

## The *Iliad*'s Economy of Pain\*

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**SUMMARY:** This paper analyzes the *Iliad*'s representation of *odunai*, pains usually caused by weapons, within the context of the complex relationship between violence, payment, and *timê* in the poem. Absent from scenes of death, *odunai* appear, *Robin Mitchell-Boyask* rather, in descriptions of wounding, where they have been interpreted as offering the wounded warrior an opportunity to display *aretê*. I demonstrate that wounds also help to represent the circulation of suffering (*algea*) that constitutes the epic plot; a critical component of this representation is blood. The latter part of the paper examines the wound of Agamemnon in Book 11, which challenges conventional representations of *odunai* and blood, not least of all by calling up the image of a woman in labor—the only time a simile is used to capture *odunai*. I argue that the simile implicitly challenges an economy in which *timê* is traded in blood and pains, a challenge echoed more darkly by Hecuba in Book 24. The epic's use of mothers to represent fierce and irreducible pain anticipates tragic appropriations of the feminine.

IN *THE CULTURE OF PAIN*, A WIDE-RANGING STUDY OF HOW BODILY SUFFERING HAS BEEN invested with meaning over the course of several millennia in Western art and literature, David Morris has this to say about the poem conventionally located at the origins of these traditions:

\* This paper has developed into its present form through excellent feedback from audiences at Princeton, where it was first presented in the Works-in-Progress series in the Program in Women and Gender, at Oberlin, where it was given as the John J. Winkler Memorial Lecture, at the 2004 meeting of the APA in San Francisco, and at the 2005 meeting of the ALSC in Boston. I thank Helene Foley for the invitation to present at the ALCS. Valuable comments from the two anonymous referees and the editor of the journal also much improved it. Many thanks especially to May Mergenthaler and April Alliston, who first pushed me to think about why it is Agamemnon who suffers this wound, Kirk Ormand, Mark Buchan, Froma Zeitlin, Sharon James, Sarah Miller, and the John J. Winkler Memorial Prize committee, which awarded an earlier version of this article the 2004 Graduate Prize.

Homer—or the ancient oral bards who bear his name—dismembered the human body with loving inventiveness. What such moments rarely contain, however, is an extended description of anguish or agony. Homeric warriors normally expire all at once in a black mist or in a bone-crunching clatter of armor; they groan, gasp, and vomit blood; but...they seldom die in pain. (41)

The claim that pain is an element foreign to the *Iliad*'s numerous accounts of death may seem, at first glance, unlikely. As Morris notes, battlefield carnage is vividly described. Weapons in the nearly 150 accounts of both fatal and non-fatal wounding refer to a corporeal topography so precise that scholars once hypothesized that Homer must have had some connection to the medical profession, if he was not, in fact, a surgeon himself.<sup>1</sup> The threat of violent penetration is constant: Hector hopes that Achilles will literally incorporate his spear (ὥς δὴ μιν σῶ ἐν χροῖ πᾶν κομίσαιο, *Il.* 22.286), and he threatens Ajax: "my long spear...will bite your delicate body" (αἶ κε ταλάσσης / μεῖναι ἐμὸν δόρυ μακρόν, ὅ τοι χροῖα λειριόεντα / δάψει, 13.829–31).<sup>2</sup> Yet it is true that when a warrior falls, we hear these boasts and taunts, rather than the noise of pain. These are not opportunities for the epic poet to focalize the experience of the warrior. The dying hero is halfway to becoming a shade, halfway to becoming a corpse: the capacity for omniscient narration to speak from within is quickly disappearing. On the exceptional occasions when the fading warrior does speak, what bridges the gap between the hero and the dead man is not pain but prescience: Patroclus foresees the death of Hector, in addition to gaining more-than-mortal insight into the conditions of his own; Hector, in turn, prophesies the death of Achilles.<sup>3</sup> Suffering, we might conclude, belongs to the *psuchê*, which leaves the limbs, then hovers over them briefly to lament the loss of youth and manliness (ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων παταμένη Ἀϊδῶσδε βεβήκει, / ὃν πότμον γοόωσα, λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην, 16.856–57, 22.362–63).

What Morris finds lacking in Homer's descriptions of death is not simply pain but, more precisely, a narrative interest in *odunai* (the word is typically found in the plural), the pains most closely associated with violence

<sup>1</sup> Frölich tabulated 148 wounds (60; reprinted, Hainsworth 253), but see Saunders in the appendix to Friedrich 132–34, esp. n10, on uncertain cases. Saunders concludes, however, that the number 150 is approximately correct. On the claim that Homer was a surgeon, see Grmek 33.

<sup>2</sup> Translations are from Lattimore unless otherwise noted. I have used the text in Monro and Allen's OCT.

<sup>3</sup> See also 16.492–501, where Sarpedon, mortally wounded, exhorts Glaucus to defend his corpse.

against the physical body.<sup>4</sup> Yet to conclude that there is no such pain in the *Iliad* would be rash; we are simply looking for it in the wrong place. For the epic is deeply concerned with the messy economy of suffering among the living. The victims of *odunai* in the *Iliad* are not the dead, but the wounded: fourteen named warriors—two of them (Hector and Diomedes) wounded twice—one unnamed warrior, and the divine Trojan patrons Ares, Artemis, and Aphrodite. The descriptions of pain in these cases have been analyzed for years for their fidelity to the special realism associated with the human body.<sup>5</sup> More recently, scholars have preferred to evaluate *odunai* in the context of the heroic code governing the poem (Loraux 1995: 88–100; Salazar 127–58; Neal 18–20). Yet such readings interpret the pain of the wound only as a hurdle that the hero overcomes to display his *aretê*; *odunai* enter the poem in order to be suppressed by the hero and the poet.

In what follows, I would like to examine another aspect of *odunai* by exploring how they facilitate the exchange of pains in the *Iliad*'s economy of *timê*. While epic vocabulary accommodates the multitude of ways in which humans suffer (*algos*, *pêma*, *achos*, *kêdos*, *penthos*, *odunê*, *pathos*) (Rey 11–14),<sup>6</sup> the poem also assumes a *lack* of difference between pains that allows them to be traded (Chryses' tears for bodies destroyed by plague) or substituted (violence

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 4.117, 191; 5.354, 397, 399, 417, 766; 11.268, 272, 398, 848; 12.206; 15.60, 394; 16.518, 524, 528; *Od.* 9.415, 440; 17.567. See Mawet 35–48. Cf. *Od.* 1.242; 2.79; 4.812 (*odunai*=cares). On one occasion, Homer does observe that death is most painful (μάλιστα...ἀλεγεινός, *Il.* 13.568–69) when a spear strikes between the naval and the genitals. I thank Sharon James for drawing my attention to this point.

<sup>5</sup> In Friedrich's *Verwundung und Tod in der Ilias*, the degree of anatomical plausibility accorded to the description of a wound serves as the criterion that enables the analyst to distinguish the work of Homer from that of the anonymous lesser poets. The operative assumption here is that Homer himself was a strict realist incapable of grotesquerie. As K.B. Saunders has demonstrated, some of the wounds dismissed by Friedrich as fantastical have their real-life counterparts in the annals of modern medicine. Others thought plausible appear to owe their details to literary pressures. See Saunders and his appendix to Friedrich. At the same time, as Friedrich 14 recognized, what may be plausible to a surgeon may still appear fantastic to a layperson, ancient or modern—the butt of a spear moved by a still-beating heart (13.442–44) comes to mind.

<sup>6</sup> Mawet 30 notes that “la distinction douleur physique/douleur morale...ne peut être adoptée *a priori*” on account of “l'étroite imbrication des phénomènes physiques et moraux,” although she still assumes a difference between “souffrances physiques” (e.g., wounds) and “souffrances morales.” The semantic fields of pain-words are distinguished by the quality of pain, its cause, the conditions under which it is dealt and received, its duration, its location, and the channels by which it is externalized (speech, cries, tears, blood).

against the troops in place of violence against Agamemnon directly) for one another. *Odunai*, I submit, play a key role in representing the circulation of suffering that the poem tracks from Achilles' crisis of honor to the death of Patroclus and beyond. They facilitate the poem's representation of collective slaughter, as well as more "epic" forms of pain (e.g. *achos*), by grounding this suffering in a field of vision.

Yet how does one "see" *odunai*, given that they belong to a register of corporeal experience that, as is often noted, resists representation (Scarry 4–19, 161–80)? Critical to the poetic expression of *odunai*, I will argue, is what I understand to be its visual evidence, namely blood, which announces a breach in the *chrōs* and indicates that the hero's life-force is being "paid out."<sup>7</sup> Ending pain, as we will see, involves closing up this bleeding body. The importance of blood to the description of pain suggests that the register of the "felt" has an enclitic relationship to the register of the "seen," that is, the representation of suffering is supported by visual clues. Thus, the spectacular nature of the bleeding body recommends it as a surface on which to plot the intersections between pain and power in the field of vision, the most important site of representation for archaic oral poetry (Worman 20). At the same time, I will also be interested in the challenges posed by *odunai* to the representation of Iliadic pain. For *odunai* may also call up the limits of what can be seen in the poem.

In the first section, I use the account of the plague in Book 1 to clarify the relationship between an "economy of *timē*" and the distribution of pain. I then begin to examine how pains are represented in the poem through a detailed analysis of the two registers of the body just mentioned, i.e. the "felt" and the "seen." Building on this analysis, I show in the third section how blood facilitates the materialization of *odunai* for the epic's internal audience, as well as for the listener (or reader). In the penultimate section, I connect the bleeding body to another, more complex representational strategy, which implicates *odunai* in the circulation of power and honor in the *Iliad*. Throughout the poem, only the leaders of the Argives and the Trojans are wounded, with the exception of a single unnamed warrior (13.211–13). I will argue that these wounds function as a synecdoche for the collective suffering that lies behind expressions such as "there the screaming and the shouts of triumph rose up together of men killing and men killed, and the ground ran blood" (ἐνθα δ'

<sup>7</sup>Wilson 27 argues on analogy with Semitic evidence that when life is paid for life, "the group's loss of blood (life) has been brought back, at least metaphorically, by a corresponding loss of blood, even if the dead man himself is not recovered." See also A. *Eum.* 254–75.

ὅμ' οἴμωγή τε καὶ εὐχολὴ πέλεν ἀνδρῶν / ὀλλύντων τε καὶ ὀλλυμένων, ῥέε δ' αἵματι γαῖα, 4.450–51; cf. 8.64–65). Thus, the army's vulnerabilities and its losses are mapped onto the skin of its leaders. From the ground that runs blood we return to the body that bleeds, which is the *Iliad's* body in pain.

In the final section of the article, I analyze one wound that stands out within this restricted field of bleeding bodies on account of both the leader who sustains it and its anomalous relationship to blood. Agamemnon, of course, is the most kingly of the Argive kings. The wound that he is dealt in Book 11 generates one of the *Iliad's* most perplexing similes, in which the king in pain is compared to a woman in labor, the only time that the poet uses a simile to expand on his traditional phrases for indicating the pain of the wound. This is also the only instance where a wound stops bleeding of its own accord, as well as the only instance where the closure of the wound provokes greater pain, rather than relief. While the motives behind the use of a given simile are irrecoverable, the borrowed model of pain, which itself borrows the imagery of the battlefield, and its unusual context suggest that Agamemnon's wound functions as an important node in the poem's circulation of pain. For the *Iliad* is heavily invested in the representation of Achilles' suffering and his crisis of *timê*, and it binds this suffering to the *atê* of Agamemnon, that is, to the desire to *make Agamemnon pay*. Over the course of the first nine books of the poem, this *atê* rebounds on the king through the pain of others. Although the wound, which terminates his *aristeia*, contributes to the representation of his *aretê*, it also raises the stakes of the debt owed by the king. I will argue that the description of the wound of Agamemnon and the ensuing pain call into question, through the figure of the mother, whether that debt can, in fact, be measured and paid. While influential readings of the *Iliad's* tragic sensibilities have laid stress on the place of *pathos* and mortal blindness in the poem (Griffin; Rutherford), the concerns of tragedy are equally anticipated by Agamemnon's *odunai* and the maternal pain that they summon up. By analyzing how wounds participate in the poem's economy of pain, I want to bring to light a more muted dimension of the epic, one that is sensitive to embodied pain and its relationship to the costs of war.

### THE ECONOMY OF *TIMÊ*

Although scholars have long observed that Homeric epic has little patience for disease or complications from wounds,<sup>8</sup> the one disease that does appear

<sup>8</sup> It has been noted that the majority of deaths in the *Iliad* should—that is, in “real life”—involve hours, if not days, of dying and excruciating pain, and many wounds that are fatal in the poem do not appear life-threatening at all (Saunders 357, 360–61); warriors

in the *Iliad*, the *nousos kakê* assailing the Achaeans ten lines into the poem, enjoys considerable thematic prominence. Indeed, the plague stages in a handful of lines the even greater suffering promised by the poem's first words (μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος / οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε..., "sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus's son Achilles and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaeans...") (Nagy 74–76; Blickman; Rabel; Haubold 50–52).<sup>9</sup>

The form taken by Apollo's retaliation against Agamemnon for the dishonor shown to his priest makes it clear that the economy of pain, through which power and honor, *timê*, are determined for gods and leaders, is founded upon the suffering of the masses. The *laos* functions for its leader as the most precious of prestige goods, occupying an unstable position, fixed by whoever is conferring value, between the human world and the world of things. The loss of the *laos*, then, has consequences for its leader. The ceaseless dying of the *laos*, whether in the plague or in the slaughter following Achilles' withdrawal from battle, creates the suffering of Agamemnon, whom the destruction of the *laos* makes *duskleês* (*Il.* 2.114–15=9.21–22).

At the same time, the *laos* stands in for a leader who cannot be killed in battle. The impossibility of killing Agamemnon at Troy is, of course, foregrounded when Athena thwarts Achilles' murderous intentions towards the king in Book 1, although the king's relative invulnerability is equally assumed by Apollo's assault, which spares the man responsible for it. Death, then, is deflected onto the *laos*. Those characters desiring to harm Agamemnon take this complicated logic of retribution for granted. Chryses, retreating to the shore, beseeches Apollo, "let your arrows make the Danaans pay for my tears shed" (τείσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσσιν, 1.42), thereby anticipating Achilles' own withdrawal to the sea three hundred lines later and *his* appeal to Thetis that Zeus pin the Achaeans, dying, up against their ships "so that thus they may all have profit of their own king, that Atreus's son, wide-ruling

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often succumb to their injuries within a single line. Especially striking, then, is Hector's promise of future agony, which is, of course, entirely rhetorical (ἀλλ' ὥς τις τούτων γε βέλος καὶ οἶκοι πέσσει, / βλήμενος ἢ ἰὼ ἢ ἔγχεϊ δ' ἔξυόεντι / νηρὸς ἐπιθρόσκων, 8.513–15). On Homeric epic's disinterest in disease, see further Delcourt; Grmek 33, 36–37.

<sup>9</sup> *Didômi algea* is used of gods giving pains, while the expression *tithêmi algea* is used when humans impose pains (Rijksbaron). The expression *tithêmi algea* at 1.2 may balance, then, the poem's first word, *mênis*, which establishes Achilles' anger on a cosmic scale, with the result that Achilles' conflicted, semi-divine status is first affirmed in the language used of his power to inflict pain. On the connection between the name Achilles and *achos*, see Nagy 69–83.

Agamemnon, may recognize his *atê*, he who paid nothing (οὐδὲν ἔτεισε) to the best of the Achaeans" (1.409–12, translation slightly modified).<sup>10</sup>

The verbs used to describe archaic notions of payment and compensation (*tiemen*, [*apo*]*tinemen*, [*apo*]*tinusthai*) combine the ideas of honoring and punishing (Wilson 20–22). Thus, pains (*algea*), like praise and material goods, function as commodities to be circulated within the economy of *timê*. The smoking corpse fires, for example, are the price exacted by Apollo for Chryses' tears: "you did me honour," the priest tells Apollo, "and smote strongly the host of the Achaians" (τίμησας μὲν ἐμέ, μέγα δ' ἵψαο λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν, 1.454; cf. 2.3–4). Achilles, too, seeks from Zeus (via Thetis) dead bodies as compensation for the *timê* lost in his quarrel with Agamemnon, thereby perverting the code that grants *timê* in exchange for the deaths of enemy combatants. He repeats 1.454 word for word at 16.237 when, building on his present successes, he requests what Zeus finally will not grant, the safe return of Patroclus. The stark equation of Achilles' honor and the slaughter of the Achaeans appeared scandalous to the Alexandrians—Zenodotus excised the line and Aristarchus disputes its legitimacy—and although modern editors have defended it (Janko 350–51, *ad* 236–38), its implications often fail to register fully.<sup>11</sup> In Book 18, Thetis is more circumspect, reminding Achilles of his prayer that "all the sons of the Achaians be pinned on their grounded vessels...and suffer things that are shameful" as a result of his absence (πάντας ἐπὶ πρύμνησιν ἀλήμεναι υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν / σεῦ ἐπιδευομένους, παθέειν τ' ἀεκήλια ἔργα, 18.76–77). Yet can we forget in the wake of Patroclus's death that the *timê* that Achilles

<sup>10</sup> On Achilles and Chryses, see MacKenzie; Rabel; Lynn-George 197–202; Wilson 64–70.

<sup>11</sup> I have greatly benefited from discussions with Mark Buchan about his analysis, in his book in progress on the *Iliad*, of what Achilles wants; see also Buchan 174–78 on Odysseus's refusal in the *Odyssey* to accept compensation for the suitors' affront to his *timê*. On Achilles' destruction of the *laos* as a strategy to gain compensation for his loss of *timê*, see Nagy 79–83; Haubold 47–100. In Donna Wilson's otherwise subtle and useful study of payment, honor, and revenge in the *Iliad*, she only weakly recognizes the deaths of the Achaeans as a positive source of *timê* to Chryses and Achilles. Her characterization of Chryses' and Achilles' strategy as one of inactivity suggests that she prefers to see its main goal as diminishing Agamemnon's *timê* to the point where the king becomes tractable (45, 76, 93), rather than acknowledging that *timê* all the while is accruing to Chryses and Achilles. Yet in both cases, the aim of harming is overdetermined (*pace* Mackenzie 6–7): Chryses and Achilles want both to replenish lost *timê* by making others suffer and to regain what has been taken from them. For Achilles in particular, these goals are entangled: the vagueness of the lost object can explain the importance of gaining *timê* through the pain of other people.

demanded from Zeus, while in principle taken from Agamemnon, was traded in Achaean corpses?

Thus, the plague focuses attention at the poem's outset on the relationship between *timê*, anxiety about its contingency, violence, and the suffering of other people, a nexus that grows in importance as Achilles' sorrow is substituted for Chryses'. But with the shift to Achilles' suffering, the stakes are raised. I want to suggest that Achilles' prayer for the destruction of the Achaeans exemplifies what Elaine Scarry has termed, in the context of an argument about the logic of war and torture, "analogical substantiation" (14). Scarry has argued that in cases where belief in an (intangible) ideal or ideology falters, the "incontestable reality of the body—the body in pain, the body maimed, the body dead and hard to dispose of—is separated from its source and conferred on an ideology or issue or instance of political authority impatient of, or deserted by, benign sources of substantiation" (62). Scarry is interested in demonstrating the way in which regimes use torture to produce pain, whose concreteness is then appropriated by the torturers to materialize and shore up "the fiction of power" (27). A similar situation obtains in war. Scarry argues that the reason why structured violence, instead of some other "contest," such as a chess game, is required to determine outcomes in war is that, as in torture, only "the sheer material weight" of damaged human bodies can give these outcomes "the force and status of material 'fact,'" thus ensuring the legitimacy of the outcome beyond the confines of the "contest" (62).

Regardless of how we understand Achilles' relationship to compensation in Book 9, in Book 1 Achilles faces a situation where the capacity of "benign" material goods (i.e., Briseis) to serve as a guarantee for his *timê* has been undermined by Agamemnon's refusal to recognize the fluid system by which warriors gain honor through exploits on the battlefield (Wilson 95). While this scenario would be troubling in itself, the threat is not only to Achilles' present honor, but also to the *kleos* that should compensate him for his death at Troy: the stakes, then, are high (Wilson 64–70).<sup>12</sup> In arguing that Achilles performs an analogical substitution like those described by Scarry, I am not suggesting that he forswears material goods altogether. Rather, it would seem that only bodies can deliver the force and power of the material world after the other symbols of *timê* have been devalued (Scarry 128; Ramazani 37–42,

<sup>12</sup> To the extent that Zeus's right to hegemony is founded on Achilles' fate of being *minunthadíos* (Slatkin 102), to strike at Agamemnon is also to strike at the cosmic father screened behind him, and to test him: Achilles queries Zeus's guarantee of *kleos*, analogous to Agamemnon's recognition of the warrior's *timê* during his lifetime, by compelling the god to extract suffering from the mortal king-father via the *laos*.



45–56). Thus, the violence envisioned by Achilles in his prayer accomplishes two goals. On the one hand, by targeting the *laos*, he strikes at the people who collectively represent Agamemnon's *timê qua* king.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, dead bodies can “verify” or materialize for Achilles the intangible and unstable idea of *timê*, and with it the promise of *kleos*, which becomes *aphthiton* only at the moment the warrior loses the ability to know the final value that his society has conferred on him.<sup>14</sup>

Yet how can dying bodies facilitate the circulation of suffering and, with it, *timê*, if we never *see* them suffering? Not only does the agony of dying go unremarked by Homer; suffering and death appear to be best represented through the *flattening* of detail. Indeed, of the nameless plague victims' suffering we hear not a word. Homer prefers to note simply the claustrophobia induced by the accumulated bodies (“and always the corpse-fires were burning, set closely together,” αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί, 1.52, translation modified). When Ares receives what would have been a mortal wound, his bellow of pain is a sound, “as great as nine thousand men make, or ten thousand / when they cry as they carry into the fighting the fury of the war god. / And a shivering seized hold alike on Achaeans and Trojans / in their fear at the bellowing of battle-insatiate Ares” (ὁ δ' ἔβραχε χάλκεος Ἄρης, / ὅσσον τ' ἐννεάχιλοι ἐπίαχον ἢ δεκάχιλοι / ἄνδρες ἐν πολέμῳ ἔριδα ξυνάγοντες Ἄρης. / τοὺς δ' ἄρ' ὑπὸ τρόμοις εἶλεν Ἀχαιοὺς τε Τρῳάς τε / δέισαντας· τόσον ἔβραχ' Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο, 5.859–63). Ares' cry of pain is indistinguishable from the cry announcing his desire to cause pain. The equivalence is stressed not only by the simile, but also by the intrusion of Ares' epithet, “insatiate of battle” (ἄτος πολέμοιο), at a moment when it is not limitless desire but limitless suffering that is being described. The comparative clause introduced by *hoson* is one of quantity, a formulation that entertains the possibility of a perfect economy of exchange: what counts are the numbers. No wonder some in antiquity imagined the Trojan war to be Zeus's ingenious corrective to overpopulation, a mathematical solution to Earth's heavy load (*Cypr*, fr. 1.7). And yet, as any aficionado of Hollywood action movies knows, a rising body count does not necessarily communicate suffering. In fact, as violence proliferates, it often works to keep pain from intruding into the spectator's field of vision by shifting attention away from the embodied individual who suffers. How, then, does pain enter into the poem?

<sup>13</sup> The king is the one “to whom an army has been entrusted” (ὃ λαοί τ' ἐπιτετράφαται, 2.25; 2.62). See Haubold 83–97.

<sup>14</sup> *Timê* is still accorded to the hero after death in a ritual context, while *kleos* requires death and is bestowed and guarded by epic poetry (Nagy 118–19).

## CATACHRESES

Unlike the narration of scenes of death, the narration of wounds combines a description of the damage done to the body with an interest in the warrior's perception of this damage. We can begin to examine this claim with an exception. When the ambidextrous Asteropaius's spear grazes Achilles' arm in Book 21, Achilles fails even to register the wound, although we are told that dark blood gushes out (τῷ δ' ἑτέρῳ μιν πῆχυν ἐπιγράβδην βάλε χειρὸς / δεξιτερῆς, σῦτο δ' αἶμα κελαινεφές, 21.166–67). The hero's indifference, which the omniscient narrator adopts, rather than, as is more often the case, intervening to tell us what the wounded hero is feeling, may be a poetic strategy to emphasize Achilles' special status and the quality of his fury as he seeks to avenge the death of Patroclus.<sup>15</sup> It may simply reflect the insignificance of the wound and, by implication, the warrior who has inflicted it. But if silence is the exception that proves the rule, then the rule in cases of battle wounds is representational noise, that is, descriptive markers of pain. What constitutes this noise? How does it focalize corporeal experience?

Before we can answer these questions, we need to examine the perspectives that epic takes on such experience. There are a number of factors, such as the absence of complications in the narration of battle injuries, that tell against a naïve belief in Homeric realism, a belief fostered in part by historians of medicine lacking non-literary sources on early Greek healing practices and knowledge. The argument against realism supports the complementary claim that the *Iliad's* descriptions of wounding are influenced by epic's heroic code. To take an example with a long afterlife in antiquity, a wound in the back is derided as proof of a coward's flight from battle, although the chances of being hit from behind in close combat are high.<sup>16</sup> The details of a wound can establish the marksmanship or the incompetence of the assailant,<sup>17</sup> and only

<sup>15</sup> *Alkê*, strength, is linked to the idea of protection: see Chantraine s.v. ἀλέξω and Lynn-George 200–1, 206–7; Collins. Thus, it is difficult to say whether Achilles' indifference is due to the fact that the wound is not serious or whether the wound is harmless because of Achilles' fury/strength. On his invincibility, see also *Il.* 20.97–102.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. *Il.* 5.55–57, 65–67; 11.446–49; 12.43–44; 15.341–42; 20.413–18, 487–89. For the motif in later literature, see e.g. Tyrt. fr. 11.17–20; 12.25 (West) and Salazar 216–17.

<sup>17</sup> Salazar 129 cites *Il.* 22.325, where Achilles strikes his opponent at the intersection of the clavicle and the neck, “where the soul's destruction is quickest”; cf. 11.384–88, stressing the ineptitude and cowardice of the aggressor. On the first wound, see also Bolens 28–31. For Bolens the wound illustrates what she calls the logic of a “*corps articulaire*” in Homer, which she contrasts to an understanding of the body *qua* envelope. While

Trojan weapons are said merely to “scratch”—the verb is *epigraphô*—their victims (Loraux 1995: 97). Moreover, as I noted above, wounds offer the poet the opportunity to showcase a hero's capacity for endurance and valor. It is precisely this silent stoicism that makes omniscient narration uniquely necessary in wounding scenes for the expression of *aretê*, which is typically registered visually for both the internal and external audience.<sup>18</sup> This is not to deny the sophistication of the anatomical knowledge displayed in such scenes, but rather to insist on its motivated application, as well as the limitations involved in using it as an aid to understanding epic bodies. Wounds, fatal and non-fatal, play an important role in establishing what Loraux has called “the symbolic cartography of the manly body” (1995: 96). The description of the body and suffering in epic is never determined by purely realist tenets.<sup>19</sup>

More importantly, however, no third-person perspective, whether anatomical or culturo-historical, is capable of subsuming the first-person perspective on having a body within the poem. On the one hand, a warrior's knowledge of his opponent's vulnerabilities, organized into an externally perceived “cartography,” is also his objective or third-person knowledge of his own body, which belongs to him as a precious possession.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, corporeal experience in archaic epic is imagined from a highly subjective point-of-view. Studies of so-called Homeric “psychology” have found it difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the *phrenes*, the *thumos* and the *êtor* and to reconcile their status as things with their status as functions. Much of this difficulty, I

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Bolens's stress on *guia* and articulation is salutary for understanding some wounds and, more importantly, the specificity of the epic body, she ends up overlooking other “body” words in Homer (e.g. *eidos*, *demas*, *chrôs*). Thus, while I think Bolens is right to stress the shift in the classical period to a stronger inside/outside distinction, which she finds in Plato, we cannot limit Homer to a single mode of embodiment. What is more, clear anxieties in the epic about the vulnerability of the skin cannot be explained by a schema denying the import of this boundary.

<sup>18</sup> I thank one of the journal's anonymous readers for drawing my attention to this point.

<sup>19</sup> Any more than our bodies are lived independent of our cultural imaginary. On body images as socio-historical schemas of corporeal experience, see Grosz 27–111, esp. 62–85.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. *Il.* 4.467–68; 22.321. On a warrior's knowledge of his opponent's body, see Daremberg 75–76; Marg 10. Loraux 1995: 93 points out that it would be too simple to equate the recognition that an opponent's vulnerability is simultaneously one's own with an awareness of mortality in Homer, for vulnerability is associated with *having a body*, as the wounds of the gods show. See also Loraux 1986; Murnaghan 1988: 23–24; Vernant 27–49. I discuss the nature of embodied vulnerability in Homer at greater length in my book in progress.

would suggest, arises from a failure to observe the strong phenomenological component in poetic descriptions of embodied, conscious experience.<sup>21</sup> It is easy to forget how imperfectly what we feel of our innards maps onto the entrails spilt in the *Iliad*'s most gruesome scenes: the *phrenes* that come out on the tip of a spear (*Il.* 16.504) and the *phrenes* seized by *erôs* belong to radically different registers of experience. It is not that the first-person perspective is private, since an expression such as "he was pained (*kêde*) in his *thumos*" makes it clear that feelings are imagined to be common property, communicated through a shared language and cultural filter. Rather, we cannot map everything we are told about the parts of the self in Homer onto the topography of the anatomical body. The idea of a totalizing, clinical Homeric anatomy is misleading, then, not only because it ignores the impact of culture and genre in shaping how a body is represented, but also because it suggests that every Homeric body part can be mapped onto a single object of study seen from a third-person perspective.<sup>22</sup>

Bruno Snell famously claimed that the absence of a word to describe the living body as an object-in-itself in Homer—*sôma*, the word most readily translated as "body" in later periods, is restricted to corpses, as Aristarchus had already noticed—was symptomatic of epic's failure to perceive the "immediate and self-explanatory truth" of the body's "hidden unity" (8).<sup>23</sup> The absence of a single word corresponding to our "body" is better explained as an effect of the different and multiple modes of embodiment that gain representation in Homer and the absence of any part of the subject (i.e., a *psuchê*) against which "the" body would come into relief (Clarke 37–49).<sup>24</sup> At the risk of schematization, we may reduce these modes of embodiment to the "seen," roughly corresponding to a third-person perspective, and the "felt," corresponding to a first-person one. Such registers of corporeal experi-

<sup>21</sup> See Onians 44–65; Clarke 53–126, although both fall back on privileging the anatomical body.

<sup>22</sup> On the numerous words for body in Homer, see Vivante.

<sup>23</sup> For philological challenges to Snell's claim that *sôma* only denotes the dead body, see Herter; Renehan. Redfield 279n46 has argued that "soma is used of a living body only when it is the prey of animals"; see also Koller 1958; Merkelbach 222. For a recent survey of the evidence favoring Snell's conclusion regarding *sôma*, see Clarke 315–19. The critique of Snell is not only lexical but has also been launched more broadly against his claim that "Homeric man" lacked a unified self: a recent and influential intervention is Williams 21–49. Porter and Buchan rescue Snell's fragmented body, albeit *qua* the Lacanian *corps morcelé*. Others have defended the body in Homer as a unity in multiplicity: Redfield 1983–1984; Padel: 1992 44–48; Clarke 115–26; Spatafora 9–12; Bolens 55–59.

<sup>24</sup> See also Williams 26, on Snell's assumption that the unified body needs a soul.

ence are as relevant as historical or generic context to an understanding of how pain is represented within the *Iliad*, both to the other characters in their encounters with the wounded and to the listener or the reader. Moreover, the poem's attempts to capture felt experience suggest that there is a place for the *quality* of pain in addition to the *quantity* of corpses, living victims alongside dead ones. At the same time, *odunai* are difficult to express and to measure, with the result that we find descriptions of felt pain taking advantage of the resources of the seen. But before examining how these descriptions work, I want to take a closer look at the elusiveness of felt pain.

Over half of the *Iliad* is direct speech, and having characters say what they are feeling is one good way of locating emotions or thoughts within the field of mimesis. Yet, only once do we find a hero openly complaining about his *odunai*; it may not be an accident that he is fighting on the Trojan side.<sup>25</sup> Glaucus, struck in the arm with an arrow in Book 12 (387–91), finds himself in Book 16 suddenly responsible for defending the corpse of Sarpedon, and prays to Apollo for aid.<sup>26</sup> Using the word *kêdos* to speak generally of his suffering, he describes his wounded arm as shot through with sharp pains (ὄξείης ὀδύνησιν) and his shoulder as weighted down (βαρύθει δέ μοι ὤμος). The information that Glaucus himself supplies here is provided elsewhere by the omniscient narrator, whose ability to express experience typically protects the hero from having to speak the epic discourse of wound-based pain. Indeed, Salazar has made the warrior's reticence with regard to the pain of the wound a key component of the *Iliad*'s heroic code (127–52): Achilles may sob on his mother's shoulder and speak his sorrows, but it falls to the poet to bear witness to the warrior's suffering when he is struck by a weapon.<sup>27</sup> Apart from Glaucus's prayer and the occasional groan (*Il.* 8.332; 13.538), the wounded warrior is silent. Achilles does not flinch, let alone speak, when he is hit by a spear.

<sup>25</sup> See Hall 19–47 for skepticism about a pro-Greek bias in the *Iliad*. But Snell observes ("Homer und die Entstehung des geschichtlichen Bewusstseins bei den Griechen," *Varia variorum. Festgabe für Karl Reinhardt dargebracht von Freunden und Schülern zum 14. Februar 1951* [Münster/Böhlau 1952], 7) that some verbs of pain, *asthmainô*, *ôimôxe*, *bebruche*, *êruge*, are restricted to Trojans (cited at Hall 24n75).

<sup>26</sup> *Il.* 16.514–26, esp. 517–18 (ἔλκος μὲν γὰρ ἔχω τόδε καρτερόν, ἀμφὶ δέ μοι χεῖρ / ὄξείης ὀδύνησιν ἐλήλαται). The verb *elaunô* is used in the same way of weapons, e.g. *Il.* 13.595. Contrast Glaucus's request to Apollo to that made by the wounded Diomedes to Athena: Diomedes does not ask for relief; he simply wants to take revenge on his opponent (5.115–20). This would support Sheila Murnaghan's argument that the heroic boast masks the vulnerability of embodiment (1988: 24–29).

<sup>27</sup> On the positive signification of tears in the *Iliad*, see Monsacré.

Despite their willingness to express grief or anger, then, warriors never complain about the pain of their wounds. Nevertheless, since the technique of omniscient narration is not hindered by the boundary between inside and outside, the problem of communicating the pain inflicted by the weapon would seem minor. The narrator easily registers it, with the result that the screen of indifference projected by the wounded warrior is recalled to the listener as just that, a screen, which testifies to the warrior's heroism by dividing the appearance of sang-froid from the "reality" of the felt body. Diomedes draws an arrow from his foot and is "pained at heart" (ἤχθετο γὰρ κῆρ, 11.400). Two lines earlier, "a terrible pain came through his flesh" (ὀδύνη δὲ διὰ χροὸς ἦλθ' ἀλεγεινὴ, 11.398), although he gives no outward sign of this. When the spear is drawn from his flesh, Odysseus is "sick in his *thumos*" (κῆδε δὲ θυμόν, 11.458), and without the narrator, we would be none the wiser.

But is it really so easy for the narrator to register this unseen pain? The description of Diomedes' wound repays closer attention. Not only does *odunê* penetrate the skin just like a weapon, shooting pain seems to internalize a weapon beyond its actual embedding in the flesh. That *odunai* may be imagined as the continued trajectory of this foreign thing inside the body is suggested by the kinds of adjectives and verbs that they entail. The epithets of *odunê* (*oxu*, *pikrê*), for example, apply equally well to the arrow (Mawet 41–43); Hades, struck by Heracles' arrow, is "pierced" (*peparmenos*, 5.399; cf. 11.268, 272, *duô*; 16.518, *elaunô*) with *odunai*. And Idomeneus says to Meriones, whom he sees withdrawing from the battlefield: "have you been hit somewhere? Does the point of the spear weary you?" (ἡέ τι βέβληαι, βέλεος δέ σε τείρει ἄκωκή, 13.251; cf. *Od.* 9.440–41, ὀδύνησι κακῆσι / τειρόμενος), as though the agent of the wound were synonymous with the still-present agent of the pain.

The image of the weapon thus appears to contribute to the representation of private and unseen pain; Scarry calls this "the expressive potential of the sign of the weapon" (17). We might say, for example, "it feels as though a thorn is pricking my inner parts" or "it feels like I am being pierced by a needle," similes that are found in the reported speech of Hippocratic patients.<sup>28</sup> Although the obstinacy of figurative language in the nascent discourse of secular medicine was once seen by scholars as an archaic feature ("une incapacité à dépasser le point de vue descriptif," Bourgey 152), when Galen speaks of his own pain, he too falls back on simile and the language of weapons (ὥς τρυπάνῳ δοκεῖν διατιτρώσθαι κατὰ τὸ βάθος τῆς κοιλίας, "it seems as though I am pierced by a trepan [or: a borer] in the depth of my stomach"), albeit grafted onto

<sup>28</sup> [Hpc.] *Morb.* II 72 (Littré 7.108–10); *Coac.* 420 (Littré 5.678).

an anatomist's precise, topographical knowledge of the inner organs (ἐν ἐκείνῳ μάλιστα τῷ χωρίῳ, καθ' ὃ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν νεφρῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κύστιν οὐρητήρας ἐκτεταμένους ἴσμεν, *De loc. aff.* 2.5=Kühn 8.81, "in that very place where we know the ducts conveying urine from the kidneys into the bladder are extended"). While the *polustonos* arrow (e.g. *Il.* 15.451; cf. *Od.* 21.12, 60; 24.180), "freight of dark pains" (*Il.* 4.117), is the object lodged in the skin, the epithet *polustonos* allows one to infer the shooting pains that are causing the warrior to groan, a groan which itself confirms that the arrow's promise of pain has been realized.

The reliance on the image of the weapon in descriptions of pain is best described as catachresis. While catachresis, literally "excessive use" in Greek, is defined in most English dictionaries first and foremost as an *abuse* of metaphor (e.g. "blind mouth"), ancient writers from Aristotle onwards recognized that sometimes there *is* no proper word, the way we can only say the "arm" of a chair: the Alexandrian grammarian Tryphon defines catachresis as "the application of a proper name to another object lacking a proper name (*akatanomaston*)" (*De Tropis* 217=West 238). On such occasions, abuse is *necessary* and not entirely improper, as Quintilian was prepared to admit.<sup>29</sup> Thus, even when there is a visible wound, as soon as we are concerned with how that wound feels, the narration of the felt is necessarily contaminated by images of pain-producing objects and scenes in which the pain is being visibly inflicted, even after the act of violence is over. This contamination suggests that although the felt is a specific register, irreducible to the seen, in the poem, the representation of pain depends on the witnessed or potentially witnessed world, as well as on language that captures shared affective reactions to that world.

Moreover, in a poem where heroes and gods seek to distribute pains, it helps to imagine a mechanism for that distribution and, when possible, proof that the pains have been inflicted. Even when the mechanism is invisible, as with Apollo's arrows, the assumption is that pains are bound to weapons that can potentially be seen behind the mist veiling mortal eyes. At the same time, given that Achilles' own vengeance in the first two thirds of the poem involves not active assault, but the withdrawal of his protection, the visible dimension of pain in these books may also be found in the description of the wounds resulting from the calculated exposure of the Greeks to Trojan violence, wounds which have their own "expressive potential."

<sup>29</sup> *Non tamen quidquid non erit proprium protinus et inproprii vitio laborabit, quia primum omnium multa sunt et Graece et Latine non denominata... Unde abusio, quae katachresis dicitur, necessaria* (IO 8.12).



## SEEING RED

With surface wounds, the spectator sees not only the agent of the damage (which remains invisible in the case of plague or illnesses caused by *daimones*), but also tangible evidence of this damage. The vulnerability of “skin that is not made of stone or iron” (*Il.* 4.510), which the poem takes as a condition of the beautiful body (22.373–74), is publicly confirmed. In the case of Odysseus’s wound in Book 11, the phrase “sick in his *thumos*” completes the line detailing the effect of the spear’s removal. Its first half, which is preceded by the phrase “he dragged the heavy spear of wise Sokos out of his flesh and out of the shield, massive in the middle” (Σώκοιο δαίφρονος ὄβριμον ἔγχος / ἔξω τε χροὸς ἔλκε καὶ ἀσπίδος ὁμφαλοέσσης), reads “and as [the spear] was torn out the blood sprang” (αἷμα δέ οἱ σπασθέντος ἀνέσσυτο, 11.456–58). Although this detail seems “realistic”—of course the wound would bleed, and later medical writers note the dangers of hemorrhage (Salazar 17–18)—it belongs to a different register of mimesis. That is, if “sick in his *thumos*” transmits information gained from a narrative position where one always knows what a character feels, blood belongs to the described landscape of the poem, its *seen*, rather than felt texture. Blood can be visualized by a listener as well as by other characters in the poem. Thus, the blood spurting from Odysseus’s body is a visible signal to the Trojans to move in like jackals around a fallen stag (Τρῶες δὲ μεγάθυμοι ὅπως ἴδον αἷμ’ Ὀδυσῆος, / κεκλόμενοι καθ’ ὅμιλον ἐπ’ αὐτῷ πάντες ἔβησαν, “But the great-hearted Trojans, when they saw the blood of Odysseus, cried aloud through the close battle and all made a charge against him, 11.459–60). In the elaborate description of the treacherous wound that Pandarus deals Menelaus in Book 4, special emphasis is placed on verbs of sight: Agamemnon shudders when he *sees* “dark blood flowing from the wound” (εἶδεν μέλαν αἷμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὠτειλῆς, 4.149; cf. 4.140) and the listener is invited to dwell for nearly ten lines on the image of blood encroaching upon skin in the simile of the ivory cheekpiece being dyed purple. Stabbed by Diomedes, Ares returns to Olympus and *shows* Zeus the blood flowing from his wound (δείξεν δ’ ἄμβροτον αἷμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὠτειλῆς, 5.870) in the hopes of inciting his indignation (“Ζεῦ πάτερ, οὐ νεμεσίζη ὁρῶν τάδε καρτερὰ ἔργα;” 5.872, “father Zeus, are you not angry looking on these acts of violence?”). If the verb *kêdô* makes sense to the listener only through an imaginative act in which language bridges what would otherwise not be shared, the imaginative act to which *haima* gives rise is visual, and this field of vision coincides with public space inside the poem. We place ourselves in the position of Odysseus to understand “sick in one’s *thumos*,” but we are outside that body when we visualize blood gushing from it. Blood seems to



play a role in making a certain type of pain—caused by a weapon, localized around a wound, productive of shooting pangs—visible.

Blood does not appear regularly in descriptions of mortal injury although, as Tamara Neal has recently shown, over the course of the *Iliad* the poet shifts from acknowledging blood as a feature of the landscape to incorporating it into descriptions of individual deaths, thereby, she argues, rendering the representation of these deaths more “visceral” (21). Neal correlates this shift with the rise of bloodlust and bestiality among the Greeks, and especially in Achilles, in the poem’s second half (23–33).<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, while blood does not figure in every wounding scene, it features in enough of them to imply that it holds special meaning in cases where the warrior is opened up without losing sentience.<sup>31</sup> In Glaucus’s prayer, he pairs the *helkos karteron*, the serious wound, with sharp *odunai*, going on to say that “my blood cannot dry up and my shoulder is heavy from it” (οὐδέ μοι αἶμα / τερσῆναι δύναται, βαρύθει δέ μοι ὤμος ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ, 16.518–19). When the wounded Deiphobus is taken off the battlefield in Book 13, hemorrhage, like groaning, again seems to signal the warrior’s experience of the violated body: the line begins with the omniscient point-of-view, located inside the felt (τειρόμενον), and ends with the bleeding hand in the register of the seen (κατὰ δ’ αἶμα νεουτάτου ἔρρεε χειρός, *Il.* 13.539).

So crucial is the visible component of the wound that when Aphrodite is wounded by Diomedes and led off the battlefield by Iris, we are told in the first half of the line that she is “racked with pain” (ἄχθομένην ὀδύνησι) and, in the second, that her fair skin is “stained black” (μελαίνετο δὲ χροά καλόν, *Il.* 5.354), although *ichôr*, the divine equivalent of blood, is described in later texts as clear.<sup>32</sup> The image of staining emphasizes the spectacular nature of the wounded body and the striking contrast between broken and unbroken skin, a contrast that also figures prominently in the description of Menelaus’s

<sup>30</sup> Neal is primarily concerned with the affective response of the reader to these deaths, rather than the pain of the dying. The references to blood in descriptions of individual deaths do not usually appear in direct connection with the wound—although cf. below, pp. 67–68—but as a graphic detail: a dying man’s eyes fill with blood (16.348–50); a sword smokes with it (16.331–3); blood soaks a warrior’s braided tresses (17.51–52).

<sup>31</sup> See Chantraine s.v. τιτρώσκω: “l’idée de blessure dans τιτρώσκω repose sur la notion de trouser.”

<sup>32</sup> See Jouanna and Demont, who argue that *ichôr* already has the meaning of a clear, serous liquid, such as that which oozes from a wound, in Homer. See also Zannini Quirini and Loraux 1986: 350–53.

wound (*Il.* 4.141–42, 146–47).<sup>33</sup> *Ichôr* darkening the surface of Aphrodite's body illustrates the participle *achthomenên* in the line's first half. Moreover, just as the arrow shared epithets with *odunê*, thereby linking visible cause to invisible effect, the poet's use of the verb *melainô* may be explained in part by the association of *odunê* with the adjective *melas* (*Il.* 4.117, 191; 15.394), "dark," which, along with other "black" words (*kelainos*, *kelainephes*, *porphyreos*), is also used of blood (*Il.* 17.360–61) and death (e.g. *Il.* 5.83).<sup>34</sup> Visible effect is thus linked to invisible effect. Indeed, as the key consequence of the weapon's violation of the body, blood may prove it, as when Pandarus tells Aeneas that his arrows have drawn "certain blood" (ἀτρεκὲς αἶμ'), from Diomedes and Menelaus (5.207–8).<sup>35</sup> Blood marks that a hole has been opened in the skin, as at 7.262, where dark blood wells up (μέλαν δ' ἀνεκίκειν αἶμα) on Hector's neck to draw attention to the fact that Ajax's spear has broken the skin, in contrast to the failure of Hector's own spear-throw several lines earlier: even so (ἀλλ' οὐδ' 7.263), Hector does not stop fighting, no doubt a testament to his *aretê*.

Continued bleeding carries the moment of wounding into the present. In the case of Glaucus, whose wound is received in Book 12, the fact that the blood is flowing in Book 16 serves as a reminder that the body is still open, and so still in pain. This is true even for an internal wound, such as the one that Hector receives while Zeus sleeps off his lust in the *Dios Apatê*. Ajax strikes Hector on the chest with a boulder, and he topples; his companions carry him, groaning, off the battlefield. Lying on the ground at a distance from the fighting, he seems to become lucid, looks around, sits up on his knees, and brings up blood (κελαινεφὲς αἶμ' ἀπέμεσεν) before fainting again (*Il.* 14.433–39). When Zeus wakes up at the beginning of Book 15, this is what he

<sup>33</sup> In the case of Menelaus, the contrast may draw more attention to the breach of contract between the armies than to felt pain, a breach that no doubt conflates a violation of trust (like that which provokes the war) with violence against Menelaus's body.

<sup>34</sup> Mawet 48 concludes that "μέλας, dans les contextes d'ᾠδόνη, revêt une forte valeur affective," and understands this affective component as taking the place of any "evocation métaphorique du sang ou de l'évanouissement." Yet the use of "black" words with blood are as attuned to the emotional associations of the color as they are to a strictly descriptive function.

<sup>35</sup> Koller 1967 hypothesized that *haima* might be a verbal noun derived from *hiêmi*, to throw. *Haima* would thus be the result of having been struck by a weapon. This is improbable linguistically, although persuasive poetically. Linke 334 argues that the "Indo-European conception of bleeding... is closely interwoven with the idea of bodily harm... the visible appearance of blood is therefore presented as linked to physical injury and to acts of violence against the body."

sees: “Hector lying on the plain, his companions sitting around him, he dazed at the heart and breathing painfully, vomiting blood, since not the weakest Achaean had hit him” (“Εκτορα δ’ ἐν πεδίῳ ἴδε κείμενον, ἄμφι δ’ ἑταῖροι / ἦαθ’, ὃ δ’ ἀργαλέον ἔχετ’ ἄσθματι κῆρ ἀπινύσσων, / αἶμ’ ἐμέων, ἐπεὶ οὐ μιν ἀφαυρότατος βάλ’ Ἀχαιῶν, 15.9–11). Hector’s coughing up of blood immediately alerts Zeus to the subversion of his *boulê* and demonstrates to the audience that Hector’s wound has not been treated, nor his suffering assuaged (*Il.* 15.239–42).<sup>36</sup>

While it is true that the *psuchê* does not require a wound to escape the body and that *aiôn*, “life-force,” is often said to reside in the spinal marrow or the knees and to be leaked out through natural pores in the body (e.g. as sweat or tears, *Onians* 200–28), Homerists have long seen blood as playing an important role in the hero’s vital energy (e.g., *Onians* 44–65). The loss of blood through the breach in the skin, then, is a particularly critical threat to this energy (*Spatafora* 23–24). Thus it is not surprising that, as we saw in the prayer of Glaucus, staunching the flow of blood is crucial to the treatment of the wound, the checking of pain, and the consolidation of the hero’s *menos*. Again, stopping the hemorrhage is not simply a practical move. The “drying up” (*tersomai*) of the wound, which is often accomplished by means of topical *pharmaka*,<sup>37</sup> suggests that the body is closed back up again. Apollo answers the prayer of Glaucus with a threefold action: stopping the pains, drying up the blood, and placing *menos* in his *thumos* (αὐτίκα παῦσ’ ὀδύνας, ἀπὸ δ’ ἔλκεος ἀργαλέον / αἶμα μέλαν τέρσηνε, μένος δέ οἱ ἔμβαλε θυμῷ, 16.528–29). Just as Hector’s many wounds are miraculously closed up (σὺν...μέμυκεν, 24.420; cf. 24.637) by the gods who tend his corpse, the preservation of the living body appears to be linked to closing up the holes whose presence is signaled by the flow of blood.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Spitting blood is only one of the symptoms, which also include sweating and labored breathing. Elsewhere, these symptoms indicate weariness (*Il.* 16.108; 17.385–87).

<sup>37</sup> For topical *pharmaka*, see e.g. *Il.* 11.847–48. At *Il.* 4.217–19 Machaon sucks the blood out and spreads *pharmaka* on the wound; at *Il.* 13.598–600, Agenor heals the wound of Helenus by binding it with fleece. For potions, see e.g. Hecamede’s at *Il.* 11.624–44; Helen’s at *Od.* 4.219. A charm “checks the blood” (ἐπαοιδῇ δ’ αἶμα κελαινὸν / ἔσχεθον) at *Od.* 19.457–58.

<sup>38</sup> With the desecration of the corpse, the seen body continues to function as a site to inflict pain on the person, however futile (e.g. 24.14–21). Washing the blood off the body is key to preparing it for burial (16.667–70; 24.419), suggesting that the bloody corpse is abandoned between two worlds: the children of Niobe spend nine days in the space between life and death, lying “in their shed blood” (ἐν φόνῳ) before the gods bury them (24.610–12).

Moreover, to stop bleeding is often to end pain, a principle also at work in the miraculous healing of divine wounds in Book 5. Dione has only to wipe away the *ichôr* from her daughter's arm for the arm to be restored (ἄλθετο χεῖρ) and the heavy pains assuaged (ὀδύναι δὲ κατηπιόντο βαρεῖαι, 5.417). Paeëon treats Ares' wound with pain-killing herbs, whose swift efficacy is described by the simile of fig-juice curdling milk—an image analogous to the congealing of human blood. The healing prompts the formulaic line “since he was not made to be one of the mortals” (οὐ μὲν γάρ τι καταθνητός γ' ἐτέτυκτο, 5.901; cf. 5.402), which brings into relief the paradox of the wounded god: to bear wounds and suffer *odunai* is to approach mortality. For the god, to be healed is to be restored to a perfectly fashioned body.<sup>39</sup>

The wounded, then, are liminal. A wound brings a warrior to the threshold of mortality, where the loss mourned by the *psuchê* from a position outside the body is endured in the present, where the opening up of the corpse to a hostile external world (worms, flies, dogs, desecration) is rehearsed. The bleeding body practices the death that awaits the warrior on the battlefield, a death defined by the violation of the skin.<sup>40</sup> I do not wish to claim that all wounds are equal, for it is clear that a hero's reaction to his wound or the nature of the wound suffered is significant: Aphrodite's and Ares' wounds are framed in different ways and elicit different kinds of responses. Nevertheless, wounds are symbolically overdetermined. Blood communicates the damage *lived* by a sentient being and the vulnerability associated with having a body. The closure of the wound coincides, formulaically if not always in practice, with the end of pain.

<sup>39</sup> The verbs *aldainô* and *apaldainô* (8.405, 419), which have the sense of “to make grow” or “to restore,” appear only in the context of divine wounds. Among mortals, only those healed by divine agents—Ares by Paeëon (5.899–906), Aphrodite by Dione (5.416–17), Aeneas by Artemis (5.447–48), Sarpedon by Boreas (5.696–98), Hector by Zeus and Apollo (15.59–61; cf. 7.272), Glaucus by Apollo—or by Machaon (i.e. Menelaus at 4.208–19) recover and return to battle. Teucer's wound (8.326–28) and Hector's first minor spear-wound (7.260–62) do not receive care, yet they continue to fight without difficulty. At 5.115–43, Athena gives Diomedes the strength to fight despite his arrow-wound, but when she and Hera descend to the battlefield, they find Diomedes “cooling his wound” (ἔλκος ἀναψύχοντα), which continues to pain him (5.792–98). Nevertheless, he again returns to the fight accompanied by Athena without any indication that the wound has been further treated. The wound from Book 11, however, does continue to plague him: see my comments at 70 on Achilles as cure.

<sup>40</sup> As Loraux 1987: 11–15 and 1995: 91–92, 111–12 has argued, the spilling of blood is crucial to the notion of a heroic death. On wounding as a brush with death: Lossau 400–2.

I have been arguing that when references to blood appear alongside phrases such as “he was pained in his *thumos*,” they supply a public and visual correlate for the unseen pain caused by the weapon’s violation of the body, that is, *qualitative*, felt pain. Yet I want to suggest that the very work of making unseen pain visible participates in the larger project of representing the vast suffering caused by Achilles’ withdrawal from the battlefield. We have seen that indications of felt pain are absent from the scenes of death, with the result that the agony of those who die in the *Iliad* is captured obliquely by quantitative, collective expressions. At the same time, we can also see the displacement of that anonymous, unexpressed pain onto the named wounded, the Argive and Trojan leaders.<sup>41</sup> In Book 11, the suffering of an army paying for Achilles’ lost *timê* comes to the Argive kings, who sustain in turn a series of wounds on their own bodies. The wounds of the kings in Book 11 not only succeed in communicating the massive suffering of the Greeks, but also invert the system by which a king suffers by proxy, through his extended body. In the context of Agamemnon’s wound, this inversion raises the question of what it means for the *algea* created by the king’s *atê* to rebound on him in the form of *odunai*. But before turning to this wound, a fascinating counter-example for the argument about the relationship between blood and pain and the limits of the seen, I want to examine more carefully the interaction between the bodies of all the wounded leaders and the suffering of the army.

### BREACHES OF DEFENSE

The description of Patroclus’s encounter with Eurypylus, who has been struck by an arrow (11.582–84), deploys a number of the conventional features of wounding scenes that we have seen thus far. For one, the wound is still gushing blood when Eurypylus reappears. While Eurypylus’s resolve in the face of pain is registered by the narrator’s emphasis on his unshaken frame of mind, equal attention is given to Patroclus’s reaction to the sight of his bleeding friend. The continued flow of blood suggests, as with Glaucus’s wound, that, because it remains open, the wound is still *argaleos*, thereby provoking Patroclus’s pity (τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ὄκτειρε Μενoitίου ἄλκιμος υἱός, 11.814).

<sup>41</sup> Violent power is exhausted in the dead body—as Aeschylus’s Philoctetes cries, “pain cannot touch a corpse” (ἄλγος δ’ οὐδὲν ἄπτεται νεκροῦ, fr. 255 Radt). Ares’ nightmare of lying and bleeding amidst the battlefield carrion is so terrifying because it is an image of not being able to die. Yet if the corpse supplies irrefutable proof of the enemy’s superior force, it is also true that once a body has become a corpse, that force has lost a site of materialization. For Achilles to achieve “killing,” where the aspect of the verb is continuous, rather than completed, he needs to spread it out over many bodies. The correlate to the suffering of the army as a whole is thus the wound that is sustained.

And yet Patroclus's initial reaction looks beyond Eurypylus to the whole class of Argive leaders:

ᾧ δειλοί, Δαναῶν ἡγήτορες ἡδὲ μέδοντες,  
ὥς ἄρ' ἐμέλλετε τῆλε φίλων καὶ πατρίδος αἴης  
ἄσσειν ἐν Τροίῃ ταχέας κύνας ἀργέτι δημῷ.  
ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπέ, διοτρεφεὺς Εὐρύπυλ' ἥρως,  
ἧ ῥ' ἔτι που σχήσουσι πελώριον Ἑκτορ' Ἀχαιοί,  
ἧ ἥδη φθίσονται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ δουρὶ δαμέντες; (11.816–21)

Poor wretches, you leaders and men of counsel among the Danaans, was it your fate then, far from your friends and the land of your fathers, to glut with your shining fat the running dogs here in Troy land? But tell me this, my lord Eurypylus, grown under Zeus's hand, will the Achaeans somehow be able to hold huge Hector, or must they now perish beaten down under his spear?

Patroclus first addresses Eurypylus with a plural vocative and a second person plural verb, as though the entire cohort of Greek leaders were standing before him bleeding. Moreover, he immediately extrapolates from the wound to the final insult to the heroic body's integrity, its fate among the dogs, before suddenly pulling back from this apocalyptic future. Yet while his language gradually adapts to the present encounter with a single casualty, he continues to connect this casualty to the state of the collective forces, albeit with the introduction of a note of hope that reserves a space for Achaean resistance to the Trojan onslaught ("will the Achaeans somehow be able to hold huge Hector?...").

Eurypylus's response adopts Patroclus's global focus. Yet in doing so it eliminates hope by confirming Patroclus's initial, hyperbolic conflation of Eurypylus's wounded body and the bodies of the Greek kings:

οὐκέτι, διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες, ἄλκαρ Ἀχαιῶν  
ἔσσεται, ἀλλ' ἐν νηυσὶ μελαίνῃσιν πεσέονται.  
οἱ μὲν γὰρ δὴ πάντες, ὅσοι πάρος ἦσαν ἄριστοι,  
ἐν νηυσὶν κέαται βεβλημένοι οὐτάμενοί τε  
χερσὶν ὑπο Τρώων· τῶν δὲ σθένος ὄρνυται αἰέν (11.823–27).

No longer, illustrious Patroclus, can the Achaeans defend themselves, but they will be piled back into their black ships. For all of those who were before the bravest in battle are lying up among the ships with arrow or spear wounds under the hands of the Trojans, whose strength is forever on the uprise.

The temporality of this response is complex. It begins and ends with gestures towards an unrelenting movement (*ouketi*, *aien*) into the future driven by a radical change to the present circumstances of the Achaeans, namely the wounding of all of those who were before the best. There is a structural

similarity between the failure of the leaders to ward off arrows and spears from themselves and their failure to serve as a defense (*alkar*) to the Achaeans. I have suggested that blood helps establish the warrior's *odunai* within the listener's field of vision. In Book 11 in particular, bleeding wounds also contribute to the representation of the damage that Achilles' withdrawal inflicts on the Greek army. This representation is most developed in the scene between Patroclus and Eurypylus.

The wounding of Eurypylus in Book 11 is juxtaposed with the more catastrophic wounding of the healer Machaon, and understanding the latter wound can render Patroclus's reaction to his friend more intelligible. Achilles, surveying the Greek rout and the army's suffering from the stern of his ship (11.601), sees the wounded Machaon borne off the battlefield by Nestor (597–98). Or rather, Achilles sees Machaon without really seeing him, for the horses rush by too fast for him to get a good look at the wounded man. And so he sends Patroclus to confirm that the healer himself needs healing, believing that if this is indeed the case, the Achaeans will have finally reached a point where their need is beyond bearing (χρεῖω γὰρ ἰκάνεται οὐκέτ' ἀνεκτός, 610). We might have thought that this point had already been reached in Book 9, when Agamemnon theatrically admits that he has lost many men, as well as the hope of taking Troy (9.17–22). Yet, as the next seven books show, there is more pain to be paid out. A critical stage in this progression, which begins with the wounding of the Danaan *aristoi* (11.656–64), is the wounding of the healer, which has important repercussions for the plot. For, in fact, the poem describes neither the wounding nor the subsequent suffering of Machaon: we never *see* his body clearly, nor do we ever shift to his perspective. Rather, the damage that Achilles imagines has been inflicted and that Patroclus is sent to confirm is realized only on that body which Patroclus and the narrator *do* confront.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the unbearable desperation of the Argive troops is best represented by the open wound, not the healer's wound, but the one whose hemorrhage signals the *absence* of the healer, in both a strict and a more metaphorical sense. Consider a moment in Book 17, the book in which Hector's drive for *kleos*, pursued at the expense of *his* people, culminates with his decision to don Achilles' armor. Just prior to this fatal arming, Hector seeks to capture

<sup>42</sup> Rather, Patroclus does *see* that the wounded man is Machaon (ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς / γινώσκω, ὁρόω δὲ Μαχάονα, ποιμένα λαῶν, 11.650–51), but this confrontation is not staged in the text, nor do we ever really “see” the wounded Machaon. That Machaon is called “shepherd of the people” here emphasizes that his injury helps establish that the *laos* are without a protector (Haubold 69).



another mark of his opponent's inimitable honor, namely the horses of Peleus, before his pursuit is interrupted by Apollo. In order to remind Hector of his responsibilities as the Trojan leader and *protector*, Apollo reports Euphorbus's recent death at the hands of Menelaus. Cued by Apollo, Hector takes visual note (πάπτηνεν...ἔγνω, 17.84) of the two men, slayer and slain, noticing, too, the blood still flowing from the dead body (ἔρπει δ' αἶμα κατ' οὐταμένην ὠτειλήν, 17.86). The corpse's open wound, which is very rarely marked in the poem and never this clearly, may cue the Trojans' vulnerability at a point when they are about to be massacred by Achilles *in place of* Hector because of Hector's mad desire for *kleos*, while also encouraging Hector to return to his duty as a leader.<sup>43</sup> The king's *atê*, as the story that Agamemnon tells of Zeus's own *atê* (19.95–133) makes clear, always falls on his sons. And Hector, like Agamemnon (and indeed, like Zeus himself), will be powerless to save them.

To the extent that he walks the line between the named heroes and the *laos*, Eurypylus is capable of playing the role of both father and son. On the one hand, his wound signals his own failure as one of the *aristoi* to protect the people, a failure that publicizes the fact that only one man, i.e., Achilles, deserves the title *aristos*. It equally alludes to the *costs* of a leader's failure: Eurypylus's statement, "there is no longer any defense for the Achaeans," obliquely projects his own pain onto the faceless *laos*. In this sense, it participates in a series that communicates the suffering of the people by means of their leaders' injuries. This series looks forward, to the pain that the loss of the *aristoi* will bring to their people, but also backwards, to the original strife among the *aristoi* that has already resulted in so many deaths among the *laos*.

Yet, on the other hand, as one of the least visible *aristoi*, Eurypylus may equally function as a representative of the *laos*, whose suffering signals the breakdown in the structure of care constitutive of Agamemnon's *timê*.<sup>44</sup> For the relationship of leader to led is reproduced among the *aristoi*, who are subordinate to the most kingly man among them. As a result, the *aristoi* are

<sup>43</sup> Diomedes speaks of a hypothetical victim of his spear, "reddening the earth with his blood," ὁ δέ θ' αἶματι γαίαν ἐρεῦθων, as he rots (11.394–95). The phrase ἐπὶ γαίῃ / κεῖτο ταθείς· ἐκ δ' αἶμα μέλαν ῥέε (13.654–55=21.118–19) appears twice. Tamara Neal 26–27 notes that the corpses that bleed are all Trojan.

<sup>44</sup> Lossau 396 plausibly suggests the one unnamed wounded warrior, a companion of Idomeneus (13.210–14), is designated "zum Repräsentanten der vielen namenlosen Verwundeten." He also points out that Idomeneus is never wounded, and thus offers the possibility that this figure is a substitute. This exchange constitutes for him a special case, since many Achaean leaders can be wounded, but he does not relate it to a broader interaction between *laos* and leaders.



doubly implicated in Agamemnon's errors: they are complicit in the consequences of the king's *atê* for the *laos*, as well as being harmed by it themselves. Their inability to defend themselves is equally the inability to defend others, as well as the failure of their king to defend them.

The leaders' wounds participate not only in a complex representational strategy, but also in the narrative development of the poem's middle books. The Trojan weapons' penetration of the kings' armor and their delicate *chrô*s in Book 11 anticipates the breach of the Achaean defenses in Book 12 and the Zeus-sanctioned Trojan advance to the ships. This advance is deferred by Hera's machinations in the *Dios apatê* in Book 14, which bring about a reversal of fortunes and a Greek rally to defend the ships. This reversal is, in fact, itself plotted by means of wounds, which are sustained in this case by Trojan princes (Deiphobus, 13.528–39; Helenus, 13.593–600; cf. 13.781–83) and culminate with Hector's injury in Book 14 (409–20) (Friedrich 26–33).<sup>45</sup> As I noted above, it is the sight of Hector lying away from the battlefield and spitting blood that makes Zeus aware of what has happened to his *boulê* as he slept.

On the Achaean side, the bleeding Eurypylus stands before us as the emblem of vulnerability once every last measure of protection has been destroyed. While this encounter surely participates in the narrative's techniques of deferral—Patroclus stays with Eurypylus until the Trojans break through the wall—it also allows Patroclus's pity for the Achaeans to crystallize by forcing him to confront the costs of Achilles' withdrawal, i.e., this one wounded body. Like the *loimos* of Book 1, this scene stages and partially resolves a crisis that foreshadows the second, messier one in which Patroclus intervenes at the cost of his life (Martin 31; Lossau 398). The details are familiar from other wounding scenes: Patroclus cuts the arrow from the thigh, washes away the blood, and applies *pharmaka* to check the pains. The scene ends with the line “the wound dried and the blood stopped,” (τὸ μὲν ἔλκος ἐτέρσεται, παύσασατο δ' αἶμα, 11.848). In sealing the wound, then, Patroclus acts locally to stop the hemorrhaging of the Achaean forces and to repair the breach in their defenses. At the same time, as he solves this crisis, Patroclus becomes aware of the greater chaos on the battlefield resulting from the destruction of the last Achaean defense, i.e., the wall. He finally leaves Eurypylus to engage the suffering of the army by offering his own body as the stop-gap cure.

<sup>45</sup> Lossau reads all the major Trojan wounds (Aeneas and Sarpedon in Book 5, Hector in Books 7 and 14, and Glaucus in Book 12), together with the Greek wounds as catalysts for the plot as it is propelled towards the death of Hector and the resolution of Achilles' anger.

It is the failure of Patroclus's cure that leads Achilles to assume the responsibility of healing the *algea* that he himself had imposed on the Argives. Indeed, the nature of this "healing" confirms the participation of the kings' wounds in the epic's representation of vulnerability and pain, rather than in simple clinical realism. Although Agamemnon, Diomedes and Odysseus *stay* wounded through Book 19, no further mention is made of these wounds after Achilles' return to combat.<sup>46</sup> Both Diomedes (23.290–513, 812–25) and Odysseus (23.709–39, 755–79) compete in Patroclus's funeral games successfully and without visible handicaps, while Agamemnon appears prepared to do so (23.887–95), suggesting that their suffering has less to do with any care they do or do not receive and more to do with the cure represented by Achilles. Their wounds flare up and disappear in response to the development of the theme of Achilles' pain, its displacement and traumatic boomeranging. As a result, as soon as Achilles begins beating back Trojans and defending Greeks, the wounds of the leaders dematerialize.

Wounds, then, stage the massive suffering of the *laos* on individual bodies, thereby opening up a place in the narrative for the representation of the *odunai* that are displaced from scenes of death. Moreover, they offer us blood that is not anonymously shed on the ground, but lost from sentient bodies. Together with the weapon, the wound, and particularly the flow of blood that reminds us that the body is open, work to shore up narrative indications of felt pain by helping to designate a place for this pain, not simply *odunai* but also *algea*, in the poem's field of vision. Surface wounds are, of course, not the only visible evidence of hurt in the *Iliad*: for this we might also invoke the tears of Achilles and Agamemnon or the ritual gestures of mourning performed within the poem. Yet recognizing these other registers of pain again raises the question of why the restoration of Achilles' *timê* involves so much blood as payment for tears. And if the best way of injuring a king is to orchestrate the destruction of his people, what are we to make of the actual spear-wound that Agamemnon, the king on behalf of whom everyone else suffers, receives in Book 11? For, in fact, the process that leads to the utter helplessness of the Greeks begins with the wounding of Agamemnon (11.251–53): Zeus sends Hector the message that he will grant Hector the strength to kill and keep killing right up until he reaches the Greek ships as soon as the Argive king is wounded (11.191–94). The wounds of Diomedes (11.373–78), Odysseus (11.434–38), Machaon (11.505–7), and, finally, Eurypylus (11.581–82) come on the heels of Agamemnon's injury. So how are we to understand a wound

<sup>46</sup> The wounds are mentioned at *Il.* 14.37–39; 19.47–53 (immediately before Achilles announces that he will return to battle).

that, even as it seems to drive home and, in a sense, “literalize” the suffering of the *laos*, forces the poet to draw on a simile for felt pain in which the ostensibly stable element is itself a catachresis?

### THE KING'S *ATĒ*

At 11.251–53, the Trojan fighter Coön stabs Agamemnon in the arm with his spear. The king continues to fight as long as the blood gushes warmly from the wound:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ἔλκος ἐτέρσεται, πᾶσ' αἶμα,  
ὀξείαι δ' ὀδύνη δῶνον μένος Ἀτρεΐδαο.  
ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ὠδίνουσιν ἔχῃ βέλος ὀξὺ γυναικᾶ,  
δριμύ, τό τε προΐεισι μογιστοκοὶ Εἰλείθυιαι,  
Ἥρης θυγατέρες πικρὰς ὠδῖνας ἔχουσαι,  
ὥς ὀξεί' ὀδύνη δῶνον μένος Ἀτρεΐδαο. (*Il.* 11.267–72)

But after the sore place was dry and the flow of blood stopped,  
the sharp pains began to break in on the strength of the son of Atreus.  
As the sharp sorrow of pain descends on a woman in labor,  
the bitterness that the hard spirits of childbirth bring on,  
Hera's daughters, who hold the power of the bitter birthpangs,  
so the sharp pains began to break in on the strength of the son of Atreus.

This simile is unique in Homer. The scholiasts hypothesized that the wound is inflamed, while in his commentary, Bryan Hainsworth simply observes that “the image of the woman in labor is a unique and memorable simile which, coming at this point, is eloquent testimony to the range and humanity of the poet's imagination” (254, *ad* 269–73).<sup>47</sup> Salazar, adopting the terms of Loraux, offers little help: “the main point concerning the Agamemnon passage seems to be the shift from ‘the beauty of war towards war that hurts’” (153).

But how to show war that hurts? We have seen in the description of wounds that blood plays an important role in communicating the pain caused by the weapon: as long as the wound bleeds, the invisible arrows of *odunai* continue

<sup>47</sup> Helene Foley 1978: 8 observes of “reverse similes” in the *Odyssey* that they “seem to suggest both a sense of identity between people in different social and sexual roles and a loss of stability, an inversion of the normal,” but she denies any thematic consistency to the *Iliad*'s similes. Loraux 1995: 34–37 incorporates the simile into her argument about “the feminine concealed in the text of the *Iliad*,” on which see also Monsacré. Moulton 392 finds the simile striking on account of its “inappropriateness,” given the association between Achilles and maternal protection and the poet's characterization of Agamemnon as a heartless aggressor. As I argue above, it is precisely this inappropriateness that suggests the king's capacity to cause violence entails his capacity, here, to suffer it.

to harrow the victim; with treatment, the blood dries and the pain stops. Yet in this singular case, the wound has dried and the blood has stopped flowing *of its own accord*. Nevertheless, the pain not only does not disappear, it grows worse. While the wound remains visible on the body's surface, perhaps swollen, as the scholiasts thought—although this piece of *seen* information is missing—blood is no longer a visible correlate of Agamemnon's pain. And so the poet, dissatisfied for the first and last time with the language of felt pain, invokes a strategy for, as Fränkel put it, “cloth[ing] the invisible in sensible images,” namely the simile (H. Fränkel 1921: 98, cited by Lloyd 187). It is only after this detour that the poet gives us the felt, formulaic version of Agamemnon's pain (ἥχθετο γὰρ κῆρ, 11.274). In indicating not only the visible (albeit sealed) wound, but also the expanded territory of the simile, the resonances of a phrase like “pained at heart” are magnified, indeed, so much so that ring composition can be said to call us back from a vanishing point.

For is this simile not a strange choice of a “sensible image”? Years later, Plutarch writes:

ταῦτ' οὐχ' Ὅμηρον αἱ γυναῖκες ἀλλ' Ὀμηρίδα γράψαι λέγουσι τεκοῦσαν ἢ τίκτουςαν ἔτι καὶ τὸ νύγμα [Reiske. μίγμα MSS] τῆς ἀλγηδόνος ὁμοῦ πικρὸν καὶ ὀξύ γινόμενον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἔχουσιν. (Mor. 496d)

These lines, women say, were written not by Homer but by a Homerid, having given birth or while she was *still in the throes of it* and had the pain of labor, bitter and sharp, in her entrails.

If Plutarch's female sources are correct, the simile should begin elsewhere and end up here, inside a pain that can be lived in the present only by the one experiencing it.<sup>48</sup> And, in fact, the simile involves a catachresis. Its stable element, the sharp dart (βέλος ὀξύ) sent by the goddesses of childbirth, borrows the swift, bitter arrow that is responsible for the most painful wounds in the *Iliad*. The Eileithyiae, too, hold bitter pains (πικρὰς ὠδῖνας) in their possession, which they inflict on a woman in labor via arrows like those bearing pain in war, with the important difference that they are invisible.<sup>49</sup>

It is this distinguishing invisibility that may recommend these darts to the description of Agamemnon's wound and the strange pain caused by the closure of the wound. If blood helps signify that the weapon continues its trajectory inside the body in the form of “sharp pains” (ὀξεῖαι ὀδύνας), the

<sup>48</sup> See Gal. *De loc. aff.* 2.9 (Kühn 8.117), who accuses Archigenes of trying to describe the pain of a disease of the womb, which can be known *only* by a woman suffering from it.

<sup>49</sup> *Ōdis* bears a close etymological relationship to *odunē*, but is often used in the plural of birth pangs. Cf. *Od.* 9.415.

pains that attack Agamemnon after the wound closes are now likened to the arrows delivered by the gods when a woman gives birth. These arrows are never seen, and the damage that they inflict leaves no mark on the surface of the skin.<sup>50</sup> Agamemnon's pain is thus referred to what was perhaps the paradigm of pain that occurs in the absence of a visible, mortal assault on the body, namely the pain of a woman giving birth.<sup>51</sup> But far from granting these pangs a correlate in the seen world, the simile exiles them to a place where the weapon fails to register in the public field of vision, and where the pain, at least for a male audience, remains opaque. The simile withdraws from the surface of the body, and thus encourages the metamorphosis of the spearwound, a wound implicated, I have argued, in the mass slaughter caused by the king's *atê*, into one that participates in the liminal world of birth, rather than death.<sup>52</sup> At the moment that the pain of the *laos* arrives at the king's body, the representation of that pain requires a body whose suffering, expressed by a borrowed weapon, implies a different kind of vulnerability than that targeted by the warrior's weapon, a different kind of pain.

In itself, this pain is, like all pain, irrecoverable. But why is it invoked here, when the poet seeks another way of representing *odunai*? While the pain of childbirth is caused by invisible arrows whose point of impact cannot be located on the body's surface, the wound itself is, in one sense, glaringly obvious. For within the Greek imagination, the female, and specifically the maternal body, is constituted by an opening that, once the *parthenos* becomes a *gunê*, never stops bleeding, and never more so than when the daughters of Hera

<sup>50</sup> The body killed by Apollo's arrows (or Artemis's for a woman, *Od.* 5.198–99) is unblemished on its surface. In her lament, Hecuba stresses how Hector's corpse, through the care of the gods, bears no trace of abuse, and she compares it to the corpse of one killed by Apollo's "gentle arrows" (ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν, 24.757–59), that is, the corpse whose death was not violent.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. [Hpc.] *Int.* 17 (Littré 7.206), καὶ πάσχει οἶα γυνὴ ὠδίνουσα.

<sup>52</sup> Across diverse cultures, childbirth and war have long been entangled in what Nancy Huston 131 has called "reciprocal metaphorization"; see also Theweleit. For this cross-fertilization in ancient Greece, see Loraux 1995: 23–58. Moreover, flesh-bound pain and the mortality that it makes visible is cross-culturally associated with not only women (see Loraux 1995, *passim*), but specifically mothers. Sheila Murnaghan 1992: 243 speaks of the "perversely causal character of maternity...as if women by giving birth to men were also responsible for their dying"; see also Loraux 1998; Ramazani. It is likely that the simile addresses itself to Agamemnon's confrontation with his own vulnerability here, which happens every time a warrior suffers *odunai*. Yet, as I suggest above, this is equally an encounter with the cost of lives lost through his *atê* because of the strong association in ancient Greek culture between childbirth and grief.

attack.<sup>53</sup> In later Greek thought, and especially in Euripidean tragedy, this pain gives rise to the fearsome intensity of maternal grief.<sup>54</sup> At this crucial moment, when we are to imagine the king suffering directly and in the flesh the *algea* promised by the first lines of the poem, a simile is asked to do the work of representation by ushering in a different kind of liminality. Agamemnon, who would destroy even the embryo in the mother's body in his desire to restore *timê* to the house of Atreus,<sup>55</sup> who, less than two hundred lines before Cöon's attack, is compared to a lion crushing fawns in his jaws as their mother looks on, unable to protect her young (11.113–21), whose brutal *aristeia* inaugurates the comparison of warriors to blood-eating animals (Neal 24),<sup>56</sup> suffers as a result of his idiosyncratic wounding the gut-wrenching pain of bringing humans into the world. Perhaps the poem needs to invoke this pain, albeit fleetingly, to calculate the cost of human destruction.<sup>57</sup> It may suggest the impossibility of that calculation.

<sup>53</sup> In the medical writers, who transmit cultural associations with the female body (Hanson), the discharge of the lochia is critical to the conceptualization of childbirth and participates in a series of bleedings that transform the *parthenos* into a *gunê* (King 85–86). The *gunê* is the one who bleeds and, for the medical writers, keeping the body of the *gunê* open is critical to maintaining health (*ibid.* 75–98; see also Loraux 1995: 111–15). On the relationship between the *parthenos* and the absence of bloodshed, see King 83–84; Loraux 1987: 31–48.

<sup>54</sup> See S. *El.* 770; E. *HF* 280–81; *Pho.* 355–56; *IA* 917–918; Arist. *EN* 1168a25; schol. *ad E. Ph.* 355. See also Ar. *Th.* 752; Ael. *NA* I. I.18. At E. fr. 1015 (Kannicht), the mother is more *philoteknos* because she is more certain that the child is her own. But see, too, E. *HF* 633–36 (where Heracles *philoteknos* ominously anticipates his later transformation into a Procne figure); *Pho.* 965; fr. 103 (Kannicht); Arist. *Rh.* 1371b24, on humans as *philoteknoi*. See also Loraux 1998: 38–39.

<sup>55</sup> ὦ πέπον, ὦ Μενέλαε, τίη δὲ σὺ κήδεαι οὕτως / ἀνδρῶν; ἦ σοὶ ἄριστα πεποιήται κατὰ οἶκον / πρὸς Τρώων; τῶν μὴ τις ὑπεκφύγοι αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον / χεῖράς θ' ἡμετέρας, μηδ' ὄν τινα γαστέρι μήτηρ / κοῦρον ἔοντα φέροι, μηδ' ὅς φύγοι, ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες / Ἰλίου ἐξαπολοίατ' ἀκήδεστοι καὶ ἄφαντοι ("Dear brother, o Menelaus, are you concerned so tenderly with these people? Did you in your house get the best of treatment from the Trojans? No, let not one of them go free of sudden death and our hands; not the young man child that the mother carries still in her body, not even he, but let all of Ilion's people perish, utterly blotted out and unmourned for," *Il.* 6.55–60).

<sup>56</sup> The victims of Agamemnon's attack, two sons of Priam (Isus and Antiphys), were previously ransomed by Achilles. Moulton 391 links this detail to what he sees as the strong connection between Achilles and the protection of the young: the sons of Priam, then, resemble the sons of the Achaeans, who were once, but no longer, protected by Achilles; Agamemnon is transformed from a passive aggressor, i.e., the cause of the Achaeans' suffering, to an active one. See below, n59.

<sup>57</sup> For mothers are not only associated with flesh-bound pain *qua* women (above, n54). That pain introduces a permanent vulnerability so that the death of a child may induce

THE COSTS OF *TIMÊ*

The simile of the woman in childbirth, which mobilizes the poem's strategies of representation to communicate the effects of a wound that is both maximally literal and maximally symbolic, is extraordinary. At a critical point in the poem's circulation of pains, a figure who lies outside this economy of pain and seems to trouble it emerges, and indeed emerges through a trope, i.e. the simile, that suggests a breakdown in the poet's ability to represent this economy with his conventional tools—wounded warriors, blood, and verbs of felt pain. This may seem like a lot of weight to hang on a single simile, however anomalous. I want to close by suggesting that the strategic conjoining of the woman in labor and the king in pain at the beginning of Book 11 resonates with a moment in the poem's final repudiation of the conflation of bodies and *timê*. If, as I have suggested, the simile uses the maternal as a gesture towards the irreducibility of bodies to surrogate material goods, a mother is also used to memorialize the darker side of this commitment to irreducibility in the poem's attempt at closure.

*Iliad* 24 is dominated by the mourning of the father and the prospect of a negotiation that might attenuate his sorrow, a scenario that revisits the poem's first lines and a father's failed bid for pity.<sup>58</sup> In creating a bond between natural enemies, the scene between Achilles and Priam lays the groundwork for narrative closure, not least of all through bringing about the return of a body to be cremated, sealed in a box, and put into a hollow (ἐς κοίλῃν, 24.797). The exchange marks the end of Achilles' continued abuse of Hector's corpse—"dumb earth" (κωφὴν γαῖαν, 24.54), in Apollo's memorable phrasing—in the hope of exacting sufficient payment for his loss, now understood as Patroclus, and it restores the institution of *apoinê* by which a father trades goods for the body of a son, albeit *qua* corpse.<sup>59</sup> This exchange alleviates the

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it all over again (hence the association between maternity and a capacity for grief). The pain of the mother thus symbolizes both the cost of bringing life into the world *and* the cost of losing it, since she survives; it is as if the *psuchê* standing over the corpse still had a body to feel the *odunai* of death.

<sup>58</sup> This is not to deny that there is general *parental* grief as well (e.g. 22.426–27). On the father's grief in the *Iliad*, see Griffin 174–77; James 10–43. See *infra*, n69.

<sup>59</sup> On *apoina* (ransom) and its relation to *poinê* (revenge), see Wilson 13–39; 41–44; 126–33, who notes that from Chryses' failed attempt to ransom his daughter to Book 24, no offer of *apoina* is accepted (31). Note that both cases of Agamemnon's brutality cited above (6.55–60, 11.101–21) are marked by his refusal to accept ransoms; see also 11.136–42 where, as at 6.55–60, deaths are extracted as payment for the original insult to



shock of the greatest of Greek heroes responding to a dying man's request that his body be ransomed to his parents with the words "I wish that somehow wrath and fury might drive me to carve your flesh and myself eat it raw because of what you have done" (αἶ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνείη / ὥμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷα ἔοργας, 22.346–47).<sup>60</sup> It also recognizes the limits of seeking compensation from mute earth: recall that Hector is being made to pay a lump sum for all of Achilles' companions (νῦν δ' ἀθρόα πάντ' ἀποτείσεις / κήδε' ἐμῶν ἐτάρων, 22.271–72), whose deaths Achilles prefers now to understand as constitutive of Hector's *timê*, rather than his own. The restoration of an economy where *timê* (and, implicitly, harm) can be repaid in prestige goods, including poetry, rescues Achilles from a limit state and anticipates the trade *psuchê-for-kleos* that lies in the poem's imminent future.

Mothers, who do not traffic in *apoina*, appear and disappear in interesting ways at the margins of this exchange between fathers and sons. Thetis's *penthos alaston* (24.105; cf. 18.88), her anticipatory mourning of her son's death, is merely interrupted when she is called upon to facilitate the return of Hector's body to Priam, and it fades from view without abating at the moment Achilles accepts Zeus's command to return the body.<sup>61</sup> Although Hermes in the guise of Achilles' courier urges Priam to supplicate Achilles in the name of his father, his mother, and his child, the Trojan king begs his enemy only to "remember his father" (μνησαί πατρός σοῖο, 24.486; μνησάμενος σοῦ πατρός, 24.504) when he actually confronts him. Achilles invokes Niobe in bidding Priam to take food again. Yet although that mourning mother remembers to eat, Achilles closes his speech by shifting from the past tense of Niobe's meal (σίτου μνήσας) to the eternal present tense of her endless digestion (πέσσει) of her sorrows (24.613–17). That is, while the repetition of *pessô* at 24.639 links Achilles to Niobe, the temporal sequence is inverted so as to produce a sense of closure implicitly contrasted to her open-ended sorrows: whereas, she ate, and then mourned forever, *before*, he was always sorrowing (ἀλλ' αἰεὶ στενάχω καὶ κήδεα μυρία πέσσω), but *now* he has

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Menelaus. At 11.101–21, Agamemnon's bloodlust is contrasted with Achilles' mercy prior to the war (11.104–6); whereas Achilles' bestiality is temporary, Agamemnon's appears more engrained and more associated with the war as a whole.

<sup>60</sup> On the increasing and quite literal bloodthirstiness of the latter half of the poem, elaborated through animal similes, see Segal 31–32; Rabel 6–7; Neal 23–33, 30–33 on Achilles' appetites.

<sup>61</sup> As Slatkin 85–105 has shown, Thetis's wrath (*mênis*), as potentially catastrophic as Demeter's, is ever-present beneath the surface of the *Iliad*, and especially Book 24.



tasted food (νῦν δὴ καὶ σίτου πασάμην). The idea of taking one's fill of mourning is repeated throughout the last book, but it is always among men, and the importance of satiety and proper limit seems implicitly correlated with the restoration of a system of exchange for the circulation of goods.<sup>62</sup> Disruption to the setting of limits is here, as elsewhere in Greek culture, seen as feminine. Indeed, the last scene of the *Iliad* is one in which the very act of closure, that is, the burial of Hector, also awakens a relentless desire to mourn (ὥς ἔφατο κλαίουσα, γόνυ δ' Ἀλῖαστον ὄρνυε, 24.760), a desire stirred up by Hecuba after the exchange between Achilles and Priam.

Hecuba, in fact, is a key figure in this final book, unsurprisingly shut out of its central exchange. A division of labor between parents is anticipated in Achilles' response to Hector's request that his corpse be ransomed: Priam is the one who will offer his son's killer the body's weight in gold (εἴ κέν σ' αὐτὸν χρυσῷ ἐρύσασθαι ἀνάοι), while Hecuba is the one who will mourn the son, *whom she bore* (ἐνθεμένη λεχέεσσι γοήσεται, ὃν τέκεν αὐτή, 22.351–53); the relative clause grounds these roles, or at least one of them, in sexual difference.<sup>63</sup> But Hecuba is not simply left behind in the city. She rejects, in fact, the very possibility of supplicating Achilles by opposing the economy assumed by that supplication to her own economy of pain: “Would that I might cleave to the liver of that man and eat it. Then what he did to my son would be *paid back*” (τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἦπαρ ἔχοιμι / ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα· τότ' ἄντιτα<sup>64</sup> ἔργα γένοιτο παιδὸς ἐμοῦ, 24.212–14). Hecuba's savage desire recalls the omophagic cannibalism ascribed by Zeus to Hera early in the poem (4.34–36). Indeed, the poem uses these two female figures, Hera and Hecuba, to define

<sup>62</sup> See esp. 24.513–14, where Achilles takes full satisfaction in his sorrow and the desire for it leaves him (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥα γόοιο τετάρπετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς, / καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ παρπιδῶν ἦλθ' ἵμερος ἥδ' ἀπὸ γυίων). See also 24.46–49, 227, 549. On unforgettable sorrow, see Slatkin 95–96; Loraux 1998: 93–109; on its relation to mothers, see *ibid.*, esp. pp. 35–56. Thus, while mourning is arguably the orchestration of closure, it is also risks deferring closure.

<sup>63</sup> But cf. 22.341, where Hector claims that both his parents will ransom his body—the sole instance where ransom is mentioned in connection with the mother (Wilson 205n38). I am not denying that Priam, too, mourns, but it is important that his mourning is marked as subject to limits and that he enforces those limits in the city (24.713–17). An endlessly mourning Priam is as threatening as a Hecuba engaged in exchange. Thus, the responses of the parents to the son's death are structured by a fundamental essentialism, which we may recognize in the Greek evidence without naturalizing or valorizing it (cf., on a maternal sublime, Yaeger, with the critique of Ramazani 54–55).

<sup>64</sup> ἄντιτα MSS; ἄν τιτὰ Apoll. Calistr. Cf. *Od.* 17.51 (=60) in support of ἄντιτα (Richardson 295 *ad* 213).

the space of anti-civilization that Achilles inhabits in Book 22, where loss is repaid not only by taking the *psuchê* of the enemy, but by incorporating his very flesh and blood, and where mourning threatens to become interminable.<sup>65</sup> Like the dog that Hecuba is fated to become in mythology, these figures occupy the border between nature and culture.<sup>66</sup>

Yet Hecuba's wish is more specific than Hera's, and it returns us to Agamemnon's pain. The Trojan queen seeks her enemy's *hêpar*, the site of the heroic death that her vengeance would pervert, as well as a privileged site of the maternal body,<sup>67</sup> and it sketches a truly parasitic revenge. *Prosphuô* is a *hapax* in the *Iliad* that literally means "to grow onto," "cleave to," thus capturing the intense, almost claustrophobic relationship between mother and child in the Greek imagination.<sup>68</sup> A child is a *ôdis* or a *ponos* for its mother for all time. Or rather, that pain is what grounds the mother's fierce attachment to the child, whose life compounds her vulnerability.<sup>69</sup> Hecuba's contestation of the poem's economy binds her to an interminable exchange of pain for pain, flesh for flesh. That is, recognizing the irreducibility of the dead to "sheer material weight" in that economy once it has *already* been set in motion inspires a bestializing lust for compensation that can never be satisfied. In the *Iliad*, this perverted exchange is superseded by one in which the weight of the dead

<sup>65</sup> This is not the occasion to address Achilles himself and the relationship to Hera and especially Hecuba established by his cannibalistic desires. I would only suggest here that the argument that Achilles challenges the materialist values of heroic society is problematic not because Achilles remains fully within his culture's logic of material compensation (Wilson 83–108) but because any challenge that he poses to that society arises from pushing that logic to the very limits of materialism (bodies and blood).

<sup>66</sup> Wilson 122–23. See also Segal 62–69; James 45–51. See Redfield 1994: 193–202, on dogs, who bear the epithet "raw flesh-eating" (ὠμηστής, e.g. 22.67), and cannibalism.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. E. *Supp.* 918–20 (ἰὸ τέκνον, δυστυχῇ / σ' ἔτρεφον ἔφερον ὕφ' ἥπατος / πόνους ἐνεγκούσ' ἐν ὠδίσι). For wounds to the *hêpar*, see *Il.* 11.579; 13.412; 17.349; 20.469. On the *hêpar* as a site where masculine heroic death and female labor meet, see Loraux 1995: 29–30. The liver, of course, is also the vital organ, so that to gnaw on it is to gnaw on the victim's very life-force, as Prometheus's eagle knows well (*Hes. Th.* 523–5). In its elimination of boundaries between self and other through incorporation, cannibalism may also cue anxieties about maternity and the womb: see James 46n23.

<sup>68</sup> But cf. *Od.* 12.433. The more common *enphuô* is used almost exclusively of women greeting men or other women (*Il.* 6.406; 14.232; 18.384, 423 [Hephaestus greeting Thetis]; 19.7).

<sup>69</sup> Child as *ponos*: A. *Ag.* 54, E. *Pho.* 30. *Ôdis*: P. *Ol.* 6.31; A. *Ag.* 1417–18; E. *Ion* 45; *IT* 1102. But Hecuba also seems to represent the seduction of life's sweetness in place of war, although for Hector, unlike for Achilles, this choice is foreclosed: see 6.258–65. Hector rejects his mother's offer of honey-sweet wine "lest I am stripped of *menos* and forget my courage" (μή μ' ἀπογινώσῃς μένεος, ἀλκῆς τε λάθωμαι, 265).

body is returned in gold. Hecuba's position is hence cued as regressive. Yet it remains powerful enough to require representation in the poem even after Achilles accepts Priam's ransom, and it falls to Hecuba to memorialize it alongside *kleos*. Her role can shed light on why it is the anonymous mother who emerges as the vehicle when the poem reaches to describe the excessive pain of the king's wound.

The simile of the woman in labor, framed by textbook ring composition, returns us to the object of description with a richer appreciation of the pain signaled by the expression "he was pained at heart" (ἤχθετο γὰρ κῆρ). Still, the simile remains, like Hecuba's wish to cleave to Achilles' liver, a dead end. This is not to say that it goes nowhere, only that it pursues, with unusual dedication, the epic's representational strategies to their limits. Then, like the wounded Agamemnon himself, it retreats. For this is not, in the end, a path that is well-trodden by the epic poet. It will be tragedy that, in largely dispensing with epic bloodshed, puts its money in the places from which pain was exiled in Homer: impassioned, lyrical speech, dramatic gesture, spectacular symptoms. Tragedy mobilizes all of its resources to realize pain as fully as possible in its heroes—Heracles, Ajax, Oedipus, Orestes. This pain, together with the experience of intense and politically disruptive mourning to which tragedy is also drawn, is not anomalously, but regularly feminizing: Sophocles' Heracles, for example, declares that "now in my misery I am discovered a woman" (νῦν δ' ἐκ τοιούτου θῆλυς ἡύρημαι τάλας, *S. Tr.* 1075), while Euripides' Heracles, lamenting the sons that he has killed in a fit of murderous rage (*à la* Procne), is accused of being "womanly" (θῆλυν ὄντ', *E. HF* 1412) by Theseus (Loraux 1995: 37–43; Zeitlin 349–52). In tragedies like *Trojan Women* or *Hecuba*, Euripides interrogates the costs of the Trojan War, especially for its survivors. In plays such as *Suppliant Women*, feminine mourning is represented, then contained.<sup>70</sup>

What about Agamemnon in tragedy? What is his relationship to those costs? Already in the *Odyssey*, we are introduced to the fatal miscalculation of a leader who thought he would return home "welcome to my children and my slaves" (11.431), only to encounter the stratagems of his murderous wife. Aeschylus stages this crime as one of tragedy's most extravagant bloodbaths, all the more spectacular for showing up on stage obliquely. The mother who perpetrates it is described as the very inverse of the child-ransoming father: the *mênis teknopoinos*, child-avenging wrath (*A. Ag.* 155). The representation of the wound in Book 11 offers only the possibility of imagining the temporary incorporation of *algea* by the king whose anxieties about *timê*

<sup>70</sup> On women and mourning in tragedy, see Foley 1993.

and concomitant *atê* result in the loss of the *laos*. It is a loss that the chorus of *Agamemnon* vividly imagines in economic terms, describing a system of exchange whereby Ares sends back ashes in place of living bodies, paid out on behalf of “another’s wife” (ἀλλοτρίας διαὶ γυναικός, 448–49). Yet even more striking is the stark equivalence the tragedy draws between the wound dealt by Clytemnestra and the cost of the daughter, her *ódis* (ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, ἱλτάτην ἐμοὶ / ὠδίν’, *A. Ag.* 1417–18), sacrificed by Agamemnon to shore up the power required for the mobilization of an army to avenge the *timê* of the Atreidae: Clytemnestra in a sense unleashes the Hecuba of *Iliad* 24, as well as a torrent of blood that goes missing in Homer’s description of Agamemnon’s wound.<sup>71</sup> Tragedy’s engagement with pain, the costs of war, and the figure of the mother naturally are not determined by epic. Nevertheless, we may see the tragedians as astute heirs to the *Iliad*’s wealth of complexity and clear-eyed beneficiaries of its appropriation of the maternal to both memorialize the pain of war and cap its power; Aeschylus may help us become better readers of the *Iliad*.

## CONCLUSION

I have argued that to the extent that bleeding wounds in the *Iliad* play a key role in rendering visible the circulation of *algea* through *odunai* and death, Agamemnon’s wound, while glorious in one register, also appears to represent, or gesture towards, the pain of the *laos*. This pain is precisely the “benefit” that they are reaping from their king (ἐπαύρωνται βασιλῆος, 1.410), who has provoked his greatest warrior to shore up his *timê* by converting dead bodies into its currency. Locating not only this pain, but also the costs of a zero-sum game of *timê* played out either by pawns or principals would seem to require, beyond indications of magnitude, bleeding, open bodies, as well as, in the case of the king’s wound, the open body of the mother. This body emerges as a vehicle for delivering the poem to its own limits, thereby anticipating the problematic sexual division of labor that tragedy, too, seemed to require for its representations of excessive suffering. One may say that death and dying are simply what heroic epic is about, the same way one might claim that the wounds of the *Iliad* are only exercises in demonstrating the warrior’s ability to overcome his flesh. But that would be to forget that the *Iliad* is not simply in the business of bestowing *kleos*, although it is committed, of course, to that,

<sup>71</sup> Reading *Agamemnon* in terms of Marx’s theory of the commodity fetish, Wohl sees this as “conspicuous expenditure” (70) and understands Clytemnestra as the figure onto whom “all the traumas of the commodity fetish...are projected” (102). On the tragedy’s attempt to judge the costs of the Trojan War, see Wohl 83–99. See also Ramazani on pain in war and the fetish.

too. Its complex, multi-layered engagement with suffering also inaugurates a tradition of questioning whether those twin phantoms, undying *kleos* and Helen, justified their costs.

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