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STRUCTURES OF CARE IN THE *ILIAD*

> Teach us to care and not to care. T. S. Eliot

> O, I could tell you—
> But let it be. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

I

When Andromache emerges from the inner chamber in Book 22, ascends the walls of Troy and looks out over the plain, she beholds a spectacle of ruthless brutality. She who has not been aware of the final combat, nor of the slaying of her husband, is suddenly confronted by the receding trail of utter defeat. Swift horses drag her husband's corpse into the distance, the cherished head disfigured as it is dragged, raking the dust of what was once their homeland. The violence of the scene is forcefully conveyed by one word in particular. The swift horses drag Hektor ἀκηδέστως (22.465)—without κῆδος, without care, 'sans soucier de, brutalement'.[1] In itself the word ἀκηδέστως provides a definition of violence, one captured in Shakespeare's phrase 'careless force'. Violence is, in its harsh brutality, specifically heedlessness, an absence of any form of care. When Achilles hurls the slain suppliant Lykaon into the river he utters the taunt, 'the fish, ἀκηδέες, will lick clean your wound's blood' (21.122-3). The discarded corpse is denied funeral rites: in place of the care that the relations of the dead traditionally bestow in tending, washing, enshrouding, lamenting, and burying the dead, here the heedless creatures of nature, fleeting visitors, will attend to the corpse, 'clean' it, but utterly without care, completely oblivious to the oblivion they create by destroying. In Book 24 Achilles will describe the gods themselves as ἀκηδέες (526).

A simile in Book 17 of the *Iliad* describes the care with which a man nurtures a young olive tree in an isolated place (53-8). Far from anywhere or anyone, a man takes care of a sapling. It is 'beautiful', it 'thrives'. Its bloom is a massive spray of white in spring, its foliage a brilliant silver-grey. Buffeted, it rebuffs the big winds, holds up—even seems to sail the winds with its proud crests of white flower—, before being utterly blasted by one sudden rush of force that wrenches it for ever from its carefully prepared trench. A seemingly indifferent, even hostile, environment erases the efforts of care.

And yet throughout the *Iliad*, the hitherto neglected force of care persists, even through annihilation, permeating the poem as a value of central significance to the Homeric conception of life and poetry.[2] The similes themselves contribute numerous and diverse examples of instances of care. It might be a watchful shepherd who takes joy in the clear night sky that assists him in guarding his flock (8.555–9); a 'careful', 'mindful' woman who weighs wool 'that she may win a scanty wage for her children' (12.433–5);[3] a protective mother who 'feel[s] care / For the carefree sleep of the child' (4.130–31);[4] or even that last trace of care, a στήλη or funerary monument, which remains in place over the grave of the dead (17.434–5). But what is notable in general is that the similes themselves are constructed from the attentive care given by the poet to everyday concerns, to generally unnoticed, disregarded, or neglected efforts of care. This fundamental element of life cuts across the divisions of peace and war, nature and culture, human and animal, life and death, in that vast web of interrelations that the *Iliad* constructs from its armature of care. The care of the young is prominent in the comparisons drawn from the realm of nature, and this in turn bridges the worlds of peace and war, even as they are sharply contrasted. In war, for example, a warrior bestrides his slain companion, shielding him with the protective care of the mother in nature, a cow that stands lowing a 'plaintive cry' over her first-born calf (17.4–5). In battle such care manifests itself in the tight wall of circled shields that a fallen warrior's companions mount at once in protection (*τῶν δ' ἄλλων οὔ τις εὐ ἀκήδεσεν, ἀλλὰ πάροιθεν / ἀσπίδας εὐκύκλους σχέθον αὐτοῦ*, 14.427–8). This composite world of care is well brought out in the grieving of Achilles' immortal horses. Here the realms of human and animal, mortal and immortal, are fused in the fixed image of the swiftest of horses arrested by the force of care. The accompanying simile takes this theme even further; for in their motionless mourning the horses are likened to the last—and lasting—construction of care in the funeral ritual, a στήλη or monument to the dead (17.434–5).

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[1] P. Chantraine, s.v., in *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (hereafter *LfrgE*), comp. Bruno Snell *et al.* (Göttingen, 1955-). Chantraine also suggests the possible additional sense, 'without burial rites'; F. Mawet, *Recherches sur les oppositions fonctionnelles dans le vocabulaire homérique de la douleur* (*autour de πῆμα-ἄλγος*) (Brussels, 1979), on the other hand, argues well that more specialized senses (including 'honneurs rendus aux défunts') are later developments from an initial general sense of 'souci, préoccupation' (see pp. 32, 394). For the development of the sense of κῆδος = 'Bestattung(sritus)', see E. Reiner, *Die rituelle Totenklage der Griechen* (Stuttgart, 1938), pp. 2-3. Unless otherwise stated, all citations of Greek texts are from the OCT series, and any emphasis in quotations from secondary literature is mine.

[2] For an earlier consideration of care and κήδεα in Book 24 see M. Lynn-George, *Epos: Word, Narrative and the Iliad* (London, 1988), pp. 244ff.

But 'care' itself is a composite with many different aspects. There is care and there are cares, and the *Iliad* ultimately provides the possibility of a significant relation between them. When the proem announces the great theme of the epic, it lays emphasis on the countless sufferings and cares (*μυρία…ἄλγεα*, 1.2) inflicted in the wake of the *μῆνις*. Cares and suffering constitute an essential element in epic's definition of its concerns: the *Odyssey*'s proem also includes the *πολλὰ ἄλγεα* (1.4) that Odysseus suffered both on the open expanse of the sea and deep within his *θυμός*. Odysseus himself opens the long account of his wanderings with emphasis upon his *κήδεα πολλά* (*Od.* 9.12, 15). While the wrath of Achilles inflicts cares without caring, the *μῆνις* itself has its source in care, as the mighty yet subtle scene that dramatizes the inception of the wrath shows. Achilles evokes his distance from the cause of the whole war—an intense sense of distance measured massively in the span of many shadowy mountains and the vast stretches of the echoing sea (1.157)—in order to underline the significant point that he has come to Troy, not out of any personal interest (*ἐπεὶ οὔ τί μοι αἴτιοί εἰσιν· / οὐ γάρ πώ ποτε κ.τ.λ.*, 1.153–6), but as a gesture of *χάρις* (158), all of which Agamemnon disregards, *τῶν οὔ τι μετατρέπῃ οὐδ' ἀλεγίζεις* (160). This emphatic charge of 'not caring', 'not concerning oneself about', is harshly confirmed in Agamemnon's reply and dismissal: *σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω, / οὐδ' ὄθομαι κοτέοντος* (180–81). In repeating the negated verb *ἀλεγίζω*, the king makes it quite clear that, to him, Achilles and his anger count for nothing. Confronted with this assertion of worthlessness, threatened with being reduced to the status of an *οὐτιδανός*, Achilles makes his oath a powerful articulation of 'take note'—do not disregard me and what I say—and do not forget.[5] The fierce wrath blazes precisely because Achilles does care, and sensitively. To him these things do count, particularly *charis*, and the recipient's enraging response that he couldn't care less. Achilles' request for honour and recognition is taken to Olympos and the plot of the epic is placed under the care of Zeus himself: *ἐμοὶ δέ κε ταῦτα μελήσεται* (1.523), 'I shall make all this my care...'

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[3] *Pace* J. B. Hainsworth, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1992), Leaf makes a good case for the meaning of *ἀληθής* (433) as 'not forgetting, i.e. *careful*…'; cf. *LfrgE* schol. s.v.

[4] To adopt F. Hölderlin's particularly apt lines from 'To the Madonna' here.

In Book 11 Nestor makes the legitimate charge, *αὐτὰρ 'Αχιλλεὺς / ἐσθλὸς ἐὼν Δαναῶν οὐ κήδεται* (664–5). But what the epic also shows in Achilles' responses to the embassy in Book 9 is that Achilles cares too much in what for him has become a world devoid of *χάρις* (9.316–17).[6] To the plea of those who desire to be *ἔξοχον ἄλλων κήδιστοι* (9.641–2), Achilles recalls the *κῆδος* that isolates,[7] the bitter wound of having been isolated, excluded, treated *ὡς εἴ τιν' ἀτίμητον μετανάστην* (648). In Book 16 he can still recall with bitterness and regret the possibility of kindness and care that was never displayed, *εἴ μοι κρείων 'Αγαμέμνων / ἤπια εἰδείη* (72–3). In the same book, and with harsh irony, we watch Patroklos, *μείλιχον αἰεί*,[8] the figure of care, kindness and concern for others, ride recklessly, beyond the bounds of care, to his own death. The epic turns on that extinguishing of care that will cause so much grief, a loss that forcibly reminds Achilles of his failure to take care, to fulfil the essential role of protector—of Patroklos in the first instance (*ἐμεῖο δὲ δῆσεν ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα γενέσθαι*, 18.100), but also of the many other Achaians (*οὐδέ τι Πατρόκλῳ γενόμην φάος οὐδ' ἑτάροισι / τοῖς ἄλλοις* (18.102–3). One might say, in short, that Achilles has cared too much and too little.

The final book of the *Iliad* sets us in the midst of a care-laden world. Scenes resound with the cries of distress and lamentation; devastated by tragic loss, this is a world that has been wracked by violence and stunned into a benumbing, hopeless and immobilizing grief. Beyond, there seems to be only impending destruction. Hektor lies *ἀκηδής*, 'uncared for' (554). The process which will render his burial possible is ushered in gently, in the softly uttered message of kindness and benevolence which Iris delivers *τυτθὸν φθεγξαμένη* (170) to the grief-stricken and fearful Priam, huddled in his cloak, wrapped completely and closely, as if to ward off the world. In Book 24 of the *Iliad* the message is affirmed, 'there is care' (24.172–4):[9]

> *οὐ μὲν γάρ τοι ἐγὼ κακὸν ὀσσομένη τόδ' ἱκάνω,*
> *ἀλλ' ἀγαθὰ φρονέουσα· Διὸς δέ τοι ἄγγελός εἰμι,*
> *ὅς σευ ἄνευθεν ἐὼν μέγα κήδεται ἠδ' ἐλεαίρει.*

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[5] *οὐτιδανός*, 293; cf. the earlier occurrence at 231, and 11.389–90, *οὐκ ἀλέγω ... οὐτιδανοῖο*. The negated verb repeated at the height of the quarrel, *ἀλεγίζω*, is a related form of *ἀλέγω*, 'to care, be concerned', 'regard or heed' and 'count among'. *ἀλέγω* is in turn related to *λέγω*, 'to count among, consider as one of; heed, esteem, value'. These meanings of the word recapitulate the sense of injury, exclusion and dishonour (closely related to value) that Achilles articulates both in Book 1 and insistently elsewhere. But the verb *λέγω*, *-ομαι*, in its meanings 'to gather, choose, select; to tell over, recount, relate', also suggests the close relation between narrative and value, the epic tale that cares for and confers worth upon those things which it chooses to gather, to narrate and to give attention to.

[6] M. L. West's interpretation of *charis* as 'fun' here, in his comment on Hesiod, *Works and Days* v. 190 (Oxford, 1978), would seem to be a trivialization of a dominant concern.

[7] Cf., e.g. the instance in Book 15 where Apollo assumes that it is some *κῆδος* that keeps Hektor from participating in the action (*νόσφιν ἀπ' ἄλλων*): *ἦ πού τί σε κῆδος ἱκάνει;* (245).

[8] See Briseis' lament, 19.300.

[9] Iris delivers the message *τυτθὸν φθεγξαμένη* (170), speaking 'in a low soft tone, gently'. This tone is important for Book 24 and it does not seem to be adequately registered in C. Macleod's explanation, 'so as not to be heard by the children and daughters-in-law', with its focus on practicalities by which the gods are not constrained (*Homer: Iliad XXIV* [Cambridge, 1982] ad loc.).

II

With its many different aspects, 'care' has a wide range of opposites, including neglect, indifference, heedlessness, forgetfulness and so on. All of these relations will come into play in the final book as the *Iliad* affirms the value of care. But there is one less obvious opposite to care, one which is intertwined with care in Book 24 in a relation that repeatedly structures the text as it works out the difficult resolution between the two terms. In a book that is in so many senses concerned—at each stage and even within the funeral itself—with holding and letting go, the troubling sense of care negotiates with the need 'to let be'.

Achilles' outlook after the slaying of Patroklos is a combination of a calm acceptance of death ('let it be') and a raging refusal to accept the death of his companion. Book 24 opens with the increasingly futile persistence of his actions of binding and dragging the corpse of Hekor, holding on to it, leaving it to trail, while leading it in a repeated circle which ultimately leads nowhere. Against a background in which the gods opposed to Troy ἔχον ὡς πρῶτον (27), '*persisted* as from the beginning', their unrelenting passion extending over a vast temporal range, Achilles must come to accept the unchangeable, to release Hektor's body, to let go and to let be.[10] Apollo argues that there are limits to grief, the mortal mourning 'for what we know must be'[11]—the necessarily limited mortal mourning over the limits of mortality: ἀλλ' ἤτοι κλαύσας καὶ ὀδυράμενος μεθέηκε (48). The sorrowful mortal μεθέηκε, 'lets go, leaves it alone, leaves off, lets be'. μεθίημι also means to 'release' what is bound or held back. And it is this great reversal that is registered in Achilles' brief but meaningful reply to his mother when she pleads for the release of Hektor's corpse: τῇδ' εἴη, 'so be it', 'let it be so' (139).[12]

It is no longer a question of Achilles' randomly abandoning (ἔασκεν, 17) the corpse of Hektor wherever it happens to lie when he has finished dragging it, but of willingly accepting and letting be, allowing the corpse the care of family and city in a proper burial. The verb ἐάω is repeated numerous times in the scene with Priam in the literal sense 'to let be' (557, 569, 684, for example), to signify Achilles' action in simply letting Priam be, leaving him unharmed, before the narrative turns to the more considerate action of actually caring for the suppliant—in place of the bare fact of allowing his survival. Achilles' initial act of 'acceptance' of things as they are gradually acquires the stronger and more positive force of accepting, taking in and taking care of the suppliant who is dependent upon him.

But there is another aspect of care, or κῆδος, which, in its completely overwhelming force, leaves the sufferer powerless to do anything other than to leave things as they are. This immobilizing force is another thing which must be overcome in Book 24. The inhibiting power of care and grief, the desire to be alone and to leave the world alone, is brought out at the beginning of Book 24 when Thetis states her extreme reluctance to journey to Olympos when beset by cares (αἰδέομαι δὲ / μίσγεσθ' ἀθανάτοισιν, ἔχω δ' ἄχε' ἄκριτα θυμῷ, 24.90–91). Zeus thoughtfully acknowledges the force of this obstacle in his words of welcome: ἤλυθες Οὔλυμπόνδε... κηδομένη περ, / πένθος ἄλαστον ἔχουσα μετὰ φρεσίν (104–5). The scene of grief is often one of paralysed immobility, such as we encounter when, with Iris, we first enter Troy in Book 24.[13] Schopenhauer once defined the 'last' and 'hardest' step in the development of drama in terms which seem to have a particular pertinence for an appreciation of the effort required here: 'At the highest and most difficult stage, the *tragic* is contemplated. The severe suffering and misery of existence is brought home to us and here the vanity of all human effort is the final conclusion. We are profoundly shaken and... there is stirred in us a turning away of the will from life.'[14] There are traces of this prevailing mood at the outset of Book 24, serving as a forceful argument for the futility of all effort, grounds for resigning oneself instead to a stunned and sad turning away from the world's brutal and intractable harshness. This sense of futility and helplessness is articulated by Hecuba in her attempt to reconcile her husband to the unchangeable nature of their lot and to discourage any possibility of a venture into the world outside their home. She recommends instead that they remain apart and leave the world alone, as it is, without any further endeavour: νῦν δὲ κλαίωμεν ἄνευθεν / ἥμενοι ἐν μεγάρῳ (208–9).

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[10] *Λῦτο*, the first word of Book 24, recurs insistently with the sense of 'release', 'ransom', throughout the book.

[11] *Hamlet*, I.ii.98; for reason 'still hath cried, / From the first corse till he that died today, / "This must be so"'.

[12] N. Richardson, in *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 6 (Cambridge, 1993), defines as one of his major aims to give particular attention to 'the unusual', the 'individuality of Homer's language, as an antidote to excessive concern for its formular quality' (p. xii). And yet, when it comes to this passage, he argues against the possibility of the generally accepted reading on the grounds that τῇδε used in this way 'is, however, *unusual* in Homer' (p. 290).

But Book 24 includes a significant action, reflecting a fundamental recognition that there is still something to be done in the midst of the mortal sense of helplessness and hopelessness brought on by the sudden blow of death. This much at least is affirmed in the very act of burial and funeral rites. The action of Book 24, its great undertaking, is rendered possible by the intensity of Priam's care as father and his refusal to leave things as they are. While Achilles accepts the need to let things be, Priam functions as the agent of care who, with divine encouragement, presses for action and change. These two major forces collide at a certain point within the shelter of Achilles, in an explosive confrontation which takes events to the very brink. At first, after the conclusion of Priam's speech of supplication, there is a suspended period of grief and inaction as Achilles gently pushes Priam away, allowing a period in which to let things be while they submit to their cares and sorrows. When Achilles does respond to Priam's plea, there is a very subtle interaction of speech and gesture. While *raising* Priam from his position huddled at Achilles' feet (γέροντα δὲ χειρὸς ἀνίστη, 515), Achilles encourages him to ἄνσχεο (518), literally 'to hold himself up, to bear up', to endure, to persist; at the same time, he leads him to be seated with the recommendation to let things lie, with the reminder that he will not raise Hektor again to life by continuing to grieve (οὐδέ μιν ἀνστήσεις, 551; cf. ἄνσχεο repeated at 549). In a certain sense, when coupled, the actions and the words are almost contradictory, but in that conjunction consists precisely the painful difficulty of caring and not caring, of submitting without submitting, of persisting while accepting and letting be. One of the most difficult aspects of care is articulated in Achilles' speech of consolation to Priam: ἄλγεα δ᾽ ἔμπης / ἐν θυμῷ κατακεῖσθαι ἐάσομεν ἀχνύμενοί περ (522–3). The concessive clause underlines exactly the difficulty and effort involved. In telling of the gifts of Zeus and the fate determined for mortals by the gods, Achilles counsels Priam to patiently accept the given, as it is, letting things be. His view of the way of the world contrasts immortals who exist *ἀκηδέες* (526) with mortals who live *ἀχνύμενοι* (526), thereby reinforcing his message, *ἄλγεα δ' ἔμπης / ἐν θυμῷ κατακεῖσθαι ἐάσομεν ἀχνύμενοί περ* (522–3). It is almost a world in which there is everything to be endured and nothing to be done.

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[13] It is perhaps also possible that the details of the Niobe story, where the people are turned to stone and hence are unable to take any action, reflect something of the same situation of immobilization through stunned grief. Niobe remains a rock, isolated, apart, a completely inactive figure of stone brooding upon her cares (κήδεα πέσσει, 617). Priam relates this image to his former inactivity in grief, when, immobilized, he remained within the courtyard close: ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ στενάχω καὶ κήδεα μυρία πέσσω (639).

[14] A. Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, E. F. J. Payne (trans.) (Oxford, 1974), vol. 2, p. 439.

One of the most telling repetitions (in an exchange where significant repetitions recur strikingly) is Priam's recalling of the word *ἀκηδής* in his response. From Achilles' grand construction of the world as it is, Priam draws the term from its reference to a remote realm of divine indifference to the immediate reality of the corpse which has been left to lie *ἀκηδής*, 'uncared for', abandoned and neglected (554). The repetition is a rebellion against resignation on the part of a father who cannot simply let things lie 'while Hektor lies uncared for'. Even in the forlorn state of mortality depicted in Achilles' speech, there is something that can and should be done. Death does not mean the end of all significant human action: surviving mortals retain the possibility of at least one last meaningful endeavour, the final act of care for the dead.

Priam's refusal to be seated and settled, to rest within the structure of the world in which Achilles has sought to accommodate him in his misery and isolation (*δειλέ*, 518, *δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι*, 525), his talk of haste and departure, precipitates the violent eruption in which 'care' and 'letting be' clash. The two converging forces clash specifically in the significant verb *ἐάω*, to 'let be'. By not letting things be (*ἄλγεα ... ἐάσομεν*, 522–3) Priam has stirred up a storm of emotions (*μᾶλλον ἐν ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ὀρίνῃς*, 568) in which his own unharmed state (having been let be, *με πρῶτον ἔασας*, 557) is directly threatened with negation, undoing the force of this and much more: *μή σε, γέρον, οὐδ' αὐτὸν ἐνὶ κλισίῃσιν ἐάσω / καὶ ἱκέτην περ ἐόντα, Διὸς δ' ἀλίτωμαι ἐφετμάς* (569–70). The delicate possibility of a reconciliation of care and the need to let be has been sharply disrupted, but not yet lost irretrievably.

III

The epic constructs not only a multitudinous world, but also a world of multiple standpoints and diverse perspectives. Statements about the world are placed in very different contexts, with altered emphasis and meaning, as the *Iliad* explores the complex and often contradictory aspects of existence. Within this frequently changing structuring of the poem, 'care' itelf is subject to a certain contrariety.

In reply to Priam's plea of supplication, Achilles gives voice to one of the oldest, most difficult and most enduring forms of mortal speech, that space wherein grief and words commingle in the attempt to comfort and to assuage pain, the *consolatio*. The *consolatio* is a speech that attempts to show care in the midst of cares, to express concern while trying to relieve the listener of the burden of concerns, a speech that tries to teach to care and not to care; to hush grief without diminishing the harsh reality that is its cause. In this account of the way of the world, a world that is not of human making and in which grief can achieve nothing, the gods have shaped this fate for mortals: to live is 'to be grieved or troubled', 'to be beset by cares' (*ζώειν ἀχνυμένοις*, 24.526). The huge cleavage between mortal and immortal is given impact by the additional comment: *αὐτοὶ δέ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσί* (526). The gods are 'without care'. This brief statement is fraught with implications. The gods who determine the human condition of care are 'without care', carefree, indifferent, heedless, without concern or solicitude. The carefreeness of the gods reinforces the defining care of the human realm. But more than that, the projection of what in so many ways might appear to mortals as an ideal existence—without death, free from care and sorrow, possessed of unlimited power and ease—is found wanting and rejected with bitterness precisely in so far as it lacks what is ultimately more desirable than immortality: the essential element of care and concern.[15]

By its very position as an account of the world in the final book of the epic, Achilles' comment seems to provide the ultimate description of 'the way things are', and has been taken as such by Dodds, for example, who describes it as 'the tragic moral of the whole poem'. Zeus is an inscrutable distributor of gifts from 'jars which have nothing to do with justice' in a view of the world which portrays 'man's helpless dependence on an arbitrary power'.[16] Dodds' version of the 'world-view' of the *Iliad* stands in marked contrast to 'the plan of providence' in, for example, Hegel's view of a world ruled by God (and reason), where 'the actual world is as it ought to be', or, alternatively, Pope's assertion that 'One truth is clear, "Whatever IS, is RIGHT"'.[17] Dodds formulates the *Iliad*'s account as a final statement that 'God's in his heaven, all's wrong with the world'—a sardonic confirmation of, at the same time, God's existence and his utter indifference to a world where nothing is as it should be. But tempting as it may be to isolate and grasp Achilles' statement as one sure nugget of hard reality, to do so is to ignore the broader context of Book 24 and its wide gathering of care.

The *Iliad* on a number of occasions allows us a view of the world in which mortal affairs count for very little. And this is because the work does not simply take for granted the significance of its subject, but opens and addresses the very problem of significance. The simile of the leaves in Book 6 reminds us of the countless generations which 'rustle away fleetingly', disappearing in their insignificance. The god Apollo echoes that simile in dismissing all mortal matters, appearing to abandon with all swiftness a swiftly fading and unimportant world (21.463–7). It is part of the *Iliad*'s tapestry of contrariety that Zeus has sent the gods to intervene in this battle, declaring *μέλουσί μοι ὀλλύμενοι περ* (20.21), 'I care for them, though they perish', 'They do concern me, even in their destruction'. And while Apollo withdraws from this mortal world, he does so only to return—when all the other gods have gone back to Olympos—to protect the mortal city which is the object of his concern and care: *μέμβλετο γάρ οἱ τεῖχος ἐϋδμήτοιο πόληος* (21.516). In addressing the general problem of significance, the *Iliad* makes the very important point that care is a measure of what matters.

The gods care and they do not care. These seemingly irreconcilable positions are both essential elements in the complex of existence and its significance that the *Iliad* constructs and examines. Critics have often cited the famous comment from *King Lear*—'As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods; / They kill us for their sport' (IV.i.36–7)—as a definition of what the Homeric gods are not. However, the quotation of these lines in isolation ignores the range of conceptions of the divine that *Lear*, like the *Iliad*, also includes. Gloucester, who speaks of 'flies to wanton boys', also addresses 'you ever gentle gods'. In the play the gods are also invoked as, for example, 'the kind gods', 'the gentle gods', the 'mighty' and the 'great gods'—in 'this tough world', which, with its 'rack' of suffering and affliction, challenges the assertion from within this same work that 'the gods are just'. This variability reflects responses to an ever changing reality for which the gods are deemed responsible.

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[15] Contrast F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, W. Kaufmann (ed., trans.) (New York, 1968), 15–144, p. 43, 'Thus do the gods justify the life of man: they themselves live it—the only satisfactory theodicy!' In relation to Achilles' speech one might compare Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 369–70, *οὐκ ἔφα τις / θεοὺς βροτῶν ἀξιοῦσθαι μέλειν*, which W. Burkert somewhat oddly locates as the 'first' occurrence of a problem articulated as follows: 'And yet the reciprocity of *charis* was missing. Who could still say that the divine cares for man, for the individual man? Here a wound was opened in practical religion which would never close again' (*Greek Religion*, J. Raffan [trans.] [Cambridge, MA, 1985], p. 311 [cf. n. 40]).

[16] E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), pp. 29, 30.

[17] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction—Reason in History*, J. Hoffmeister (ed.), H. B. Nisbet (trans.) (Cambridge, 1975), p. 66, cf. p. 260; A. Pope, 'An Essay on Man', line 294.

The *Iliad*'s compound of caring and uncaring gods does justice to the problem of the meaning of an often contradictory existence, where contradiction itself is often the only satisfactory explanation. In relation to this question, we might briefly consider J. Gould's valuable paper, entitled 'On Making Sense of Greek Religion'.[18] The title is notable since the paper itself duplicates the very function that it defines for religion: a cognitive function of 'making sense' of what appears to defy sense. It should not, perhaps, surprise us that this account should conclude by providing a sense that defies sense, wherein the workings of the gods remain incomprehensible. And this, for mortals, makes sense. For the significant paradox of theological language is that 'the sense of God must be indefinitely regressive' and elusive, 'regressive' in the sense in which 'the "sense of the universe" is regressive': 'Final understanding is not attained, it recedes before research in the sense that there is always something more to be known.' '"God" as a symbol retreats in the face of definition.'[19] As a source for, and hence explanation of, the unknown, the divine remains unknown. The attempt to render a rational account of the unaccountable world concludes with the unaccountable, a comprehensible god who escapes comprehension. The product of reason is ultimately that which escapes reason and marks its limits. The personification of the inexplicable as god is narrowly, but for most cultures significantly, more than a mere masked tautology (the world is unpredictable; the unpredictable is god)—a circular rationality that, to a certain extent, asserts ultimately as an explanation that which from the outset demanded explanation.

A problem in Gould's account is his construction of a clear division of 'prayer' and 'sacrifice', which he distinguishes as the 'transparent' and the 'opaque' respectively. Leaving aside the consideration that prayers often go unanswered, Gould maintains that prayer preserves the intelligible social principle of reciprocity or *charis*, while the process of making gifts to the gods often confounds this order. But this brings us to a point of crucial significance for the *Iliad* and the impact of its final book. The gods are not bound by the ethic of gift-exchange and reciprocity that weaves the human world together. *Pace* Gould, the gods 'can always say no *without giving any reason*'.[20] This gap between religion and ethics, which has, in its different aspects, so troubled readers of the poem, is a necessary element in a world in which mortals are not the masters. Gods bound by gifts and sacrifices would yield a controllable world in which gods could be 'harnessed to the ends of man'. 'Men live by the hope of reciprocal favour, *charis*... But it is never possible to count on this with certainty. Man can never be entirely sure of his gods.'[21] The *Iliad* shapes the impact of its conclusion from this very uncertainty. In rupturing a rule-bound economy, which may reduce itself to a 'mechanical' cycle of predictable acts and strict obligation, the gods restore and reinforce one of the essential elements of the rich and highly potent concept of

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[18] In *Greek Religion and Society*, P. E. Easterling and J. V. Muir (eds.) (Cambridge, 1985), 1-33. His citing of Chryses' prayer in Book 1 of the *Iliad* as the paradigm of pure prayer overlooks the element of indissociability of prayer and sacrifice, since Chryses recalls in prayer past sacrifice.

[19] J. Bowker, *The Sense of God* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 114, 115.

[20] Burkert (n. 15 above), p. 189.

[21] Burkert (n. 15 above), p. 188.

charis—its unexpectedness, and the accompanying sense of surprise, joy, delight and wonder, the gradual, expansive response to a world in which the unpredictable element of life has acquired a positive force.

A constitutive aspect of *charis*, too often overlooked, is the incalculable. In place of a settling of accounts, this aspect of *charis* presents us with the unaccountable: a world in which the 'gratuitous' is no longer the senselessness of that 'without reason or justification', but the incalculable, invaluable force of *charis*. For the force of the poem in its final book is one of unexpected care, kindness and benevolence. It is significant that it is, more than a solace, precisely a force. For beyond the structure of alternatives defined by Shakespeare—'careless force and forceless care'[22]—the *Iliad* leaves us not with 'forceless' care, but with care as a force that makes life not simply bearable, but worth living.

Although it is true that 'in the last, decisive extremity, the gods abandon man',[23] as shown in the dramatic swiftness with which Apollo leaves Hektor in Book 22 when the scales tilt downward indicating his fate (212–13), nevertheless in Book 24 the gods return, after the death of Hektor, and care for the corpse.[24] Apollo protects and preserves Hektor's body *καὶ τεθνηότα περ* (24.20). This phrase, and its equivalent, *καὶ νέκυός περ ἐόντος*, recur in Book 24, emphasizing the care of the gods not only for mortals, but for a mortal when most mortal, when dead and hence likely to be even more negligible from the divine perspective.[25] It is Apollo who, in providing a voice for the voiceless (the *κωφὴν γαῖαν*, 54), initiates the course of the great final act in Book 24, beginning by reminding the gods of reciprocity (a reciprocity pressed verbally by the repetition of *καίω—ἔκηε*, 34, *κήαιεν*, 38; Hektor burnt sacrifices to the gods, now let his corpse be burnt in the funeral pyre).[26] The gods have the power to accomplish this burial themselves (as shown in the case of Sarpedon and in the tale of Niobe). A number of them urge Hermes to steal the corpse from Achilles. The possibility of divine autonomy highlights the significance of what instead must be a difficult mortal effort as enacted in Book 24.

In terms of the general questions already raised, we might do well to consider the prominent role given in Book 24, and for the first time in the epic, to the god who perhaps embodies most of all the sense of *ἀκηδής* as one who is carefree, playful and joyous: Hermes. The words in which Zeus summons this god of the beautiful golden sandals and magical wand underline the fact that he does whatever he wishes (*καί τ' ἔκλυες ᾧ κ' ἐθέλῃσθα*, 335). But the potentially capricious Hermes is sent to protect the aged Priam, to remove all care and fear of death. His intervention itself is evidence of the protective care of a watchful, thoughtful Zeus who oversees the action. This is the Zeus *μεδέων* (308, 'prendre soin de, protéger, régner sur')[27] to whom the Trojans pray and who renders possible a sense of joy (320–21), even in the midst of such severe sorrow, with the reassuring sign of his mighty eagle that sweeps through the city.

Hermes' arrival in the gathering darkness at the place marked by the *σῆμα* of Ilos has been taken as a symbol of his role as *psychopompos* in what is to be a visit to the

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[22] *Troilus and Cressida* V.5.40.

[23] Burkert (n. 15 above), p. 188.

[24] Notable in this relation is Hera's speech in Book 16 (440–58) as Zeus ponders the impending death of Sarpedon, particularly *ἔασον* at 451, leave it as it is, let him die; leave him to his mortal fate, but ensure proper burial.

[25] Cf. 24.20, 35, 423, 428, 750. Macleod (n. 9 above) interprets such phrases with a somewhat different emphasis: *καὶ ἐν θανάτοιό περ αἴσῃ*, 'if only after his death' (comment on 425–31).

[26] The sacrifices and gifts are acknowledged by Zeus at 66–70.

[27] E. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque, étudiée dans ses rapports avec les autres langues indo-européennes*, 3rd edn. (Heidelberg, 1938), p. 618.

'underworld' realm of Achilles.[28] This is one possibility; but, in an important general sense, the context of Book 24 is not entirely 'otherworldly', and Hermes represents a possibility which, in its contrast to theft, underlies a dominant theme of the final book. He provides, as it were, a certain radiance in the darkness, that of *χάρις*, which is not restricted to the external appearance of the beauty of youth which he adopts as his disguise (347–8, *τοῦ περ χαριεστάτη ἥβη*).[29] Hermes comes, not as messenger of the gods, but to enact the important message that there is care, even though the very uncertainty of mortals in relation to the gods does not admit the removal of all fear and care from Priam. Hermes plays a part which is not that of mere messenger, but rather herald of the kinder possibilities which will be discovered—not without struggle—within the shelter of Achilles.

The point is made in one of the key words of Book 24, *ἐνδυκέως*, 'kindly', as Hermes declares that he would accompany and protect Priam *ἐνδυκέως* (438) even on a distant journey as far as Argos, deep into hostile, enemy territory (as indeed he does now in the Trojan king's own homeland). Within the verbal structures of care which shape Book 24, Achilles' treatment of the corpse (*ἕλκει ἀκηδέστως*, 417) is contrasted by Hermes with the active concern of the gods: *ὥς τοι κήδονται μάκαρες θεοὶ υἷος ἑῆος / καὶ νέκυός περ ἐόντος, ἐπεί σφι φίλος περὶ κῆρι* (422–3). The anxious father's response to this care on the part of the gods is one of joy (424), prompting the statement that underscores the affirmative nature of the *Iliad*'s conclusion (24.425–8):

ὦ τέκος, ἦ ῥ' ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἐναίσιμα δῶρα διδοῦναι
ἀθανάτοις, ἐπεὶ οὔ ποτ' ἐμὸς πάϊς, εἴ ποτ' ἔην γε,
λήθετ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι θεῶν, οἳ Ὄλυμπον ἔχουσι·
τῶ οἱ ἀπομνήσαντο καὶ ἐν θανάτοιό περ αἴσῃ.

It is good and proper to give gifts to the gods since in their care they have remembered (*ἀπομνήσαντο*, 428), even in death, one who never forgot or neglected (*λήθετ'*, 427) to give gifts to the gods when alive. This coupling of memory and care is of major significance for the epic poetics of memory itself, in so far as poetry actively strives to overcome forgetfulness and neglect. In contrast to Achilles' version of the gifts of the gods, which proceeds in one direction only (where the immortal gives and the mortal receives), here the possibility of reciprocity and *charis* between mortals and the gods is reinstated in the poem. The possibility is at once played out with gentle irony as Priam offers the disguised god a gift—which he refuses. It is also somewhat ironical, and a measure of the peace achieved finally in the relation between Achilles and Priam, that it is the god Hermes who must remind the sleeping king to take care, where initially it was Hermes who was sent to remove from the apprehensive old man all concern regarding death: *ὦ γέρον, οὔ νύ τι σοί γε μέλει κακόν* (683; cf. 152, *μηδέ τί οἱ θάνατος μελέτω*, 181).

When Hektor's corpse is returned to his own home and laid out on the fretted bed, the three women, Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen, give voice to their formal laments (719ff.). Both Andromache and Helen articulate inconsolable grief at the loss of Hektor as protector. Both foresee a very bleak future, for the city of Troy and for themselves personally. The three laments work through modulations of repetition and difference. But Hecuba's lament, which is set between the other two, stands out as something quite different again in tone and content. Unlike the mother of Achilles, the mother of Hektor does not enumerate her many *κήδεα* (*κήδεα λυγρά*, 18.430, *ὅσ'*

[28] See, e.g. C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), p. 217.

[29] Leaf notes, with regard to the meaning of *αἰσυμνητήρ* at 24.347, 'one who is *mindful of* justice'.

ἐμῷ ἔνι κήδεα θυμῷ, 18.53; cf. Andromache's *ἄλγεα*, 24.742). Instead, she registers with wonder (*ἄρα*, 750) the late revelation of a message which has been affirmed throughout: *οἱ δ' [θεοὶ] ἄρα σεῦ κήδοντο καὶ ἐν θανάτοιό περ αἴσῃ* (24.750).[30] This late recognition, on the part of Hecuba in particular, who was so opposed to Priam's venture, and so full of a desire for revenge at the outset of Book 24, provides some measure of the extent of the achievement in Book 24: the degree to which the poem has lifted the distress and despair of grief to a different plane while never erasing the piercing grief. Unlike other early Greek poetry, the *Iliad* does not aim simply to dispel care, but to redefine in refined ways what we understand by 'care'. A gradual transformation is achieved through a positive sense of care and solicitude which results in this unexpected sense of wonder, comfort, and something verging upon 'joy' in the midst of the mother's lament.

The laments of Hecuba and Andromache are set in counterpoint and it is important to maintain the force of each. In Hecuba's words there is an emphasis on retrieval; but the note of forlorn abandonment is dominant in the bitter and inconsolable sorrow of Andromache. In the funereal gesture of care, the grieving wife holds what she has lost, protectively clasps in her hands the head that had been dragged across the plain *ἀκηδέστως*. The language of the accompanying lament intensifies the importance of this holding of the head of Hektor the 'holder, protector': *ἦ γὰρ ὄλωλας ἐπίσκοπος, ὅς τέ μιν αὐτὴν / ῥύσκεο, ἔχες δ' ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα* (729–30). The bereaved who utters her lament overlooking the head of the slain recalls and reflects upon his role as *ἐπίσκοπος*, 'one who watches over something, a guardian or protector'. *Ἕκτορος ... κάρη μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχουσα* (724), she beholds and temporarily holds up, supports the head of the sole figure who could guard and uphold the existence of Troy. With his death she affirms the certain destruction of her world (*κατ' ἄκρης / πέρσεται*, 728–9) while she nurses with care the helpless head, the centre of a helpless world.

Yet in the midst of such bitter grief and bleak despair, the *Iliad* sustains an insistent affirmative note such that there is a sense, if not always for the participants, at least for those who hear the song and read its complex of possibilities, that the epic 'with slow hand makes joyful those who sorrow'.[31]

IV

One of the most striking aspects of Book 24 is the major transformation of the dimensions and architecture of the *κλισίη* of Achilles. In Book 24 the text gives particular attention to architecture and the significance of its various divisions of space. When we first encounter Priam in this book he is huddled forlornly surrounded by the dung of the *αὐλῇ* (160–65; cf. 640), while the women lament within the house itself (*ἀνὰ δώματα*, 166). Enclosed but exposed, outside the house and apart from the house in the space where the animals are stalled, Priam is, in his sorrow, 'unhoused'.[32]

Once he has received the message from Iris he proceeds through the chambers of the palace and across the multiple thresholds of the city itself in his journey to the shelter of Achilles. Achilles' dwelling is itself a source of many possibilities. In its amplitude it signifies power, and the weight of the bar bolting the door is an index of the might of Achilles as a warrior. The dwelling is at first imposing, forbidding, and constructed to exclude any intruder (see particularly 452–6). But as the simile of the suppliant underlines (480–2), such a structure of power is also a potential source of refuge, shelter and protection. The description of the process of the making of its roof, with thatch gathered from the meadows, underlines this fundamental function of *shelter* (450–51).

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[30] For *ἄρα* and the sense of wonder, cf. Hermes' reply to Priam, *θηοῖό κεν αὐτὸς ἐπελθὼν / οἷον ἐερσήεις κεῖται* (24.418–19); the description of the dead Hektor might also be compared with Hecuba's words at 757ff.

[31] Hölderlin, 'Homecoming'.

[32] On the *αὐλή* see, e.g. M. O. Knox, 'Megarons and *Megara*: Homer and Archaeology', *CQ* 23 (1973), 1–21, 'it is a place regarded as "*outside the house*"' (p. 9), and *LfrgE* s.v., '*καὶ ὕπαιθρος τόπος*'.

Moreover, as Achilles' *consolatio* to Priam brings out, the condition which continues to haunt the Homeric imagination is that of the homeless wanderer (530–33), the figure who is made *λωβητός*, a miserable outcast who ceaselessly wanders, who is never taken in, sheltered or fed by anyone.[33] Such details point to the immense symbolic importance of the *κλισίη*, especially when described as a *home* and endowed with the structure of a Homeric house; it comes to function not only as a setting for, but as a repository of, central Homeric values.

But there is a tension in the structure of Achilles' abode. As is suggested by the inverted roles in the simile of the suppliant which marks the entrance of Priam, this is also the shelter of a warrior, the precarious space of a slayer of men. Perhaps even more than as a protection against the elements and external danger, the dwelling is staged as the scene in which a quietening of the storm *within* is to be achieved. In a certain sense also, the slayer, who had restlessly wandered at night at the opening of the final book, here houses *himself* in housing the old suppliant. As the departure of Hermes highlights (462–4), the arena within which these possibilities are to come into effect is now one of mortal struggle without the gods.

When first described as a home or house (512, *δώματα*) the *κλισίη* is hollowed out by the desolate echo of helpless grief. It is described as an *οἶκος* (572) at the point at which Achilles bounds outside like a lion, threatening to disrupt all that a home should offer in terms of secure refuge. But this very struggle to secure certain major values underlines the process by which the forbidding dwelling of the warrior gradually embraces not only the architectural features of a house, but some of the essential elements of a structure of care. It is within this structure that the final drama is played out and its resolution is achieved. Care meets cares as mortals trouble themselves to do something about their troubles. The care which consists of grief and misery, of loss, and abstinence from food and sleep, is transformed by the care which consists of kindness and solicitude—care of the corpse (and care that the corpse remain unseen, 583–6), care of the guest with meal and bedding. It is in these actions that an important word in Book 24 acquires its force. The word has been emphasized not only by Zeus' pronouncement and its repetition by Iris, but by its introduction by three negatives—all, as it were, contributing something by negation to the word's positive features (24.157–8 = 186–7):

> *οὔτε γάρ ἐστ' ἄφρων οὔτ' ἄσκοπος οὔτ' ἀλιτήμων,*
> *ἀλλὰ μάλ' ἐνδυκέως ἱκέτεω πεφιδήσεται ἀνδρός.*

ἐνδυκέως, 'kindly, in gentle wise, with care',[34] is a term which occurs only once outside this book and there in a context of particular significance. When, in Book 23, the *psyche* of Patroklos returns to Achilles, he opens with the words *εὕδεις, αὐτὰρ ἐμεῖο λελασμένος ἔπλευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ. / οὐ μέν μευ ζώοντος ἀκήδεις, ἀλλὰ θανόντος* (69–70). He reminds the hero of their shared past from the time 'when Menoitios brought me as a small child from Opoeis to your country on account of a woeful manslaying... Then Peleus the horseman took me into his own house and nurtured me kindly [*ἔνθα με δεξάμενος ἐν δώμασιν... ἔτραφέ τ' ἐνδυκέως*]' (23.85–90). Within the temporary 'home' of the warrior, far from home in Book 24, these significant affirmative values of the *Iliad* are retrieved and enacted conspicuously. They become the conditions upon which a 'return to life' after a prolonged period of mourning becomes possible, and as such they define some of the desirable possibilities of life itself.

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[33] For an example of such an existence within the text see, e.g. the story of Bellerophon, especially 6.200–202; see also Nestor's words at 9.63–4, *ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος κ.τ.λ.* The suppliants throughout the poems reinforce the sense of the reality of this plight. Achilles, who feels that he himself has been cast out, treated *ὡς εἴ τιν' ἀτίμητον μετανάστην* (9.648), uses terms related to *λωβητός* in his references to the treatment he has received from Agamemnon, e.g. *λώβη* (9.387) and *λωβάομαι* (1.232).

[34] '(Sch. *ἐπιμελῶς*) *fürsorglich*' (*LfrgE*, s.v.).

In many ways the term 'shelter', then, perhaps best describes the multiple aspects of the dwelling of Achilles (which poses precisely the question of what it is that constitutes a 'dwelling'), particularly if we recall that, 'Despite the whole variety of cultural forms of dwelling, something immemorial persists: the shelter. Sheltering oneself cannot be reduced to protection against bad weather, but establishes an intimacy around the "hearth"... the necessity for every human being to establish a place of peace, rest, warmth, and stillness'.[35] Moreover, within the Homeric context, these possibilities are generously made available to, and shared with, the outsider, which marks an important extension of care. The intimate association of care and kin manifests itself in language: '"Kindred" has the same root as "kindness", two words whose common derivation expresses in the happiest way one of the main principles of social life';[36] in Greek it may be observed that *κηδεστής*, is 'an affine, but originally "one who is an object of concern, and to whom one is oneself an object of concern"'.[37] But the challenge of the *Iliad* is to take care beyond the confines of kin.

The Homeric shelter is, ultimately, the site of *χάρις* in many of its most significant forms. The interval in which Achilles and Priam contemplate each other after the meal is an experience that comprises all the elements of peace, rest, warmth, and stillness. The scene of silent contemplation by the hearth is suffused with the glow of *χάρις*, and it is *χάρις* and kindness that will become prominent at the conclusion of their encounter. The poet remains realistic in his portrayal of the tensions, dangers and the great struggle through which these moments are attained. Perhaps it is also the realistic quality of a certain 'fierce kindness' on the part of Achilles that explains what has most often perplexed commentators in the description of his final proposal with the term *ἐπικερτομέων* (649). *ἐκτός* (650) sounds initially like an inhospitable exclusion[38] with reference to what is in fact a careful and solicitious bedding arrangement, which is still within the architecture of the dwelling (*ὑπ' αἰθούσῃ*, 644).

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[35] M. Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*, W. McNeill (trans.) (Albany, NY, 1993), p. 178. For the construction of a home as a protective shelter, two similes are pertinent, 16.212–13 and 23.712–13, while the simile at 19.375–8 reinforces the value of the hearth in even the most isolated shelter. The commentaries still have difficulty in accommodating this transformed aspect of the shelter of Achilles and its potentially fundamental significance; Richardson's (n. 12 above) recent suggestion of a rendering 'quarters' (accompanied by 'squires') would seem to fall short of the significance required.

[36] E. B. Taylor, *Anthropology* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 249, cited by M. D. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1968), p. 10; hence, 'A little more than kin, and less than kind' in *Hamlet* (I.ii.65).

[37] Gould, 'Hiketeia', *JHS* 93 (1973), 74–103, p. 93 n. 98, 'since the paradigm case of a relationship involving bonds of mutual obligation is that of kinship'; cf. I. Anastassiou, *Zum Wortfeld 'Trauer' in der Sprache Homers* (Diss., Universität Hamburg, 1973), pp. 89ff.

[38] Cf. in this respect Achilles' initial response to Priam's supplication, which at first looks like a rejection; he pushes him away—but gently (508).

But it is in the offer that concludes this speech that the all-important element of χάρις is expressly registered by Priam in his reply: ᾧδέ κέ μοι ῥέζων, Ἀχιλεῦ, κεχαρισμένα θείης (661).[39] The sense of the term κεχαρισμένα, and its implications, are far stronger than are conveyed by the conventional renderings 'acceptable, welcome, pleasing' (LSJ).[40] The word acknowledges the force of χάρις: kindness, good will, and, in response, a profound sense of gratitude. It is easy to overlook that the final eleven days of the epic are made possible by χάρις. In the dark and bleak setting of a doomed world, in which the future of both Troy and Achilles are limited, this is the enduring achievement: not only that it is still possible to do something, but that it should be χάρις that prevails in the end.[41] In granting Priam and the Trojans the time requested for the burial of Hektor, Achilles clasps the old man by the wrist (671–2)—a warm physical gesture of kindliness and reassurance which seals the conclusion to the *Iliad.*

As a way of underlining the significance of some of the points being made here, one might note how, in tracing the suggested linguistic roots of the important form *kēd-*, one has the sense that one is following, through the networks of comparative linguistics, a transformation already achieved by the narrative of the *Iliad.* Related forms in the Italian, Celtic and Germanic languages show shifts of meaning ranging from 'Zorn' ('anger, wrath'), 'Hass', ('hate, spite, enmity', Gothic 'hatis'), to a meaning of 'für den Fremdling sorgend', 's'occupant de l'étranger'.[42] The poem of μῆνις at least yields something like this as its final achievement, a move from 'wrath' to 'care for the stranger'. In itself 's'occupant de l'étranger' might serve as a good definition of the reason for our attention to literature, that activity of 's'occupant de l'étranger' which the *Iliad* not only enacts within its narrative, but of which it has given its own fine example.

V

It is within the space of Achilles' dwelling that the first funeral rites for the corpse of Hektor are accomplished. This initiates the long sequence of ritual acts that will conclude the epic. Achilles announces the definitive release of the corpse (λέλυται... κεῖται δ' ἐν λεχέεσσι, 599–600) and in a lengthy and important speech he summons Priam to eat. In the normal entertainment of a guest the provision of a meal would precede all else. But here, within a disturbed context of intense emotional turmoil, the meal comes last and is charged with an important burden of significance. It marks a momentous transition in which host and guest, enemies by the definition of war, will share a meal that will affirm not only a social bond between them, but a bond between them and the living, after a prolonged period of abstinence from food and sustained proximity to the dead. It marks a break in the persistence of life-denying grief. The verbs upon which the speech of invitation to eat is structured are noteworthy not only for their immediate significance in relation to the meal, but for their general pertinence to the overall import of the final book of the *Iliad.*

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[39] One might also note that in this recognition Achilles is specifically named, while throughout the encounter the two have tended to avoid specifically naming each other.

[40] For the sense of the term, cf. also J. Latacz, *Zum Wortfeld 'Freude' in der Sprache Homers* (Heidelberg, 1966), pp. 117, 121: 'χαρίζομαι: jm. χάρις erweisen'.

[41] Contrary to the view cited by J. M. Redfield in his final note in *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago, 1975): 'Yet the two men are one only through their shared relation to a doomed and nihilistic world. All else divides them and breeds hatred, envy, and fear. There is compassion, then, but there is nothing to *do*' (p. 262, Redfield's emphasis).

[42] For the argument from comparative philology for the sense 'Sorge für den Fremdling hegend', see P. Thieme, *Der Fremdling im Ṛgveda: eine Studie über die Bedeutung der Worte* ari, arya, aryaman *und* ārya (Leipzig, 1938), p. 158.

Achilles opens the speech with the exhortation, *νῦν δὲ μνησώμεθα δόρπου* (601), a summons which is recalled at the end in the words *ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ καὶ νῶϊ μεδώμεθα, δῖε γεραιέ, / σίτου* (618–19). The two cardinal verbs appeared at the outset of Book 24 within a structure of opposition that set Achilles apart from society (*τοὶ μὲν δόρποιο μέδοντο*, 2; *αὐτὰρ 'Αχιλλεὺς / κλαῖε φίλου ἑτάρου μεμνημένος*, 3–4). The later context weaves together the related senses of the two words. *μέδομαι* has the meanings 'to bethink oneself of, think of, take thought for, attend to, remember, meditate, reflect', and belongs in general to a complex of words from the root **med-* which express the notion of thought or care, of caring for.[43] It is notable that the structure of Achilles' speech closely associates this verb and the verb for memory.[44] These words and their related forms pervade Book 24 and lend it that mood of reflection, recollection from a distance, and thoughtfulness which contributes appropriately to its sense of an ending—and of something beyond the end. Moreover, as Achilles' speech indicates, the range of the two words is closely aligned in the text. Memory is as much a matter of thoughtful meditation as of recall. And, in a more general sense, it functions as a form of care. It is the opposite of forgetfulness, thoughtlessness, indifference, and neglect.[45]

This note of thoughtful meditation is intensified in the mythological exemplum that Achilles narrates in his encouragement of Priam to partake of the meal. It is noteworthy that within the epic the everyday source of sustenance, the meal, is something one gives thought to and takes care in preparing. These features are not only the signs of heroic ceremony but also constitute the burden of so many of the Homeric similes, where it is the care, struggle and labour of the everyday that are closely observed and quietly celebrated.[46] Achilles reminds Priam that even Niobe remembered to eat, took thought for food, after the loss of all her children. But unexpectedly the mythological paradigm does not end with the words *ἡ δ' ἄρα σίτου μνήσατ', ἐπεὶ κάμε δάκρυ χέουσα* (613).[47] In itself the continuation in 614–17 not only gives prominence to a motif of thoughtfulness, of the pensive, but suggests thoughtfulness on the part of Achilles himself. Achilles does not claim to take the old man's 'care' away from him. His speech indicates that he recognizes that there is a morrow after the meal, that it is not so easy to eliminate or elide grief and care in a single act or gesture, and that even after the peace and reconciliation of the meal, Hektor will be much lamented by his sorrowful father (24.618–20):

> *ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ καὶ νῶϊ μεδώμεθα, δῖε γεραιέ,*
> *σίτου· ἔπειτά κεν αὖτε φίλον παῖδα κλαίοισθα,*
> *Ἴλιον εἰσαγαγών· πολυδάκρυτος δέ τοι ἔσται.*

The story of that other grieving parent, Niobe, does not end simply with the meal. In an isolated and somewhat desolate setting in distant mountains (614), Niobe remains a figure immobilized by care. Her isolation and immobility are brought out in the contrast with the nymphs, her only neighbours, who *ἀμφ' Ἀχελώϊον ἐρρώσαντο* (616). Niobe, on the other hand, *λίθος περ ἐοῦσα θεῶν ἐκ κήδεα πέσσει* (617). Even (and ever) beyond the meal, Niobe continues to reflect and brood upon the cares (*κήδεα*) she received at the hands of the gods. Achilles' speech therefore offers no easy or simple resolutions but recognizes the need to go on reflecting in thoughtful meditation upon devastating events. This recognition that the simple act of eating does not once and for all put an end to extreme grief and care is registered with subtlety in the very verb for reflection or brooding itelf. *πέσσω* is a metaphor taken from the meal at two different stages. It is the very action of cooking, of changing raw to cooked by means of fire; it is also the act of digestion. Both are processes of transformation that are suspended indefinitely in Niobe's never-ending pondering upon the unchangeable.

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[43] A fuller discussion of the significance of these words will be given in n. 63 below.

[44] Cf. also 602, 613 in the same speech.

[45] For a specific instance of such associations articulated in Book 24 itself, see 427–8.

[46] In its interrelating of these two worlds, the heroic and the everyday, the epic significantly stands apart from the general tendency characterized by Nietzsche: 'The excessive and incredible pathos with which we have valorized the most exceptional acts has as its counterpart the absurd indifference and disdain with which we devalue inconspicuous and everyday actions. We are the fools of rarity and have thus depreciated even our daily bread' (Nachgelassene Fragmente, 1880–81, in *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, G. Colli and M. Montinari [eds.], vol. 5, part 1 [Berlin, 1971], p. 400 [my trans.]). One might note that Achilles invites Priam to partake of *σῖτος* (619; cf. 602, 613).

[47] On the proposed athetesis of these lines see Lynn-George (n. 2 above), p. 250.

VI

οὐδέ νυ τόν γε
γηράσκοντα κομίζω, ἐπεὶ μάλα τηλόθι πάτρης
ἧμαι ἐνὶ Τροίῃ σέ τε κήδων ἠδὲ σὰ τέκνα. (24.540–42)

This negative evaluation is brief and concentrated: all turns on the central concept of care. The distance between Troy and Phthia is here more than the physical expanse of sea and mountains. The distance is the wide breach between caring for and not caring for, between caring for and causing care to. Achilles' rueful awareness of the absence of care for his father develops into a reinforced negative: not only has he also *not* cared for Priam, but his actions have actually *caused care*—in the negative sense of trouble, grief and suffering—for Priam and his sons. He is active (*κήδων*) but in an action that is so deprived of positive meaning as almost to nullify the sense of action itself: 'I sit around, I am idle'.[48] From this perspective, his seems to have been a rather worthless existence: not a short, glorious, heroic life of great deeds, but a barren human failure to provide care, both to those to whom it is owed in the first instance and to others. In this bleak and bitter appraisal of his heroic life, Achilles quietly extinguishes that one possibility of joy that Priam had suggested (*χαίρει*, 491). In this world without *charis*, lines 540–42 articulate a contrast between the realm of 'as it is', which has dominated Achilles' explanation of the way of the world to Priam, and the domain of 'as it should be'. In the discordance of this world of displacement, Achilles is unable to do what he should do: provide care for his helpless old father. The world 'as it is' is revealed as a condition wrenched from what might have been and in a certain sense should have been. For the son stranded in a foreign land there does remain, however, a possibility for retrieving significance for life even as it is: to extend care to another who mirrors his father's plight—care beyond kin, kindness to the outsider. One possibility for the significance of life lies in *charis*.

The prominence of care, particularly in this central final scene, perhaps enables us to suggest something of its value for the Homeric conception of life. It has often been stated, for example, that the meal in Book 24, the sheer act of eating, marks a return to and an affirmation of life. There is an important point in such an observation, but perhaps we can now go one step further. We might ask what constitutes life, and is it anything other than simply existing in the purely creatural cycle of living, eating, sleeping, and dying—the life of 'unaccommodated man'? If we attend to the Homeric description of the meal itself, suggestions of a significant conception of life and its central activities seem to emerge. The meal, as described in Book 24 and elsewhere in the epic, is something one attends to (ἀμφιέπω), something to which one gives thought and attention (μέδομαι, here attended to by Amphi-*medon*). The Homeric meal is, above all, a structured sequence of care, a point which is emphasized verbally at each of its stages and recapitulated particularly in the important word περιφραδέως, 'with great care, carefully' (24.624; cf. also ἐπισταμένως, 623, with its similar sense of attention and care: 'εὐφραδέως', *LfrgE*).[49] In the meal all is ordered εὖ κατὰ κόσμον (622). By contrast, when Apollo wishes to express forceful condemnation of Achilles' conduct at the beginning of Book 24, he likens him to the lion that simply yields to impulse and goes out to seize his meal (41–3, δαῖτα λάβησιν).

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[48] Macleod (n. 9 above) on *ἧμαι* (542). In this respect the reflection is similar to that of Achilles in Book 18, *ἀλλ' ἧμαι παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης* (104). The *Odyssey* interestingly also concludes with the theme of care for the father when Odysseus finds Laertes in his orchard, caring for his plants and not caring for himself; cf., e.g., *ἀλλ' εὖ τοι κομιδὴ ἔχει, οὐδέ τι πάμπαν, οὐ... τοι ἄνευ κομιδῆς κατὰ κῆπον* (24.245–7), *αὐτόν σ' οὐκ ἀγαθὴ κομιδὴ ἔχει* (24.249).

The meal is only one instance of this predominant element of care which structures Homeric culture and life. But, as with many of the features we are considering here in the Homeric text, the account of the meal and the life it both sustains and symbolizes lends force to the affirmation that 'To live is to care'.[50] In arriving at this conclusion, while seeking a meaningful sense for that most abstract and elusive concept, 'Being', Heidegger drew on J. Grimm's treatment of 'In' and 'In und bei', with attention to the sense of Latin *colo* as signifying both *habito* and *diligo*.[51] Heidegger was, ironically, unaware of the related Greek form of the verb 'to be', πέλω/πέλομαι, which has important associations of care. The Homeric verb and related forms contribute in the epic to the significant sense of an outspread, and often outlying, world traversed by the everyday rounds of care, such as we find also in the similes. In Homer we still find traces of an old and very different concept of being and existence before the word crystallized in its assimilation to the static sense of 'to be in a certain state, to be'.[52] In its original sense πέλω meant 'I am in motion, in movement, on the move' in a nomadic pastoral world in which one was constantly 'moving around', 'turning', traversing territory from day to day and according to the seasons of the revolving year as charted by the movements of the stars themselves.[53] But this turning existence also revolved around what was under one's care—watching, tending, turning. 'To be, to move around' was to care for: 'sich wo herumbewegen, versari', '*fürsorglich* um jemanden herum sein'.[54] In agriculture one went to and from the fields regularly, turned up the earth in ploughing, frequented a place, turned round in a far more limited range of space, and cultivated the land.

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[49] One might also note that the form ἐρύομαι can mean not only 'to draw off' but also 'to protect, tend, save'.

[50] 'Leben ist Sorgen', *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), vol. 61, p. 109. For Heidegger the term *Sorge* ['care'] 'is used in a purely ontologico-existential manner' (*Being and Time*, J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson [trans.] [Oxford, 1962], p. 237), which excludes some of the more familiar senses considered here. On the other hand, a more complete treatment of 'care' in the *Iliad* and its relation to other major aspects of the epic (which is in preparation) would have to include consideration of Heidegger's argument that it is an awareness of the finitude of death that constitutes the fundamental and singular care of life. 'Es geht um mein Leben', *mea res agitur*: '*Dasein* is an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is an issue' (*Being and Time*, p. 236; cf. Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, T. Kisiel [trans.] [Bloomington, 1985], p. 292).

Many have maintained that the hero knows neither fear nor care, and H. Speier in particular, in *Social Order and the Risks of War* (New York, 1952), argues that Heidegger's concept of *Sorge* (which he interprets as anxiety) 'is a poignant description of man insofar as he is *not* heroic' (p. 122). For Speier, 'heroes are *secure*' and 'the most accurate description of the character of the hero is rather the opposite of *Sorge: Sorglosigkeit*'. This final remark is a reworking in German of the etymology of the Latin *securus: se + cura*, 'without care'. But 'care' has many aspects, and *Angst* is not a necessary component in its structure. As Speier himself at once concedes, his *Sorglosigkeit* ('freedom from care') does not include, for example, 'carelessness' and 'indifference'.

Rilke celebrates the venture to a point 'outside all caring' as the highest reach of human endeavour: 'Except that we...go *with* this venture, will it, adventurous, more sometimes than Life itself is, more daring by a breath...There, outside all caring, this creates for us a safety...In the end, it is our unshieldedness on which we depend' (untitled lines in *Gesammelte Gedichte* [Leipzig, 1930–3], vol. 4, p. 118).

But, with respect to the hero's burden of care and responsibility, we might recall the heavy freight of care in the opening words of Hektor's reply to Andromache in their famous scene in Book 6: ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει (441, and note the division of concerns [κόμιζε, 490, μελήσει, 492] in the solicitous preparation for parting in the farewell at 490–93). In response to the view articulated by Rilke, one might add that there are those who dare, who hazard their lives, out of care for others, to protect and to 'shield'. Throughout the epic, however, Hektor tests the limits of daring and caring, and particularly the line that divides them (cf. in this relation 12.237ff.). It is interesting that Speier cites Hektor as an example of the hero who knows *fear* ('we sometimes fall short of what is required of us'), and suggests, 'I believe it can be shown that Homer did *not* want to have Achilles regarded as the greatest man in the *Iliad*', a suggestion which was to find an advocate in Redfield's study of *The Tragedy of Hector*.

Extending to agricultural activity and far beyond, πέλω/πέλομαι is related to a constellation of words traced to I-E **kwel-*, a wheeling world as portrayed on the shield of Achilles, where wheeling, turning, revolving movements and motifs are particularly prominent throughout the depiction of the diverse aspects of existence.[55] Such words include πόλος, the 'turning point', 'axis', 'circling vault of heaven'; πολέω and πολεύω, 'to turn or go about, range over, haunt, to live in'; 'to turn up the earth with the plough'; and ἀμφιπολεύω, 'to go about, take care of, attend and tend'.[56] Hence ἀμφίπολος, αἰπόλος and βουκόλος.[57] οἰό-πολος (οἶος, πέλομαι) is to be alone, moving in 'lonely, solitary, remote' places; but it is here that one tends herds of sheep and it is explicitly in such a site that the young tree is cared for in the simile of Book 17.[58] The *Iliad* reminds us that even in the most remote outpost there is care. In the opening book of the epic, the form δικασπόλος has a striking impact as Achilles protests against the injustice he suffers, invoking in his powerful oath the δικασπόλοι, οἵ τε θέμιστας / πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται (1.238–9), those whose concern and care it is 'to guard, protect, watch over and preserve'. In this world where to live is to care, the Greek πέλω is closely related to Latin *colo* with its multiple senses, 'to dwell in and to care for, to till, tend, cultivate, to look after, to pay constant attention to, to keep, maintain' and 'to remember with respect'. Through all its spheres of movement, from, for example, *πόλος* to *colo*, this verbal complex delineates a world that pivots on care.

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[51] J. Grimm, 'In' and 'In und bei', *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 7 (Berlin, 1884), 247–9 and 249–50 respectively; Heidegger, *Being and Time* (n. 50 above), p. 80.

[52] Cf. C. H. Kahn's argument in *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek* (Dordrecht, 1973) that 'the static copula represents the fixed point around which the predicative system of the language revolves' (pp. 206–7).

[53] The cycle of the περιπλόμενος ἐνιαυτός (περιπέλομαι), περιτελλόμενος ἔτος, ἐνιαυτός.

[54] A. Walde, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen*, J. Pokorny (ed.) (Berlin, 1930), vol. 1, pp. 514–16; cf. G. Curtius, *Principles of Greek Etymology*, A. S. Wilkins and E. B. England (trans.) (London, 1886), vol. 1, pp. 77–8; on this 'vieille famille' of words see also P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris, 1968–80), s.v. πέλομαι.

[55] Sophocles memorably explores these associations to create a prolonged and powerful '*figura etymologica*' (J. C. Kamerbeek, in his commentary on *The Antigone* [Leiden, 1978], p. 82) in the first stasimon of the *Antigone*, with πέλει (333) echoed at the strophe's end by the cognate πολεύων (341).

[56] Cf. *LfrgE* s.v., 'umsorgend 1. von der liebevollen Sorge für das Dasein eines anderen'.

[57] Cf. ὀνειροπόλος, 1.63, 5.149, and ἱπποπόλος, 13.4, 14.227.

[58] 17.54, already mentioned above.

VII

Some of the cardinal implications of 'care' can be brought out by considering specifically its relation to one of its important opposing concepts. The description of the death of Kebriones in Book 16 provides a notable and suggestive instance. The two sides fight relentlessly for possession of the slain warrior. The epic magnitude of the intense battle is heightened by the insistence upon a word that characterizes much that constitutes what is specifically epic: *πολλά* (772, 774). The scene is an immense tumult of countless sharp spears, darting arrows and huge stones ceaselessly smiting shields. Twice in the passage the narrative makes the sweep in similes to a far-off distance: the peaks and valleys of the mountains (757, 765), valleys where east and south winds howlingly contend with one another. But the sense of an immeasurable distance is even more profoundly implicit at the centre of all that is taking place, with the final attention given to the warrior who lies dead on the plain, in a whirl of dust (16.775–6):

> *μαρναμένων ἀμφ' αὐτόν· ὁ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης*
> *κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστί, λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων.*

The reduplicative form of *μέγας μεγαλωστί* has the effect of retarding the forward movement, eliciting a contemplative mood which is then sustained in the lengthening, lingering forms that complete the verse as it ponders the meaning of death. In the midst of the multitude, the ceaseless struggle and striving of the living, the slain warrior lies alone in stillness—a stillness underlined by the swirling of dust about him, perhaps a late echo of the blast of winds in the mountains, the swirl now the spectre of the turbulent action of the great battle raging around him.[59] *μέγας μεγαλωστί*, he is, in death, the same and no longer ever again the same. For all his greatness and physical might, he is totally oblivious to all that takes place around him. The scene focuses upon this indefinite void at the centre of things. In the intensity of battle in which neither side will let up (*οὐχὶ μεθίει / ἑτέρωθεν ἔχεν*, 762–3), something crucial has been let go and has irrevocably slipped away. The chariot driver whom we had seen *ἵππων ἡνί' ἔχοντα* (739) has lost all, has released reins, life and thought, no longer caring in any way for the dominant concern of his heroic life—horsemanship. Now without care or concern, he lies stretched out in the oblivion which is death. The entire scene of battle, the great struggle of life, is suddenly and hauntingly set against this reflection upon one 'who has left it all behind'.[60]

The significant word here is *λελασμένος* (776), which carries with it all the force of *λήθη* and *λανθάνω/λήθομαι*: 'to forget, neglect, take no thought for, care nothing for; to let slip from one's mind, care no longer about, cease to strive for, depart from; for whom all thought of something is over'.[61] But beyond the important immediate contrast between the concerned living and the 'careless dead' (where life is care and it is the duty of the living to take care of the dead),[62] there is the care of the poet that thoughtfully shapes the impact of the passage. While λανθάνω/λήθω, -ομαι, can also mean 'to escape, elude, to fail to attract the observation, notice, attention of', what is most notable here is the way in which the poet has done precisely the opposite by devoting attention to the dead λελασμένος, forgetful but not forgotten. Negated λανθάνω/λήθω means 'to be mindful of'. And the poetics of the *Iliad* itself is in a fundamental sense that of being mindful, thoughtful, constructing a work from care and respect. The great force opposed to λήθη is not simply (or only) 'memory', but μνημοσύνη with its important sense of 'a bearing in mind, thought or care for something'. μιμνήσκω and μνάομαι have the meaning of 'bethink oneself of; not to neglect, turn one's mind to'. These verbs are related in this sense to μέδομαι, 'to observe, watch (over); to take thought (for something); remember, care for', from which we have Latin *meditare*, *medeor*, English 'meditate' and 'many words expressing the notion of thought or care'.[63] In its epic narration the *Iliad* does not simply describe heroic action: it consists just as much of meditation upon the action and its meaningfulness, as the example of the death of the horseman briefly and poignantly illustrates. In the Homeric undertaking, to 'remember' is to care and to take care of. This coupling of memory and care, of recollection and thoughtful reflection, is of major significance for the epic poetics of memory itself, in so far as poetry actively strives to overcome forgetfulness, neglect, indifference, and disappearance without trace.

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[59] There may be a further point in the term *στροφάλιγξ*, which is derived from *στρέφω*, the verb used for 'to wheel, turn, guide one's horses'—a faint reminiscence of the lost art of horsemanship.

[60] A. Parry, Introduction to *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford, 1971), p. liii.

[61] Cf. *LfrgE* s.v., 2aa 'nicht mehr denken an; ausser acht lassen'.

[62] Hence, for example, Patroklos' words in Book 23, *αὐτὰρ ἐμεῖο λελασμένος ἔπλευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ. / οὐ μέν μευ ζώοντος ἀκήδεις, ἀλλὰ θανόντος* (69–70); cf. Achilles' assertion that he will never forget his companion, even among the 'mindless' dead (22.387–90).

For beyond such structures of care as, for example, the dwelling, the meal and the funeral, it is the epic itself which emerges finally as the ultimate structure of care. In this relation the *Iliad* initiates a significant poetic concern—and a definition of poetry *as concern*—which may be detected in such hints as, for example, Odysseus' declaration of his identity when called upon to recount his κήδεα in *Odyssey* 9, ὅς πᾶσι... / ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει (19–20),[64] or even in the suggestive reference to the Argo as πᾶσι μέλουσα (*Od.* 12.70). The *Iliad* is not a diversion seeking 'merely to make us forget our own reality for a few hours':[65] it treats that which matters, particularly our concern with mortality, and the related question of the value of life, with a prolonged meditative thoughtfulness and care which contribute to the stature of the poem and which at the same time provide a highly significant function for Greek poetry. The concern to tell the story is the first instance of what Euripides (among others) was later to define as a μυσοποιὸς μέριμνα: a care or concern that creates art and which, in the *Iliad*, art has created.[66]

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[63] *OED* s.v. 'meditate'; see, e.g. Boisacq (n. 27 above), s.v. μέδω; E. Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, E. Palmer (trans.) (London, 1973), '**med*- and the concept of measure' (pp. 399–406). One might well be critical of Benveniste's reconstruction of the 'original meaning' of the root (which reads finally very much like an endorsement of his own etymological procedures); his insistence on a divorce between the senses of ruler and protector is refuted by, e.g. the Greek ἄναξ. See M. Lynn-George, 'Aspects of the Epic Vocabulary of Vulnerability', *Colby Quarterly* 29.3 (special issue entitled *Essays on Homeric Epic*, H. Roisman and J. Roisman [eds.]) (1993), 197–221, p. 199.

[64] Reading this in a wider sense, rather than simply determined by δόλοισιν (19).

[65] E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, W. Trask (trans.) (Princeton, 1953), p. 15.

[66] Euripides, *Hippolytos* 1428–9; cf. Bacchylides, 19.11 and Theognis, 245, μελήσεις ἄφθιτον ἀνθρώποισι αἰέν ἔχων ὄνομα. On the other hand, Hesiod's conception of the Muses is paradoxical: they are daughters of Memory and yet they provide λησμοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄμπαυμά τε μερμηράων (*Theog.* 55); they are 'without care' and yet song is their concern, ᾗσιν ἀοιδὴ / μέμβλεται ἐν στήθεσσιν, ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἐχούσαις (*Theog.* 60–61).

VIII

In Book 6 of the *Iliad* Agamemnon intervenes when Menelaos is on the point of sparing a suppliant. He opens with the question, *τίη δὲ σὺ κήδεαι οὕτως / ἀνδρῶν;* (55–6). In arguing that Menelaos was himself not well treated by the Trojans in his own home, he calls for the utter destruction of the Trojans *ἀκήδεστοι καὶ ἄφαντοι* (60). The *σῆμα* that the poem constructs finally for Hektor, a memorial made from huge durable stones, testifies to the epic's concern that its subject, that which it has chosen to treat and give thought to in its multiple aspects, should not disappear '*uncared for and without trace*'. Indeed the funeral is the epic's last great gesture of care.

Gradually everything is calmed, restored to a more peaceful order, as the epic takes time to recount the final rites which themselves take time, a period of eleven days, each with its significant act performed with care. 'For, in the last resort, correct behaviour requires that what must be, should be, but that nothing should be brought about too precipitately.'[67] If Lévi-Strauss located the origin for such ritual action in 'deference towards the world', it should be remembered at the same time that these acts transform the given into something done, actively constructed in the face of the sense of human helplessness and despair that death, and here specifically the death of the defender of the city, evokes. Humans attempt to cope with sorrow and cares *through care*, care of the *κηδεμόνες*, of the living for the dead, care exercised in Homer without *fear* of the dead.[68] The relation between care and death is a close one, and one which pervades life concerned with mortality. But perhaps, even more than this, care asserts finally that these things matter and that the loss of a life is something worthy of significant attention and reflection.

In the description of the funeral of Hektor there are a number of small details that signal the care with which the poet has shaped this ending to the epic. One such detail is the epithet chosen for dawn in the regulated procession of time that measures out the final stages of, and conclusion to, the vast epic narrative. At verse 785 *ἠώς* is described, not with a usual epithet such as *κροκόπεπλος* or *ῥοδοδάκτυλος*, both of which have marked the resplendent dawns of the epic right up until the conclusion, but rather with the epithet *φαεσίμβροτος*, 'that brings or gives light to mortals'. (One might contrast, for example, 19.1–2, *'Ηὼς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἀπ' 'Ωκεανοῖο ῥοάων / ὄρνυθ', ἵν' ἀθανάτοισι φόως φέροι ἠδὲ βροτοῖσιν*; cf. 11.1–2). The epithet occurs only here in the *Iliad* and, in its restriction to mortals alone, suitably marks the very *mortal* context of the day on which the corpse of Hektor is finally borne out and placed upon the funeral pyre. The conclusion of the epic, with its attendance to the funeral, is the space of action of the *βροτοί* alone. Hermes' departure before the spreading light of saffron-robed dawn at 695 on the return journey from the shelter of Achilles marked the departure of the gods.

Another significant aspect of the funeral is its very quietness. Ethnographic studies have made the point that funerals tend to be loud, noisy affairs:[69] they consist not only of wailing and the resonant vocal signs of grief, but often of musical accompaniment, the insistent percussion of, for example, the beat of the drum, or other instruments, and often include loud assertions of life—as if to deny the perpetual silence of death. The funeral for Hektor stands in relation to the other major funeral within the epic, that of Patroklos. The comparison brings out the subdued nature of this conclusion. In Book 23 the loud roar of the mighty fire and the shrill blast of the great winds heightened the sense of the ferocity of an event marked by a multitude of bloody sacrifices. Through a troubled night Achilles maintained a vigil, vainly calling again and again on the name of his lost companion in long-drawn-out cries of grief.[70] At the end of the epic, on the other hand, the Trojans mourn, but with silent tears.[71] The wailing has already taken place, days before, within the halls of Hektor, in the formal *γόοι* set to the accompaniment of the *ἀοιδοί, θρήνων ἐξάρχοι* (24.721). On the eleventh day, the Trojans gather (and the verbal emphasis upon this gathering together may have point in its contrast to the dispersal of a conquered people envisaged in Andromache's lament); they attend to the final gestures of care which make up a funeral, collecting the bones and covering them in *πορφυρέοις πέπλοισι μαλακοῖσιν* (796)—as past care on the part of the warrior is reciprocated by the care of the weaver.[72] They place the remains in a golden urn, place the urn within a grave, construct a *σῆμα*, and set *σκοποί* around. In these final actions the funeral reveals its compound aspects of caring and letting be; of attending to and letting go; letting go and guarding; looking after and departing; of mindfulness and not forgetting. It is therefore in a way appropriate that, in the final gesture, the *σῆμα* itself is constructed by the act of *pouring* (*σῆμ' ἔχεαν*, 799; *χεύαντες δὲ τô σῆμα*, 801): building up by letting fall and flow.

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[67] C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners*, J. and D. Weightman (trans.) (London, 1978), p. 507.

[68] In the sense of the comment on Mycenaean practice by D. C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, 'Despite the care with which the Myceneans furnished their dead, it is clear that they were not troubled by them' (*Greek Burial Customs* [Ithaca, NY, 1971], p. 21).

[69] See, e.g. R. Huntington and P. Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 46ff. While studies of death and funeral rites have proliferated in recent years, they often contribute little more than additional empirical detail rather than significant thought on the general question of death. C. Geertz's criticisms of

The *σκοποί* at the end represent one final additional element of care and vigilance, in a world poised at the end betwen vigil for the dead and vigilance concerning the future (*σκοπός*: 'one that watches, one that looks about or after things'). But they also mark the end of a cluster of terms that have appeared in Book 24 (often for the first time in the epic) and have played an important role in characterizing a prominent aspect of this world. *ἐΰσκοπος* appeared as an epithet of Hermes (24.24, 109), recapitulating one of the major functions of his general role in this book. The term *ἐπίσκοπος*, for one who watches over something, a guardian, a protector, occurs at 729 and reinforces this general theme. And in Zeus' reassurance, repeated by Iris, Achilles is described as not *ἄσκοπος*, but as one who is thoughtful and considerate. The *σκοποί* at the end, then, fixed in their vigilant and cautious scanning of the horizon, mark the final outpost of the general attentiveness, thoughtfulness, protectiveness, and care which have, throughout Book 24, encompassed this watchful world.

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anthropological work on religion (*The Interpretation of Cultures* [New York, 1973], pp. 87-9) remain pertinent in this regard.

[70] Cf. also the description of the funeral of Achilles at *Od.* 24.70, *πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει.* In the description of the funeral at the end of the *Iliad* there is no percussion, but there is the continuing beat of hexameter poetry: the rhythm of both life and death.

[71] One might compare 7.426-9, *δάκρυα θερμὰ χέοντες ... / οὐδ' εἴα κλαίειν Πρίαμος μέγας· οἱ δὲ σιωπῇ / νεκροὺς πυρκαιῆς ἐπενήνεον ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ, / ἐν δὲ πυρὶ πρήσαντες ἔβαν προτὶ Ἴλιον ἱρήν.*

[72] In spite of Andromache's sense of hopelessness and despair at the end of Book 22 (510-14), Book 24 is a world of soft fabrics, where the delicate work of women (particularly in relation to the funeral) has a central place. Fabrics figure predominantly in the ransom Priam brings to Achilles and thereby play an important part in the care of the corpse (580-81, 587) as well as in the care for the guest in bedding.

Although at first sight it seems insignificant that the sequence of events that make up the funeral ultimately differs from that outlined by Priam to Achilles, there may be some significance in this. The poetic conception of the epic's conclusion goes beyond a fixed rite with a rigid sequence of actions to be strictly observed in set order. The meal was to have taken place on the tenth day, with the final day devoted entirely to the construction of a *τύμβον* (665–6). In the event, the *τύμβον* and the *σῆμα* have a notably less prominent part, and the funeral as a whole ends with the meal in the halls of Priam.[73] The monument concedes space to the final human act of the community, eating the funeral meal in halls which have their own subdued splendour, stillness and calmness, undiminished by the inevitability of their impending destruction. Indeed, at the end, at the edge of a very fragile future, it is as though, even in the aftermath of such a tragedy, we were somehow cast back to a remote time, that time 'before the coming of the sons of the Achaians'. With the Trojans and their king settled in the home of Priam at the end, the poem lends some force to that sense of an ending contributed by the underlying epic theme of a *homecoming* after the journey through the night to the dwelling of Achilles. Priam is restored to the status of *διοτρεφὴς βασιλεύς* (803)—a status that was attributed to Achilles alone in their encounter (cf. 553, 635); Priam regains at the end his former status as king and ruler of Troy, cared for by Zeus, after the abjection, the degradation of grief and the extreme humility of his supplication. It might be observed that the last line of the *Iliad*, *ὥς οἵ γ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἕκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο* (804) does not employ the collocation used previously, *τελέσαι τάφον* (660), which could have underlined the finality of an end. Instead the narrative closes with a final cadence of care, *ἀμφίεπον τάφον*.[74]

In the closing account of the funeral ceremonies, a small, seemingly negligible word carries an important weight: *εὖ συναγειρόμενοι δαίνυντ' ἐρικυδέα δαῖτα* (802). The adverb that appears in the account of the final act of the sequence may be taken in conclusion to recapitulate the significance of all that has been achieved in these carefully performed last deeds for the dead. *εὖ* can, like the Latin *rite*,[75] mean 'with all due formalities, in the manner required, properly, duly', and commentators generally prefer to take it with *δαίνυντο*. But in this closing context the word has a possibly far wider relevance in the very possibility of its general meaning, *as it should be* ('wie es sich gehört', *LfrgE*, s.v.). For in its conclusion the epic is able to retrieve and define a sense of 'as it should be' from all the harsh reality of 'as it is'. In the process of the funeral rites themselves it hushes, and with subtlety subdues, the seemingly irreversible sense—particularly severe in the case of Troy—, that, 'He is Dead': 'dismantle the sun...sweep up the wood...*for nothing now can ever come to any good*'.[76]

It is in the funeral itself that the division between 'as it is' and 'as it should be' is ultimately overcome. In funeral rites and burial, the fact—the '*must*'—of death is moulded into the value of what ought to be. In general the heroic epic deals with an idealized past and a past ideal. But the opening of the *Iliad*, in its very dissonance, radically restructures the world. The poem begins not by simply proceeding to present the ideal, but by placing the ideal in jeopardy and in question, in the wake of a split which immediately divides the world. It is a rift of far-reaching significance. The *Iliad* begins with an unexpected, violent and powerful rupture between the world 'as it is' and the world 'as it should be'—a fracture which runs deeply through the vast structure of the epic. After the tumultuous assembly and the taking of Briseis, Achilles, alone by the sea, utters a prayer which releases the searing power of the hero's protest at this great breach between what 'ought to have been' and the contrasting reality of what is—'as it is', *νῦν δέ* (1.352–4):

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[73] I am not sure that one finds, in the *Iliad*'s final construction of a *σῆμα* for Hektor, the poet's triumphant note of *exegi monumentum aere perennius* that others have recently claimed for the passage.

[74] Thus with attention to the aspect of tending: *ἀμφιέπω*, 'to attend to', used in the preparation of the meal, 24.622. LSJ, s.v., II 'to be busy about, look after; tend or heal the sick; esp. guard, protect; simply, frequent [*colo*]; cherish; abs., in part., with good heed, carefully'. Cf. Chantraine (n. 54 above), s.v. *ἕπω*: 's'occuper de, *soigner*'.

[75] As Macleod (n. 9 above), suggests here.

[76] W. H. Auden, 'Song for Hedli Anderson'. The sense of irrevocability in Auden's lines is a bitter response to the incongruity which Dodds outlines succinctly in the comment in his introduction to Euripides, *Bacchae*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1960): 'To our "Ought" [Nature's] sufficient reply is the simple "Must"' (p. xlv).

μῆτερ, ἐπεί μ’ ἔτεκές γε μινυνθάδιόν περ ἐόντα,
τιμήν πέρ μοι ὄφελλεν ’Ολύμπιος ἐγγυαλίξαι
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης· νῦν δ’ οὐδέ με τυτθὸν ἔτεισεν.

In Book 24 the issue surges forth once more, this time in the outrage of the god Apollo who, in providing a voice for the voiceless victim, protests against the disparity between the way things are and the way things should be. To a certain extent the epic has separated death and burial, and, in the prolonged denial of burial, it creates a structure where the emphasis is shifted to the funeral as the good and proper thing to be done, counterbalancing the sense of irreparable wrong felt at the impact of death, Auden's 'for nothing now can ever come to any good'. In the funeral, the world 'as it is' is ceremoniously blended with the world as it should be. In this relation one might compare Geertz's observation that 'in a ritual the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world'.[77]

In answering the turbulent dissonance of its beginning, and the problematic questions raised by it, the *Iliad* in its conclusion quietly suggests something of a reconciliation across a major fissure, not by creating a new world which has nothing to do with reality, a poetic vision or dream, but by engaging the reality of war and by showing how, with care, in the gathering of the funeral, mortals can at least maintain some hope of coming to terms with the realities of violence and death. And if there is a consolatory note of calm and composure in the final lines of the epic, it is perhaps in the possibility that, even in the face of all that has preceded and all that is still to come, mortals can still gather together and do things well, arrange and order them 'as they should be'—even if they are as they must be and not at all as we should like them to be.

This important consideration bears upon the nature of Book 24 as a conclusion to the epic as a whole. One critic recapitulates a commonly held view in the following remarks:

> In ending the poem as he does, without pretending to resolve the impossibility he has defined, the poet makes his reader share the predicament he has brought his characters to face. The relationship between Priam and Achilles at the end offers, at last, the standard by which the heroic culture is judged and found impossible... Like Achilles and Priam, we are left with a new knowledge, facing *the fact that what ought to be will never be*.[78]

It is in similar terms that Redfield, in *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, stresses the point that the 'reconciliation takes place outside the sphere of culture', 'outside the human world' (pp. 214, 219, 222), 'outside experience' and 'outside life': it is above all 'an event possible only in poetry' (p. 204), achieved 'therefore at night and by magic': 'The ceremony of Book Twenty-four takes place outside the human world because the contradictions which it reveals cannot be resolved within the human world. The vision of man revealed in Achilles' two speeches is not a vision tolerable in practice. It is possible only in theory' (p. 222). Redfield maintains that 'culture is overcome' (p. 218), arguing that we have moved instead to the level of the universal (where a whole range of oppositions is too readily constructed and distributed according to the matrix of nature/culture identified with the universal/the particular). 'Since life takes on meaning only when formed by culture, this ceremony of reconciliation is not a discovery of meaning. It is rather an accurate recognition of meaninglessness' (p. 219). Redfield interprets the conclusion to the *Iliad* as an act of 'purification' which, in purging the world of all the impurity that precedes in the epic, 'allows us to rise into some purer atmosphere' (p. 50);[79] this realm of purity is defined at different times as 'the level of nature' ('the invariable') and also 'the divine sphere' (the eternal). With the corpse disposed of, the audience enters the realm of disembodied and autonomous *Nous*, outside and beyond the world.[80] Redfield's concept of 'purification' in literature is ultimately also Lévi-Strauss's concept of myth as *a simplification* (p. 219).

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[77] Geertz (n. 69 above), p. 112.

[78] J. B. White, *When Words Lose their Meanings* (Chicago, 1984), p. 54; cf. A. W. H. Adkins, 'The Greek Concept of Justice from Homer to Plato', *CPh* 75 (1980), 256–68, p. 262, and 'Values, Goals, and Emotions in the *Iliad*', *CPh* 77 (1982), 292–326.

On these readings, all is removed from the possibility of realization, as if the epic at its conclusion could only offer the ever elusive 'something that...never is yet, but always *ought* to be':[81] an impracticable, impossible poetic flight of fancy.[82] But in relation to what does take place within Book 24, one might recall Hegel (that most persistent critic of Kant's *Sollen/Sein* dichotomy in ethics), who argued that it is through funeral rites that death no longer belongs 'to nature alone' but is brought into the realm where 'something may be actually *done*'.[83] In a section of *The Phenomenology of Mind* entitled 'Culture and its realm of reality', he remarked, 'To represent the existence of the good and the noble as an isolated particular anecdote, whether fictitious or true, is the bitterest thing that can be said about it.'[84]

Within the shelter of Achilles and in a context of δειλοὶ βροτοί (24.525), not 'outside the human world', Achilles and Priam enact a very real possibility, one which constituted the fabric of Greek culture. It offers not simply an unrealized, unrealizable (or indeed unrepeatable) ideal, nor just a poetic fabrication. Without losing sight of Priam's courageous resolution and the kindly assistance of Hermes, it might be argued that trenches, fortifications, guards, and bolted doors are not the only obstacles that have been overcome at night. Deep within these structures of

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[79] After a descent into 'the pit of impurity' (p. 202) in the action of the poem.

[80] For a recent consideration of this position see T. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York, 1986).

[81] M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, R. Manheim (trans.) (New Haven, 1959), p. 197, apparently echoing Hegel, 'all the other impalpable unrealities designed in the interest of an everlasting "ought to be" which never *is*' (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, J. B. Baillie [trans.], 2nd edn. [London, 1949], p. 289).

[82] In relation to the same questions, we might remember that Kant once stated, 'But though I cannot *know*, I can yet *think* freedom' (Preface to 2nd edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, N. Kemp [trans.] [London, 1933], p. 28). The statement can be read, outside the specific context of Kant's argument, with poignant force. B. Williams (*Shame and Necessity* [Berkeley, 1993], p. 152), has recently asserted, 'But metaphysical freedom is nothing—at any rate, very little'. One might note the added qualification. It is not difficult to imagine that, depending upon the degree and the duration of incarceration, that 'very little', 'almost nothing' might even sustain life.

[83] *Phenomenology of Mind* (n. 81 above), 'The Ethical World', p. 470.

[84] Hegel (n. 81 above), p. 545.

Book 24 there is revealed the 'magical' (extraordinary and yet everyday) possibility of χάρις, kindness and care, and ξενίη. These elements do not belong exclusively to an impossible utopian vision ('a better where' that is nowhere). The vision of 'as it should be' is seen as something that can actually be achieved, albeit with difficulty, fashioned out of the often disturbed and troubling reality of 'as it is'. More than this, the vision of the *Iliad* quietly suggests that this is as it should be, might be, can be and, sometimes, is.

The *Iliad* does not delude us with the cruelty of an unrealizable ideal, 'smoother than this rough world', enchanting us only superficially with the hollow emptiness of an unfeelingly sweet song, even as it finally subdues the great raging wrath of its theme:

Sing Ariel, sing,
Sweetly...
Entrancing, rebuking
The raging heart
With a smoother song
Than this rough world,
Unfeeling god.[85]

It is not as though Priam were simply transported magically through the night, and as though human existence were charmed for a night—and for that night alone—by the mere whisper of benevolence into a world cradled by its own dream of something beyond unending hatred and spite. The poem is not caught betraying the unremitting reality of 'as it is', and it is not as though, irremediably smitten by bitterness, this world (which is not merely a *Wunschtraum* nor simply one for ever bounded as fiction) could not include willing—and wishing—well. In Book 24 the message is introduced gently and sustained throughout: there is care. And that is perhaps one of the most profound achievements of the *Iliad*—epic of war, bloody battles and brutal death, 'poem of force'—that, in its concluding message, it bestows a significance upon life through care, and holds out something to sustain mere mortals, a realistic possibility, which, once glimpsed in the midst of the deepest grief and overwhelming suffering—extreme κήδεα—is not so easily surrendered:

May a man look up
From the utter hardship of his life
And say: Let me also be
Like these? Yes. As long as kindness lasts...[86]

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[85] Auden, 'Invocation to Ariel'.

[86] F. Hölderlin, 'In Lovely Blue...', R. Sieburth (trans.), in *Hymns and Fragments* (Princeton, 1984). It should be noted that 'kindness' (*Freundlichkeit*) is, in his translations of Sophocles, Hölderlin's word for Greek *charis*.