Greek councils and assemblies in the *Iliad* all have important dramatic functions, but functions of different sorts. Those in 1 and 19, for example, are indispensable to the plot, needed to begin and end the great quarrel. The whole of Book 2, as has often been remarked, is irrelevant to the development of the plot; the point of the council and assembly in 2 is accordingly quite different – to reveal the characters of Agamemnon, Nestor and Odysseus and to show the effect of the long war on the Greeks. The council in 14 is no more needed in the plot than that in 2. Had Agamemnon, Odysseus and Diomedes not met Nestor at all, but returned without any parley to the battlefield, the ensuing sequence of events could have remained the same. I suggest that their council has a symbolic and a paradigmatic function.[42] It marks the desperation of the Greek cause at this point in the battle. At the same time it indicates the way great heroes in military command will behave in a crisis. A crisis must be met not with panic but with courage, and not merely courage but careful thought. So Homer presents the Greek leaders in rational discussion. Rational discussion is not just something that happens on this occasion, we must infer. It may not actually occur all that frequently in the narrative of the poem. But it is a heroic ideal in an epic about the heroic ideal.

[41] A. W. H. Adkins, 'Values, goals, and emotions in the *Iliad*', *CP* 77 (1982), 292–326, at p. 298.

[42] Cf. in general Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, ch. 1 ('Symbolic scenes and significant objects').

That is to say, the conduct of the discussion as a whole constitutes an ideal. Agamemnon's part in it is characteristically disastrous. His counsel is governed by fear and anxiety: mostly for the army, but also for his own standing with the Greeks. A proper concern for his troops is an elementary requirement in a commander, but Agamemnon is too close to panic. His positive proposal is plainly incompetent, for the reasons exposed by Odysseus. He accepts Odysseus' rebuke graciously, but the self-knowledge revealed by his request that someone 'may speak a better plan than this' (14.107) does not restore faith in his fitness to be commander. The comparison of words and behaviour is instructive: Odysseus' and Diomedes' act of returning to the battlefield is matched by the conviction of their speeches; Agamemnon, too, had been returning, but his words show his indecision and lack of resolve. All this is typical of the dominant strain in Agamemnon's character and behaviour throughout the *Iliad*. Homer says to us in this episode not merely: this is how Agamemnon behaved, but: this is what Agamemnon is like.

Two aspects of the portrayal are of particular interest to us. The first is that the focus of this passage, like most of the more memorable scenes in which Agamemnon figures, is his performance as a commander, not his prowess as fighter. It might be felt that, although the ideal hero is a speaker of words as well as a doer of deeds (9.443), when it comes to presenting his major heroes the poet of the *Iliad* puts all the emphasis on martial prowess. This is perhaps true of Ajax: but he is the exception who proves the rule, as a brief look at the other major Greek heroes will confirm. In Agamemnon's case it is his shortcomings as a deviser of counsel and as a decision-maker which preoccupy Homer and the reader. If Agamemnon is no good, that is because he is no good at *boule*. This brings me to the second point. The reason for Homer's emphasis here is obviously that in a supreme military commander it is *euboulia*, understood as ability in tactics, strategy, and the power to persuade, not warrior prowess, that counts most. Agamemnon is therefore quite properly more concerned with the ultimate fate of the campaign and the need not to sustain heavy losses than with leading a glorious charge into the fray or scoring personal triumphs in combat. His predicament illustrates from another angle the same point of tension within the heroic code as emerged in considering Hector. Both see that it may be more prudent to accept defeat. The difference is that Agamemnon has less spirit but more regard for his responsibility to exercise *euboulia* than Hector. He knows that returning home empty-handed will bring dishonour (2.115, 9.22), although he tries to pretend that 'there is no impropriety in fleeing from evil' (14.80). Now the place of *euboulia* in the heroic code is such that its deliverances cannot properly be ignored or rejected as cowardly: if reason matters, then it matters. Accordingly Odysseus' main complaint against Agamemnon in 14 is that his plan is a bad plan, not informed by *euboulia*.

Odysseus' main scenes in the *Iliad*, like Agamemnon's, are mostly ones in which he figures as a counsellor and speaker. Unlike Agamemnon he excels in this sphere. As he himself puts it at 19.216–19:

> Achilles son of Peleus, best by far of the Achaeans, you are mightier than me and not a little better with the spear, but I can far surpass you in thought, since I was born first and know more things.

Finley, presumably thinking of the Odysseus of the *Odyssey*, dismisses him as a liar,[43] although I prefer Kirk's judgement that 'with few exceptions he is represented as behaving extremely rationally, indeed as initiating complex processes of analysis and decision-making that would do credit to Bertrand Russell himself'.[44] In the *Iliad* he

[43] *World*, p. 115.

[44] *The Nature of Greek Myths*, p. 288.

stands out among the heroes of both sides for his skill as a public speaker, which is harnessed to loyalty, good judgement (although like all the Greeks he misjudges Achilles in Book 9), and grim determination.

Two passages are worth recalling. After Agamemnon's catastrophic address to the army at the beginning of Book 2 Odysseus saves the day with a whole series of interventions: first exhortations to individual chieftains and men, then his popular attack on Thersites, and finally a long and cleverly judged speech, balancing Agamemnon's inept performance, to the army as a whole. It begins with an attempt to shame the Greeks for breaking their promises to Agamemnon and wailing like women and children; then it concedes that there is a lot to wail about; there follows a reminder, in rivetingly vivid detail, of the portent of snake and sparrows they witnessed at Aulis, and of Calchas' interpretation – that in the tenth year of siege Troy will fall. The triumphant conclusion is that the Greeks are now on the brink of that success. The whole is a splendid example of the preacher's art: sin is condemned, the sinner pitied, a miracle retailed and salvation promised – on the preacher's terms.

No less admirable is Odysseus' handling of Achilles in Book 19. Achilles has been rather offhand in his reply to Agamemnon's offer of recompense and has proposed an immediate return to battle. Odysseus responds with a firm speech which puts him tactfully in his place while assuring him of the sympathy of the other Greek leaders in his great quarrel. An immediate return to battle is out of the question (the men must eat). Now is the time rather for Agamemnon to give his gifts, and swear on oath. And he tells Agamemnon to his face to behave with more justice in future. When Achilles persists with his proposal, Odysseus resists again, and with the authority of experience lays it down that in war death cannot merit a fast. His restraint is as heroic as Achilles' desire for war, not least because he takes risks in arguing with him, as in a different way he took a risk in the Doloneia of Book 10. Here, too, he succeeds.

In Odysseus' oratory there is not so much of the rational analysis which marks Polydamas' advice to Hector. But what he says is always reasoned and reasonable, although it exploits emotion, too.

Redfield supplies a convenient summary of a well-known Homeric contrast:[45]

> In Homeric society a distinction is made between the young man and the mature man, a distinction correlated with the distinction between council and battle as arenas of excellence and with the contrast between the word and the deed. Excellence in both speech and combat are required of the perfect hero (9.433; cf. lines 510–16), but speech develops later in life (9.53–61). In a culture where physical strength and beauty are so important, old age can only be hateful – *stugeros*, *lugros*, *oloos* – but there are certain partially compensating advantages. The young man's mind is hasty, and his wits are slight (23.590). The elder 'knows more' (13.355, 21.440); there is an authority which belongs to age (1.259, 9.160–1).

Among the Greek counsellors of the *Iliad* Nestor has a special place as the eldest and Diomedes as the youngest.

Finley has some harsh things to say about Nestor. In his talk Nestor never aimed 'at selecting the course of action' nor did he formulate anything that could properly 'be called a significant and reasoned' suggestion – except once, when at 7.323–43 he proposed the building of the defensive wall before the Greek camp (*World*, pp. 114–15). This is a puzzling claim. Nestor influences policy decisively by his advice on several other occasions. For example, he is responsible for the division of the army into tribes and phratries (2.360–8); he engineers the sending of the embassy to Achilles (9.96–113); he conceives of the plan of a nocturnal reconnoitre which results in the capture of Dolon (10.204–17). All these schemes are recommended by Nestor on

[45] *Nature and Culture*, pp. 110–11.

reasonable grounds, and all are treated as significant by the poet. Although only the episode of the embassy is important within the overall development of the *Iliad*, each of them shapes the rest of the book in which it occurs. Nor should it be forgotten that it is Nestor's appeal to Patroclus (11.655–803) which is directly responsible for his return to the battlefield (16.20ff.) and so indirectly for Achilles' own reappearance. As Dio Chrysostom points out (56.9), so dominant is Nestor in formulation of tactics and strategy that when Zeus wishes to deceive Agamemnon by the dream, the dream adroitly adopts the form of the old man, rightly confident that Agamemnon will then find its message irresistible.[46]

We are sometimes prone to think of Nestor merely as a boastful and garrulous old man, overly fond of autobiographical anecdote (as above all, perhaps, in his enormously long speech at 11.656–803). This view of him was apparently current in antiquity also, for Dio devotes one of his discourses to an examination of the question whether in his speech of mediation in Book 1 Nestor's appeal to his own experience is simply bragging (*Or.* 57). For what he tells Achilles and Agamemnon is that the men of his youth were better men than they, but never made light of Nestor: they summoned him to be with them, they understood his counsels, they obeyed his words (1.259–73). Dio's evaluation of this passage of reminiscence is clearly correct. Nestor, he says, perceives that Achilles and Agamemnon are misbehaving because of their arrogance. By his reference to the men of old he intends to shock them into humility as one might prick or squeeze a swelling. His reference to himself is designed to convince them that he is the doctor to whom they must turn if they are to be cured. It is, as Norman Austin puts it,[47] 'a strong appeal for a hearing', just like Diomedes' in 14.110–27. It says to Achilles and Agamemnon: recognise a tried and tested moral

[46] It is strange that, of all Nestor's exercises in counsel, his advice to build the wall should meet with Finley's special approval. As Kirk says (*The Songs of Homer*, p. 219), 'Nestor's original suggestion of building the wall was cursory and odd, and was associated with the proposal that the burnt bones of the Achaean dead should be collected for carrying back to their children after the war'. Kirk's new commentary on *Iliad* 1–4 is particularly good value on Nestor (*The Iliad: a Commentary*, Vol. I: *books* 1–4 (Cambridge, 1985)). See for example his notes on 1.247–91 (pp. 78–82), 2.20–1 (p. 116), 2.76–83 (p. 123), 2.336–68 (pp. 150–5), 4.291–309 (pp. 360–3).

[47] N. Austin, 'The function of digressions in the *Iliad*', in *Essays on the Iliad*, ed. J. Wright (Bloomington, 1978), 70–84, at p. 75 [reprinted from *GRBS* 7 (1966), 295–312]. This essay has many helpful things to say about Nestor's digressions, especially the one at 11.656ff. Austin suggests (p. 79) that 'where the drama is most intense the digressions are the longest and the details the fullest', and that 'the length of the anecdote is in direct proportion to the necessity for persuasion at the moment' (he thinks particularly of the story of Meleager in Book 9 and Nestor's story in Book 11, and argues that they 'mark the most desperate stages in the deteriorating [military] situation'). The first of these propositions seems to me simply false: the *drama* is much more intense in the quarrel in Book 1 than it is in Book 11 at least. Austin concedes (p. 83) that 'the digressions do not create suspense in the modern sense' although they occur at dramatic moments. He claims, however, that prolix as they are they do represent 'a *concentration* of tension' (my italics). I think this is a false trail. As Austin himself shows, the very long anecdotes of Books 9 and 11 are designed to stop Achilles and Patroclus from concentrating on themselves and the present to the exclusion of all else, by diverting their attention to remoter times and places. The point is to induce a sense of perspective on the present which may shift their attitudes. Austin's final sentence reads (p. 84): 'It [the Iliadic digression] brings time to a complete standstill and locks our attention unremittingly on the celebration of the present moment'. For 'present' read 'past'. Pat Easterling suggests to me that we should compare e.g. the account of how Odysseus got his scar (*Od.* 19.383–466): a very long digression 'poised between the moments when Eurycleia recognises the scar (vv. 392–3) and when she reacts to the recognition (vv. 467–75)'. She would 'emphasise the significance or weight given to any episode which is *embellished*, whether by elaborate descriptions or by speeches' rather than notions like tension or suspense.

authority which has a greater claim on your attention than the demands of your immediate selves.

No speech of Nestor has been more discussed in recent years than this intervention of his in the great quarrel. It is worth a little more attention in the present context, since it illuminates the nature of his *euboulia* and also some of the complexities of the heroic code that we have been exploring. The speech falls into three parts. Nestor begins by observing that the rift and its likely consequences can bring joy only to the Trojans (254–8). Then he asks the two heroes to accept the counsel he has to offer, and (as we have noted) cites at some length some of the experience which entitles him to have his advice heeded (259–74). Finally he presents his proposals, briefly and trenchantly: Agamemnon should let Achilles keep Briseis – because the girl was given to him as a mark of honour; Achilles must not quarrel with a king – because Zeus gives special honour and glory to a king; and Agamemnon must desist from his anger with Achilles – because Achilles is the bulwark of the Achaeans (275–84).

There is nothing notably emotional about Nestor's appeal. He is trying to cool the temperature, not raise it. All his proposals are eminently reasonable; and they are all explicitly supported by reasons – reasons that appeal not to the emotions but to cool consideration of the claims of justice and prudence. It is sometimes implied that Nestor only puts real weight on his prudential arguments.[48] Indeed M. M. Mackenzie goes so far as to claim that he *has* only prudential arguments – ignoring the reason Nestor gives Agamemnon for returning Briseis, and redrafting the reason he offers Achilles for not quarrelling with Agamemnon (he should 'admit Agamemnon's superiority, since by his action he is jeopardizing the Greek position at Troy').[49] It is as if Nestor's case were complete by v. 257. Hugh Lloyd-Jones had made the appropriate reply:[50]

> This speech of Nestor's may contain no mention of an abstract notion of justice, but justice is what Nestor is aiming at; he wishes to settle the dispute by persuading each participant to accord to the other his proper *time*.

Achilles and Agamemnon are invited to think not just of themselves and their own honour, but of the other man's point of view, and what *his* position or situation entitles *him* to expect. This sort of thinking is certainly given weight by Odysseus, for he concludes his first speech in the reconciliation scene with an explicit directive to Agamemnon about just behaviour (19.181–3):

> You, son of Atreus, will have to be juster in the future in other cases too. For there is no shame for a king in making amends to a man if he was the one first to create trouble.

What must motivate the denial that Nestor has any or any significant concern with justice in his speech in Book 1 is, I think, a more fundamental conviction about the Homeric hero: that the hero is so predominantly concerned with his own honour and well-being that there would be little or no point in Nestor's appealing to anything but prudential considerations. To this the short answer can only be: but he does, so there must be. There is one very obvious reason why there has to be: if honour matters so much, then it also matters a great deal that every hero should recognise the honour due to every other hero.

One might attempt to support the idea that there cannot be by adducing in evidence Adkins's thesis that Nestor has no *moral* vocabulary powerful enough to trump considerations of what is due to a hero expressed in terms of his claims as an *agathos*.

[48] This seems to be Adkins' view in *CP* 77 (1982), 292–326 at pp. 299 and 325.

[49] M. M. Mackenzie, *Plato on Punishment* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981), 73–4.

[50] *The Justice of Zeus*, p. 13.

I take it, however, that this thesis is by now thoroughly discredited. Let us consider, as Adkins did, what Nestor says to Agamemnon at 1.275: 'Do not, *agathos* though you be, take the girl from him'. On this Adkins commented:[51]

> That is to say, an *agathos* might well do this without ceasing to be an *agathos*, and indeed derives a claim to do it from the fact that he is an *agathos*; but in this case Nestor is begging Agamemnon not to do it.

Long has pointed out that this badly distorts Nestor's plea. Nestor supports it with an argument: the Greeks gave Briseis to Achilles as a prize. His words seem to have an implication quite the opposite of that suggested by Adkins: your being an *agathos* gives you no claim on the girl, and certainly none to override Achilles' claim, which derives from the fact that she was given to him by the army.[52] So interpreted they throw no clear light on the question of whether Nestor does or does not have available in the heroic vocabulary an evaluative expression stronger than *agathos*. But in a recent article of great clarity and magisterial common sense Sir Kenneth Dover has shown that that question is in any case an obscure and inappropriate one.[53] What matters at least as much as the words a speaker chooses is what he is using them to achieve. In the present instance Nestor is trying to *persuade* a powerful prince to be *reasonable* and in consequence to change course. To tell a man publicly and in the strongest terms available that he is in the wrong is generally not the most effective way of persuading him to see reason. The strong language of moral denunciation is just inappropriate. Of course, Nestor's more tactful plea fails. This is certainly because of the strength of something – not language, however, but Agamemnon's care at that moment for his own honour, which outweighs any regard for justice or for the likely consequences of his behaviour. He is propelled by the dynamic of the heroic code, but not inevitably propelled:[54] sometimes *euboulia* prevails, with Agamemnon as with most other heroes. (The whole plot of the *Iliad* turns on the fact – bitterly regretted – that he loses his wits (9.377) or that his mind becomes infatuated (9.119, 19.88). There could be no stronger testimony to the importance of *euboulia* in the heroic scheme of things.)

Tact is the hallmark of Nestor's *euboulia*.[55] This is evident in the first few lines of his speech in Book 1, when he describes Achilles and Agamemnon as 'surpassing the Danaans both in counsel and at fighting' (1.258). Because this is transparently untrue (neither is much good at counsel), Finley thought we must retranslate *boule* as 'power of decision' to make it true.[56] But the retranslation will not work in most other contexts. It is better to leave *boule* to mean 'counsel' and to recognise a tactful insincerity, designed to coax the quarrelling princes into exercising such *euboulia* as they possess. Much of Nestor's advice is intended to bolster Agamemnon's authority, even when (as here) it opposes his will. Thus at the beginning of Book 2 he lends decisive support to Agamemnon's plan with the highly ambiguous argument that the dream would be reckoned deception were it not the dream of him who boasts to be best of the Achaeans (2.76–83). This is ingenious as well as tactful, like his counsels at the beginning of Book 9. Diomedes has opposed Agamemnon's speech urging a return home with a robust charge of cowardice that catches the popular mood. Nestor seizes his opportunity. He compliments Diomedes on his prudent counsel, with just enough condescension to suggest that, although the inexperienced young man may

[51] *Merit and Responsibility*, p. 37.
[52] *JHS* 90 (1970), 127.
[53] 'The portrayal of moral evaluation in Greek poetry', *JHS* 103 (1983), 35–48.
[54] See Redfield, *Nature and Culture*, pp. 94–8, on Agamemnon's behaviour in the quarrel.
[55] Cf. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*, p. 14.
[56] *World*, p. 115.

have settled one issue, much remains to be discussed – and Agamemnon is the man to preside over the further deliberations. When these are held, he softens the harsh message he has to deliver to Agamemnon with the most eloquent account of the pre-eminence and authority of the king to be found in the *Iliad* (9.52–78, 96–113).

Nestor calls Diomedes 'exceedingly valiant in war and the best in counsel of all your contemporaries' (9.54). Diomedes is after Odysseus the most perfect hero of the *Iliad*, and he is so because in him *euboulia* (albeit a raw *euboulia*) and warrior prowess are better balanced than in anyone else but him.[57] Griffin observes how 'the poet shows us Diomedes making no immediate protest when unjustly and publicly criticised by [Agamemnon] in Book 4, and then asserting himself, firmly but calmly, in Book 9... The Diomede scene is evidently present in order to form a contrast with the behaviour of Achilles... If Achilles were like Diomede, there would be no *Iliad* at all'.[58] It is consequently important for Homer to present Diomedes excelling in counsel as well as on the field of battle. His counsel is the opposite of Nestor's: forthright and uncomplicated. And as C. A. Querbach suggests in a recent study, its characteristic virtues are often reinforced by deliberate juxtaposition with speeches by Nestor, as in the incident in Book 9 just described or in the scene from Book 14 recalled at the beginning of this section.[59] 'Forthright' need not imply 'unthinking'; and (for example) the boldness of Diomedes' enterprise in the Doloneia of Book 10 is complemented by his shrewdness in inviting a companion to join in the spying mission (10.220–6).

By his own account (18.106) and that of others (11.786–9, 19.216–19) Achilles is inferior to others in counsel and the assembly,[60] although he handles the quarrels and complications of the funeral games with great judgement. Does his stature as the greatest hero of the *Iliad* indicate that excellence in thought and speech is a virtue only of the second rank? There are many ways of resisting this simplistic conclusion. One is to note that Achilles' first and decisive action in the epic (1.54) is an example of *euboulia*: he summons an assembly to tackle the problem of the plague.[61] Another is to reflect on some sentences of Redfield which sum up much recent thought about Achilles:[62]

[57] But Kirk (in the course of an interesting discussion of the *Τειχοσκοπία*, where Odysseus is treated as *the* great Greek hero) finds Odysseus' character 'complex and contradictory' (*The Iliad: a Commentary*, vol. I, p. 287). This assessment of the Iliadic Odysseus is amplified in R. B. Rutherford, 'The philosophy of the *Odyssey*', *JHS* 106 (1986): a rich article which explores *euboulia* in the *Odyssey*.

[58] *Homer on Life and Death*, p. 74. The incident also recalls an earlier occasion (7.379–402) when of all the Greek leaders it is again only Diomedes who has the spirit to offer decisively defiant advice in a difficult situation. A passage which forms another interesting contrast with the behaviour of Achilles and Agamemnon in Book 1 is 8.130–71, where Diomedes, like Agamemnon, is inclined on grounds of honour to reject Nestor's advice despite acknowledging its soundness, but unlike Agamemnon is saved (from attempting single combat with Hector) by a sign from Zeus.

[59] C. A. Querbach, 'Conflicts between young and old in Homer's *Iliad*', in *The Conflict of Generations in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. S. Bertman (Amsterdam, 1976).

[60] But the scholiast thinks he can infer from 9.374 that Achilles was not merely practised in the martial arts but also *βουλεύειν ἄριστος*: so *Σ*bT *ad loc.*

[61] I owe this point to Pat Easterling, who further observes that he is the first person to talk about *themistes* (1.237–9). The character of Achilles' entry into the action is balanced by the stress Homer lays on his withdrawal as being from 'the assembly which brings men glory' at 1.490. As the scholium (*Σ*bT) says of 1.490–1: 'Homer knows two virtues of men, action and speech. But he gives preference to speech.' (Here at least, we might add in qualification.)

[62] *Nature and Culture*, p. 17.

Achilles is an outsize figure. He is stronger, swifter, braver, than the other heroes, and his anger also is larger than any they could feel. And Achilles is a hero with exceptional powers of intellect and speech; he has an unique capacity to generalise his immediate experience and state it in universal terms.

Such intensity and indeed alienation of thought and feeling do not well equip him for argument with the likes of Odysseus in the assembly. They show how Achilles transcends heroic *euboulia* just as he transcends other heroic attitudes. But they confirm that the Homeric hero is heroic in mind as well as in action.

CONCLUSION

The World of Odysseus represents an enterprise in many ways very different from the studies by Snell, Dodds and others in the tradition of *Geistesgeschichte*. But in its treatment of the heroic code and of the scope it leaves for choice and reason it shares with them a certain primitivist tendency. There is no question that the social world represented in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is simpler in organisation than the society of (for example) classical Athens. Nor should it be disputed that its relative simplicity of structure determines and is reflected in simpler and less analytical ways of talking and thinking about most other things, including human nature: no council in the *Iliad* is or could be as sophisticated as the debate on Mytilene in Thucydides 3. But it is a further step again (this I call the primitivist step) to hold not only (what I have conceded) that reason has a narrower scope and is less self-conscious and self-critical in the Homeric world, but also that the Homeric hero is not really rational at all – because there is no social or ethical room for him to use reason except as the instrument of his passions. In this paper I have tried to show why we should resist this primitivist move, which I take to be as misconceived as most other versions of primitivism. My arguments have been derived from the *Iliad* itself. But they express a more general conviction that the circumstances of human life are and always will have been too complex, and the intelligence of humans too various, for the primitivist picture to be credible.[63]

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