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THE WRATH OF THETIS

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The first question to arise in any inquiry into the role of Thetis in the *Iliad* must be why a figure of evidently minor stature—whose appearances in the poem are few—serves such a crucial function in its plot. Why is it that the poem assigns to Thetis the awesome role of persuading Zeus to set in motion the events of the *Iliad*, to invert the inevitable course of the fall of Troy? An initial answer to this might be, because Achilles is her son, and this poem is his story; so that a methodologically more fruitful way of posing the question is, why has the *Iliad* taken as its hero the son of Thetis?

The *Iliad*'s presentation of Thetis is of a subsidiary deity who is characterized by helplessness and by impotent grief. Her presentation of herself is as the epitome of sorrow and vulnerability in the face of her son's mortality. Consider her lament to her Nereid sisters at 18.54–62:

> ὤ μοι ἐγὼ δειλή, ὤ μοι δυσαριστοτόκεια,
> ἦ τ' ἐπεὶ ἆρ τέκον υἱὸν ἀμύμονά τε κρατερόν τε,
> ἔξοχον ἡρώων· ὁ δ' ἀνέδραμεν ἔρνεϊ ἶσος·
> τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ θρέψασα, φυτὸν ὡς γουνῷ ἀλωῆς,
> νηυσὶν ἐπιπροέηκα κορωνίσιν Ἴλιον εἴσω
> Τρωσὶ μαχησόμενον· τὸν δ' οὐχ ὑποδέξομαι αὖτις
> οἴκαδε νοστήσαντα δόμον Πηλήϊον εἴσω.
> ὄφρα δέ μοι ζώει καὶ ὁρᾷ φάος ἠελίοιο
> ἄχνυται, οὐδέ τί οἱ δύναμαι χραισμῆσαι ἰοῦσα.

But the *Iliad* shows us another side as well. In a key passage in Book 1 Achilles, in order to obtain from Zeus the favor that will determine the trajectory of the plot, invokes not Athena or Hera, those powerful, inveterate pro-Greeks, but his mother. He asks Thetis to make his request of Zeus, reminding her of how she saved Zeus when the other Olympians wished to bind him.

> ἐλθοῦσ' Οὐλυμπόνδε Δία λίσαι, εἴ ποτε δή τι
> ἢ ἔπει ὤνησας κραδίην Διὸς ἠὲ καὶ ἔργῳ.
> πολλάκι γάρ σεο πατρὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἄκουσα
> εὐχομένης, ὅτ' ἔφησθα κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι
> οἴη ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι,

ὁππότε μιν ξυνδῆσαι Ὀλύμπιοι ἤθελον ἄλλοι,
Ἥρη τ' ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη·
ἀλλὰ σὺ τόν γ' ἐλθοῦσα, θεά, ὑπελύσαο δεσμῶν,
ὦχ' ἑκατόγχειρον καλέσασ' ἐς μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον,
ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες
Αἰγαίων'—ὁ γὰρ αὖτε βίην οὗ πατρὸς ἀμείνων—
ὅς ῥα παρὰ Κρονίωνι καθέζετο κύδεϊ γαίων·
τὸν καὶ ὑπέδεισαν μάκαρες θεοὶ οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔδησαν.
τῶν νῦν μιν μνήσασα παρέζεο καὶ λαβὲ γούνων,
αἴ κέν πως ἐθέλῃσιν ἐπὶ Τρώεσσιν ἀρῆξαι,
τοὺς δὲ κατὰ πρύμνας τε καὶ ἀμφ' ἅλα ἔλσαι Ἀχαιοὺς
κτεινομένους, ἵνα πάντες ἐπαύρωνται βασιλῆος,
γνῷ δὲ καὶ Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
ἣν ἄτην, ὅ τ' ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτεισεν. (1.394–412)

Here we see the *Iliad* alluding to aspects of Thetis' mythology which it does not elaborate and which do not overtly reflect the subject matter of heroic poetry. Why does it do so? The question is twofold: why does it allude to Thetis' power, but why does its reference remain only an allusion? Why does it present us with an apparent contradiction: if the mother of Achilles is so helpless, why was she able to rescue Zeus; and if she rescued Zeus, why is she so helpless? Why does the *Iliad* remind us of Thetis' efficacious power in another context while it presents her to us in an attitude of lamenting and grieving without recourse?

This paper will attempt to see the Homeric use of Thetis in the perspective of her mythology, and to make some suggestions about its value in helping us to read the *Iliad* as a whole. Our best initial index of comparison with the *Iliad*'s Thetis is afforded by Thetis' role in another epic treatment, the cyclic *Aethiopis*, where we are presented not only with Thetis and Achilles but with a strikingly similar relationship, namely that of the divine Dawn Eos and her son Memnon.

The heroic identity of Memnon, the Trojan ally, was established in the *Aethiopis*, whose now lost five books related his single combat against Achilles, among other events.[1] In the *Aethiopis*, the confrontation between Achilles and Memnon seems to have made use of the same narrative features that characterize the climactic duel of *Iliad* 22: the contest followed upon the death of Achilles' close friend at the hands of his chief Trojan adversary, and was preceded by Thetis' prophecy of the outcome. In the *Aethiopis* Achilles avenged the killing of Nestor's son Antilochos, whose death at the hands of Memnon is referred to at *Odyssey* 4.187–88.

[1] See Proclus' summary in Allen, *Homeri Opera* 5.106. For a discussion of the range of its contents, see A. Severyns, *Le Cycle épique dans l'école d'Aristarque* (Liege 1928) 313–27; G. L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry: From Eumelos to Panyassis* (London 1969) 144–49. On the structure and style of the Cycle see W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias*, Hermes Einzelschriften 14 (Wiesbaden 1960) 204–303, esp. 212–14.

Memnon, although functioning in a role like Hector's, is a mirror image of Achilles as the *Iliad* represents him. The association of these two heroes, not principally as adversaries but as parallel figures, is reflected in the poetry of Pindar, who more than once describes Memnon in terms appropriate to Achilles in the *Iliad*—singularly so, as they are the terms Achilles uses of himself—calling him ... Μέμνονος οὐκ ἀπονοστήσαντος.[2] Preeminent among his allies, bearing armor made by Hephaestus, Memnon is the child of a divine mother, Eos, and a mortal father, Tithonos. This last feature was apparently given emphasis by the narrative shape of the *Aethiopis*: the actual presence of the two goddesses Eos and Thetis on the field of battle, contrasting the mortal vulnerability of the opponents with their equal heritage from the mother's immortal line, may have generated the poem's narrative tension.[3] What the *Iliad* treats as a unique and isolating phenomenon, the *Aethiopis* developed along alternative traditional lines, giving prominence to the theme of mortal/immortal duality by doubling its embodiment, in the two heroes Memnon and Achilles.

Iconographic evidence supplements the version of the myth given by the *Aethiopis*. The symmetry of the two heroes is reflected in numerous examples of archaic art. Vase-paintings, illustrating the *monomachia* of Memnon and Achilles, significantly portray Eos and Thetis facing each other, each at her son's side.[4] The parallelism persists even in the outcome of the duel, although ultimately one hero will win and the other will lose. Vase-painting corroborates the existence, in the tradition also shared by the *Aethiopis*, of a *kêrostasia* in which Hermes weighs the *kêres* of Memnon and Achilles in the presence of Eos and Thetis.[5] In

[2] *Nem.* 6.50. See also *Ol.* 2.83 and *Nem.* 3.63. References are to the Oxford edition of Pindar by C. M. Bowra (1947, repr. 1961).

[3] To precisely what effect the *Aethiopis* used this traditional parallelism is of course a matter for speculation; in any case, as the iconographic evidence indicates (see below), the poem very likely transmitted this inherited confrontation without special innovation. W. Burkert writes "When Achilles fights with Memnon, the two divine mothers, Thetis and Eos, rush to the scene—this was probably the subject of a pre-Iliad epic song," *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass. 1985) 121.

[4] In his important study *The Iliad in Early Greek Art* (Copenhagen 1967), K. Friis Johansen, referring to "a well-known type of picture that was very popular in early Greek art, a conventional monomachy framed by two standing female figures," points out that "There can be no doubt that this type was originally invented for the fight between Achilles and Memnon in the presence of their mothers Thetis and Eos" (200–201). M. E. Clark and W. D. E. Coulson discuss the iconography of the *Aethiopis* and its adaptations in painting, as well as the poem's relation to the *Iliad*, in "Memnon and Sarpedon," *MH* 35 (1978) 65–73.

[5] On the iconography of this subject see E. Wüst, *RE* 23.2 (1959) 1442; G. E. Lung, *Memnon. Archäologische Studien zur Aethiopis* (Bonn 1912) 14–19; and the discussion in Friis Johansen (above, note 4) 261. Also K. Schefold, *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art* (London 1966) 10. The weighing of the fates of Memnon and Achilles is not specifically

the *Aethiopis*, the paired mothers are equated in their involvement in the struggle, each present to protect her son.[6]

The efforts of Thetis and Eos in the *Aethiopis* are essentially identical. In only one respect are Thetis and Eos distinguished in Proclus' summary of the *Aethiopis*. Unlike Eos, Thetis communicates to Achilles some foreknowledge about his adversary: τὰ κατὰ τὸν Μέμνονα προλέγει.[7] Eos requests of Zeus, and obtains, immortality for Memnon. Thetis does not actually ask Zeus for immortality for Achilles; but she herself "having snatched her son away from the pyre, transports him to the White Island." Like Elysion, the White Island represents the refuge of immortality for heroes, where they live on once they have not avoided but—even better—transcended death.[8] The *Aethiopis*, then, emphasized the hero's divine heritage as a way of separating him from ordinary human existence, and his access to communication with the gods as a way of resolving the conflict between heroic stature and mortal limitation.

The tradition represented by the *Aethiopis* and by our iconographic examples thus posits an identity not only between Achilles and Memnon but between Thetis and Eos, based on their roles as immortal guardians and protectors of their mortal children. From a narrative standpoint this parallelism is more than an instance of the Cycle's fond-

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mentioned by Proclus in his summary, although it provided the subject for Aeschylus' lost *Psychostasia*, as we learn from e.g. schol. A ad 8.70 and Eustathius on 8.73 (699.31). For views in support of its existence in the *Aethiopis* see Clark and Coulson (above, note 4); B. C. Dietrich, "The Judgment of Zeus," *RhM* 107 (1964) 97–125, esp. 112–14; A. Severyns (above, note 1) 318–19.

[6] See Schefold (above, note 5) 45.

[7] In the reconstruction of the "Memnonis" offered by neo-analytic research, Thetis here foretells Achilles' imminent death which is to follow upon his slaying of Memnon. According to this hypothesis, Thetis' prophetic warning here is the cause of Achilles' abstention from battle, which he will reenter only after the death of his friend Antilochos. G. Schoeck, *Ilias und Aethiopis* (Zurich 1961) 38–48 contributes the interesting observation that the *Iliad* makes reference to a prophecy from Thetis precisely at those junctures where the question of Achilles' return to battle arises, e.g. 11.790ff., 16.36–50. He argues that the *Iliad* in this way adverts to a "Memnonis" prototype, in which Thetis' prophecy was the specific cause of Achilles' absence from battle; that is, Achilles absented himself from battle at his mother's request.

[8] The use of the White Island motif, like that of Elysion at *Odyssey* 4.563, is an acknowledgment of the religious and social phenomenon of the hero-cult, which is generally excluded from direct reference in Homeric epic. E. Rohde, in *Psyche. Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (Freiburg 1898) 3.371 calls Leuke a "sonderelysion" for Achilles. Rohde offers a discussion of the thematic equivalence of Leuke, Elysion, and the Isles of the Blessed at 365–78. On Elysion as a cult concept, see W. Burkert, "Elysion," *Glotta* 39 (1961) 208–13, and Th. Hadzisteliou Price, "Hero-Cult and Homer," *Historia* 22 (1973) 133–34. Examination of the diction (as transmitted by Proclus, at any rate) will show that the terms used for Thetis' actions are those used to describe cult-practice. See G. Nagy, "Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas," *HSCP* 77 (1973) 137–77.

ness for repetition or doublets. The *Aethiopis* shows us not a recapitulation of a prior situation by a subsequent one, but a rendering of the mythological equation between the two figures as a simultaneous juxtaposition, a mirroring in which each reflects, and must assume the dimensions of, her counterpart.

The identity between the two mothers in the tradition transmitted by the *Aethiopis* and the vase-paintings reinforces the uniqueness of Thetis in the *Iliad*—the incomparable singularity of her position to which the poem explicitly calls attention at 18.429–34:

> Ἥφαιστ', ἦ ἄρα δή τις, ὅσαι θεαί εἰσ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
> τοσσάδ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἧσιν ἀνέσχετο κήδεα λυγρά,
> ὅσσ' ἐμοὶ ἐκ πασέων Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν;
> ἐκ μέν μ' ἀλλάων ἀλιάων ἀνδρὶ δάμασσεν,
> Αἰακίδῃ Πηλῆϊ, καὶ ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνὴν
> πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα.

But if the *Iliad* treats Thetis' position as unparalleled, then an examination of its treatment in the light of the sources of the Thetis-Eos equation can serve as an introduction to the *Iliad*'s process of interpreting and selectively shaping its mythology, preserving for us dimensions of Thetis that elucidate her role in the *Iliad* even when Eos is not present to help evoke them.

Comparative evidence indicates the connection of several female deities, notable in Greek and Indic mythologies, to the prototype of an Indo-European Dawn Goddess, *Ausos.[9] The representatives of this important Indo-European figure who most closely assume her functions in their respective poetic traditions are Indic Uṣas and Greek Eos. However, the shared attributes of these Greek and Indic Dawn goddesses, which link them to their prototype, yield a still more productive legacy in Greek epic, where they are inherited by Aphrodite, among others.

In analyzing the elements which Aphrodite and Eos share, and which identify them (with Uṣas) as descendants of the Indo-European Dawn Goddess,[10] we recognize motifs that are significant in the story of Thetis. Chief among these is the association of the immortal goddess with a mortal lover.[11] Like Uṣas in the Vedic hymns, Eos unites with

[9] On the etymology of Attic Ἕως (= Ionic Ἠώς), see Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968) 394–95.

[10] The evidence for the Indo-European origins of these deities is presented in D. D. Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic* (Leiden 1974), whose subject is Greek epic's integration of Aphrodite's inherited features, through diction and theme, into its development of her character and role. See also the discussion in P. Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite* (Chicago 1978), who considers that "the Proto-Indo-European goddess of dawn was one of several main sources for the Greek Aphrodite" (31).

[11] Boedeker (above, note 10) 67 writes: "The tradition of the mortal lover of the Dawn-goddess is an old one; in Greek epic it is surely the most obvious aspect of Eos' mythol-

various lovers, among whom Tithonos is prominent in epic; Aphrodite has union with several, notably Anchises; and Thetis is joined to Peleus. Although the outcome of a love relationship between immortal and mortal may be benign, the potential for extraordinary pathos in such a story is clear.

Eos and her lovers serve as the model for goddess-mortal relationships[12] with their essential antithesis between the timelessness of the goddess and the temporality of her lover. Eos and her lovers are even cited by characters *within* epic as exemplary of such relationships. Aphrodite herself tells Eos' story (*h.Aphr.* 218–38); Calypso knows it as well, even though, as the *Odyssey* points out, she lives very far away (*Od.* 5.121); and both compare it to their own stories. The marriage of Thetis to Peleus exhibits the same antithetical pattern. Because Eos typifies such goddess-mortal relationships, Thetis is perceived synchronically as being connected with her, as in the *Aethiopis*, and thus shares dictional features associated with her; although Thetis cannot be shown definitively, as Eos has been, to be a direct descendant, or hypostasis, of the Indo-European Dawn Goddess. Their relationship is structurally homologous, rather than historical.

In Greek epic, the themes attached to the goddess and her mortal lover are recapitulated with much greater emphasis in the relationship between the goddess and her son, the offspring of her union with her mortal lover. Eos and Memnon, as an instance of this, reinforce the Eos-Thetis parallel. But in the case of Eos, the pattern of whose relationship with Tithonos is repeated in part with Memnon—as she requests and obtains his immortality—the erotic aspect of her mythology dominates. Thetis' erotic aspect, discernible (as we shall see) in the tradition followed by Pindar and Aeschylus, where both mortal and immortal partners woo her, is subordinated to her maternal aspect, as she appears in the *Iliad*.

Certain elements in the constellation of motifs common to the divinities sharing the mythology of the Dawn Goddess are preserved by the *Iliad*; others are significantly reworked. The motif of the goddess's protection of the mortal hero she loves is a central traditional feature shared by the immortal mothers (and lovers) who inherit, or are assimilated to, the mythology of the Dawn Goddess.[13] Its variations, apart

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ogy. Comparative evidence from the *Rig-Veda* indicates that this feature of solar mythology dates back to common Indo-European, although in Greek myth it may have been amplified beyond its original importance." See also C. P. Segal, "The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite: A Structuralist Approach," *CW* 67 (1974) 205–12.

[12] Boedeker (above, note 10) 69.

[13] In *Achilles, Patroclus and the Meaning of Philos* (Innsbruck 1980), D. Sinos has shown in detail that the *kourotrophos* or nurturing function of the goddess, revealed in the diction of vegetal growth, as for example at *Iliad* 18.437–38, is apparent in the relationship in cult

from Eos and Thetis in the *Aethiopis*, include Calypso in the *Odyssey* and Aphrodite in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* as well as in the *Iliad*.[14] This tradition is well known to the *Iliad*, where in two dramatic episodes Aphrodite acts to protect her favorites from imminent danger, snatching them away from battle at the crucial moment. In Book 3 she rescues Paris as he is about to be overpowered by Menelaos; in 5 it is Aeneas whom she saves from the onslaught of Diomedes. To snatch a hero from danger, to protect him from death, however, offers a paradox of which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are conscious: that preserving a hero from death means denying him a heroic life.

Thus Calypso, who compares her intention toward Odysseus with Eos' abduction of Orion,[15] wants by sequestering Odysseus to offer him immortality; but this would inevitably mean the loss of his goal, the impossibility of completing the travels, the denial of his identity. From a perspective that is intrinsic to the *Odyssey* as to the *Iliad*, it would mean the extinction of heroic subject matter, the negation of epic. Calypso "the concealer" uses persuasive arguments in her attempt to hide Odysseus from mortality; her ultimate failure measures the hero's commitment to his mortal existence. Aphrodite, on the other hand, is a successful concealer, shielding her favorites by hiding them, Paris in a cloud of mist and Aeneas in her flowing robe.[16]

Thetis, like Calypso and Aphrodite, is associated by the *Iliad* with impenetrable clouds, with veils, and with concealment. But the *Iliad* does not pursue the parallelism of this aspect of their mythology. Thetis never spirits Achilles away from danger, and she never tempts him with immortality. On the contrary, it is she who states the human limits of his choice. Repeatedly, the absoluteness of the *Iliad*'s rejection of the

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between the *kourotrophos* goddess and the *kouros*. The protection motif is a correlate of this function in myth. See also G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 174–210, as well as R. Merkelbach, "*KOROS*," *ZPE* 8 (1971) 80 and P. Vidal-Naquet, "Le Chasseur noir et l'origine de l'ephébie athénienne," *Economies-Sociétés-Civilisations* (1968) 947–49.

[14] On the related attributes of these goddesses, see Boedeker (above, note 10) 64–84.

[15] 5.121–24.

[16] Aphrodite is described as rescuing Paris as follows:

> τὸν δ' ἐξήρπαξ' Ἀφροδίτη
> ῥεῖα μάλ' ὡς τε θεός, ἐκάλυψε δ' ἄρ' ἠέρι πολλῇ,
> κὰδ δ' εἷσ' ἐν θαλάμῳ εὐώδεϊ κηώεντι. (3.380–82)

and Aeneas in 5:

> ἀμφὶ δ' ἑὸν φίλον υἱὸν ἐχεύατο πήχεε λευκώ,
> πρόσθε δέ οἱ πέπλοιο φαεινοῦ πτύγμ' ἐκάλυψεν. (5.314–15)

It is perhaps significant, however, that while both Aphrodite's beneficiaries do escape destruction and survive the *Iliad*, their individual heroism, from an epic standpoint, has been permanently compromised.

idea of immortality emerges from its treatment, in relation to Achilles, of this protection motif, which figures so importantly in the immortal goddess-mortal lover or son stories, and which has a preeminent place in Thetis' mythology.

Thetis acts on behalf of Achilles in the *Iliad* only after asserting repeatedly the knowledge that he must die, and finally, in 18, the certainty that it is to happen soon. It is only then, after establishing her awareness of Achilles' vulnerability, her understanding that he cannot be saved, that she makes her gesture toward protecting him. She asks Hephaestus to create new armor for him, to replace the old armor worn by Patroclus and lost to Hector.

The *Iliad*'s treatment of the *hoplopoiia* is underscored by the evident existence of a similar scene in the *Aethiopis*, in which Memnon entered the battle wearing ἠφαιστότευκτον πανοπλίαν, prior to Eos' successful plea for his immortality. In the *Aethiopis*, apparently, Memnon's divine armor anticipated the successful intervention of divinity, and was emblematic of its redemptive patronage. It confirmed Memnon's special relationship with the gods which would make immortality possible for him.[17] In the *Iliad*, the supreme implement of protection made by Hephaestus at Thetis' request is the shield, which only Achilles can endure to look at when Thetis brings it to him. But it precisely does not fulfill, as it does for Memnon, the promise of ultimate divine preservation through the agency of his mother. The *Iliad*'s rejection of this outcome for Achilles, and hence for its conception of heroism, is expressly stated. Thetis prefaces her request of Hephaestus with a summary of the *Iliad* up to that point, and Hephaestus replies:

> θάρσει· μή τοι ταῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶ σῇσι μελόντων.
> αἲ γάρ μιν θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ὧδε δυναίμην
> νόσφιν ἀποκρύψαι, ὅτε μιν μόρος αἰνὸς ἱκάνοι,
> ὥς οἱ τεύχεα καλὰ παρέσσεται, οἷά τις αὖτε
> ἀνθρώπων πολέων θαυμάσσεται, ὅς κεν ἴδηται. (18.463–67)

In other words, the *Iliad* uses this constellation of traditional elements—the divine armor, the protection motif—in order to violate conventional expectations of their potency, and it does so for the sake of the primacy of the theme of mortality, as Thetis' lament to the Nereids at 18.54–62 explicitly and deliberately reminds us:

> ὤ μοι ἐγὼ δειλή, ὤ μοι δυσαριστοτόκεια,
> ἥ τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ τέκον υἱὸν ἀμύμονά τε κρατερόν τε, 55
> ἔξοχον ἡρώων· ὁ δ' ἀνέδραμεν ἔρνεϊ ἶσος·
> τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ θρέψασα, φυτὸν ὡς γουνῷ ἀλωῆς,
> νηυσὶν ἐπιπροέηκα κορωνίσιν Ἴλιον εἴσω

[17] See J. Griffin, "The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer," *JHS* 97 (1977) 39–53, esp. 42–43, on immortality in the Cycle poems.

Τρωσὶ μαχησόμενον· τὸν δ' οὐχ ὑποδέξομαι αὖτις
οἴκαδε νοστήσαντα δόμον Πηλήϊον εἴσω. 60
ὄφρα δέ μοι ζώει καὶ ὁρᾷ φάος ἠελίοιο
ἄχνυται, οὐδέ τί οἱ δύναμαι χραισμῆσαι ἰοῦσα.

The semi-divine hero is inextricably associated with non-human perfection and scope, but instead of conceiving of him as elevated by this into the realm of divinity, the *Iliad*'s vision is of an exacting mortal aspect which exerts its leveling effect on the immortal affiliations and expectations of the hero. These retain their authenticity, but no longer their overriding authority as guarantors of immortal stature.

Thus, the *Iliad*'s rejection of the possibility of Achilles' salvation through Thetis results in its emphasis on her helpless status, which is put into relief as a radical contrast to her part in the tradition of divine protectresses—one might even say, her role as protectress *par excellence*. For the *Iliad*, in such provocative allusions as Achilles' speech at 1.394–412, depicts Thetis as the efficacious protectress not of heroes but of gods.[18]

In the *Iliad*, Thetis has a present and, prospectively, a future defined by the mortal condition of her son, and as such she is known in her dependent attitude of sorrowing and caring. But the *Iliad* recognizes that she has a past as well, and in recalling it at crucial points suggests a source for her role that is far more important than initially appears.

How does the *Iliad* reveal a character's past? Typically, through the character's own reminiscences and reflections on his previous achievements or position. But Thetis never refers to any past that does not include her son. Instead, Hephaestus gives the only first-person account of Thetis' previous activities, anterior to the time-frame of the epic.

In Book 18, when Thetis arrives to request the new set of armor for Achilles, Hephaestus responds to the news of her presence with an account of how she had saved him after Hera had cast him out of Olympus.[19] In Book 6, there is another instance of Thetis preserving a god

[18] M. Lang, in C. A. Rubino and C. W. Shelmerdine ed., *Approaches to Homer* (Austin 1983) 140–61, suggests that "hurling out of heaven and rescues by Thetis seem to have been popular motifs," noting that Thetis "made a specialty of rescue (witness her deliverance of Zeus in 1.396ff., and her rescue of Dionysus in 6.130ff.)" (153–54).

[19] 18.394–405. That Eurynome, who otherwise does not figure in Homeric epic, is named here as a participant in the rescue of Hephaestus, may be explained by the particular context of Hephaestus' conversation with Charis. Elsewhere in Homer, Hephaestus is the husband of Aphrodite; but here Charis is his wife, as in the *Theogony* (945–46), where he is married to one of the Charites (there specifically Aglaia; Homer uses simply the generic Charis). And at *Theogony* 905ff., Hesiod identifies the Charites as the daughters of Eurynome. The inclusion of Hesiodic Eurynome, therefore, is owed to the presence of her Hesiodic child. Moreover, the mention of Eurynome here, and perhaps even the presence of Charis, are motivated by what emerges, as I hope to show below, as the *theogonic* context of references to Thetis' power.

from disaster which is, similarly, not related by her but in this case by Diomedes, who cites it as part of an example of how dangerous it is to fight with the gods. Diomedes describes how Lykourgos chased Dionysus with a cattle prod until Dionysus in terror leapt into the sea where he was sheltered by Thetis.[20]

Together with the episode described by Hephaestus in 18, this account associates Thetis in a divine past—uninvolved with human events—with a level of divine invulnerability extraordinary by Olympian standards. Where within the framework of the *Iliad* the ultimate recourse is to Zeus for protection,[21] here the poem seems to point to an alternative structure of cosmic relations, one which was neither overthrown by the Olympian order (insofar as Thetis, unlike, say, the Titans, still functions) nor upheld by it (insofar as no challenge to the Olympian order persists), but whose relation to it was otherwise resolved.

We do not have far to look for explicit confirmation of this in the poem. Thetis, the rescuer of Hephaestus and Dionysus, was first and foremost the rescuer of Zeus. The most general, but most potent, statement of her power in this regard is expressed by the formula λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι.[22] The ability to λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι (or ἀμύνειν) within the *Iliad* is shared exclusively by Achilles, Apollo, and Zeus: although others are put in a position to do so, and make the attempt, only these three have the power to "ward off destruction," to be efficacious in restoring order to the world of the poem. Thetis alone, however, is credited with having had such power in the divine realm, for she alone was able to "ward off destruction" from Zeus. She herself unbound Zeus, summoning the hundred-handed Briareos as a kind of guarantor or reminder of her power.[23] That Thetis saves Zeus from being bound deserves special attention. I wish to suggest that the motif of binding on Olympus, together with the reference to Briareos, specifically evoke the succession myth and the divine genealogy on which it is founded.

The motif of binding is central to the account of the succession myth in the *Theogony*, recurring as one of the primary ways to assert divine sovereignty over a potential or actual challenger. Ouranos attempts to ensure his power over Briareos and his other children by binding them; ultimately they are freed by Zeus, who in turn wants their allegiance in his own bid for hegemony, and their willingness to cooperate is based on their gratitude at being unbound. With the aid of

[20] 6.123–37.

[21] As at 21.505ff., where Artemis retreats to Zeus when attacked and struck by Hera.

[22] For a detailed discussion of the thematics of this formula, see Nagy (above, note 13) 74–78.

[23] 1.401–5, cited above, p. 2.

Briareos and his brothers, the Olympians, once they have managed to overpower Kronos and the other Titans, bind them and cast them beneath the earth.[24]

Binding is the ultimate penalty in the divine realm, where by definition there is no death. It serves not to deprive an opponent of existence, but to render him impotent.[25] Once bound, a god cannot escape his bondage by himself, no matter how great his strength. In this sense it is not finally an expression of physical strength (although violence certainly enters into the Titanomachy) but of what has been called "terrible sovereignty."[26]

The attempt to bind Zeus recounted at 1.396ff. thus constitutes a mutinous effort at supplanting him and imposing a new divine regime—on the pattern of his own overthrowing of Kronos and the Titans.[27] Thetis' act in rescuing Zeus is therefore nothing less than supreme: an act that restores the cosmic equilibrium. Once having loosed the bonds, she summons Briareos, not to perform, but simply to sit beside Zeus as a reminder of Zeus' final mastery in the succession myth struggle. Briareos and his brothers, in Hesiod (as later in Apollodorus) are never instigators but agents; Thetis' power to summon the *hekatoncheir* here—beyond what the insurgent gods are capable of—recalls Zeus' own successful use of Briareos and his brothers. Not even a single one of Briareos' hands needs to be laid on the mutinous gods here: they are overwhelmed by the assertion of sovereignty implied by the presence of Briareos, rather than overpowered by him. In this sense, one can see Briareos' narrative function as a mirror of his dramatic function: as a reminder. The binding element in itself is a sufficient allusion to the succession myth, so that Briareos is included as a multiplication of the motif.

Linked to this cosmic act on the part of Thetis is the phrase ὁ γὰρ αὖτε βίην οὗ πατρὸς ἀμείνων—a reference about which it has rightly been said that "much remains obscure."[28] Yet some light may be shed on the difficulties by reminding ourselves that the reference to "the son who is greater than his father" is significant for Thetis in a crucial dimension of her mythology.

[24] *Theogony* 658ff.

[25] References to binding of gods in the *Iliad* include the account of the binding of Ares by Otos and Ephialtes at 5.386–91; of Hera by Zeus at 15.19; Zeus' threat to the other gods at 13.17ff.

[26] On the metaphysical nature of binding, see M. Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, transl. P. Mairet (New York 1969) Ch. 3, "The 'God Who Binds' and the Symbolism of Knots," 92–124.

[27] On binding as an expression and instrument of sovereignty, see G. Dumézil, *Ouranos-Varuna: étude de mythologie comparée indo-européenne* (Paris 1934).

[28] G. S. Kirk ed., *The Iliad: A Commentary* (Cambridge 1985) 95 ad 403–4. See 93–95 for a valuable discussion of 1.396–406.

Pindar's *Isthmian* 8, where Thetis' story is the ode's central myth, recounts that Zeus and Poseidon were rivals for the hand of Thetis, each wishing to be her husband, for love possessed them. But the gods decided not to bring about either marriage, once they had heard from Themis that Thetis was destined to bear a son who would be greater than his father. Therefore, Themis counseled, let Thetis marry a mortal instead, and see her son die in war. This divine prize should be given to Aeacus' son Peleus, the most reverent of men.[29] *Isthmian* 8 thus reveals Thetis as a figure of cosmic capacity, whose existence promises profound consequences for the gods. Not only does she generate strife between Zeus and Poseidon because of their love for her, but her potential for bearing a son greater than his father threatens the entire divine order.[30] Themis, the guardian of social order,[31] tries to avert a

[29] ταῦτα καὶ μακάρων ἐμέμναντ' ἀγοραί,
Ζεὺς ὅτ' ἀμφὶ Θέτιος ἀγλαός τ' ἔρισαν Ποσειδὰν γάμῳ,
ἄλοχον εὐειδέα θέλων ἑκάτερος
ἐὰν ἔμμεν· ἔρως γὰρ ἔχεν.
ἀλλ' οὔ σφιν ἄμβροτοι τέλεσαν εὐνὰν θεῶν πραπίδες,

ἐπεὶ θεσφάτων ἐπάκουσαν· εἶπεν
εὔβουλος ἐν μέσοισι Θέμις,
οὕνεκεν πεπρωμένον ἦν φέρτερον πατέρος ἄνακτα γόνον τεκεῖν
ποντίαν θεόν, ὃς κεραυνοῦ τε κρέσσον ἄλλο βέλος
δώῃξει χερὶ τριόδοντός τ' ἀμαιμακέτου, Δί τε μισγομέναν
ἢ Διὸς παρ' ἀδελφεοῖσιν. (*Isthmian* 8.29–38)

C. M. Bowra, in *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 88–89, writes:

> [*Isthmian* 8] is concerned with the consequences of what will happen if Thetis marries either Zeus or Poseidon. If she does, says Themis, it is πεπρωμένον that her son will be stronger than either. Here everything turns on the meaning of πεπρωμένον. It is clear that it is not a decision of the gods on Olympus but something which is bound to happen unless they take avoiding action ... What Pindar means is that, the gods being what they are, such a union will inevitably bring forth a being stronger than they. The gods have their own nature, and this is a consequence of it.

[30] The relationship of *Isthmian* 8 to the Aeschylean treatment of Thetis is considered more fully in the larger study of which this paper forms a part. See the discussion in M. Griffith ed., *Aeschylus Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1983) 4–6, as well as that in G. Thomson ed., *Aeschylus Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1932) 21–22. In *PV* the focus on intergenerational succession emphasizes the absolute supremacy of Zeus, diminishing the importance of Poseidon in the courtship of Thetis and its consequences. Nevertheless, as Prof. Helen Bacon points out to me, *PV* 920–27 may well be an allusion to Poseidon's role in the pursuit of Thetis. See Griffith ad loc.

[31] On the role of Themis, cf. A. Köhnken, "Gods and Descendants of Aiakos in Pindar's Eighth Isthmian Ode," *BICS* 22 (1975) 33, note 19. Apollodorus 3.13.5 says that one version attributes to Themis, and another to Prometheus, the revelation of the secret that Thetis will bear a son greater than his father: τὸν ἐκ ταύτης αὐτῷ γεννηθέντα οὐρανοῦ δυναστεύσειν.

catastrophic *neikos*,[32] on the scale of previous intergenerational succession struggles; this is what Thetis has the power to engender.

While the danger to Zeus posed by the attempt of Hera, Athena, and Poseidon was averted by Thetis, therefore, she herself presented the greatest challenge of all to his supremacy, according to the myth as known to Pindar in *Isthmian* 8.[33] The phrase ὁ γὰρ αὖτε βίην οὖ πατρὸς ἀμείνων at *Iliad* 1.404 describes Achilles in that tradition and recalls his association with the theme of ongoing genealogy and generational strife.

Thetis' cosmic potential, enunciated by Pindar in *Isthmian* 8, is presented with remarkable clarity in a local context, in Laconia, where incidentally Pausanias tells us she was worshipped with utmost reverence in cult.[34] In Alcman's cosmogony (fr. 5 P)[35] we learn that Laconian poetic traditions reflect the belief that Thetis was not simply a cosmic force, but *the* cosmic force: she not only has power in the sea, but is the generative principle of the universe. Alcman seems to have presented Thetis as the primal, divine creative force, through whose agency *Poros* "the way" and *Tekmor* "the sign" came into being.

Known to us only through a commentary, the cosmogony appears to have envisaged a sequence of creation in which at first only undifferentiated matter existed; then Thetis, the γένεσις παντῶν, appeared, and generated Poros and Tekmor. Darkness existed as a third feature, later followed by day, moon, and stars. The point to stress here is that this cosmogony, with Thetis the creatrix as demiurge, involves not primarily the bringing into being of matter, but rather the discrimination of objects, the ordering of space, the illumination of dark-

[32] μηδὲ Νηρέος θυγάτηρ νεικέων πέταλα δὶς ἐγγυαλιζέτω
ἄμμιν. (*I.* 8.47–49)

Note Themis' role in the *Cypria* where *eris* also plays a crucial part. See Nagy (above, note 13) 253–75 and 309–16 on the overlapping semantics of *eris* and *neikos* and their implications for traditional Greek poetry.

[33] It is necessary to proceed with the greatest caution when reading Pindar (or any later author) as evidence for traditions latent in Homeric poetry. Two considerations encourage the validity of doing so here. First, that Pindar has been shown to preserve highly archaic material reaching back even to an Indo-European provenance, as illustrated by E. Benveniste's discussion of *Pythian* 3, in "La Doctrine Médicale des Indo-Européens," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 130 (1945) 5–12. Second, that as C. Greengard has demonstrated, *Isthmian* 8 "draws ... heavily on the themes and movements of the *Iliad* tragedy," *The Structure of Pindar's Epinician Odes* (Amsterdam 1980) 35. Her comprehensive analysis concludes that "the diction itself of *I.* 8 is more than usually allusive to that of the *Iliad*" (36, note 27). It seems reasonable to suppose that Pindar in *I.* 8 draws on mythology present in the *Iliad* in some form, and recoverable from it—even if deeply embedded and only allusively evident to us.

[34] Pausanias 3.14.4–6.

[35] Originally edited by E. Lobel in *P.Oxy.* xxiv, no. 2390, fr. 2.

ness with light. It is therefore an intellectual rather than a physical creation.

This aspect of Alcman's poem has been discussed by M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, who argue convincingly for a close connection between Thetis and Metis.[36] In different versions of their mythology, Thetis and Metis have associations with bonds and binding; both are sea-powers; both shape-shifters; both loved by Zeus; both destined to bear a son greater than his father. Some scholars, like M. L. West, have seen the name of Thetis as defining her role.[37] Detienne and Vernant suggest that it is the power of metamorphosis as an attribute that disposes these goddesses of the sea to a crucial cosmological role: they "contain" the potential shapes of everything created and creatable. Their emphasis on Thetis' connections with the sea includes the possibility of understanding Poros and Tekmor as navigational phenomena. Thus Thetis' role in the cosmogony is as a force against chaos, the principle *positively* corresponding to *negatively* defined limitless disorder.

The *Iliad*'s acknowledgment of Thetis' cosmic power, known to these traditions,[38] locates it in a past to which she herself does not refer. Her grief is her preeminent attribute in the poem. Her references to herself, mentioned above, are uniquely to her sorrow over her son. In contexts where we might expect allusions, like that in Achilles' speech in 1, to her former power, she claims for herself only suffering beyond that of all other Olympians. Thus, at 18.429–31:

> Ἥφαιστ', ἦ ἄρα δή τις, ὅσαι θεαί εἰσ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
> τοσσάδ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἧσιν ἀνέσχετο κήδεα λυγρά,
> ὅσσ' ἐμοὶ ἐκ πασέων Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν;

In what follows I will suggest the way in which the grief of Thetis represents the link between her past and her present in the *Iliad*.

In the *Iliad*, as G. Nagy has pointed out, ἄχος is a constant for Achilles, while his continuous grief involves shifting consequences for

[36] M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Les Ruses de l'intelligence: la métis des Grecs* (Paris 1974) 127–64, which develops a number of ideas on this subject first presented in J.-P. Vernant, "Thetis et le poème cosmogonique d'Alcman," *Hommages à Marie Delcourt*, Collection Latomus 114 (Brussels 1970) 219–33.

[37] M. L. West, "Three Presocratic Cosmologies," *CQ* 57 (1963) 154–57 and "Alcman and Pythagoras," *CQ* 61 (1967) 1–7; see also *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford 1971) 206–8.

[38] It is important to stress that we obviously cannot assume a single common bearing on Thetis' mythology in Pindar, Alcman, Aeschylus, Apollodorus (or, for example, Herodotus, who records at 6.1.191 that the Persians sacrificed to Thetis at Cape Sepias); but at the same time we may usefully draw attention to these authors' identification of Thetis as invested with vast cosmic power—an identification that seems to stem from elsewhere than the *Iliad*'s *overt* presentation of her.

other people. Achilles' capacity to effect a *transfert du mal*, through which his ἄχος is passed on to the Achaeans and ultimately to the Trojans, is part of the dynamic of his μῆνις. As Nagy puts it, "the ἄχος of Achilles leads to the μῆνις of Achilles leads to the ἄχος of the Achaeans."[39]

Achilles is the only hero of whom the substantive μῆνις is used in Homer. In a detailed study of the semantics of μῆνις, C. Watkins has shown that "μῆνις is on a wholly different level from the other Homeric words for 'wrath.' The ominous, baneful character of μῆνις is plain. It is a dangerous notion, which one must fear; a sacral, 'numinous' (θεῶν) notion, to be sure, but one of which even the gods are concerned with ridding themselves."[40] Moreover, Watkins writes, "The association of divine wrath with a mortal by this very fact elevates that mortal outside the normal ambience of the human condition toward the sphere of the divine."[41]

Μῆνις thus not only designates Achilles' power—divine in scope—to exact vengeance by transforming events according to his will, but it specifically associates Achilles with Apollo and Zeus, the two gods whose μῆνις is, in the case of each, explicitly identified and isolated as propelling and controlling the events of the poem.[42] In addition, Zeus, Apollo, and—uniquely among mortals—Achilles can generate or remove ἄχος.

When Apollo and Achilles are involved in removing ἄχος from the Achaeans, they are said to ward off λοιγός "devastation." Apollo is appealed to by Chryses to remove the λοιγός with which the god has afflicted the Greek army.[43] Achilles is requested to λοιγὸν ἀμύνειν "ward off devastation," where, as in the case of Apollo, λοιγόν designates the plight into which he himself has cast the Achaeans: it is the term used to designate the Battle at the Ships.[44] In fact, the successful capacity to λοιγὸν ἀμύνειν (or ἀμῦναι) *within the framework* of the *Iliad* is restricted to the two figures of μῆνις—Apollo and Achilles—who, like the third, Zeus, can both ward destruction away from the Greeks and bring it on them as well.

The single other possessor of the ability to λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι successfully is Thetis. We have examined the passage in Book 1 which identifies her as the rescuer of the divine regime; she alone was able to λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι for Zeus, to protect him from destruction. But if the power

[39] Nagy (above, note 13) 80.

[40] C. Watkins, "On Μῆνις," *Indo-European Studies* 3 (1977) 694–95.

[41] Ibid. 690.

[42] Zeus' μῆνις is referred to at 5.34; 13.624; 15.122. On the μῆνις of Achilles and Apollo, see Nagy (above, note 13) 69–83.

[43] 1.456.

[44] 16.32.

to λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι is bivalent—if the one who wields it can not only avert destruction but bring it on—then the threat posed by Thetis, who could λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι on a cosmic level, is potentially the greatest of all. For Thetis' ἄχος is supreme among the gods of the *Iliad*: the *transfert du mal* she might effect would be on an equal scale. Remembering that for Achilles "ἄχος leads to μῆνις leads to the ἄχος of others," we may ask the question, why does the *Iliad* not predicate a μῆνις of Thetis? The answer, I suggest, is that it does so—by allusion and digression integrating into its own narrative mythology that is not evidently appropriate to *kleos*-epic as a genre.

If we consider the grief that Thetis endures because of the imminent loss of her son (whose prospective death she already mourns in her γόος at 18.52–64), and her power to respond on a cosmic scale, we recognize elements that combine elsewhere in a context in which it is appropriate to show full-fledged divine μῆνις in action, namely in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. The *Hymn* is precisely about the consequences of the μῆνις that ensues from Demeter's grief over the loss of Kore.

Much as Thetis' grief is evoked instantly when she hears Achilles' lament for Patroclus in Book 18, implicitly signalling his own death,[45] so ἄχος seizes Demeter at the moment when she hears her daughter's cry as she is abducted into the underworld by Hades.[46] What follows is Demeter's wrath at the gods' complicity in the irrevocable violation of Persephone, and through her wrath both Olympians and mortals are bound to suffer disastrously. She isolates herself from the gods, prepares full-scale devastation, and finally brings the Olympians to their knees. Zeus is compelled to dissuade her, sending Iris with his appeal:

> εὗρεν δ' ἐν νηῷ Δημήτερα κυανόπεπλον,
> καί μιν φωνήσασ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
> Δήμητερ καλέει σε πατὴρ Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα εἰδὼς
> ἐλθέμεναι μετὰ φῦλα θεῶν αἰειγενετάων.
> ἀλλ' ἴθι, μηδ' ἀτέλεστον ἐμὸν ἔπος ἐκ Διὸς ἔστω.
>
> (*H.Dem.* 319–23)

But Demeter's μῆνις is too great: she does not comply, and Hermes must be sent to Hades so that Demeter may see her daughter. Hermes reports:

> Ἄιδη κυανοχαῖτα καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσων
> Ζεύς σε πατὴρ ἤνωγεν ἀγανὴν Περσεφόνειαν

[45] σμερδαλέον δ' ὤμωξεν· ἄκουσε δὲ πότνια μήτηρ
ἡμένη ἐν βένθεσσιν ἁλὸς παρὰ πατρὶ γέροντι,
κώκυσέν τ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα. (18.35–37).

[46] *H.Dem.* 38–44, cited below, p. 17.

ἐξαγαγεῖν Ἐρέβευσφι μετὰ σφέας, ὄφρα ἑ μήτηρ
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα χόλου καὶ μήνιος αἰνῆς
ἀθανάτοις παύσειεν. (*H.Dem.* 347–51)

Among a number of correspondences between Demeter and Thetis, there is an especially telling parallel in the κάλυμμα κυάνεον Demeter puts on as she rushes out in search of Kore, which is subsequently reflected in her epithet κυανόπεπλος. Κυανόπεπλος is used to describe Demeter four times in the course of the *Hymn*, within a space of only slightly over one hundred lines,[47] characterizing her at the height of her ominous wrath, in the course of the gods' efforts to appease her.[48] Demeter's dark aspect originates with the onset of her ἄχος:

ἤχησαν δ' ὀρέων κορυφαὶ καὶ βένθεα πόντου
φωνῇ ὑπ' ἀθανάτῃ, τῆς δ' ἔκλυε πότνια μήτηρ.
ὀξὺ δέ μιν κραδίην ἄχος ἔλλαβεν, ἀμφὶ δὲ χαίταις
ἀμβροσίαις κρήδεμνα δαΐζετο χερσὶ φίλῃσι,
κυάνεον δὲ κάλυμμα κατ' ἀμφοτέρων βάλετ' ὤμων,
σεύατο δ' ὥς τ' οἰωνὸς ἐπὶ τραφερήν τε καὶ ὑγρὴν
μαιομένη. (*H.Dem.* 38–44)

This image of Demeter covering herself with a dark shawl has been shown to signify her transformation from a passive state of grief to an active state of anger.[49] In contrast to the image of the black cloud which surrounds a dying warrior or a mourner, here the goddess's deliberate assumption of the dark garment betokens her dire spirit of retaliation, the realization of her imminent wrath.[50]

[47] *H.Dem,* 319; 360; 373; 442.

[48] Κυανόπεπλος is glossed by a fuller description of the goddess's black garment at 181–83, when she has separated herself from the gods, specifically out of wrath (see note 54, below). The final instance of the epithet at 442 occurs after the reunion of Demeter and Kore, but *before* Zeus has appeased Demeter's wrath, guaranteeing her *timai* and the return of her daughter for two-thirds of the year. Once Demeter has agreed to renounce her wrath, the epithet is not used again.

[49] Full argumentation is given in an unpublished paper, "Demeter and the Black Robe of Grief," by D. Petegorsky, who demonstrates the distinction between the dying warrior being covered by a dark cloud, in such phrases as νεφέλη δέ μιν ἀμφεκάλυψε / κυανέη (*Iliad* 20.417–18) or μέλαν νέφος ἀμφεκάλυψεν (16.350), and Demeter's assertive action in cloaking herself with her black garment. I am greatly indebted to him for making his important analysis available to me.

[50] Petegorsky (above, note 49) compares Simonides (fr. 121 D) on the death of the heroes who perished at Thermopylae:

ἄσβεστον κλέος οἵδε φίλῃ περὶ πατρίδι θέντες
κυάνεον θανάτου ἀμφεβάλοντο νέφος·
οὐδὲ τεθνᾶσι θανόντες, ἐπεί σφ' ἀρετὴ καθύπερθεν
κυδαίνουσ' ἀνάγει δώματος ἐξ Ἀίδεω.

To quote from his analysis: "What is crucial in the poem is the change from a situation in which the cloud of death, as a force beyond their control, consumes the warriors, to one in

In this connection, the cult of Demeter *Melaina* at Phigalia in Arcadia deserves attention. Pausanias reports (8.42) that the Phigalians, by their own account, have given Demeter the *epiklesis Melaina* because of her black clothing, which she put on for two reasons: first, out of anger at Poseidon for his intercourse with her, and second, out of grief over the abduction of Persephone. Two reasons—but her anger is the first. The Phigalians further explain that Zeus, having learned about Demeter's appearance (σχήματος ... ὡς εἶχε) and her *clothing* (ἐσθῆτα ἐνεδέδυτο ποίαν), sent the Moirai to persuade the goddess to put aside her anger (first) and to abate her grief (second). Moreover, in their worship of Demeter *Melaina* the Phigalians are said—by way of introduction to their cult—to agree with the Thelpusian account of Demeter's rape by Poseidon. This account, which the Phigalia passage begins by referring to, Pausanias records at 8.25.4–5 in order to explain why the goddess is worshipped by the Thelpusians as Demeter *Erinus*. After Poseidon forced himself on her as she was searching for her daughter, Demeter was enraged at what had happened, and was therefore given the *epiklesis Erinus* because of her wrath (τοῦ μηνίματος μὲν ἕνεκα Ἐρινύς, 8.25.6). Demeter *Erinus* and Demeter *Melaina* are congruent references to the same story: the black-garbed goddess is a metonym of the wrathful, avenging goddess.

There is only one other dark κάλυμμα in Homeric epic, and it belongs to Thetis. She wraps herself in it when in Book 24 Iris announces Zeus' request that she come to Olympus. Here the context is again, as in the *Hymn to Demeter*, one of ἄχος.[51] Because of her ἄχος Thetis all but refuses to join the other gods. Unlike Demeter in the *Hymn* she does respond to the summons; and yet, the dark cloak she then puts on expresses, as with Demeter, the active principle that her grief presupposes:

> Ὣς ἄρα φωνήσασα κάλυμμ' ἕλε δῖα θεάων
> κυάνεον, τοῦ δ' οὔ τι μελάντερον ἔπλετο ἔσθος.
> βῆ δ' ἰέναι, πρόσθεν δὲ ποδήνεμος ὠκέα Ἶρις
> ἡγεῖτ'. (24.93–96)

The very request from Zeus acknowledges that she and Achilles together have, like Demeter, brought Olympus to its knees. Her poten-

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which they have appropriated death by turning it into a willful act—they are not passively slain, rather they choose actively to die. The grammar reflects this change. The familiar dark covering phrase is transformed from one in which the dark agent is the subject of the verb of covering and the person who is to die is the object, into one in which the heroes have become the subjects and the cloud the object of the verb ἀμφιβάλλομαι. This is especially interesting in that the verb which is used of Demeter putting on the dark shawl is βάλλομαι, and it is said that she puts it on both (ἀμφοτέρων) shoulders" (23).

[51] 24.83–92. ... ἔχω δ' ἄχε' ἄκριτα θυμῷ.

tial for retaliation is signalled explicitly: Zeus says, as she takes her place next to him,

> ἦλυθες Οὔλυμπόνδε, θεὰ Θέτι, κηδομένη περ,
> πένθος ἄλαστον ἔχουσα μετὰ φρεσίν· οἶδα καὶ αὐτός. (24.104–5)

Ἄλαστον, derived from λανθάνομαι, means, on the one hand, "unforgettable." The semantics of ἀλάστωρ in tragedy, however, as well as the morphological parallel with ἄφθιτον, indicate that it can also mean "unforgetting."[52] In this sense, the πένθος of Thetis has the same ominous character as that of her son, whose final πένθος over the death of Patroclus drives him to his devastating vengeance.

The image of the goddess taking up her κάλυμμα κυάνεον may be seen, I suggest, as conveying the implicit threat of μῆνις.[53] That Thetis wears a dark cloak "than which there is no blacker garment" accords with her having a cosmic potential for revenge—bivalent as we have seen λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι to be—that is greater than any other.

Why then does the *Iliad* not refer overtly to the wrath of Thetis? Thetis, as observed earlier, never refers to her own power, in contexts where we would expect it, but to her own grief. That grief, however, is twofold. When she accounts for it most fully, to Hephaestus in 18, she separates the two aspects of it:

> Ἥφαιστ', ἦ ἄρα δή τις, ὅσαι θεαί εἰσ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
> τοσσάδ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἧσιν ἀνέσχετο κήδεα λυγρά,
> ὅσσ' ἐμοὶ ἐκ πασέων Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν;
> ἐκ μέν μ' ἀλλάων ἁλιάων ἀνδρὶ δάμασσεν,
> Αἰακίδῃ Πηλῆϊ, καὶ ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνὴν
> πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα. ὁ μὲν δὴ γήραϊ λυγρῷ
> κεῖται ἐνὶ μεγάροις ἀρημένος, ἄλλα δέ μοι νῦν·
> υἱὸν ἐπεί μοι δῶκε γενέσθαι τε τραφέμεν τε,
> ἔξοχον ἡρώων· ὁ δ' ἀνέδραμεν ἔρνεϊ ἶσος ... (18.429–37)

The primary cause of her suffering was being forced by Zeus the son of Kronos to submit against her will to marriage to a mortal. Thus the *Iliad* returns us to the crucial feature of Thetis' mythology, her role in the succession myth. She was forced to marry a mortal because her potential

[52] Among other examples from tragedy, see *Agamemnon* 1500–1504. In *Comparative Studies of Greek and Indic Meter* (Cambridge, Mass. 1974) 256–61, G. Nagy discusses the traditional relationship of the complementary themes of *kleos* and *penthos* and the morphology of their epithets. See as well the analysis in Chantraine (above, note 9) 54. Also the discussion of verse 911 in Wilamowitz's edition of Euripides' *Herakles* (Bad Homburg 1959; reprint of the 1895 ed.) 3.202.

[53] M. Nagler has demonstrated the symbolic signification of clothing and gestures related to it in his discussion of Homeric *krêdemnon*, in *Spontaneity and Tradition: A Study in the Oral Art of Homer* (Berkeley 1974) 27–63. See also S. Lowenstam, *The Death of Patroklos: A Study in Typology*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie Heft 133 (Königstein 1981) on the symbolic force of gesture in the *Iliad*.

for bearing a son greater than his father meant that marriage to Zeus or Poseidon would begin the entire world-order over again.

Here once more there is a striking parallel with the *Hymn to Demeter*, which stresses Demeter's anger not so much against Hades as against Zeus, who ordained the rape of Persephone by his brother.[54] The implicit wrath of Thetis has an analogous source.

Given that the tripartite division of the universe is shared between the three brothers—Zeus and Poseidon on the one hand, Hades on the other—we see that these two myths share in the first place a preoccupation with the imposition and preservation of the existing hierarchy of divine power. Both the *Hymn to Demeter* and Pindar's *Isthmian* 8, in treating Thetis' mythology, are equipped by the nature of their genres to emphasize this concern. Their other common element, namely grief over the confrontation with mortality, is what heroic epic uniquely elaborates.

The *Iliad* is about the condition of being human, and about heroic endeavor as its most encompassing expression. The *Iliad* insists at every opportunity on the irreducible fact of human mortality, and in order to do so it reworks traditional motifs, such as the protection motif, as suggested above. The values it asserts, its definition of heroism, emerge in the human, not the divine, sphere.

[54] The poem is explicit on this point. Helios identifies Zeus as exclusively *aitios* in the abduction of Persephone (75–79), upon hearing which Demeter is said to feel a "more terrible" *achos* and to withdraw from the company of the gods out of rage at Zeus:

> τὴν δ' ἄχος αἰνότερον καὶ κύντερον ἵκετο θυμόν.
> χωσαμένη δ' ἤπειτα κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι
> νοσφισθεῖσα θεῶν ἀγορὴν καὶ μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον
> ᾤχετ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων πόλιας καὶ πίονα ἔργα
> εἶδος ἀμαλδύνουσα πολὺν χρόνον. (*H.Dem.* 90–94).

In the context of her wrathful isolation from the gods, as noted above, her black garment is made elaborate mention of:

> ἡ δ' ἄρ' ὄπισθε φίλον τετιημένη ἦτορ
> στεῖχε κατὰ κρῆθεν κεκαλυμμένη, ἀμφὶ δὲ πέπλος
> κυάνεος ῥαδινοῖσι θεᾶς ἐλελίζετο ποσσίν. (*H.Dem.* 181–83)

It is perhaps worth adding that in Homer the formula τετιημένος ἦτορ, when it is used to describe the gods, always denotes anger rather than sorrow; when Hera and Athena sit apart from Zeus and refuse to speak to him for preventing them from assisting the Achaeans, they are said to be φίλον τετιημέναι ἦτορ at *Iliad* 8.437; and when Hephaestus discovers the adultery of Aphrodite and Ares, he is described as follows at *Od.* 8.303–4:

> βῆ δ' ἴμεναι πρὸς δῶμα, φίλον τετιημένος ἦτορ·
> ἔστη δ' ἐν προθύροισι, χόλος δέ μιν ἄγριος ἦρει.

For a psychoanalytic perspective on the hymn's representation of Demeter's resistance to the patriarchal order, see M. Arthur, "Politics and Pomegranates: An Interpretation of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter," *Arethusa* 10.1 (Spring 1977) 7–47.

For this reason, it is more useful to ask, not why the *Iliad* omits specific mention of a μῆνις of Thetis, but why it gives us so much evidence for one; and why at crucial points in the narrative it reminds its audience of the theogonic mythology of Thetis as cosmic force. This sort of question may be said to motivate an inquiry such as the present one, whose goal is to reinforce our awareness of how, and for what purposes, Homeric epic integrates diverse mythological material into its narrative, and of the ways in which it unifies such material thematically.

Thetis provides an intriguing example of the convergence of these dynamic processes, in that the way in which her mythology is resonant but subordinated corresponds to the Homeric insight that it literally underlies or forms the substratum of the heroism of Achilles. The intrinsic relation of parent to child, in which the parent's story becomes the child's story, is not banal here, but has special significance. The reality of Thetis' generative power has as its issue the fact of Achilles' mortality. In this sense *Isthmian* 8 is describing where the *Iliad* should begin.

It has been argued by C. Watkins that whereas the *Iliad* demands the resolution of a wrath (whose religious stature is established by its very diction) in its initial thematic statement, the formula which would express such a resolution is rigorously suppressed. Referring to Watkins's detailed analysis, suffice it to quote his conclusion:[55]

> We have shown on the one hand the equivalence of μῆνις and χόλος in the mouth of the one who says "I," and the equivalence of μῆνις and μηνιθμός, for which the latter is the tabu substitute precisely in μηνιθμὸν καταπαυσέμεν 16.62. We have shown on the other hand that μένος in the sense of "anger, wrath" is an echo, a phonetic icon of the forbidden word μῆνις. Everything then would indicate that the dramatic resolution of the *Iliad* as a whole, whose theme "wrath" is announced from its very first word, is expressed by a formula "put an end to one's wrath," *whose real verbal expression* παύειν + μῆνιν *never surfaces*. It is a formula whose workings take place always beyond our view, a formula hidden behind the vocabulary tabu, a particular condition on the plane of the parole, of the message, of the one who is speaking and the one who is addressed.

Similarly, what informs the human stature of Achilles is Thetis' cosmic, theogonic power, her role in the succession myth; and although the *Iliad* never reverts to it explicitly, it returns us to it repeatedly. For had Themis not intervened, Thetis would have borne the son greater than his father, and the entire chain of succession in heaven would have continued: Achilles would have been not the greatest of the heroes, but the ruler of the universe. The price of Zeus' hegemony is Achilles'

[55] Watkins (above, note 40) 109.

death. This is the definitive instance of the potency of themes in Homeric epic which exert their influence on the subject matter of the poems, yet which do not *surface* (in Watkins's term) because of the constraints of the genre; nevertheless, the poem reveals them, through evocative diction, through oblique reference, even through significant omission.

It is in this sense that we can understand what appears to be a revision of the prayer formula by Achilles through Thetis to Zeus in Book 1. It has been shown that the typical arrangement of prayers, as represented in archaic poetry, consists of the invocation of the god or goddess; the claim that the person praying is entitled to a favor on the basis of favors granted in the past; the specific request for a favor in return—based on the premise that this constitutes a formal communication of reciprocal obligations between god and hero.[56]

In directing his request for a favor from Zeus to Thetis, Achilles has translated his reminder of a "past favor granted" into *her* past aid to Zeus. But he prefaces his request, and invokes his mother, by saying:

> μῆτερ, ἐπεί μ' ἔτεκές γε μινυνθάδιόν περ ἐόντα,
> τιμήν πέρ μοι ὄφελλεν Ὀλύμπιος ἐγγυαλίξαι
> Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης . . . (1.352–54)

In other words, Achilles' favor to Zeus consists in his being μινυνθάδιος, whereby Zeus' sovereignty is guaranteed.

To reiterate, the *Iliad* reminds us of Thetis' mythology, through allusions to her power and through emphasis on the reciprocity of ἄχος that she and Achilles share—his Iliadic and hers meta-Iliadic—in order to assert the meaning of human life in relation to the entire cosmic structure, in order to show that cosmic equilibrium is bought at the cost of human mortality. The alternative would mean perpetual evolution, perpetual violent succession, perpetual disorder.

The tradition of Thetis' power whose eventual issue is in the figure of Achilles both enhances his stature and is subsumed in it. Thus it represents the ultimate example of thematic integration. As heroic epic is concerned with the *erga andrôn* rather than the *erga theôn*, with Achilles the moral hero, the wrath of Thetis—potent in another framework—becomes absorbed in the actual wrath of her son. Achilles' invocation, in Book 1, of Thetis' cosmic power that once rescued Zeus, must also evoke the power that once threatened to supplant him; and once again, as in *Isthmian* 8, its corollary is the death of Achilles in battle.

[56] I am paraphrasing here from the detailed discussion of the formal structure of Homeric prayers in Leonard C. Muellner, *The Meaning of Homeric* EYXOMAI *through its Formulas* (Innsbruck 1976) 27–28.

That Thetis' power to persuade Zeus to favor Achilles has a source that the poem sees as located in an anterior (or extra-Iliadic) tradition, is expressed not only in Achilles' speech in Book 1, but in a telling passage in Book 15. The result of Thetis' persuading Zeus to favor Achilles is the Trojans' success in bringing fire to the Achaean ships. In Book 15, at the final stage of the Trojans' advantage from the favor granted to Achilles before the death of Patroclus commits him to re-enter the fighting, the situation is described as follows:

> Τρῶες δὲ λείουσιν ἐοικότες ὠμοφάγοισι
> νηυσὶν ἐπεσσεύοντο, Διὸς δὲ τέλειον ἐφετμάς,
> ὅ σφισιν αἰὲν ἔγειρε μένος μέγα, θέλγε δὲ θυμὸν
> Ἀργείων καὶ κῦδος ἀπαίνυτο, τοὺς δ' ὀρόθυνεν.
> Ἕκτορι γάρ οἱ θυμὸς ἐβούλετο κῦδος ὀρέξαι
> Πριαμίδῃ, ἵνα νηυσὶ κορωνίσι θεσπιδαὲς πῦρ
> ἐμβάλοι ἀκάματον, Θέτιδος δ' ἐξαίσιον ἀρὴν
> πᾶσαν ἐπικρήνειε . . . (15.592–99)

Significantly, Thetis' prayer is qualified by the Iliadic *hapax* ἐξαίσιον. It has been shown that the phrases ὑπὲρ μοῖραν and κατὰ μοῖραν, and by extension the equivalent phrases ὑπὲρ αἶσαν and κατὰ αἶσαν, are used in Homeric epic self-referentially, to signify adherence to or contravention of the composition's own traditions.[57] We may therefore observe that the exercise of Thetis' power with its massive consequences for inverting the course of the Trojan War is ἐξαίσιον—neither according to, nor opposed to, Iliadic tradition, but *outside* it and requiring integration into it.

The *Hymn to Demeter* demands a sacral resolution in terms appropriate to Demeter's wrath. Heroic epic demands a human one, and the *Iliad* presents it in 24. Thetis must accept the mortal condition of Achilles, of which, as *Isthmian* 8 explains, she is the cause. This acceptance means the defusing of μῆνις, leaving only ἄχος. It is thus comprehensible thematically that Thetis should be the agent of Achilles' returning the body of Hector; of his acceptance not only of his own mortality but of the universality of the conditions of human existence as he expounds them to Priam in 24.

As such Thetis is the instrument of his renunciation of μῆνις in the poem. In a sense the submerged formula παύειν + μῆνιν is enacted twice, not only on the human and divine levels, but twice in time: in the "long-time" eternality of the succession myth and in the time-span of the Iliadic plot. The intersection is the life-span of Achilles. With this

[57] Nagy (above, note 13) 40: "Within the conventions of epic composition, an incident that is untraditional would be ὑπὲρ μοῖραν 'beyond destiny.' For example, it would violate tradition to let Achilles kill Aeneas in *Iliad* 20, although the immediate situation in the narrative seems to make it inevitable; accordingly, Poseidon intervenes and saves Aeneas, telling him that his death at this point would be 'beyond destiny' (ὑπὲρ μοῖραν: 20.336)."

perspective we can see the *Iliad*'s concern with the individual's experience of his mortal limitations and the existential choices they demand, but equally its concern with their metaphysical consequences in relation to the entire cosmic structure.

Through Thetis' agency, finally, the *Dios boulê* is kept from yielding to the *Achillêos boulê*. In Alcman's cosmogony, she is a force of order and orientation, establishing bearings and a goal in the presence of darkness and chaos. So, too, the order that the *Iliad* asserts is served by Thetis: once a threat to Olympian stability, she takes her place again as its protector.[58]

[58] The forthcoming study of Homeric mythology and oral style, of which this essay forms part, owes thanks to more people than can be acknowledged here; I look forward to expressing my gratitude to them in that context. The present article, a version of which was first given as a talk at Princeton University in November 1979, has benefited from the illuminating criticisms of A. E. Johnson, and of J. H. Finley, Jr., G. Nagy, and R. Sacks, as well as from the valuable suggestions of H. Bacon, S. Bershtel, N. O. Brown, P. Easterling, D. Frame, A. Hayum, R. Janko, N. Loraux, R. Slatkin, F. Zeitlin, and of the editor and anonymous referees of *TAPA*.