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Homeric Subjects: Psychoanalysis and the *Iliad*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Classics

by

William Witherspoon McCrary

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Homeric Subjects: Psychoanalysis and the *Iliad*

by

William Witherspoon McCrary

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Brent Harmon Vine, Chair

The Homeric poems' folk theories of the mental apparatus are primitive, the characters are not very introspective, and the narrators are not particularly concerned with depicting interiority. All of this should not, however, be taken for a lack of characterization or psychological insight on the part of the poet(s). As some scholars have recognized, interiority is not absent; it is implicit. This dissertation makes the implicit explicit. Drawing on four theories or schools of psychoanalysis (object relations, self psychology, attachment theory, and relational psychoanalysis), I show what beliefs, assumptions, and interpersonal templates Achilles and other Homeric characters use to interpret the world, construct their subjective experience, and guide their interactions with others. We see how Achilles' characteristic ways of relating reflect his mental representations of self and other in interaction.

The first two chapters show how the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1, and therefore the plot of the whole poem, grows out of their personalities. The first chapter explains Agamemnon's refusal to ransom Chryseis, points out the subtle ways in which Achilles

masochistically provokes Agamemnon, and traces Agamemnon's shifting and contradictory defenses. In the second chapter, I analyze the quarrel proper. The heart of the chapter begins our discussion of narcissism and establishes Achilles' relational manner and what it implies about his personality. The third chapter shows how Achilles prevents reconciliation with Agamemnon in book 1, introduces the enactment that Achilles repeatedly draws others into, compares his behavior and personality with Thetis's, and considers his heroism in the context of masochism and narcissism. After first demonstrating that Achilles is narcissistic, the fourth chapter then uses self psychology, object relations theories, and relational psychoanalysis to explain the outcome of the embassy, Achilles' enactment, and the origins of his narcissism.

I take the characters apart and put them back together to show how they work. Just as an orthopedist might be able to visualize what each bone and muscle are doing as a person moves, we learn to discern what mental processes and representations of self and other are at work as the characters interact with one another.

The dissertation of William Witherspoon McCrary is approved.

David Blank

Alex Purves

Mario Telò

Brent Harmon Vine, Committee Chair

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2017

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Introduction

I. Theory

This dissertation is an experiment. My goal was to use contemporary psychology to help me generate new readings of Homer. Since literary critics had long found Freud's and Lacan's ideas useful, I suspected that the vast discipline of psychology might have some other useful ideas to offer. After exploring various branches of psychology, I eventually realized that what I was looking for was a theory, and so I turned to psychoanalysis.

I use four theories of psychoanalysis: self psychology, attachment theory, object relations theory, and, above all, relational psychoanalysis.¹ Object relations theory is more a school than a theory. Major theorists in this tradition include Melanie Klein, Ronald Fairbairn, Donald Winnicott, John Bowlby, and Otto Kernberg. Although Klein is frequently in the background of the dissertation and greatly influenced these other authors, she does not make many direct appearances. Fairbairn and Winnicott appear in the last chapter and Winnicott in the conclusion. Kernberg combines Klein's, and to a lesser extent Fairbairn's, object relations with Edith Jacobson's and Margaret Mahler's ego psychology.² He has been a leading theorist of narcissism and borderline personality disorder since the 1960s and plays a large role in chapters 2 and 4. I will introduce these authors' theories, as well as Heinz Kohut's self psychology, as we come to need them in the course of the dissertation.

¹ I was initially highly skeptical of psychoanalysis, and while I still think that more than a little skepticism is in order and I certainly do not accept everything that I read, I can usually find something of merit, and I have developed a deep appreciation for the whole tradition. Our skepticism should vary with the date and theory of the author and the extent to which he is describing clinical phenomena or engaging in metapsychology.

² Kernberg 1976, Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, Mitchell and Black 1995.

John Bowlby, a disciple, or rather apostate, of Klein, is the creator of attachment theory, which is essentially an operationalized and empirically tested theory of object relations.³ It has become a leading paradigm for clinical, relationship, and developmental psychology. I introduce it here because we will have occasion to refer to it periodically, and it provides empirical support for the other psychoanalytic theories we will use. Bowlby created attachment theory after seeing how children reacted to being separated from their parents, primarily their mothers.⁴ Drawing on ethology, cybernetics, psychoanalytic object relations theory, and Harry Harlow's work with infant rhesus monkeys, Bowlby posits the existence of a behavioral system, the attachment system, whereby children form an emotional bond to their caregivers, seek to be near them, and experience distress when separated from them.⁵ Environmental threats or the threat of separation from caregivers activate the attachment system, which then implements certain attachment behaviors (e.g., crying, clinging, seeking, expressing negative emotion, protest) that evolved to maintain children's proximity to their caregivers because proximity historically promoted their survival.⁶ These behaviors are supposed to activate the attachment figures' reciprocal system, the caregiving system, so that the attachment figures act as caregivers and provide comfort. This

³ Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1980; Cassidy and Shaver 2008. The first edition of Mikulincer and Shaver's *Attachment in Adulthood*, a synthesis of contemporary attachment research, had roughly 1,800 entries in its references section. I have based my discussion on that work, as well as Cassidy and Shaver 2008, rather than Bowlby's because it considers all of the work that has been done in the roughly sixty-five years since Bowlby's work began appearing in the 1950s. New editions of *Attachment and Adulthood* (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016) and the *Handbook of Attachment* (Cassidy and Shaver 2016) have just appeared, but I have not yet had a chance to consult them.

⁴ Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1980; Cassidy and Shaver 2008.

⁵ Bowlby 1969, Mikulincer and Shaver 2007.

⁶ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 12-13. The attachment behaviors will vary with the person's age. Depending on the responsiveness of the attachment figures, the person develops a characteristic attachment strategy, an "attachment style" (Ainsworth et al. 1978). Later research has shown that one's attachment style may persist into adulthood (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). People can develop different attachment strategies for different attachment figures. When no threats are present, "[a] person may seek proximity for the purpose of some other behavioral system, such as affiliation or sexual mating" (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 12).

makes attachment important for more than survival. For example, the soothing provided by caregivers deactivates the attachment system and helps children learn how to regulate their emotions. The mental representations of these interactions are internalized, so that the repeated experience of being soothed eventually allows people to soothe themselves.⁷ How the attachment figures respond determines the representation the child forms of herself in that interaction, and the aggregate of these representations and those involving other behavioral systems, along with their attendant affects, becomes the self.⁸ The attachment system is thus essential for emotional development, and disruptions to the attachment bond are supposed to be a source of pathology throughout the lifespan.⁹ Despite the often hostile reception of his work in certain psychoanalytic circles, Bowlby “continued to view himself as a psychoanalyst and a legitimate heir to Freud, which is the way he is largely viewed today.”¹⁰ Psychoanalysts have a different attitude today and now widely embrace attachment theory.¹¹

The empirical support for attachment theory also applies to our other psychoanalytic theories in at least three major ways. First, Fairbairn argued that libido is primarily object-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking, as Freud held.¹² Although we no longer use libido theory, this modification of Freudian theory is important because it puts people and relationships at the

⁷ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007.

⁸ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007.

⁹ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, Cassidy and Shaver 2008, Schore 2012.

¹⁰ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 7.

¹¹ E.g., Fonagy 2001; Stern 2004, 147; Wallin 2007; Schore 2012; Eagle 2013.

¹² Fairbairn 1952. See chapter 4 for details.

center of psychoanalysis.¹³ Psychoanalytic theories that emphasize the importance of relatedness find support for their theories of motivation in the attachment system. These psychoanalytic theories are less precise than attachment theory is. Fairbairn's object-seeking libido, for example, could include not only the attachment system but also the affiliation, sex, and caregiving systems or any other that might be relevant. As we will see, the particular system does not necessarily matter for the larger point that object relations theories and relational psychoanalysis are making.

Second, the caregiver is a source of external regulation and consequently resembles Kohut's selfobject, i.e., "that dimension of experience of another person that relates to this person's functions in shoring up our self."¹⁴ We will have more to say on this in chapter 4.

Third, attachment theory holds that a person forms "internal working models" of self and other in interaction so that she can "predict future interactions with the relationship partner and adjust proximity-seeking attempts without having to rethink each one."¹⁵ These models involve various systems of memory (episodic, declarative, procedural) and result from the consolidation of memories into more abstract and generic representations.¹⁶ Internal working models, which are the "cognitive scripts" or "social schemas" of social psychology, are "hot" cognitions" in

¹³ Greenberg and Mitchell's *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, which helped launch the relational movement, argues that Freud's theory does not adequately address the importance of people and relationships in life and individual psychology (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983). The book shows how various psychoanalytic authors tried to cope with this limitation of Freudian theory. Authors such as Fairbairn and Sullivan broke with Freud's model, while others chose accommodation by resorting to metapsychological contortions, by surreptitiously redefining concepts, or by assigning their findings to the "preoedipal period." These techniques of accommodation supposedly leave Freud's theories intact. This was necessary because of the cultish nature of psychoanalysis and its tendency to excommunicate dissenters. Freud himself set a bad precedent in this respect.

¹⁴ Kohut 1984, 49.

¹⁵ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 23.

¹⁶ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 24.

that they are “residues of past emotions and triggers for subsequent, similar experiences.”¹⁷ These “internal working models” are exactly the same as “object relations.”¹⁸ In psychoanalytic theory, “objects” refer to our mental representations of other people and sometimes to the external people that these representations are based on. These mental representations can belong to any of the systems of memory (episodic, declarative, procedural) and so are often not unconscious (or “preconscious”).¹⁹ This odd use of “objects” is a legacy of Freud’s theory of instinctual drives, according to which people are often the objects of sexual and aggressive drives.²⁰ Our affectively charged representations of ourselves and others in some sort of relation (interaction) are thus our “object relations,” which become, as Bowlby’s internal working models do, more abstract and general as we develop. Although the concept of internal working models can be extended to any motivational and behavioral system, there are far more aspects of life than those that attachment theory deals with (two or three behavioral systems: attachment, caregiving, and sex, which intersects in complex ways with attachment in adult romantic relationships). Attachment theory and the findings of academic psychology provide empirical support for our theoretical foundations (e.g., object relations, selfobjects), but we need our various other psychoanalytic theories in order to handle the richness and variety of the phenomena we encounter.²¹

¹⁷ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 23, citing Kunda 1999.

¹⁸ See chapter 2, in which I lay out Kernberg’s theory of object relations (Kernberg 1976).

¹⁹ Episodic memory is the memory of episodes. It is as if a scene from a movie were playing in our head. An example of declarative memory is remembering the year in which the Peloponnesian War began. Procedural memory is implicit memory and so does not feel like a memory at all. Examples are knowledge of how to ride a bike or how to be with other people (Siegel 2012).

²⁰ Greenberg and Mitchell 1983.

²¹ Greenberg and Mitchell 1983.

Relational psychoanalysis is a synthesis of interpersonal psychoanalysis and the object relations tradition. Important members of the interpersonal school are Erich Fromm, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Clara Thompson, and, above all, Harry Stack Sullivan. Edgar Levenson and Philip Bromberg are two more recent representatives. Relational psychoanalysis can look different depending on which authors in the object relations and interpersonal traditions the analyst happens to like.²² Stephen Mitchell, one of the founders of the relational movement, blends Sullivan and Fairbairn.²³ Jeremy Safran's and Paul Wachtel's relational psychoanalysis can sometimes look quite similar to Levenson's variety of interpersonal theory, which we will draw on in chapter 4.²⁴ Instead of expounding relational psychoanalysis here in detail, I will let Mitchell tell us quickly how the relational perspective differs from Freud's. Then I will offer some essential points, briefly compare relational psychoanalysis with object relations theory, and provide a clinical "vignette" to illustrate what these ideas look like in practice.

For Freud, nature and culture are at war within us. Our bestial drives press for release, yet society requires us to repress or otherwise control our animal impulses:

We are portrayed as a conglomeration of asocial, physical tensions represented in the mind by urgent sexual and aggressive wishes pushing for expression. We live in the clash between these wishes and the secondary, more superficial claims of social reality; our very thought itself is derivative of, a transformation of, these primitive, bestial energies. Mind is composed of complex and elegant compromises between the expression of impulses and the defenses which control and channel them. Classical analytic inquiry entails an uncovering and eventual renunciation of infantile instinctual impulses.²⁵

²² Aron 1996, 18-19.

²³ Aron 1996, 18.

²⁴ Safran 2012, 138-55; Wachtel 2008.

²⁵ Mitchell 1988, 2.

The “relational model,” in contrast, “considers relations with others, not drives, as the basic stuff of mental life.”²⁶

We are portrayed not as a conglomeration of physically based urges, but as being shaped by and inevitably embedded within a matrix of relationships with other people, struggling both to maintain our ties to others and to differentiate ourselves from them. In this vision the basic unit of study is not the individual as a separate entity whose desires clash with an external reality, but an interactional field within which the individual arises and struggles to make contact and to articulate himself. *Desire* is experienced always *in the context of relatedness*, and it is that context which defines its meaning. Mind is composed of relational configurations. The person is comprehensible only within this tapestry of relationships, past and present. Analytic inquiry entails a participation in, and an observation, uncovering, and transformation of, these relationships and their internal representations. In this perspective the figure is always *in* the tapestry, and the threads of the tapestry (via identifications and introjections) are always in the figure.²⁷

While relational authors may sometimes privilege needs for relatedness or connection, humans obviously have numerous, and often conflicting, motives. Since most of these involve other people, they are embedded in a relational context, come with a relational history, and derive their meaning from this relational context and history. We cannot escape our object relations. Our thoughts, our feelings, our behaviors, and, indeed, our very selves are the products of interactions with significant others.

We perceive the world through templates derived from past relationships and act according to scripts learned in them. (These templates, schemas, and scripts are our object relations or internal working models.) In a sense, then, there is an element of transference in every interaction. An enactment is the enacting of the transference.²⁸ Our relational templates or

²⁶ Mitchell 1988, 2.

²⁷ Mitchell 1988, 3.

²⁸ McWilliams 1994.

schemas consist of generalized representations of interactions in which self and other occupy particular roles. While our schemas affect what we are able to perceive, features of a situation also activate these schemas. In an enactment, after we have assigned the other person to a role in the activated schema, we follow our script for how to interact with people in this role and by doing so, exert pressure on the person to act in accordance with the role. Once the other person succumbs to the pressure and acts the part that she has been cast in, we have an enactment.²⁹

Object relations theorists such as Kernberg, and perhaps analysts of other schools as well, would agree with the previous paragraph (excepting the footnote). One difference between relational psychoanalysis and these other schools is that relational psychoanalysis emphasizes the interactional processes that occur on a moment-to-moment basis. We have all developed characteristic ways of relating that enable us to connect with our particular families. Our relational manner is our manner of being with other people (“implicit relational knowing”) and managing them, based on our expectations of how they will behave, in ways that allow us to stay safe and get our needs met.³⁰ Our lives are a succession of present moments, and consequently the larger patterns in our lives are created out of what we do in each of these moments.³¹ Our

²⁹ Enactments are cocreated, so the other’s personality is always contributing something to the enactment even if we are willing to say that it is primarily the relational world of the person exerting the most pressure that is being recreated in the present. For the cocreation of enactments, see, for example, Mitchell 1988, Wachtel 2008, Safran 2012.

³⁰ Now, a person’s relational manner may be maladaptive, and he may seem addicted to people and behaviors that cause pain. We will discuss these problems below. *Implicit relational knowing* is procedural, implicit, non-verbal memory of how to be with and do things with others (Boston Change Process Study Group 2010, 31).

³¹ “The present moment lasts between 1 and 10 seconds, with an average duration of around three to four seconds. There are three main reasons for this time span. It is the time needed to make meaningful groupings of most perceptual stimuli emanating from other people, to compose functional units of our behavioral performances, and to permit consciousness to arise” (Stern 2004, 41). Stern presents evidence for choosing this span, but the precise span does not matter for the point I am making, namely, that our relational processes happen in small chunks of time and result in larger patterns.

relational manner reflects our object relations. Thus, the depths are on the surface if we know how to look.

Our vignette, which Mitchell and Black use to illustrate a contemporary interpersonal perspective, is essentially indistinguishable in outlook from those found in certain relational works.³² Emily, a patient with an obsessive-compulsive personality (not to be confused with “obsessive-compulsive disorder”), “had learned, in her relationships with her parents, that other people were not likely to contribute anything positive to her experience, but required careful handling and deflecting”:

The important relationships in Emily’s life all reflected the same pattern. She kept her parents, her close friends, her boyfriends at a measured distance from the center of her life: her own intense, isolated productivity. She would check in with others, ascertain what they seemed to need from her, and provide it effectively. She tended to regard the men she became involved with as somehow wanting a great deal from her and was proud of her facility for being helpful to them. She was always genuinely surprised when lovers or friends broke off relationships with her because they somehow felt a lack of commitment on her part. . . .

She was handling the analyst in the same manner she handled others: she expected nothing terribly useful, discerned what he needed, took care of that, and went on her way. . . .

It gradually became apparent that there were many ways that Emily experienced the analyst as similar to her friends and lovers—as someone who needed to feel wanted, was excessively demanding, and needed reassurance.

To summarize Emily’s relational manner, she was impermeable, coolly efficient, and (implicitly) emotionally distant, attending to her own and others’ needs while refusing to take anything from anyone because to do so would be to let the person in and expose her to anxiety. Emily’s object

³² Mitchell and Black 1995, 80-81. Mitchell is a relational author, but this work is a history of psychoanalysis rather than a relational work per se. See Safran 2012, 138-55 and Wachtel 2008 for vignettes formulated in similar ways. Whether a particular vignette draws more on object relations theory or interpersonal psychoanalysis will depend on the author, the patient, and the point being made.

relations can be inferred from her manner. For example, the other is needy and unreliable, has nothing to offer, and needs to be managed lest he or she provoke anxiety.

II. Scholarship

Although the number of works applying psychological theories to Homer has grown relatively quickly over the last twenty years, it is still not particularly large, and scholars have more often drawn their theories from anthropology and sociology.³³ This is understandable given the work that there was to be done on Homeric society and the fruit that such approaches might, and did, bear.³⁴ Jonathan Shay's two books about combat trauma compare the experiences of Homeric heroes with those of veterans suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder.³⁵ Although I use research on trauma in my first chapter, I do not apply it to the same parts of the *Iliad* that Shay does. Elizabeth Minchin's *Homer and the Resources of Memory* draws on cognitive psychology, largely in an attempt to illuminate the phenomena of oral poetry.³⁶ Another recent application of cognitive psychology is Jenny Strauss Clay's *Homer's Trojan Theater*, which focuses on the battle books of the *Iliad*.³⁷ Ruth Scodel uses psychology, mainly social psychology, on occasion in her *Epic Face-Work*, which is primarily an application of Goffman's

³³ I consider the work of Bruno Snell and Hermann Fränkel and the debates that they started, as well as the work of such authors as Shirley Sullivan, to be ethnography (not the same as psychological anthropology) and to belong more to anthropology (and history and philology) than to psychology (Snell 1982, Fränkel 1975, Sullivan 1988, 1995). The questions raised by Snell, for instance, are interesting but lie beyond the scope of this project.

³⁴ Some examples of anthropological and sociological studies, whether concerned with Homeric society, literary criticism, or both, are Finley 2002; Redfield 1975; Donlan 1982, 1989, 1993; Morris 1986; Beidelman 1989; van Wees 1992; Muellner 1996; Raaflaub 1997; Wilson 2002; Scodel 2008. This is not including all of the ethnographic studies. Works on oral poetry (e.g., Martin 1989) can be folkloric or anthropological as well.

³⁵ Shay 1994, 2002.

³⁶ Minchin 2001.

³⁷ Clay 2011.

sociology of “face” and its extension in Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory.³⁸ In *The Rape of Troy: Evolution, Violence, and the World of Homer*, Jonathan Gottschall draws on evolutionary psychology, as well as game theory, ethology, anthropology, and sociobiology, to argue that the Homeric characters are fighting over access to women qua women, in addition to fighting over them as symbols of *tīmē* (“honor”).³⁹ He thinks that a shortage of women explains the competitiveness and violence of Homeric society.

Scholars have also begun to turn to the psychology of emotion. William Harris’s award-winning *Restraining Rage*, although primarily concerned with the ancients’ preoccupation with anger control, is informed by modern psychology and has a helpful and judicious chapter on Homer.⁴⁰ The same can be said of Douglas Cairns’s contribution to *Ancient Anger*, in which he criticizes “cultural determinist assumptions,” discusses the terminology of anger, shows how Homer’s metaphors for anger are very similar to our own, and correctly explains this similarity as the result of the physiology of anger.⁴¹

Mark Buchan’s two books on Homer both make use of psychoanalysis. The first, *The Limits of Heroism*, is a Lacanian reading of the *Odyssey*, though it also has a chapter on the Doloneia.⁴² The second, *Perfidy and Passion*, which purports to be an introduction to the *Iliad*,

³⁸ Scodel 2008, Goffman 1967, Brown and Levinson 1987. I am particularly indebted to Scodel’s book, along with, of course, Milman Parry’s (1971) and Albert Lord’s (1960/2000) work on oral poetry.

³⁹ Gottschall 2008.

⁴⁰ Harris 2001.

⁴¹ Cairns 2003, 17. The introduction to his *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* makes good use of the psychology of emotion, but the chapter on Homer is undertheorized (Cairns 1993).

⁴² Buchan 2004. See also Porter and Buchan’s introduction and Buchan’s chapter in *Before Subjectivity? Lacan and the Classics* (Buchan and Porter 2004).

uses Freud and Lacan on occasion but not enough to be called a psychoanalytic reading of the poem.⁴³ In any case, my approach is neither Freudian nor Lacanian. Michael Lynn-George likewise draws on Lacan occasionally in *Epos: Word, Narrative and the Iliad*.⁴⁴

Only two works bear much theoretical resemblance to mine: Thomas MacCary's *Childlike Achilles* and Richard Holway's *Becoming Achilles*.⁴⁵ MacCary uses Kohut and Kernberg and thinks that Achilles is narcissistic and displays "narcissistic rage."⁴⁶ The similarities between us more or less end there, however. At the center of his work is his "Achilles complex":

*We thus posit an 'Achilles complex' as the thematic core of the Iliad, and a formative stage in the development of every male child. If the mother, and after her other women and the world as such, is not validated by 'proto-oedipal' conflict, but narcissistic preoccupation continues, then there is no orientation of desire outwards, no libidinal investment of true objects; in fact, there is both libidinal and aggressive investment of self-objects, creating a kind of closed system which must suffer entropy.*⁴⁷

In other words, MacCary thinks that because the father is absent and the mother is "infinitely available and supportive," the child never comes to desire the mother but only the image of his own perfection that she projects to him.⁴⁸ As I explain in chapter 4, I would agree with a reformulation of what MacCary says: spoiling the child and fostering an idealized image of it can contribute to narcissism.

⁴³ Buchan 2012.

⁴⁴ Lynn-George 1988.

⁴⁵ MacCary 1982, Holway 2012.

⁴⁶ See chapter 4 for Kohut's concept of narcissistic rage (Kohut 1978).

⁴⁷ MacCary 1982, 95.

⁴⁸ MacCary 1982, 178.

Holway's *Becoming Achilles* applies attachment theory to the *Iliad*.⁴⁹ He sees the psychology of the Homeric heroes as the result of a quasi-incestuous pattern of parenting. Daughters who are treated seductively by their fathers and elevated at the expense of their mothers are married off to men whom they resent and devalue, since these husbands cannot match their idealized fathers. These daughters then have children of their own whom they treat seductively, elevate at the expense of their fathers, and use as narcissistic extensions to compensate for their shame. These sons in turn start the cycle over again. This pattern is supposed to apply to Thetis, Peleus, and Achilles, for example. Holway makes interesting points, but I more often agree with his general theoretical ideas than with their supposed manifestations in the poems. For instance, he thinks that Agamemnon uses Achilles, Iphigenia, and the Greek army as extensions of himself and sacrifices them for the sake of his honor and greater glory. I agree with all of that and will discuss narcissistic parenting in chapter 4. But I do not think that his model applies particularly well to Thetis, Peleus, and Achilles, at least not as they appear in the *Iliad*. Well aware of the problem, Holway argues that those who suffer such relational trauma must deny the awful truth of sacrificial parenting, defensively idealize their parents, displace their rage onto scapegoats, and thereby purge it. Thus, Thetis's narcissistic exploitation of Achilles and Peleus's envy of him appear in Agamemnon's relationship with Achilles. "Why," Holways asks, "should we construe these glaring discrepancies between the *Iliad*'s narrative and our model as denial rather than disproof?"⁵⁰ That is a good question. It is inherently problematic for Holway to explain away as denial any evidence that hurts his argument. While there does

⁴⁹ Holway 2012.

⁵⁰ Holway 2012, 67.

seem to be something to what he says, he cannot offer much evidence for it.⁵¹ Indeed, he requires us to accept his undoing of denial and his constant equating of characters (e.g., Agamemnon is both Peleus and Thetis). The most we can say is “maybe.”

Holway and I differ in a few important respects. He is trying to reconstruct the object relations of the people and culture responsible for the myths and the Homeric poems, whereas I focus on the characters as they appear in the poems.⁵² I do, however, think that what I find could in theory reflect the psychology of the people and culture that produced the poems. Trying to find evidence for his model, Holway must frequently look elsewhere, ignoring or undoing what is in the poems. In contrast, I concentrate on what is present rather than on what is absent. There is more than enough rich psychological material in the texts that we have. There is also ample evidence of sacrificial parenting in the poems if we are not wedded to one model of it. The presence of this evidence suggests that the truth of sacrificial parenting did not have to be denied. In fact, the Greeks of the time may not have realized, consciously or unconsciously, that there was anything problematic with such parenting. Finally, Holway’s focus is more on mothers and sons, whereas mine is more on fathers and sons, even though we both discuss both parent-child pairs. As a result of these differences, Holway and I have far less in common than our theoretical similarities might lead one to expect.

⁵¹ His model works better for some characters (e.g., Phoenix and his family) than for others. There are indeed pieces of Holway’s model scattered throughout the poem. We might allow that Zeus, who had a seductive relationship with Thetis, was a foster father to her, and he certainly married her off to a relatively weak and inferior husband, but the other pieces of the model are missing in this case.

⁵² If he is not referring to the people and culture as opposed to the characters, and it is not always clear, then his undertaking is illegitimate, because he cannot say, for example, that Achilles does not really have the parents that he has in the poems or that other aspects of the parents are split off when it is the narrator telling us about them. See the third paragraph on page 67 for a suspect example of whether he is referring to a character or to the culture (Holway 2012, 67). The first two paragraphs of the same page are illegitimate in that they deny without sufficient justification what does not fit Holway’s model.

III. Overview

I realize now that over the course of this project I have been trying to see as a psychologist sees. Phenomena that I would not have noticed before now stand out as meaningful. I collect these phenomena and show how they are related and what they mean. My readings pay close attention to the characters' defenses, to their assumptions about themselves and others, to their emotional shifts and conflicts, to what they choose to respond to, and to the relational messages (as opposed to the content) of what they say, to give only a few examples. I reinterpret the *Iliad* through the lenses of the theories mentioned above. The psychology of narcissism and, to a lesser extent, masochism helps us understand Achilles more deeply. Even though we may agree with much previous scholarship, this approach brings about a radical shift in how we see the familiar data of the poem.

Anthropological and sociological approaches have provided us with essential knowledge of the Homeric world, and I consider my approach complementary to them. My approach fills them in in a few respects. First, cultures may tend to produce certain personalities. Even though features of a culture or society, such as its values, instability, or parenting practices, may play a causal role in the development of a personality and cultural knowledge continues to be important, they do not tell us how the personality itself works. As we will see with narcissism, personalities have a certain logic and structure to them. The parts depend on one another. The narcissistic personality is like a three-legged stool. If one leg is removed, the whole stool comes crashing down. Psychology thus helps us even when the personalities are similar.

Homeric society tends to produce narcissistic personalities.⁵³ As psychoanalytic nosology teaches us, personalities exist on a continuum of severity: normal, neurotic, borderline, psychotic.⁵⁴ Thus, someone can have narcissistic traits and still fall within the normal range. Achilles is both similar to other characters in being narcissistic and different from them in being far more narcissistic than they are. Even apart from severity, two people with narcissistic features will differ from each other in other respects, as our comparison of Achilles and Agamemnon will show.

Second, the same culture and social position can produce people with different personalities, so there are obviously other variables to consider, and some of these (e.g., trauma, learning history) are taken up by psychologists. The current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) gives an example of moral rigidity in obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD).⁵⁵ An obsessive might refuse to lend a quarter to a friend for a phone call because he accepts the proverb “neither a borrower nor a lender be” and feels compelled always to follow it. If a cultural idea or practice were always a sufficient explanation on its own, we could merely point to the existence of this proverb and the obsessive’s behavior would appear normal and comprehensible. Homeric characters do not all have the same personality, for they do not all behave the same way in similar situations, and their differences in personality go beyond what differences in social role and position can explain. Now, because of

⁵³ Holway 2012, 4: The *Iliad*’s sacrificial parenting “would also generate major observable features of ancient Greek cultures: hyper-competitiveness, propensity to shame, sense of self as either superior and worthy of esteem or inferior and unworthy, vulnerability to slight and dishonor, and honorific violence.”

⁵⁴ McWilliams 1994.

⁵⁵ DSM-5, 679-80. Again, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) is not to be confused with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

our lack of information about the characters' histories, we may not be able to explain how these differences arose any more than anthropological or sociological approaches can, yet we can at least point to their existence and may even be able to explain how the different personalities work.

Finally, psychologists have their own questions, and rich material not falling under the purview of anthropology or sociology would go untreated were it not for the complementary approach of psychology. Achilles' object relations are an example of such material. The folk psychological theories of the Homeric poems are primitive, the characters are not very introspective, and the narrators are not particularly concerned with depicting interiority.⁵⁶ All of this should not, however, be taken for a lack of characterization or psychological insight on the part of the poet(s).⁵⁷ To be sure, the characters are not all equally developed, and a sustained analysis of personality may only be possible with a few of them (e.g., Achilles, Agamemnon).⁵⁸ An interiority is nevertheless often implied by a character's words or actions: "Psychological complexities (as we would think of them) may or may not be involved [in a character's words, actions, or possessions]; in either case, the inward corresponds to the outward and is implicit in

⁵⁶ See Snell 1982; Fränkel 1975; Redfield 1975, 20-22.

⁵⁷ As for the Homeric question, let me state here that I do not make any assumptions about the number of poets responsible for each poem (viz., the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*). Even though I sometimes say "Homer" or "the poet" for convenience, I often use plurals or equivalent (or ambivalent) expressions (e.g., "the tradition"), so the reader should take this note as my official position and not infer anything from my practice in any one sentence elsewhere.

⁵⁸ Whitman 1958, 180: "what he [i.e., Homer] chose to say was so timed in context, combination, and contrast that his characters, from the most primary ones to those fleeting personalities who appear only as they fall on the battlefield, possess a haunting kind of individuality, an individuality which forces its way, by the poet's skill, through the universal human type." Silk thinks the characters "strikingly immediate and alive – and yet strikingly different from their modern equivalents" (Silk 2004, 72). "They are," he continues, "homogeneous and consistent representatives of one or two particular qualities" (Silk 2004, 74).

it.”⁵⁹ Psychoanalysis aside, Homer shows much else that agrees with the findings of contemporary psychology.⁶⁰ There is thus a real need for psychological approaches to complement the valuable contributions of anthropological and sociological studies.

This dissertation concentrates on characters, primarily Achilles, but as I mention in the conclusion, the same approach can be applied to the psychology of the characters taken collectively. This is partly a matter of emphasis. I have tended to emphasize differences, but I could just as easily have emphasized similarities. Provided that we adjust for quantitative differences (e.g., severity), some of what I have found for Achilles will apply to the psychology of the culture.

The first three chapters show how the quarrel and therefore the plot of the whole poem grow out of Achilles’ and Agamemnon’s “organizing principles” (the “emotional beliefs,” assumptions, and relational schemas by means of which a person organizes and constructs her experience of the world).⁶¹ The causes of human behavior are both external and internal. Given certain situational inputs, the person returns certain outputs. These outputs both reflect and reveal personality. To determine a character’s organizing principles, I ask questions of the following sort. What assumptions and beliefs are implied by a character’s response to a stimulus? What meaning does this situation have for the character, and what meanings does he assign to various courses of action? What roles does the character cast others in? What is the character’s manner

⁵⁹ Silk 2004, 74.

⁶⁰ E.g., cognitive biases. See chapter 2 for an example. His psychology of emotion is accurate in a number of ways, e.g., mood-congruent thinking (Fox 2008).

⁶¹ “Organizing principles” is Stolorow and Atwood’s useful phrase (Stolorow and Atwood 1992).

of relating, and what functions does it have? What relational patterns can we detect, and what explains them?

My first chapter has three parts, as do all four of my chapters. In the first part, I argue that Agamemnon refuses to ransom Chryseis because the situation resembles the sacrifice of Iphigenia in important respects. The second part introduces Achilles' masochism and shows how he provokes Agamemnon in the lead-up to the quarrel. The third part analyzes Agamemnon's defenses in his reply to Calchas in order to demonstrate how his personality contributes to the quarrel (*Il.* 1.106-20).

My second chapter contains my analysis of the quarrel proper. I continue to explicate the characters' organizing principles as we encounter them in the speeches. In the first part, we see how Achilles resists Agamemnon's defenses. We consider the contributions of personal and situational factors to behavior to determine what we can learn about Achilles' personality. In the second part, we see how Agamemnon responds specifically to the parts of Achilles' speech that impede his defensive operations and how Agamemnon's narcissistic defenses trigger Achilles' own. The final part of the chapter establishes Achilles' manner of relating and shows what this reveals about his personality. Here we begin our discussion of narcissism and explain how this type of personality works.

In the third chapter, I first conclude my analysis of the quarrel by showing how Achilles prevents reconciliation with Agamemnon. I explain the relational messages that Achilles is sending by swearing an oath on the scepter and then dashing it to the ground. The quarrel, I suggest, is an enactment, and this may affect how we view the questions it raises (e.g., "What makes someone the best?"). The second part of the chapter argues that Achilles is similar to his mother both in his withdrawal in anger and in some of his organizing principles and ways of

relating. The third part concludes our treatment of masochism by reviewing Achilles' self-defeating and self-destructive behaviors throughout the poem and suggests that we consider his heroism, or heroism generally, in the context of masochism and narcissism.

In the final chapter, we examine the DSM's diagnostic criteria for narcissism in order to establish that Achilles is in fact narcissistic. This not only gives new significance to Achilles' behaviors throughout the *Iliad* but also allows us to apply Kohut's self psychology, which originated as a theory of narcissism. Self psychology, the subject of the second part of the chapter, provides us with a new theoretical lens through which to see the events of the poem. For example, it helps us better understand Achilles' anger by elucidating how narcissists experience other people. The third part of the chapter uses self psychology and Fairbairn's object relations theory to interpret the embassy to Achilles in book 9. Here I explain both the origins of Achilles' narcissism and the enactment that he has been involved in throughout the poem.

Chapter 1

Antecedents

Introduction

Covering book 1 of the *Iliad*, the first three chapters form a unit. Chapter 1 is devoted to the antecedents of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, Chapter 2 to the quarrel proper, and Chapter 3 to the conclusion of the quarrel and Achilles' withdrawal from battle.

Chapter 1 has three parts. The first part examines why Agamemnon refuses to accept Chryses' ransom for his daughter Chryseis. The second introduces features of Achilles' masochism, particularly his subtle and not so subtle provocations of Agamemnon in the assembly, provocations that contribute to the quarrel. The third is a reading of Agamemnon's response to Calchas's interpretation of the plague. Chapter 1, then, is largely a study of Agamemnon. The remaining chapters focus on Achilles and move from his masochism to his narcissism.

Part I: The Role of Past Relationships in Agamemnon's Refusal of Chryses in *Iliad* 1.

Introduction

Why does Agamemnon refuse to accept the ransom for Chryseis and return her to her father at the beginning of the *Iliad*? I argue that the situation in the *Iliad* resembles Aulis, where Agamemnon was forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, and that this resemblance triggers Agamemnon's angry and impulsive refusal.

After Chryseis petitions the Greek army and the sons of Atreus to accept ransom for Chryseis, the army shouts its approval, but Agamemnon refuses angrily:

Ἐνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐπευφήμησαν Ἀχαιοὶ
αἰδεῖσθαί θ' ἱερῆα καὶ ἀγλαὰ δέχθαι ἄποινα·
ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι ἦνδανε θυμῷ,
ἀλλὰ κακῶς ἀφίει, κρατερὸν δ' ἐπὶ μῦθον ἔτελλε· (25)
μὴ σε γέρον κοίλῃσιν ἐγὼ παρὰ νηυσὶ κηχεῖω
ἢ νῦν δηθύνοντ' ἢ ὕστερον αὐτίς ἰόντα,
μὴ νύ τοι οὐ χραίσμη σκῆπτρον καὶ στέμμα θεοῖο·
τὴν δ' ἐγὼ οὐ λύσω· πρὶν μιν καὶ γῆρας ἔπεισιν
ἡμετέρῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ἐν Ἄργεϊ τηλόθι πάτρης (30)
ἰστὸν ἐποικομένην καὶ ἐμὸν λέχος ἀντιώσσαν·
ἀλλ' ἴθι μὴ μ' ἐρέθιζε σαώτερος ὥς κε νέηαι. (1.22-32)

Then all the other Achaeans shouted their approval for respecting the priest and accepting the splendid ransom. But it did not please Atreus's son Agamemnon in his spirit, but he sent him away evilly and laid upon him a strong command: 'Let me not find you, old man, by the hollow ships, either delaying now or coming again later, lest the scepter and ribbon of the god not protect you. I will not release her. Before that, old age will come upon her in our house, in Argos, far from her fatherland, going back and forth at the loom and sharing my bed. But go, don't provoke me, so that you may go home more safely.'¹

Agamemnon responds "with what seems utterly unnecessary harshness."² This cruel response strongly suggests that he is angry. "Although the narrator does not say that Agamemnon is

¹ The Greek text of the *Iliad* is Monro and Allen's Oxford Classical Text (1920), except in one instance in which I follow West's Teubner edition (West 1998-2000). The Greek text for the *Odyssey* is von der Mühl's (1962). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated. The translations are designed to assist the Greekless reader and are for that reason very literal. I have also generally tried to get my translations to follow the Greek sentences line for line. That is, where there is enjambment, I try to have the same words enjambed in English as are enjambed in Greek. In an effort to do that, I have used slightly unusual word order on occasion. Despite appearances, the translations are prose. I have consulted and benefited from a number of translations (Lattimore 1951, Hammond 1987, Fagles 1990, Murray 1999, Verity 2011).

² Scodel 2008, 127.

angry,” Ruth Scodel writes, “it seems clear that he is – the warning not to provoke is a sign that the speaker is already provoked (cf. *Il.* 24.580 and $\mu\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$ at 568).”³

Scodel is one of the few scholars to consider why Agamemnon responds angrily.⁴ She offers two explanations. First, because Agamemnon claims to like Chryseis (1.113-14), he “has been asked to do something he does not want to do,” and “[t]he threat of Apollo’s wrath makes this a powerful face-threat.”⁵ Second, when “the army shouts its approval before Agamemnon has a chance to reply,” it “assume[s] a right that properly belongs to him, trampling on his negative face,” so that “[i]f he agrees, he accepts that encroachment on his power.”⁶ I do not find explanations in terms of face-threats compelling here. In this situation, Agamemnon’s face is hardly going to suffer if he respects a god, but it will suffer, as the poem shows, if he does not. Chryses’ “threat of Apollo’s wrath” does not seem very threatening because it is “politely framed” and “barely-on-record” and because Agamemnon’s honor is not going to suffer from respecting a god.⁷ If it were very threatening, we might expect a different reaction from the army, which Chryses is also addressing. Scodel anticipates this objection: “If the issue were really a matter for the whole army, the face-threat would be diffused, as the ransom would be

³ Scodel 2008, 127.

⁴ Scodel 2008 127. For debate on whether Agamemnon is normally obliged to respect the army’s opinion, see Elmer 2013. He thinks that Agamemnon is wrong to disregard the “collective will” (Elmer 2013, 67). Taplin essentially agrees but thinks that interpretations of Agamemnon’s refusal will vary depending on how one interprets Agamemnon’s status and the demands of *aidōs*, “sense of shame” (1992, 52). Scodel writes, “Many critics assume that the crowd’s response shows how wrong Agamemnon is, and it does. Yet at the same time, this response contributes to Agamemnon’s folly” (2008, 128). She cites Taplin 1992, 62-63 and Edwards 1980, 7.

⁵ Scodel 2008, 128.

⁶ Scodel 2008, 128. “[F]ace’ is the positive social worth that everyone claims in social self-representation, and that others attribute to him or her. There are two sides to face: negative face is an individual’s claim to freedom of action, while positive face is the positive self-image based on the approval of the social group” (Scodel 2008, 13).

⁷ Scodel 2008, 127.

divided.”⁸ Even though the ransom would not be divided, I see no reason why what little face-threat there is cannot still be distributed across all of the addressees. Even if the threat were very threatening, we can argue that by shouting its approval the army does not arrogate Agamemnon’s prerogative but rather shows that he will not suffer any face-loss by granting Chryses’ request. Knowing the men’s will could also be advantageous, because Agamemnon could pretend that he is acting in accordance with their wishes out of concern for them. He adopts this approach later (1.116-17).

As for the army’s trampling on Agamemnon’s negative face, a parallel in book 7 makes it unlikely that Agamemnon is refusing here for that reason. Idaeus has relayed the Trojans’ offer, Diomedes has refused, and the troops have shouted their agreement (7.381-404).⁹ Agamemnon then says: Ἴδαϊ’, ἧ̃ τοι μῦθον Ἀχαιῶν αὐτὸς ἀκούεις, / ὥς τοι ὑποκρίνονται· ἐμοὶ δ’ ἐπιανδάνει οὕτως, “Idaeus, surely you hear yourself the speech of the Achaeans, / how they answer you, and so it is pleasing to me” (7.406-07). Addressing Agamemnon and the other leaders, Idaeus is asking whether he and the Greeks will accept compensation for Helen in lieu of Helen herself. This question, if any, is one that Agamemnon or Menelaus should be answering, yet Diomedes and then “all the sons of the Achaeans” reply before Agamemnon has a chance to (7.403). This is a question about whether to continue the whole war. If Agamemnon is concerned about having his negative face violated, how could he fail to become angry here? The answer is that his negative face is not the issue. The difference between book 1 and book 7 is that the troops shout

⁸ Scodel 2008, 128.

⁹ The Greeks fall silent after Idaeus speaks and then Diomedes answers (7.398-99). Elmer thinks that silence in “scenes of collective decision making” signifies the group’s rejection of a proposal (2013, 28, 29). So even silence would be an answer. If this view is correct, the troops have no choice but to shout their acclaim in book 1 lest their silence be interpreted as disapproval. That Agamemnon allows such silence to intervene suggests that he is not threatened by others replying before he does.

their support for an action that Agamemnon does not like in the first case and that he does like in the second. This is clear from the verb in each case: ἤνδανε (“it pleased”) and ἐπιανδάνει (“it pleases”).¹⁰ The similarity of the verbs suggests that the situations can be treated as analogous and that the fact that Chryses is not the leader of a group is not what matters.¹¹ Likewise, that in book 7 the compensation would belong primarily to Agamemnon and Menelaus, just as in book 1 the ransom would belong only to Agamemnon and not to the army, suggests that the army’s having no claim to the ransom is not the correct explanation.

Eliminating explanations in terms of face-loss leaves the explanation that Agamemnon gives, namely, that he wants to keep Chryseis because she has many good qualities (1.111-15). Agamemnon does have an attachment to Chryseis, but it is not a straightforward, romantic attachment, and the reasons Agamemnon gives for wanting to keep her are after-the-fact rationalizations (see Part 3 below). I suggest that the very request for Chryseis gives her a special symbolic value for Agamemnon. The situation transforms her into another Iphigenia. Agamemnon senses that she is important but does not quite understand why.

Agamemnon’s Refusal as a Trauma Response

¹⁰ Adducing 7.406-07, Pulleyn says that Agamemnon “does, however, accept popular feeling when it suits him” (2000 ad 1.24).

¹¹ Scodel 2008, 128. “The crowd often shouts its approval of a speech. Yet in all the other instances, the speaker is a leader of the group (Achaean or Trojan), and he has offered a decisive response to another speaker or to a moment of crisis (e.g., *Il.* 9.50, 8.542). In a debate, the whole army has every reason to shout its support for one side, and its participation is appropriate. . . Here, though, the ransom will belong to Agamemnon, not the army, and the decision must be Agamemnon’s.” Elmer says that this verb implies that Agamemnon’s “own preference is decisive” (2013, 115).

The sacrifice of Iphigenia would have been traumatic for Agamemnon.¹² As we will see, features of the situation with Chryses resemble features of the situation resulting in the sacrifice of Iphigenia. These similarities trigger a trauma response designed to avoid being retraumatized or forced to remain in a painful situation, painful both because it recalls the sacrifice of Iphigenia and because the person is experiencing negative emotions in the expectation of being retraumatized. In this case, the response triggered is Agamemnon's unwarranted rage and the impulsive refusal that results from it (*Il.* 1.24-32).¹³ In discussing emotional processing in trauma, Briere and Scott explain that "exposure to trauma-reminiscent stimuli (either in the environment or as a result of thinking about or describing a traumatic event) (1) triggers associated *implicit* and/or explicit memories, which then (2) activate *emotional responses initially co-encoded with (and conditioned to) these memories.*"¹⁴ When we "retrieve" implicit memories, we do not have the subjective experience of remembering and therefore do not realize that we are remembering or that we are responding according to preexisting mental models: "We act, feel, and imagine without recognition of the influence of past experience on our present

¹² DSM-5 defines a "traumatic stressor" as "Any even (or events) that may cause or threaten death, serious injury, or sexual violence to an individual, a close family member, or a close friend" (DSM-5, 830). Thus the sacrifice of Iphigenia qualifies. I am not claiming that Agamemnon has posttraumatic stress disorder.

¹³ "Agamemnon not only rejects Chryses' request to ransom his daughter," Scodel says, "but speaks to him with what seems utterly unnecessary harshness" (Scodel 2008, 127).

¹⁴ Briere and Scott 2006, 121, emphasis added. See also, for example, Van der Kolk 2014.

reality.”¹⁵ Implicit memory includes “behavioral, emotional, perceptual, and somatosensory memory.”¹⁶ While Agamemnon’s response may be misguided, it is at least understandable.

Now, anger might not be the emotion that one would expect. Perhaps fear or compassion would be more intuitive. Nevertheless, anger makes good sense for a number of reasons. Anger can be defensive. It prepares us for fighting, just as fear mobilizes us for fleeing, and thus anger, along with fear, is an obvious response to a threat. In this formulation, however, the threat is of retraumatization or of a painful situation rather than a face-threat. Agamemnon’s response might be an angry version of King Lear’s response to Cordelia’s death: “Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life / and thou no breath at all?” (5.3.305-06). Achilles’ reply to Lycaon is a non-angry example from the *Iliad* (21.99-110). If Agamemnon cannot have Iphigenia, why should Chryses have Chryseis? Agamemnon would be acting out of anger and spite, but this anger need not be related to anger resulting from the threat of trauma or pain. In fact, this explanation is potentially independent of the explanation in terms of trauma yet is compatible with it. In this explanation Agamemnon is likely to be conscious of why he is angry, whereas in the trauma explanation he may or may not be conscious of his motives or perhaps only dimly so.¹⁷ Agamemnon may be angry and spiteful and refuse Chryses because Chryses is a reproach to Agamemnon as a father.

¹⁵ Siegel 2012, 52, 56, 57. “Each of us filters our interactions with others through the lenses of mental models created from patterns of experience in the past. These models can shift rapidly outside of awareness, sometimes creating abrupt transitions in states of mind and interactions with others. In this way, ‘transference’—the activation of old mental models and states of mind from our relationships with important figures in the past—happens all the time, both inside and outside the psychotherapy suite” (Siegel 2012, 56). Agamemnon’s reaction is essentially transference, but because transference is usually associated with patterns derived from childhood experiences with caregivers, I have chosen to speak in terms of a trauma response. In both cases, features of a situation “trigger” an automatic response. One difference between transference and a trauma response is that the former is likely to be based on many interactions, which may or may not involve acute trauma (e.g., sexual or physical abuse), whereas the latter is based on one or more acute traumas.

¹⁶ Siegel 2012, 57.

¹⁷ Briere and Scott 2006, 121.

Chryses is willing to risk his life and property to ransom his child, whereas Agamemnon sent for his daughter in order to kill her. Finally, anger may be a way of coping with another emotion by replacing it. In the first reason, anger might replace fear; in the second, grief; in the third, shame and guilt.

What are the features common to the sacrifice of Iphigenia and to Agamemnon's refusal of Chryses' petition? A nubile young woman is at stake in both cases. There is a father-daughter component to each situation. It need not have been a father coming to ransom his daughter in the *Iliad*. It could have been a brother or husband or uncle or any other *philos* (friend or relative). A priest is involved in both cases. Chryses is a priest, and Calchas is a priest and seer and was involved at Aulis (1.62). The priest is associated with Apollo. Chryses is a priest of Apollo (1.11), and Calchas, a priest, was given the art of divination by Apollo (1. 62, 71). This priest asks Agamemnon to hand over a young woman.

In both instances Agamemnon is to surrender the woman because of a child of Zeus and Leto.¹⁸ At Aulis, Agamemnon must sacrifice Iphigenia to appease Artemis, so that she will send favorable winds and the army can escape famine. At Troy, the threat is from Apollo. Interestingly, in answer to his rhetorical question "Which of the gods set the two of them [i.e., Agamemnon and Achilles] together to fight in strife?" Homer says simply, Λητοῦς καὶ Διὸς υἱός, "the son of Leto and Zeus" (1.9). Since this phrase, which appears only here in archaic epic, starts the verse and comes so early in the poem, it is harder to dismiss as just a crutch of oral

¹⁸ Holway also notices this parallel, namely, that Artemis at Aulis and her brother Apollo at Troy both need to be appeased, the former by the sacrifice of Agamemnon's favorite daughter, the latter by the sacrifice of his "favorite concubine" (2012, 40, 66).

poetry.¹⁹ The phrase Διὸς υἱός (“Zeus’s son”) does occur another 14 times in various positions in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and 7 times in the hymn to Apollo.²⁰ Because this two-part phrase is common and can be used to identify any number of Zeus’s progeny, it is trivial in and of itself. The addition of Λητοῦς (“Leto’s”), however, creates a unique phrase, and mentioning both of Apollo’s parents recalls their other child, Artemis. We could even be expecting Artemis until we reach υἱός (“son”).²¹ The similarity between the two situations might have suggested this phrase to the poet. He mentions Leto again at 1.36. Furthermore, the welfare of the army is at stake in both cases. At Aulis, Artemis afflicts the army with famine (λῆμός). At Troy, disrespecting the priest of Apollo risks incurring the plague (λοιμός [1.61]). The two afflictions are metrically identical and differ only in the vowel of the first syllable. Hesiod even pairs them (*Op.* 243).²² Also metrically equivalent is λουγός (“ruin,” “destruction”), which is used to refer to the effects of both the plague and Achilles’ plan.²³

In each situation, the decision seems to have taken place in an assembly. The army also seems to have urged Agamemnon to give up the young woman in both instances. For the events at Troy, these two elements are unproblematic, since Chryses addresses “all the Achaeans,” as

¹⁹ It is true that Apollo in the nominative does not begin the line very often, but there is an alternative to this phrase: Φοῖβος ἀκερσεκόμης, “Phoebus of the unshorn hair” (e.g., *Il.* 20.39; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 134).

²⁰ This is an ancient phrase, appearing already in Mycenaean Greek (PY Tn 316). But that Λητοῦς is a case of unresolvable contraction (i.e., *Λητόος does not scan here) might mean that this use of Λητοῦς with καὶ Διὸς υἱός is late.

²¹ We do find this phrase with the parents in reverse order in the *Homeric Hymns*: Διὸς καὶ Λητοῦς υἱός/υιέ (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 545; *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 243, 321).

²² The passage in which this pairing occurs resembles *Il.* 1 and 9 in its language, even if Hesiod’s Zeus is more concerned with justice than Homer’s is. The Greeks also connected these words, apparently correctly as it turns out, by folk-etymology (see Chantraine 1968-80, s.v. λῆμός).

²³ Both Apollo and Achilles will “ward off destruction” for the Greeks (e.g., 1.67, 97, 341). For this story pattern, see Nagy 1999, Muellner 1996, and Rabel 1988 and 1997. Rabel thinks that Achilles “takes Chryses as his role model” (1997, 52).

well as Agamemnon, and the troops reply en masse: “Then all the other Achaeans shouted their approval / for respecting the priest and accepting the splendid ransom” (1.22-23). Respecting the priest and receiving the ransom entail returning Chryseis, so the troops are urging Agamemnon to give her back. For Aulis, we must rely on Aeschylus and our knowledge of oral poetry.

Aeschylus has Agamemnon say,

παυσανέμου γὰρ θυσίας
παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀρ-
γαῖ περιόργωι σφ' ἐπιθυ-
μεῖν θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἴη. (Ag. 214-17)

For it is natural for them [i.e., the troops] to long with very passionate passion for a sacrifice to stop the winds and for a maiden's blood. May it be well!²⁴

That Agamemnon knows not only that the troops desire the sacrifice but also that they desire it “with very passionate passion” suggests that the troops have declared what they want, just as they do after Chryses speaks, and this would probably have happened in an assembly.²⁵ Although it is impossible to know for certain where Aeschylus found this detail, if he did not invent it himself, Homer and Aeschylus may be drawing on a common source, common in that the Aulis episode would have been told with the story patterns and type scenes of traditional oral epic. Narratives of this episode may have included an assembly type scene such as we have in the *Iliad* when Chryses appears. This assembly may have had the troops shouting their support for a

²⁴ The Greek text is Page's 1972 Oxford Classical Text. Sommerstein's text matches Page here (Sommerstein 2008). I am following Sommerstein's translation of *themis* here as “quite natural,” a translation which he explains in a note (2008).

²⁵ In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Calchas seems to be addressing the whole army, but that Agamemnon tells Talthybius to dismiss the army might suggest that it is not present (*IA* 87-95). It seems best to think that the army is being addressed.

proposal, in this case, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, as they often do.²⁶ In any case, my argument does not depend on the Aeschylean evidence (or on these two parallels), yet the evidence would tend to confirm what we might expect for other reasons. These are the parallels between the Aulis episode and Chryses' petition. I will discuss another set of parallels presently.

Iphigenia or Iphianassa?

In addition to such parallels, we find evidence for this reading in the exchange between Calchas and Agamemnon. This exchange is essential because the *Iliad* does not mention Iphigenia by name. Before we can discuss this exchange, however, it is necessary to discuss the daughters that Homer does mention by name. In book 9 Agamemnon says that he will let Achilles marry whichever of his daughters—Chrysothemis, Laodike, or Iphianassa—Achilles wants (9.144-47). If Iphianassa is to be equated with Iphigenia, we would have a problem, since Iphianassa is still alive. Hainsworth claims that “the discrepancies from the later canonical version of Agamemnon’s family soon began to trouble genealogists: the *Cypria* (fr. 15) made two persons out of Iphianassa-Iphigeneia and gave Agamemnon four daughters.”²⁷ Here Hainsworth has presupposed that Iphigenia and Iphianassa are the same daughter in the *Iliad*.²⁸ In order to account for the *Cypria*’s testimony, he must posit that its poet was troubled by discrepancies between versions and so gave Agamemnon four daughters. But this explanation is unnecessary. The only extant author to equate Iphigenia and Iphianassa is Lucretius (*De rerum*

²⁶ Homer may have narrated the Aulis episode on other occasions and may even be drawing on the type scenes and formulas that he used on those occasions.

²⁷ Hainsworth 1993, ad 9.145. Cropp opposes Hainsworth’s assumption: “one should not identify Iphigenia with Agamemnon’s living daughter Iphianassa (*Il.* 9.145, 287) and then infer that Homer did not know the sacrifice story. Iphigenia and Iphianassa were clearly distinct in the *Cypria* (fr. 17 Davies/24 Bernabé) and in Sophocles’ *Electra* (cf. *El.* 157, 530ff.)” (2000, 43n 45).

²⁸ Griffin’s view is essentially the same as Hainsworth’s (Griffin 1995, ad 9.144).

natura 1.85).²⁹ The simpler explanation is that Iphigenia and Iphianassa are distinct, and there are a number of reasons for thinking so. The testimony of archaic and classical Greek sources ought to be preferred to that of a first century BCE Roman author, especially when the Greek sources are consistent with Homer and the Roman source is not. The tradition overwhelmingly agrees that Iphigenia was the daughter at Aulis. Whether she was actually sacrificed is another matter. My explanation does not require the assumption that Homer either denies or does not know about the sacrifice, completed or only intended, of one of Agamemnon's daughters at Aulis.³⁰ Since the latter of these is highly unlikely, Hainsworth's interpretation requires Homer to be implicitly denying the sacrifice (completed or intended), for if Iphianassa is Iphigenia and Iphianassa is alive, she has not been (truly) sacrificed. My interpretation allows him to remain silent or to allude to it. My explanation is perfectly consistent with *Iliad* 9, in which Agamemnon

²⁹ West 2013, 110. We do not know Lucretius's source besides Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, which Lucretius essentially translates at certain points, and Aeschylus does not use Iphianassa. Without knowing Lucretius's source for Iphianassa, we should not prefer him to the Greek tradition. There is no way to be sure that Lucretius is not confused or not simply assuming that Iphianassa and Iphigenia are the same. Indeed, it would not be difficult to confuse the two because of Sophocles and Euripides. In *Electra*, Sophocles follows Homer in saying that Chrysothemis and Iphianassa are alive: Χρυσόθεμις ζώει καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα, "Chrysothemis lives, and Iphianassa" (157). The essential word, ζώει ("lives"), applies to both Chrysothemis and Iphianassa. Later, however, Clytemnestra refers to a daughter that Agamemnon sacrificed, and this can only be Iphigenia (e.g., 530-35). In *Orestes*, Euripides has Chrysothemis, Iphigenia, and Electra: ὧι παρθένοι μὲν τρεῖς ἔφουμεν ἐκ μιᾶς, / Χρυσόθεμις Ἰφιγένειά τ' Ἡλέκτρα τ' ἐγώ, "to whom we three maidens were born from one woman, / Chrysothemis and Iphigenia and I, Electra" (22-23). The verb ἔφουμεν ("we were born") need not imply that all three of them are still living, even though it would be easy to assume that they are, especially because of the similarity of Sophocles' line. While this line is similar to the one in Sophocles' *Electra*, it does not make Iphigenia and Iphianassa the same, and even if Iphigenia is alive, it could be because she was rescued. Sophocles certainly keeps Iphigenia and Iphianassa distinct, and Euripides never mentions Iphianassa, and Iphigenia is the only daughter that he has at Aulis. Pindar, like Sophocles and Aeschylus, has Iphigenia sacrificed at Aulis rather than rescued (*Pyth.* 11.22-23). See also West's *Epic Cycle*, to which I am indebted for references (2013, 110-111).

³⁰ Euripides, in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, is the only author who has Iphigenia return home after being rescued by Artemis, but Agamemnon is already dead by then, and Iphigenia herself was believed to be dead. In the *Catalogue of Women*, the daughter sacrificed is Iphimede, actually, her *eidolon* ("phantom") and "immortalized in Greece" ([Hes.] fr. 23a.17-26, Merkelbach and West 1990; Cropp 2000, 46). While this additional daughter might fit either with Hainsworth's explanation or with mine, Hainsworth mentions only her existence and not that she was sacrificed at Aulis. It would not matter for my argument whether the daughter sacrificed was Iphigenia, Iphimede, or one of some other name.

says that he has three daughters in his well-built hall: τρεῖς δέ μοί εἰσι θύγατρεις ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ εὐπήκτῳ / Χρυσόθεμις καὶ Λαοδίκη καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα (9.144-45). Whether Iphigenia is dead or living with the Taurians, she would not be in Agamemnon's house. In my explanation, the *Iliad* and *Cypria* are in agreement rather than in conflict unnecessarily. Finally, my interpretation makes sense of the exchange between Calchas and Agamemnon.³¹

A potential problem with my interpretation is that in the *Cypria* Artemis rescues Iphigenia and brings her to the Taurians (arg. 8 West 2003).³² That Iphigenia does not die would not matter if Agamemnon does not know what happens to her or is unhappy about her being taken to the Taurians. In the *Catalogue of Women*, Agamemnon apparently believes that he has sacrificed his daughter although he has actually sacrificed a phantom ([Hes.] fr. 23a.17-26). I think that the sacrifice of Iphigenia is more likely to be the original version of the story and her rescue a later development, perhaps an *aetion* for her various cults.³³ The *Cypria* is nevertheless useful for showing that there is no need to make Iphigenia and Iphianassa the same person, since Lucretius is the only author who does so. Again, what Homer says is perfectly consistent with Iphigenia and Iphianassa being two daughters and even makes more sense when they are kept

³¹ Hainsworth also says, "Neither here nor elsewhere does Homer so much as hint at the dreadful events at Aulis before the war, though it does not follow that he was unaware of the legend" (Hainsworth 1993, ad 9.145). I think that Homer does hint at the events at Aulis. As we will see, plenty of scholars have thought that the exchange between Calchas and Agamemnon alludes to the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

³² cf. West 2013, 109-11.

³³ Davies says, "The miraculous substitution of the deer for Iphigenia is another of those folk-tale motifs for which Homer has little time" (1989, 45).

distinct.³⁴ We might also say that it is not Homer per se who is silent but rather his characters, who have good reasons for not mentioning Iphigenia by name.

Why does mentioning these other daughters not trigger Agamemnon's defensive anger? What stimuli trigger a trauma response and how sensitive a person is to stimuli will vary. We can imagine a veteran who has returned home from war. He hears a loud noise and dives to the ground reflexively, filled with fear and adrenaline, his heart racing.³⁵ We can suppose on another occasion someone asks him what the war was like. He might be able to say that the bombs were the worst part without becoming triggered. But if he talked about his experiences in detail, he might very well become triggered. For Agamemnon, these situational cues are like the loud noise triggering the veteran. They make it seem as though Aulis is happening again. The mere mention of his daughters is not enough to trigger him, but revisiting the events of Aulis in detail might be.

How could Homer have known about trauma? Obviously, he would not have had the same understanding of it as we do today, but he would not have needed to.³⁶ All that he would have needed to know is that people can be sensitive about certain subjects or to certain actions or events and that they can react angrily or explosively when these occur or are brought up. That Homer was aware of this seems clear from his treatment of Achilles' anger. Replying to Ajax in book 9, Achilles says:

ἀλλά μοι οἰδάνεται κραδίη χόλω ὀππότε κείνων
μνήσομαι ὧς μ' ἀσύφηλον ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἔρεξεν

³⁴ Moreover, even if Iphianassa and Iphigenia were the same person in book 9, Homer might still be referring to the sacrifice of Iphigenia in book 1, the contradiction being an inconsistency of oral poetry (cf. Clark 1998, 21). It is not necessary to think that there is a contradiction, however.

³⁵ See Shay 1994 for examples.

³⁶ Shay thinks that Homer would have learned about trauma from being around those exposed to combat trauma (1994).

Ἀτρεΐδης ὡς εἶ τιν' ἀτίμητον μετανάστην. (9.646-48)

But my heart swells with anger whenever I remember
those things, how he did me an indignity among the Argives,
Atreus's son, as if I were some dishonored refugee.³⁷

If Achilles is filled with rage when he remembers how Agamemnon has treated him despitefully, he might have a similar reaction if someone else reminded him of Agamemnon's behavior.³⁸

This is one possible reason why in book 9 Odysseus does not mention that Agamemnon admits his folly (*ātē*).³⁹

Such rage is potentially explosive. In book 1, Achilles needs to be restrained by Athena, and in book 24, aware of his own volatility, he warns Priam not to provoke him lest he impulsively kill him (1.188-99, 24.553-70). The example from book 24 is interesting in that it resembles the ransom scene in book 1.⁴⁰ The language is even similar: μή μ' ἐρέθιζε, "don't provoke me" (1.32), and μηκέτι νῦν μ' ἐρέθιζε, "don't now provoke me further" (24.560).

Achilles has greater insight into his sensitivity in the moment than Agamemnon seems to have in rejecting Chryses' petition. Achilles tells Priam, "So don't now stir up my spirit more *in its pains*" (24.568). The pains in question are his grief for Patroclus but probably also include his residual anger at Hector and Agamemnon. While Achilles' recent traumas have made him even more sensitive and explosive, their very freshness makes their influence on his behavior more

³⁷ The meaning of ἀσύφηλος is uncertain. LSJ gives "headstrong, foolish." *DGE* gives "indigno, vil, sin valor . . . cuan indignamente me trató como si yo fuera un miserable advenedizo." Chantraine has "m'a traité de façon infâme (? ou folle (?)" (1968-80, s.v.). I have taken "indignity" from Murray (1999) and "refugee" from Hainsworth (1993, ad loc.).

³⁸ Cf. 16.52-59.

³⁹ Scodel 2008, 144-45. His great speech in book 9 is full of anger as well (9.308-429).

⁴⁰ This symmetry is of course well known: the poem begins with an unsuccessful supplication and attempt at ransom and ends with a successful one of each (e.g., Edwards 1987, 74; Taplin 1992, 21).

transparent. Agamemnon’s trauma, in contrast, is almost a decade old, so he may not be aware of why Chryses’ appeal makes him so angry. In addition, Achilles may experience Priam’s order to release Hector’s body as similar to Agamemnon’s heavy-handed seizure of Briseis.⁴¹ If the poet knew that merely remembering certain events could be triggering, he surely could have recognized that new events resembling the old could be as well.⁴² Our last examples come from the exchange between Calchas and Agamemnon, in which the poet shows awareness of how the resemblance of the present to the past may be triggering.

The Exchange between Calchas and Agamemnon

Fearing the anger of a great king, Calchas will not explain the cause of the plague until Achilles swears to protect him:

ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ κέλεαί με Διὶ φίλε μυθήσασθαι
 μῆνιν Ἀπόλλωνος ἑκατηβέλεταιο ἄνακτος·
 τοιγὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω· σὺ δὲ σύνθεο καί μοι ὄμοσον
 ἧ μὲν μοι πρόφρων ἔπεσιν καὶ χερσὶν ἀρήξειν·
 ἧ γὰρ ὄτομαι ἄνδρα χολωσέμεν, ὃς μέγα πάντων
 Ἀργείων κρατέει καὶ οἱ πείθονται Ἀχαιοί·
 κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ·
 εἶ περ γὰρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψη,
 ἀλλὰ τε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσση,
 ἐν στήθεσσι ἐοῖσι· σὺ δὲ φράσαι εἶ με σώσεις. (*Il.*1.74-83)

Achilles, dear to Zeus, you bid me to explain
 the wrath of lord Apollo the far-shooter.
 Well, then, I will speak, but take heed and swear
 that you will readily help me with your words and hands;
 for I think that I will anger a man who rules greatly over all
 the Argives and whom the Achaeans obey.

⁴¹ Achilles says that he already intends to release Hector, so he objects to being pressured to do it (24.560-61). Priam uses the imperative λῦσον (“release”), whereas Chryses uses the polite optative λύσαίτε, which is technically a wish and means roughly “please release” (1.20, 24.555). Both of them do use an infinitive as an imperative for accepting the ransom, but that seems less imperious, because the suppliants are telling them to accept something good, namely, ransom (1.20, 24.555). Priam also uses a negative imperative “don’t seat me in a chair” (24.553).

⁴² Part of Achilles’ rage in his great speech (9.308-429) stems from the embassy’s repetition of Agamemnon’s original offense. See chapter 4.

For a king is mightier when he gets angry at an inferior man;
for even if he digests his anger for that day,
he still has resentment afterwards in his chest until he fulfills it.
So consider whether you will protect me.

Although Calchas has not named names yet, he is obviously referring to Agamemnon: “who rules greatly over all / the Argives and whom the Achaeans obey” (78-79). Calchas’s reference needs to be clear enough that Achilles will promise to protect him even from Agamemnon. Picking up on Calchas’s cue, Achilles does mention Agamemnon by name in his promise (1.90). In lines 76-77 Calchas speaks allusively of a man who rules over all the Greeks. He uses a general word (ἄνδρα, “man”) rather than a name but is descriptive enough to suggest Agamemnon. The description is also a paraphrase of “king.” Calchas then speaks sententiously about the anger of kings (80-83). The king intended in lines 76-77 and 80-83 is the same. Calchas’s *sententia* is simply a disguise, just as describing (rather than naming) Agamemnon is. Although these attempts to disguise his referent are intentionally feeble, they are diplomatic and less face-threatening and provide at least a modicum of deniability. Just as that description refers to a specific person, so this *sententia* refers to specific behaviors of that same person. Calchas has learned from experience about the anger of kings, and experience has taught him that he needs Achilles’ protection. It was because of the sacrifice of Iphigenia that Calchas incurred Agamemnon’s *kotos*.⁴³ Calchas’s speech, then, describes Agamemnon’s reaction to the seer’s role in Iphigenia’s death. The *sententia* is retrospective as well as prospective.

⁴³ Harris says, “*kotos* is in fact a kind of anger” and has “the overtone ‘resentful anger’” (2001, 148, 51). According to Walsh, in the passage above, “Calchas presents us with a folk definition of anger” (2005, 14). Much of Walsh’s discussion of *kotos* is devoted to showing what Calchas tells us, namely, that *kotos* is long-lasting anger and endures until it is fulfilled. The distinction between *kotos* (“resentful anger”) and *cholos* (“anger” generally and “a strong, fresh anger, wrath”) is not always maintained (see 1.180).

To this priest and seer of Apollo, Agamemnon reacted with anger and ill-will. As we have seen, this is how he reacts to Chryses, priest of Apollo. Earlier we considered why Agamemnon reacts with anger to Chryses' request. We have treated Agamemnon's response to Chryses as a trauma reaction triggered by the similarity of the situation to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, so we would expect Agamemnon to have been angry in response to Calchas's original call for Iphigenia's sacrifice. In Calchas's speech above, we find a reference to this hypothesized anger and a confirmation of our explanation.

Homer prefaces Agamemnon's reply with a description of his anger. Agamemnon is ἀχνύμενος, "upset" (1.103). Agamemnon's *phrenes* ("midriff," "mind") are black and filled with *menos* ("passion" but here essentially "anger"), his eyes look like flashing fire, and he glares menacingly at Calchas (1.103-105). One of Agamemnon's epithets here, εὐρὺ κρείων ("wide ruling"), also echoes Calchas's μέγα πάντων / Ἀργείων κρατέει ("rules greatly / over all the Argives") and κρείσσων ("mightier") and so helps link Calchas's prediction with its eventuation (1.102, 78-79, 80). Agamemnon replies:

μάντι κακῶν, οὐ πώ ποτέ μοι τὸ κρήγυον εἶπας·
 αἰεὶ τοι τὰ κάκ' ἐστὶ φίλα φρεσὶ μαντεύεσθαι,
 ἐσθλὸν δ' οὐτέ τί πω εἶπας ἔπος οὔτ' ἐτέλεσσας·
 καὶ νῦν ἐν Δαναοῖσι θεοπροπέων ἀγορεύεις
 ὡς δὴ τοῦδ' ἔνεκά σφιν ἐκηβόλος ἄλγεα τεύχει, (110)
 οὔνεκ' ἐγὼ κούρης Χρυσηΐδος ἀγλά' ἄποινα
 οὐκ ἔθελον δέξασθαι, ἐπεὶ πολὺ βούλομαι αὐτὴν
 οἴκοι ἔχειν· καὶ γὰρ ῥα Κλυταιμνήστρης προβέβουλα
 κουριδῆς ἀλόχου, ἐπεὶ οὐ ἔθην ἐστὶ χερείων,
 οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, οὔτ' ἄρ φρένας οὔτε τι ἔργα. (115)
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς ἐθέλω δόμεναι πάλιν εἰ τό γ' ἄμεινον·
 βούλομ' ἐγὼ λαὸν σῶν ἔμμεναι ἢ ἀπολέσθαι·
 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γέρας αὐτίχ' ἐτοιμάσαστ' ὄφρα μὴ οἶος
 Ἀργείων ἀγέραςτος ἔω, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ἔοικε·
 λεύσσετε γὰρ τό γε πάντες ὃ μοι γέρας ἔρχεται ἄλλη. (1.106-20)

Prophet of evils, never yet have you told me anything good;
 Evils are always pleasing to your mind to prophesy,

but you have not yet said a good word or accomplished one.
 Now, too, among the Danaans you explain the god's will and declare
 that in fact on account of this the far-shooter is making pains for them,
 because the splendid ransom for the girl Chryseis
 I was not willing to accept, since I much prefer
 to have her at home. For in fact I prefer her to Clytemnestra,
 my wedded wife, since she is not inferior to her,
 not in build or stature or in mind or work.
 But even so I am willing to give her back if that is better;
 I want the men to be safe rather than to perish;
 but get a prize ready for me at once so that I alone
 of the Argives may not be prizeless, since it is not fitting;
 for you all see this, that my prize is going elsewhere.

As many scholars have thought, Agamemnon is alluding to the sacrifice of Iphigenia here (specifically 1.106-108).⁴⁴ Thus Clark can say, “Without the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon’s rebuke of Kalchas has no reference to make it meaningful; with the sacrifice, this outburst and Chryses’ supplication are neatly connected.”⁴⁵ I agree with Clark and Pulleyn that Calchas’s Aulis prophecy referred to in book 2 cannot explain what Agamemnon says here, because that prophecy—victory in the tenth year of the war—is not bad (2.300-32).⁴⁶ In fact,

⁴⁴ Those who think that this is so or that it is likely include Kullmann (1960, 198; 1992, 64-66), Edwards (1987, 179), Taplin (1992, 86), Clark (1998, 21-23), Pulleyn (2000, ad 1.108), Latacz (2009, ad 1.106-108), and West (2011, ad 1.106-108; 2013, 110). I am indebted to West for the reference to Kullmann 1960 (2013, 110). Kirk writes: “The exegetical scholia (AbT) show that there was probably much ancient discussion about Agamemnon’s motives for blackguarding Kalkhas, especially in view of the latter’s helpful divination at Aulis (71n.). At the time he may have thought the prospect of a ten-year war, even if ultimately successful, bad rather than good – and then there was the matter of his having to sacrifice his daughter on Kalkhas’ advice” (1985, ad 1.108). Jones also thinks an allusion to Iphigenia possible (2003, ad 1.106). Willcock (1976, 1978) is silent on this subject here, as is Leaf (1900-1902). On *Iliad* 9.144-45, Willcock says, “if Iphianassa is a variation on Iphigeneia, Homer appears to be ignorant of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia before the Greeks sailed for Troy” (Willcock 1978 repeats Willcock 1976 verbatim). Leaf writes: “Iphianassa seems here identical with Iphigeneia, whose death at Aulis is ignored in H[omer]” (1900, ad 9.145). But neither Leaf nor Willcock accounts for *Il.* 1.106-08.

⁴⁵ Clark 1998, 22. Clark also says that “Sophocles seems to have made a connection between Iphigeneia and Chryses, since his fragmentary ‘Chryses’ includes a meeting of the two after her departure from Tauris, accompanied by Orestes and pursued by Thoas (*TrGF* IV F 726-30)” (1998, 22n 35). Clark thinks that in supplicating Agamemnon Chryses may avoid using the “appeal to familial pity” that is “a frequent element of other supplications” because such an appeal would remind Agamemnon of Iphigenia (1998, 22).

⁴⁶ Clark 1998, 22; Pulleyn, ad 1.108.

Odysseus uses this prophecy to rally the troops after Agamemnon's test has backfired. The troops even shout their approval when Odysseus finishes recounting the prophecy (2.333-35). As Taplin notes, Calchas tells the troops that the *kleos* ("fame") of the sack of Troy will never perish, and *kleos* is the highest good of Homeric heroes (2.325).⁴⁷

Agamemnon is angry, and his reply confirms what Calchas says about both Agamemnon's *cholos* and *kotos*. We see what the violent anger (*cholos*) of the present looks like in Homer's description of Agamemnon and hear it in Agamemnon's tone. The original anger of Agamemnon that Calchas has learned to fear would have been like this. Complaining about the past ("never yet," "always," "not yet") is precisely what we would expect from someone with *kotos* (1.106-08).⁴⁸ We see Agamemnon's resentment in the way that he blames Calchas himself (μάντι κακῶν) for his prophecies rather than the situation (1.106). First, he claims that Calchas "never" says or does anything good and "always" prophesies ill (1.106-108). Second, Agamemnon makes the prophecies the result of Calchas's character: "Evil is always pleasing to your mind to prophesy" (1.107). Agamemnon does not treat Calchas's explanation of Apollo's anger as fact but rather leaves it embedded in indirect statement: "now, too, explaining the god's will you proclaim that on account of this Apollo is making pains for them, because I wasn't willing to accept the splendid ransom for the girl Chryseis" (1.109-12). This embedding and Agamemnon's sarcastic and skeptical δὴ ("in fact") create epistemological distance (1.110).⁴⁹ Agamemnon is subtly denying reality to lessen his discomfort and any resentment or contempt from the army. This is also another way that he blames Calchas, since he is insisting that these

⁴⁷ Taplin 1992, 88; Scodel 2008, 148: *kleos* is "the greatest long-term good available."

⁴⁸ For these sentiments as typical of anger, see Scodel 2008, 133.

⁴⁹ Denniston 1950, 233; Pulleyn 2000, ad 1.110; de Jong 1987, 176.

embedded propositions are Calchas's interpretation and consequently debatable rather than certain. Agamemnon is making the present situation an instance of the charge "Evil is always pleasing to your mind to prophesy" (1.107).⁵⁰ Even when Agamemnon does comply with Calchas's interpretation, his compliance depends on the condition that returning the girl is the better course of action rather than on the truth of Calchas's interpretation per se: "But even so I am willing to give her back *if* that is better" (1.116). Agamemnon makes it sound as though Calchas takes some sadistic pleasure in his baleful prophecies, and there is the sense that Agamemnon and Agamemnon alone is the victim of this sadism and has no choice but to comply. We should understand that Agamemnon would have reacted similarly at Aulis and blamed Calchas for his loss there just as he does here.

Agamemnon's reply shows that his *kotos* is still in effect.⁵¹ In fact, when Agamemnon calls Calchas μάντι κακῶν ("prophet of evils") and complains about his prophecies, he is explaining and therefore defending his *kotos*. At the same time, Agamemnon is unwittingly revealing why he did not call the assembly to learn the cause of the plague: he resents Calchas and blames him for the trauma of sacrificing Iphigenia. He wants to avoid repeating or reliving the trauma and so tries to avoid any situation resembling that at Aulis, and consulting Calchas to learn why a child of Leto is killing his men would be just such a situation. Moreover, despite his skepticism about Calchas's interpretation, Agamemnon may already know the cause of the

⁵⁰ Scodel 2008, 130, 133.

⁵¹ It is still in effect in spite of the aorist aspect of τελέσση ("accomplish") of 1.82 or because Agamemnon has not yet taken his revenge. In a sense, Agamemnon's anger is not *kotos* here because it is *cholos*. But even though *kotos* and *cholos* may be qualitatively different, they can be said to be the same anger because they are anger at the same person for the same reasons. We can think of Agamemnon's original *cholos* as a log that has just been set alight and is burning strongly. As it burns down to embers, it becomes *kotos*, but these embers can be fanned into flame to become *cholos* again. Calchas's latest explanation fans these embers and becomes a new log. It would not affect my argument much if Agamemnon's *kotos* were not still in effect, because, as his reply shows, Iphigenia still comes readily to mind.

plague and know that Calchas will prophesy something that he will not like, namely, giving up Chryseis, which would again recreate the situation at Aulis.⁵² This knowledge would explain both his failure to consult Calchas and his lack of surprise at Calchas's revelation. The speeches of Calchas and Agamemnon show that Agamemnon's resentment is affecting his behavior (e.g., his treatment of Calchas and his failure to call an assembly and consult Calchas). The cause of this resentment can only be the sacrifice of Iphigenia. That the sacrifice of Iphigenia is haunting Agamemnon here offers further evidence that her sacrifice contributed to his refusal of Chryses' petition ten days earlier.

Furthermore, Agamemnon says that Calchas is doing all of this again now: *καὶ νῦν ἐν Δαναοῖσι θεοπροπέων ἀγορεύεις*, "Now, too, among the Danaans you explain the god's will and declare" (1.109). Agamemnon is comparing what Calchas is saying in the present to what he said in the past. The *καὶ νῦν* ("now, too") is adding the present evil prophecy to the former ones. We know this because the content of the indirect statement is negative in Agamemnon's eyes: "on account of this is Apollo making pains for them, / because I wasn't willing to accept the splendid ransom for the girl Chryseis" (1.110-12). If Agamemnon is alluding to the sacrifice of Iphigenia as the earlier evil, he is seeing the present situation in the light of the past, and so Chryseis is like Iphigenia. Since Agamemnon's *καὶ νῦν ἐν Δαναοῖσι* ("now, too, among the Danaans") tells us that the present situation is like the past, the *ἐν Δαναοῖσι* suggests that Calchas was "among the Danaans" when he explained that Iphigenia needed to be sacrificed. That is, the call for Agamemnon to sacrifice Iphigenia came in the assembly, just as Chryses' petition for Chryseis

⁵² Holway also thinks that Agamemnon already knows the cause of the plague (2012, 8).

did.⁵³ Thus Agamemnon himself is providing evidence for interpreting his refusal of Chryses as a trauma reaction that repeats the original emotions and behaviors.

Agamemnon's disparagement of Clytemnestra in this speech may also point to the sacrifice of Iphigenia (1.113-15). This disparagement would make good sense if Agamemnon expects his relations with her to have deteriorated. The sacrifice of Iphigenia is a reason for Clytemnestra to hate Agamemnon if anything is. Indeed, this is the motive that the tragedians give her for killing him. If Agamemnon knows or suspects that his wife is hostile, it makes sense that he is planning to bring a choice woman home as a concubine to replace his wife.⁵⁴ Indeed, Agamemnon makes a point of saying that he wants to have Chryseis "at home" (πολὸν βούλομαι αὐτήν / οἴκοι ἔχειν [1.112-13]). In his earlier rebuff of Chryses, he likewise emphasizes having Chryseis in his home (ἡμετέρῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ἐν Ἄργεϊ, τηλόθι πάτρης, "in our house, in Argos, far from her fatherland"), granted that this is partly to set up an antithesis (Argos versus her homeland) for the sake of cruelty (1.30). Chryseis is also a surrogate for Iphigenia, so by bringing her home Agamemnon can in a way make up for the girl that should be at home. This emphasis on the home is consistent with *Iliad* 9, in which Agamemnon says that he has three daughters in his well-built hall: τρεῖς δέ μοί εἰσι θυγάτρεις ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ εὐπήκτῳ (9.144).

We can now revisit the parallels between the situations at Aulis and Troy. A case history is apposite here.⁵⁵ The patient, Richard, wanted intimacy yet unintentionally sabotaged his

⁵³ On the other hand, the troops do not shout to hand over the girl in the present instance, perhaps because they have already made their opinion known or because their intervention would interfere with the coming conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles (1.22-23).

⁵⁴ Scodel 2002, 106: "his lack of respect for his wife fits well within the narrative that begins with the sacrifice of his daughter and ends with his death." She notes that the same story pattern is being used for Chryseis but does not connect Agamemnon's refusal of Chryses' petition with Iphigenia.

⁵⁵ Wachtel 2008, 111-115.

relationships with the kind of women who were capable of genuine intimacy by trying to buy their affections and refusing to share anything intimate about himself. To prevent rejection in the latest relationship, Richard would lavish even more money on the women and ironically effect what he was trying to avoid, more rejection. Likewise, rejecting Chryses' request in order to avoid a situation like that at Aulis, Agamemnon ironically creates a situation that is even closer to it. Although Chryses obliquely threatens Agamemnon and the army with Apollo's wrath (1.21), the troops are not dying yet, as they were at Aulis. Refusing Chryses results in Apollo sending a plague on the army, so that now the men are dying just as they were at Aulis. We said that when Chryses asks Agamemnon for his daughter back, the situation resembles that at Aulis in that Chryses is a priest of Apollo and it was a priest or seer of Apollo, Calchas, who told Agamemnon to give up Iphigenia at Aulis. After Agamemnon refuses Chryses, it is not simply a priest of Apollo but Calchas himself who is involved. Just as at Aulis, Calchas is called upon to interpret the anger of a child of Leto. Just as at Aulis, Calchas says that Agamemnon has offended a child of Leto. Just as at Aulis, Calchas says that Agamemnon must give up a young woman. Just as at Aulis, Calchas says that Agamemnon must give up the woman to appease a child of Leto. Just as at Aulis, Calchas says that Agamemnon must appease a child of Leto to keep his troops from dying. Whereas Agamemnon refuses Chryses earlier, this time he does give up the woman, as he did at Aulis. Agamemnon returns Chryseis for the sake of the troops, as he emphasizes in his reply to Calchas. Although the line is in indirect statement, Agamemnon says that Apollo is making pains *for them*, i.e., the troops: σφιν ἐκηβόλος ἄλγεα τεύχει (1.110). And Agamemnon is willing to return the woman because he wants the army to be safe rather than to perish (1.117).

Because Agamemnon must return Chryseis, his *geras* (special prize of honor), without receiving the ransom as compensation, and must do so for the troops, Chryseis becomes a sacrifice, just as Iphigenia did. It was Odysseus who went to Mycenae to fetch Iphigenia to be sacrificed.⁵⁶ In *Iliad* 1, it is Odysseus who returns Chryseis to her father at the same time that he is conducting the hecatomb on Agamemnon’s behalf. Odysseus even leads Chryseis to the altar and puts her in her father’s hands: τὴν μὲν ἔπειτ’ ἐπὶ βωμὸν ἄγων πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεὺς / πατρὶ φίλω ἐν χερσὶ τίθει, “then leading her to the altar, very cunning Odysseus / put her in her dear father’s hands” (1.440-41). When Calchas was explaining what Agamemnon must do to propitiate Apollo, one of his instructions was “to lead a sacred hecatomb to Chryse”: ἄγειν θ’ ἱερὴν ἑκατόμβην / ἐς Χρύσην (1.99-100). In Greek “to Chryse” and “to Chryses” are both ἐς Χρύσην, so that Odysseus is leading the sacrifice to Chryses as well as to the town. The participle that Homer uses to tell how Odysseus leads Chryseis to the altar is ἄγων (“leading”), a form of ἄγειν (“to lead”), the same verb that Calchas used for bringing a hecatomb to be sacrificed (1.99-100). This verb is the *vox propria* for leading animals to the sacrificial altar. Moreover, the altar to which Odysseus leads Chryseis is the same altar to which he leads and at which he slaughters this hecatomb:

τοὶ δ’ ὄκα θεῶ ἱερὴν ἑκατόμβην
ἐξείης ἔστησαν ἐϋδμητον περὶ βωμὸν (1.447-48)

they quickly stood the sacred hecatomb for the god
in order around the well-built altar

αὔευσαν μὲν πρῶτα καὶ ἔσφαξαν καὶ ἔδειραν (1.459)

⁵⁶ Apollodorus epit. 3.21-2 in West 2013, 109-110. Talthybius accompanied Odysseus in fetching Iphigenia. Apollodorus presumably reflects the *Cypria*, since his account is so similar to Proclus’s summary of it. West uses Apollodorus to fill in gaps in Proclus (West 2013, 109-110).

they first pulled back the cattle's heads and then cut their throats and flayed them”

The symbolism is unequivocal: Chryseis is a sacrifice. The symbolism of sacrifice connects Chryseis with Iphigenia.⁵⁷

At Aulis, Agamemnon had to sacrifice Iphigenia so that Artemis would give the Greeks a favorable wind enabling them to escape starvation and sail to Troy. In *Iliad* 1, after Odysseus has returned Chryseis and performed the sacrifice, Apollo sends a fair wind, so that Odysseus and company may sail to Troy (1.479).⁵⁸

Finally, Achilles is involved at both Aulis and Troy. At Aulis, Agamemnon sends for Iphigenia on the pretense that she is to marry Achilles as payment for his help (arg. 8 West 2003). At Troy, Achilles calls the assembly that results in Agamemnon having to surrender Chryseis. Perhaps Agamemnon blames Achilles, as well as Calchas, for Iphigenia's death. The herald Talthybius accompanied Odysseus to fetch Iphigenia. In the *Iliad*, while Odysseus is taking Chryseis to her father, Talthybius goes to Achilles and takes away Briseis.⁵⁹ It is as though both at Aulis and at Troy, because Agamemnon must sacrifice a young woman, Achilles loses a potential wife.⁶⁰ Agamemnon will eventually have to give up Briseis for the good of the army in yet another iteration of this pattern.

Conclusion

⁵⁷ Because of the parallels that we have discussed, for example, Odysseus's role being virtually the same here as it was in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the poet is not only making the connection between Chryseis and Iphigenia clear but may also be drawing on some of the same language that he used to narrate Iphigenia's death on other occasions. Odysseus leads Chryseis to the altar, where her father is waiting, and places her in his hands, and then Chryses prays to Apollo for the deliverance of the Greeks. Might not Odysseus have placed Iphigenia in Agamemnon's hands or in Calchas's hands just like this?

⁵⁸ A god sending a favorable wind is a motif (e.g., *Od.* 2.420; Edwards 1980, 22).

⁵⁹ Cf. Kullman 1960, 199.

⁶⁰ Patroclus told Briseis that he would make her Achilles' wife (19.295-99).

While plenty of scholars have thought that Agamemnon is alluding to the sacrifice of Iphigenia in his angry reply to Calchas, only Clark, Scodel, and Holway connect Chryseis and Iphigenia. Holway notes the parallel of Iphigenia being sacrificed because of Artemis and Chryseis being sacrificed because of Apollo but does so merely in order to argue that Iphigenia was Agamemnon's favorite daughter.⁶¹ Holway's knowledge of attachment theory and psychoanalysis has taught him to look for relationship patterns. He is interested in this pattern insofar as it is a good example of parents sacrificing their children for narcissistic ends. Scodel notes that the same story pattern is being used for Chryseis and Iphigenia but does not connect Agamemnon's refusal of Chryses' petition with the sacrifice of Iphigenia.⁶² Clark's paper is on supplication in Homer. He connects Chryseis with Iphigenia in order to explain why Chryses omits the "appeal based on familial pity": Chryses does not want to remind Agamemnon of Iphigenia.⁶³ Clark also thinks that Agamemnon's reply to Calchas alludes to the sacrifice of Iphigenia and so adduces this allusion as evidence for his reading of Chryses' anomalous supplication.

Clark, Holway, and Scodel do not connect Agamemnon's angry refusal of Chryses' petition with the sacrifice of Iphigenia. I made this connection by considering whether Agamemnon's refusal could be part of pattern. As my analysis shows, making this connection is only the first step. Trauma theory and psychoanalysis allow us to offer an explanation that is more powerful and illuminating than saying simply that Agamemnon refuses because he is reminded of Iphigenia. As I have explained, Agamemnon's anger is part of a trauma reaction that

⁶¹ Holway 2012, 40.

⁶² Scodel 2002, 106.

⁶³ Clark 1998, 20.

is designed to avoid being retraumatized. The psychoanalytic principle of transference and the nature of trauma reactions teach us to look for evidence of a past response in a present response that seems more appropriate to an earlier situation, despite some similarities between the two situations. All of this enables us to read the exchange between Calchas and Agamemnon with a new sensitivity. Finally, Wachtel shows us how responding *as if* somebody were acting in a certain way can in fact make the person act in that way. By evoking the response that we are expecting, we confirm and perpetuate our organizing principles and sometimes ironically bring about what we are trying to prevent. For this reason we were able to notice that in trying to avoid a situation that recalled the traumatic sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon inadvertently brings about a situation that resembles the one at Aulis even more closely.

Part II: Achilles' Initial Provocations

Introduction

We now leave Agamemnon's dealings with Chryses and Calchas behind and turn to his quarrel with Achilles. Although Achilles' personality is narcissistic with masochistic elements, this chapter and the next introduce his masochism and show how the quarrel largely develops out of Achilles' and Agamemnon's relational manner and personal dynamics. I discuss sociocultural and situational contributions to the quarrel when they are relevant, but my emphasis is on the contributions of Agamemnon's and Achilles' personalities to the conflict. I argue that Agamemnon and Achilles are each responsible for the quarrel but that because Agamemnon's

behavior is more reprehensible than Achilles', Achilles has the moral high ground and is thereby allowed to set up the narcissistic contest that forms the basic plot of the poem.⁶⁴

Some Features of Masochism

When I speak of Achilles' masochism, I am referring to what Freud called "moral masochism" (*moralischer Masochismus*) and to what more recent authorities call "Masochistic Personality Disorder" or "Self-Defeating Personality Disorder."⁶⁵ This type of masochism has no necessary connection with sexual masochism, since moral masochists need not be sexual masochists, and vice versa.⁶⁶ Achilles exhibits some of the features of masochism but not so many that we would describe his personality as predominantly masochistic. His personality is best described as narcissistic with masochistic features, and these masochistic features often serve narcissistic ends. This is in keeping with Cooper's argument that masochistic behaviors have narcissistic functions so often that we should regard the masochistic character as a masochistic-narcissistic character.⁶⁷

Although all of the personality disorders can be said to be self-defeating in that they result in unhappiness, masochism designates behaviors that are not merely dysfunctional but patently self-defeating (e.g., having an accident after a success).⁶⁸ By definition, the central

⁶⁴ Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti write, "narcissists may not just exploit but also actively seek out competitive situations that provide opportunities for glory" (2011, 403).

⁶⁵ *Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual* (hereafter "PDM"); DSM-3-R.

⁶⁶ PDM; McWilliams 1994.

⁶⁷ Cooper 1988, 2009.

⁶⁸ McWilliams 1994.

defenses of masochism are acting out (viz., self-defeating behavior) and moralization (hence “moral masochism”).⁶⁹ “Acting out” refers to acting impulsively, compulsively, automatically, or for an unconscious purpose in order to avoid an emotion, wish, or impulse or the accompanying ideation.⁷⁰ Two ways of acting out that are characteristic of masochism are provocation and exhibitionism, both of which we will see in Achilles’ behavior during the quarrel. The DSM’s fourth criterion for masochism captures what is meant by “provocation”: the person “incites angry or rejecting responses from others and then feels hurt, defeated, or humiliated (e.g., makes fun of spouse in public, provoking angry retort, then feels devastated).”⁷¹ “Exhibitionism” refers to the way in which masochists often seek an audience for their suffering, sacrifice, fortitude, ill-treatment, or misfortune. Exhibitionism can also be provocative or intended to punish the observer. “Moralization” refers to rationalization in which one of the reasons given for an action is also a moral justification:

When one is rationalizing, one unconsciously seeks cognitively acceptable grounds for one’s direction; when one is moralizing, one seeks ways to feel it is one’s *duty* to pursue that course. Rationalization converts what the person already wants into reasonable language; moralization puts it into the realm of the justified or morally obligatory.⁷²

“Moralization can be an exasperating defense in masochistic clients,” McWilliams writes, since “[o]ften they are much more interested in winning a moral victory than in solving a practical

⁶⁹ McWilliams 1994, 261.

⁷⁰ McWilliams 1994, 138-39; Vaillant 1993, 52-55. This is the broader meaning of “acting out.” Its original, narrower meaning refers to “any behavior that is assumed to be an expression of transference attitudes that the patient does not yet feel safe enough to bring into treatment” (McWilliams 1994, 139).

⁷¹ DSM-3-R, 374.

⁷² McWilliams 1994, 125.

problem.”⁷³ Moralization is thus not limited to self-dialogue intended to justify one’s actions. It is present in cultivating one’s indignation, complaining or ranting about another’s turpitude, and feeling and acting morally superior, as well as in the self-denying and self-mortifying behavior of ascetics and martyrs.⁷⁴ It is this moralizing component that allows the masochist to regulate his self-esteem through suffering.

The Provocations

Achilles’ provocations escalate until finally the quarrel breaks out.⁷⁵ It is Achilles who arranges for a meeting in order to learn the cause of the plague. Relations between Achilles and Agamemnon are uneasy. As we will see presently, each has his grievances and seems generally to dislike the other.⁷⁶ In addition, Achilles makes Agamemnon feel insecure: Achilles is the best warrior, contests Agamemnon’s claim to be the best of the Achaeans, and resents taking orders from him.⁷⁷ Agamemnon is likely to feel attacked or humiliated if he is revealed to have caused his army’s suffering, however he may have done so (e.g., refusing Chryses or a faulty sacrifice). If the cause is his refusal of Chryses’ petition, Agamemnon is likely to lose his *geras* and therefore honor. Even if Achilles does not know the cause of the plague, he should be able to

⁷³ McWilliams 1994, 263. McWilliams gives the example of a client who was owed money by the IRS but “much preferred [McWilliams’s] sympathetic indignation to [McWilliams’s] attempts to help her get recompensed” (McWilliams 1994, 263). “Left to herself, she would have gone on collecting and bemoaning injustices rather than eliminating one” (McWilliams 1994, 263).

⁷⁴ Reik 1941; McWilliams 1994.

⁷⁵ This is to imply neither that Achilles alone is responsible nor that he is more culpable than Agamemnon. While Achilles is far from innocent, Agamemnon crosses a line in 1.131-47 when he threatens, even if not intending to carry out the threat, to take Achilles’ prize. I treat the quarrel proper as beginning with that speech even though Achilles’ reply (1.149-71) is required to ensure that there will be a quarrel. Broadly defined, the quarrel spans the assembly in book 1 (1.54-305) or even runs until book 19.

⁷⁶ Edwards 1987, 179, 180; Rabel 1999, 44. Their relationship in the *Odyssey* complicates this picture.

⁷⁷ For Agamemnon’s insecurity, see Donlan 1971, 111, 112.

anticipate that learning the cause and the required remedy, whatever they may be, will likely be unpalatable to Agamemnon, in that as the leader of the expedition, he may ultimately be held responsible for the plague and be expected to do what is necessary to end it. That Agamemnon does dread such information can be seen in his failure to consult Calchas or any other seer and in what he says once Calchas does explain the plague (e.g., μάντι κακῶν, “prophet of evils,” etc. [1.106-12]). Whatever Calchas says is probably going to be unwelcome because he is only consulted when there is a problem, which the gods are probably causing. Since the gods usually do not punish good behavior and punishments are supposed to be unpleasant, the Achaeans will need to do something unpleasant to placate the gods, and this unpleasantness will fall to their leader. For these reasons, Achilles would have done well to have someone else sponsor the meeting that will bear bad news.⁷⁸ True, Hera prompts Achilles to assemble the army, but he could have still achieved this while having Nestor or Odysseus act as the official author of the meeting.⁷⁹ Although something needed to be done to end the plague, because these considerations were available to Achilles and he is capable of tact, as he demonstrates in book 23, calling this meeting is tactless and so constitutes the first of his provocations in book 1.

⁷⁸ Collins 1988, 95-96: “The very act of calling the assembly in A might be viewed as Achilles’ appropriation of royal prerogatives.” She says that in the *Iliad* only Zeus, Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, and Priam call assemblies, but she acknowledges that “Carlier . . . takes Achilles’ (and Telemachus’, in the *Odyssey*) convening an assembly as proof that anyone could do so” (Collins 1988, 70; Carlier 1984, 185). According to Scodel, “all the major leaders have the right to call assemblies” (Scodel 2008, 129). While it would support my argument if Achilles were appropriating one of Agamemnon’s prerogatives, I will assume that he is not. As I have said, calling the assembly is provocative insofar as relations are strained between Achilles and Agamemnon, Achilles represents a threat, and the explanation of the plague is likely to bring bad news for Agamemnon.

⁷⁹ The verb used, καλέσσατο, is in the middle voice, so since Achilles “had the army called to assembly” rather than going around shouting himself, he could still have “had it called” under Nestor’s or Odysseus’s auspices (1.54). On Hera’s role, Scodel writes, “Presumably we have a ‘double motivation’: Hera chooses to inspire Achilles, because Achilles is already concerned” (2008, 129; Lesky 1961).

I have intentionally used the rather nonspecific word “meeting” to designate the gathering that Achilles calls. Achilles’ second provocation is that he calls an assembly (*agorē*) of the whole army rather than a council (*boulē*) of the leaders: ἀγορῆνδε καλέσσατο λαὸν Ἀχιλλεύς, “Achilles called the men to the assembly” (1.54).⁸⁰ Again, Hera gives Achilles the idea (1.55), but again, I ask whether her prompting would not still allow him the freedom to call a council rather than an assembly. Regardless of whether we hold Achilles responsible for choosing the assembly over the council, the venue nevertheless contributes to the quarrel, since as far as Agamemnon and Achilles know, the decision is Achilles’ alone.⁸¹ Furthermore, Achilles’ subsequent behavior, unmotivated by Hera, still takes place before the whole army. That is, Achilles chooses to act provocatively in other ways even though he must know that the presence of the whole army is likely to make face-threats even more threatening and so to make Agamemnon, the leader of the army, more defensive.⁸² That Agamemnon is far more tolerant of criticism in the council and other small gatherings suggests that the venue does contribute to the quarrel. A confounding variable is that Achilles is not the one confronting Agamemnon in these other settings. It is nevertheless difficult to imagine this most public of settings not raising the stakes and making any conflict more likely to escalate.

That Achilles is the first to speak in this assembly is likewise potentially provocative. Even if Hera alone were responsible for his calling an assembly, he could have had Nestor or

⁸⁰ Scodel says, “If Achilles had summoned a meeting of the council instead of the assembly, we would have no quarrel and no *Iliad*” (2008, 129).

⁸¹ Scodel 2008, 129. Edwards says that “Achilles’ aggressive initiative may have provoked” Agamemnon’s demand for another prize (1987, 179).

⁸² We may see Achilles’ awareness of this variable in his dissatisfaction with Agamemnon’s overtures in book 9. For Agamemnon to suffer more he must apologize in person and in public, as he eventually does in book 19.

Odysseus open it or, at the least, introduce the topic of the plague. The assemblies in books 2 and 19 are called by Agamemnon and Achilles, but Odysseus effectively takes control of each. Therefore, the person who calls the assembly need not run it.⁸³ In book 2, Odysseus silences Thersites after Agamemnon's test of the troops has miscarried. In book 1, by contrast, by the time that Nestor intervenes in the quarrel, his chances of repairing the rupture have worsened. In book 19, Odysseus ensures that what is needed for an adequate reconciliation between Agamemnon and Achilles is carried out and that Agamemnon is not the one who must oppose Achilles' demand that the army proceed to battle at once, even though unfed.⁸⁴ In book 1, by contrast, it is Achilles who opposes Agamemnon's demand for another prize.

The speech with which Achilles opens the assembly is provocative in both what it says and how it says this.

Ἄτρεΐδη νῦν ἄμμε πάλιν πλαγχθέντας ὄϊω
 ἄψ ἀπονοστήσειν, εἴ κεν θάνατόν γε φύγοιμεν,
 εἰ δὴ ὁμοῦ πόλεμός τε δαμαῖι καὶ λοιμὸς Ἀχαιούς·
 ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ τινα μάντιν ἐρείομεν ἢ ἱερῆα
 ἢ καὶ ὄνειροπόλον, καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστιν,
 ὅς κ' εἴποι ὅ τι τόσσον ἐχώσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,
 εἴ ταρ ὅ γ' εὐχολῆς ἐπιμέμφεται ἠδ' ἑκατόμβης,
 αἴ κέν πως ἀρνῶν κνίσσης αἰγῶν τε τελείων
 βούλητ' ἀντιάσας ἡμῖν ἀπὸ λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι. (1.59-67)⁸⁵

Son of Atreus, now I think that beaten back,
 we will go back home, if we should escape death,
 if war and plague together are going to overcome the Achaeans.
 But come, let us ask a seer or a priest
 or a dream interpreter, for the dream also is from Zeus,
 who might say why Phoebus Apollo is so angry,
 whether he finds fault with us for a vow or hecatomb,

⁸³ In *Odyssey* 2, Aegyptius opens the assembly called by Telemachus but does not even know who has called it (2.26-28).

⁸⁴ Giving the gifts may also allow Agamemnon to save face (Scodel 2008, 99).

⁸⁵ For line 64 I follow West's text (West 1998).

in the hope that perhaps after receiving the savor of lambs and flawless goats, he wants to ward off destruction from the Achaeans.

Achilles' εὐχολῆς (“vow”) might recall, at least for the audience, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, because Agamemnon has vowed (ἠϋξῶ) to sacrifice her to Artemis (*IT* 15-25). εὐχολή can also mean “boast,” and in another version of the story, Agamemnon angers Artemis by boasting that he is a better hunter than she is and by killing a deer (*Cypria* arg. 8 West 2003).⁸⁶

The main provocation is that Achilles suggests that the expedition might fail and the army be destroyed.⁸⁷ The πάλιν πλαγχθέντας (“beaten back”) and ὁμοῦ πόλεμός τε δαμῆι καὶ λοιμὸς Ἀχαιοῦς (“together the war and plague are going to overcome the Achaeans”) remind Agamemnon that this return home would be ignominious, if the Achaeans can even manage to make it home. Although failure would diminish everyone’s honor, Agamemnon’s (and Menelaus’s) honor would suffer the most (see 4.413-17). As the supreme leader, he is the most responsible for the outcome of the endeavor and would have failed to restore the family’s honor by regaining Helen and punishing the Trojans. This suggestion is therefore a face-threat to Agamemnon in particular, and indeed Achilles is here addressing Agamemnon alone.⁸⁸ In book 2, Agamemnon himself says that the expedition’s failure would entail a loss of honor. He would return “inglorious” (δυσκλέα) to Argos after he has “lost many men” (πολὸν ὄλεσα λαόν), and it would be a “disgrace” (αἰσχρὸν) for future men to learn that so great an army of Achaeans

⁸⁶ We can see this as an instance of Ellen Oliensis’s “textual unconscious”: “What I am listening for is an unconscious that tends to wander at will, taking up residence now with a character, now with the narrator, now with the impersonal narration, and sometimes flirting with an authorial or cultural address” (Oliensis 2009, 6). Although Oliensis is not aware of it, there may actually be a scientific explanation for some instances of this textual unconscious in the concept of “associative memory,” “another type of implicit memory” (Auchincloss and Samberg 2012, sub “memory,” with references).

⁸⁷ So Scodel 2008, 129. I cannot agree with Kirk, who says, “It is worth noticing that Akhilleus’ opening remarks to Agamemnon are perfectly unprovocative” (Kirk 1985, ad 1.56-67).

⁸⁸ Chryses, in contrast, addresses both sons of Atreus, Ἀτρεΐδαι (1.17).

fought in vain against fewer men (2.115, 119-23).⁸⁹ Agamemnon says this to the men before he proposes that they all go home. Although he hopes that the prospect of dishonor will inspire them to stay the course, he has miscalculated, and they break for the ships. He is evidently more sensitive than they are to the dishonor of the expedition's failure.⁹⁰

Achilles' prediction of failure could be designed to motivate Agamemnon or to justify calling for a seer to explain the plague, but it is unnecessary to do either of these. Since Calchas stands up and speaks immediately after Achilles, Achilles does not need Agamemnon to do anything at all.⁹¹ Consulting a seer under such circumstances hardly needs justification, so Achilles' threatening prediction is again unnecessary.⁹² If Achilles believes that his threatening prediction is necessary as a motivation or justification, then it is the product of moralization. As his subsequent speeches make clearer, Achilles resents Agamemnon, and his resentments leak out in these subtle provocations.

The speech is provocative in form primarily in that it presents the negative outcomes as more likely than the positive. In the first sentence, the outcomes threatening to Agamemnon, namely, having to return home and destruction by war and plague, are put in the more confident future indicative and future infinitive, whereas the escape from death is put in the more cautious

⁸⁹ In the same book, Odysseus says that it is shameful to stay a long time and return empty-handed (2.298). By leaving, the Achaeans are willing to make Agamemnon *ἐλέγχιστον* ("most deserving of reproach," "most contemptible") among all humans (2.285). Agamemnon does say that retreat is preferable to capture (14.80-81).

⁹⁰ This is not to say that he is the most sensitive. That distinction may belong to Diomedes (cf. 9.32-49; 8.139-156). It should be noted, however, that when Agamemnon despairs of victory, he can propose that they all go home (9.27-28, 14.65-81). 9.26-28 repeats 2.139-41, but when Agamemnon suggests that they go home in book 2, he is testing the men rather than proposing in earnest that they flee.

⁹¹ Taplin suggests that Achilles and Calchas are working together and that Achilles' mention of Apollo shows that he knows "the nature of the offence (62-7)," even though he feigns ignorance (1992, 54).

⁹² It is unnecessary unless Achilles already knows the cause of the plague and is telling everyone in advance why Agamemnon should return Chryseis in order to trap him.

optative.⁹³ Making his prediction pessimistic even in form, Achilles seems to be enjoying tormenting Agamemnon with these unpleasant possibilities.

Achilles' next speech is far more provocative than anything we have discussed so far. This is the speech in which Achilles promises to protect Calchas in case revealing the cause of the plague angers anyone:

οὐ τις ἐμεῦ ζῶντος καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ δερκομένοιο
σοὶ κοίλης παρὰ νηυσὶ βαρείας χεῖρας ἐποίσει
σμπάντων Δαναῶν, οὐδ' ἦν Ἀγαμέμνονα εἴπης,
ὄς νῦν πολλὸν ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν εὐχεται εἶναι. (1.88-91)

while I'm alive and looking on the earth
no one will lay his heavy hands on you by the hollow ships,
not one of all the Danaans, not even if you mean Agamemnon,
who now claims that he is by far the best of the Achaeans.

To appreciate how this speech is provocative, we should compare it with the minimum required by the situation. Achilles only needed to say “I swear that I will protect you,” or he could have had the other Achaeans agree to protect Calchas. Instead, he issues a face-threat to the whole army and two additional face-threats to Agamemnon. These face-threats are provocations in a more literal sense because they are challenges to everyone in the army and to Agamemnon in particular. Although Achilles challenges “all the Danaans,” his real target has been Agamemnon all along, and his οὐδ' ἦν Ἀγαμέμνονα εἴπης (“not even if you mean Agamemnon”) aggressively reminds everyone that “all the Danaans” includes Agamemnon. To be sure, Achilles is

⁹³ Since the last protasis of the speech (66-67) has its verb (βούλητ', “wants”) in the subjunctive, it is a partial exception to Achilles' trend here of expressing the negative more vividly than the positive, but only a partial exception, for he throws in the cautious πῶς (“somehow, perhaps”). ὄτω (“I think”) is not functioning as a polite qualifier here. It is either neutral or provocative. The future indicative alone (“we will return home”) would have had the wrong sense. He needs the ὄτω to make a prediction, and the prediction is the whole point. It has the sense of necessity: “I expect that we will have to return home.” ὄτω is potentially provocative because it foregrounds the fact that it is Achilles of all people who is responsible for this threatening information. As the subject of the verb, Achilles sets himself squarely in Agamemnon's way. ὄτω is used more provocatively during the height of the quarrel to convey defiance (1.170-71, 287-89, 295-96).

responding to a specific part of Calchas's request, but Calchas is able to indicate to whom he is referring without naming Agamemnon. Achilles provocatively dispenses with this modicum of tact.⁹⁴ As if this were not inflammatory enough, Achilles proceeds to challenge Agamemnon's claim that he is the best of the Achaeans by reminding everyone that it is just a claim (εὔχεται) and not a fact accepted by everyone, to wit, Achilles.⁹⁵ Contesting Agamemnon's claim in this way, Achilles is also implying that he rather than Agamemnon is the best of the Achaeans. If it would gall Agamemnon not to be the best of the Achaeans, it would gall him still more if Achilles were.

What makes Achilles provocative is not simply that he reports threatening information or does what is necessary but that he makes things more threatening than they need to be. He does this both by including more threatening material than is necessary and by presenting it in threatening ways. In this speech, instead of saying "I will protect you" or "you will be safe," Achilles adds details that make what he says more vivid, forceful, and, given the nature of what he is saying, provocative. Two of these details (ἐμεῦ ζῶντος καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ δερκομένοιο, "while I'm alive and looking on the earth," and βαρείας χεῖρας ἐποίσει, "will lay his heavy hands on") have counterparts in colloquial English: "not while I'm alive" and "no one will lay a hand on you." Not content with "no one," Achilles adds "of all the Danaans," thereby reminding his

⁹⁴ Of this mention of Agamemnon, Kirk comments, "a gratuitous addition, this, and mildly insulting, the beginning of trouble. The comprehensiveness of Akhilleus' guarantee was plain enough without directly mentioning the king again" (Kirk 1985, ad 1.85-91).

⁹⁵ See Kirk 1985, ad 1.90-91. On εὔχεται, see Muellner 1976, 78-81. Using εὔχεται ("he claims," "he boasts") of another's claims does not always call those claims into question. It does not when Nestor uses it at 2.82, but it does at 20.2012 (Kirk 1985, ad 1.90-91). Whether it does depends largely on the speaker's intention and the audience's recognition of it (cf. Grice 1957). The audience's interpretation will in turn depend on its knowledge of many things, particularly of the other person, yet this knowledge of the other person will have passed through the filter of past relationships.

listeners that they are the referents of his τις (“someone, anyone”). It is as much the manner in which Achilles expresses himself as the substance of what he says that makes him provocative.

Part III: Agamemnon’s Reply to Calchas

Introduction

We have discussed Agamemnon’s reply to Calchas as it pertains to his refusal to accept ransom for Chryseis. Here we discuss it as it contributes to the quarrel with Achilles. The speech is marked by anger and defensiveness. As I have suggested, we may understand Agamemnon’s anger as part of a trauma response designed to prevent (re)traumatization. But Agamemnon is defending himself from more than (re)traumatization in this speech. He is trying to deny responsibility for the plague in order to avoid losing honor and authority. The organizing defense of this speech is, accordingly, denial. This is Agamemnon’s preferred defense in general and one that he uses in connection with Iphigenia as well.

We can explain Agamemnon’s arguments in this speech in terms of defense mechanisms, which are automatic and relatively unconscious.⁹⁶ That is, although we may find it convenient to refer to these defenses as “strategies,” we should not read the speech as having any elaborate, consciously calculated strategy.⁹⁷ The speech is reactive. Agamemnon fumes in anger and squirms in humiliation. When I call denial the “organizing defense” of the speech, I am referring both to Agamemnon’s use of the defense of denial itself and to the element of denial in the other

⁹⁶ Vaillant 1993, 19: “the term *unconscious* is relative.”

⁹⁷ As Wilson, in her otherwise helpful analysis, sometimes seems to do (2002, 49-53).

defenses that he uses.⁹⁸ Even though Agamemnon uses defenses in this speech, this does not mean that it has no arguments, only that they are simple and reflexive in themselves. Used in conjunction, however, they form a more complex argument. This more complex argument is not necessarily intended by Agamemnon but may result simply from the conjunction of simple arguments and from the need of listeners to make sense of what they have heard.

“Prophet of Evils”: Agamemnon’s Ad Hominem

Agamemnon’s denial may be partial or implicit in other defenses rather than consist in bald declarations that something is not the case. We see the denial primarily in Agamemnon’s skeptical treatment of Calchas’s interpretation of the plague. This defense begins with an ad hominem argument: Calchas always likes prophesying evils and has never said or done anything good for Agamemnon (1.106-08). Agamemnon is implying that because Calchas always has bad news and it is improbable that in every case the news should be bad, he prophesies what he likes rather than what is true. He may also be inimical to Agamemnon (cf. μοι, “me” [1.106]) and take perverse pleasure in giving baleful prophecies. For these reasons, the Greeks should doubt the veracity of Calchas’s present interpretation.

As we saw earlier, when Agamemnon discusses Calchas’s interpretation, he embeds it as indirect speech: ἀγορεύεις / ὡς δὴ τοῦδ’ ἔνεκά σφιν ἐκηβόλος ἄλγεα τεύχει, “you are saying / that Apollo is making pains for them for this reason” (1.109-12). By embedding Calchas’s interpretation, Agamemnon is refusing to accept it as true and is reminding everyone that it is merely what Calchas says, merely one possible interpretation. Furthermore, Agamemnon casts doubt on Calchas’s interpretation by adding a sarcastic and skeptical δὴ (“in fact, indeed”) to the

⁹⁸ “A component of denial can be found in the operation of most of the more mature defenses” (McWilliams 1994, 102).

embedded propositions.⁹⁹ Even after deciding to return Chryseis, Agamemnon still does not admit that Calchas's interpretation is correct. Agamemnon will do all he can to save the army and so will return Chryseis just in case doing so may preserve the army ("if that is better" [1.116]).¹⁰⁰ Although Agamemnon does not expressly deny the truth of Calchas's explanation, his skeptical handling of it functions as a covert denial.

Casting doubt on Calchas's interpretation allows Agamemnon to deny responsibility for the plague and thereby to save face and retain as much honor as possible. This defense can be successful even if Agamemnon and his audience do not wholly disbelieve Calchas's explanation. Doubt functions both as a psychological defense and as a rhetorical tactic. Agamemnon can take refuge in doubt and relieve his discomfort. The doubt functions as denial: if he accepts only that something *may* be the case, he does not accept that something *is* the case, and not accepting something can be tantamount to denying it. At any rate, the same effect is achieved in both cases: the person does not acknowledge a state of affairs as being the case. If Agamemnon's audience has any doubts about Calchas's interpretation, it may be reluctant to punish Agamemnon with the loss of esteem that he might suffer if there were no doubts. And even if the audience does not have any doubts, if Agamemnon thinks that it might have them, he may feel that he suffers less face-loss. Sowing reasonable doubt, then, is enough for Agamemnon to save face and feel less humiliated.

⁹⁹ de Jong 1987, 176: "Agamemnon recapitulates Calchas' speech A 93-100. The tone in which he does so is one of ironic disbelief as regards the correctness of Calchas' interpretation: the emphatic τοῦδ' ἕνεκά and ἐγὼ, in combination with ὡς δὴ, all indicate that Agamemnon finds it hard to believe that the misery of all Greeks is caused by his individual behavior. He insinuates that Calchas' interpretation results from long-standing antipathy towards him, Agamemnon."

¹⁰⁰ de Jong 1987, 280 n57: "This disbelief also appears from καὶ ὥς ('even so') in 116: although he does not believe Calchas' interpretation to be correct, he is prepared to do what is best for the army."

From Denial to Rationalization

Agamemnon moves from implicitly denying Calchas's interpretation to rationalizing his refusal of ransom:

οὔνεκ' ἐγὼ κούρης Χρυσηΐδος ἀγλά' ἄποινα
οὐκ ἔθελον δέξασθαι, ἐπεὶ πολὺ βούλομαι αὐτὴν
οἴκοι ἔχειν· καὶ γάρ ῥα Κλυταιμνήστρης προβέβουλα
κουριδίης ἀλόχου, ἐπεὶ οὐ ἔθέν ἐστι χερείων,
οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, οὔτ' ἄρ φρένας οὔτε τι ἔργα.
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς ἐθέλω δόμεναι πάλιν εἰ τό γ' ἄμεινον· (1.111-16)

. . . because I was not willing to accept the splendid ransom for the young woman Chryseis, since I much prefer to have her at home. For in fact I prefer her to Clytemnestra, my wedded wife, since she is not inferior to her, not in build or stature or in mind or work. But even so I am willing to give her back if that is better.

Agamemnon is justifying his refusal after the fact. Chryseis has the qualities of the society's ideal woman, and Agamemnon presumably has a "sexual relationship" with her.¹⁰¹ "Everyone in the army," Scodel writes, "can recognize that he could have a special attachment to a particular woman and so not wish to give her up."¹⁰² His refusal out of affection was "a natural response with which others should sympathize – and it was just his bad luck that his refusal has led to the plague, so that he now has to give up the woman herself and is threatened with a loss of *timē* because he will have no prize."¹⁰³ This is indeed what Agamemnon is suggesting, but it is a rationalization. If he cared deeply about Chryseis herself rather than as a substitute, he would not have treated Chryses so harshly. Agamemnon's intimation of his affection resembles Achilles' declaration of his feelings for Briseis in book 9 (9.336-43). If anything, Achilles' affection is

¹⁰¹ Scodel 2008, 131.

¹⁰² Scodel 2008, 131.

¹⁰³ Scodel 2008, 131.

more plausible, yet what he says in book 9 is belied by his willingness to let Agamemnon keep sleeping with her (9.336-37) and by his wish that Artemis had killed her on the day that he acquired her (19.59-60).¹⁰⁴ If the depth of Achilles' affection for Briseis is in doubt, Agamemnon's romantic attachment to Chryseis certainly is. Chryseis is important for what she comes to symbolize. She may assume her symbolic significance only once Chryses' petition creates a situation resembling Aulis and that situation triggers Agamemnon's trauma response.

Whereas casting doubt on Calchas's interpretation implicitly denies it, these rationalizations implicitly accept it. The denial of the interpretation allows Agamemnon to deny responsibility for the plague and thus potentially to conserve all of his *tīmē*. The rationalizations, in contrast, which make his refusal understandable and represent the plague as bad luck, accept responsibility and serve to minimize the loss of *tīmē* by eliciting sympathy.¹⁰⁵ Having caused the army harm by making an understandable mistake is likely to cost him less honor than having done so by acting perversely.¹⁰⁶ These defenses are nevertheless in contradiction.¹⁰⁷ This recalls the joke that Freud tells to illustrate the irrationality of his defenses in his dream of Irma's injection. A man who has borrowed a kettle from a neighbor returns it "in a damaged condition" and then argues that "in the first place the kettle wasn't damaged at all, in the second it already had a hole in it when he borrowed it, and in the third he had never borrowed a kettle from his

¹⁰⁴ Scodel, among others, notes the similarity of Agamemnon's and Achilles' declarations of affection and questions their sincerity (2008, 147).

¹⁰⁵ Scodel 2008, 131.

¹⁰⁶ Scodel 2008, 131.

¹⁰⁷ Agamemnon's "if that is better" reverts to the questioning of Calchas's interpretation.

neighbour.”¹⁰⁸ Agamemnon’s contradictory defenses epitomize his conflict throughout the speech. He can neither absolutely deny nor wholeheartedly admit. What he admits in one breath he denies in the next.

Agamemnon’s Willingness

Agamemnon represents the return of Chryseis as voluntary: “But even so I am willing to give her back if that is better” (1.116). Wilson argues that Agamemnon tries to represent the return of Chryseis as *apoina* (“ransom,” “compensation”) for the army rather than as *poine* (“punishment,” “penalty,” “compensation”) for his churlish treatment of Chryses so that he will lose less honor.¹⁰⁹ Although Agamemnon does not use the words *poine* and *apoina* here, by casting the return of Chryseis as voluntary, he nevertheless suggests that he is paying a ransom rather than a penalty, for paying a penalty is usually voluntary only in a weak sense.¹¹⁰ The consequences of non-compliance make payment virtually compulsory. Under these circumstances, surrendering Chryseis is essentially compulsory, so characterizing it as voluntary effectively denies that it is *poine*. Agamemnon’s denial is once again covert, implied rather than stated.

¹⁰⁸ Freud 1900, 95-96.

¹⁰⁹ Wilson 2002, 51-52; cf. Muellner 1996, 103. I follow Wilson in using *apoina* and *poine* here, even though they are not used in this speech, in order to refer to “themes.” With *apoina*, the status disequilibrium between the giver and receiver of the ransom is preserved, whereas the giver of *poine* suffers a loss of honor, which flows to the receiver of *poine*. For this reason, Agamemnon wants to cast the return of Chryseis as *apoina* rather than *poine*. I do not accept Wilson’s reading of the embassy in book 9. She thinks that Achilles refuses the offer because Agamemnon offers *apoina* rather than *poine*. Agamemnon does use the word *apoina* (9.120), but I am skeptical that it means “ransom” there. I nevertheless agree that there are problems with spirit in which Agamemnon makes his offer (see chapter 4 below).

¹¹⁰ There are a few examples in the *Iliad* in which *poine* is entirely voluntary and seems to cost the giver no honor. These all involve Zeus, however. He compensates Tros for the abduction of Ganymede (5.265-66) and various heroes (e.g., Hector) for their early deaths (17.206-08). In book 19, Odysseus comes close to saying that mortals need not lose honor when they give *poine* (19.179-81).

Characterizing Chryseis’s return as voluntary allows Agamemnon to claim that he is surrendering her out of concern for the army: “But even so I am willing to give her back if that is better. / I want the men to be safe rather than to perish” (1.116-17). Since he is willing to surrender Chryseis now in order to save the army, he invites his audience to infer that he would not have refused the ransom originally if he had known that refusing would harm the troops. Thus he acted in ignorance and made a mistake that anyone could have made. If Agamemnon simply made a mistake, he should be judged more leniently and lose less honor than he would if he had acted in disregard for the army’s welfare or in some other reprehensible way.¹¹¹ His concern for the army’s safety here therefore supports his earlier rationalizations, which, in light of his ignorance at the time, seemed like good reasons.

Claiming to be returning Chryseis voluntarily out of concern for the army suggests that returning her constitutes *apoina* rather than *poinē* and thus supports his demand for a prize to replace her.¹¹² Since Calchas is not necessarily correct and Agamemnon is returning Chryseis voluntarily (not as *poinē*) and for the sake of the army, the army ought to compensate him.¹¹³ That he deserves compensation for this reason seems implicit in his sequence of thought rather than in any logical or explanatory particles:

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἐθέλω δόμεναι πάλιν εἰ τό γ' ἄμεινον·
 βούλομ' ἐγὼ λαὸν σῶν ἔμμεναι ἢ ἀπολέσθαι·
 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γέρας αὐτίχ' ἐτοιμάσατ' ὄφρα μὴ οἶος
 Ἀργείων ἀγέραστος ἔω, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ἔοικε·
 λεύσσετε γὰρ τό γε πάντες ὃ μοι γέρας ἔρχεται ἄλλη. (1.116-20)

But even so I am willing to give her back if that is better;
 I want the men to be safe rather than to perish;

¹¹¹ Scodel 2008, 131.

¹¹² Wilson 2002, 51.

¹¹³ Cf. Muellner 1996, 103.

but get a prize ready for me at once so that I alone
of the Argives may not be prizeless, since it is not fitting;
for you all see this, that my prize is going elsewhere.

In line 117, even though there is no *gar* (“for”) or the like, Agamemnon is clearly explaining why he is now willing to return Chryseis (116): he wants the army to be safe. While in 116-117 Agamemnon explains this (sudden) willingness, in 118 he demands another prize: “but get a prize ready for me at once.” Here the thought seems to approach a condition: “Give me another prize and I will give her back,” which is equivalent to “If you give me another prize, I will give her back.” Even though Agamemnon does not say, “I am returning Chryseis for the army’s sake; therefore, give me another prize,” because his demand follows immediately upon a statement of his willingness to return Chryseis for the army, he still seems to suggest that his demand follows from or is justified by this willingness.¹¹⁴

Agamemnon’s Appeal to Propriety

Agamemnon suggests that Chryseis’s return constitutes *apoina* rather than *poinē* but does not say so explicitly. He does, however, explicitly justify his demand for another prize when he says that “it is not fitting” (οὐδὲ ἔοικε) for him alone to be prizeless (1.118-19). Why would this be unfitting?¹¹⁵ The best answer is “because of his status.” He is referring not only to his status as one of the leaders but more specifically to his position as commander in chief: “He invokes the collective belief in his privileged position in a fixed system as commander in chief over the

¹¹⁴ Wilson says, “he defines her as a prize (*geras*) and treats her as the price that must be paid for Achaian lives to be spared . . . Agamemnon offers, in effect, to use Chryseis as *apoina* to preserve the army rather than as *poinē* to redress the harm he did to Chryses” (Wilson 2002, 51). Scodel says that returning Chryseis is supposed to justify his claim to another prize: “Insofar as Chryseis is a particular woman, her loss will be irremediable, but insofar as she is a γέρας, another can substitute, and Agamemnon’s willingness to give up a unique good for the sake of the army adds force to his insistence that he is entitled to another prize” (Scodel 2008, 131; Muellner 1996, 103).

¹¹⁵ Taplin questions whether Agamemnon is entitled to another prize (Taplin 1990, 81). See chapter 2 for a discussion of this problem.

Panachaian forces.”¹¹⁶ Agamemnon’s position as commander in chief would explain why it seems particularly inappropriate for him *alone* of the Argives to lack a prize (1.118-19).¹¹⁷ That Agamemnon is appealing to status is clearest, however, from his imperiousness: “get a prize ready for me at once” (1.118). His position as commander in chief allows him to give peremptory commands even to the other leaders and even after he has lost his prize through his own folly. Agamemnon’s appeal to his power is simultaneously an exercise of that power.¹¹⁸

Projective Identification

Agamemnon uses a few defenses in concert at the end of this speech, and together they continue his denial. He makes two moves in the last three lines of the speech: he demands another prize and justifies this demand. The demand for another prize here is an instance of projective identification. In this defense, a person “deposits” an unwanted emotion or relational role into another person by getting the other person to experience this emotion or role and

¹¹⁶ Wilson 2002, 52.

¹¹⁷ Taplin denies that Agamemnon is commander in chief and says that “there is no suggestion of any social structure according to which Achilles or any other *basileus* might be accused of mutiny or treason” (1992, 56-57). The second part is undoubtedly true, and it is often best to think of Achilles and the other “kings” as allies. Agamemnon is nevertheless the chief who is at least notionally in command, and consequently we can refer to him as “commander in chief.” With this term I am not suggesting that he is at the top of some formal “military hierarchy” (Taplin 1992, 56). Sometimes the poem treats him as having a higher status than the others (e.g., 1.275-84), although Taplin is right that this can be thought of as a matter of degree (e.g., Agamemnon is “more kingly” [9.160] or “most kingly” [9.69]) within the rank of *basileus* (Taplin 1990, 64). Sometimes he is *primus inter pares* (16.52-54; cf. Raaflaub 1997, 634). His position is unofficial and informal in respect to the other chiefs, and if he is superior to them, that is only because they are willing to recognize him as such or he is willing to assert his power. Within one community, however, the “paramount *basileus*,” to borrow Raaflaub’s phrase, does seem to have more authority and perhaps even an office (Raaflaub 1997, 634; van Wees 1992, 274-311). The problem in the *Iliad* is that this system is being applied among men who are themselves paramount chiefs (and allies) and therefore is even more unstable (cf. Donlan 1982). The scholarship on Homeric society is vast, but see, for example, Finley 2002, Donlan 1982, 1989, 1993, Morris 1986, Beidelman 1989, van Wees 1992, Raaflaub 1997, Wilson 2002, Scodel 2008.

¹¹⁸ Wilson makes a similar point: “Agamemnon therefore both presumes and imposes his symbolically maintained position in the relatively fixed status system to recover his *timē* in the fluid one” (2002, 52). Cf. Muellner 1996, 103: “Agamemnon’s response is a way of covering up for his mistake, of asserting his authority just when it is being eroded.”

“metabolize” it for him or her.¹¹⁹ Agamemnon is experiencing shame, humiliation, and anger, the last partly in reaction to the first two. He is also in the role of the deprived and impotent victim. By demanding another prize, Agamemnon reasserts his authority and power over the other Greeks and thereby dumps his shame, humiliation, anger, and sense of victimization, deprivation, and impotence onto them, for they will be losing part of their prize, will be powerless and deprived, and will feel shame, humiliation, and anger at being forced to submit to Agamemnon and acknowledge their inferiority to him.

How do we know that Agamemnon is feeling any of these things? The narrator tells us of Agamemnon’s anger when he introduces the speech, and Agamemnon’s attack on Calchas is clearly angry (1.103-09). The situation itself should make it obvious that Agamemnon is feeling shame, humiliation, impotence, deprivation, and victimization. In front of the whole army, Calchas has just revealed that Agamemnon has caused the plague and the army’s suffering through his own folly and that to propitiate Apollo, he must return Chryseis, his prize, and sacrifice a hecatomb. The pervasive defensiveness of the speech argues Agamemnon’s general discomfort. His response is also consistent with what he would have been feeling at Aulis.¹²⁰

Evidence for what Agamemnon is dumping on the others comes from the quarrel and its aftermath. Agamemnon makes clearer the intent behind his demand, even if he was unaware of it

¹¹⁹ Safran and Muran 2000, 63; Langs 1978, 123-24. Projective identification was introduced by Melanie Klein but was developed into the form familiar today by Wilfred Bion.

¹²⁰ As we have seen, this anger belongs in part to a trauma response, a defensive reaction that both attempts to prevent (re)traumatization and repeats emotions from the original trauma. I would suggest that all of these feelings, which are commonly experienced by survivors of trauma, are what we would expect Agamemnon to have felt at Aulis as well. Agamemnon could have felt ashamed, as well as guilty, for sacrificing his daughter, impotent and victimized because of having to do it, and angry because he was forced to feel all of these and because anger is part of the fight response. In some versions of the myth, Agamemnon is required to sacrifice Iphigenia because he has offended Artemis by boasting or by killing a sacred deer. Thus Agamemnon may have felt shame, humiliation, and guilt on that occasion too because he had caused the famine that was killing his men.

at the time, when he threatens to take Achilles', Ajax's, or Odysseus's prize if he is not given a replacement (1.137-39). He says, "The man to whom I come will be angry" (1.139). This man will be angry not simply because he will have lost his prize but also because Agamemnon will have humiliated him by making him submit.¹²¹ Drawing the analogy with Apollo, Agamemnon says himself how he is passing on the role of the deprived and impotent victim:

ὥς ἔμ' ἀφαιρεῖται Χρυσηΐδα Φοῖβος Απόλλων,
 τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ σὺν νηϊ τ' ἐμῇ καὶ ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισι
 πέμψω, ἐγὼ δέ κ' ἄγω Βρισηΐδα καλλιπάρηον
 αὐτὸς ἰὼν κλισίην δὲ τὸ σὸν γέρας ὄφρ' εὐ εἰδῆς (185)
 ὅσσον φέρτερός εἰμι σέθεν, στυγέη δὲ καὶ ἄλλος
 ἴσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθῆμεναι ἄντην. (1.182-87)

As Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryseis away from me,
 I will send her back with my ship and my companions,
 but I will take lovely-cheeked Briseis, that prize of yours,
 going myself to your hut, so that you may know well
 how much greater I am than you and another too may
 be afraid to say that he is equal to me and to liken himself to me to my face.¹²²

Later, Achilles says that by taking his prize Agamemnon has dishonored him (1.355-56), has committed an outrage that stings Achilles' heart and must be repaid with Agamemnon's suffering (9.387), has caused Achilles' heart and soul "terrible pain" (16.52), and has treated Achilles like a "dishonored vagabond" (9. 647-48; 16.58-59). Achilles' pain of dishonor includes not only anger but also shame and humiliation. All of this shows that Agamemnon is dumping more than anger onto the other Greeks. Achilles' insubordination leads Agamemnon to disclose

¹²¹ On 1.139, Scodel says, "he is imagining the pleasure of transferring his own present anger and frustration to someone else" (2008, 133-34). He is transferring more than anger and frustration. See chapter 2.

¹²² *Lfgre* lists this φάσθαι as one of the ambiguous instances that could mean either "say" or "think." "Say" seems to make better sense in this context. Under φημί, *Lfgre* says that ἴσον is a predicate accusative in indirect statement or thought, but under ἴσος, it says that ἴσον is an internal accusative and translates it, "claim the same status / rights as."

the defensive intent of his demand for another prize, an intent that Agamemnon only becomes conscious of in the course of the quarrel as Achilles responds to it.

We have already seen how some of Agamemnon's defenses are in conflict and how this is not unusual (cf. Freud's joke). For example, the attack on Calchas implicitly denies his interpretation while the rationalization implicitly accepts it. Likewise, Agamemnon suggests that he is entitled to another prize because he is returning Chryseis as *apoina* for the army, but then he turns around and expressly demands another prize as part of the projective identification. The explanation is that his defenses vary with his emotion. He begins the speech angry and accordingly denies Calchas's interpretation (1.106-12). Then he starts to feel deflation, resignation, and self-pity (1.112-16).¹²³ Lines 116-17, "But even so I am willing to give her back if that is better; / I want the men to be safe rather than to perish," are a half-hearted attempt at magnanimity and concern. There is still a touch of the pitiful about them, particularly 117. It is at this low-point of depletion that the projective identification kicks in and Agamemnon becomes imperious: "but get a prize ready for me at once so that I alone / of the Argives may not be prizeless, since it is not fitting" (1.118-19). He grandiosely asserts his power in order to transfer his helplessness and depletion to the other Greeks. His "it is not fitting," an appeal to propriety, is yet another defense but is used to support his projective identification.

Agamemnon's appeal to propriety is moralization. This defense works in concert with the projective identification by justifying Agamemnon's demand. As we saw earlier, moralization is closely related to rationalization and in some cases may even be considered a subspecies of it. White and Gilliland point out that "rationalization is often invoked as a third line of defense to

¹²³ Scodel 2008, 130: "It seems clear that he is no longer addressing Calchas, but the Achaeans generally, and that his anger is shading into something else – self-pity or frustration."

provide a plausible explanation for the illogical behavior” that results from the use of other defenses.¹²⁴ Something similar is happening in Agamemnon’s speech. It is as though he has impulsively demanded another prize and is now seeking an explanation and justification for it. This moralization also allows Agamemnon to deny that he is doing anything untoward by demanding and taking another prize. Yet this justification, the appeal to propriety, does not conflict with the projective identification because it rests on his status as commander in chief. Thus by moralizing, Agamemnon reasserts his power and status and thereby supports his projective identification, which itself relies on the assertion of his power.

Projective identification serves Agamemnon’s denial in a number of ways. It resembles denial in that it disavows emotions and roles by depositing them into others. In denial, the person insists that a state of affairs is not the case. In projective identification, the person unconsciously acknowledges a state of affairs and then rejects the resulting emotions as intolerable. In both defenses, then, something is rejected.

There is an element of denial in Agamemnon’s projective identification also in that Agamemnon’s shame, humiliation, and impotence are signs of his culpability. To feel shame and humiliation at having caused the plague and harmed the army through folly is to admit to having done this. Since this truth is unacceptable, so are the emotions associated with it. What Agamemnon is feeling might be influenced by what he imagines the army is feeling (perhaps contempt, disgust, anger, betrayal, fear at having an inept leader), so this disavowal of his emotions simultaneously allows him to deny that the army may be feeling any of that toward him. Likewise, projective identification allows Agamemnon to deny his powerlessness by

¹²⁴ White and Gilliland 1975, 57.

transferring it to the other Greeks, who must submit to him. This is also an example of the defense of reversal. Agamemnon reverses his role from the impotent, deprived victim to the powerful depriver, with the other Greeks forced into the role of the impotent, deprived victim.¹²⁵ It is possible that Agamemnon saw the other Greeks, particularly Calchas and Achilles, as the original deprivers. In one sense, they are. But in another sense, the role of depriver has been displaced from Chryses and Apollo onto them (the defense of displacement).¹²⁶

Finally, keeping his prize allows Agamemnon to pretend that he never sacrificed his daughter in that if Agamemnon's prize has become a replacement for Iphigenia, losing the prize would repeat her loss, and the absence of a prize would force him to acknowledge her loss and sacrifice. One problem is that the presence of a prize should also remind Agamemnon of her loss and sacrifice. In fact, substitution or symbolization by its very nature requires absence. Nevertheless, Agamemnon finds his prize, which is not in any case identical to Iphigenia, a comforting presence. The replacement prize becomes a denial of loss because it makes returning Chryseis less of a repetition of Aulis and because it undoes the loss. If Chryseis replaces Iphigenia and her presence allows Agamemnon to deny the events at Aulis, the replacement prize undoes the loss of Chryseis and so allows him to continue this denial.

Stolorow and Atwood provide a real-life analog for such use of substitutes. A patient, Jessica, had a brother, Justin, who died in childhood. Her mother effectively turned her into Justin in order to cope with her grief. For example, she made Jessica cut her hair like Justin's and move into his room.¹²⁷ The mother was not delusional: she knew that Jessica was in fact Jessica.

¹²⁵ "Control-mastery theorists call this 'passive-into-active transformation'" (McWilliams 1994, 133).

¹²⁶ Cf. Wilson 2002, 60.

¹²⁷ Stolorow and Atwood 1992, 67-68.

Yet she could pretend that Jessica was Justin and thereby keep her connection to him alive. Likewise, Agamemnon knows that Iphigenia is gone but can pretend that she is not. For this bereaved mother, then, the illusion of presence outweighed the reminder of absence, and she found more solace than pain in a substitute.

Conclusion

Denial in one form or another pervades Agamemnon's speech. His attack on Calchas functions as an ad hominem argument that tries to negate Calchas's damning interpretation of the plague. His skeptical imbedding of Calchas's interpretation as indirect statement implicitly denies it. In both cases, the denial of the interpretation is global. Agamemnon then turns to rationalizing his refusal of Chryses. He had good reasons for refusing and simply made a mistake. Since anyone could have made this mistake, Agamemnon deserves the army's sympathy and should lose less honor than he would lose if he had acted perversely. Agamemnon's willingness to return Chryseis denies that her return is compulsory and therefore that it is *poinē*. This willingness also allows Agamemnon to claim that he is returning her for the sake of the army. From this present solicitude for the army's welfare Agamemnon invites his audience to infer that he must have been similarly solicitous earlier, when he refused Chryses. He effectively denies that he refused Chryses because of any selfish indifference to the army and pleads ignorance and bad luck. Agamemnon's willingness thus reinforces his rationalization. Casting Chryseis's return as voluntary, Agamemnon suggests that it is *apoina* rather than *poinē* and supports his demand for another prize.

Agamemnon's demand is based on his position as commander in chief and on his power to exact a replacement prize. His demand is therefore an assertion of power, and even his feeble moralization of his demand depends on his position of power. An assertion of his power,

Agamemnon's demand here is an instance of projective identification. With this defense Agamemnon disavows his negative affects and helpless role by bringing them about in the other Greeks. He deposits what is intolerable to him into others by making them experience it in his stead. Disavowing his negative affects and helplessness can be understood as a denial of an intolerable state. It is also a denial of the cause of this state, namely, Calchas's interpretation and the loss of honor and authority that it entails for Agamemnon, even though the mere presence of these feelings may show that Agamemnon accepts Calchas's interpretation on some level. If Agamemnon does not have to feel shame and helplessness, it is easier for him to pretend that he has done nothing that would warrant such feelings. Thus, Agamemnon's demand for another prize not only allows him to transfer his shame and sense of deprivation to the other Greeks but also attempts magically to undo his loss of honor, for if the other Greeks are "willing" to give him another prize, they replace the honor of the original prize, and their very "willingness" to replace the prize reassures him that he has not lost any additional honor. As Scodel says, "[g]iving him a substitute would represent public acceptance of his version [of events] and would thus be face-saving for Agamemnon."¹²⁸ If Agamemnon still has a prize, he can pretend that this latest episode never happened. If Agamemnon can secure another woman as a replacement prize, he can secure a substitute for Iphigenia and continue to disavow the events at Aulis.

Denial, so characteristic of Agamemnon, begins with the attack on Calchas and continues throughout the speech, each argument building on the preceding and denying something in a new way until finally denial leads Agamemnon to demand a new prize. It is this demand that brings

¹²⁸ Scodel 2008, 131.

him into conflict with Achilles. Thus the quarrel grows not only out of social position and the situation but also out of personality.

Chapter 2

Quarrel

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the quarrel proper. We resume where we left off, with the next speech in the assembly (Achilles' reply to Agamemnon), and show how the quarrel grows out of these characters' organizing principles. In the first part, we see the ways in which Achilles rejects Agamemnon's projective identification and consider what Achilles' response in this particular situation can tell us about his personality. The second part shows how Agamemnon responds specifically to Achilles' attempts to impede his defensive activity (e.g., projective identification). We elucidate Agamemnon's internal conflicts by following his subtle and not-so-subtle changes of direction. One way Agamemnon tries to escape his discomfort is by resorting to narcissistic defenses, but this has the unhappy consequence of activating Achilles' own narcissistic defenses. Part III establishes Achilles' relational manner and some of the organizing principles that it implies. There we also begin our explication of the logic and inner workings of the narcissistic personality.

The standard interpretation of the quarrel is that it is about who the best of the Achaeans is.¹ That this is so is clear from the characters' words themselves (e.g., 1.91, 185-87, 244, 277-

¹ See Redfield 1975, Nagy 1999, Collins 1988, Martin 1989, van Wees 1992, Muellner 1996. I have found Donlan 1982, van Wees 1992, Wilson 2002, and Scodel 2008 most helpful on the quarrel. Wilson disagrees that this is what the quarrel is about: "Achilles claims that the quarrel originates in a long-standing conflict between Agamemnon's privileged position and the agonistic *timē*-based status system. The opposition is thus not presented as one between traditional kingship and a leading warrior, though Nestor construes it as such and modern scholars sometimes follow him in doing so" (2002, 54). Her objection is only partly valid, and we will discuss the ambiguity of Agamemnon's position below. She says that Agamemnon is not "a traditional hereditary monarch" (Wilson 2002, 36, 195 n6). This is true insofar as he is not Achilles' and the other chiefs' king, but he is the hereditary king or chief of Mycenae (see van Wees 1992). Achilles is of course a chief in his own right and is certainly not Agamemnon's vassal. Nestor still has more or less the right idea. We could reformulate Nestor's position as follows: because Agamemnon rules over more men and is the commander in chief, he is superior to Achilles, deserves more honor, and should not be challenged by Achilles, even though Achilles is a chief and the best warrior. To be precise, the quarrel arises over

81). The issue hinges on the meaning of “best.” What makes someone the best? Is it being the best warrior or having the most power? Nestor tries to stop the quarrel by answering this question. Although Achilles is strong, he says, Agamemnon is superior because he rules over more men, and Achilles should not quarrel with him face to face since as a scepter-bearing king, Agamemnon has no ordinary share of honor (1.277-81). Achilles and the *Iliad* as a whole disagree. Since the best of the Achaeans will also in theory have the most honor, the conflict is about honor and what it confers, namely, status.²

Some scholars recast the quarrel in terms of various anthropological theories. Donlan sees the conflict as the “inevitable” result of the society’s level of organization.³ Homeric society “best conforms to the model of the segmental tribe, in which a higher level of organization (the office of chief with subordinate ‘nobility’) exists, but has only a small degree of unity and central authority and whose integrative control is limited.”⁴ In other words, Homeric society is at a level of organization between the tribe and the chiefdom. Problems arise because these two types of social organization have different systems of distribution. Tribes are more egalitarian and have “balanced-specific giving, dependent on a particular service,” whereas chiefdoms are more stratified and have “generalized-unspecific giving, dependent on rank.”⁵ That is, “[i]f . . . we ask whether the giving to the chief is ‘voluntary,’ or whether the chief may ‘command’ the giving,

Agamemnon’s requiring the army’s spoils to be collected again and then over his threatened seizure of Achilles’ prize. But in the course of this dispute, Achilles’ and Agamemnon’s rivalry and resentments emerge so that the issue comes to concern not merely the impropriety of Agamemnon’s behavior but also the title “best of the Achaeans.” Cf. Muellner 1996, 106, 109-11.

² See in particular van Wees 1992.

³ Donlan 1982, 161.

⁴ Donlan 1982, 173.

⁵ Donlan 1982, 160-61.

we must answer ‘yes’ twice. That is the nature of chiefly due.”⁶ Agamemnon’s demand for another prize violates “the principle of egalitarian sharing” even as his “superior right to compensation is recognized in Achilles’ offer to ‘apotinein [‘repay’ him] three and four-fold’ in the future (1.128).”⁷

There are problems with this interpretation, however. Does Homeric society reflect a historical society? If so, does it reflect a society in transition between the tribe and the chiefdom? Or is it a conflation of historical societies from different periods? What is the status of this theory of political organization? Does the quarrel arise from the contradictions in Homeric society generally or from the nature of the enterprise, which requires independent chiefs to recognize the leadership of one of their peers?⁸ Regardless of the answers to these questions, I still find this approach both helpful and interesting, for there is indeed disagreement over Agamemnon’s status vis-à-vis the other chiefs and over what this status entitles him to. Thus Agamemnon and Nestor can say that Agamemnon is superior to Achilles, while Achilles can complain that Agamemnon, though superior in power, has robbed his “equal” (ὄμοιον [1. 185-87, 277-81; 16.53-54]).⁹

Wilson’s more recent work is similar to Donlan’s, but in place of his conflict between the egalitarianism of tribes and the stratification of chiefdoms, she posits a conflict between two

⁶ Donlan 1982, 161.

⁷ Donlan 1982, 161.

⁸ “Agamemnon’s ‘chiefdom’ at Troy was an anachronistic epic retrojection, since the chiefdom form, as we see it in Homer, was not capable of effecting anything like a pan-Hellenic consolidation. Nevertheless, the sociological stresses that it experienced correspond perfectly (scaled down) to our model of the chiefdom with surviving elements of the tribal form, and it is reasonable to conclude that the epic’s conception of the Greek confederacy at Troy was an inflated version of the local system” (Donlan 1982, 163).

⁹ Nestor also says that as a scepter-holding king, Agamemnon does not receive a share of “like honor” (οὐ ποθ’ ὄμοιον ἐμμορε τιμῆς [1.278]). Compare Agamemnon’s *στυγέη δὲ καὶ ἄλλος / ἴσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην*, “[so that] another too may be afraid to say that he is equal to me and to *liken* himself (to me) to my face” (1.187). Cf. Donlan 1982, 162-63.

systems of rank, a fixed system based on political power and a fluid system based on *tīmē*.¹⁰ Achilles and Agamemnon each appeal to the “common sense” (i.e., “what can be taken for granted in a given culture”) of the fluid and fixed systems respectively in their struggle for dominance.¹¹ Achilles attempts to supplant Agamemnon as the distributor of goods and patron of Menelaus. His success would signal the triumph of the fluid system over the fixed. A necessary ingredient for conflict in each of these three scenarios seems to be that Homeric society is agonistic. Homeric heroes are competing for honor and status.¹² In a statement of heroic ideology in *Iliad* 12, Sarpedon tells Glaucus that Homeric heroes must fight to justify the honors and status that they enjoy in their communities (12.310-28). The second part of the statement is that because death is inevitable, heroes should try to win fame in battle. Donlan and Wilson seem to assume that the nature of Homeric society and Achilles’ and Agamemnon’s place within it explain the quarrel, as if these factors make the quarrel inevitable.¹³ These are indeed necessary

¹⁰ Wilson 2002, 36-37. Wilson’s formulation of these two systems is misleading because she makes it sound as though the fixed system is an alternative to *tīmē*, which is not the case. Agamemnon’s political position is the basis of rank because it brings with it *tīmē* (hence Nestor’s words at 1.278). It would be preferable to speak of a relatively fixed system of *tīmē* or rank based on position and a relatively fluid one based on achievements and talents. (Scodel refers to these two systems as “status-*tīmē*” and “achievement-*tīmē*” (2008, 10, 47; cf. Riedinger 1976).) This would preserve the intersection of the two systems that provides a ground for conflict. The two systems would thus be two different sources of *tīmē*. Hence, Collins, following Donlan, writes, “the *Iliad* generally elides royal authority with influence from martial prowess, of, that is, authority from social position with authority from excellence and achievement” (Collins 1988, 98; Donlan 1979, 51-70; for the ideology of this elision and its limits, see van Wees 1992). Wilson thinks that “the qualitative difference in *tīmē* accorded scepter-bearing kings,” which Nestor “takes as a premise,” is “contested in the quarrel” (2002, 63). There may be qualitative differences, but Achilles and Agamemnon seem to be arguing about quantitative differences. I think that Nestor’s “like honor” (1.278) is quantitative rather than qualitative, for the quarrel comes to involve the size of the prizes. Agamemnon’s position is recognized with a *geras* (“prize”), tangible honor in the form of a woman in this case, and Achilles’ complaint is that Agamemnon’s *geras* is always larger than his (1.167). It seems to me that Nestor and Agamemnon are saying that political position confers *more* honor than prowess and heroic deeds do. It is the very real wealth and power more than the mystifications of god-bestowed scepters that give the politically superior their greater honor. Agamemnon exerts this power in taking Achilles’ prize.

¹¹ Wilson 2002, 16, 54-58.

¹² See especially van Wees 1992.

¹³ Donlan 1982, 161; Wilson 2002, 37, 55.

conditions for this particular quarrel, but they are not sufficient.¹⁴ Why is it Achilles who calls the assembly? Why is it necessary for Achilles to oppose Agamemnon? Why does he behave the way he does? Why does Agamemnon react the way he does? Why are the other leaders silent until Nestor finally intervenes? It is hardly satisfactory to say that this is just what the narrative requires even if that is also true. These approaches thus leave an explanatory gap. This we will try to fill by considering the contributions of personality and the situation to the conflict.

Part I: Projection Denied. Achilles' Speech at 1.122-29

Achilles is the one who replies to Agamemnon. By opposing Agamemnon's demand for another prize and by provoking him in other ways, Achilles shows himself unwilling to digest Agamemnon's projective identification. Here is Achilles' speech in full:

Ἀτρεΐδη κύδιστε, φιλοκτεανώτατε πάντων,
πῶς τάρ τοι δώσουσι γέρας μεγάθυμοι Ἀχαιοί;
οὐδέ τί που ἴδμεν ξυνήϊα κείμενα πολλά·
ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν πολίων ἐξεπράθομεν, τὰ δέδασται,
λαοὺς δ' οὐκ ἐπέοικε παλίλλογα ταῦτ' ἐπαγείρειν.
ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν τῆνδε θεῶ πρόες· αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὶ
τριπλῆ τετραπλῆ τ' ἀποτείσομεν, αἶ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς
δῶσι πόλιν Τροίην εὐτείχεον ἐξαλαπάξαι. (1.122-29)

Most glorious Atreides, greediest of all men,
how are the great-hearted Achaeans going to give you a prize?
We do not at all know of common stock laid away in abundance anywhere,
but the things that we plundered from the cities have been distributed,
and it is not fitting for the men to gather these things so that they're collected
again.
But let this woman go for the god. We Achaeans
will repay you three and four times over if Zeus ever
gives us the well-walled city of Troy to sack.¹⁵

¹⁴ While the nature of Homeric society and Achilles' and Agamemnon's place within it are necessary conditions for this particular quarrel (i.e., Who is the best of the Achaeans?), Achilles could quarrel with anyone for any number of reasons. The *Odyssey* mentions a quarrel he had with Odysseus (8.75-82), and the *Cypria* says that he quarrels with Agamemnon when he is invited to dinner late (arg. 9).

¹⁵ For translating *πολλά* as "in abundance," see Leaf (1900, ad loc.) and Cunliffe (1924, sub *ξυνήϊος*). In 1.126, I have taken "the men" as the subject of the infinitive instead of the object (Latacz 2009, ad loc.; cf. Lattimore 1951; Hammond 1987; Verity 2011). Line 126 could also be translated "it is not right to collect these things together again

Achilles' provocations begin with the first line of the speech. κύνιστε, "most glorious," is sarcastic. As the cause of the plague, Agamemnon hardly appears "glorious," much less "most glorious," to Achilles right now. Achilles' next words (φιλοκτηανώτατε πάντων, "greediest of all men") are not only provocative but openly hostile and will affect how his audience interprets the rest of the speech.¹⁶

Achilles' φιλοκτηανώτατε says more about Achilles than it does about Agamemnon. Achilles is obviously reacting to Agamemnon's demand for another prize, but the demand, if an isolated behavior, might not be enough on its own to elicit this adjective. As becomes clear later in the quarrel, Achilles is assimilating Agamemnon's present behavior to a preexisting schema that he has formed of Agamemnon's personality. He sees Agamemnon's demand as part of a pattern and as a reflection of his personality. We might say that Achilles' interpretation is an instance of the fundamental attribution error, but this would be misleading.¹⁷ For Achilles' error

from the men." Leaf (1900, ad loc.), Cunliffe (1924, sub ἐπαγείρω), Kirk (1985, ad loc.), Pulleyn (2000, ad loc.), and Murray (1999) think that ἐπαγείρειν ("to collect together") either could or should be interpreted here as taking a double accusative as ἀφαιρείται ("is taking away") does in 1.182. The difference does not matter because Achilles' point is the same: it is not right for the men to have to give back what they have been given.

¹⁶ Muellner thinks that φιλοκτηανώτατε does not mean "most greedy for gain" (1996, 104 n27). "The point of Achilles' epithet," he says, "seems to be that possessions are exceptionally φίλο- 'near and dear' to Agamemnon since he is so reluctant to give them up and so eager for immediate restitution if he must do so." He thinks that because Agamemnon's demand should not be thought of as greedy, we must be misunderstanding this epithet by importing our values. I disagree, although being attached to one's possessions is certainly compatible with greed. It is a matter of Achilles being unfair to Agamemnon rather than the critics mistranslating the word. What Achilles says in this speech and later in the quarrel supports interpreting this epithet as referring to greed. Achilles refuses to pile up wealth for Agamemnon (1.170-71). Instead of going on ambushes, Achilles says, it is much better for Agamemnon to hang back among the wide army of the Achaeans and take the gifts of anyone who opposes him (1.229-30). Then he refers to Agamemnon as δημοβόρος ("people-devouring" [1.231]). Thersites also accuses Agamemnon of greed (2.225-37). Accusing kings of greed was a topos. For instance, Hesiod's kings are δωροφάγοι, "devouring gifts," "greedy of bribes" (*Op.* 221, 264; Collins 1988, 94; cf. Donlan 1982).

¹⁷ The fundamental attribution error is attributing others' behavior to their personality and ignoring or underestimating the contribution of situational factors. When it comes to explaining one's own failures and bad behavior, however, people usually do the opposite and attribute them to external factors (the actor-observer difference) (Aronson, Wilson, and Akert 2005). Cf. Scodel 2008, 133: "Agamemnon and Achilles both show the

is not that he attributes Agamemnon's behavior to his personality but that he draws the wrong conclusion about Agamemnon's personality, namely, that Agamemnon is greedy. To be sure, the situation is affecting Agamemnon's behavior, and this variable seems to be missing from Achilles' interpretation, but it is unlikely that everyone in Agamemnon's position would have responded exactly as he did, and even if all people did respond the same way, their response would still reflect their personality.

In interpreting Achilles' φιλοκτεανώτατε, we must not ourselves neglect situational factors. There is less danger of this with Achilles than with Agamemnon because we have better comparanda for Achilles.¹⁸ The other Greeks can serve as our control group. Their position vis-à-vis Agamemnon is similar, albeit not identical, to Achilles' (the proposed redistribution of spoils would diminish their share or prize as well as Achilles'), so we can compare their reaction to Agamemnon with Achilles'. Even if the others are irritated with Agamemnon or think that he is being greedy, Achilles is the only one who says anything to Agamemnon, the only one who opposes his demand, and the only one who insults him. The other Greeks oppose and rebuke Agamemnon elsewhere, so fear of him cannot explain their silence here.¹⁹ Likewise, while Achilles is competing with Agamemnon for the title "best of the Achaeans," Odysseus, who will also have a claim to this title, never comes into conflict with Agamemnon.²⁰ Moreover, since all

universal human tendency to judge their own behavior situationally, while regarding the (bad) behavior of others as revelatory of character."

¹⁸ Achilles' and Menelaus's behavior in book 23 does serve as a foil to Agamemnon's in book 1 (see below).

¹⁹ Instances of others rebuking Agamemnon include Thersites in book 2, Diomedes and Nestor in book 9, and Odysseus in book 14 (2.211-42; 9.32-49, 106-11; 14.82-105; cf. 19.85-86). Some of these examples (2.211-42; 9.32-49) occur in the assembly and not only in the council.

²⁰ See Nagy 1999.

of the Greeks are competing for honor and giving Agamemnon another prize would cost them honor, they might all object to Agamemnon's demand, but they do not. That Achilles is the best warrior certainly affects his behavior, but it does not on its own fully explain his reply. For these reasons, uttering φιλοκτεανώτατε reveals something about Achilles' personality and is not simply what anyone would do in this situation.

There are other reasons why a person's behavior cannot be attributed solely to the situation. People often select the situation in which they find themselves.²¹ People change the situation with their "mere presence."²² For instance, the gender assigned to infants affects how they are treated from the moment that they are born.²³ People change the situation with their behavior.²⁴ Finally, people can subjectively change the situation by changing their mental representation of it.²⁵ This last possibility raises a more basic reason why the situation and the person cannot be isolated: it is not the situation on its own but rather people's construal of the situation that affects their behavior.²⁶ Personal and situational factors interact to cause behavior

²¹ Funder 2008, 575, citing Buss 1979, D. M. Buss 1987; Kihlstrom 2013, 798.

²² Kihlstrom 2013, 798; Funder 2008, 575.

²³ Kihlstrom 2013, 798, citing Seavey, Katz, & Zalk 1975 and Sidorowicz and Lunney 1980.

²⁴ Kihlstrom 2013, 799; Funder 2008, 575; Buss 1979, D. M. Buss 1987.

²⁵ Kihlstrom 2013, 801.

²⁶ Kihlstrom 2013, 801. This does not mean that a person's construal is not in some sense based on or constrained by the situation itself or reality, which we usually assume exists and whose features we often agree on. It is because there is so much agreement that there is an "out there" and that it is a certain way that psychologists could forget that construal mediates the influence of the situation. When someone's interpretation of a situation seems abnormal, we remember that reality as known by the person is the result of his or her unconscious organizing activity, his or her "structures of subjectivity" (Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987; Stolorow and Atwood 1992).

instead of causing it independently. They are multiplicative rather than additive.²⁷ In short, contemporary research sees the person, situation, and behavior as reciprocally determined.²⁸

To return to Achilles' φιλοκτεανώτατε, for the reasons we have seen, this epithet would tell us something about Achilles' personality even if other Greeks also thought that Agamemnon were being greedy. But we might ask whether this epithet tells us anything interesting or significant about him. I think that it would for a number of reasons. As we will see, this epithet is an instance of Achilles' moralizing, something that he does repeatedly and in different situations. If other Greeks agreed that Agamemnon's demand is a sign of greed, this would tell us that Achilles' interpretation of the situation is not highly eccentric, and it is indeed easy to imagine some of them sharing Achilles' assessment of Agamemnon.²⁹ If Achilles' interpretation is not highly eccentric, what does it teach us about his personality? We will discuss the meaning of Achilles' interpretation presently. Now, however, I would emphasize that Achilles acts on his interpretation, whereas no one else does.³⁰ This willingness to act itself teaches us something important about Achilles' personality: he takes things to extremes and is the most intense of the *Iliad's* characters, with the possible exception of Hera, who resembles him in her vehemence and

²⁷ That is, it is not as though on a given occasion the cause of the behavior is 40 percent situational and 60 percent personal, with two adding up to 100 percent.

²⁸ Person↔Behavior, Person↔Environment, Environment↔Behavior, with the arrow ↔ representing bidirectional influence (Kihlstrom 2013, 797).

²⁹ Though not talking about Agamemnon's demand per se, Thersites, that curious double of Achilles, implies that Agamemnon is greedy (2.225-38). On Thersites as a double of Achilles, see Buchan 2012. Donlan says that chiefs in such unstable political systems must maintain his superiority by claiming his chiefly due while still appearing generous, "for the chief who is perceived as greedy risks losing his followership" (1982, 163).

³⁰ Thersites will in book 2, though (2.225-38). Since Thersites is a double of Achilles, it is interesting that Reik in his important study on masochism uses Thersites as an example of the "social masochist," Reik's version of Freud's "moral masochist" (Reik 1941).

penchant for self-defeating confrontation.³¹ Agamemnon seems to be referring to this extremism when he calls Achilles πάντων ἐκπαγλότατ' ἀνδρῶν, “most excessive of all men” (1.146).³² By acting on his interpretation, Achilles is also willing to punish and humiliate Agamemnon. “Nothing in Achilles’ speech,” Scodel writes, “recognizes Agamemnon’s face needs or tries to address them.”³³

Even though the situation obviously influences Achilles’ φιλοκτεανώτατε and others might share Achilles’ opinion of Agamemnon, this epithet expresses Achilles’ personality in that he is partly responsible for Agamemnon’s demand. Achilles has selected the situation: he has called, attended, and chaired the assembly leading to Agamemnon’s loss of Chryseis. Achilles “evokes” Agamemnon’s response with his mere presence, which makes Agamemnon defensive, and with his earlier provocations (e.g., questioning whether Agamemnon is the best of the Achaeans), which can only have made Agamemnon feel more threatened.³⁴ These provocations are based in part on Achilles’ beliefs about himself and Agamemnon: Achilles is really the best of the Achaeans and deserves to be recognized as such and compensated accordingly;

³¹ Cf. Silk 2004, 78-80.

³² On ἐκπαγλος, Kirk thinks that it ranges in meaning “from ‘amazing’ to ‘vehement’ to ‘excessive’” and that “it does not simply mean ‘terrible’ or ‘violent’ as LSJ assert” (Kirk 1985, ad 1.145-46). “Violent,” “vehement,” and “excessive” would all be appropriate here. Chantraine says, “qui frappe de stupeur, terrible,” and gives the etymology, “De *ἐκ-πλαγ-λος avec perte par dissimilation du premier λ. Radical de ἐκ-πλήσσω, ἐκ-πλαγήναι” (1968-80, s.v.). *DGE*: “que inspira miedo, terrible.” Latacz 2009, ad loc.: *erschrecklichster*. He notes that Agamemnon’s superlative is an ironic answer to Achilles’ φιλοκτεανώτατε.

³³ Scodel 2008, 132. Muellner 1996, 104: “Achilles’ response only exacerbates Agamemnon’s status problem and pushes the discourse between them over the brink into unmitigated blame, though not until the very end of Agamemnon’s speech.”

³⁴ Agamemnon is much less defensive when Achilles is absent. In books 2 and 9, for example, Agamemnon admits his mistake in taking Briseis (2.375-78; 9.115-21). In the example from book 2, he still blames Zeus but is less defensive than in book 19. In books 9 and 14, he openly despairs, and in book 9 he even does so in the assembly (9.13-28; 14.65-81). Agamemnon’s defensiveness in book 1 we have seen and will continue to see. His apology in book 19 resembles his reply to Calchas in book 1, so that like his reply to Calchas, it is as much an apology in the ancient sense (defense speech) as in the modern.

Agamemnon is inept, is not the best of the Achaeans, and does not deserve larger prizes, and the fact that he gets larger, undeserved prizes means that he is greedy (cf. 1.163-71, 225-44, 340-43, 410-12; 9.315-33). These beliefs generate Achilles' resentment.³⁵ Agamemnon's claim to the title "best of the Achaeans" is based on his wealth and power. His wealth is both a source and a sign of his power and superiority.³⁶ When Achilles' provocations, which are based in part on these beliefs, and the loss of Chryseis, which Achilles has helped bring about, make Agamemnon feel even more threatened, he reasserts his power and superiority by demanding another prize. The prize, a form of wealth, is therefore a source and a sign of his power and superiority.³⁷ His projective identification operates through the forced redistribution of prizes (i.e., wealth). Feeling threatened, Agamemnon seeks relief in wealth (i.e., prizes). But Achilles has driven him to seek this relief. Achilles' beliefs have thus become self-fulfilling prophecies and have evoked the situation that elicits his φιλοκτεανώτατε. Since Achilles' φιλοκτεανώτατε depends on his beliefs about Agamemnon, he is now inducing Agamemnon to behave even more like the greedy person that he already believes him to be.

³⁵ Cf. Scodel 2008, 132-33: "Both Achilles and Agamemnon impute bad motives to each other. This suggests that there has already been tension between them in the past, and that the resulting cognitive bias makes them assume the worst of each other now."

³⁶ Donlan's discussion of the political system in the *Odyssey* applies to the *Iliad* as well: "the chief's ability to command the loyalty of other tribal units depends ultimately on his wealth—his continuing source-fund of prestige and power. Political authority, prestige, and wealth form an inextricable web in tribal 'power structures,' as we learn from Telemachus' succinct (and youthfully naive) statement in *Odyssey* 1.392: 'For it is no bad thing to be chief (*basileuemen*); quickly his house (*dō*) becomes rich (*aphneios*), and he himself more honored' (*timēesteros*). But, as Telemachus knew full well, without wealth and prestige one did not become *basileus* in the first place. . . . Inability to control one's wealth means inability to act as redistributor, which is the economic organization of political power in chiefdoms" (Donlan 1982, 153).

³⁷ Achilles implicitly equates prizes with wealth in 1.163-71 even though, as we will see, he sometimes distinguishes them or detaches honor from wealth (1.122; 9.315-416; see chapter 4).

Interpreting Agamemnon's demand as a token of greed is uncharitable on Achilles' part. Agamemnon does not desire wealth per se but rather what that wealth symbolizes, namely, honor and status. What else the prize symbolizes (e.g., a substitute for Iphigenia) and what his demand is designed to accomplish (e.g., projective identification) we have already discussed. The characterological acquisitiveness (as opposed to the particular demand) imputed to him is likewise surely not a desire for wealth for its own sake.³⁸ That is, not for Agamemnon, and perhaps not for anyone, is wealth a final good. It has some other meaning or function for the person. Achilles either knows this and ignores it or would know it if he cared about his effects on others.

This uncharitable interpretation shows a lack of empathy. Achilles knows that Agamemnon feels threatened and humiliated and is trying to save face, but lacking empathy, he does not feel what Agamemnon is feeling or view the situation from Agamemnon's perspective and has no interest in doing so.³⁹ Consequently, Achilles sees only what Agamemnon does wrong. Achilles lives in a world of black and whites. Without feeling or caring about Agamemnon's pain, Achilles cannot see the grays of the situation. Relational psychoanalysis can take a charitable view of projective identification, seeing it as a way, and perhaps the only way known to the person, of communicating certain affects or relational roles. Thus even if the projective identification seems hostile, understanding its communicative function may make one more tolerant of it. Even without this interpretation of projective identification, if the characters understand that Agamemnon is behaving this way because the situation has made him unusually

³⁸ I agree with Scodel that among other things the demand is an attempt to save face (2008, 132; Muellner 1996, 103-04).

³⁹ This is not to say that Achilles is incapable of empathy, only that it is often wanting or requires special circumstances to be elicited.

uncomfortable, they may be more tolerant. This is in fact what happens with them. They tolerate Agamemnon's demand as the product of exceptional discomfort.⁴⁰ Failing to empathize, Achilles interprets Agamemnon's demand through his preexisting negative schemas and misrepresents it as a sign of greed. This is one reason why Achilles rejects Agamemnon's projective identification.

Achilles' lack of empathy here enables his moralizing, and this moralizing, which we see in his φιλοκτεανώτατε, has a number of functions. By calling Agamemnon "greediest of all," Achilles casts Agamemnon's demand as a desire for wealth rather than for honor and thus suggests that for Agamemnon wealth is simply wealth rather than honor.⁴¹ Therefore, even though Agamemnon has more wealth than Achilles does, he does not on that account have more honor. Furthermore, if Agamemnon has amassed his wealth through greedy, suspect practices or for the wrong reasons, this wealth may be sullied. Moralizing allows Achilles to condemn Agamemnon and devalue his wealth while elevating himself by implying his moral superiority. Achilles' φιλοκτεανώτατε shows that he assumes that others, Agamemnon, in particular, have baser motives than he does.

Achilles' φιλοκτεανώτατε helps him define his and Agamemnon's positions in a dispute that will become the quarrel.⁴² Even before the quarrel has erupted in full force, Achilles is making it a dispute about justice or fairness.⁴³ If Agamemnon's demand is an act of greed, his

⁴⁰ Scodel points out that the characters often try to preserve one another's face (2008, 15).

⁴¹ Donlan 1971, 111; Scodel 2008, 132.

⁴² I treat the quarrel proper as beginning with Agamemnon's next speech 1.131-47. But it takes two to quarrel, so Achilles' reply (1.149-71) is required to actualize the rupture. It is nevertheless possible for either of them to stop the quarrel at any point by making amends or letting go of what the other has done, in short, by refusing to quarrel.

⁴³ That the characters themselves see the quarrel in terms of justice, fairness, or some other moral principle, if not already obvious, should be clear from Odysseus's injunction to Agamemnon in book 19: "Son of Atreus, you will be

subsequent actions to enforce this demand will also be acts of greed. It is almost as if Achilles has planned the quarrel, and in a way, he has. Achilles and Agamemnon have already scripted the roles in which they will cast each other. Achilles casts himself as the upholder of right and Agamemnon as its transgressor, whereas Agamemnon casts himself as the beleaguered elder and Achilles as the upstart plotting to deprive him and usurp his position.⁴⁴

Over the next four lines (1.123-26), Achilles opposes Agamemnon's demand on practical and then on moral grounds. Achilles' impatient question and patronizing answer make Agamemnon look like a fool for making such an impractical demand, "how are the great-hearted Achaeans going to give you a prize? / We do not at all know of common stock laid away in abundance anywhere, / but the things that we plundered from the cities have been distributed" (1.123-25). In the next line, Achilles opposes Agamemnon's demand on moral grounds: λαοὺς δ' οὐκ ἐπέουκε παλίλλογα ταῦτ' ἐπαγείρειν, "it is not fitting for the men to gather these things so that they're collected again" (1.126). This opposition not only threatens Agamemnon's authority and negative face but also threatens to prevent him from recouping the honor that he has lost by causing the plague and losing Chryseis. Since Achilles expects Agamemnon to know that there are no more spoils awaiting distribution and that it is not right to redistribute what has been given out, he is implicitly criticizing Agamemnon's demand for immediate compensation as improper or immoral. Feeling compelled to enforce his moral sensibility, Achilles is moralizing again.

more just [δικαιότερος] also toward others hereafter, / for it is not at all reprehensible for a king / to make amends to a man when he [i.e., the king] is the first to become angry" (19.181-83). Agamemnon agrees and presumably means what he says (19.185-86). Likewise, in book 1, Athena refers to Agamemnon's behavior as "hubris," an outrage intended to dishonor and humiliate someone (1.214; Aristotle *Rhet.* 1378b10-30; Fisher 1992, 1).

⁴⁴ See Agamemnon's complaint about Achilles wanting to rule all and give orders to all (1.287-89).

The way in which this last line (126) echoes Agamemnon’s speech makes Achilles’ opposition more confrontational. He foregrounds his contradiction of Agamemnon by answering Agamemnon’s οὐδὲ ἔοικεν (“it is not fitting”) with his own οὐκ ἐπέουκε (“it is not fitting”) (1.119, 126.). The ἐπ- of Achilles’ ἐπέουκε almost seems to be one-upping Agamemnon’s ἔοικε.⁴⁵ In the same line, Achilles also uses ἐπαγείρειν (“to gather”), perhaps a slight echo of Agamemnon’s ἀγέραστος (“without a prize”), and παλίλλογα (“collected again”), which recalls Agamemnon’s πάλιν (“back”) (1.126, 119, 116). Thus Achilles emphasizes the impropriety of taking *back* what has been given.

In the last three lines of the speech, Achilles combines a concession with further provocations. He tells Agamemnon to return Chryseis: “But now let this woman go for the god, and we Achaeans / will repay you three and four times over if Zeus / ever gives us the well-walled city of Troy to sack” (1.127-29). (1.127).⁴⁶ Agamemnon has already agreed to return Chryseis, so Achilles’ order is unnecessary. While giving an order is threatening enough, the issue here is the timing and contingent nature of Agamemnon’s replacement prize.⁴⁷ Achilles’ “now” (νῦν) answers Agamemnon’s “at once” (αὐτίχ’), but Achilles reverses the order of events: Agamemnon must return Chryseis now and wait for his replacement prize. Achilles thus publicly countermands Agamemnon’s demand for immediate compensation. Although Achilles is trying to be reasonable by offering Agamemnon a replacement in the future, having little patience for Agamemnon’s face-saving maneuvers, he still comes across as provocative.

⁴⁵ As a preverb, *epi-* can denote “after” or “in addition” or intensify the verb (LSJ). Taplin (1992, 62n 27) notes the echo, as does Latacz, an example of the “Catchword-Technik” (2009, ad 1.126).

⁴⁶ Achilles’ “let this woman go for the god” would also have worked if the woman in question were Iphigenia.

⁴⁷ Muellner notes that Agamemnon objects to Achilles “bidding” him to return Chryseis (1996, 105).

Achilles' command approaches a condition ("If you let the woman go, we will repay you three and four times over if Zeus ever lets us sack Troy"). Apparently conceding Agamemnon's right to another prize, Achilles seems to be trying to act tactfully by compromising.⁴⁸ Since Achilles' command corresponds to the protasis of the condition, the imperative may not be impolite in itself, yet Achilles is still telling Agamemnon what to do.⁴⁹ He is also requiring Agamemnon to return Chryseis immediately but to go without a prize until Troy is sacked, if it ever is. Agamemnon is unlikely to listen to Achilles because he would be forced to abandon his projective identification.

Why Achilles opposes Agamemnon still remains unclear. Does he do so simply because Agamemnon is demanding another prize after losing his through his own folly (referred to hereafter as "the demand itself") or because Agamemnon's demand requires taking back what has been given to others (referred to hereafter as "the demand's requirements")? Or does Achilles object for both reasons or for other reasons? If the demand itself is the reason, then the infeasibility and unfairness imputed to it by Achilles may be pretexts for opposing it.

Our interpretation of Achilles' motives for objecting will depend on whether Agamemnon's claim that it is not fitting for him to be without a prize is legitimate within his society. Scholars have not shown much interest in this point. This is surprising, because Agamemnon's demand leads directly to the quarrel.⁵⁰ For Kirk and Latacz, Achilles' speech

⁴⁸ Wilson calls Achilles' offer of repayment later "an overtly conciliatory gesture" (2002, 56). It is, but there are problems with it, as we will see. She thinks that the problem for Agamemnon is that if he accepts Achilles' offer, he will forfeit the role of the distributor and come to depend on Achilles for "prizes and honors," with the result that their roles will be reversed, with the fluid system eclipsing the fixed (2002, 57).

⁴⁹ This is not lost on Agamemnon. In his reply, he uses *κέλευαι* ("order, bid, urge") and later in the quarrel objects to Achilles' giving orders (1.134, 289).

⁵⁰ Taplin even calls it the "beginning of trouble" (1990, 81).

shows that Agamemnon is entitled to another prize but is not entitled to have the distributed spoils re-collected.⁵¹ For Taplin, Agamemnon's claim is dubious: "The magnanimous man would resign himself to the unpredictability of divine interests. Why accept his claim that 'that would not be right'?"⁵² My position combines these two views. Agamemnon is technically entitled to another prize, at least if this does not require taking away others' prizes, but such heavy-handed assertions of superior status breed resentment and incur accusations of greed and are therefore to be avoided.⁵³ Hence, the "magnanimous man," or rather the prudent one, would not insist on another prize.

Wilson thinks that from the perspective of the fixed system based on political position Agamemnon is entitled to another prize even if it requires taking back others' prizes, but from the perspective of the fluid system based on *tīmē* he is not entitled to take others' prizes.⁵⁴ It could be that these competing perspectives do not allow us to decide what Agamemnon is entitled to: "A plurality of things is deemed fitting or not fitting in heroic society and they do not comprise a coherent system. Both of the participants in the quarrel presume the beliefs they mobilize are held in common by the Achaians."⁵⁵ Wilson herself believes that "the control of the fixed system over the fluid system" is "eclipsed" in the funeral games of book 23.⁵⁶ We will

⁵¹ Kirk 1985, ad 1.106-20; Latacz 2009, ad 1.118-29. Others seem to adopt this position implicitly (Donlan 1971, 111; 1982, 161; van Wees 1992; Scodel 2008, 131-32).

⁵² Taplin 1990, 81. Cf. Pulleyn 2000, ad 1.119.

⁵³ See Donlan 1982 for the balancing act that the "paramount chief" must perform in societies similar to that in the Homeric poems.

⁵⁴ Wilson 2002, 54-57; cf. Donlan 1982, 160-63.

⁵⁵ Wilson 2002, 56.

⁵⁶ Wilson 2002, 57.

examine the funeral games presently. I think that the assembly in book 19 offers us an answer. There Odysseus tells Agamemnon to be δικαιότερος (“more just”), and Agamemnon agrees (19.181-86). Presumably Agamemnon means what he says, but even if he does not, he has publicly conceded Odysseus’s point. This implies that Agamemnon is not entitled to another prize if he must take others’ prizes.

The awarding of prizes during the funeral games tends to support this interpretation. In the chariot race, Diomedes finishes first, Antilochus second, Menelaus third, Meriones fourth, and Eumelus fifth. Because Eumelus is the “best” at driving, Achilles wants to give him the prize for second place, as is “fitting” (ἐπιεικής), and the crowd approves (23.536-39). Antilochus objects that Achilles is about to “take away his prize” (ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἄεθλον) and proposes that Achilles instead provide an additional prize for Eumelus (23.544).⁵⁷ Accepting this suggestion, Achilles lets Antilochus keep his prize. Despite Eumelus’s failure, he is still entitled to a prize. Such a failure is analogous to Agamemnon’s loss of his prize in book 1.⁵⁸ Achilles’ treatment of Eumelus, which may seem odd to modern readers, suggests that Agamemnon, too, is entitled to

⁵⁷ ἀφαιρήσεσθαι (“to take away”) is the same verb that Achilles and Agamemnon use to describe their prizes being taken away (1.161, 182). The funeral games are of course an ironic commentary on the quarrel of book 1, for the amicable settlement of disputes in book 23 reminds us that other worlds were possible, worlds in which Achilles and Agamemnon avoid their disastrous quarrel.

⁵⁸ The awarding of prizes for some of the other events is similar. The wrestling match and the duel are declared draws even though Ajax is losing in both of them. In the former, Odysseus and Ajax are supposed to take “equal” (ἴσα) prizes (23.735-37). In the latter, they are also supposed to get “equal” (ἴσα) prizes, but Diomedes is supposed to get the sword in addition (23.822-25). It may be that ἴσα really means “fair” here (van Wees 1992). Finally, in the javelin, Achilles awards Agamemnon first prize without even holding the event (23.890-94). What all of this means is debatable. Achilles is certainly trying to be tactful and magnanimous. In the case of Agamemnon, however, he is also ironically commenting on Agamemnon’s sensitivity and insecurity by treating him with such caution. Wilson thinks that the fact that Achilles has become the distributor of prizes shows that he and the fluid, merit-based system have supplanted Agamemnon and the fixed system (Wilson 2002, 124-25). This symbolic interpretation is satisfying (if we are willing to overlook that this arrangement is temporary). I agree that Agamemnon has been “eclipsed” by Achilles by at least book 19 (Wilson 2002, 57; Taplin 1990). Yet awarding prizes according to who is supposed to be the best at something does not make it abundantly clear that the fixed system has been eclipsed. Likewise, while Menelaus is reluctant to use his status to decide his dispute with Antilochus, he still tells him not to try to cheat his “betters” (ἀμείνονας [23.605]). See below for this dispute.

another prize if he does not have to take others' prizes. As in the quarrel, the issue is the unfairness of taking away what already belongs to someone else.

Within this same event, Menelaus is enraged at Antilochus for cheating. After Antilochus admits his "transgressions" (23.589) and offers Menelaus second prize, Menelaus magnanimously yields and lets Antilochus keep the mare (23.566-611). Menelaus wants to win the dispute fairly and not because of his higher status (23.575-77). Antilochus's recognition of Menelaus's right to the mare is enough. Once Antilochus concedes that, Menelaus takes the prize for third and leaves Antilochus the prize for second. Menelaus is grateful for all that Antilochus and his family have done for him, and he does not want his spirit to seem *ὑπερφίαλος* ("arrogant") or *ἀπηνής* ("harsh," "obstinate" [23.607-11]).⁵⁹ Menelaus, then, is entitled to the prize for second but magnanimously accepts the prize for third instead. All of this contrasts with how Agamemnon behaves in book 1 and speaks to Taplin's point that the magnanimous man would not have demanded another prize.⁶⁰

Menelaus's dispute with Antilochus shows not that the fixed system has been eclipsed by the fluid system but that those with higher status according to the fixed system should set limits to their self-assertion (i.e., self-assertion founded on their status in the fixed system). Paradoxically, the same dispute also suggests the converse, namely, that self-assertion in the fluid system should recognize limits as well: Menelaus is entitled to the second-place prize

⁵⁹ *ἀπηνής* is associated with both Agamemnon and Achilles (1.340, 16.35).

⁶⁰ On the other hand, Menelaus is still getting a prize, he tells Antilochus not to try to deceive his superiors in the future, and he says that another would not have persuaded him quickly (23.605-06). Unlike Achilles in book 1, Antilochus has also shown Menelaus deference. See Scodel for the complexities of this episode (2008, 44-47, 103-06).

because of his performance rather than his status, yet he gives the prize to Antilochus anyway.⁶¹

The episode illustrates how the two systems are to coexist. On the one hand, Menelaus is competing for the prize, is not awarded it because of his status alone, and does not want his status to decide the dispute. On the other, his concern that his status might induce others to decide in his favor or Antilochus to yield clearly shows that his status could decide the dispute. Moreover, as we have mentioned, he tells Antilochus not to try to cheat his “betters” in the future (23.605). That status could decide this dispute hardly suggests that the fixed system is in eclipse.

The continued ascendancy, or at least parity, of the fixed system in this episode indicates that the tension between the fixed and fluid systems remains even at the end of the poem. With the fixed system still strong in this episode, it is far from clear that Achilles’ victory over Agamemnon represents the triumph of the fluid system. While the poem agrees that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans, his victory over Agamemnon seems only to mean that he has greater honor than Agamemnon. Little else has changed. Even though Achilles distributes the prizes in the games, gives Agamemnon orders in books 19 and 23, and promises Priam a temporary truce without consulting Agamemnon, he does not officially supplant Agamemnon as commander in chief, and we do not know how prizes will be distributed in the future.⁶² In book 19, the takeaway for Agamemnon is to be “more just” in the future (i.e., he should not take others’

⁶¹ To be sure, Menelaus does say that another would not have persuaded him quickly, and he is concerned that he will win the dispute because of his status rather than the merit of his claims (23.605-06). Antilochus does yield out of deference and a desire to preserve his friendship with Menelaus. He says that on his own (αὐτὸς) he will give Menelaus the mare, which *he* (Antilochus) *won* (23.591-92). Nevertheless, Menelaus and Antilochus each recognize that there are factors that should limit even claims based on performance (the fluid system).

⁶² According to Wilson, that Achilles is now distributing honors marks his “succession” and the victory of the fluid system (2002, 125). As for future relations between Achilles and Agamemnon, given Achilles’ nobler death, his wish in *Odyssey* 24 that Agamemnon had died honorably at Troy rather than ignominiously at the hands of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra is ironic and perhaps represents a trace of animosity on Achilles’ part (*Od.* 24.30-35). The wish, an ironic expression of goodwill, is not unlike his handling of Agamemnon in *Iliad* 23.

prizes), but no other changes are recommended. Without Achilles supplanting Agamemnon as commander in chief, we cannot say that Achilles has a higher status than Agamemnon does or that the fluid system has eclipsed the fixed, even if the poem's sympathies lie with the fluid. Agamemnon will no doubt exercise his power and command more diplomatically in the future and may even cease from trying to exercise it altogether where Achilles is concerned, but Achilles is hardly the commander of the army or Agamemnon. In the case of Achilles and Agamemnon, the two systems seem equal. Their case does not necessarily generalize, however, as the episode with Menelaus and Antilochus shows. Menelaus could make the fixed system prevail yet decides against it. His dispute with Antilochus offers a clear formulation of the relative strengths of the two systems. Having more power, those of higher status can make the fixed system prevail over the fluid, but they should not, because doing so can be unfair, disastrous, and self-defeating. The quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon makes this obvious. The poem advocates a harmony of the orders, as it were, and this harmony requires each to respect the other's claims. As Donlan has noted, such a system is inherently unstable, yet book 23 shows that it is workable, unless the personalities involved are those of Achilles and Agamemnon. At the poem's end, the two systems, like Achilles and Agamemnon, maintain an uneasy truce.

The funeral games aside, Calchas, Chryses, and Apollo never indicate that Agamemnon is not entitled to another prize. Calchas says only that Agamemnon must return Chryseis "unbought" and "unransomed" (*ἀπριάτην ἀνάποινον* [1.99]). Although we may think that the circumstances and the spirit of Calchas's interpretation preclude Agamemnon from receiving a replacement prize, Calchas does not himself say this. Likewise, Chryses and Apollo are content to punish the Greeks collectively rather than Agamemnon individually. In fulfillment of Chryses'

prayers, Apollo punishes all the Greeks and then stops the plague once Chryseis is returned, even though Agamemnon has Briseis. Chryses and Apollo therefore do not care whether Agamemnon takes a replacement prize.

Taplin points out that once Agamemnon returns Briseis and gives Achilles the promised gifts, he does not receive a replacement prize.⁶³ “If he is justified in feeling that it is improper [to be without a prize],” Taplin writes, “then it is strange that no one does anything to correct this in book 19 when he finally gives up Briseis.”⁶⁴ Not only does no one give Agamemnon another prize, but he does not demand another one either. This is explained, however, by the “potlatch strategy” that Agamemnon has adopted at this point in the poem.⁶⁵

The last two examples come from the *Odyssey*. In the first, to repay themselves for the gifts that they are giving Odysseus, Alcinous suggests that he and the Phaeacian nobles should recover their losses “from among the people” (κατὰ δῆμον) because “it is hard for one man to give freely without reimbursement [προικὸς χάρισσασθαι]” (*Od.* 13.14-15). In the second, once Odysseus has revealed himself and killed Antinous, Eurymachus tells him that the suitors will make amends from among the people (ἀρεσσάμενοι κατὰ δῆμον) and repay Odysseus until he is satisfied (22.55-59). Odysseus refuses this offer. That the Phaeacians likewise want to recover their losses from the *dēmos* suggests that Eurymachus’s proposal is not merely the result of the suitors’ perversity. We are not told what “the people” think of these actions, but they would no doubt be at least as unhappy as we are when we learn that we owe the Internal Revenue Service more money. It is even probable that the *dēmos* would resent the nobles’ latest imposition. The

⁶³ Taplin 1990, 81.

⁶⁴ Taplin 1990, 81.

⁶⁵ Scodel 2008, 142.

propriety of the nobles' actions would probably vary depending on whose perspective, the people's or the nobles', the actions were seen from. Similar though these examples are to Agamemnon's demand, his is more likely to be objectionable because he is demanding the re-collection of spoils from an army that is there fighting on his family's behalf.

What do all of these examples teach us? There are parallels for Agamemnon's demand, but there are also parallels for Achilles' objections. A modern audience would probably think that in the cases of Agamemnon, Eumelus, the Phaeacians, and the suitors, the situation should preclude them from receiving (another) prize or recovering their losses. This is evidently not what the Homeric Greeks thought. Agamemnon's appeal to propriety is theoretically legitimate, but its legitimacy becomes doubtful when receiving another prize requires taking back what has already been distributed. This is Achilles' point, and it is supported by the rest of the poem. Antilochus objects on similar grounds to giving Eumelus the prize for second. He acts as though he already has the prize and it is being taken away from him (*Il.* 23.544). Achilles is therefore not unique in considering behavior such as Agamemnon's problematic or reprehensible. If Agamemnon can claim that it is not fitting for him to lack a prize, Menelaus's conduct shows that it is also fitting to be magnanimous and not to pull rank. Menelaus is content with Antilochus's recognition of his right to the second-place prize. Agamemnon, in contrast, is not content with Achilles' acknowledgement of his right to another prize (after the sack of Troy). It is not only Agamemnon who behaves badly, however. Whereas Antilochus shows Menelaus deference, Achilles challenges Agamemnon. This comparison suggests that when Agamemnon demands another prize, he knows that there are no spoils left to be distributed. He is under greater threat than Menelaus is and so needs to assert his status more boldly. His projective identification works far better if the other Greeks have to give back their prizes or share of the

spoils just as he has to return his prize. And, in fact, he insists on his demand even after Achilles informs him that there are no spoils left.

Achilles objects both to Agamemnon's demand itself and to the demand's requirements. Achilles already resents Agamemnon's higher status and larger prizes, so he is certainly going to resent Agamemnon getting a larger prize for the second time, especially after having lost his original prize through his own folly (*Il.* 1.149-71). Agamemnon's latest assertion of his status and authority only compounds Achilles' resentment. Menelaus's behavior shows that magnanimity and displays of gratitude are not too much to expect of Homeric heroes. Furthermore, having done the army great harm, Agamemnon has shown himself an inept leader, and Achilles is probably exasperated and disgusted with him. For these reasons, Achilles resents Agamemnon's demand itself.

Although Achilles objects to Agamemnon's demand itself, because Agamemnon is still technically entitled to another prize, these reasons for objecting are insufficient on their own. The demand's requirements give Achilles the reasons that he is looking for, but they are not mere pretexts, for they are more objectionable than the demand itself is. It is above all the demand's requirements that Achilles objects to. Agamemnon's projective identification works through them, and Achilles refuses to accept the position that they would put him in. He has tolerated his subordinate status in the past but refuses the indignity that Agamemnon is trying to subject him and the other Greeks to now. They would be humiliated and dishonored by Agamemnon's projective identification. They would be forced to submit to Agamemnon's unfair and irregular demand and to lose honor by having their share of the spoils reduced. That Agamemnon insists on his demand despite Achilles' protests shows his willingness to dominate and humiliate the other Greeks. Already intolerant of shame and inferiority and already feeling misprized, Achilles

will not process Agamemnon's shame, humiliation, and sense of deprivation for him. Achilles' opposition and provocations block Agamemnon's projective identification and prevent him from regaining his equanimity and sense of security.

Achilles' opposition to Agamemnon's projective identification threatens to force Agamemnon to continue in the role of the deprived. Earlier, Agamemnon is uncertain who his deceiver is. On some level, he knows it is Apollo, as his analogy shows (1.182), but in his reply to Calchas, Agamemnon is still implicitly denying Calchas's interpretation (and consequently that Apollo is responsible) and searching for someone to blame. His anger moves him to latch onto and lash out at Calchas. Since Achilles calls the assembly and calls for a seer to explain the plague, Agamemnon may suspect that Achilles and Calchas have conspired to deprive him of his prize.⁶⁶ He also probably knows that Achilles resents his subordinate status, and he certainly knows that Achilles disputes Agamemnon's claim to the title "best of the Achaeans."⁶⁷ Now that Achilles has opposed Agamemnon's demand, however, he has confirmed Agamemnon's suspicions and become the deceiver whom Agamemnon was searching for. Agamemnon is not without a part in Achilles becoming his deceiver. He caused the plague that occasioned this assembly and made the demand to which Achilles is responding. But we have also seen how Achilles has contributed to Agamemnon's suspicions (e.g., 1.88-91). While Achilles has become Agamemnon's deceiver, it has only been with Agamemnon's help.

⁶⁶ Scodel 2008, 129.

⁶⁷ Achilles has already challenged that title in this assembly (1.88-91). Later in the quarrel, Agamemnon complains that Achilles wants to rule and give orders to all (1.287-89).

Part II: “The Man to Whom I Come Will Be Angry.” Agamemnon’s Reply to Achilles

(1.131-147)

Because Agamemnon is insecure around Achilles and cannot tolerate certain feelings (e.g., shame, inferiority), Achilles’ opposition activates Agamemnon’s defenses, which in turn make Achilles a greater threat by aggravating his resentment about his status vis-à-vis Agamemnon. These defenses lead Agamemnon to go too far, so that he puts himself in the wrong, ratchets up the conflict, and gives Achilles the opening for his masochistic protest and narcissistic contest. In this speech, Agamemnon’s projective identification becomes clearer, and his other defenses appear mainly in his manner. At several points in the speech a tension emerges between Agamemnon’s defenses and his recognition of Achilles’ value. Below is Agamemnon’s speech in full:

μη δ’ οὕτως ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν θεοείκελ’ Ἀχιλλεῦ
κλέπτε νόφ, ἐπεὶ οὐ παρελεύσεαι οὐδέ με πείσεις.
ἢ ἐθέλεις ὄφρ’ αὐτὸς ἔχῃς γέρας, αὐτὰρ ἔμ’ αὐτως
ἦσθαι δευόμενον, κέλει δέ με τῆνδ’ ἀποδοῦναι;
ἀλλ’ εἰ μὲν δώσουσι γέρας μεγάθυμοι Ἀχαιοὶ (135)
ἄρσαντες κατὰ θυμὸν ὅπως ἀντάξιον ἔσται·
εἰ δέ κε μὴ δώωσιν ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἔλωμαι
ἢ τεὸν ἢ Αἴαντος ἰὼν γέρας, ἢ Ὀδυσῆος
ἄξω ἐλών· ὃ δέ κεν κεχολώσεται ὄν κεν ἴκωμαι.
ἀλλ’ ἦτοι μὲν ταῦτα μεταφρασόμεσθα καὶ αὖτις, (140)
νῦν δ’ ἄγε νῆα μέλαιναν ἐρύσσομεν εἰς ἄλα δῖαν,
ἐν δ’ ἐρέτας ἐπιτηδὲς ἀγείρομεν, ἐς δ’ ἐκατόμβην
θείομεν, ἂν δ’ αὐτὴν Χρυσηΐδα καλλιπάρηον
βήσομεν· εἷς δέ τις ἀρχὸς ἀνὴρ βουλευφόρος ἔστω,
ἢ Αἴας ἢ Ἴδομενεὺς ἢ δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς (145)
ἢ ἐ σὺ Πηλεΐδη πάντων ἐκπαγλότατ’ ἀνδρῶν,
ὄφρ’ ἦμιν ἐκάεργον ἰλάσσειαι ἱερὰ ρέξας. (1.131-47)

Though you are a good warrior, godlike Achilles, don’t try to cheat me like this with your mind, since you won’t get by me or persuade me.

Do you really want me, as long as you have a prize yourself, to sit just as I am lacking one, and do you order me to give this woman back?

But if the great-hearted Achaeans give me a prize

fitting it to my spirit in such a way that it will be equivalent . . .
but if they don't give one, I will go and take for myself
either your prize or Ajax's, or Odysseus's
I will take and lead away. And the man to whom I come will be angry.
But these things we will consider again later.
But now, come, let us launch a black ship on the divine sea
and assemble rowers on board for the purpose, and let us set
a hecatomb on board and fair-cheeked Chryseis herself let us
put on board, and let someone who is a counselor be leader,
Ajax or Idomeneus or noble Odysseus
or you, son of Peleus, most excessive of all men,
so that you may make sacrifice and appease the far-worker for us.

Despite Achilles' opposition to his projective identification, Agamemnon insists on being rid of his shame and sense of deprivation and impotence.⁶⁸ When in lines 133-34 he complains that Achilles wants him to sit there lacking a prize and is ordering him to give back Chryseis, he is objecting to being in the passive role of the deprived. Achilles' order to return Chryseis obstructs Agamemnon's projective identification in two ways. First, Achilles has given Agamemnon an order. In his last speech, Agamemnon was trying to assert his power and status by demanding another prize, but he cannot do that while taking orders from Achilles. Second, Achilles is denying Agamemnon another prize now, even though Agamemnon's ability to dump his shame and humiliation depends on undoing his deprivation by depriving the other Greeks. In both cases, Achilles is forcing Agamemnon into the passive role (i.e., of the one taking orders and of the one being deprived) into which Agamemnon is trying to force the other Greeks. It is precisely to these two obstructions to his projective identification that Agamemnon objects in 133-34.

⁶⁸ Although Agamemnon makes a distinction between giving and taking, it is specious here. For example, as he makes clear, if he is not given another prize, he will take one, whether Achilles', Ajax's, or Odysseus's. Since this giving would be coerced, it is effectively taking. Therefore, even if the Greeks give him another prize, he will still be depriving them. I use "deprive" to describe what is happening between two parties more generally, even though the text might have "give" as its verb.

That Agamemnon will take Achilles' prize if the Greeks do not give him a replacement shows that Agamemnon holds Achilles responsible for the loss of Chryseis and therefore that he sees Achilles as his depriver even though he later acknowledges that Apollo is taking away his prize (1.137-38, 182).⁶⁹ If Achilles' interference will not allow Agamemnon to carry out his projective identification subtly and symbolically, he will carry it out literally and physically: "I will go and take for myself / either your prize or Ajax's . . ." (1.137-38). Now having someone to blame, Agamemnon makes the meaning and purpose of his projective identification explicit.

Agamemnon's projective identification becomes clearer still from what he says next: ὁ δέ κεν κεχολώσεται ὃν κεν ἴκωμαι, "the man to whom I come will be angry" (1.139). As Scodel notes, Agamemnon is threatening to pass his anger on to Achilles, Ajax, or Odysseus.⁷⁰ Although Agamemnon predicts this response for the man whose prize he takes, his projective identification is not limited to this man, nor does it require him to take this man's prize. It is directed at the Greeks as a whole and can have its effect through Agamemnon's demand alone, even before they give Agamemnon a replacement, just as Agamemnon can feel humiliated and deprived before he has returned Chryseis. That is, the Greeks' having to give Agamemnon another prize accomplishes something similar to his taking a prize from one man, granted that the experience would be more aversive for the man who is singled out than for members of the collective.

We would miss the point of the projective identification if we thought that it is primarily anger that Agamemnon is trying to deposit into others. It is not anger but rather the cause of the

⁶⁹ That Achilles tells Agamemnon to give back Chryseis (in Agamemnon's words, κέλευι δέ με τῆνδ' ἀποδοῦναι; [1.134]) and then Agamemnon threatens to retaliate by taking Achilles' prize shows that Agamemnon connects giving back with deprivation. Agamemnon does include Ajax and Odysseus among those whose prize he might take away (1.137-39). Achilles is nevertheless the real target of Agamemnon's threat, and we will consider below why Agamemnon includes the others.

⁷⁰ Scodel 2008, 134.

anger that Agamemnon is trying to pass on. Why would the man whose prize Agamemnon takes be angry? He would think that Agamemnon has treated him outrageously and with hubris and has dishonored and humiliated him. He would feel deprived, helpless, unappreciated, like a nobody, like a worthless vagabond (see chapter 1, part 3 above for what Achilles says). He would feel singled out, abandoned, and persecuted. Thus Achilles complains, “And to the chieftains and kings he gave other prizes. / Their prizes are stored away secure, but from me alone of the Achaeans / he took away a prize” (9.334-36). In keeping with projective identification, this is just what Agamemnon is feeling. Hence, Agamemnon complains that he “alone” would be ἀγέραστος, “prizeless” (1.119), and his complaint in the present speech is similar (1.133-34). To appreciate the significance of Agamemnon’s prediction of angering the man whom he deprives, we must put the prediction in context and consider why this man would be angry.

In this speech and in his reply to Calchas some of Agamemnon’s organizing principles emerge: his suspiciousness, the relational roles that he tries to force others into, and the importance of being given another prize and of not being singled out. Agamemnon opens the speech by telling Achilles not to try to cheat him:

μη δ’ οὕτως ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν θεοείκελ’ Ἀχιλλεῦ
κλέπτε νόῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐ παρελεύσεαι οὐδέ με πείσεις.
ἢ ἐθέλεις ὄφρ’ αὐτὸς ἔχῃς γέρας, αὐτὰρ ἔμ’ αὐτως
ἦσθαι δευόμενον, κέλεαι δέ με τῆνδ’ ἀποδοῦναι; (1.131-34)

Though you are a good warrior, godlike Achilles, don’t try to cheat me like this with your mind, since you won’t get by me or persuade me.

Do you want me, as long as you have a prize yourself, to sit just as I am lacking one, and do you order me to give this woman back?

Agamemnon imputes malice to Achilles by assuming that Achilles is trying to cheat him and that Achilles *wants* him to lack a prize while he keeps his own.⁷¹ That is, Achilles wants Agamemnon to suffer the humiliation of being without a prize. Achilles is a persecutory bad object that must be exposed and combated. Agamemnon is only half wrong. Achilles would probably like to see Agamemnon humiliated at this point and certainly does later. Yet Achilles is not trying to cheat him. He uses frontal assaults and eschews deception as beneath him. He is himself trying to prevent being “cheated” by Agamemnon (9.344). Furthermore, it is to Agamemnon’s attempted projective identification and omnipotent control that Achilles is responding, both of which began before Achilles objected in his last speech.⁷² The reply to Calchas shows that Agamemnon was suspicious before Achilles’ objections. Achilles, to be sure, had been provocative before his last speech, but Achilles did not cause the plague. Since at least some of Agamemnon’s suspiciousness is unwarranted, it reflects his idiosyncratic way of organizing experience. Believing that he is being persecuted, he must control these persecutory objects through his projective identification. His attempt to control these objects will make them hostile or more hostile and thus confirm his existing schemas (i.e., his internal objects). He will then reintroject (i.e., reinternalize) these more hostile objects.

While Agamemnon has reasons for being suspicious of Achilles, this response makes the situation worse. Although Achilles has multiple motives for opposing Agamemnon’s demand, his proposal is not entirely unreasonable. Treating Achilles’ suggestion as a plot, Agamemnon

⁷¹ Cf. Scodel 2008, 132-33.

⁷² Otto Kernberg tells us that the defense of omnipotent control is often found with projective identification and that they can each serve to control imagined persecutory objects (Kernberg 1995).

imputes malice to him here just as he does to Calchas earlier.⁷³ In both cases the imputation functions as an ad hominem argument discrediting an unpalatable suggestion. Agamemnon thus dismisses Achilles' proposal and objections, which do not even warrant consideration. But this reply also dismisses and invalidates Achilles himself. His unmasking of Achilles' plot assigns Achilles to a hostile role and guarantees that Achilles will be hostile or more hostile. This part of Agamemnon's reply shuts down communication (e.g., οὐδέ με πείσεις, "you will not persuade me") and collaboration even though they are holding an assembly. Agamemnon leaves Achilles no avenues for controlled communication and inadvertently encourages him to resort to abuse and threats of his own.

In addition to projective identification, Agamemnon's defenses in this speech include grandiosity, entitlement, certain emotions, and compartmentalization. The most interesting thing about them is that they fail. They fail because they are incomplete and aggravate Achilles' resentment and frustration. They are incomplete in that Agamemnon employs a defense and then retreats.

By "compartmentalization" I am referring to the way that Agamemnon turns to certain aspects of his self-concept when he feels threatened by Achilles.⁷⁴ Since Achilles is the best warrior, Agamemnon must define himself as something other than a warrior in order to maintain his self-esteem and disavow his narcissistic envy. He does this a few times during the quarrel. In his next speech, for example, Agamemnon dismisses Achilles as inferior because he rules the Myrmidons (1.178-81). In the present speech, Agamemnon allows that Achilles is a good soldier

⁷³ Scodel 2008, 132-33.

⁷⁴ For this use of "compartmentalization," see Larsen and Buss 2009.

(ἀγαθός) but suggests that he (Agamemnon) is the cleverer one or the one better in council: μὴ δ' οὕτως ἀγαθός περ ἔων θεοεΐκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ / κλέπτε νόω, ἐπεὶ οὐ παρελεύσεαι οὐδέ με πείσεις (“Though you are a good warrior, godlike Achilles, don’t / try to cheat me like this with your mind, since you won’t get by me or persuade me” [1.131-32]). There is something patronizing in Agamemnon’s concessive participial phrase and three verbs saying that Achilles will not outwit him.

Agamemnon’s patronizing is related to his grandiosity and entitlement. The grandiosity and entitlement appear in the feigned incredulity of his rhetorical question (1.133-34), in the presumption and arrogance of his threat to take someone’s prize himself, in the bluster of this threat (Agamemnon will take the prize himself, and no one will be able to stop him), in the ἄρσαντες κατὰ θυμὸν (“fitting it to my spirit” 1.136), in the “unctuous note” of his orders in 140-47, in including Achilles in the list of those to run his errand, and in his “so that you may perform the sacrifice and propitiate the far-worker for us” (1.147).⁷⁵ The grandiosity also comes out in Agamemnon’s tone here, which is angry and hostile but even more sarcastic and contemptuous. This tone and the emotions supporting it function as defenses.

Agamemnon’s grandiosity and sense of entitlement are narcissistic defenses activated by Achilles’ opposition, presence, and very existence. Agamemnon is insecure and behaves badly mainly when Achilles is present or otherwise involved. His narcissistic defenses feed Achilles’ resentments and concerns and activate Achilles’ own narcissistic and masochistic defenses. Achilles’ defenses then make Agamemnon feel more threatened so that he strengthens his defenses, thereby provoking Achilles further. In this way the quarrel arises and escalates. In

⁷⁵ Kirk 1985, ad 1.141-47.

protecting him from the anxiety, insecurity, and inadequacy triggered by Achilles' threat, Agamemnon's defenses not only increase the threat so that Agamemnon feels even more anxious, insecure, and inadequate but also lead him to behave in such a way that he ends up proving his inadequacy and inferiority to the whole army. His loss of honor and self-esteem is that much greater, and Achilles is able to prove that he rather than Agamemnon is the best of the Achaeans.

Agamemnon's defenses, like defenses generally, are signs of the threats that they are defending against. A person's unconscious perceives a threat and activates a defense to spare him conscious discomfort or prevent him from acting on unacceptable impulses. So vis-à-vis consciousness defenses typically have an element of avoidance or distortion (and therefore denial).⁷⁶ Although defenses are supposed to operate unconsciously and spare the person the distressing idea or affect, this is not always the case, and it is possible for the person to be conscious of the threatening material while the defenses are still active.⁷⁷ This is true of Agamemnon's grandiosity in this speech. He oscillates between the defense and the recognition of the material defended against, between security and insecurity, because he would prefer not to alienate the valuable yet volatile Achilles. Agamemnon's own interests require him to recognize the threat (i.e., reality) even as his defenses are trying to deny it. The alternation between narcissistic defense and backsliding illustrates this inner conflict at work.

⁷⁶ McWilliams 1994.

⁷⁷ Defenses themselves can be conscious, even though they tend to be unconscious and work better when they remain so. They differ from other types of coping in that they are "*relatively* unconscious and their deployment is *relatively* involuntary" (Vaillant 1993, 17, emphasis added). A corollary of being involuntary is that they are automatic.

The conflict between grandiosity and the recognition of Achilles' value and the threat that he poses appears in Agamemnon's threat to take someone's prize and subsequent backsliding, in this case, the addition of Ajax and Odysseus as other targets of his threat. Agamemnon's threat itself indicates that his narcissistic defenses (namely, his grandiosity and sense of entitlement) are active:

εἰ δέ κε μὴ δώωσιν ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἔλωμαι
ἢ τεὸν ἢ Αἴαντος ἰὼν γέρας, ἢ Ὀδυσῆος
ἄξω ἐλὼν· ὃ δέ κεν κεχολώσεται ὄν κεν ἴκωμαι.
ἀλλ' ἦτοι μὲν ταῦτα μεταφρασόμεσθα καὶ αὖτις (1.137-40)

but if they don't give one, I will go and take for myself
either your prize or Ajax's, or Odysseus's
I will take and lead away. And the man to whom I come will be angry.
But these things we will consider again later.

Agamemnon's sense of his own power (grandiosity, omnipotence) flares up, impelling him to threaten to seize Achilles' prize, but his knowledge of Achilles' value and dangerousness leads him to temper the threat to Achilles by adding Ajax and Odysseus as possible targets, in the hopes that he will not have to carry out the threat at this point.⁷⁸

Agamemnon's oracular prediction ("The man to whom I come will be angry") continues the backsliding in that the man whose prize he will take has become even less specific. Although the man in question would presumably be one of the three mentioned, Agamemnon now retreats from naming names altogether. This prediction itself constitutes another instance of grandiosity followed by backsliding. Agamemnon grandiosely threatens to do something that will cause anger yet does not dare to specify who will be angry.

⁷⁸ So Scodel 2008, 134.

Agamemnon also backslides by announcing that they will consider the matter later. Changing the subject suggests that he is eager to direct attention away from his threat lest he be compelled to follow through on it.⁷⁹ All of this indicates that the threat is either impulsive or insincere. The tempering of the threat thus shows that Agamemnon recognizes a limit to his power even though by making the threat he pretends to know no such limit.

The list of instructions that follows likewise seems intended to distract the listeners from his threat (1.141-45). Agamemnon nevertheless returns to Achilles at the end of the list: or you, son of Peleus, most excessive of all men, / so that you may make sacrifice and appease the far-worker for us. (1.146-47). There are a few ways to interpret the inclusion of Achilles here. It could be an overture to Achilles saying that Agamemnon is not at war with him since he is willing to entrust this important mission to him.⁸⁰ It could be an attempt to put Achilles in his place by forcing him to do Agamemnon's bidding. Or it could be some of both. In the last, Agamemnon would be including Achilles begrudgingly. Enumerating what needs to be done, Agamemnon begins to swell with grandiosity again. The inclusion of Achilles is an overture but an overture that states the conditions on which peace may exist between them, namely, if Achilles serves Agamemnon. Including Achilles allows Agamemnon to communicate that there need not be any rupture between them and at the same time to assert his superiority over Achilles.⁸¹ With the addition of "most excessive of all men," however, Agamemnon's hostility

⁷⁹ Scodel 2008, 134.

⁸⁰ Donlan 1971, 111: Agamemnon "tries to soften the kingly rebuke by postponing discussion until later and by indicating his willingness to honor Achilles by making him the leader of the propitiatory voyage."

⁸¹ Scodel 2008, 134: "Agamemnon probably includes Achilles only because he can thereby remind Achilles and the army who is in command."

leaks out and undermines his peace overture.⁸² Ultimately, Agamemnon's narcissistic defenses lead him to miscalculate the effect that telling Achilles to propitiate Apollo for him is likely to have, so although Agamemnon's inclusion of Achilles is a peace overture, it only contributes to Achilles' mounting resentment. Even if Achilles has been willing to do Agamemnon's bidding in the past, the circumstances and the rest of Agamemnon's speech, particularly his threat, make this last address to Achilles most ill-advised.

Part III: Agamemnon, "Clothed in Shamelessness." Achilles' Reply (1.149-71)

Introduction

This entire speech is provocative and far more provocative than any of Achilles' other speeches so far. At this point, we can dispense with talking about his provocations and instead speak of his manner of relating, which his provocations are indicative of. If we had to describe his manner in a word, it would be "forceful." This is not altogether surprising for a hero of *biē* ("strength," "force," "violence"), but it is interesting that this forcefulness carries over into Achilles' relational manner.⁸³ For practical reasons I divide Achilles' forcefulness into two superordinate categories: moralizing and coercion. Although these categories are convenient,

⁸² For Muellner, Agamemnon is "baiting" Achilles and "turning to the language of insult" (1996, 106). I agree that *ἐκπαλότατ'* is an insult (so, too, Kirk 1985, ad 1.145-46).

⁸³ For *biē* versus *mētis* ("cunning intelligence"), see Detienne and Vernant 1991 and Nagy 1999. Collins sees Achilles' forcefulness and violence as part of his character typology. He is the brash, young warrior who is better at fighting ("deeds") than at speaking or counseling ("words") and who relies on *biē* (1988, 83, 69-103 passim). Agamemnon is Achilles' counterpart in this typology: he is the king, older, an upholder of *themis* ("[customary] law," "custom," "ordinance," "what is right") and user of *mētis*, a good speaker and planner, and the distributor of booty (1988, 83, 69-103 passim). Rejecting Nestor's formulation of the quarrel (1.275-81), Wilson objects to Collins's reading on the grounds that Agamemnon is not a hereditary monarch (Wilson 2002, 195 n6). Despite Wilson's critique, Collins's argument holds, because even though Agamemnon is not Achilles' king, the poets could still draw on this trope, and it seems clear that they are (e.g., Nestor's formulation). Even though Achilles and Agamemnon conform to character types, they, especially Achilles, are more than that.

they are not separate or mutually exclusive since the same statement can fall into multiple categories at once. After discussing Achilles' relational manner, I turn to the organizing principles that explain it. We move from surface to depth. The depths are in the surface if we know how to look. Finally, a word about moralizing. I treat Achilles' moralizing in four ways: as a manner of relating, as a form of coercion that I will call "moral positioning," as a way of organizing experience, and as a way of managing emotions. I use "moralizing" differently depending on which of these categories I am dealing with, but the connections between the usages should be clear. I also use "moralizing" in its popular, non-technical sense. In this I follow McWilliams herself. To illustrate moralizing, she describes how a masochistic patient of hers was content to go on complaining about how she had been wronged by the IRS.⁸⁴ The last two uses of "moralizing" are most closely related to "moralizing" in the technical sense of "moral rationalizing." The first two uses can be thought of as effects or functions of articulating one's moralizations to others.

Moralizing 1: Grievances

Achilles' speech makes one overarching argument: since Agamemnon is treating Achilles badly by threatening to take his prize, he will go home to Phthia. Achilles spends most of the speech explaining why Agamemnon's threat is outrageous. This is the moralizing part of the speech. The conclusion of Achilles' argument, namely, that he will go home to Phthia, seems unexpected. We might have expected him to conclude that Agamemnon should not take his prize because to do so would be wrong. Although Achilles implies this, apparently it is not enough for him, so he threatens to go home to Phthia. Achilles' argument can thus be reformulated: since

⁸⁴ McWilliams 1994, 263.

Agamemnon is treating Achilles' badly by threatening to take his prize, if Agamemnon does not stop this behavior, Achilles will go home.

Achilles spends most of this speech listing his grievances. The first half of the speech (1.149-61) argues that Agamemnon is ungrateful in that he threatens to take Achilles' prize even though Achilles is fighting at Troy as a favor to Agamemnon and Menelaus.⁸⁵ The second half of the speech (1.161-71) argues in effect that it would be unfair for Agamemnon to take Achilles' prize and that the distribution of prizes is already unfair. Agamemnon does not have the right or authority to take Achilles' prize because Achilles earned it and the Achaeans gave it to him (1.162). Moreover, the present system for distributing prizes is unfair in that Achilles does more work than Agamemnon yet receives a smaller prize. Achilles points to his forbearance in tolerating this arrangement until now. That Agamemnon threatens to take the prize that Achilles does have even after he has tolerated this system is more than he can bear. Hence the grievances come flooding forth. The two arguments work together and independently. That is, although the second argument is concerned with fairness, it can be added to the first argument: Agamemnon does not appreciate the restraint that Achilles has shown until now.

Before proceeding to the details of Achilles' grievances, we must emphasize that the listing of grievances is itself an instance of moralizing here and is one of the more provocative things about the speech. Part of what makes the grievances provocative and moralistic is that Achilles uses these grievances to take Agamemnon to task for making his threat. As we have seen, Agamemnon does not intend to carry out his threat, and Achilles even seems to know

⁸⁵ This is a partial truth. Achilles is helping the Atreidai, but that is not his only motive, much less his primary one, for going to Troy (cf. Scodel 2008, 137). Scodel 2008, 135: "From his [i.e., Achilles'] point of view – which is surely legitimate, but not the only one possible – he is present as a favor to the Atreids, having no personal cause to fight the Trojans, so that Agamemnon, far from having the authority to tell him what to do, owes him proper reciprocity."

this.⁸⁶ Achilles, nevertheless, will not let Agamemnon get away with making the threat. Challenging Agamemnon's threat is itself an act of moralizing since it is Achilles' rigid adherence to certain moral principles that motivates him. While honor is undoubtedly one of Achilles' motivations, he could have responded to Agamemnon's threat in any number of ways that did not include moralizing, for example, with counterthreat alone.⁸⁷ But it is characteristic of Achilles to interpret the situation in moral terms and then to foreground the moral dimension in his discourse. He feels compelled to enforce what he thinks is right even if to do so is likely to prove self-defeating. And if in the event moralizing proves self-defeating, the glory of the moral victory is all the greater. Achilles' moralizing is thus also provocative.

Achilles provokes Agamemnon not only by calling him on his threat but by devaluing him. When Achilles complains that Agamemnon gets a greater prize than he does even though he does the greater part of the fighting, he belittles Agamemnon's contribution and value to the army generally (1.163-67). While calling Agamemnon on his threat is inflammatory enough, complaining about the system in such a way as to disparage Agamemnon is a challenge that would be difficult for Agamemnon to ignore.

⁸⁶ There are a few reasons for thinking Achilles knows that Agamemnon is not in earnest. First, in line 161 Achilles says that Agamemnon is threatening to take Achilles' prize, whereas later in the quarrel Achilles says that Agamemnon (and the other Greeks) took away his prize even though this has not happened yet (1.299). If Achilles really thought he was losing his prize at this point, we might expect him to say something similar to what he does in 1.299. Second, Achilles' reaction in this speech is mild compared to his reaction to Agamemnon's next speech, in which he says that he will take Achilles' prize (1.184-85). Achilles' reaction to that speech is to start drawing his sword while he considers killing Agamemnon on the spot (1.188-91). Third, in the present speech Achilles simply says he will go home and says nothing about returning his prize first, nor does he engage in the face saving of 1.295-302, where he says that the whole group, which gave him his prize, is taking it away rather than Agamemnon alone.

⁸⁷ He could have threatened to go home without saying more or could have threatened violence, as he does later (1.300-303).

Not only does Achilles protest Agamemnon's threat and position, but he does so bluntly and publicly.⁸⁸ The bluntness includes calling Agamemnon names and disparaging his importance. The blunt, public nature of Achilles' complaint makes it highly confrontational. This shows how Achilles' forceful and violent manner of relating extends even to his moralizing. This public and blunt airing of grievances is a manifestation of what I call his "rhetoric of honesty," the clearest expression of which comes in his reply to Odysseus in *Iliad* 9: "hateful to me like the gates of Hades / is that man who hides one thing in his mind but says another" (9.312-13, see all of 309-314).⁸⁹ But this rhetoric of honesty is merely a moralization of his violent and confrontational relational manner. Because Achilles is morally right, he is entitled, even required, to go about accomplishing his goals in the most direct way available, for to act otherwise would be a compromise or deception of sorts and therefore beneath him.⁹⁰

Casting the quarrel as a clash between the fixed and fluid ranking systems, Wilson writes:

The social rules of the two systems themselves are thereby brought into conflict or, perhaps more accurately, the contradiction already present in Homeric society is put on display. Such internal contradictions are common in real societies and usually rise to the level of conflict only when they are put on display in intense situations and for political purposes, as they are here.⁹¹

While it is true that societies and value systems have internal contradictions, people are constantly negotiating conflicting demands more or less successfully. That a person makes an

⁸⁸ Scodel thinks that if Achilles had done this in another setting, "Agamemnon might have avoided having to answer the challenge" (2008, 138).

⁸⁹ Even though Achilles is undoubtedly blunt, as I have been arguing, I nevertheless speak of his "rhetoric of honesty" because he draws attention to his candor (even as he conceals that he has orchestrated the Greeks' recent losses by appealing to Zeus).

⁹⁰ Cf. Scodel 2008, 129: "It is characteristic of Achilles that he takes the most direct path to his goal, alleviating the plague, and does not consider how he could achieve this socially desirable goal at the least cost to social cohesion."

⁹¹ Wilson 2002, 55.

issue of a contradiction, which contradiction the person chooses to make an issue of, and how and why the person does so reveal something about personality. Contradictions within a society are interesting and worth studying for their own sake, but we should not focus exclusively on the content of a contradiction, treat the conflict that may result as inevitable, or forget the contributions of personality. It is characteristic of Achilles to make an issue of a contradiction, and we will continue to explain the significance of choosing this contradiction and how and why he makes an issue of it.

That Achilles lists his grievances publicly shows his masochistic exhibitionism. He wants everyone to know how he has been wronged by Agamemnon. We see this in Achilles' argument about Agamemnon's ingratitude but more clearly in the second half of the speech. Achilles there emphasizes how he toils away at war without receiving commensurate remuneration: ᾧ ἔπι πολλὰ μόγησα ("for which I toiled much" [162]), ἐπεὶ κε κάμω πολεμίζων ("when I am tired from fighting" [168]). He suggests that he has endured "furious war" stoically and shown forbearance by not protesting the system until now. If Achilles has endured the war stoically until now, we might think that this is the opposite of exhibitionism, but that is not the case. Masochists exhibit their stoical endurance of suffering. Not complaining and appearing not to draw attention to themselves are part of the show.⁹² This is true of Achilles, who is now trying to cash in on his stoicism and forbearance.

Moralizing 2: Rhetoric

That Achilles lists his grievances at length also contributes to his moralizing manner. This section first shows how Achilles' rhetoric is expansive and then what effects this

⁹² Reik 1941, McWilliams 1994.

expansiveness has. Richard Martin's conclusion that Achilles' rhetoric is characterized by expansiveness ("*auxēsis*, 'magnification'") supports my findings.⁹³ We seem to have come from different starting points to reach similar conclusions. He started by comparing the formulas, many of them "structural," in Achilles' great speech in book 9 (9.308-429) with related formulas in the speeches of other characters. He found, for example, that Achilles splits formulaic expressions and inserts expansions into the middle of them ("*splitting*") and that he retains "some elements of several formulaic lines" while replacing others with "different, fuller expressions" ("*replacement*").⁹⁴ Martin arrived at Achilles' expansiveness by working from the bottom up, as it were, while I arrived at it by working from the top down. I considered what effects Achilles might have on his audience and then sought to understand how he would achieve them. Much of the analysis that follows is devoted to the content of the speech but not to the content for its own sake. I treat the content by category. For example, is a proposition new information or is it common knowledge? What themes (e.g., morality) is the content concerned with? How do these compare with those of Achilles' other speeches? As a result of this approach, which draws heavily on pragmatics, it is as though content becomes form, that is, part of the form of the larger message, which is more than what is said. My analysis differs from Martin's in that I am interested in the "language of Achilles" insofar as it contributes to the effects that he has on

⁹³ Martin 1989, 220. On methods of expansion, see also Lohmann 1970.

⁹⁴ Martin 1989, 208-09. Although Martin treats such expansions as unique to Achilles (e.g., 1989, 220) and Achilles' formulaic expressions in that speech may indeed diverge from the normal use of those formulas, he does not show that the use of other formulas by other characters does not also diverge from the norm. He ran his demonstration in only one direction. Because Achilles is more expansive than other characters, Martin's conclusions may still hold up reasonably well. But I would note that Martin's "splitting" and "replacement," for instance, are similar to the ways in which the poet can modify formulas, granted that the practices that he isolates operate on a larger scale (see Hainsworth 1968). So we are likely to find similar practices in the speeches of other characters even if they are not employed to the degree that they are in those of Achilles.

others, whereas Martin is interested in it for its own sake.⁹⁵ He argues that “the ‘language of Achilles’ is none other than that of the monumental composer” and that “the poetic rhetoric of the narrator, in turn, is that of a heroic performer in the role of an Achilles.”⁹⁶ In contrast, I spend the rest of the chapter showing what effects Achilles and his language have on others, what his relational manner is and how it functions, and what underlying psychology explains all of this.

Achilles’ rhetoric is expansive in its use of doubling and elaboration. By “doubling” I am referring to his use of synonymia (“[a]mplification by synonym”) and bipartite parallelism, in which one member is usually an inessential expansion.⁹⁷ There are two instances of synonymia in this speech: μετατρέπη (“care about”) and ἀλεγίζεις (“have a regard for”) in line 160, and ἄφενος (“riches”) and πλοῦτον (“wealth”) in line 171.

The instances of bipartite parallelism are more numerous. First, the two examples of synonymia are also examples of this parallelism. The other simple examples are ἢ ὁδὸν ἐλθέμεναι ἢ ἀνδράσιν ἴφι μάχεσθαι (“either to go on a journey or to fight men with force” [151]), Μενελάῳ σοί τε (“for Menelaus and you” [159]), ᾧ ἔπι πολλὰ μόγησα, δόσαν δέ μοι υἱεὶς Ἀχαιῶν (“for which I toiled much and which the sons of the Achaeans gave me” [162]), and ὀλίγον τε φίλον τε (“small yet dear” [167]). Lines 154-56 contain two examples, one inside the other:

οὐ γὰρ πώποτ’ ἐμὰς βοῦς ἦλασαν οὐδὲ μὲν ἵππους,
οὐδέ ποτ’ ἐν Φθίῃ ἐριβόλακι βωτιανείρη
καρπὸν ἐδηλήσαντ’ . . .

⁹⁵ The “language of Achilles” has been discussed at least since Adam Parry’s paper of that title (Parry 1956). In response to Parry, see, for example, Reeve 1973, Lynn-George 1988, and Martin 1989. See also the dispute between Friedrich and Redfield (1978, 1981) and Messing (1981).

⁹⁶ Martin 1989, 222.

⁹⁷ Lanham 1991, 150. For the rhetorical terms below I also follow Lanham 1991. I realize that different definitions can be given for some of these ancient rhetorical terms, but since I merely want something to use as a shorthand, I will not discuss competing definitions or try to find the ones with the best ancient authority. For different definitions of some of these terms, see Rowe 1997.

For never yet have they driven off my cattle or horses,
nor have they ever in fertile Phthia, feeder of men,
destroyed my crops. . . .

The two verb phrases constitute one parallelism, and the two direct objects (“cattle” and “horses”) of ἤλασαν (“have driven off”) form the other.⁹⁸ Line 157 provides another complex example: οὔρεά τε σκιόεντα θάλασσά τε ἠχήεσσα, “shadowy mountains and roaring sea.” The noun-adjective phrases have the same word order, placement of τε, and class of adjectives and produce a jingle (e.g., οὔρεά τε, θάλασσά τε) superficially resembling homoiopoton.⁹⁹ The whole line is iconic, the epsilons, alphas, sigmas, and taus all “echoing” (ἠχήεσσα) each other.¹⁰⁰ It is a sonically soothing line that conjures up the peaceful life an ocean away that Achilles has forsaken in coming to Troy.

By “elaboration” I am referring to Achilles’ habit of making a statement and then providing either reasons supporting the statement or details amplifying it. I will refer to these two techniques of elaboration as “aetiologia” (reason-giving) and “diaeresis” (dividing a whole into its parts or a genus into its species).¹⁰¹

The first half of the speech will allow us to illustrate these methods of elaboration. It is essentially an elaboration on Achilles’ rhetorical question (“how is any of the Achaeans to obey your words eagerly”) and implicitly argues that Agamemnon is ungrateful.

⁹⁸ The parallelism is also supported by the two verbs, ἤλασαν and ἐδηλήσαντ’, which display a striking similarity on the phonetic level: both contain the sequence /ēlVsan/ (“V” = vowel).

⁹⁹ The noun-adjective phrases have the same case and final alpha but not the same number or full ending.

¹⁰⁰ Quotations excluded, the whole line and each of its halves are unique.

¹⁰¹ I perhaps use “diaeresis” a little loosely to mean the modification of a general statement by a particular one even if the two statements do not strictly correspond to genus and species or to whole and part. “Merismus” and “distributio” might also be used (Lanham 1991, 59, 99).

ὦ μοι ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένε κερδαλέοφρον
 πῶς τίς τοι πρόφρων ἔπεσιν πείθηται Ἀχαιῶν (150)
 ἢ ὁδὸν ἐλθέμεναι ἢ ἀνδράσιν ἴφι μάχεσθαι;
 οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ Τρώων ἔνεκ' ἤλυθον αἰχμητῶν
 δεῦρο μαχησόμενος, ἐπεὶ οὐ τί μοι αἰτιοὶ εἰσιν·
 οὐ γὰρ πῶποτ' ἐμὰς βοῦς ἤλασαν οὐδὲ μὲν ἵππους,
 οὐδέ ποτ' ἐν Φθίῃ ἐριβόλακι βωτιανείρῃ (155)
 καρπὸν ἐδηλήσαντ', ἐπεὶ ἦ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξὺ
 οὔρεά τε σκιόεντα θάλασσά τε ἠχήεσσα·
 ἀλλὰ σοὶ ὦ μέγ' ἀναιδὲς ἄμ' ἐσπόμεθ' ὄφρα σὺ χαίρης,
 τιμὴν ἀρνύμενοι Μενελάω σοὶ τε κυνῶπα (160)
 πρὸς Τρώων· τῶν οὐ τι μετατρέπη οὐδ' ἀλεγίζεις·
 καὶ δὴ μοι γέρας αὐτὸς ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἀπειλεῖς,
 ὃ ἔπι πολλὰ μόγησα, δόσαν δέ μοι υἴες Ἀχαιῶν. (1.149-62)

[Agamemnon] clothed in shamelessness, crafty-minded,
 how is any of the Achaeans to obey your orders readily,
 either to go on a journey or to fight men with force?
 For not on account of Trojan spearmen did I come
 here to fight, since they are not at all blameworthy to me.
 For never yet have they driven off my cattle or horses,
 nor have they ever in fertile Phthia, feeder of men,
 destroyed my crops, since there are truly very many things in between,
 shadowy mountains and roaring sea.
 But we followed you, you great shameless thing, so that you might be happy,
 trying to exact compensation for Menelaus and for you, dog-face,
 from the Trojans. These things you don't at all care about or have a regard for;
 and you actually threaten to take away my prize yourself,
 for which I toiled much and which the sons of the Achaeans gave me.¹⁰²

In lines 150-51, the first instance of diaeresis, Achilles breaks the general statement (“orders”) down into particular orders (“either to go on a journey or to fight men with force”). In 153-56, he first says that the Trojans are not blameworthy to him personally (the general statement) and then lists two particular ways in which they have not wronged him. Likewise, line 156 provides the general statement (“very many things”), and line 157 gives particular examples (“shadowy mountains and roaring seas”) of the “very many things” that lie between Phthia and Troy.

¹⁰² Achilles' ὦ μοι (literally “oh me!”), which I have not translated above, is expressing annoyance or exasperation here and means something like “Oh Jeez!” “Jesus Christ!” or “What the hell!”

The aetiologia consists in the succession of *gar* (“for”) and *epei* (“since”) clauses: *gar* (152), *epei* (153), *gar* (154), and *epei* (156). In this *gar-epei-gar-epei* pattern, each new clause explains the last while remaining embedded within it. With ἀλλὰ σοὶ (“but you” [158]), Achilles returns to the level of the first *gar* clause and provides further support for his rhetorical question. In 160 (“These things you don’t at all care about or have a regard for”), he makes the point of 152-60 clearer, and in 161 (“and you actually threaten to take away my prize yourself”), he concludes the argument about Agamemnon’s ingratitude by specifying what Agamemnon has done wrong. He has delayed specifying Agamemnon’s misdeed until now so that he could provide the context that renders Agamemnon’s action ungrateful. Although he does not expressly say here that Agamemnon is ungrateful, that is clearly what lines 160-61 imply, and in book 9 he does complain about Agamemnon’s ingratitude explicitly (9.316-17). Achilles’ implicit argument in this elaboration is thus that because he and the others are fighting not to avenge any wrong that they have suffered personally at the hands of the Trojans but rather to do Agamemnon and Menelaus a favor, Agamemnon’s threat to take Achilles’ prize shows ingratitude and is therefore doubly wrong and should be renounced, or Achilles will go home.¹⁰³

Now, not all of Achilles’ techniques of elaboration are not unique to him among the characters, and his techniques are those of the oral poet generally.¹⁰⁴ Achilles is nevertheless

¹⁰³ Line 161 is transitional, concluding the first argument and beginning the second argument. The argument of the second half of the speech is that because Achilles has earned his prize through his exertions and the other Greeks gave it to him, Agamemnon has no right to take it. To this argument Achilles appends two points: 1) the present system for distributing prizes and honor is unfair because Achilles does the bulk of the work, but Agamemnon gets the greater prize; 2) Achilles has shown forbearance by tolerating this system until now. For these reasons, taking the little that Achilles does have is unjust. When the first and second arguments are combined, Agamemnon’s threat is doubly ungrateful and outrageous. Therefore, Achilles will go home.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Latacz 2009, ad 1.160; Martin 1989, 222.

more expansive than other characters.¹⁰⁵ Expansiveness can vary in a few ways (e.g., quantity, technique, context), and these variables are sources of meaning. Achilles' variety of expansiveness can therefore tell us about his personality. Nestor's expansiveness, for instance, might make him seem tedious.¹⁰⁶ Achilles' emotionality drives his expansiveness and makes him seem anything but boring.

So what is the effect of Achilles' expansiveness here? It is patronizing. Achilles makes four points: 1) the Trojans have done nothing to him; 2) the Greeks are fighting for Agamemnon and Menelaus's honor rather than for their own; 3) Agamemnon does not consider these points; and 4) he now threatens to take Achilles' prize. Agamemnon already knows what Achilles is telling him in lines 152-60, so what is the point of giving him all of this unnecessary information? If we assume that Achilles is observing Grice's Cooperative Principle ("Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"), then what Achilles says violates Grice's maxim of Relation ("Be relevant") or a submaxim of Quantity ("Do not make

¹⁰⁵ Martin says that "*auxēsis*, 'magnification,'" is a strategy "unique [to Achilles] in the rhetorical repertoires of Iliadic heroes—thus characterizing once and for all Achilles' 'language'" and that it is shared only with the narrator (1989, 220). Some forms of magnification may indeed be unique to Achilles, but *synonomia* and what I call "doubling," for instance, which I treat as forms of magnification, are not (see 1.177, 179, 180-81, 183, 187, 273, 286-89. Comparison of Achilles' refusal of Agamemnon's offer (9.379-87) with Odysseus's refusal of the suitors' offer (*Od.* 22.61-67) shows both that other characters can be expansive and that Achilles is more expansive. For further comparisons, see Martin 1989.

¹⁰⁶ There are differences between Achilles' and Nestor's expansionism. Martin observes that Achilles' οἶον ἔμμυνε ("[Hector] awaited [me when I was] alone") in 9.355 has a parallel only in Νέστωρ οἶος ἔμμυνε ("Nestor alone remained") in 8.80 and introduces "[t]he motif of 'one man remaining'" (Martin 1989, 176). He concludes, "Achilles' reference to a single combat with Hektor represents the embedding, in kernel form, of a narrative theme that we can recognize from its various repeated uses. . . . It illustrates one important constraint on Achilles' 'expansion' style: Homer does not make Achilles speak, as Nestor, ornamenting every possible statement. The narrative possibilities for a recounting of his single fight with Hektor remain unexploited, while the hint of the motif, in the two words οἶον ἔμμυνε, is still a form of expanding the speech, and effectively points an audience steeped in the traditional motifs toward another vista of experience" (Martin 1989, 176). This difference is one reason why Achilles' speeches are not tedious as Nestor's are.

your contribution more informative than is required”) since Agamemnon already has this information.¹⁰⁷ In Searle’s taxonomy of speech acts, “you are ungrateful” is superficially a “representative” speech act (i.e., a speaker commits to a proposition).¹⁰⁸ But saying something negative like this is a reproach, so the speech act is actually an “expressive” and perhaps also a “directive” if the reproach is designed to get Agamemnon to renounce his threat.¹⁰⁹ Now, although the four propositions mentioned above are enough to generate the implicature “you are ungrateful,” Achilles’ expansiveness, particularly his doubling, flouts a submaxim of Manner (“Be brief”) or Quantity (“Do not make your contribution more informative than is required”). This flouting reinforces the implicature “you are ungrateful” and makes Achilles’ censure, indignation, and moralizing that much louder and more forceful.

By telling Agamemnon something that he already knows and by doing so at length, Achilles berates Agamemnon. How could Agamemnon be so ungrateful, entitled, shameless, or stupid as to fail to consider that Achilles is doing him a favor by fighting? Achilles is both indignant and contemptuous here, and this contributes to the patronizing quality of the first half of the speech. By hammering his points home in this way, Achilles lectures his audience.¹¹⁰ He seems to enjoy this lecturing and his moral or intellectual superiority. Thus Achilles’ moralizing

¹⁰⁷ Grice 1975, 45-46. As for deciding between the categories of Relation and Quantity, Grice himself realized that the two could overlap (1975, 46). I would add that a submaxim of Manner (“Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)”) compounds the problem, as we will see (1975, 46).

¹⁰⁸ Searle 1975, 354.

¹⁰⁹ Searle 1975, 355-57. We might say that by the end of the speech, this reproach will have become part of Achilles’ implicit threat (“If you continue to act ungratefully and do nothing to atone for your behavior, I will go home”) and therefore part of a “commissive” speech act (i.e., the speaker commits himself “(again in varying degrees) to a future course of action”), while remaining an expressive as well (Searle 1975, 356).

¹¹⁰ Achilles “expatiates on Agamemnon’s ingratitude” (Scodel 2008, 136).

extends not only to what he says but also to how he says it. Moralizing is part of his very manner of relating.

Although Achilles compromises repeatedly in the *Iliad*, and with unhappy consequences, he gives the impression of having an uncompromising nature, which his rhetoric of honesty and his extremism reflect. Two additional manifestations of this nature are his defiance and his posing of (moral) dilemmas. In the present speech, these are clearest in his rhetorical question: “How is any of the Achaeans to obey your orders readily [πρόφρων], / either to go on a journey or to fight men by force?” (1.150-51). This question is obviously defiant since Achilles suggests that no Greek, but mainly himself, should follow Agamemnon’s commands anymore.¹¹¹ The first part of the question (line 150) raises the possibility of disobedience generally. While this would be defiant enough, Achilles’ “to go on a journey” refers to Agamemnon’s last commands (1.141-47) and therefore suggests that his hypothetical refusal to obey is not so remote. Achilles’ “to fight men with force” anticipates his withdrawal from battle and refusal to fight on anyone’s terms but his own.¹¹² One function of the πρόφρων (“readily”) is to insinuate that Agamemnon is unfit for command and consequently does not deserve obedience even if he can compel it. Achilles’ rhetorical question is all the more defiant and provocative in that he asks it publicly and at a moment when Agamemnon is already reeling. This protestation of Agamemnon’s ingratitude and fitness to lead shows that Achilles’ disobedience is an expression of his moralizing.

¹¹¹ Although Achilles seems to be raising the possibility of not obeying at all rather than of simply not obeying “readily” (πρόφρων). Support for this interpretation comes later in the speech (1.169-71), later in the quarrel (e.g., 1.188-94, where Achilles considers killing Agamemnon, and 1.293-96), and in Achilles’ refusal to fight until he wants to. The πρόφρων is proleptic, as if Achilles were anticipating handing over Briseis unwillingly.

¹¹² For Achilles’ need to fight on his own terms rather than on Agamemnon’s, see Eichholz’s discussion of the embassy (1953).

Achilles' question also illustrates his tendency to pose moral dilemmas. Achilles could have said to Agamemnon, "If you behave like this, no one will obey you willingly." It is characteristic of him, however, to turn this into a question that poses a problem. The "how" introduces an element of possibility or fitness into the situation. Hence, translators have translated Achilles' subjunctive with "can."¹¹³ The dilemma, to obey or disobey, is a moral one, for it is because Achilles is so disgusted with Agamemnon's ungrateful, heavy-handed, and foolish behavior that he questions whether his code of honor even allows him to serve such a man. That the demands of honor are involved in the question can be seen from Achilles' ἄτιμος ("without honor, unhonored, dishonored"), which he gives as a reason for not piling up wealth for Agamemnon anymore (i.e., for not serving him anymore [1.171]). To be clear, I am not saying that Achilles would be content to serve Agamemnon despite his ingratitude but coolly and intellectually thinks that he is obligated to rebel by refusing to obey. I am saying, rather, that Achilles cannot help but rebel.¹¹⁴ The feeling that he must rebel and publicize his rebellion is already contained in his disgust, contempt, and indignation, which are not, however, the only

¹¹³ Goodwin (1998, 100), Murray (1999), Hammond (1987), Verity (2011), and Pulleyn (2000) all translate this deliberative subjunctive with "can" and Fagles (1998) with "could." This verb is a *prospektiven Konjunktiv im Fragesatz*, related to the Attic deliberative subjunctive (Latacz 2009, ad loc., citing Chantraine 1953, 210).

¹¹⁴ Achilles is not obligated to serve or obey Agamemnon, but since he agreed to go on an expedition headed by Agamemnon, he is expected to obey, and he and the other chiefs typically do obey insofar as they recognize Agamemnon as commander in chief, i.e., the chief who is in command. The obligations of the chiefs other than Achilles are complicated by their oath to Tyndareus. A qualification needs to be made about Achilles having no obligations to Agamemnon. If Achilles has received spoils and prizes from Agamemnon, he may feel obligated to reciprocate with service, but this will depend on the system of reciprocity and political organization of the society. If Agamemnon acts greedily or unjustly, however, and fails to perform the role of distributor properly, Achilles would be absolved of any obligations. Hence, in the present speech, Achilles justifies his disobedience with Agamemnon's failings. See Donlan 1982, 1989, 1993. Now, if there is "balanced-specific giving, dependent on a particular service" (Donlan 1982, 160-61), why would any obligations not be dissolved after the person has been compensated for the service or the service has been performed?

emotions and motivations involved here. While these emotions are understandable, it is what Achilles does with them that is revealing. He turns them into a moral dilemma. He moralizes.

Coercion

Achilles' manner of relating is forceful as well as moralizing. It is forceful in that it is both dynamic and coercive. I discuss Achilles' coerciveness under three heads: moral positioning, emotionality and rhetoric, and threats.

Moral Positioning

Achilles' moral positioning, or moral rhetoric, is a function of his moralizing. It is not something that he does consciously but is rather an effect of his moralizing that happens to be functional some of the time. "Moral positioning" refers specifically to Achilles' manner of casting himself in the role of the victim, who is good or just, and the other in the role of the perpetrator, who is bad or unjust. That Achilles organizes his experience in this way will concern us later. Here, however, that Achilles announces his judgments interests us.

Before we consider the terms with which Achilles defines the situation in the present speech, let us revisit his previous speech. There, Achilles calls Agamemnon "greediest of all" (*φιλοκτεανώτατε πάντων*) and says that it would not be right to collect and redistribute the army's prizes. As we have seen, to characterize Agamemnon's demand for another prize as an indication of greed is not entirely fair on Achilles' part. To call Agamemnon *φιλοκτεανώτατε* casts him as morally deficient, since in Achilles' eyes greed is evidently bad for some reason.

In the present speech, Achilles' moral positioning consists in name-calling, the argument about ingratitude, the arguments about desert (he earned his prize, which the army rather than Agamemnon gave him; he deserves a prize equal to or greater than Agamemnon's because he does more of the work), and the refusal to pile up wealth for Agamemnon. Three of the four

names or epithets that Achilles gives Agamemnon in this speech say or imply that Agamemnon is shameless: ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένε (“clothed in shamelessness” [1.149]), ὃ μέγ’ ἀναιδὲς (“great shameless thing” [1.158]), and κυνῶπα (“dog-face,” “bitch-face” [1.159]). The last of these implies shamelessness in that dogs were proverbially shameless (cf. the Cynics). In Homeric society shamelessness amounts to immorality, so these epithets all characterize Agamemnon as in some sense “bad.”¹¹⁵ The same is true of κερδαλέοφρον here. Whether the word means “greedy of gain” or “crafty,” Achilles is obviously using it pejoratively.¹¹⁶ Even if it simply means “crafty” in neutral contexts, Achilles would be using it here to say that Agamemnon is trying to cheat him out of his prize, so it would still imply that Agamemnon is greedy and unscrupulous. Achilles’ refusal to pile up wealth for Agamemnon likewise implies that he is greedy (1.170-71).

It remains to be seen how this moral positioning is coercive. Let us first say that Achilles’ patronizing and indignant moralizing is probably not going to convince his opponents of their moral error very often, and if it does, they are unlikely to admit the error voluntarily and immediately in public.¹¹⁷ The distinction that I am making between moralizing and moral positioning is that the latter is a function of the former. Moral positioning works through manipulation rather than through (non-coercive) persuasion, not that the purpose of moralizing is persuasion either. By defining a situation in moral terms and assigning persons to certain roles, Achilles forces his opponents either to dispute his representation of the situation or to appear to

¹¹⁵ For *aidōs*, “sense of shame,” and related concepts, see Cairns 1993.

¹¹⁶ LSJ s.v.; Kirk 1985, ad 1.149.

¹¹⁷ Menelaus and Antilochus are possible exceptions, but that may be because of the goodwill between them. Agamemnon’s admissions come after the fact.

accept it. If Achilles' representation is plausible and his opponents seem to accept it, a few things are likely to happen. His opponents may lose face on the spot because of this representation. What the opponents do next may be construed by third parties as a manifestation of the qualities that Achilles has assigned to them, so that they lose more honor. Their actions will be the more reprehensible now that they have been warned (cf. Achilles' previous speech). Achilles is able to seize the moral high ground as far as public relations, and therefore potentially *tīmē* and *kleos*, are concerned. He is thus able to set up a contest in an acceptable way, for his opponents' turpitude has driven him to such a recourse. Finally, if Achilles' opponents later want to repair relations with him to salvage a situation, they are forced either to dispute his representation of events after the fact and after already appearing to have accepted it or to accept whatever humiliation Achilles has devised for them, as Agamemnon ultimately does in book 19. They must be the loser in Achilles' contest. Therefore, if Achilles' opponents have the prescience to see where the conflict might lead, they are forced to respond in the moment. If they are forced to dispute Achilles' representation of the situation, the conflict may escalate. If they want to avoid an escalation, they may appease Achilles. But if not handled carefully, Achilles will force his opponents to appease him sooner or later.

Emotionality and Rhetoric

Achilles is prone to violent emotions, particularly anger. Often the narrator (e.g., 1.188-94) or Achilles' actions (e.g., throwing the scepter to the ground) or facial expressions (e.g., glowering [1.148]) tell us what he is feeling. Lacking these sources of information, we must infer his emotion from his language and the context. Although emotions can be simulated and dissimulated verbally and nonverbally, Achilles' vehement rhetoric does seem both to reflect and to result from genuine emotion, and we will assume that this is so unless we have reason for

thinking otherwise.¹¹⁸ Both violent emotions and violent rhetoric are characteristic of Achilles, and they work together to coerce others into doing his bidding.

How is the speech vehement? It displays features of emotional speech in general and of angry speech in particular. It begins with an emotional exclamation (ecphonesis) and name calling: ὦ μοι ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένε κερδαλέοφρον, “[Agamemnon] clothed in shamelessness, crafty-minded” (1.149).¹¹⁹ Achilles’ “clothed in shamelessness” is a violent and paradoxical metaphor, especially since in Greek it is being naked rather than being dressed that is a sign of shamelessness.¹²⁰ This catachresis is an instance of the general forcefulness of Achilles’ language.¹²¹ In the course of the speech, Achilles also calls Agamemnon a “great shameless thing” (ὦ μέγ’ ἀναιδὲς [1.158]) and “dog-face” (κυνῶπα [1.159]). We find the “nevers” typical of anger: οὐ γὰρ πῶ ποτ’ ἐμὰς βοῦς ἤλασαν οὐδὲ μὲν ἵππους (“For never yet have they driven off my cattle or horses” [154]), οὐδέ ποτ’ (“and not ever” [155]), οὐ μὲν σοί ποτε ἶσον ἔχω γέρας (“I never have a prize equal to yours” [163]).¹²² Unusually, however, the “nevers” in this speech are not hyperbolic. It is interesting that Achilles finds a way to insert the “nevers” of anger but uses them to refer to what the Trojans have not done rather than to what Agamemnon, the target of his

¹¹⁸ Of course even his rhetoric and emotions are fictive constructs. This raises the interesting problem, which we cannot pursue, of whether, and if so, to what extent, the poets are drawing on or activating their own emotions when composing. I would think a great deal since merely assuming a facial expression of an emotion can generate that emotion (e.g., Ekman 2007). In that case, Achilles’ rhetoric and emotion would be both fictional and real.

¹¹⁹ Lanham 1991, 61.

¹²⁰ The word for genitals, *aidoia*, implies that those who have a sense of shame (*aidōs*) cover those parts (cf. pudendum). αἰδώς can itself mean “genitals” (2.262). It is also true that depending on the gender (male) and activity (e.g., athletics), the historical Greeks of the archaic and classical periods (and beyond) were less modest than contemporary Americans tend to be. See Cairns 1993.

¹²¹ This also modifies the narrator’s usual expression ἐπιειμένοι ἀλκὴν, “clad in valor” (7.164, 8.262, 18.157).

¹²² Cf. Scodel 2008.

anger, has not done.¹²³ In the second and third lines of the speech, Achilles asks a rhetorical question to reproach Agamemnon (epiplexis): “how is any of the Achaeans to obey your orders readily, / either to go on a journey or to fight men with force?” (150-51).¹²⁴ For that matter, Achilles reproaches and reviles Agamemnon throughout the speech, which would well be described as a rant.

Other indications of Achilles’ emotion in this speech include his expansiveness, the “breathless” pace of some of the lines, his provocative defiance, his listing of grievances, and his threat to return home.¹²⁵ The expansiveness we have already discussed, so here we only need to say that Achilles’ indignation and concomitant desire to punish Agamemnon fuel it. Listing grievances is typical of arguments. Although people may intend to let go of others’ irritating actions as they occur, they have a tendency to save them and trot them out later when they are angry enough. That defiance and threats can be characteristic of emotion should be clear enough. Achilles begins and ends the speech with defiance. He begins it with his rhetorical question “How can any of the Achaeans readily obey your words . . . ?” and ends it with “since I’m dishonored here, I don’t intend to heap up wealth and riches for you” (1.1150-51, 170-71).

Achilles’ pace becomes “breathless” in lines 158-60:

ἀλλὰ σοὶ ὧ̃ μέγ’ ἀναιδὲς ἄμ’ ἐσπόμεθ’ ὄφρα σὺ χαίρης,
τιμὴν ἀρνύμενοι Μενελάῳ σοὶ τε κυνῶπα
πρὸς Τρώων· τῶν οὐ τι μετατρέπη οὐδ’ ἀλεγίζεις·

But we followed you, you great shameless thing, so that you might be happy,
trying to exact compensation for Menelaus and for you, dog-face,
from the Trojans. These things you don’t at all care about or have a regard for. . . .

¹²³ The “never” of line 163 is an exception. It refers to something that Agamemnon is at least partially responsible for.

¹²⁴ Lanham 1991, 69.

¹²⁵ Kirk 1985, ad 1.158-60.

The enjambment (“from the Trojans”), the vocatives (“you great shameless thing,” “dog-face”), the repeated second-person pronouns, and the elisions of line 158 all contribute to making the pace “breathless.”

The ultimate function of Achilles’ vehemence, by which I am referring to both his emotionality and vehement rhetoric, is to get what he wants. This vehemence works in a few ways. It shows conviction and commitment, which may either cause others to doubt their position or persuade them that he is right. Achilles’ conviction and commitment may also suggest that he cannot be prevailed upon or will be too difficult to persuade to justify the effort. For all of these reasons, then, Achilles’ conviction and commitment encourage others to acquiesce to his wishes.

Above all, however, Achilles’ vehemence works through intimidation and bullying. Simply being emotional may allow one to bully others even if the others are physically stronger or know that they are not in danger. While Achilles may derive this benefit from showing certain emotions, he is also the best warrior, prone to anger, and lethally explosive.¹²⁶ For these reasons Achilles’ vehemence should allow him to be more successful at bullying and intimidating than the average warrior would be. This vehemence is one of the better examples of how Achilles’ manner of relating can be forceful or violent even when he is not using physical force or violence.

¹²⁶ For Achilles’ irascibility, see in particular book 9. For Achilles’ explosivity we need look no further than his response to Agamemnon’s next speech when he comes close to killing Agamemnon. See also book 24 and the tradition of him killing Thersites. While it is true that other characters (e.g., Patroclus) impulsively kill someone and have to flee, Achilles’ martial prowess makes his explosivity the most dangerous and therefore should make his bullying the most effective. The whole poem is a testament to the destructiveness of Achilles’ rage. Van Wees discusses the incentives for not controlling one’s anger or for believing that it cannot be controlled (1992; cf. Harris 2001, Cairns 2003, Scodel 2008). For anger generally, including its functions and ideology across cultures, see Averill 1982, Tavis 1989, and Potegal, Stemmler, and Spielberg 2010.

Achilles' bullying can have some potentially unintended and undesirable effects. It only works if others allow themselves to be bullied.¹²⁷ If they do not and Achilles is not willing to kill them or hurt them in various ways, his vehemence may be counterproductive, inspiring resistance rather than acquiescence. His emotionality may activate others' defenses or make them feel obligated to respond in order to save face. Finally, emotions are contagious, so that Achilles' emotion may produce in others a similar level of the same emotion, instead of a reciprocal one such as fear, and this may also make them resist him.¹²⁸ All of these effects, in turn, will tend to cause conflicts to escalate. Hence, when Agamemnon says that Achilles is the most hateful to him of the kings because strife and wars and battles are pleasing to him, he is objecting to Achilles' fondness for conflicts generally as well as to his fondness for war (1.177).¹²⁹

Now the tendency of Achilles' vehemence to exacerbate conflicts may or may not be an undesirable or unintended effect depending on whether he enjoys the contests that result. We must take the contest with Agamemnon as our test case since it is the only conflict for which we have good information. In this case, Achilles does not enjoy the suffering that results from losing his prize even if his self-esteem benefits from his moral victory, and because of Patroclus's death, he cannot even enjoy his victory over Agamemnon even if he would have had Patroclus

¹²⁷ They need not acquiesce until violence becomes a real possibility. Part of what makes bullying successful for Achilles is that others may not know just when Achilles is close to becoming violent. Besides the threat of violence, Achilles can hurt people by withdrawing from battle himself or by withdrawing his forces.

¹²⁸ E.g., Hatfield, Cacioppo, Rapson 1993; Neumann and Strack 2000. Not necessarily referring to emotional contagion, Ekman writes, "anger calls forth anger, and the cycle can rapidly escalate" (2007, 111). Emotional contagion bears a resemblance to projective identification, and the two may be hard to distinguish from each other sometimes.

¹²⁹ See Peleus's advice to Achilles in 9.255-259. *Eris* can of course refer to personal quarrels and in the proem even refers to this quarrel (1.6, 8; cf. 1.277).

not died. On the whole, we must say that Achilles comes to find such effects undesirable. As McWilliams tells us, “masochism” does not mean “the love of pain or suffering.”¹³⁰ Rather, “the person who behaves masochistically endures pain and suffering in the hope, conscious or unconscious, of some greater good.”¹³¹

Threats

Threats are by nature coercive. There is only one threat in this speech, and even it is oblique. Achilles says that he will go home to Phthia but does not specify the conditions on which he will stay at Troy.¹³² Agamemnon, in contrast, explicitly states the conditions on which he will take someone’s prize, namely, if the Greeks do not give him another prize on their own. Achilles evidently wants Agamemnon to refrain from taking his prize and to show that he appreciates Achilles’ value by begging him to stay. As for the latter, that is what Agamemnon understands Achilles to be wanting and what Agamemnon refuses to do (1.173-74). As for the former, if Agamemnon were going to beg Achilles to stay, he would also not take his prize, and when Agamemnon does try to reconcile with Achilles in book 9, he offers to restore his prize, and in book 19 he finally does restore it. Achilles also probably expects some sort of apology, amends, or admission of guilt from Agamemnon, as he does in books 9 and 19.¹³³

The very form of Achilles’ threat is self-defeating. Failing to list its demands, the threat is vague, so that Agamemnon may not know what Achilles wants. We said that Achilles

¹³⁰ McWilliams 1994, 259.

¹³¹ McWilliams 1994, 259.

¹³² Martin 1989, 212: “Achilles’ words are always verging on the language of threat and abuse.”

¹³³ As I argue in chapter 4, when in book 9 Achilles complains that Agamemnon does not come in person, he is complaining that he is not receiving an apology in person (9.372-73). The exchange between Menelaus and Antilochus in book 23 gives an idea of what Achilles probably wants.

presumably wants Agamemnon to leave his prize alone, to apologize, and to show his appreciation of Achilles by begging. But since Achilles complains about the size of his prizes relative to Agamemnon's immediately before saying that he will go home, he may also seem to be demanding that in the future he be given prizes that are equal to or even greater than Agamemnon's because he does more of the fighting (1.163-70). This is in effect a demand to be recognized as equal or superior to Agamemnon, a demand, in short, to be recognized as the best of the Achaeans. The rest of the quarrel tells us that this is what is at stake. Now, while Achilles is probably not demanding to be given equal prizes as a condition for his remaining at Troy, it is easy to see how he might be understood to be demanding that, and Agamemnon also knows that Achilles' complaint about prizes is a claim to being the best of the Achaeans. Agamemnon cannot agree to this demand or accept this complaint. Because Achilles' demands are unclear, if Agamemnon agrees to any of them, he might appear to be accepting Achilles' complaints at the same time.

The form of Achilles' threat is self-defeating in a subtler way. He does not say that he will go home *if* Agamemnon does not do something for him. He says only that he will go home. Since Achilles fails to list his conditions, it might not be clear that his statement is a threat at all. If the audience does appreciate that it is a threat, its unconditional form contradicts its conditional message. Omitting the conditions shuts down interaction and denies Agamemnon the chance to appease him. In the structure of the interaction, a threat implies two or three turns. In the first turn, person 1 makes the threat and awaits a response. In the second turn, person 2 responds by speaking or acting (or by not speaking or acting). In the optional third turn, person 1 responds with acceptance or rejection of person 2's response. The form of Achilles' threat leaves no second turn. Because Achilles does not say what he wants but only what he will do, it is as

though he does not want the problem solved, the relationship repaired, or his concerns addressed. Expecting the threat to fail, Achilles builds failure into the very form of the threat.

What is the result of Achilles' moralizing and coercion in this speech? In Agamemnon's last speech, Achilles is one of three whose prize Agamemnon might take away, and that only if the army does not give Agamemnon another prize on its own. After Achilles' speech, Agamemnon says that he will personally go to Achilles' hut and take his prize so that Achilles will know how much greater Agamemnon is than he (1.183-86). Achilles is no longer one of three who might lose his prize, nor is this loss conditional on the army's failure to satisfy Agamemnon. In short, Achilles does a marvelous job of getting his prize taken away. We now turn to the organizing principles that generate Achilles' relational manner.

Organizing Principles

In discussing Achilles' relational manner, we have also implicitly been discussing his organizing principles (e.g., his beliefs, assumptions, and relational scripts and schemas). Here we will try to make some of those principles explicit.

Moralizing

In addition to having various functions and to being part of Achilles' manner, moralizing is an organizing activity. In fact, Stolorow and Atwood use the principles of the classical superego as examples of organizing principles.¹³⁴ Organizing principles "are not specific subjective contents, but are the principles that organize those contents into characteristic patterns."¹³⁵ Achilles moralizes both in his present speech and in his previous one, but the

¹³⁴ Stolorow and Atwood 1992, 30.

¹³⁵ Stolorow and Atwood 1992, 35.

content of the moralizing differs. In the previous speech, he says that it is not right to take back and redistribute the army's prizes. In the present speech, he lectures Agamemnon about ingratitude and complains about the size of his prizes relative to Agamemnon's. In both speeches, however, Achilles calls Agamemnon to account for trying to take more than he is entitled to and treats Agamemnon's behavior as a sign of greed. Moreover, in both speeches even Achilles' insults are moral attacks: φιλοκτηανώτατε ("most greedy"), ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένε ("clothed in shamelessness"), κερδαλέοφρον ("crafty-minded"), μέγ' ἀναιδέξ ("great shameless thing"), κυνῶπα ("dog-face" [1.122, 149, 158, 159]).

Achilles' moralizing implies certain beliefs and assumptions. He splits the world into good and bad. This relatively primitive polarization (e.g., black or white) is typical of severe narcissism, borderline personality disorder, and other personalities at the borderline level of organization.¹³⁶ He obviously believes that he is right and Agamemnon is wrong. Agamemnon is acting out of badness of some sort (e.g., greed, ingratitude). Achilles neglects the situational factors influencing Agamemnon's behavior. We all constantly evaluate events as positive or negative in respect to achieving our goals.¹³⁷ But we can feel a certain way without turning positive or negative into morally good or bad. It is characteristic of Achilles to frame the situation in moral terms. Achilles sees himself as a victim, whether of deceit, ingratitude, or an unfair system. He believes that he must confront Agamemnon and is so committed to his position that he is willing to risk much unpleasantness in order to stop him.

¹³⁶ Kernberg 1975, 1976, 1984, 2004. The borderline level exists between the neurotic and psychotic.

¹³⁷ This is a core tenet of emotion research. Our emotions are automatic responses to how we are doing in respect to our goals. They both inform us of how we are doing and motivate and prepare us to take appropriate action. See, for example, Barrett 2006; Oatley, Keltner, and Jenkins 2006; Ekman 2007; Lewis, Haviland-Jones, Barrett 2008; Scherer 2009; and Wranik and Scherer 2010.

Moralization of Feelings

Achilles' moralizing is also related to one of his methods of coping with emotion. When he feels a negative emotion, he can become fixated on what someone has done to cause it and can consequently fail to attend to the feeling itself. If Achilles is feeling angry, for example, he assumes that the other person has done something wrong and is displaying his badness. Now, the other person may in fact have done something that the poem deems untoward. By focusing on what the other has done wrong, however, Achilles generates emotions of a certain kind, particularly, anger, indignation, and resentment. Feeling anger, he assumes that his subjective experience of Agamemnon's behavior as bad is objective reality and not merely his way of perceiving what has happened. He feels compelled to enforce his subjective assessment of the situation. Achilles' moralization of his feelings restricts his experience of emotion. Failing to investigate his feelings, Achilles often does not realize, or is slow to realize, what else he is feeling and is therefore unable to articulate what he needs. He says what the other has done wrong rather than how this behavior makes him feel. Perhaps expressing needs and feelings seems out of character for any of the Homeric heroes or inappropriate for the public setting of the quarrel. I am not suggesting that Achilles should have bared his heart to Agamemnon here. I am saying that Achilles' failure to process what he is feeling leads him to act out in anger and to focus on Agamemnon's bad behavior instead of phrasing his concerns in a calmer and more appropriate manner.

In the present speech, we can infer the moralization of feelings by considering the nature of Achilles' complaints and how they shift throughout the speech. Achilles complains that Agamemnon is threatening to take his prize even after all that Achilles has done for him. Achilles is indignant, yet he is protesting Agamemnon's ingratitude. The complement of

Agamemnon being ungrateful is Achilles being unappreciated. Focusing on Agamemnon's failings allows Achilles to be angry but prevents him from feeling the hurt of being unappreciated. Ignoring this hurt leads to indignant moralizing about Agamemnon's badness. Anger energizes the body for fighting and generates sensations of power and efficacy.¹³⁸ It is a more pleasant emotion than the hurt of being unappreciated. While this indignant moralizing allows Achilles to avoid the more painful emotion, it does not get him the appreciation and honor that he seeks.¹³⁹

In addition to the nature of Achilles' complaint (that he is unappreciated), evidence that Achilles is defensively moralizing his emotions comes in the second half of the speech. There his anger abates somewhat, and he indulges in self-pity:

καὶ δὴ μοι γέρας αὐτὸς ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἀπειλεῖς,
 ὃ ἔπι πολλὰ μόγησα, δόσαν δέ μοι υἱεὶς Ἀχαιῶν.
 οὐ μὲν σοὶ ποτε ἴσον ἔχω γέρας ὁππότε Ἀχαιοὶ
 Τρώων ἐκπέρσωσ' εὖ ναιόμενον πτολίεθρον·
 ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πλεῖον πολυάϊκος πολέμοιο (165)
 χεῖρες ἐμαὶ διέπουσ'· ἀτὰρ ἦν ποτε δασμὸς ἴκηται,
 σοὶ τὸ γέρας πολὺ μείζον, ἐγὼ δ' ὀλίγον τε φίλον τε
 ἔρχομ' ἔχων ἐπὶ νῆας, ἐπεὶ κε κάμω πολεμίζων.
 νῦν δ' εἴμι Φθίην δ', ἐπεὶ ἧ πολὺ φέρτερόν ἐστιν
 οἴκαδ' ἴμεν σὺν νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν, οὐδέ σ' οἴω (170)
 ἐνθάδ' ἄτιμος ἐὼν ἄφενος καὶ πλοῦτον ἀφύζειν. (1.161-71)

and you actually threaten to take my prize yourself,
 for which I toiled much and which the sons of the Achaeans gave me.
 I never have a prize equal to yours whenever the Achaeans
 sack a well inhabited city of the Trojans,
 but the greater part of furious war
 my hands manage, but if a division [of the spoils] ever takes place,
 your prize is much greater, but I with something small yet dear
 go to my ships when I have become tired from fighting.
 But now I will go to Phthia, since it is much better

¹³⁸ Tavis 1989, Ekman 2007, Wranik and Scherer 2010.

¹³⁹ We might say that it is successful in the long term, but this is only because of Zeus's support, and Achilles could not be certain that Zeus would help him.

to go home with my curved ships, and I don't think that I,
being without honor here, will pile up riches and wealth for you.

In lines 162-68, Achilles sounds pathetic, in 169-72, petulant. His complaint that he never gets a prize equal to Agamemnon's is likewise a complaint that he is unappreciated, or more accurately, underappreciated. That this complaint follows his indignant argument about Agamemnon's ingratitude shows that Achilles does feel unappreciated and hurt in the first half of the speech even though his anger is there in the ascendant. While he indulges in self-pity in the second half of the speech, he is not as clear as he might be about his hurt feelings and, characteristically, moralizes them. In the first half of the speech, Agamemnon's badness (ingratitude) is the topic. In the second half, it is the unfairness of the system of distributing prizes. Achilles cannot simply say that he feels unappreciated. He must find an external cause to blame, shifting attention away from the emotion. It is not enough or acceptable to have a subjective experience of the emotion. He must find the bad thing in objective reality that is responsible for his emotion and direct his attention toward it rather than toward the emotion itself. He projects badness onto the world and regulates his emotions by focusing on the bad object. He is thereby saved from the experience of anything bad or imperfect within the self that the negative emotion might imply.

Entitlement and Self-Concept

Achilles' narcissistic sense of entitlement explains his moralizing and forceful manner of relating. His entitlement consists in both a belief and feeling that he is owed something and is justified in behaving a certain way. This entitlement is itself explained by his self-concept and assumptions about the world. We will start with Achilles' self-concept and assumptions and work up to his moralizing and violent relational manner.

Various beliefs are implicit in this speech and others in the quarrel. Achilles believes that he is the best warrior, and the poem supports this belief. He believes that he does the greater part

of the fighting and that this entitles him to a prize closer to, equal to, or greater than Agamemnon's in value. He assumes that prizes should be based on merit, that merit should be based on the value of one's contribution to the Greek war effort, and that fighting is the most important contribution. These assumptions presuppose that the human world should operate according to a system of fairness. He assumes that being the best warrior and conducting the greater part of the war make him the best of the Achaeans. Essentially, he assumes that being the best warrior is equivalent to being the best generally and that being the best generally entitles him to have the most honor, which should be reflected in the prizes that he receives.

By complaining about his *geras*, his prize of honor, Achilles creates a problem for himself. Although *gera* (prizes) are a form of *tīmē*, they “concretize” honor in material wealth.¹⁴⁰ Nestor says that Agamemnon is superior to Achilles because he rules over more people than Achilles does (1.281). Agamemnon's rule brings with it not only political power but wealth and resources. Achilles himself implicitly refers to Agamemnon's wealth when he calls him greedy. If Achilles is to have more honor than Agamemnon simply from being the best of the Achaeans, this honor must not be based on material wealth. Achilles' problem is twofold. On the one hand, by protesting his prize vis-à-vis Agamemnon's, Achilles is measuring his honor in tangible wealth, a measure by which he will be inferior to Agamemnon. On the other, receiving a smaller prize than Agamemnon will not help his “intangible” honor either.¹⁴¹ This problem will concern Achilles in book 9.

¹⁴⁰ Stolorow and Atwood 1992.

¹⁴¹ The phrase “intangible *tīmē*” is from Scodel (2008, 8), although it probably appears in other authors.

To return to Achilles' self-concept, we said that Achilles equates being the best warrior with being the best generally. This equation reveals that Achilles has a simple self-concept, i.e., one based on relatively few qualities. We mentioned that Achilles tends to split the world into good and bad. This all-or-nothing thinking appears in the present speech in his abuse of Agamemnon, which suggests that Agamemnon is all bad. Achilles himself oscillates between images of the self as all good or all bad. The all-good, grandiose self is his default and manifests itself, for example, in his belief that he is the best of the Achaeans.¹⁴² These good and bad selves are "summations" of representations of the self coupled with positive or negative affect.¹⁴³ Every interaction generates a mental representation of oneself, of the other, and of oneself and the other in interaction, and this representation has the potential to affect the summation of past representations. The respective, and often reciprocal, roles that self and other occupy in the interaction are preserved in the mental representation.¹⁴⁴ The emotion that one is feeling during

¹⁴² The term "grandiose self" is Kohut's (1971) and is adopted by Kernberg (1975). The following simplified account of the development of the self and object relations is based on Kernberg's work (particularly 1976, but also 1975, 1984, 2004) and attachment theory (e.g., Mikulincer and Shaver 2007, 2016), which are essentially in agreement on the major points. In this simplification, I have omitted how the processes of internalization may differ by age. Most important is how a representation of self can form before the infant has the concept of self, or something like it, as implied by its ability to recognize itself in the mirror at around 18 months (Stern 1985, 165). It should be obvious that there can be various types of implicit selves before the infant can pass the mirror test. That even such primitive animals as reptiles know which body parts are their own seems to imply some sort of rudimentary self-representation (Feinberg 2009). Must fish and reptiles learn what they can and cannot swallow, or has this knowledge been transmitted genetically, or do they have some implicit knowledge of the size of their own bodies? I do not mean to suggest that animals or very young infants consciously "know" or have a concept of the self in the way that adult humans do. Other relevant learning can also occur before the formation of the self-concept. From experimental work with infants, Stern argues that four "senses of self" emerge in development, the first three at various times before fifteen months and the last after that (1985, 11). He says that the task of forming "the sense of a core self and core others" is "largely accomplished during the period between two and seven months" (1985, 70).

¹⁴³ Siegel 2012, 52; Kernberg 1976. It is important to realize that the mental representations in question are typically those of implicit, procedural memory. The mental representations of implicit memory are not experienced as memories at all but are instead enacted (Siegel 2012, 56-57; Howell 2005; Wallin 2007, 122-23; Schore 2012).

¹⁴⁴ When these object relations are activated, the person may enact the role of either self or other. For example, when as adults we take care of others, our caregiving style will reflect how we were cared for as children (see Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). Certain patients, particularly those with borderline personality disorder, undergo rapid and confusing role reversals in the transference. In the same session, they might oscillate between enacting the role of a

the interaction becomes tied to the representations of self and other that are present during the interaction, and this emotion is then reactivated as the object relation is activated. Our lasting representations of self, other, and self and other in interaction are generalizations based on countless interactions.¹⁴⁵ In normal development, the good and bad representations of self are integrated, so that one forms a realistic self-concept that is neither all good nor all bad. The same happens for our representations of others. When development is derailed, there can be an overreliance on the defense of splitting: the good and the bad selves are kept apart (dissociated), so that the person never develops a realistic self-concept and consequently fluctuates between the emotional extremes attached to the all-good and the all-bad self-concepts.¹⁴⁶ In narcissism, for example, when the good self is activated, the person enjoys artificially inflated self-esteem and feelings of omnipotence and grandiosity. Others, however, will be struck by the person's grandiosity and arrogance. When the bad self is activated, self-esteem plummets, and the person

sadistic, persecutory parent and the reciprocal role of the impotent, persecuted, and terrified child (Kernberg 1975, 1976, 1984, 2004; Howell 2005, 125).

¹⁴⁵ These representations allow us to interpret what is happening to us in the moment, to predict how others will react if we respond a certain way, and to tailor our responses accordingly (Siegel 2012, 52-53; Wallin 2007, 26-27; Mikulincer and Shaver 2007; Howell 2005, 122-24, with references). Kernberg thinks that normally introjected interactions are "averaged out" so as to be more abstract and less intense, but in severe pathology such as borderline conditions, "unmetabolized" introjections emerge readily in the transference or the rest of life (1976). I would add the responses of adult-onset trauma to this category. These unmetabolized introjections of childhood should also be seen as the product of trauma, whether cumulative or acute.

¹⁴⁶ Splitting may at first result from the lack of capacity to integrate representations formed under strong emotions of opposite valence (i.e., positive or negative) (Kernberg 1976). The defensive function of splitting is to protect the person from the anxiety that would arise from reconciling strongly positive and negative representations, the strength of the negative representations seeming to threaten to destroy the good representations (Kernberg 1976). Splitting allows the person to avoid the discomfort of ambivalence or cognitive dissonance. Once splitting is established as a typical response, I suspect that it can come to operate without any obvious (unconscious) defensive intent. Whatever the origins and defensive functions of splitting, the signs of the type of dissociation known as "splitting" are extremely clear, most famously in borderlines, who routinely go from speaking of the same person as utterly worthless to speaking of him as supremely wonderful in a matter of hours or minutes. Speaking of his patients' splitting, Kernberg writes, "The patients were conscious of the severe contradiction in their behavior; yet they would alternate between opposite strivings with a bland denial of the implications of this contradiction and showed what appeared to be a striking lack of concern over this 'compartmentalization' of their mind" (1976, 20). Pressing one patient about his contradictions "would bring about intense anxiety" (Kernberg 1976, 23).

is tormented with searing shame, humiliation, and feelings of inferiority. If the narcissistic injury or disappointment is severe enough, the person may come to feel depleted and fall into a deep depression.¹⁴⁷

When Achilles' self-esteem is threatened, if his narcissistic defenses fail, the all-good self is replaced by the all-bad self. Achilles gives an indication of the bad self when says that he is *atimos* at Troy. To be *atimos* is to be without *tīmē*, without honor. Achilles may not be entirely sincere in characterizing himself as without honor at this point since he is still hoping to keep his prize and elicit appeals for him to stay. This characterization is nevertheless indicative of how his mind works, of his all-or-nothing thinking. It is obviously not true that Achilles has no honor, yet his mind turns losing some honor or not receiving as large a prize as he would like into the extreme of having no honor at all. His self-concept is thus unrealistic, in this instance, unrealistically bad, a result of splitting. While this belief may be unrealistic, Achilles nevertheless will experience the emotional extreme that accompanies it. The wrenching shame and humiliation that Achilles will feel will make such an appraisal compelling.¹⁴⁸ Later in the quarrel, Achilles says that Agamemnon will be angry that he did not honor the best of the Achaeans "at all" (*ouden* [1.244]). Agamemnon rules over "worthless men" (οὐτιδανοῖσιν) since they are letting Agamemnon get away with this last outrage (1.231). Finally, Achilles says that if he yields to Agamemnon in every matter, he would be called δειλός, "a coward," and οὐτιδανός, "a worthless man," a "nothing" (1.293-94). The examples with οὐτιδανός show that Achilles' thinking is literally all or nothing. His δειλός, "cowardly," and οὐτιδανός, "worthless," reveal

¹⁴⁷ Kernberg 1975, 1984, 2004, 2012.

¹⁴⁸ In book 9, he describes Agamemnon's "outrage" as *thumalgea*, "heart-paining" (9.387). He also says that he has been treated like a "dishonored vagabond" (9.647-48).

what being all bad amounts to for him. If he yielded, he would be such a mean, cowardly, contemptible thing that he should not even exist. In addition to the talk of being worthless, Achilles concludes that if he yields to Agamemnon in this one interaction, that is enough to make him a coward, his years of derring-do forgotten or undone in a moment. Achilles does yield, and he has already told us how he will feel, worthless, like a nothing, a nobody. So low does his self-esteem fall that he feels like a non-person. Shame causes the self to fragment, and only rage saves him from annihilation.

All of this is just what the research on narcissism would predict. It is largely worthlessness, inferiority, and the accompanying shame that narcissists are defending against.¹⁴⁹ For example, in a reaction time experiment, priming with “failure” words activated “worthless-related words” when narcissists were given little processing time.¹⁵⁰ When they were given more time, however, “the association between the self-threatening prime and worthlessness reversed, indicating that narcissists engaged in quick automatic inhibition.” Narcissists respond to threats and criticism with aggression rather than with avoidance or withdrawal.¹⁵¹ In another

¹⁴⁹ Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 402, 406, with references Tracy et al. 2009; Hepper et al. 2010.

¹⁵⁰ Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 403-404; experiment by Horvath and Morf (2009).

¹⁵¹ Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 406-07; Bushman et al. 2009; Morf and Rhodewalt 1993. An exception to this is the repression of the previous experiment. It should be noted that the academic research on narcissism often does not address pathological narcissism, e.g., narcissistic personality disorder, and is limited by measures geared to some aspects or types of narcissism (e.g., what has been called “grandiose,” “phallic,” “overt,” or “thick-skinned” narcissism) to the neglect of others (e.g., what has been called “vulnerable,” “depleted,” “covert,” or “thin-skinned” narcissism [McWilliams 1994; PDM; Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 414-15]). Avoidance and withdrawal can be found among narcissists, especially among the vulnerable ones (Kernberg 1975, 1984, 2004, 2012). Achilles’ initial response is to attack Agamemnon. His withdrawal from battle is aggressive, instrumental, and sadistic (e.g., it is designed to punish).

experiment, for instance, subliminal exposure to “worthlessness primes” produced aggression in narcissistic men but inhibited it in “less narcissistic participants.”¹⁵²

Because Achilles’ self is brittle and prone to splitting, yielding devastates his self-esteem. This self-structure explains why Achilles reacts the way that he does in the present speech. Achilles prefers to operate with the good self active in order to regulate his self-esteem and emotion. The brittleness of his self requires him to be hypervigilant of threats.¹⁵³ That is, he must guard against information that contradicts this self-concept so that the bad self remains inactive and dissociated. Since the image is of the self as perfect, there is much that could contradict it. Certain parts of the self-concept, however, can be more important than others so that the person can devote his defensive activity to protecting himself in those sensitive areas.¹⁵⁴ Achilles primarily defines excellence as being the best warrior. While his claim to being the best warrior is not disputed, his claim that being the best warrior makes him the best of the Achaeans is. Therefore, he must defend himself by upholding this claim when questions of who is the best and who has the most honor, the greatest prize, and the greatest value to the army arise.

Achilles’ sensitivity causes him to take Agamemnon’s behavior personally rather than to let it pass as the product of an unusually painful situation. Although it is easy to understand how Achilles construes Agamemnon’s threat to mean that he does not respect, value, or appreciate Achilles, Agamemnon gives indications that this is not in fact his opinion. For instance, that Agamemnon first weakens his threat to Achilles by adding Ajax and Odysseus as

¹⁵² Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 405-406; experiment by Morf, Horvath, and Zimmermann (2010).

¹⁵³ Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 403; Horvath and Morf 2009.

¹⁵⁴ Achilles, for example, does not seem to care that others claim to be wiser than he is. Caring more about some parts of the self-concept than about others is a general finding of social psychology and is not limited to narcissism.

other possible targets and then changes the subject altogether suggests that he does know Achilles' value. When Nestor tells Agamemnon to give up his anger at Achilles because "he is a great bulwark against evil war for all of the Achaeans," Agamemnon agrees with him but complains that Achilles wants to rule all and give orders to all (1.283-84, 286-89). Furthermore, Ajax and Odysseus are each willing to forgive Agamemnon's threat here. Achilles assumes that if he feels unappreciated or disrespected, Agamemnon's behavior must mean that he is ungrateful and does not respect or value Achilles. This is part of what we were referring to in the discussion of Achilles' moralization of his feelings. He confuses his feelings with reality. To be clear, Agamemnon has behaved badly by threatening in his last speech to take Achilles' prize, but his behavior need not mean all that Achilles takes it to mean, as Ajax's and Odysseus's willingness to excuse it shows. Achilles also assumes that if he does not respond, he will lose honor. Hence, he says later that he would be called δειλός and οὔτιδανός if he yields to Agamemnon in every matter (1.293-94). Again, Achilles confuses how he would feel with reality, for no one calls Achilles either of these things. Just as this prediction is inaccurate, so is the belief that he would suffer a massive loss of honor if he did not react to Agamemnon. Achilles' brittle self-structure causes him to take Agamemnon's behavior personally and to assume that he must suffer a loss of honor subjectively and objectively if he allows Agamemnon's subjectivity to go unopposed.

This raises a problem with the way in which the characters (and the critics) calculate honor. The characters involved in an action assume that they will lose or gain honor by doing or not doing something. But this can be an externalization of their feelings rather than what happens, for the characters who are observing the action may not share the principals' assessment of how their honor will be affected. "*Timē*," Scodel explains, "is both prestige that

characters hope to acquire and keep and face that is constantly in negotiation.”¹⁵⁵ Later, she says, “*Timē* is thus often closer to ‘face’ than it is to objective status or deference. It has a significant subjective component.”¹⁵⁶ I am saying that the characters are often wrong in thinking that they will lose *tīmē* both in the sense of “prestige,” which is relatively enduring, and in the sense of “face,” which is more fluid. They can also be mistaken in thinking that losing face will cost them prestige.

To give some examples, in book 8, when Diomedes is reluctant to retreat before Hector’s Zeus-backed onslaught, Nestor reassures him that the Greeks and Trojans will not believe Hector if he calls Diomedes a coward (8.152-56). This implies that Diomedes need not fear losing honor despite what Hector may say. In book 19, Odysseus says that it is not reprehensible for kings to make amends when they have done wrong (19.181-83). As Scodel observes, “Odysseus’ formulation is a litotes: it is positively a good thing.”¹⁵⁷ Agamemnon then agrees with Odysseus (19.186). Usually, to make amends is implicitly to admit having done something wrong. Yet it has been difficult for Agamemnon to make amends, both in book 9 and in book 19. He feels embarrassed, and his self-esteem has suffered. His apology (e.g., his exemplum of *Ātē*) is intended to save face. That he believes such face-saving is effective or necessary suggests that he thinks that making amends will cost him honor. But Odysseus tells us that others think the opposite, namely, that making amends and admitting wrongdoing do not diminish one’s honor and may even increase it. What is a loss of honor in Agamemnon’s eyes is not one in others’. If we took Agamemnon’s face-saving at face value, however, we might think that he would suffer a

¹⁵⁵ Scodel 2008, 13.

¹⁵⁶ Scodel 2008, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Scodel 2008, 99.

greater loss of honor without the face-saving. In book 23, does Menelaus lose honor for yielding to Antilochus? The point of the episode seems the opposite. To yield to elders is also approved. While the elders may gain honor, it does not seem to be the case that the younger men lose honor.¹⁵⁸ If Agamemnon yielded to Nestor in book 1, would he thereby lose honor or have less honor than Nestor? Of course not. Although a society may assume that this is how honor works, it may not be correct. Because of how the characters feel, they assume that their honor fluctuates more than it actually does.

Achilles' sense of entitlement arises in part from his self-concept. He is all good, the best of the Achaeans. As we have seen, Achilles also considers himself morally good and others, particularly Agamemnon, morally bad. By repeatedly characterizing Agamemnon as greedy, ungrateful, or shameless, Achilles implicitly contrasts himself with Agamemnon. Unlike Agamemnon, he acts for noble reasons. For example, whereas Agamemnon is trying to re-collect the troops' share of the spoils, Achilles is trying to protect them. Achilles' self-concept thus includes the idea of the self as good in ability (best warrior, most valuable) and the idea of the self as morally good (principled, noble).

As the best warrior, Achilles believes that he is the most valuable and the best in general. He is therefore entitled to the largest prize and the most honor. He is special, and the system of distributing prizes, through which Agamemnon receives the largest prize, should not apply to him, even though others could also complain that they fight more than Agamemnon does. Since Achilles receives a smaller prize than Agamemnon, he is not being treated fairly. Agamemnon is also wronging him by threatening him and by failing to appreciate him. Narcissists frequently

¹⁵⁸ Scodel rightly argues that honor is not always a zero-sum game in the poems (2008).

feel that they are being cheated or victimized: “their sense of entitlement chronically makes them feel that they are owed and deserve more than they are getting. Correspondingly, narcissists readily perceive themselves to be victims of interpersonal transgressions (McCullogh, Emmons, Kilpatrick, & Mooney, 2003).”¹⁵⁹ Interpersonal failure cannot be their fault, because if it were, their grandiose self-concept would be threatened. Being wronged, Achilles is entitled to respond however he wants (e.g., with abuse, moralizing, or threats) and to go about getting what he wants in whatever way he deems expedient, regardless of others’ needs or feelings. He effectively resorts to extorting what he wants. His emotional and forceful manner intimidates and bullies others into acceding. That Achilles has good motives and the moral high ground also entitles him to get what he wants in the most direct way, however tactless or damaging it may be. In this way Achilles’ self-concept justifies his entitlement, and his entitlement justifies his tactlessness, moralizing, and coerciveness, in short, his relational manner.

Since Achilles is entitled to certain things, when others do not behave as he expects them to, he can interpret their behavior as reflecting their badness rather than his. That is, he is being wronged rather than rejected, and the all-good self-concept can remain active and the all-bad self-concept dissociated. Consequently, he can feel rage rather than shame or sorrow. His self-concept not only justifies responding to failure or frustrations with righteous anger but requires it. Otherwise, failure threatens to disconfirm the illusions that the narcissistic self is built on. The rage is empowering and is congruent with Achilles’ preferred sense of himself as perfect and omnipotent. Paradoxically, he may feel this empowering rage precisely at those times when his omnipotence is challenged and he is threatened with feelings of impotence, as he is during the

¹⁵⁹ Morf, Horvath, and Torchetti 2011, 411. Masochists also feel cheated and victimized (Reik 1941, McWilliams 1994). Hence, Cooper speaks of the masochistic-narcissistic character (1988, 2009).

quarrel. The rage helps keep the all-good self active and defends against the painful affects that he feels when the bad self is mobilized. For in Achilles' mind, if he is not all-powerful, he is the opposite, impotent and pathetic, or in his words, "a coward and a nothing."

Chapter 3

Withdrawal

Introduction

The first part of this chapter concludes our discussion of the quarrel by showing how Achilles prevents reconciliation. The second part considers Thetis's life and relational style and argues that these served as a model for some of Achilles' actions and ways of relating. The third part concludes the discussion of masochism by assembling Achilles' various masochistic behaviors in one place. This includes briefly reviewing some of the masochistic tendencies already discussed as well as introducing new ones, which are taken from the whole poem rather than from book 1 alone.

Part I: Another Form of Self-Defeat

Introduction

After Achilles' speech and Agamemnon's reply, in which he tells Achilles to go home if he wants, it may seem as though the quarrel can only escalate and cause a serious rupture in their relationship. While there is a sense of inevitability about what follows, it is primarily Achilles who prevents reconciliation in book 1. One of the ways in which he does so seems to be an organizing principle: he assumes that something has happened before it has.

Achilles prevents reconciliation by assuming that something has happened before it has and by continuing to act in his forceful and violent relational manner. As for his relational manner, we will focus on Achilles' dramatic and baleful oath and his dashing the scepter to the

ground.¹ Scholars have interpreted this gesture as a rejection of Agamemnon's authority, and it is, but it is also more complicated than that. The gesture is just one in a series of actions. These turn out to be inconsistent and reflect Achilles' childhood conflicts. That the quarrel is embedded in an enactment suggests that it is less about the social or political system than it is about his childhood conflicts. That is, the social and political provide the arena in which Achilles' internal conflicts can be played out. But his conflicts would be played out in any number of arenas. The central conflict is the narcissistic need for recognition, admiration, and validation and the other's withholding of them. Once this need is frustrated, Achilles reacts with anger, and the conflict becomes one between the need and the denial or repudiation of the need. Achilles' relational manner and violent behavior are adaptations that evolved to extort this needed but withheld recognition. Begging is the complementary response that Achilles' relational manner extorts when he cannot obtain more direct forms of recognition such as praise. His assumption that something has already happened is the expectation of something being withheld. That is, what he assumes has happened is that recognition, in the form of his prize, has been withheld (in this case, taken away). This explains the form the internal conflict takes below: Achilles both assumes that something has happened and carries in the hope that it has not or that he may still get the recognition that he seeks.

Foreclosures

Achilles assumes something has already happened at a few points in the quarrel. He assumes that he has lost his prize before he has. After being persuaded by Athena to abuse rather than kill Agamemnon, Achilles says to him,

¹ Other instances of this relational manner are the continued name calling, abuse, moralizing, and threats (1.224-232, 300-303).

ἢ πολὺ λώϊόν ἐστι κατὰ στρατὸν εὐρὸν Ἀχαιῶν
δῶρ' ἀποαιρεῖσθαι ὅς τις σέθεν ἀντίον εἴπῃ· (230)
δημοβόρος βασιλεὺς ἐπεὶ οὐτιδανοῖσιν ἀνάσσεις·
ἢ γὰρ ἂν Ἀτρεΐδῃ νῦν ὕστατα λωβήσαιο. (1.229-32)

Truly it is much better among the wide army of the Achaeans
to take away the gifts of whoever speaks in opposition to you.
King who devours his people, since you rule worthless men;
for otherwise, son of Atreus, you might now have committed your last outrage.

I am interpreting Achilles' ἢ γὰρ ἂν Ἀτρεΐδῃ νῦν ὕστατα λωβήσαιο ("for otherwise, son of Atreus, you might now have committed your last outrage") as expressing past possibility and as referring to outrageous behavior that includes the seizure of his prize.² This line recurs in Thersites' abuse of Agamemnon in book 2 after he says that Agamemnon has taken away Achilles' prize (2.240-42). That the line clearly refers to the past in the second instance lends weight to interpreting it as referring to the past in the first instance too. As we will see, even if Achilles' potential optative were referring to the present or future, he nevertheless assumes that the discussion is over. When Achilles interrupts Agamemnon later in the quarrel, he likewise assumes that he has already lost his prize: "I will not fight with my hands over the girl / with you or any other, since you who gave her took her away from me [μ' ἀφέλεσθέ γε δόντες]" (1.298-99). This example further supports interpreting Achilles' ἢ γὰρ ἂν Ἀτρεΐδῃ νῦν ὕστατα λωβήσαιο as referring to the past. Because Achilles assumes that he has already lost his prize, there is no point in further discussion.

Achilles forecloses reconciliation in other ways. Immediately after saying that Agamemnon might have committed his last outrage, Achilles makes a prediction and swears an oath:

² The grammars take this optative as a past potential (Chantraine 1958-63, 2.219; Schwyzer and Debrunner 1950, 2.324). Kirk seems to interpret it the same way (Kirk 1985 ad loc.).

ἀλλ' ἔκ τοι ἐρέω καὶ ἐπὶ μέγαν ὄρκον ὁμοῦμαι·
 ναὶ μὰ τόδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὐ ποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους
 φύσει, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα τομῆν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν, (235)
 οὐδ' ἀναθηλήσει· περὶ γάρ ῥά ἐ χαλκὸς ἔλεψε
 φύλλά τε καὶ φλοιόν· νῦν αὐτὲ μιν υἴες Ἀχαιῶν
 ἐν παλάμῃς φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἳ τε θέμιστας
 πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται· ὁ δέ τοι μέγας ἔσσεται ὄρκος·
 ἦ ποτ' Ἀχιλλῆος ποθὴ ἵξεται υἴας Ἀχαιῶν (240)
 σύμπαντας· τότε δ' οὐ τι δυνήσεται ἀχνύμενός περ
 χραϊσμεῖν, εὔτ' ἂν πολλοὶ ὑφ' Ἑκτορος ἀνδροφόνιοι
 θνήσκοντες πίπτωσι· σὺ δ' ἔνδοθι θυμὸν ἀμύξεις
 χωόμενος ὃ τ' ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτισας.
 Ὡς φάτο Πηλεΐδης, ποτὶ δὲ σκῆπτρον βάλε γαίῃ (245)
 χρυσείοις ἥλοισι πεπαρμένον, ἔζετο δ' αὐτός·

But I will tell you, and I will swear a great oath:
 by this scepter, which will never grow leaves or shoots again,
 now that it has left its stump in the mountains,
 and will not bloom again, for bronze stripped it of
 its leaves and bark, but now the sons of the Achaeans
 carry it in their hands, the judges who safeguard
 the laws from Zeus; and this will be my great oath to you:
 Truly someday a longing for Achilles will come upon the sons of the Achaeans,
 all of them, and then, although grieved, in no way will you be able
 to help them when at the hands of man-slaying Hector many
 fall dying, and you will lacerate your spirit inside you
 angry that you did not at all honor the best of the Achaeans.
 So spoke Peleus's son, and to the earth he threw
 the scepter studded with golden nails and sat down himself.

This oath does not simply predict something in a characteristically forceful way but implicitly commits Achilles to a certain course of action. If a “longing” for Achilles will come over the Greeks, Achilles must be absent. He is here committing himself either to withdrawing from battle or to returning home. In either case, he is committing himself to preventing reconciliation. He assumes that reconciliation and recognition will not be forthcoming and so commits himself to extorting recognition by the most violent of strategies.

We might be surprised that in this oath Achilles does not make what he plans to do clearer. He might have said, “I swear that I will no longer fight. . . .” Instead, we must infer what

he commits himself to doing. As with his earlier threat (1.149-71), Achilles, for all his forcefulness, leaves essential elements of the communication implicit.

Achilles' words and actions here need to be broken down into the following smaller pieces because their implications are not entirely consistent: swearing an oath, swearing by the scepter, the imagery of the scepter, the content of the oath itself, dashing the scepter to the ground, and sitting back down.

Swearing an oath as Achilles does is a forceful and dramatic gesture and has a sense of finality about it. Since he formally binds himself to a course of action, there can be no more discussion. The sense of finality is reinforced by his preamble to the oath proper. The oath has two introductions (lines 233 and 239), separated by his digression on the scepter.

Achilles could have sworn an oath without swearing by the scepter. Using the scepter for the oath introduces all that the scepter symbolizes, namely, the system (of the assembly and political decision making, of administering justice, and of princely power) and the Zeus-backed authority of this system.³ Kirk comments:

The staff or *σκῆπτρον* belongs to the heralds who control the assembly; they give it to the speaker whom they recognize as having the floor. It is therefore a particularly solemn object, symbol of royal and indeed divine authority – Agamemnon's own staff or sceptre at 2.100-8 has descended to him through the rulers of Argos from Zeus himself, and here at 237-9 the staff Akhilleus is holding is one habitually held by the law-makers who guard the divine ordinances laid down by Zeus; see also on 2.109.⁴

³ Cf. Edwards 1980, 15.

⁴ Kirk 1985, ad 1.234-39. Cf. Latacz 2009, ad 1.234.

Kirk is probably correct that the scepter belongs to the heralds, but because the poem does not tell us whose scepter this is, we might suppose, as some have, that it is Agamemnon's.⁵ Even though we will assume that the scepter is not Agamemnon's, it is nevertheless associated with him, for he is the scepter-bearing king par excellence.⁶ Hence, Nestor is referring to Agamemnon when he tells Achilles not to quarrel with a scepter-bearing king, to whom Zeus gives glory (1.277-79). In book 9, Diomedes says that Zeus granted Agamemnon to be honored beyond all others with the scepter (9.38; cf. 9.99 and 2.203-06). Odysseus borrows Agamemnon's scepter in book 2 to restore order and (ironically) says that the army needs to have just one king, to whom Zeus gave the scepter and ordinances (2.185-87, 203-06 = 9.99; cf. 2.265-66, 278-79). This scepter, then, even if not belonging to Agamemnon, is associated with him and symbolizes the political and judicial system and the authority and legitimacy of the status quo.⁷

The imagery of the scepter contributes to the oath's impression of finality.⁸ The wood of which the scepter is made is dead. It has left its stump in the mountains and will never bloom or put forth leaves or shoots again. The finality of death implies the finality of Achilles' oath and the rupture in his relationship with Agamemnon. There can be no reconciliation. "As the scepter is separated from the forest," Lowenstam writes, "so Achilleus is removing himself from society."⁹ There is also pathos in such "vegetal imagery," which is one reason why Homer uses

⁵ Schein 1984, 96. On the shield of Achilles, the elders hold the heralds' scepters, which apparently authorize them to speak in the assembly (18.503-06).

⁶ The other leaders are also called "scepter bearing," so in theory this could be Achilles' scepter, but that seems unlikely (2.86).

⁷ Cf. Muellner 1996, 108.

⁸ Whitman 1958, 161.

⁹ Lowenstam 1993, 68.

it for fallen heroes.¹⁰ The sadness reflects Achilles' self-pity and growing disillusionment. He, too, has left his home never to return. He may also be sad because he has been treated this way. After this disappointment, the relationship with Agamemnon is dead.

The administrators of justice (*dikaspoloi*), who maintain Zeus's laws, hold the scepter.¹¹ Reminding his audience of this function of the scepter even as he holds it himself, Achilles is suggesting that he has been trying to administer justice as a de facto *dikaspolos*. Not being allowed to uphold justice, he is being denied it.¹² He has trusted in the system of the scepter but has been betrayed by it. The system of justice, like the tree from which the scepter was made, is dead.¹³ Achilles speaks against Agamemnon in order to uphold what is right. Of course, he has masochistically and narcissistically arrogated the authority to do this to himself.

Achilles has been following the proper procedure for speaking in the assembly, namely, speaking when he has the scepter.¹⁴ The assembly is supposed to allow for disagreement. Diomedes prefaces his criticism of Agamemnon in book 9 with a reminder of this (9.32-33). Hence, Achilles complains that Agamemnon thinks it better to take the prizes of whoever speaks against him (1.229-30). Achilles slips from the use of the scepter in assemblies generally to its

¹⁰ Schein 1984, 96, 73-76.

¹¹ *Dikē* is "right, justice" (GE, s.v.).

¹² Griffin 1980, 11-12.

¹³ For Muellner, Achilles' dashing the scepter to the ground "marks both his social detachment from the group of Agamemnon's Achaeans and that group's detachment from the divine and deathless *thémistes* of Zeus that the scepter represents" (1996, 108).

¹⁴ Achilles seems to be following protocol at least through his speech at 1.122-29. In his two speeches to Agamemnon after that (1.149-71, 225-44), he is so abusive that he might be deemed no longer to be following the rules even if he is holding the scepter.

use in assemblies deciding legal disputes. This move suggests that he has been acting as Agamemnon's judge all along.

When Achilles attempts to uphold justice, he does so in respect to prizes of honor: it would be wrong for Agamemnon to redistribute the army's prizes or to take Achilles' prize, which the army gave him and Agamemnon has no right to take. Achilles then enlarges his protest to include the system of distributing honor generally. The systems of speaking in the assembly, of administering justice, and of distributing honor all come together in what Achilles says about the scepter.

As we said, Achilles' oath itself commits him to being absent from battle and therefore to preventing reconciliation with Agamemnon. The oath is narcissistic and sadistic in its callousness and fantasy of Agamemnon's distress. Achilles elides his responsibility for the Greeks' impending suffering. Their deaths, which will be their own and Agamemnon's fault, are just something that will happen at Hector's hands rather than something that Achilles will engineer. The Greeks are simply getting what they deserve for failing to appreciate Achilles now.

Achilles' closing gesture, dashing the scepter to the ground, likewise reinforces the finality of the oath and of the rupture in his relationship with Agamemnon. This action not only expresses Achilles' exasperation but also symbolizes the end of communication, particularly communication by means of this system. Thus, to begin his next speech, Achilles will interrupt Agamemnon. Since the scepter indicates that the speaker has the floor and Achilles is no longer holding the scepter, for him to speak at all requires interrupting someone.

We said that the scepter symbolizes the system (of speaking, of politics, of decision making, of adjudication). In other words, it symbolizes political power and authority and is associated with those who wield it, the scepter-bearing kings and Agamemnon in particular.

Dashing the scepter to the ground therefore symbolizes Achilles' rejection of this political and judicial system and Agamemnon's power and authority. "When Achilleus casts down the scepter," Lowenstam says, "his gesture indicates his rejection of Agamemnon's rule and of the conventions of society."¹⁵ Whitman likewise thinks that this gesture symbolizes "Achilles' defiance of external authority."¹⁶ For Griffin, the scepter symbolizes the community, so dashing it to the ground represents Achilles' rejection of the community.¹⁷

While I agree with these scholars, this gesture needs to be put in the context of Achilles' other actions (swearing an oath, swearing by the scepter, the imagery of the scepter, the oath, sitting back down). When we do this, the gesture and the scene become more complicated. Achilles is sending mixed messages here. He swears by the scepter to solemnize his oath, because the scepter evidently carries a certain authority. He then throws this same scepter to the ground in what is apparently a rejection of its authority. This gesture undermines the oath he has just sworn. What are we to make of this? We might argue that his gesture symbolizes only the end of communication and not the rejection of the scepter's authority. Or maybe it symbolizes neither of these. Or we might dismiss this contradiction and say that the frustrated Achilles simply fails to realize the implications of his gesture. Or we could argue that the self-defeating nature of the gesture is simply indicative of his masochism.¹⁸

Achilles' gesture represents a compromise between conflicting impulses. On the one hand, he is frustrated and disgusted and wants to reject the system and Agamemnon and to

¹⁵ Lowenstam 1993, 67.

¹⁶ Whitman 1958, 161.

¹⁷ Griffin 1980, 11.

¹⁸ Cf. Schein 1984, 96: Achilles throws the scepter down in "self-defeating anger."

punish him and the Greeks with his absence. His frustration has reached its limit, and he is no longer willing to abide the current system. He disavows his need for the Greeks. It is not he who needs them but they who need him (1.240-44, 340-42; 9.197).¹⁹ He will withdraw in protest, and his withdrawal will show who needs whom. On the other hand, all things considered, Achilles would rather be accorded the respect that he believes himself entitled to than withdraw in protest. Achilles' oath and gesture (dashing the scepter) indicate that he refuses to continue under the status quo and that he rejects Agamemnon's authority. Yet dashing the scepter, which undermines his oath, invites others to intervene and beg him to stay. And in fact Nestor does intervene after Achilles' speech.²⁰ In this way, dashing the scepter allows one part of Achilles to reject Agamemnon and the status quo and another part of him to "undo" his oath in the hope that he can extort the recognition that he desires without resorting to withdrawing from battle. That is, others' desire to prevent him from fulfilling his oath would motivate them to give him his desired recognition (in the form of begging) now.

If recognition would be sufficient to mollify Achilles, Agamemnon's authority per se would not be an insurmountable obstacle to reconciliation provided that Achilles received his due recognition. This shows that fundamentally the quarrel is about Achilles' need for recognition rather than about the fairness of the system per se (e.g., Who is the best? What makes someone the best? What is status based on? What does Agamemnon's position as paramount chief entitle him to do?). Or to put it another way, the quarrel is about these questions, but there would be no quarrel over these questions if Achilles did not need so much recognition. This

¹⁹ Cf. Lynn-George 1988, 123ff. See chapter 4 below.

²⁰ See chapter 4 below.

need, which reaches narcissistic levels in Achilles' case, is rooted in his personality and personal history (see chapter 4).

Dashing the scepter to the ground is not all that Achilles does after his oath. He also sits back down. His remaining in the assembly rather than storming off or disbanding it suggests that despite his oath and gesture, he has not quite finished communicating. He has already sworn an oath committing him to withdrawing, yet his continued presence indicates that at least a part of him still hopes for a resolution. Perhaps he swears by the scepter rather than by a god so that he is able to break his oath with impunity if circumstances become more favorable.

Achilles' contradictory oath and gestures reflect his ambivalence about the system and anticipate the problems that will occupy him in his great speech in book 9. Swearing by the scepter shows that in principle he accepts the system, while throwing it down suggests that he rejects the system altogether. He does not in fact reject the system itself but rather his place within it.²¹ To abandon the system entirely would be to abandon the contest to be recognized as the best of the Achaeans and as having the most honor. This Achilles does not do here and never does completely.

To return to the ways in which Achilles prevents reconciliation, after Achilles sits down, Nestor tries to end the quarrel. He tells Agamemnon not to take Achilles' prize because Achilles is a bulwark against war. Agamemnon agrees but then complains about Achilles' abusive, entitled, and domineering behavior (1.286-91).²² At this point, Achilles interrupts Agamemnon and says that he will not take any more orders from Agamemnon (1.292-303). It is here that

²¹ Edwards 1987.

²² Donlan thinks Agamemnon is at fault for refusing to compromise (1993, 163).

Achilles says that he will not fight for Briseis because “you who gave her took her away” (1.299). This statement, which refers to the past, is the more remarkable in that Nestor has just urged Agamemnon not to take Achilles’ prize, so what will happen to Achilles’ prize is clearly still up for debate rather than a past event. Achilles ends his speech with a challenge, which is also a threat. Agamemnon, he says, cannot take anything else of his against his will and dares Agamemnon to try it (1.295-303). Achilles graphically describes what would happen: “quickly your dark blood will spurt about my spear” (1.303). Achilles thus prevents reconciliation by interrupting, defying, and threatening Agamemnon in this last speech.

These actions prevent reconciliation in part by denying Nestor a chance to prevail on Agamemnon and Agamemnon a chance to reconsider. Despite Agamemnon’s complaints, I think that he would have yielded had Achilles not interrupted. He simply needed to have his grievances heard before doing so. There are a few reasons for believing this. Agamemnon agrees with what Nestor says. We might think that the sequence of Agamemnon’s thought (“you have said all of this properly, but . . .”) means that he is not going to yield, and we might argue that this is what Achilles is responding to. Yet Achilles assumes both before and after Agamemnon speaks that his prize has already been taken away. Agamemnon here complains about Achilles’ behavior but does not say that he will take Achilles’ prize. Agamemnon recognizes that Achilles is valuable and for that reason does not want to take his prize. Agamemnon’s agreement with Nestor here and his backsliding earlier show this. Since Agamemnon agrees with Nestor, he would have yielded to Nestor eventually, even if Nestor had had to exhort him again not to take Achilles’ prize. Complaining allows Agamemnon to save face, for he can pretend that he would have taken Achilles’ prize if he did not have so much respect for Nestor. Finally, Edwards tells

us that this is a mediation type scene.²³ In his examples (*Il.* 1.573ff., 23.456-98, and 24.65ff.), the person appealed to yields. This suggests that Agamemnon would have yielded here too if Achilles had given him the chance.

Nestor's bungling intervention contributes to Achilles' refusal. Although Achilles' gestures (dashing the scepter and sitting back down) invite intervention, Nestor does not give Achilles what he wants. Instead, he criticizes Achilles for quarreling with a scepter-bearing king and says that Agamemnon is better than Achilles because he rules over more men (1.277-81). Achilles wants Nestor or Agamemnon to beg him to stay. Agamemnon refuses to do this after Achilles' speech at 1.149-71: "Go ahead, flee, if your spirit is impelled to, but I'm not / begging [λίσσομαι] you to stay for my sake" (1.173-77). Nestor does beg but begs the wrong person. Instead of begging Achilles to stay, he begs (λίσσομαι) Agamemnon to let go of his anger (1.283).²⁴ Achilles' attempt at extortion by means of his violent relational manner (e.g., the oath, dashing the scepter) has once again failed, and consequently he resorts to drastic actions: withdrawing from battle and enlisting Zeus to destroy the Greeks.

Although Nestor squanders this opportunity, his intervention is not solely responsible for Achilles' refusal. Achilles does not agree with Nestor that Agamemnon is better than he is because Agamemnon rules over more men, yet he does not reply to Nestor's speech. He does, however, interrupt Agamemnon when Agamemnon is complaining about Achilles' wanting to rule all and give orders to all. Achilles says that he would be called a coward and a nothing if he yields to Agamemnon in every matter (1.293-94). Achilles seems to be referring to

²³ Edwards 1980, 15.

²⁴ See chapter 4 for more on this point.

Agamemnon's demand for another prize or to his threat to take Achilles' prize. The latter seems more likely even though Achilles proceeds to say that he will not fight for Briseis. But it is this very threat that is still being debated. If Agamemnon were to yield to Nestor, as he seems likely to do, then the matter that Achilles is objecting to specifically would disappear. Achilles does not let this happen. He assumes that his prize is lost, even though this is what is being discussed. Even if Agamemnon is not going to be persuaded by Nestor, since Achilles cannot know this yet from what Agamemnon has said, he acts to prevent reconciliation. Therefore, in this scenario too, even if Achilles assumes correctly that Agamemnon is still going to take his prize, Achilles acts to ensure that he loses his prize. Furthermore, the point about the past tense of "you who gave her took her away" still holds: Agamemnon has not taken Achilles' prize yet. Not only has Achilles' prize not been taken yet, but the threat to take his prize, the "matter" in which Achilles refuses to yield to Agamemnon, is still being discussed. That is, Achilles' very reason for interrupting may be in the process of dissolving until his interruption halts this process. The great irony is that Achilles proceeds to yield prematurely and voluntarily precisely to the thing that he is objecting to and goes so far as to assume that it has already happened. In this way does Achilles ensure that what he assumes has happened does happen.

Athena's Intervention

We might think that Athena's instructions do not permit Achilles to reconcile with Agamemnon (1.207-14). This is not so. Acting as Hera's agent, Athena tells Achilles to check his spirit, stop quarreling, and not to draw his sword (i.e., not to kill Agamemnon). She tells him to reproach Agamemnon with "how it's going to be" and says that he will receive three times as many gifts. She does not say that Achilles cannot reach a settlement with Agamemnon, nor does she tell Achilles what he is to say when he reproaches Agamemnon with "how it's going to be."

The one thing that she does tell Achilles about the future, that he will get triple the gifts, he does not mention in his prediction of “how it’s going to be.” He says that the Greeks will miss him when they are dying at Hector’s hands and that Agamemnon, powerless to help them, will regret failing to honor the best of the Achaeans (1.240-44). Since Athena does not give Achilles this plan, her promise of triple gifts does not preclude reconciliation. Her “cease quarreling” in fact implies that reconciliation should be reached, even if ἔπεσιν μὲν ὀνειδίσσον ὡς ἔσεται περ (“with words reproach him with how it will be”) is at odds with it (1.211). Since Athena does not give Achilles any plan, the gifts that she promises must come some other way if they are to come at all. The plan is Achilles’ own. He is the one who prevents reconciliation, which would, in any case, suit Hera and Athena’s purposes better than Achilles’ plan does. In fact, they will repeatedly try to thwart Zeus’s implementation of Achilles’ plan.

Hera and Athena’s promise of triple gifts is a sop for the moment and essentially empty.²⁵ The proof of this is that they do nothing to fulfill the promise, which is never mentioned again in the poem, and even act in ways that would prevent Achilles from getting his gifts. Furthermore, Achilles himself does not trust them. He does not sit around expecting them to fulfill it. Rather, he has Thetis appeal to Zeus. Since Achilles’ plan, as it can be inferred from his prediction, is his own, he is acting on his own initiative in refusing reconciliation and without knowing whether his plan will work, for it depends on Thetis’s and Zeus’s willingness to execute it. In the event, Zeus is reluctant, preferring to avoid a quarrel with Hera. He even sits silently and has to be begged again by Thetis. Because Zeus is reluctant and is not sure himself what he will do, Achilles cannot know that Zeus will help him. His plan is a gamble.

²⁵ Cf. Achilles’ promise that the Achaeans will repay Agamemnon three or four times over if he forgoes taking another prize now.

Part II: Achilles and Thetis

Thetis's Life

I argue that Thetis's life provides a model and therefore an explanation for some of Achilles' actions and ways of relating. The *Iliad* gives some of the facts of Thetis's life. For others we must rely on other sources. When there are competing versions of her story, we follow those most consistent with the *Iliad*. But deciding which these are is not always simple, for the poem itself provides seemingly contradictory information about Thetis.

Thetis, a daughter of Nereus, was raised on Olympus for at least part of her life. There Hera "nurtured and reared" her (*Il.* 24.60). Although the *Iliad* is silent on the point, the other sources agree that Zeus had a romantic interest in her.²⁶ According to the *Cypria*, Apollonius, and Apollodorus, Thetis avoids having sex with Zeus as a courtesy to Hera, and in retaliation, Zeus forces her to marry a mortal, Peleus.²⁷ All of this either agrees with the *Iliad* or is at least not inconsistent with it. The *Iliad*, too, says that Zeus forced Thetis to marry Peleus, but it gives no reason for the marriage: "Of all the sea-goddesses he [i.e., Zeus] subdued me to a man, / Aeacus's son Peleus, and I endured the nuptial bed of a man, / although I was extremely unwilling [πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα]" (18. 432-34, 429-35). In book 24, Hera mentions that she gave Thetis to Peleus to be his wife (24.60-61).

²⁶ Pindar *Isthm.* 8.27-40; West 2003a, *Cypria* fr. 2 = Philodemus *De pietate* B 7241 Obbink; Apollonius *Arg.* 4.790-97; Apollodorus *Bibl.* 3.13.5.

²⁷ West 2003a, *Cypria* fr. 2 = Philodemus *De pietate* B 7241 Obbink; Apollonius *Arg.* 4.790-97; Apollodorus *Bibl.* 3.13.5.

In the other tradition, represented by Pindar and *Prometheus Bound*, Zeus and Poseidon want to “marry” Thetis but decide to marry her off to Peleus when they learn that she is destined to give birth to a son who will be mightier than his father (*Isthm.* 8.27-40; *PV* 167-77, 755-74, 907-14).²⁸ Homer seems to allude to this tradition when Achilles tells Thetis to remind Zeus of how she once saved him when Hera, Athena, and Poseidon were trying to bind him (*Il.* 1.396-406).²⁹ Thetis released Zeus and summoned the hundred-hander Briareus to help. Briareus is “stronger in force than his father” (βίην οὐ̃ πατρὸς ἀμείνων [1.404]). That Homer has Achilles, who is destined to be mightier than his father, refer to Briareus as mightier than his father cannot but allude to the tradition about Achilles. By forcing Thetis to marry a mortal, Zeus prevented his overthrow and the renewal of the succession crisis of Hesiod’s *Theogony*.³⁰ We will return to this point in more detail later.

Only on two points are the traditions about Thetis’s marriage to Peleus potentially incompatible. These are whether Thetis refused Zeus and whether he made her marry Peleus to punish her for refusing him or only to avoid having sex with her. These would not be incompatible if they happened sequentially: Thetis refuses Zeus, and then after learning of the prophecy of his overthrow, he forces her to marry Peleus out of spite or caution. The two traditions are not preserved in enough detail to decide whether they are incompatible.

Apollonius, for example, reconciles them. If the versions were to be incompatible, we should

²⁸ In Pindar, Themis is the one who warns Zeus and Poseidon. In *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus is the one who can warn Zeus (Poseidon is not mentioned in this context), but he does not do so in this play. Griffith thinks that Pindar could be the source for this myth in *Prometheus Bound* or Pindar and the play could have a common source, perhaps a “lost epic” (Griffith 1983, 5). He favors the former scenario.

²⁹ For the following arguments, I am indebted to Slatkin (1991) and Muellner (1996), who follows her.

³⁰ Slatkin 1991; Muellner 1996. In the *Theogony*, Zeus frees the hundred-handers, including Briareus, to help him fight the Titans (*Theog.* 617-735; Kirk 1985, ad 1.399).

probably prefer the tradition preserved in Pindar because the *Iliad* provides no evidence for Thetis's refusal of Zeus's advances but does allude to the tradition of Achilles being mightier than his father, and in this tradition Zeus's motive for marrying off Thetis is to avoid being overthrown.³¹

Why is Homer not clearer about the reasons for the marriage? When Achilles wants Zeus to repay Thetis's favor to him, why does he not refer to the favor of his mortality (i.e., he is mortal so that Zeus could stay in power)? As Slatkin says, "The price of Zeus's hegemony is Achilles' death."³² Why does Achilles not refer to this instead of to Thetis's freeing of Zeus? It would be impolitic to remind Zeus explicitly of why he is still in power. Achilles tells Thetis to remind Zeus of the service she did him rather than of the disservice Zeus did her (1.394-412). When Thetis does petition Zeus, she omits even the story that Achilles does recommend and uses only the standard, generic language of prayers: "if I ever helped you among the immortals either in word or in deed, / fulfill this wish for me" (1.503-04). This suggests that even the story mentioned by Achilles would have been too direct. If this would have been too direct, recounting Zeus's disservice definitely would have been. By referring to Achilles as ὠκυμωρότατος ("most short-lived," "doomed to a most early death"), Thetis can tactfully remind Zeus of why Achilles is doomed to an early death. She can obliquely recall the disservice without actually mentioning it. I also agree with Slatkin that Homer keeps the various myths about Thetis's cosmic importance in the background because they would detract from the poem's concentration on

³¹ Hera's support for the marriage in book 24 tells us nothing about Zeus's motives since in either case Hera would have been enthusiastic about it.

³² Slatkin 1991, 101.

mortality.³³ Homer focuses on Achilles' choice rather than on how he could have been the ruler of the universe.

According to Apollonius and Apollodorus, Thetis leaves Peleus and returns to her father's house (*Arg.* 4.771-73, 780, 816-17, 865-879; *Bibl.* 3.13.6).³⁴ In the *Iliad*, too, Thetis and Peleus no longer live together. Thetis now lives with her father Nereus under the sea (1.357-59; 18.35-68; 24.77-84). One might argue that she is only living there to be closer to Achilles. Yet she could be closer than that, and in any case, it does not take the gods long to get from Olympus to Troy. Thetis herself gets to Olympus quickly, and Phthia is not very far from Olympus. It is also suspicious that she is living in her father's house, the very place to which she withdraws in Apollonius. This is simply where she lives. Book 24 might seem to provide some support for the alternate interpretation: Zeus says that Thetis "is always by" Achilles (24.72-73). But the bottom of the sea hardly qualifies as being so close to Achilles as to prevent the gods from stealing Hector's corpse. Furthermore, in lamentation Thetis and the other Nereids leave their father's house and rise out of the sea to comfort Achilles (18.35-68). As the neoanalysts point out, this motif has been borrowed from the death of Achilles himself.³⁵ In the *Aethiopsis*, Thetis, her sisters, and the Muses come to lament Achilles (Proclus *Chrestomathy*, arg. 4 West 2003a, 112). Agamemnon's account of Achilles' funeral in *Odyssey* 24 agrees with the *Aethiopsis* (*Od.* 24.36-

³³ Slatkin 1991. Thetis, whose former power can be glimpsed from her importance in the succession crisis, is powerless to help Achilles on her own in the *Iliad* and must appeal to Zeus. She is reduced to a helpless, grieving mother.

³⁴ Green thinks that Apollodorus's account is based on the hymn's and Apollonius's, and Frazer that it is based on Apollonius's (Green 1997, ad 4.863-79, Frazer 1921, 2.69n.4).

³⁵ E.g., Kullmann 1960, 332; Burgess 2009, 72-97.

94).³⁶ He says that Thetis and her sisters rose from the sea (*Od.* 24.47-48). The *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aethiopsis* thus all have Thetis living with her father under the sea rather than with Peleus.

A handful of passages pose problems for this interpretation because they seem to imply that Thetis was or is still living with Peleus.³⁷ Thetis says that she will never again welcome Achilles home to Peleus's house, so we might think that she must still be living there.³⁸ Thetis gave Achilles a chest full of clothes and carpets to take with him (16.221-24). Epeigeus, a Myrmidon, fled as a suppliant to Peleus and Thetis, who sent him to accompany Achilles at Troy (16.574). Finally, in book 1, Achilles says that he often heard his mother boast that she saved Zeus when Hera, Poseidon, and Athena were trying to bind him (1.396-97).

A number of responses can be given that apply to all of these problematic passages. First, Thetis's estrangement from Peleus need not require that she never go to Peleus's house again. We can imagine her visiting Achilles there from time to time. Otherwise, she would have had few occasions to see her son for any length of time. The poets could have imagined some such scenario without expecting anyone to insist that her estrangement from Peleus preclude visiting her son. These passages are *topoi* or motifs, the implications of which the poet fails to realize and contain. The passages in which Thetis or Thetis and Peleus will not receive Achilles at home are

³⁶ The authenticity of *Od.* 24.1-204 (or 23.297ff.) has been doubted at least since Aristarchus (Heubeck 1992 ad 24.1-204). See Heubeck 1992 (353-55, ad 24.1-204) for references.

³⁷ These passages (1.396-97; 16.222-23, 574; 18.332; 19.422) are given by Edwards (1991, ad 18.59-60).

³⁸ *Il.* 18.59-60=440-41, cf. 332. In 16.89-90, Achilles says that his mother will not receive him after returning home, and in 19.421-22, he says that he will die far from his parents. This is a *topos*, which is slightly expanded in 18.59-60=440-41.

a common pathos-inducing topos.³⁹ I agree with Willcock's comments on 18.59-60: "For the pathos of her situation (that of a mother who will not receive her son home from the war), the poet disregards the fact, assumed in [line] 35, that Thetis had now left her husband's home in Phthia, and was living again in the sea with her father."⁴⁰ As for Thetis's gift of the chest, although this hardly needs to mean that she lives with Peleus, it is a frequent motif, theme, or narrative technique of Homeric poetry to provide the history of an object. For example, Thetis is also the source of the urn that will hold Patroclus's and Achilles' bones (23.91-92). As for Epeigeus, the theme of the refugee who is taken in by a benefactor is common, and this information here constitutes the hero's "obituary."⁴¹ As a refugee, Epeigeus is also a doublet of Phoenix and Patroclus (9.447-84; 23.84-90), and his death in book 16 foreshadows Patroclus's later in the same book (16.570-80, 855-57). The passage from book 1, in which Achilles recalls how Thetis once helped Zeus, is an instance of the poet's technique of using character speech to narrate events preceding those of the primary story.⁴² Inconsistencies are not uncommon in Homeric poetry, and those we have been considering, if indeed they are inconsistencies, can be explained by these techniques of oral composition.

Often Peleus is the only parent who is said to be living in Phthia, even in contexts in which we might, on the basis of the problematic passages discussed above, expect to find Thetis

³⁹ For such pathos-generating topos, see Griffin 1980.

⁴⁰ Willcock 1984, ad 18.59-60.

⁴¹ Cf. Griffin 1980, Schein 1984.

⁴² This is an "external analepsis," a "reference to events *before* the beginning of the primary story" (Nünlist and de Jong 2015, 164; cf., Genette 1980, de Jong 1987, 87-90). In the *Iliad*, "external completing analepses" are usually left to "secondary narrators," i.e., the characters who are narrating (Nünlist and de Jong 2015, 164). We cannot go into Zielinski's law, the "'continuity of time' principle" ("narrator-text narrates the course of events in essentially chronological order"), but see Nünlist and de Jong (2015, 166) for references (Zielinski 1899-1901).

mentioned too. Although Peleus and Thetis receive the refugee Epeigeus, only Peleus is said to have received Phoenix and Patroclus and Menoetius (9.478-84; 23.84-90). In books 9 and 11, Peleus and Menoitius, but not Thetis, are said to have sent Achilles and Patroclus off to Troy (9.438-39, 11.765-90). Since Nestor's account is fairly full, we might have expected him at least to mention Thetis (11.765-90). In *Iliad* 24, Priam tells Achilles to think of Peleus, who in his old age may be oppressed by neighbors because he has no one to protect him (24.486-89). Achilles says that Peleus is unlucky in having only one child since even that one child is not caring for him in his old age (24.538-41). This suggests that Thetis does not and will not take care of Peleus, for otherwise not having sons to care for him would be less pitiful.⁴³ We know that Thetis is not caring for Peleus now, since she is living in the sea, but what Achilles says obviously applies to the future as well. While the parent who is not cared for in old age is a topos designed to generate pathos, so is the son who dies in war far from his parents.⁴⁴ Consequently, we might treat these passages as offsetting.

The evidence for Thetis having left Peleus to live with her father seems stronger than the evidence for her living with Peleus. Although the poem is inconsistent on where Thetis lived in the past, it consistently has her living under the sea in the present (1.357-59; 18.35-68; 24.77-84). This is where the *Odyssey* and the *Aethiopsis* have her living as well. The evidence for this seems stronger than that for the alternative partly because this evidence is difficult to explain away, whereas it is easy to see how the contradictory passages could have arisen: the poet was using topoi and motifs without considering the implications that these passing references to the past

⁴³ Peleus does have at least one daughter, Polydora, according to Homer (*Il.* 16.175).

⁴⁴ Griffin 1980.

might have and how they might conflict with what he says elsewhere. Where Thetis lives in passing references to the past seems more open to corruption through “ad hoc invention” than does where she lives in the present.⁴⁵ Living in the sea with her father in the present represents the main tradition. If, however, it is ultimately best to conclude that the poem is simply inconsistent on where Thetis lives, we are nevertheless warranted in believing that the myths preserved by Apollonius lie behind the situation in the *Iliad*.

The *Iliad* does not say why or when Thetis left Peleus’s house. That the poem consistently has her living under the sea in the present seems to presuppose the tradition preserved by Apollonius and Apollodorus, and we will accordingly (and by necessity) follow them. According to these authors, Thetis left in anger because Peleus interrupted her attempt to make Achilles immortal and ageless by holding him over the fire (*Arg.* 4.771-73, 780, 816-17, 865-879; *Bibl.* 3.13.6).

Withdrawal Symptoms

This section considers the sources for the myth of Thetis’s withdrawal from Peleus’s house and focuses on Apollonius and his sources. I argue that Apollonius modeled his account of Thetis’s withdrawal on the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* but did not invent her withdrawal.

Apollonius modeled his account of Thetis’s attempt to immortalize Achilles on the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.⁴⁶ In the hymn, Demeter tries to make Demophon immortal but withdraws in anger after she is interrupted by his mother Metaneira (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 233-81).

⁴⁵ The phrase is Willcock’s (1977).

⁴⁶ Green 1997, ad *Arg.* 4.863-79; Mackie 1998, 331; Richardson 1974, 70 n1.

The numerous verbal parallels between the hymn and the *Argonautica* tell us that Apollonius was using the hymn as a model.⁴⁷ We can compare ἄϊε (“heard” [*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 250]) with αἰουσα (“hearing” [*Arg.* 4.875]); ἀάσθη and ἀάσθης (“was misled, acted foolishly” [*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 246, 258]) with ἀάσθη and ἄτη (“blindness, madness, folly” [*Arg.* 4.817]); ἀσπαίροντα (“convulsing, writhing” [*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 289]) with σπαίροντα (“convulsing, writhing” [*Arg.* 4.875]); and line final κῆρας ἀλύξαι (“escape death” [*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 262]) with line final γῆρας ἀλάλκοι (“ward off old age” [*Arg.* 4.872]). Both poems have line initial παῖδα φίλον (“dear child” [*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 252, 261; *Arg.* 4.874; cf. *Il.* 16.460, *Od.* 24.103]).⁴⁸ Most telling is the similarity between line initial χρίσκ’ ἀμβροσίη (“anointed with ambrosia” [*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 237]) and line initial ἀμβροσίη χρίσκει (“anointed with ambrosia” [*Arg.* 4.871]).⁴⁹ Apollonius is using the same language to narrate the same plot.

Although Apollonius modeled his narrative on the *Hymn to Demeter*, he did not invent the myth about Thetis’s attempt to immortalize Achilles. First of all, it is highly unlikely that the obscure Demophon, son of Celeus and Metaneira, would be the first character that a goddess tried to immortalize by this method.⁵⁰ In addition to the cases of Thetis and Demeter, Isis tries to make Byblus’s son immortal in the same way.⁵¹ “All three goddesses,” Frazer writes, “were baffled by the rash intervention of affectionate but ignorant mortals.”⁵² These myths consist of a

⁴⁷ Mackie 1998, 331 and Richardson 1974, 70 n1.

⁴⁸ Livrea 1973, ad *Arg.* 4.874.

⁴⁹ The *Iliad* has χρίσόν τ’ἀμβροσίη, “anoint with ambrosia” (16.670 = 680; Livrea 1973, ad *Arg.* 4.871).

⁵⁰ Other authors differ on the names of those involved in the incident. See Frazer’s Appendix 1, “Putting Children on the Fire,” for references (1921, 2.311-12).

⁵¹ Frazer 1921, 2.312; see Plutarch’s *Isis et Osiris*, 16.

⁵² Frazer 1921, 2.312.

few story patterns of oral epic: a goddess's attempt to immortalize a human infant is interrupted by a mortal parent, a god or hero withdraws in anger, and an angry god or hero inflicts devastation until propitiation is made.⁵³ That these myths consist of story patterns, which oral poets use to compose their narratives, strongly suggests that they are the work of oral poets.⁵⁴ For this reason alone, Thetis's instantiation of the story pattern is also most likely the work of oral poets rather than an invention of Apollonius. I agree with Peter Green that "[t]he myth [of Thetis trying to immortalize Achilles with fire] is one of great antiquity."⁵⁵

Apollonius and Apollodorus are not the only sources for this myth or for variations of it. Lycophron says that Achilles alone of Peleus's seven children survived being put in the fire (*Alexandra* 178-79 and scholiast).⁵⁶ According to a scholiast on Apollonius (*Arg.* 4.816), the poet of the Hesiodic *Aegimius* says that Thetis put Peleus's sons in a cauldron of water to see whether they were immortal, but other authors say that she put them in the fire, as Apollonius does (*Hes. fr.* 300 Merkelbach-West).⁵⁷ After Thetis had killed many of the children by doing

⁵³ Other themes can be added. For instance, the offended god or hero may at first refuse to be reconciled (e.g., Achilles, Meleager, Demeter) and then regret his decision (e.g., Meleager and on one interpretation of the *Iliad*, Achilles). There is also the theme of the abducted woman in the *Iliad* and the *Hymn to Demeter*. In the *Hymn to Demeter*, there are two instantiations of what Muellner calls the "*mēnis* [wrath] theme" (Muellner 1996, 50, *passim*). One is directed at Zeus and the immortals because Zeus allowed Hades to abduct Persephone, and the other is directed against mortals because Metaneira interrupted Demeter. See Lord (2000, 186-98), Mary Louise Lord (1967), Sowa (1984, 95-120), Muellner (1996), and Nickel (2003).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Lord 2000, Nagy 1999.

⁵⁵ Green 1997, 328 ad *Arg.* 4.863-79. Frazer tells us that "[t]he Greek practice of running round the hearth with a child on the fifth or seventh day after birth may have been a substitute for the older custom of passing the child over the fire" (Frazer 1921, 2.313; Suda s.v. Ἀμφιδρόμια and the *scholion* to Plato *Theaetetus* 160e). He assembles an impressive body of cross-cultural analogues to this myth (Frazer 1921, 2.311-17). In his examples, the child is placed over the fire to ward off spirits or evil or to get back a human infant that was suspected of being a changeling. These analogues and the Greek practice give some idea of how this myth might have arisen.

⁵⁶ Hurst and Kolde 2008, ad loc.

⁵⁷ See also Livrea 1973, ad *Arg.* 4.816.

this, Peleus was upset and prevented her from putting Achilles in the cauldron. In *Achilles' Lovers*, Sophocles says that Thetis left Peleus after he rebuked her.⁵⁸

From this *scholion* we learn that there was also a tradition about putting Achilles in a cauldron, which recalls myths about Medea, and that in this variant, too, Peleus interferes.⁵⁹ The scholiast knows of “others” who agree with Apollonius about Thetis putting Achilles in the fire. We do not know who these “others” are, but it is encouraging that the scholiast has been using earlier sources (the *Aegimius* and Sophocles) and can even cite the relevant book of the *Aegimius* (book 2). The scholiast was still early enough to have access to the *Aegimius* and to Sophocles’ play or to sources about these works. We learn that Sophocles, too, has Thetis withdraw after Peleus rebukes her, presumably for what she was doing to Achilles or had done to the other children. We can now trace this myth, or at least versions of it, back into the archaic and classical periods. All of this shows that Apollonius did not invent this myth. He was aware of the myth about Achilles, noticed the story pattern in the *Hymn to Demeter*, and used the hymn as a model because it was “Homeric.”⁶⁰ By following the hymn’s language closely, Apollonius could point to the story pattern shared by the hymn and myths about Achilles.

There are other relevant myths that go back to the archaic period. In the *Aethiopsis*, after Achilles is killed, Thetis takes him to the “White Island” in the Black Sea (Proclus *Chrestomathy*, arg. 4). This island is similar to Elysium, so Achilles there enjoys a kind of

⁵⁸ Livrea 1973, ad *Arg.* 4.816, for the *scholion* and references.

⁵⁹ Whether it was the fire or a cauldron that Thetis put Achilles in does not affect my argument.

⁶⁰ At least some of the hymns were attributed to Homer at least as early as Thucydides (3.104.4-6; West 2003b, 4-5).

immortality and is married to either Helen or Medea.⁶¹ In the same poem, Dawn gives her son Memnon immortality after Achilles kills him (Proclus *Chrestomathy*, arg. 2 West 2003a). West writes:

Achilles' translation to the White Island was an innovation of the *Aethiopsis*. If Memnon got a form of immortality from his mother, Achilles merited no less. The White Island may originally have been a purely mythical place; the Indian epics also know of a White Island in the north where certain men go who die in battle. In Greek sources, however, it is identified with a real uninhabited island in the Black Sea, 50 km off the mouth of the Danube, now the Ukrainian Island of Ostrov Zmeinyy. . . . Sherds with scratched dedications to Achilles are found there, starting from the late sixth century. Ionian mariners in the second half of the seventh century had carried his cult into the Black Sea and attached his name to this and certain other sites. . . .⁶²

Since a goddess's desire to confer immortality on a human was a common theme (cf. Calypso and Odysseus [*Od.* 5.135-36, 209] and Dawn and Tithonus), it seems unwarranted to claim that the *Aethiopsis* invented this myth just because it is not found in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.⁶³ In fact, Calypso's desire to make Odysseus ageless and immortal (*Od.* 5.135-36) and Zeus's desire to save Sarpedon (*Il.* 16.432-57) imply familiarity with such myths. The way in which Sleep and Death retrieve Sarpedon's body in *Iliad* 16 is similar to the way in which Thetis and Dawn retrieve their sons' bodies in the *Aethiopsis*, even if what happens afterwards is different (16.666-83).⁶⁴ The parallel in Indian epic, if related, would make the theme of the White Island extremely old, even if locating the White Island in the Black Sea was a relatively late development.

⁶¹ Ibycus, Simonides, and Apollonius say that Achilles marries Medea in Elysium (*Arg.* 4.811-15 and scholiast = Ibycus fr. 291 Campbell 1991). Apollodorus presumably follows them (*Epit.* 5.5). Pausanias says that Helen was living with Achilles on the White Island (3.19.11-13 = Stesichorus test. 19 Campbell 1991).

⁶² West 2013, 156.

⁶³ Burgess 2009, 41: "We may suspect that the *Aithiopsis* follows pre-Homeric myth in narrating that Thetis obtained a special afterlife for her son, because one can hardly find another source from the ancient world that agrees with the Homeric placement of Achilles in Hades rather than at a paradisiacal setting."

⁶⁴ Slatkin 1991.

Finally, there are the myths surrounding Achilles' heel. The tradition of him being shot in the ankle goes back to the archaic period, but it is not clear that the tradition of dipping him in the Styx to render him invulnerable does.⁶⁵ With the possible exception of the myth of Achilles' heel, all of the myths we have discussed show that the tradition of Thetis trying to make Achilles immortal goes back to the archaic period and that the myth of her putting Achilles in the fire is at home in this tradition. As we have seen, Apollonius did not invent this myth, and the *Iliad* even seems to imply it in that Thetis no longer lives with Peleus.

Achilles' Relational Inheritance

Having established the events of Thetis's life, we are now in a position to see what they mean to her and to compare them with similar events in Achilles' life. Achilles resembles his mother both in his larger actions and in his relational manner and organizing principles.

Arranged Marriages

Thetis was unhappy about her marriage to Peleus. She tells Hephaestus,

Ἥφαιστ', ἧ ἄρα δὴ τις, ὅσαι θεαί εἰς' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
 τοσσάδ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἧσιν ἀνέσχετο κήδεα λυγρὰ
 ὅσσ' ἐμοὶ ἐκ πασέων Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν;
 ἐκ μὲν μ' ἀλλάων ἀλιάων ἀνδρὶ δάμασσεν
 Αἰακίδῃ Πηλεΐ, καὶ ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνήν
 πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα. ὃ μὲν δὴ γήραϊ λυγρῶ
 κεῖται ἐνὶ μεγάροις ἀρημένος (Il. 18. 429-35)

Hephaestus, has any of all the goddesses who are on Olympus borne in their minds as many grievous sorrows as the pains that Zeus, the son of Cronus, has given to me out of all of them? Of the other daughters of the sea, he subjected me to a man, Peleus, the son of Aeacus, and I endured the bed of a man, although I was very unwilling. By grievous old age he lies oppressed in his palace

⁶⁵ For details, see Gantz 1993, 626-27; West 2013, 150-51; Burgess 2009, 9-26.

Zeus subjected her to a mortal whose marriage bed she had to endure even though she was very unwilling. This is one of the “pains” she has had to suffer.⁶⁶ When Thetis is appealing to Zeus on Achilles’ behalf in book 1, she tells him to nod his assent to her or to refuse her so that she may know well how much she is the “most dishonored” (ἀτιμοτάτη) goddess among all the gods and goddesses (1.514-16). Even if Zeus grants her request, Thetis’ ὄφρ’ εὖ εἰδέω / ὅσσον ἐγὼ μετὰ πᾶσιν ἀτιμοτάτη θεός εἰμι (“so that I may know well / how much I am the most dishonored goddess among all the gods”) still presupposes that she is the most dishonored goddess. Thetis is the “most dishonored goddess” largely because she was forced to marry a mortal. Thetis, then, is indignant that she was forced to marry a mortal. She takes her forced marriage personally: it is a sign of her dishonor and of the disrespect in which Zeus and the other Olympians hold her. Being married to a mortal is beneath her, and she should not have had to do it because she is entitled to more.

Thetis’s attitude toward being married to Peleus is similar to Achilles’ attitude toward being subordinate to Agamemnon. Achilles resents the arrangement under which he must take orders from Agamemnon and receive a prize smaller than Agamemnon’s. Achilles believes that he is entitled to more and that the present system is unfair. Ultimately, it is Zeus’s dispensation that they protest in each case.

Seeing Husbands, Blind Leaders

When Peleus interrupts his wife’s attempt to immortalize their son, Thetis reacts with anger. Apollonius emphasizes this anger and even makes a joke of it. Hera says to Thetis: “Why

⁶⁶ Achilles’ σε βροτοῦ ἀνέρος ἔμβalon εὖνῃ (“they [i.e., the gods] put you in the bed of a mortal man”) seems to suggest that he knows what Thetis thinks of her marriage, especially if there is anything violent about ἔμβalon, which should mean “threw in” (18.85).

is your anger firmly fixed? / He acted foolishly [ἄσθη], but folly [ἄτη] comes even upon the gods” (*Arg.* 4.816-17). The joke works in a few ways. Thetis is like Achilles in her implacable anger. The language of *ātē* alludes to Agamemnon, especially to his apology in *Iliad* 19, in which he claims that *Ātē* infatuated even Zeus (19.86-137).⁶⁷ Achilles also characterizes Agamemnon’s behavior as an act of *ātē* (*Il.* 1.412). Hera’s entreaty recalls Phoenix’s appeal to Achilles in book 9 (9.496-514). Her matter-of-fact language (short, choppy sentences) and her breakdown of events (he simply acted foolishly) contribute to the humor. Then there is the irony that this is coming from Hera, whose anger and hatred (e.g., of the Trojans and Zeus’s paramours, along with their offspring) can be as savage and refractory as anyone’s. All of this is clearly an intertextual joke, but the joke would not work or not work as well if the reader did not know the story to which Hera is referring.⁶⁸ This joke thus constitutes further evidence that this myth was not of Apollonius’s invention. Thetis’s anger must have already been familiar to readers.

To emphasize Thetis’s anger, Apollonius also ends her speech to Peleus with a warning for him not to anger her further: “But do not show my form to anyone when you see / me coming with them [i.e., the Nereids], but keep it to yourself, lest you anger [χολώσης] me / even more than you thoughtlessly [ἀπηλεγέως] angered [ἐχόλωσας] me before” (*Arg.* 4.862-64).

Apollonius’s ἀπηλεγέως (“thoughtlessly”) is also used by Achilles in the sense “forthrightly,

⁶⁷ As we have seen, Apollonius is echoing the language of the *Hymn to Demeter* as well.

⁶⁸ Apollonius does not recount this story until 4.866-79. We have another joke in Hera’s speech when she digresses about Zeus’s affairs: “you did not have the nerve to lie down in the bed of Zeus, though he was desiring it / (for these acts always interest him [τάδε ἔργα μέμηλεν], / to sleep either with immortal goddesses or with mortal women” (4.793-95). Apollonius’s τάδε ἔργα μέμηλεν, which refers to sex here, humorously and irreverently recalls Zeus’s solemn promise to help Thetis (ἔμοι δέ κε ταῦτα μελήσεται, “and these things will be my concern” [1.523]) and reluctance to provoke Hera in *Iliad* 1.518-30. Again, Hera’s digression would not be nearly as amusing if we were not already familiar with Zeus’s extramarital exploits (e.g., *Il.* 14.313-28).

bluntly” at the beginning of his great speech (*Il.* 9.309). Apollonius may also be echoing Achilles’ reproach to Agamemnon: οὐδ’ ἀλεγιζεις, “nor do you have a regard for [these things]” (*Il.* 1.160). The echo is as much etymological as it is sonic.⁶⁹ As Apollonius’s own language suggests, a thoughtless act is essentially an act of *ātē*. Apollonius, therefore, saw the similarity of Peleus’s behavior to Agamemnon’s.

More precisely, it is not so much that Peleus’s and Agamemnon’s actions are the same as that Thetis and Achilles interpret them in the same way. To some extent, Apollonius saw this too. What exactly are the actions in question and how do Thetis and Achilles interpret them? The similarity in actions is greater between Thetis and Achilles than between Peleus and Agamemnon. In trying to immortalize her son, Thetis means well and thinks that she is doing something good for Achilles, which will in turn be something good for Peleus insofar as he presumably wants good things for his son.⁷⁰ When Achilles calls the assembly to find out how to stop the plague, he is trying to do something good for the army, which will in turn benefit Agamemnon. In each case, good intentions elicit an adverse response. In Thetis’s case, Peleus interrupts her procedure. In Achilles’ case, Agamemnon reacts defensively, demands another prize, and then threatens to take Achilles’ prize after he protests Agamemnon’s demand.

Thetis and Achilles both respond with indignation. Achilles’ reaction is easier to understand than his mother’s is since Peleus simply makes a mistake. Why do Thetis and Demeter respond this way? Demeter says to Metaneira: “Ignorant humans and without the sense

⁶⁹ *LfgE*, sub ἀπηλεγιζεις.

⁷⁰ The characters in the Homeric poems consider being immortal and ageless a good thing, even if it is not the highest good for all of them under every circumstance (cf., Odysseus’s refusal of Calypso’s offer in *Od.* 5.135-36, 209). Being immortal and being ageless are the two qualities that best distinguish gods from humans for the Greeks. That Thetis thinks that she is doing something good does not necessarily mean that her action is good. We will discuss the meaning of this action later.

/ to foresee a dispensation of approaching good or evil! / For you also were incurably misled [ἀάσθης] by your folly [ἀφραδίησι]" (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 256-58).⁷¹ Demeter's contempt for human ignorance accounts for part of her indignation. She is also indignant that a human should question her, a goddess. Demeter and Thetis thus interpret these mortals' interference as a slight to their honor and divinity (hence, "Ignorant humans" [*Hom. Hymn Dem.*256]). Thetis takes Peleus's mistake personally, as an insult. As we have seen, Achilles takes Agamemnon's threat personally, as a sign of dishonor and ingratitude, even though Agamemnon initially has no intention of carrying out his threat.⁷² All three are indignant that the insult comes from someone whom they consider their inferior. At least in the cases of Demeter and Achilles, the inferior is socially their superior: Demeter is working for Metaneira as her son's nurse, and Agamemnon is the supreme commander of the army. Homeric society is patriarchal, so Thetis, as a wife, is also technically subordinate to Peleus.⁷³ Demeter, Thetis, and Achilles each react with anger and deny the offenders their services. Demeter and Thetis stop the process of immortalization, and Achilles refuses to fight.

Withdrawal

⁷¹ Hera's discussion of *ātē* implies that Apollonius's Thetis responds in essentially the same way as Demeter does (i.e., she sees Peleus's interference as an act of *ātē*). Hera's understanding of moral responsibility is not necessarily that of the *Hymn* or of the *Iliad* (see Dodds 1951, 3).

⁷² Ajax and Odysseus, in contrast, let it go, knowing that Agamemnon is not in earnest and is only acting this way because of his extraordinary stress. Agamemnon likewise ignores the threat that ends Achilles' last speech in the assembly of book 1, namely, that Agamemnon's blood will spurt around Achilles' spear if he tries to take anything else of Achilles' (1.300-03).

⁷³ While the gender inequality in Homer is not as great as it is in classical Athens, it is nevertheless already established. One indication of this is the double standard for extramarital sex in the Homeric poems.

Thetis, Achilles, and Demeter withdraw in anger. This basic narrative combines two story patterns. The first is what Muellner calls the “*mēnis* theme.”⁷⁴ In this story pattern, a god or hero is angered, inflicts punishment, and must be appeased so that he or she will ward off devastation. In the *Iliad*, Achilles, Apollo, and Meleager each have a *mēnis* theme.⁷⁵ The second is the story pattern of withdrawal, with or without return.⁷⁶ This story pattern applies to Thetis, Achilles, Demeter, and Meleager.⁷⁷ In the case of Achilles, Demeter, and Meleager, an “embassy” is at first unsuccessful in persuading the angry hero or goddess to return and ward off devastation, but all three characters return in the end.⁷⁸

Thetis provides a model for Achilles.⁷⁹ She withdraws in anger and withdraws to her father’s house. Achilles withdraws to his hut in anger and threatens to withdraw to his father’s house (*Il.* 1.169; 9.357-63, 393-400, 428). As we have seen, the idea of withdrawing from battle is Achilles’ rather than Athena’s, and it is implicit in his prediction that the Greeks will miss him when the Greeks are dying at Hector’s hands (1.240-44). The plan is also implicit in 1.340-42: εἴ ποτε δ’ αὖτε / χρεῖω ἐμεῖο γένηται ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμῶνα / τοῖς ἄλλοις, “if ever in the future / a

⁷⁴ Muellner 1996, 50, passim; cf. Lord 2000, 186-97; Mary Louise Lord 1967; Rabel 1988, 1997; Nickel 2003. This is the technical sense of “theme,” “groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song” (Lord 2000, 68, 68-99).

⁷⁵ Mary Louise Lord 1967; Muellner 1996; Rabel 1988, 1997. So does Artemis in the story of Meleager told by Phoenix (*Il.* 9.533ff.).

⁷⁶ The withdrawal pattern always includes the *mēnis* theme, but the *mēnis* theme need not include the withdrawal pattern. For example, neither Apollo’s *mēnis* at the Greeks for dishonoring Chryses nor Artemis’s at the Aetolians for not offering her the first fruits involves withdrawal.

⁷⁷ Mary Louise Lord 1967; Sowa 1984, 95-96; Foley 1994, 91-93; Muellner 1996; Nickel 2003. Thetis does not return, or at least, she is not reconciled with Peleus. There are hints of the *mēnis* theme also with Paris (6.325-31) and Aeneas (13.459-61; Burgess 2009, 68; Muellner 1996).

⁷⁸ See in particular Mary Louise Lord 1967; Sowa 1984, 95-96; Nickel 2003.

⁷⁹ So also Foley 1994, 92. Rabel thinks that Chryses is Achilles’ model (1997, 52).

need of me arises to ward off disgraceful destruction / from the rest.” Achilles uses ἀεικέα λογὸν ἀμῦναι in recounting how Thetis helped Zeus: she “warded off disgraceful destruction” for Zeus (1.398).⁸⁰ Achilles then asks Thetis to have Zeus help the Trojans and pen the Achaeans among the ships’ sterns and the sea as they are killed (1.408-10). Achilles engineers the destruction that he will be needed to ward off, and in warding it off, he will become like his mother.

Although Achilles decides on his own to withdraw from battle, Thetis encourages this plan. She says that she will petition Zeus when he returns from the feast among the Ethiopians (1.419-27). She tells Achilles to withdraw from battle: ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν νῦν νηυσὶ παρήμενος ὠκυπόροισι / μήνι’ Ἀχαιοῖσιν, πολέμου δ’ ἀποπαύεο πάμπαν, “But now sit by the quick-going ships / and be angry at the Achaeans and cease from the fighting entirely” (1.421-22). Lines 423-27 explain that Zeus has gone to the Ethiopians, so Thetis’s instructions to withdraw might seem to be what Achilles is supposed to do just until she can talk to Zeus. They are not limited to that time, however, for Achilles must be absent from the fighting while Zeus enacts his plan. While Achilles’ absence is implicit in his plan to have the Greeks destroyed, Thetis nevertheless believes that she needs to make Achilles’ absence from battle explicit. She thus arrives at the idea of his withdrawal on her own. Not only does Achilles decide to withdraw on his own, following his mother’s example, but Thetis comes along and suggests the same action. She reinforces the relational pattern that Achilles has learned from her.⁸¹

We have already touched on some of the motivations for Achilles’ and Thetis’s withdrawal. These were emotions, particularly, rage, indignation, and contempt. Withdrawal also

⁸⁰ See Slatkin 1991.

⁸¹ In book 18 she will recommend withdrawal until she can obtain a new suit of armor for Achilles.

has certain functions for each of them. It allows them to protest and reject arrangements that they consider unfair. For Thetis this arrangement is her marriage to a mortal. For Achilles it is his subordination to Agamemnon. Such protests reflect their sense of entitlement: they are entitled to something more or better than what the current arrangement gives them. By withdrawing, Thetis and Achilles can punish the offenders. In the one case, Thetis deprives Peleus of a wife, a divine wife, and denies his son the immortality that he might have had.⁸² In the other, Achilles makes Agamemnon suffer in two ways. First, Agamemnon suffers distress and anxiety as his army is beaten back and threatened with destruction. Second, Agamemnon suffers the shame and humiliation of having to yield to Achilles and recognize his importance.⁸³ As Achilles says in book 9, he will not reconcile with Agamemnon until he has paid for the heart-rending outrage that he has inflicted on Achilles (9.386-87). In other words, Achilles refuses to be reconciled until Agamemnon has suffered as much as he has. Achilles' withdrawal is not only punitive but also coercive. He forces Agamemnon to yield and give him the recognition that he deserves.

Now, Thetis's sense of entitlement is not unusual for a god or goddess. Demeter, for instance, reacts in a similar way in a similar situation. That this sense of entitlement is not unusual for a goddess does not mean that it is not narcissistic, however. Regardless of the normality of her attitude among the gods, Thetis nevertheless models this haughtiness and sense of entitlement for her son.

Organizing Principles

⁸² This also hurts her of course. Cf. Medea's killing of her children to hurt Jason.

⁸³ He never says that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans, but Achilles frames the contest in such a way that to recognize the need for Achilles is implicitly to recognize him as the best of the Achaeans (1.240-44). Agamemnon, no doubt, would not accept this formulation, but without contesting it, he might appear to accept it.

Some of the organizing principles shared by Thetis and Achilles we have already mentioned: their sense of entitlement, tendency to take things personally, sensitivity to perceived slights, discontentment with status, punitiveness, and (Achilles') coerciveness. Thetis, too, is coercive and shares Achilles' all-or-nothing thinking. They also share two masochistic-narcissistic beliefs: they are victims, and the gods and the universe are unfair.

Reik identifies the belief in one's victimhood and in the unfairness of the gods or the universe as characteristic of masochism.⁸⁴ After the quarrel, Achilles sits weeping pitifully in isolation and prays to Thetis:

μητηρ ἐπεὶ μ' ἔτεκές γε μινυνθάδιόν περ ἔόντα,
τιμήν περ μοι ὄφελλεν Ὀλύμπιος ἐγγυαλίξαι
Ζεὺς ὑπιβρεμέτης· νῦν δ' οὐδέ με τυτθὸν ἔτισεν·
ἦ γάρ μ' Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (355)
ἠτίμησεν· ἐλὼν γὰρ ἔχει γέρας αὐτὸς ἀπούρας. (1.352-56)

Mother, since you bore me to be truly short lived,
the Olympian ought to give me honor,
Zeus the high thundering, but as it is he has honored me not even a little,
for Atreus's son, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
has dishonored me; for he took my prize and holds it, having taken it on his own.

Achilles believes that he is entitled to honor from Zeus because he has the misfortune of being short lived. Fate has been unkind in giving Achilles a short life, and the gods have been unfair in failing to give Achilles what he is owed as compensation.⁸⁵

Thetis shows where Achilles' beliefs have come from. After Achilles finishes recounting the quarrel and telling her what he wants her to do, Thetis replies:

ὦ μοι τέκνον ἐμόν, τί νύ σ' ἔτρεφον αἰνὰ τεκοῦσα;
αἴθ' ὄφελες παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀδάκρυτος καὶ ἀπήμων (415)
ἦσθαι, ἐπεὶ νύ τοι αἴσα μίνυνθά περ οὔ τι μάλα δῆν·

⁸⁴ Reik 1941.

⁸⁵ Zeus gives Hector glory in compensation for his short life (15.60-14, 17.206-08). Achilles is owed such compensation even more in that his death is the price of Zeus's rule (Slatkin 1991, 101).

νῦν δ' ἄμα τ' ὠκύμορος καὶ οἴζυρος περὶ πάντων
ἔπλεο· τὼ σε κακῆ αἴση τέκον ἐν μεγάροισι. (1.414-18)

Alas, my child! Why did I rear you after suffering grievous childbirth?
Would that without tears or misery you were sitting by the ships,
since your fate is short, not very long at all;
but now you are at once both short fated and miserable beyond all men.
Therefore, I bore you with an evil fate in the palace.

When Thetis petitions Zeus, she tells him to “honor [her] son since he is the most short lived [ὠκυμωρότατος] of others” (1.505-06). In book 18, she asks Hephaestus:

Ἥφαιστ', ἧ ἄρα δὴ τις, ὅσαι θεαί εἰς' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
τοσσάδ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἧσιν ἀνέσχετο κήδεα λυγρὰ
ὅσος' ἐμοὶ ἐκ πασέων Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν;
ἐκ μὲν μ' ἀλλάων ἀλιάων ἀνδρὶ δάμασσεν
Αἰακίδῃ Πηληϊῆ, καὶ ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνήν
πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα. (18.429-34)

Hephaestus, has any of all the goddesses who are on Olympus borne in their minds as many grievous sorrows as the pains that Zeus, the son of Cronus, has given to me out of all of them? Of the other daughters of the sea, he subjected me to a man, Peleus, the son of Aeacus, and I endured the bed of a man, although I was very unwilling.

Thetis is a victim of both fate and the gods. She is a victim of fate in that her son, being destined to die young, has an evil fate. Achilles' premature death will bring Thetis more sorrows than all of the other Olympian goddesses, and her suffering means that she too has an evil fate. She had the misfortune of being destined to give birth to a son mightier than his father, and this fate required her marriage to a mortal. She is a victim of the gods in that Zeus forced her to marry a mortal. Thetis's belief in her victimhood appears most clearly in her emphasis on how she was singled out. Speeches such as these have taught Achilles to believe that he, too, is a victim of fate and the gods.

Like Achilles, Thetis is coercive but in her own way. To see this, we can compare her handling of Zeus with Achilles' instructions about handling Zeus and with Achilles' handling of Agamemnon in the quarrel. Formally supplicating Zeus, Thetis says:

Ζεῦ πάτερ εἴ ποτε δὴ σε μετ' ἀθανάτοισιν ὄνησα
ἢ ἔπει ἢ ἔργῳ, τόδε μοι κρήνην ἐέλδωρ·
τίμησόν μοι υἱὸν ὃς ὠκυμορώτατος ἄλλων (505)
ἔπλετ'· ἀτάρ μιν νῦν γε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
ἠτίμησεν· ἐλὼν γὰρ ἔχει γέρας αὐτὸς ἀπούρας.
ἀλλὰ σὺ πέρ μιν τίσον Ὀλύμπιε μητίετα Ζεῦ·
τόφρα δ' ἐπὶ Τρώεσσι τίθει κράτος ὄφρ' ἂν Ἀχαιοὶ
υἱὸν ἐμὸν τίσωσιν ὀφέλλωσίν τέ ἐ τιμῆ. (1.503-10)

Father Zeus, if I ever helped you among the immortals
either in word or in deed, fulfill this wish for me:
honor my son who is the most short lived of all others.
But the lord of men Agamemnon has now
dishonored him, for he took his prize and holds it, having taken it on his own.
But honor him, Olympian Zeus, counselor,
and give victory to the Trojans until the Achaeans
honor my son and make him grow in honor.

Thetis keeps her request generic. Achilles uses similar generic language: ἐλθοῦσ' Οὐλύμπων δὲ Δία λίσαι, εἴ ποτε δὴ τι / ἢ ἔπει ὄνησας κραδίην Διὸς ἠὲ καὶ ἔργῳ, “go and beg Olympian Zeus, if ever you pleased the heart of Zeus in word or deed” (1.394-95). But he also instructs Thetis to remind Zeus specifically of how she helped him when the other Olympians were trying to bind him (1.397-407). In the event, Thetis's generic request, which is non-confrontational, proves sufficient, and Zeus grants her request.

Thetis's τίμησόν μοι υἱὸν ὃς ὠκυμορώτατος ἄλλων / ἔπλετ' (“honor my son, who is most short lived of all others” [1.505-06]) paraphrases Achilles' complaint in 1.352-54:

μητέρα ἐπεὶ μ' ἔτεκές γε μινυθάδιόν περ ἐόντα,
τιμὴν πέρ μοι ὀφείλλεν Ὀλύμπιος ἐγγυαλίζαι
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης· νῦν δ' οὐδέ με τυτθὸν ἔτισεν·

Mother, since you bore me to be truly short lived,
the Olympian ought to give me honor,

Zeus the high thundering, but as it is he has honored me not even a little.

Zeus has been remiss in not giving Achilles the honor to which he believes himself entitled and in allowing Agamemnon to dishonor Achilles. The entitlement is clear in Achilles' phrasing. Thetis is subtler. Her ὀκνημορώτατος ("most short lived") alludes to the story that Achilles wanted Thetis to tell (helping Zeus and summoning Briareus) and to the reason that Achilles is "most short lived," namely, that his mortality is the price of Zeus's rule. She suggests that Zeus owes Achilles honor because he is destined to die prematurely. Thetis changes Achilles' ἐπεὶ ("since") to ὃς ("who"). While ὃς introduces a relative clause with causal sense, it is less direct than Achilles' ἐπεὶ and therefore softens the entitlement of his claim. Saying that Zeus ought to have done something suggests that he is guilty of a wrong by omission. Thetis omits any mention of what Zeus did not do and of what he ought to have done. She says only that Agamemnon dishonored Achilles by taking his prize. But since Thetis has suggested that Zeus should honor Achilles because he is "most short lived" (and this is Zeus's fault), mentioning Agamemnon's dishonoring of Achilles may also suggest that Zeus has been remiss in letting this happen. By making her language allusive and suggestive, Thetis muffles the entitled, clamorous, and accusatory qualities of Achilles' speech. She implies what Achilles says but is not threatening or confrontational.

We have seen these same qualities of Achilles (i.e., being entitled, demanding, accusatory, threatening, and confrontational) in his speeches to Agamemnon. He castigates Agamemnon for his greed and ingratitude, complains about his prizes relative to Agamemnon's, and threatens to go home. Thetis, in contrast, leaves it to Zeus to conclude that he has been remiss or that he ought to grant her request. Neither angry nor reproachful, Thetis does not put Zeus on the defensive. She activates Zeus's sense of guilt, pity, gratitude, and reciprocity.

Achilles' arguments seem intended to make Agamemnon feel ashamed or guilty about his ungrateful behavior, but Achilles' confrontational and moralizing manner activates Agamemnon's defensive grandiosity instead.

Like Achilles, Thetis is coercive. After her initial appeal, Zeus sits in silence. Her appeal makes Zeus consider assisting her, but she believes that it may not be enough. She then says, "Promise me unerringly and nod your assent / or refuse, since you have no fear, so that I may know well / how much I am the most dishonored [ἀτιμοτάτη] goddess among all" (1.514-16). This is coercive in that Thetis threatens to interpret Zeus's refusal to mean that he does not respect or appreciate her, so that if he does not want her to think this, he must grant her wish. As we have mentioned, Thetis's ἀπόειπ' . . . ὄφρ' ἐὺ εἰδέω / ὅσσον ἐγὼ μετὰ πᾶσιν ἀτιμοτάτη θεός εἰμι ("refuse . . . so that I may know well / how much I am the most dishonored goddess among all") presupposes that she is already the "most dishonored goddess among all" by some degree (1.515-16). Zeus's refusal would only make the degree of her dishonor clearer to her.

Although Thetis is being manipulative in threatening to interpret Zeus's refusal in a certain way, the presupposition implies that she already believes that she is the most dishonored goddess. She thus reveals that being most dishonored is part of her self-image. As we said, Thetis considers herself most dishonored because she was forced to marry a mortal and has more sorrows than other goddesses. Now, neither of these facts entails that she is dishonored, much less that she is the most dishonored. These are her interpretations, and they are products of her organizing principles. We see that she has a proclivity to all-or-nothing thinking just as Achilles does and that her self-concept likewise gravitates toward an extreme (hence, her superlative ἀτιμοτάτη). While Achilles' self-concept oscillates between positive and negative extremes,

Thetis's self-concept is mostly at the negative extreme in the *Iliad*. The situation is more complicated than this, as we will see presently.

In this threat to interpret Zeus's refusal a certain way, Thetis represents herself as pitiful and weak. Her "since you have no fear" makes her coercive behavior less threatening and underscores the contrast between Zeus as powerful and herself as powerless. Her tactic will work if Zeus, perhaps because he feels guilty about what has happened to her, does not want her to feel most dishonored and is not annoyed by her manipulateness. Her success thus depends on how pitiful she is.

The success of Thetis's manipulative behavior demonstrates how masochism can be functional and adaptive. Though not ideal, masochism is nevertheless an adaptation, and Thetis's success shows why people might adopt such a strategy. Her pitifulness, powerlessness, and dishonor bring her power and honor, for they lead Zeus to help her. In a concrete way, this scene shows how masochists derive honor from dishonor and find victory in defeat. Usually such honor and victory come in gains to self-esteem: masochists increase their self-esteem by basking in their moral superiority and the nobility of their suffering. Masochism also has relational functions, such as gaining the sympathy, support, or favor of others, particularly of attachment figures.⁸⁶ Masochists learn that relatedness happens in the context of suffering. Thetis's pitifulness and powerlessness bring her into contact with Zeus and win his support, and his support in turn brings her honor. In this way, masochistic strategies for relating to others and regulating self-esteem coincide and reinforce each other. Or in other words, the same behavior can have multiple functions and be rewarded in different ways.

⁸⁶ McWilliams 1994.

Thetis employs similar strategies in appealing to Hephaestus in book 18. Although Hephaestus is already minded to help her if he can, Thetis complains about how many sorrows she has, recounts certain events of the poem, says that she is powerless to help Achilles (οὐδέ τί οἱ δύνάμει χραισμῆσαι ἰοῦσα, “I am not able to help him in any way even going to him” [18.443]), and ends by requesting that Hephaestus give Achilles new armor: τοῦνεκα νῦν τὰ σὰ γούναθ’ ἰκάνομαι, αἴ κ’ ἐθέλησθα / υἱεῖ ἐμῷ ὠκυμόρῳ δόμεν ἀσπίδα καὶ τρυφάλειαν, “For this reason I now come to your knees, in the hope that you are willing / to give my son, who is short fated, a shield and helmet . . .” (18.457-58, 424-61). Hephaestus tells her to “take heart” (θάρσει) and says that he will provide the new armor (18.463-67). As with Zeus, Thetis appeals to Hephaestus on the basis of her pitifulness and powerlessness. Again, the reasons for her pitiful condition are that she was forced to marry a mortal and that her son is doomed to a short life (e.g., ὠκυμόρῳ [18.429-43, 457-58]). Again, she is a suppliant. Although Hephaestus would have helped her anyway, Thetis nevertheless sees representing herself as pitiful and powerless as the way to get what she wants. Pitifulness and powerlessness become sources of power for her.

There are some paradoxes here. The first is general: masochists gain victory through defeat. Next, Zeus helps Thetis because she is pitiful and he wants to disconfirm her belief in how dishonored she is. Paradoxically, in disconfirming her belief he confirms it, for it is the pitifulness expressed in this very belief that leads him to act. Thus by acting, Zeus accepts her belief. Finally, Thetis’s dishonor brings her honor in that it leads Zeus to grant her request. To this we can add an earlier paradox: Thetis’s forced marriage to a mortal, which she interprets as a sign of disrespect and therefore of her powerlessness and pitifulness, was done out of respect for her power, which manifested itself in giving birth to a son who would be more powerful than his father.

Suffering brings not only Thetis but also Achilles into contact with others. Thetis seeks the assistance of Zeus and Hephaestus. Her representation of herself as pitiful and suffering almost makes us forget that she goes to them on Achilles' behalf rather than on her own. That her appeals represent her as pitiful, powerless, and miserable suggests that these are her default ways of appealing and relating. When Achilles is distressed, he seeks his mother's assistance (book 1), or she comes to him (book 18). Suffering allows Achilles to see his mother. Thetis further reinforces his masochism with her readiness to join in his self-pity and indulge her own. Thus for Achilles and Thetis relatedness occurs in the context of suffering, so much so that we might even say that for them relatedness requires suffering.

Achilles' experience of relatedness in the context of suffering is not limited to his interactions with his mother. In various ways, this happens in books 1 (the suffering from the plague leads to the assembly and quarrel and thence to his appeal to his mother), 9 (the embassy to Achilles), 16 (Achilles' and Patroclus's interaction before Patroclus goes into battle), 18 (Achilles' mourning and interaction with Thetis), 19 (Thetis's return with the armor and the reconciliation with Agamemnon that is brought about by the loss of Patroclus), 23 (funeral games for Patroclus), and 24 (the encounter with Priam).

The View from Attachment Theory

When Achilles is distressed in book 1, he seeks his mother's assistance. This is precisely what attachment theory would predict. Distress activates the attachment system, which motivates the individual to express her distress (e.g., through crying) and to seek proximity to the attachment figure in order to find safety and comfort. The attachment figure then responds with

caregiving, thereby deactivating the attachment system.⁸⁷ In many societies, parents function as the child's attachment figures. The attachment figures are organized hierarchically by preference. The child or adult turns to the primary attachment figure first, and if he or she is unavailable, turns to the next person in the hierarchy and so on until she finds an available figure, even a stranger, if necessary. In western societies, the mother is typically the primary attachment figure. Hence, Achilles calls his mother when he needs help. When Achilles goes to the sea to call on Thetis in book 1, he shows proximity seeking, for by drawing near her element, he gets as close to her as he can. He is also crying, and crying is an attachment behavior that has evolved to elicit the reciprocal behaviors of caregiving. That is, crying automatically activates the attachment figure's caregiving system. We see this in book 18 when Thetis, though unable to help Achilles, comes to him unsummoned after hearing his groans (18.35-77).⁸⁸

To be sure, Achilles wants his mother to appeal to Zeus for him, and it is common for humans to pray to the gods for help. Chryses, for example, walks along the beach in tears and prays to Apollo to punish the Greeks for refusing the ransom for Chryseis (1.34-42). Rabel even thinks that Achilles is using Chryses as a model.⁸⁹ Speaking of Chryses' withdrawal to the seashore, Edwards says that the seashore is chosen because of the "connotations of desolation and misery which the motif usually carries."⁹⁰ That this withdrawal to the seashore is a "motif" of oral poetry might seem to present problems for a reading in terms of attachment theory. This

⁸⁷ This simplified account is based on the synthesis of Mikulincer and Shaver 2007.

⁸⁸ Compare Achilles' simile in book 16, in which he says that Patroclus is like a weeping little girl who is tugging at her mother's robe in order to be picked up (16.7-11). She wants "contact comfort."

⁸⁹ Rabel 1997.

⁹⁰ Edwards 1980, 8.

need not be the case. The themes of oral poetry can have different meanings depending on the context just as rhetorical devices do.⁹¹ The various instances of the story pattern of the abducted woman or goddess (e.g., Helen, Chryseis, Briseis, Persephone) are significantly different from each other even if they share important features. For example, Paris's abduction of Helen and Agamemnon's seizure of Briseis could both involve ingratitude, yet in the former's case, the violation of *xenia*, "guest friendship," and Helen's complicity are at issue, while in the latter's case, the relative status of the chiefs and what they are entitled to are at issue. Achilles' special helper did not have to be his mother, even if she was an obvious choice. Achilles could have had Thetis's help without the attachment behaviors of crying and proximity seeking and without her reciprocal caregiving behaviors. We can also argue that the gods themselves are modeled on human parents and therefore on attachment figures. The gods are bigger, better versions of humans who have the power to aid or punish them. As "sources of idealized strength," they are figures to whom humans can turn for comfort and assistance in times of danger and uncertainty.⁹² The Greeks themselves refer to the gods as parents: Zeus is the father of gods and men.⁹³

Final Comparisons

Comparing Thetis's handling of Zeus with Achilles' handling of Agamemnon reveals that mother and son use similar tactics but that Achilles uses them ineptly. In one way or another,

⁹¹ Cf. Lowenstam 1993.

⁹² This phrase is Kohut's (1984, 52).

⁹³ He is addressed Ζεῦ πάτερ, "father Zeus," and comparison of this phrase with Latin *Iuppiter* (< **dyeu pater*, "father Jove") and cognate phrases in other Indo-European languages (e.g., Vedic Sanskrit) shows that this metaphor dates back to Indo-European times (1.503; Watkins 1995, 8; Watkins 2011, sub *dyeu-*). There is of course much more evidence for it. See also Sappho 1, in which Aphrodite assumes a maternal role.

they both invoke gratitude and use coercion, and their coercion includes interpreting themselves as dishonored. Thetis is successful in part because she appeals to Zeus privately, whereas Achilles abuses Agamemnon publicly. Thetis makes what she wants from Zeus clear but merely alludes to why she deserves his support and what he should have done for Achilles. Thetis has removed the demanding and reproachful quality of Achilles' speech so that even though the entitlement is still present implicitly (e.g., ὀκυμορότατος, "most short lived" [1.505]), her speech does not feel entitled. Rather, it is guilt inducing. Her pitifulness creates an awkward and uncomfortable atmosphere that Zeus wants to escape.

Achilles' condemnation of Agamemnon's ingratitude may also be designed to induce guilt and shame, but Achilles' anger, aggression, and violence evoke anger and aggression from Agamemnon. Achilles' speech is the inverse of his mother's in where it is explicit. Achilles comes across as entitled, demanding, indignant, and reproachful yet does not make clear what he wants from Agamemnon, nor does Achilles' threat formally give Agamemnon the chance to do what he wants (i.e., there is no condition to the threat; he has already resolved to leave).

Achilles and Thetis are coercive particularly in their use of threats. Thetis threatens to interpret Zeus's refusal to help as an indication that she is the most dishonored goddess. His refusal would dishonor her further and thereby confirm her belief. Achilles threatens to go home and not to draw up wealth for Agamemnon since he is without honor (ἄτιμος) there at Troy (1.169-71). Thetis uses the same word as Achilles does but in the superlative degree: ἀτιμοτάτη (1.516). Achilles' threat omits the conditions under which he will carry it out. He simply says what he will do rather than what he will do if Agamemnon does or does not do something. Exactly what Achilles wants remains unclear. For example, is he demanding to be given prizes equal to Agamemnon's in the future? Achilles does seem to want at least two things: for

Agamemnon to renounce his threat to take Achilles' prize and for him to show an appreciation of Achilles' value and service. Agamemnon's response, a refusal to beg Achilles to stay, gives some indication of what Achilles is expecting. Unlike Achilles', Thetis's threat is conditional.⁹⁴ They both assume that they have been dishonored and make their threats in order to obtain something that might disconfirm their beliefs, whether this is Zeus granting Thetis's request or Agamemnon begging Achilles to stay.⁹⁵

An important difference between the two threats is that Thetis formally invites (i.e., through the conditional nature of her threat) Zeus to disconfirm her belief, whereas Achilles does not do this with Agamemnon. This is another instance of Achilles assuming that something has happened before it has or before the event is over. By omitting the conditions of the threat, Achilles requires Agamemnon to beg (hence Agamemnon's οὐδέ σ' ἔγωγε / λίσσομαι εἴνεκ' ἐμεῖο μένειν, "and I am not begging you to stay for my sake" [1.173-74]). Thetis, in contrast, does the begging herself (λίσσομένη [1.502]). The threat works for Thetis because she presents herself as pitiful and puts herself at the mercy of Zeus. Achilles' threat fails because he is petulant and aggressive and requires too much of Agamemnon. In these ways is Achilles like his mother. They are both coercive, yet Thetis's style of coercion is subtle and manipulative, whereas Achilles' is confrontational and violent. Achilles has learned some of his mother's relational techniques but employs them ineptly because he refuses to abase himself and assume her pitiful, non-threatening role. Her tactics presuppose her inferiority. Achilles cannot follow her here because it is precisely his inferiority to Agamemnon that he is contesting.

⁹⁴ It is a disjunction, which is logically equivalent to a condition with the protasis negated. Compare "Stop, or I'll shoot" with "If you don't stop, I'll shoot."

⁹⁵ Thetis also threatens to interpret Zeus's refusal as an indication of further dishonor, but the main goal of her threat is to get Zeus to help Achilles.

Part 3: Masochism Concluded

This section shows how Achilles meets various criteria for self-defeating personality disorder. Although by way of summary we mention features of masochism that we have already discussed, we will focus on acting out, which we have hardly dealt with so far. McWilliams tells us that acting out is characteristic of masochism: masochists have an uncanny ability to make mistakes and bad decisions, to get into accidents, to injure themselves, to refuse to help themselves, and to follow successes with failures.⁹⁶ Their patently self-defeating behavior is associated with their provocativeness, exhibitionism, and moralizing.

Achilles “chooses people and situations that lead to disappointment, failure, or mistreatment even when better options are clearly available” (criterion 1).⁹⁷ Achilles complains about his prizes and status relative to Agamemnon’s even though he knew what the arrangement would be when he agreed to follow Agamemnon. He was under no obligation to go to Troy and yet chose to go, knowing what the outcome would be, namely, his death. Achilles repeatedly complains about how Agamemnon has treated him and recognizes that he has options other than staying at Troy. In books 1 and 9, he contemplates going home to Phthia yet does not go. In *Odyssey* 11, Achilles explicitly regrets the choice he made, and I will argue later that he does in the *Iliad* as well. It is not only bad situations but also unsatisfying people that Achilles chooses. Although repeatedly frustrated by Agamemnon, Achilles is tied to him in such a way that he

⁹⁶ McWilliams 1994, 261. See chapter 1, part 2 above.

⁹⁷ Unless otherwise stated, the criteria come from DSM-3-R, 373-74. Related to criterion 1 is criterion 7: “is uninterested in or rejects people who consistently treat him or her well, e.g., is unattracted to caring sexual partners.”

cannot leave him behind and instead must “wring recognition” from him.⁹⁸ This unsatisfying attachment illustrates once again the way in which masochism can have narcissistic functions.⁹⁹

Achilles “rejects or renders ineffective the attempts of others to help him” (criterion 2). We have seen how in book 1 Achilles renders Nestor’s intervention ineffective and repeatedly prevents reconciliation with Agamemnon. In book 9, Achilles likewise refuses to be reconciled with Agamemnon. To be sure, Agamemnon’s offer of compensation and the ambassadors’ appeals are problematic (see chapter 4). Achilles could nevertheless have used the ambassadors to help him negotiate a settlement acceptable to him. Instead, he demands that Agamemnon suffer as he has suffered (9.386-87). Even this goal he might have achieved if he had formulated it differently, for example, as a demand for a public apology rather than for Agamemnon’s suffering. He is interested in neither reconciliation nor the ambassadors’ help. McWilliams says of masochists, “Often they are much more interested in winning a moral victory than in solving a practical problem.”¹⁰⁰ Reconciliation is the practical problem that Achilles is unwilling to solve.

Achilles does allow Thetis and Zeus to help him. But when he does so, they are assisting him in his own self-destruction. Achilles knows that his plan, which will keep him at Troy, will lead to his death. Their assistance is also acceptable because Achilles believes himself entitled to it. Nestor’s and the ambassadors’ intervention would secure for Achilles what he is entitled to, i.e., his prize, but he believes that he is entitled to more than that. He is entitled to be recognized

⁹⁸ This phrase is Whitman’s (1958, 204).

⁹⁹ See Cooper 1988, 2009. In the next chapter we will examine the object relations underlying this masochistic-narcissistic relationship.

¹⁰⁰ McWilliams 1994, 263.

as the best of the Achaeans, and it is only right that he be recognized as such. In the last chapter, we explained how this moralizing stems from and supports the grandiose self.

The DSM's third criterion for self-defeating personality disorder is that the person, "following positive personal events (e.g., new achievement), responds with depression, guilt, or a behavior that produces pain (e.g., an accident)." We could argue that Achilles' refusal of the embassy is an instance of this criterion, for his plan has brought him victory. Now, Agamemnon's problematic offer of compensation vitiates this victory somewhat, but his capitulation is still a victory for Achilles. It is as though after a battle the enemy has withdrawn from the field and begun to retreat in an orderly manner rather than abandoned the field in headlong flight. Instead of accepting his victory, Achilles renews his strategy to his regret. Even though he is dissatisfied with the victory that he has won, since he has now made his point, he has the option to go home but chooses instead to remain at Troy.

After Achilles refuses the embassy, his plan continues to succeed, the Greeks needing him more than ever. In book 11, for example, he says, "Now I think the Achaeans will station themselves about my knees, / begging [λίσσομένους]; for a need [χρειῶ] no longer bearable has come" (11.609-10). Once his plan is succeeding, Achilles proceeds to make a series of decisions that bring him pain. He sends Patroclus to learn whether Machaon is the wounded Greek whom they have seen fly by on a chariot (11.597-615). When Achilles summons Patroclus for this purpose, the narrator calls responding to Achilles "the beginning of evil" for Patroclus, but this is also the beginning of evil for Achilles himself (11.604). It is on this mission that Nestor gives Patroclus the idea of entering battle in Achilles' armor and in his stead. Achilles agrees to this suggestion in book 16 even though it potentially endangers his plan (16.80-96). If Patroclus is too successful, he will make Achilles ἀτιμότερον, "more dishonored" (16.89). This decision gets

Patroclus killed. The decision is already foolish, and then in book 18 we learn that Thetis had told Achilles that the best of the Myrmidons, viz., Patroclus, would die while Achilles was still alive (18.8-11). Now Achilles may not have been able to prevent this prediction from happening if it was fated, but he could have at least done his best not to bring it about. Achilles' forgetting is an instance of repression.¹⁰¹ And if Achilles has not forgotten Thetis's prophecy when he sends Patroclus into battle, his decision is even more foolish (or sinister). In either case, Achilles' decision is an instance of masochistically following up success with defeat and suffering. It is masochistic acting out: he acts for the unconscious purpose of bringing himself harm.

The DSM's fourth criterion is "incites angry or rejecting responses from others and then feels hurt, defeated, or humiliated (e.g., makes fun of spouse in public, provoking an angry retort, then feels devastated)." We have discussed Achilles' provocations (e.g., name calling) at length and so will not revisit them.

Achilles also "engages in excessive self-sacrifice that is unsolicited by the intended recipients of the sacrifice" (criterion 8). According to Achilles, he does the greater part of the fighting. He is constantly toiling in battle against the enemy, only to hand over the fruits of his labors to Agamemnon. He is like a mother bird that brings food to her chicks but suffers herself (9.323-27). Achilles suggests in these passages that he fights especially hard and contributes more than he needs to. Once Patroclus has been killed, Achilles wants to starve himself in

¹⁰¹ It could be the result of an internal conflict. While part of Achilles loves Patroclus and does not want to see him get hurt, another part of him is willing to use Patroclus to further its narcissistic agenda (16.80-96), and this same part is also angry at Patroclus for siding or sympathizing with the other Greeks rather than with him (cf. Achilles' warning to Phoenix in book 9).

mourning and penance. Finally, he sacrifices himself in avenging Patroclus, for he knows that by killing Hector, he will ensure his own death at Troy.¹⁰²

Achilles' masochistic acting out has been implicit in these criteria, but here I want to make it explicit by emphasizing his self-destructiveness. According to Achilles in book 9, Thetis told him that he has a choice of fates. Either he can go home and live a long, obscure life, or he can die fighting at Troy and win undying fame (9.410-16). The poem has not shown Thetis informing Achilles of his choice of fates, although she does warn him later that he will die at Troy if he kills Hector (18.95-96). As Burgess notes, already in book 1 Achilles has some awareness of his fate, so he acquired this information before the poem begins.¹⁰³ This fact does not tell us, however, whether he had the information before leaving for Troy.¹⁰⁴ I think that we are supposed to assume that Thetis did give Achilles his choice before he left for Troy. At 17.406-11, the narrator says that Thetis "often" (πολλάκι) told Achilles of Zeus's thinking. This is referring to Achilles' knowing that he will not sack Troy, presumably because he will be dead before then. In a parallel, the Corinthian Euchenor had "often" (πολλάκι) been told by his father, a seer, that he could either die of disease at home or die fighting at Troy (13.663-72).¹⁰⁵ Euchenor goes to Troy "knowing well" his fate (13.665). The choice of fates is evidently a motif

¹⁰² Holway 2012, 162: "Achilles' long-suppressed rage at the loss of his *nostos* ["return home"]—via the death of the companion whose life he loves as well as his own—is by turns homicidal and suicidal. No longer is any parent or parent-figure, legitimate or otherwise, *aitios* ["responsible"] for the now manifestly outrageous sacrifice of their son's life and the lives of others whose deaths at his hands avenge or vindicate their honor. By the end of the poem, the son alone will be responsible, and prepared to pay the price." In other words, having denied that his parents are sacrificing him for their greater honor and having enacted the parental role of sacrificer vis-à-vis Patroclus, Achilles is now willingly sacrificing himself, thereby at once absolving his parents and completing their sacrifice of him.

¹⁰³ Burgess 2009, 48.

¹⁰⁴ We discuss below whether Achilles' fate in book 1 is the same as that mentioned in book 9.

¹⁰⁵ Burgess points out that πολλάκι ("often") is used with both Achilles and Euchenor (2009, 48).

of oral poetry, and the parallel of Euchenor suggests that Achilles too knew that he had a choice before setting out for Troy.¹⁰⁶

Although the way in which Achilles and Thetis speak of his “short fate” (e.g., 1.352, 416; 18.59) might be interpreted to mean that he has only one fate rather than a choice of fates, it need not be.¹⁰⁷ If Achilles has chosen the short, glorious fate, to speak of this fate as *the* fate that he has is not inconsistent with having had a choice. Although Achilles has made his choice, it remains subject to revision until he kills Hector (9.410-16, 18.95-96).¹⁰⁸ It is possible that speaking of Achilles as “swift fated” reflects a tradition in which he did not have a choice of fates. Even if that were to be the case, since the language of this tradition has been combined with the tradition of his having a choice and this language is not necessarily inconsistent with his having a choice, we could argue that the passages in which he has a choice (e.g., 9.410-16) would require us to revise our interpretation of those passages in which the only fate mentioned is his early death.

Burgess questions whether Achilles really does have a choice of fates in book 9 and argues that what Achilles says is “best seen as a threat, perhaps made with self-delusion.”¹⁰⁹ “It is more likely,” Burgess says, “that Achilles is being untruthful in book 9 or perhaps is misleadingly speaking of a choice that he made in the past.”¹¹⁰ I think that Thetis’s words in

¹⁰⁶ Griffin 1995, ad 9.410-16.

¹⁰⁷ Griffin 1995, ad 9.410-16.

¹⁰⁸ So Edwards 1991, ad 18.89-90. See below for further discussion of Achilles’ choice.

¹⁰⁹ Burgess 2009, 52. In chapter 4, we discuss whether what Achilles says is an empty threat. Burgess continues: “The hero seems to be manipulating others, and perhaps is also thinking out loud, expressing doubts about what he actually knows is fated and irrevocable.”

¹¹⁰ Burgess 2009, 50.

18.95-96 tend to confirm what Achilles says in book 9. After Achilles states his determination to kill Hector (18.90-93), Thetis says:

ὠκύμορος δὴ μοι, τέκος, ἔσσεαι, οἷ' ἀγορεύεις·
αὐτίκα γάρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ' Ἑκτορα πότμος ἑτοῖμος.

You will be swift fated indeed, my child, since you say such things,
for in that case immediately after Hector your death is ready.

Of this passage, Burgess writes:

Some conclude that the words of Thetis . . . imply that Achilles could live if he did not kill Hektor. But such a choice, whether to avoid Hektor and live or kill him and die, would not be the choice of book 9 (though the two passages are conflated at Pl. *Symp.* 179e). And the words of Thetis in book 18 do not imply that Achilles has a choice of fates. She merely observes that his determination to die confirms a fate she views as irrevocable and then provides more specific information about it.¹¹¹

If one does not dismiss what Achilles says in book 9, these lines tend to suggest that Achilles does have a choice at Troy, as Plato thought.¹¹² When Burgess says that the choice of book 18 (“whether to avoid Hektor and live or kill him and die”) is not the choice of book 9, he seems to omit an essential consideration: killing Hector is the heroic act that will ensure that Achilles’ κλέος ἐσθλόν (“good fame”) will be ἄφθιτον (“imperishable” [9.413, 415]).¹¹³ When Achilles decides to return to battle, he wishes that he may win good fame, κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀροίμην (18.121). This wish may imply that before killing Hector, he has not yet won the “good fame”

¹¹¹ Burgess 2009, 51.

¹¹² The emphatic δὴ (“indeed”) might support Burgess’s interpretation because one might think that it presupposes that Achilles is already swift fated (Denniston 1950, 204, adducing this passage). But we can reply that he will be swift fated only if he stays and fights, as he says in book 9. Denniston also says, “δὴ is bound to the relevant word by a looser bond [than γὰρ is], and is more able to spread its influence over the whole clause” (Denniston 1950, 204). Evidently Plato did not see this δὴ as an obstacle to Achilles having a choice. As Burgess acknowledges, many have thought that Achilles does have a choice (e.g., Edwards 1991, ad 18.89-90; Schein 1984, 92, 132).

¹¹³ So Edwards 1991, ad 18.89-90.

that he mentions in 9.415 and therefore can still return home. After he has killed Hector, he tells the men, ἠράμεθα μέγα κῦδος· ἐπέφνομεν Ἴκτορα δῖον, “We have won great glory; we have killed noble Hector” (22.393). *Kūdos* and *kleos* are not identical, but here they are similar, as the shared verb also suggests. *Kūdos* is “victory” and the “glory of victory,” which become long-term *kleos*.¹¹⁴

Burgess allows that “a choice of fates, whether a general motif or not [cf. Euchenor, Heracles, and Gilgamesh] may have always been part of traditional myth,” but he thinks that “if so, it is much more likely that it belongs to his [i.e., Achilles’] past and not to the context of the *Iliad*” since “it is less credible that Achilles is mulling over such a choice in the tenth year of the war.”¹¹⁵ This is unconvincing, especially because the *Iliad* not infrequently incorporates material that either belongs to an earlier part of the war (e.g., the catalogue of ships in book 2 and the *teichoscopia* and duel between Paris and Menelaus in book 3) or that symbolically repeats an action from earlier in the Trojan cycle (e.g. the Trojan treachery in book 4 repeats Paris’s treachery in abducting Helen).¹¹⁶ It is to the *Iliad*’s credit that it repeatedly shows Achilles making his choice again and again and struggling with it in his disillusionment. If Achilles really had no choice, his great speech in book 9 would be just so much sound and fury signifying nothing, and book 9, as well as the *Iliad* as a whole, would be greatly vitiated.

Although we will assume that Achilles had a choice of fates before going to Troy, whether he learned of his choice before leaving home or only after arriving at Troy does not matter for our purposes here. What is important is that he chooses a course of action that he

¹¹⁴ *Lfgre* gives *Triumph*, *Heldenruhm*, *Prestige als Folge*.

¹¹⁵ Burgess 2009, 52.

¹¹⁶ E.g., Whitman 1958, 268; Griffin 1980, 1; Burgess 2009, 65, 93.

knows will result in his death. He makes this choice repeatedly. It is implicit in his plan to have Zeus help the Trojans so that the Greeks will need him. It is implicit in remaining at Troy after the embassy in book 9. And it is explicit in choosing to avenge Patroclus even after he is warned that his death will soon follow Hector's.

For Achilles, being the best requires suffering and self-destruction. He provokes the quarrel, which comes to center on who the best of the Achaeans is. He then refuses to be reconciled both in book 1 when Nestor intervenes and in book 9 when the ambassadors convey Agamemnon's offer. Total victory over Agamemnon requires Achilles to endure prolonged suffering and marginalization.

Achilles' masochistic self-destruction is clearest in the events surrounding the deaths of Patroclus and Hector. As neoanalysis has taught us, the poet transfers motifs from the death of Achilles to that of Patroclus, who is a doublet of Achilles.¹¹⁷ In the *Odyssey* and *Aethiopsis*, for example, Thetis comes from beneath the sea with her sisters to mourn Achilles (*Od.* 24.39-40, 47-49; Proclus *Chrestomathy*, arg. 4 West 2003a, 112). In the *Iliad*, Thetis likewise comes from the sea with her sisters, although she comes to comfort rather than to mourn him (18.22-72). The arrival of Thetis accompanied by her sisters has obviously been transferred from Achilles' death, for it is unnecessary and incongruous to have all of these Nereids accompany Thetis just to comfort Achilles. The motif clearly fits better in the context of Achilles' death than it does here, and this argues that Achilles' death is the original context. When groaning for Patroclus in the *Iliad*, Achilles "[lies] stretched out in the dust, great in his great sprawl," ἐν κονίησι μέγας

¹¹⁷ E.g., Kakridis 1949, Schadewaldt 1965, Kullmann 1960, West 2003c, Burgess 2009. See these works for additional examples.

μεγαλωστί τανυσθεῖς / κεῖτο (18.26-27).¹¹⁸ In the *Odyssey*, Agamemnon tells Achilles how the Greeks fought to protect his dead body, which was lying in the dust: σὺ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης / κεῖσο μέγας μεγαλωστί, λελασμένος ἵπποσυνάων, “but you in a whirl of dust / lay great in your great sprawl, having forgotten your horsemanship” (24. 39-40).¹¹⁹ Thus, when Thetis comes to Achilles in the *Iliad*, the poet suggests that he is already dead. Transferring such motifs to Patroclus’s death is one way in which Homer manages to include Achilles’ death without actually narrating it.¹²⁰

The transference of these motifs aside, the symbolism of Achilles’ death is transparent. Thetis has warned Achilles that Patroclus will be killed while Achilles is still alive. Achilles either forgets or ignores this prophecy.¹²¹ Otherwise, he would not send Patroclus into battle to stop Hector. As it happens, Achilles sends Patroclus to his death while wearing his (i.e., Achilles’) armor. By sending his double to his death, Achilles symbolically destroys himself. This symbolism continues: avenging Patroclus will require killing Hector, and Thetis has told Achilles that his death will follow shortly upon Hector’s (18.95-96). Achilles then kills Hector, who is now wearing Achilles’ armor. Achilles thus symbolically destroys himself by slaying his latest doublet. Achilles ensures his actual destruction as well, since Hector’s death is destined to

¹¹⁸ For μεγαλωστί, *Lfgre* gives *über eine große Fläche, langhinstreckt*.

¹¹⁹ Some of these phrases (e.g., μέγας μεγαλωστί, στροφάλιγγι κονίης) are formulaic, but they are used sparingly. μεγαλωστί and στροφάλιγγι are used only three times in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Two of these three passages we have already seen. The other relevant one is the use of these words in the battle over Cebryones’ body: ὁ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης / κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστί, λελασμένος ἵπποσυνάων, “but he in a whirl of dust / lay great in his great sprawl, having forgotten his horsemanship” (*Il.* 16. 775-76). When Agamemnon uses this language for Achilles in the *Odyssey*, he is discussing the fight for Achilles’ body. See Burgess 2009, 83-85.

¹²⁰ Burgess 2009, 65: “Many have also recognized the *Iliad*’s evocation of the whole war” (cf. 81, 87, 93, 97; see 148n.44 for references).

¹²¹ The poem is inconsistent on this point (18.324-27, 19.328-33; Burgess 2009, 48-49).

precipitate his own. Achilles does this knowing full well that he is bringing about his own destruction.

The regulation or enhancement of self-esteem motivates Achilles' self-destruction in both his decision to go to Troy and his decision to avenge Patroclus. Thus, as Cooper tells us, masochism has narcissistic functions.¹²² In his choice of fates, Achilles chooses to win honor and glory at Troy rather than to live a long but obscure life. In book 18, he tells Thetis that his spirit bids him to die unless he can kill Hector (18.90-93). She replies, "immediately [αὐτίκα] then after Hector your death is ready" (18.96). He then wishes to be dead "immediately" (αὐτίκα τεθναίην) since he did not help Patroclus or the other Greeks but instead sits by the ships a "useless burden" (ἐτώσιον ἄχθος) upon the plowland (18.98-104). Achilles has been a "useless burden" because of his refusal to fight. There is the implication that he must now fight if he does not want to remain a useless burden. Even though he knows what the consequences will be, it is duty to fight and avenge Patroclus. The interplay of masochism and narcissism is evident even here. Uselessness threatens his self-esteem here just as worthlessness (e.g., οὐτιδανός) does in book 1 (1.293). He feels he must act to redeem himself or to prevent becoming even more useless. Once again, he uses the defense of moralization to justify an action to ward off worthlessness. In book 1, this was his resistance to Agamemnon. Here, it is avenging Patroclus. In this way does Achilles' self-esteem masochistically depend on his self-destruction.

Achilles' choice of the short, glorious life is more narcissistic than his decision to avenge Patroclus is, because it is more selfish and is motivated by his desire for honor and fame, whereas avenging Patroclus is self-sacrifice for the sake of another and is narcissistic mainly in

¹²² Cooper 1988, 2007.

the sense that it still pertains to regulating self-esteem. Insofar as Achilles' choice of the short, glorious life and his decision to avenge Patroclus are heroic, heroism is narcissistic and masochistic. The inherent masochism of heroism is illustrated by nothing so well as by its absurd culmination, that sublime parody, Don Quixote.¹²³

¹²³ Noted also by Reik 1941.

Chapter 4

Embassy

Introduction

The first part of this chapter lays out the evidence for Achilles' narcissism systematically. The second part introduces Heinz Kohut's self psychology, a school of psychoanalysis that originated as an approach to narcissism. When seen through the lens of self psychology, Achilles' behaviors in the quarrel and embassy take on a new significance because we appreciate that they conform to a common narcissistic pattern. Part III provides a reading of the embassy to Achilles in book 9 and explains the object relations of Achilles that we have encountered in the first three chapters.

Part I: Narcissism

Before we can apply self psychology's insights into narcissism, we need to see that Achilles is in fact narcissistic. While chapter 2 may have made that clear, there we were primarily discussing features of narcissism relevant to Achilles' speeches in book 1, and it remains necessary to review the features of narcissism systematically. We will do this by considering DSM-5's diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Now, although we demonstrate that Achilles is narcissistic, our purpose is not to pathologize him or argue that he has a personality disorder but rather to show that certain behaviors are meaningful and belong to a non-arbitrary whole.¹

DSM-5 has nine diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality disorder:

¹ For example, we saw in chapter 2 how grandiose defenses and a sense of entitlement are related through the person's self-concept and how narcissistic dynamics are a house of cards requiring certain responses to keep the illusion from crashing down. Narcissists must complain that they are unfairly being deprived of what they are entitled to, for if they were being treated fairly, they would not be as great as they think that they are.

1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).
2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.
3. Believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).
4. Requires excessive amounts of admiration.
5. Has a sense of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations).
6. Is interpersonally exploitative (i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends).
7. Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.
8. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.
9. Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

All of these criteria except the third are relevant to Achilles.² I have said that these criteria “are relevant to” Achilles rather than that he “meets” them because people can display significant levels of a trait while still falling below the extreme level required for a personality disorder. Sometimes Achilles does meet the necessary level of severity, but because we are interested in describing and explaining rather than pathologizing his personality, we will not concern ourselves with levels of these criteria.

Narcissistic grandiosity is most obvious when the person’s grandiose claims verge on the delusional, but a person widely acknowledged to be great in some way who goes around intoxicated with a sense of his own greatness and capabilities would still be grandiose:

Grandiosity ([i.e.,] *enhanced* or unrealistic sense of superiority, uniqueness, or capability) is expressed in unwarranted expectations, *exceptionally* high aspirations, and self-centeredness, as well as in fantasies of unfulfilled ambitions or unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal relationships.³

² The third criterion is woven into the fabric of Homeric society. The person must meet five of these criteria in order to qualify for Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

³ Ronningstam 2010, 71; my emphasis.

Narcissists can manifest their grandiosity in boasting and in asserting themselves unnecessarily. Grandiosity has an affective component as well. The person feels expansive, powerful, or even omnipotent.

While Achilles is obviously exceptional and may not exaggerate his talents, he does overstate his importance and contributions to the army.⁴ According to Achilles, he has sacked twenty-three cities (9.328-29). In book 1, Achilles says that he does the greater part of the fighting (1.165-66). What has happened to the contribution of all of the other Greeks? Achilles is less important than he thinks he is.⁵ As the early battle books show, the Greeks can defeat the Trojans without Achilles. Ajax is, and Diomedes would be, more than a match for Hector. Only after Zeus gives the Trojans the upper hand do the Greeks come to need Achilles. The Greeks need Achilles because of Zeus, but it is only because of Thetis that Zeus helps the Trojans. Therefore, it is Thetis, more so than Achilles, who is important. Achilles is important insofar as he can capitalize on his mother's importance.

Achilles' assertion that he is the best of the Achaeans, although in part evoked by Agamemnon, is an instance of his grandiosity. He feels compelled to announce and to prove his superiority to everyone. Likewise, before the chariot race, he must declare that he would win the race if he entered it (23.272-79). He claims to be the best of the Achaeans, but his superiority is based on a rather limited number of qualities: being the best and bravest warrior, being the fastest, and having the best horses (23.272-79, 791-92).⁶

⁴ The poet colludes in Achilles' narcissism by making him exceptional to such a high degree. The poet and the tradition create pure wish-fulfillment in the idealization of Achilles and the heroic world.

⁵ See van Wees 1992. Achilles' relatively unimportant place in the larger narrative of the Trojan War also makes this clear (West 2011, 42-43).

⁶ Van Wees 1992, 78.

Achilles' feeling of grandiosity is implicit in his *aristeia*, particularly when he defies the river Scamander (21.214-69). Outside the *Iliad*, the same sense of omnipotence lies behind Achilles' disregard for Apollo's warning to turn back.⁷ In the ritual antagonism between hero and god, the hero oversteps in an attempt to transcend human limits, to become a god and therefore immortal.⁸ Patroclus's defiance of Apollo, which is modeled on Achilles', only happens after he has donned Achilles' armor and grandiosity.⁹ The armor, defensive by design, can be interpreted as "character armor."¹⁰ In this case, the character armor represents Achilles' narcissistic defenses, particularly, grandiosity, omnipotence, and arrogance.

We can contrast Achilles' behavior with Diomedes' in similar situations. Diomedes fights Aphrodite and Ares only after Athena gives him permission or support (5.129-32, 826-30). Diomedes does attack Aeneas three times when Apollo is rescuing him, but unlike Achilles and Patroclus, he aborts his fourth attack and withdraws in obedience to Apollo's warning not to vie with the gods (5.432-44).

Achilles is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success (criterion 2). Success for Achilles consists in winning honor and fame through performing great deeds and having his excellence recognized. It is also legitimate to add honor and fame to the list of goals given by the DSM for the second criterion. Achilles was motivated to come to Troy by the fantasy of winning *kleos aphthiton*, so his fantasied success is unlimited temporally. Because of the quarrel with

⁷ Patroclus's defiance of Apollo in the *Iliad* is presumably modeled on Achilles' outside the *Iliad* (Nagy 1999, Muellner 1996, Burgess 2009).

⁸ See Nagy 1999 and Muellner 1996.

⁹ E.g., Whitman 1958, 199-201. Hector is filled with Ares when he puts on Achilles' armor, but this is part of Zeus's compensation to him for his early death (17.201-12).

¹⁰ "Character armor" is Wilhelm Reich's felicitous metaphor (Reich 1949).

Agamemnon, Achilles fantasizes that his excellence will be recognized when the Greeks are dying by their ships (1.240-44). At that point, the Greeks' need for Achilles will demonstrate that he is the most important and therefore has the greatest honor, and it will complete Agamemnon's humiliation. In book 16, Achilles wishes that all the Greeks and Trojans might perish and that he and Patroclus alone might capture Troy (16.97-100).

Achilles requires excessive amounts of admiration (criterion 4). In book 1, he complains that he, the best of the Achaeans, has not been honored and that he does not receive a prize of honor commensurate with his contributions to the war (1.240-44, 163-68). Even though he is awarded his prize in the same way that everyone else is, he alone complains that his is insufficient.¹¹ Achilles' quarrel with Agamemnon becomes a narcissistic contest to be recognized as the best of the Achaeans and to extort the honor to which he believes himself entitled. Winning this contest means that Achilles has the greatest honor. In order to win this contest, Achilles is willing to destroy his fellow Greeks. He even insists that the king of gods and men should honor him.

We have discussed Achilles' sense of entitlement (criterion 5) at length in chapters 2 and 3. Here I would only add that his expectation of automatic compliance with his wishes shows his sense of entitlement. In book 16, Achilles expects Patroclus to obey his instructions to turn back after driving the Trojans away from the ships (16.80-100). In book 19, he expects the army to return to battle at once even though it is unfed, and Odysseus must tactfully oppose him a second time (19.146-237). It is as if Odysseus is walking on egg shells, and Achilles could fly into a

¹¹ It is not clear exactly how prizes and spoils are awarded. Sometimes Agamemnon is said to do it, sometimes the army is, and sometimes both are (1.161-62, 275-76, 299; 9.333-36; 16.56-60). Van Wees (1992) thinks that the army gives Agamemnon the spoils for him to distribute. The army thus in a sense authorizes Agamemnon to distribute the spoils, and whatever is given out by him can also be said to have been given by the army.

rage if he happens to misstep. The expectation of automatic compliance is implicit in how quick Achilles is to grow violently angry. In book 11, for instance, Patroclus tries to complete the errand that Achilles has sent him on quickly, without getting hung up chatting with the garrulous Nestor. Refusing Nestor's invitation, Patroclus explains why he cannot stay:

οὐχ ἔδος ἐστὶ γεραιᾷ διοτρεφές, οὐδέ με πείσεις.
αἰδοῖός νεμεσητὸς ὃ με προέηκε πυθέσθαι
ὄν τινα τοῦτον ἄγεις βεβλημένον· ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς (650)
γινώσκω, ὀρώω δὲ Μαχάονα ποιμένα λαῶν.
νῦν δὲ ἔπος ἐρέων πάλιν ἄγγελος εἶμ' Ἀχιλλῆϊ.
εὔδ' ἐσὶ σὺ οἴσθα γεραιᾷ διοτρεφές, οἴος ἐκεῖνος
δεινὸς ἀνήρ· τάχα κεν καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτιόωτο. (11. 648-54)

This is not the time for sitting, old man nurtured by Zeus, and you won't persuade me.

To be respected and inclined to anger is the man who sent me to find out who this man was whom you were bringing back wounded, but even by myself I recognize and see Machaon, shepherd of the people.

But now I will go back as a messenger to report the news to Achilles.

You know well, old man nurtured by Zeus, what a terrifying man he is; he is likely to blame even a blameless man.

Achilles' warning to Priam not to provoke his explosive and potentially lethal anger reflects this same expectation of automatic compliance (24.560-70). If Priam does not comply, Achilles may lose control and kill him.

Achilles is interpersonally exploitative (criterion 6). We saw something related to this in his attempt to bully others into doing his bidding (see chapter 2). Sending Patroclus into battle in his stead might be considered exploitative: Achilles is not yet ready to return, sending Patroclus into battle gives Achilles additional time, and whatever success Patroclus has brings Achilles honor. Achilles is concerned that Patroclus do enough to bring him honor but not so much that Achilles will lose honor (16.83-90). More cynically, Patroclus's death will allow Achilles to

return to battle for his own reasons.¹² That is, he will be returning to avenge Patroclus rather than to serve Agamemnon in return for accepting his gifts. Achilles conveniently forgets his mother's prophecy that the best of the Myrmidons (Patroclus) will die while he is still alive. To be sure, Nestor and Patroclus give Achilles the idea of sending Patroclus into battle in his place. That Patroclus wants to do this does not mean that Achilles' decision is not also exploitative, especially in light of his mother's prophecies.

The best example of Achilles' interpersonal exploitativeness is his sacrifice of the Greek army to win his narcissistic contest with Agamemnon. This exploitation is all the more flagrant because it is deliberate, callous, and sadistic. A milder example is Achilles' treatment of the army once he is ready to return to battle. The army has been worn down by the Trojans the previous three days, but Achilles needs it so that he may avenge Patroclus. His behavior here is exploitative in that he demands that the army resume the fight at once even though it is unfed (19.146-237). He wants to use the men and cares nothing of their suffering. He relents in this demand only after Odysseus remains firm in opposing him.

The last two examples are also examples of Achilles' lack of empathy (criterion 7). Since scholars make much of Achilles' pity, sensitivity, and humanity, we need to clarify this lack of empathy even if it may seem obvious to some.¹³ While narcissists usually lack empathy, many are nevertheless capable of it. There are degrees of the impairment in empathy, and this impairment will vary according to the severity of the narcissism.¹⁴ Even when narcissists are

¹² Eichholz 1953.

¹³ Schein is one who emphasizes Achilles' *philotēs*, "friendship," "affection," "love" (1984, 98-99).

¹⁴ Narcissism exists on a continuum of severity: narcissistic defenses, narcissistic character, narcissistic personality disorder, "malignant narcissism," and perhaps then antisocial personality disorder and psychopathy (Kernberg 1984, 2004).

capable of empathy, it may be relatively shallow. It might be intellectual rather than felt: “The other is feeling pain. I don’t want her to feel pain, so I should offer sympathy even though I feel nothing of the other’s pain.”¹⁵ Narcissists may fail to empathize not because they cannot empathize but rather because they are not interested in doing so or because they are oblivious to their effect on others.

That Achilles can be wanting in empathy should be unobjectionable. He is repeatedly called “pitiless” and “cruel” even by his friends (e.g., 9.628-38, 699-700; 16.29-35).¹⁶ Once again, Achilles is willing to sacrifice the army for his contest and is relatively unmoved by the Greeks’ suffering even if he is curious about it. Achilles fails to empathize with Agamemnon even before the quarrel is fully underway because he is not interested in Agamemnon’s feelings.¹⁷ Likewise, the reconciliation between Achilles and Agamemnon in book 19 is tense because Achilles is dismissive and impatient. Except for his initial speech (19.56-73), he does not make apologizing any easier for Agamemnon.¹⁸ Odysseus must intervene to enforce the formalities and ensure that the whole affair does not miscarry at the last moment.

Achilles can be oblivious to his audience and forget how his words might affect it. In book 1, he says that he does the greater part of the fighting (1.165-66). While it may be true that he accomplishes more in battle than anyone else, he is surely exaggerating here. He thus

¹⁵ Ronningstam 2010, 73, with references.

¹⁶ Phoenix tells Achilles not to have a “pitiless” (νηλεὲς) heart (9.496-97). Ajax calls calling him νηλής (“pitiless”) and σκέτλιος (“unfeeling, inflexible, cruel”) and his spirit ἄγριον (“wild, savage”), ἀλληκτόν (“implacable”), and κακόν (“bad” [9.629, 630, 632, 636]).

¹⁷ Cf. Scodel 2008, 132.

¹⁸ In this speech Achilles expresses some mutuality by saying “we” and wishing that Artemis had killed Briseis (19.56-68).

implicitly disparages the contribution of his audience to the fighting. Likewise, unless Achilles and the Myrmidons alone have sacked the twenty-three cities mentioned in book 9, he slights the contributions of Ajax and Odysseus if they too were involved (9.328-29). We might also say that he slights the contribution of the rest of the Myrmidons, some of whom are in attendance. In book 19, Achilles does not consider that the other Greeks might not be as distraught as he is about Patroclus's death or that they might not share his sense of urgency. Consequently, he forgets that they have not yet eaten. He also forgets that others do not have his fighting ability and stamina. He might be able to fight all day without eating, though Zeus does not agree, but the others cannot (an instance of his grandiosity). Even after Odysseus reminds him that the men need to eat, he still insists that they proceed to battle forthwith. Not only does he not care about the other troops, but he also obliviously shows his disregard for them in their presence.

Achilles wants to fast until he has avenged Patroclus. As Odysseus recognizes, Achilles is acting as though the other Greeks should do the same. Odysseus reminds him that the Greeks are dying constantly and daily and that fasting and prolonged mourning are impossible in such a state of continual fighting (19.199-233). Odysseus's general statement (men die constantly in battle) reminds us of the particular circumstances: the men have been dying the last three days. And why is that? Achilles has not been fighting. Because of the continual fighting, the Greeks do not have time to mourn their dead comrades for more than a day. Achilles is oblivious to this as well. Patroclus is usually the only one who matters to him, and it is as if the others who have died mean nothing to everyone else just as they do to him. It is as if Achilles were the only one in the army to have lost someone dear to him. Again, Achilles is responsible both for the loss of these other Greeks and for their friends' inability to fast for them or to mourn for more than a

day. Achilles is oblivious to all of this and is oblivious to the audience before whom he is being oblivious.

Achilles' empathy or pity can be intellectual rather than emotional, so that he can seem cold and dismissive. While pity and empathy are not necessarily the same, they are related, and the latter may make possible the former, so I will treat Achilles' pity under the rubric of "empathy." The DSM's criterion (lacks empathy) applies also to failures of pity and compassion: "When recognized, the needs, desires, or feelings of others are likely to be viewed disparagingly as signs of weakness or vulnerability. Those who relate to individuals with narcissistic personality disorder typically find an emotional coldness and lack of reciprocal interest."¹⁹

We see the cold, dismissive, and intellectual quality of Achilles' pity in his response to Patroclus at the beginning of book 16. Seeing Patroclus weeping, Achilles pities him and asks why he is upset:

τίπτε δεδάκρυσαι Πατρόκλεες, ἤϋτε κούρη
νηπίη, ἢ θ' ἅμα μητρὶ θεοῦσ' ἀνελέσθαι ἀνώγει
εἰανοῦ ἀπτομένη, καὶ τ' ἐσσυμένην κατερύκει,
δακρυόεσσα δέ μιν ποτιδέρκεται, ὄφρ' ἀνέληται· (10)
τῆ ἵκελος Πάτροκλε τέρεν κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβεις.
ἦέ τι Μυρμιδόνεσσι πιφάσκειαι, ἢ ἐμοὶ αὐτῶ,
ἦέ τιν' ἀγγελίην Φθίης ἐξέκλυες οἶος;
ζῶειν μὰν ἔτι φασὶ Μενόϊτιον Ἴακτορος υἴόν,
ζῶει δ' Αἰακίδης Πηλεὺς μετὰ Μυρμιδόνεσσι; (15)
τῶν κε μάλ' ἀμφοτέρων ἀκαχοίμεθα τεθνηῶτων.
ἦε σύ γ' Ἀργείων ὀλοφύρεαι, ὡς ὀλέκονται
νηυσὶν ἐπι γλαφυρῆσιν ὑπερβασίης ἔνεκα σφῆς;
ἐξάυδα, μὴ κεῦθε νόω, ἵνα εἶδομεν ἄμφω.

Why, Patroclus, are you crying like a little girl
who runs alongside her mother and begs to be picked up,
holding onto her dress and restraining her as she tries to hurry,

¹⁹ DSM-5, 671. Explaining its alternative model for personality disorders based on traits, the DSM puts "empathy" at one end of the spectrum and "callousness" at the other, and callousness is the lack of empathy, sympathy, compassion, pity, or mercy (DSM-5, 773).

and she looks at her tearfully until she picks her up.
Like her, Patroclus, you are shedding tender tears.
Are you revealing something to the Myrmidons or to me myself,
or have you alone heard some news from Phthia?
They say that Menoitius, Actor's son, still lives,
and Aeacus's son Peleus is living among the Myrmidons,
over whom we would be greatly saddened if both were dead.
Or is it that you are feeling compassion for the Greeks, how they're being killed
by the hollow ships on account of their transgression?
Tell me, don't conceal it, so that we both may know. (16.7-19)

The simile itself shows that Achilles is aware of Patroclus's distress and that he is capable of great sensitivity. Applying it to Patroclus, however, is disparaging and dismissive, for comparing a hero to a weeping little girl who needs her mother is unflattering. The comparison implies weakness, immaturity, and a lack of masculinity. The disparaging and dismissive quality makes Achilles' pity seem sarcastic and cold.

The pity is more intellectual than emotional. Achilles understands what Patroclus is feeling, but he evidently does not feel Patroclus's pain. Otherwise, he would not be dismissive or disparaging, since genuine, felt empathy would seem to make such coldness impossible. That Achilles has to ask why Patroclus is distraught might suggest that Achilles is limited after all in his ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of others, since the cause of Patroclus's distress ought to be obvious. Patroclus has just returned from visiting his beleaguered comrades. If Achilles knows the answer but feigns ignorance, he is tormenting his friend a little sadistically for sympathizing with the distressed Greeks.

We must emphasize just how severe the narcissistic disturbance must be to allow Achilles actively to destroy his fellows and to feel no remorse.²⁰ Buchan is right to emphasize

²⁰ Achilles only regrets his plan after he has got Patroclus killed (18.98-113). He certainly feels remorse for getting Patroclus killed. Although he mentions being no help to his friends, we may doubt how much remorse, if any, he feels for the other Greeks whose deaths he has engineered, for he has multiple chances to abort his plan (e.g., in

Achilles' betrayal of the Greeks.²¹ Scholars have focused too much on Achilles' slaughter of the Trojans during his *aristeia* or on his treatment of Hector's body.²² His sacrifice of his comrades is far worse.²³ While other characters may resemble Achilles in having narcissistic goals, the lengths to which he is willing to go to meet them differentiate him from other heroes. One might adduce Meleager as an analogue to Achilles, but even Meleager falls short, for he does not actively engineer the destruction of his people. He merely withdraws from battle, and Achilles would have been completely justified in going home.

Homer colludes with his hero in keeping the other Greeks from learning of Achilles' plan (i.e., to have Zeus help the Trojans). Most of the time the poem focuses on Achilles' withdrawal and the suffering that he lets happen. If Achilles' friends deprecate his continued absence from fighting on the grounds that it is cruel or pitiless (book 9), they would deplore far more his active effectuation of their discomfiture. Homer identifies so thoroughly with his hero that he withholds this damning information from the other Greeks in order to protect Achilles. Homer's suppression of this knowledge might suggest that he approves of Achilles' plan or thinks that it is justified under the circumstances. I think, rather, that this suppression indicates ambivalence on Homer's part. Homer thinks that Achilles' plan is reprehensible in the world of the poem and in the poet's world, but he must suppress it in order to protect his hero, for even if he did not condemn Achilles' plan in his own voice, the reaction of Achilles' comrades to his plan, were

book 9 or 16) by returning to battle but does not. While Achilles remains distraught over Patroclus's death for the rest of the poem, he quickly forgets the other Greeks.

²¹ Buchan 2012.

²² E.g., King 1987.

²³ His sacrifice of the twelve Trojan youths in book 23 is another action that is worse than his treatment of Hector or berserking slaughter of Trojans during his *aristeia*.

they to learn of it, might prevent the audience from identifying or sympathizing with him. Homer disapproves of Achilles' plan but not of Achilles.

Homer's need to suppress Achilles' plan suggests that it is excessive and abnormal even for Homeric heroes. The other heroes can understand and tolerate Achilles' withdrawal up to a point (9.515-26, 628-39). Withdrawal might be normal and acceptable in this society when it remains within certain limits. But the duration of Achilles' withdrawal and his effectuation of the Greeks' destruction break these limits. His friends think that he lacks empathy (hence the epithet "pitiless"), but they do not even know the worst of what he has done.

Envy (criterion 8) motivates Achilles' defensive devaluation of Agamemnon's wealth and political power. This devaluation makes Agamemnon's wealth and power less desirable and consequently makes it easier for Achilles to deny that he envies Agamemnon because of them. Acknowledging the envy risks acknowledging a lack or shortcoming and therefore potentially inferiority. Devaluation thus sustains Achilles in his belief in his perfection, superiority, and self-sufficiency.

We see Achilles' arrogance and haughtiness (criterion 9) in his contempt for Agamemnon, insistence on his superiority, and argument that the Greeks need him, not he the Greeks. Achilles' peers think he is haughty and arrogant. For instance, Diomedes calls Achilles "arrogant" (ἀγῆνωρ) and says that Agamemnon should not have incited him to greater "arrogance" (ἀγηνωρίησιν) by sending the embassy (9.697-700).

Most of the other features of narcissism we have already discussed in earlier chapters, so we will review them briefly here as we complete our sketch of the narcissistic elements of

Achilles' personality.²⁴ Narcissistic individuals have difficulty regulating self-esteem and swing between the extremes of high and low self-esteem.²⁵ When their self-esteem or sense of superiority is threatened, they tend to react with rage and sometimes violently.²⁶ They tend to show off, try to elicit admiration, and set up narcissistic contests.²⁷ Narcissistic individuals are hypervigilant of and hypersensitive to criticism or perceived slights and are prone to shame and feelings of inferiority.²⁸

The narcissistic self consists of dissociated all-good and all-bad self-concepts and their corresponding affects.²⁹ For example, when the grandiose (i.e., all-good) self-concept is active, the person enjoys high self-esteem and is filled with feelings of uniqueness, perfection, omnipotence, and superiority. Narcissists are prone to splitting. Their dissociated all-good and all-bad self-concepts are one manifestation of this. But they also split other people, and the world generally, into all-good and all-bad. Hence, they tend to idealize or devalue people and things rather than acknowledge the good and the bad. The splitting may consist in oscillating between idealizing and devaluing the same person or in assigning people and things to a good or bad category without any oscillation. According to Kernberg, such idealization and devaluation are

²⁴ Specifically, we have mentioned splitting, the dissociated all-good and all-bad self-concepts and their attendant emotions and self-esteem, the sensitivity and shame-proneness, the feelings of worthlessness and inferiority, and the competitiveness.

²⁵ Ronningstam 2005, 74, with references.

²⁶ Ronningstam 2005, 82, with references.

²⁷ Ronningstam 2005, 82.

²⁸ Ronningstam 2005, 24, 82.

²⁹ This paragraph relies on Kernberg 1975, 1984.

projections of the all-good and all-bad selves respectively.³⁰ In narcissism, “there is a fusion of ideal self, ideal object, and actual self images as a defense against an intolerable reality in the interpersonal realm, with a concomitant devaluation and destruction of object images as well as of external objects.”³¹

Narcissists have superego deficits presenting as diminished capacity for empathy and a self-serving morality.³² They are often hostile and aggressive and interpersonally dominant and controlling, with a tendency to get into power struggles.³³ As we will discuss below, narcissists have poor self-other boundaries and tend to treat others as extensions of themselves. Now, of course, they do not have the self-other confusion of psychotics, who may not know whether voices are coming from within or from without, for example.³⁴ Kernberg describes the boundary problems in narcissism as a denial of the difference between self and other rather than as a denial of the separateness of self and object.³⁵ That is a quibble, and there is no problem talking in terms of separateness and differentiation provided that we remember this is not the same type of boundary confusion as occurs in psychosis.

Part II: Self Psychology

Heinz Kohut developed self psychology when he found that classical psychoanalysis and ego psychology were inadequate for working with narcissistic patients, who suffered from

³⁰ Kernberg 1975, 231-32.

³¹ Kernberg 1975, 231.

³² Kernberg 1975.

³³ PDM, 604; Kernberg 1975, 228.

³⁴ In psychosis, the boundary problem can exist even at the perceptual level, as opposed to the conceptual level, so that what is coming from within the person and what is coming from without become confused (Meloy 1985, 1988).

³⁵ Kernberg 1984, 181.

“disorders of the self” rather than from transference neuroses centered on the Oedipus complex.³⁶ Depending on the theory, standard interpretations not only failed to capture what was wrong with narcissistic patients but also tended to seem critical or downright censorious, so that these patients often flew into rages or sometimes stopped treatment altogether. Self psychology allows therapists to “avoid judgmental confrontations in which the psychopathology is reflected to the patients in the form of implicit reproaches for their childish behavior.”³⁷ The use of empathy, both as an epistemological tool and as something that interpretations need to communicate, is probably Kohut’s most important contribution.³⁸

Contrary to what earlier theorists believed, narcissistic patients do form transferences but transferences involving a primitive type of object-relation.³⁹ In one type of narcissistic transference, the patients need “mirroring,” (i.e., approval, recognition, praise, confirmation, or the like) from the therapist.⁴⁰ In another, they need to idealize the therapist. The idealized therapist is able to provide a sense of safety and to be a calming or soothing presence. According to Kohut, these are childhood needs that went unmet because of parents’ empathic failures and that consequently resulted in developmental arrests. Therapy reactivates these needs and offers the potential for renewed growth through the new experience of the therapist’s empathic

³⁶ To be fair, classical theorists did not consider psychoanalysis applicable to narcissistic patients because they believed that these patients invested themselves rather than the therapist with libido and therefore did not form transferences, the interpretation of which was the cornerstone of psychoanalytic treatment.

³⁷ Goldberg 1978, 6.

³⁸ That is, interpretations need to convey the therapist’s tolerance and acceptance of the patient and her understanding of the patient’s perspective and of how the patient came to be a certain way in order to survive in a difficult environment.

³⁹ Kohut 1971, 1977, 1984; Kernberg 1975, 1984.

⁴⁰ Kohut 1971, 117.

responsiveness. The therapist allows the patient to feel understood and accepted rather than negated, rejected, criticized, neglected, or terrorized. Kohut calls these needs “selfobject needs.”⁴¹

The concept of the selfobject is one of Kohut’s most important contributions to psychoanalysis.⁴² A selfobject in his earlier work is an object (i.e., another person or a mental representation of that person) who is experienced as part of the self.⁴³ Narcissistic patients, who suffer from structural defects of the self, are particularly dependent on these selfobjects to maintain their self-esteem, stability, sense of wholeness, and motivation. In a later formulation, Kohut defines “selfobject” as “that dimension of experience of another person that relates to this person’s functions in shoring up our self.”⁴⁴ The therapist becomes one such person.

Humans generally, and not only narcissists, need selfobjects and “not only in infancy but throughout the whole span of life.”⁴⁵ Selfobject needs are supposed to mature as the person does so that they assume age-appropriate forms. A letter of Kohut’s captures how he envisions mirroring, idealizing, and twinship selfobject needs operating throughout life:

‘Throughout his life a person will experience himself as a cohesive harmonious firm unit in time and space, connected with his past and pointing meaningfully into a creative-productive future, [but] only as long as, at each stage in his life, he

⁴¹ In *How Does Analysis Cure?* (1984), Kohut adds “twinship” or “alter ego experience” as a third selfobject need. This is “the need to experience essential likeness from the moment of birth to the moment of death” (1984, 194) and to belong to a “human community” (Lessem 2005, 51). There are “phase-specific versions of this selfobject need,” so that “there is a progression from twinship experiences having a merged quality to being able to have twinship experience with greater toleration of differences, of individuality” (Lessem 2005, 51).

⁴² Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987, 15.

⁴³ Kohut 1971, xiv. In *The Analysis of the Self* (1971) and *The Restoration of the Self* (1977), Kohut hyphenates “self-object,” while in *How Does Analysis Cure?* (1984) he writes “selfobject.”

⁴⁴ Kohut 1984, 49. In practice, Kohut uses “selfobject” to refer both to this experience of another person and to the person herself, and I will use the term in both ways too.

⁴⁵ Kohut 1984, 50.

experiences certain representatives of his human surroundings as joyfully responding to him [mirroring], as available to him as sources of idealized strength and calmness [idealizing], as being silently present but in essence like him [twinship], and, at any rate, able to grasp his inner life more or less accurately so that their responses are attuned to his needs and allow him to grasp their inner life when he is in need of such sustenance.⁴⁶

Although Kohut usually speaks of these three selfobject needs, he and others recognize that there are far more.⁴⁷

As self psychology developed from a theory of narcissism into a general theory of psychology, the concept of the selfobject was expanded. It originally applied to narcissistic object relations, but then Kohut evidently recognized that others have a similar regulatory function for healthy, non-narcissistic individuals as well. The selfobject essentially came to correspond with the attachment figure of attachment theory.⁴⁸ For both self psychology and attachment theory, children need adults to help them regulate their emotions and self-esteem. Mental representations of these interactions become one's object relations (representations of self and other in interaction that include the motives and emotions of the interaction). When parents are appropriately responsive, the child develops a stable, positive, and realistic self-image and is able to regulate his emotions and self-esteem without inappropriate dependence on others for support. Now, we never outgrow the need for support, and the capacity to depend on others in adulthood is a sign of health, but dependence assumes more mature forms as we become adults and become more emotionally resilient. In the course of normal development,

⁴⁶ Kohut 1984, 52; the *but* in brackets is Kohut's or his editors'.

⁴⁷ Kohut 1984; Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987; Wolf 1988; Lessem 2005.

⁴⁸ Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) and Schore (2012), for instance, note the similarity of selfobjects and attachment figures. I am not saying that Kohut's concept of the selfobject does not contribute anything not already provided by the concept of the attachment figure, only that the two largely correspond. Compare Klein's "part object" and Winnicott's "subjective object" (Lessem 2005, 235). Cf. MacCary (1982, 90).

experiences of being soothed by our attachment figures or selfobjects and the mental representation of these experiences become psychic structure that allows us to soothe ourselves and regulate our self-esteem. Kohut calls this process “transmuting internalization.” In Kohut’s view of narcissism, the developmental trauma of not getting one’s narcissistic needs met means that the experiences of being soothed, appreciated, and the like never happened, and consequently the structures that allow one to do these things on one’s own never developed through internalization. As a result, narcissists need inordinate amounts of external support to maintain their self-esteem. Paradoxically, narcissists are unable to depend on others even though they rely on them to provide the admiration necessary to maintain their self-esteem.⁴⁹ They cannot acknowledge dependence because they would be forced to acknowledge weakness and imperfection, which is unbearable.⁵⁰ They solve this paradox by believing themselves entitled to admiration.

Non-narcissistic people depend in age-appropriate ways on others to help them regulate their emotions (mature dependence) and therefore can also be said to have selfobjects (i.e., attachment figures). Although this expansion of the concept of the selfobject extends the scope and application of Kohut’s theory, it risks obscuring the differences between normal and narcissistic object relations that the concept originally brought out so well. In narcissism, the self-selfobject relationship is more primitive and is extended to more interactions. The very term *selfobject* captures the most important quality of narcissistic object relations, namely, that other people are treated as part of the narcissist’s self. This means not only that others provide

⁴⁹ Kernberg 1975, 1984; Salzman 1993, 245.

⁵⁰ Kernberg 1975, 228; Salzman 1993, 246.

regulation for narcissists but also that they are expected to behave as narcissists want them to. Narcissists can thus be very controlling.⁵¹ In narcissism, selfobjects are not experienced as separate persons. In fact, they may not be experienced as persons at all. If we imagine the narcissist's self as a bubble, instead of including only the narcissist himself, it would expand to include everyone and everything that he considers good or worthy. These people and things are idealized and treated as extensions of the narcissist's self.⁵² The people are not experienced as persons but as good things that fit within and support the all-good self concept. All other people and things are considered bad, "not-me," contemptible, and unworthy of respect. Constant supplies of admiration from other people are necessary to keep the bubble of the narcissist's grandiose self inflated. When other people do not do what the narcissist wants, such as when they fail to supply the needed admiration or when they are critical, the narcissist responds with narcissistic rage, for they have burst the bubble of the narcissistic self.

Self Psychology and Achilles

Self psychology began as an approach to treating narcissism, and we have seen that Achilles is narcissistic. Achilles comes to Troy to win fame and honor. In other words, he seeks mirroring. If Achilles' peers honor him by giving him valuable prizes and by acknowledging that he is the best warrior, they show their admiration for him and thus support his self-esteem. Kohut says that one's peers become selfobjects as one reaches later childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.⁵³ Attachment theory likewise holds that one's peers become attachment figures.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Kernberg 1975; Salzman 1993, 246, 250.

⁵² Kernberg 1975, 236.

⁵³ Kohut 1971, Lessem 2005, 33-34.

⁵⁴ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007. In adulthood, the primary attachment figure is usually one's romantic partner but can also be a parent or a friend. We have a hierarchy of attachment figures. In infancy and childhood, the primary

Achilles comes to Troy for mirroring but gets the opposite when Agamemnon takes his prize and insults him. Agamemnon says:

φεῦγε μάλ' εἴ τοι θυμὸς ἐπέσσεται, οὐδέ σ' ἔγωγε
λίσσομαι εἵνεκ' ἐμεῖο μένειν· πᾶρ' ἔμοιγε καὶ ἄλλοι
οἳ κέ με τιμήσουσι, μάλιστα δὲ μητίετα Ζεὺς. (175)
ἔχθιστος δέ μοι ἐσσι διοτρεφῶν βασιλῆων·
αἰεὶ γάρ τοι ἔρις τε φίλη πόλεμοί τε μάχαι τε·
εἰ μάλα καρτερός ἐσσι, θεὸς που σοὶ τό γ' ἔδωκεν·
οἴκαδ' ἰὼν σὺν νηυσὶ τε σῆς καὶ σοῖς ἐτάροισι
Μυρμιδόνεσσιν ἄνασσε, σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω, (180)
οὐδ' ὄθομαι κοτέοντος· (1.173-81)

Go ahead, flee, if your spirit is impelled to. I'm not begging you to stay for my sake. Around me are others who will honor me, and above all Zeus the counsellor. You are the most hateful to me of all the Zeus-nourished kings, for strife and wars and battles are always dear to you. If you are very strong, a god, I suppose, gave you this. Go home with your ships and companions and lord it over the Myrmidons. I give no thought to you, and I'm not worried if you are angry.

I take *eris* (“strife”) to refer not only to battle and war but also to quarrelsomeness in other aspects of Achilles’ life. The narrator refers to the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles as *eris* (1.6, 8). What is happening between them in the present illustrates why Agamemnon hates Achilles. Agamemnon also devalues Achilles’ love of war and fighting in that it contributes to Agamemnon’s hatred of Achilles, which outweighs Achilles’ usefulness. Hence, Agamemnon tells Achilles to leave if he wants to. An envious Agamemnon dismisses Achilles’ strength as the gift of a goddess and seems to imply that Achilles does not deserve special credit or honor for this strength because he did nothing to earn it. Of course, Agamemnon did nothing to earn Mycenae either, nor does this fact stop him from sneering at Achilles’ rule of the Myrmidons.

caregiver, usually the mother, is the primary attachment figure, followed by the father and then by other relatives or babysitters. Attachment hierarchies exist in adulthood as well.

Achilles' strength and love of fighting help make him a good warrior and therefore valuable to the army. He came to Troy to exhibit these qualities in the hopes of receiving mirroring. And it is precisely these qualities that Agamemnon devalues and dismisses and that he despises Achilles for.

This speech shows how Agamemnon envisions relating. He will not beg Achilles to remain for his sake, for he has others to honor him, especially Zeus (1.174-75). Here Agamemnon speaks of others not as people to relate to through bonds of love and affection but as selfobjects, whose function is to provide mirroring by honoring him. Others exist for his greater glory. When he says that he cares neither about Achilles nor his anger (σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω, / οὐδ' ὄθομαι κοτέοντος [1.180-81]), he is blustering, but he is also mocking Achilles' τῶν οὐ τι μετατρέπη οὐδ' ἀλεγίζεις, "you don't have a regard for these things or care about them" (1.160). Agamemnon, then, is flaunting his empathic failure and thereby repeating it. This narcissistic style of relating applies to Achilles as well (e.g., 1.244).

Agamemnon intuitively knows how to hurt Achilles the most. Narcissists can be hypersensitive and can interpret any criticisms, even constructive ones, as threats to their self-worth. Agamemnon does not simply criticize one of Achilles' actions but Achilles' himself, so that he threatens Achilles' global self-concept and self-worth. He dismisses or attacks the qualities—being a good warrior and enjoying fighting—that are the source of Achilles' honor and self-worth and that he has been taught to cultivate. Most of the Homeric warriors must be exhorted to remember their *charmē*, their joy of battle, so that they will stand their ground and fight valiantly. Achilles needs no such exhortation, for fighting is "dear" to him.

Achilles responds with what Kohut calls "narcissistic rage." This is anger arising from a narcissistic injury, which threatens the self with fragmentation (e.g., loss of self-esteem, searing

and prolonged shame).⁵⁵ Kohut uses *narcissistic rage* to refer to any anger, even “fleeting annoyance,” arising from a narcissist injury, even though “[s]trictly speaking,” it “refers to only one specific band in the wide spectrum of experiences.”⁵⁶ Other forms of anger seek to remove an obstacle and then cease when that obstacle has been removed. Narcissistic rage, in contrast, tirelessly and compulsively seeks revenge:

The need for revenge, for righting a wrong, for undoing a hurt by whatever means, and a deeply anchored, unrelenting compulsion in the pursuit of all these aims, which gives no rest to those who have suffered a narcissistic injury—these are the characteristic features of narcissistic rage in all its forms and which set it apart from the other kinds of aggression.⁵⁷

The “wish to redress an injury and obtain revenge” is “boundless,” and “there is an utter disregard for reasonable limitations.”⁵⁸ Both the rage and the resultant actions seem to be excessive for the offense and continue as long as the injury remains even if to others it might seem as though the enraged person has received what he wanted or what is reasonable. Because such rage is excessive, Kohut thinks that “the aggression was mobilized in the service of an archaic grandiose self and that it is deployed within the framework of an archaic perception of reality,” such that the narcissist fails to “recognize his opponent as a center of independent

⁵⁵ “Fragmentation,” Wolf writes, “means regression of the self toward lessened cohesion, more permeable boundaries, diminished energy and vitality, and disturbed and disharmonious balance,” and “the person . . . experiences this [regression] as a loss of self-esteem, or as a feeling of emptiness or depression or worthlessness, or anxiety” (Wolf 1988, 39). Fragmentation varies in severity, with psychosis marking the upper reaches, and in which “sector of the personality” it affects (Wolf 1988, 39-40). “[F]ragmentation is sometimes experienced as the terrifying certainty of imminent death, which signals a process of apparently irreversible dissolution of the self” (e.g., psychosis [Wolf 1988, 39]).

⁵⁶ Kohut 1978, 636. The rationale is that “with this designation we are referring to the most characteristic or best known of a series of experiences that not only form a continuum, but, with all their differences, are essentially related to each other” (Kohut 1978, 636).

⁵⁷ Kohut 1978, 637-38.

⁵⁸ Kohut 1978, 639-40.

initiative with whom he happens to be at cross-purposes” but instead treats him “as a *flaw in a narcissistically perceived reality*”:

The enemy is a recalcitrant part of an expanded self over which the narcissistically vulnerable person had expected to exercise full control. The mere fact, in other words, that the other person is independent or different is experienced as offensive by those with intense narcissistic needs.⁵⁹

Kohut is referring to the extreme or primitive nature of selfobjects in narcissism, whereby the other is treated or experienced as part of the self so that when the other fails to act in accordance with the narcissist’s wishes, it is as if a part of the self is rebelling and the self is being torn apart. “[T]hose who are in the grip of narcissistic rage,” Kohut says, “show total lack of empathy toward the offender,” and this is explained by “[t]he archaic mode of experience.”⁶⁰

Self psychology allows us to see the plot of the *Iliad* in a new light, for Achilles behaves exactly as self psychology would predict. He comes to Troy for mirroring. Not only does he not receive it, but he receives its opposite. Agamemnon’s empathic failures repeat the empathic failures that cause narcissism, and Achilles predictably responds with narcissistic rage that knows no limits. He is so set on revenge that he loses the capacity to empathize and is willing to destroy his friends. Because he needs others to help regulate his self-esteem, when Agamemnon refuses to help, it is as though Achilles’ self is being torn apart. Patroclus’s fear of Achilles’ anger in book 11 and Achilles’ warning to Priam in book 24 both refer to the threat of narcissistic rage when people do not behave exactly as Achilles wants them to (see the discussion of these passages above).⁶¹ They are selfobjects and as such are not recognized as

⁵⁹ Kohut 1978, 643, 644.

⁶⁰ Kohut 1978, 645.

⁶¹ Likewise, Achilles admonishes Phoenix not to do Agamemnon any favors so that Achilles does not hate rather than love him (9.613-15).

centers of independent initiative: “The enemy is a recalcitrant part of an expanded self over which the narcissistically vulnerable person had expected to exercise full control.”⁶² Achilles’ narcissistic object relations can also be seen in Achilles’ decision to let Patroclus go into battle wearing his armor. Although the idea does not originate with Achilles, he accepts it and makes it his own. He allows Patroclus to do this because he expects Patroclus to do what he is told. And what is that? Patroclus is to do only what will bring Achilles honor (16.80-96). This could be the very paradigm of using someone as a “narcissistic extension” of oneself.⁶³ The symbolism of the armor reinforces the idea: wearing Achilles’ armor, Patroclus represents Achilles. He is a part of Achilles’ expanded self, a selfobject.⁶⁴

Part III: The Embassy to Achilles

This part of the chapter covers the embassy to Achilles. I briefly discuss Agamemnon’s speech at 9.115-61 because it creates some of the problems that doom the embassy. I examine Odysseus’s speech to Achilles and Achilles’ great speech in detail in order to show how Odysseus repeatedly fails to empathize with Achilles and how Achilles responds to these empathic failures. While my interpretation agrees with previous scholarship on many small points, my theories allow me to connect these small points in new ways so that they fall into place and make sense within the larger explanatory narrative that I am constructing. How all of

⁶² Kohut 1978, 644.

⁶³ I do not know the origin of this common and useful term. The use of “extension,” and perhaps the whole phrase, is present in Kohut and Kernberg (Kohut 1971, 180-85, 277; Kernberg 1975, 235). Holway says that Achilles treats Patroclus as an extension of himself in book 11 (and elsewhere) when he sends him to learn which wounded Greek they have just seen go by (Holway 2012, 157).

⁶⁴ Likewise MacCary 1982, 64.

this fits together will become clear in the final section, in which I briefly discuss the speeches of Phoenix and Ajax. There I offer final explanations for Achilles' narcissism and relational patterns.

Agamemnon's Reply to Nestor

Achilles' refusal of the embassy has its origins in this speech of Agamemnon.

Agamemnon is himself ambivalent about the quarrel and Achilles and consequently produces a mixed message, which Odysseus then transmits to Achilles.

After Nestor reproves Agamemnon for taking Briseis and advises him to make amends, Agamemnon replies:

ὦ γέρον οὐ τι ψεῦδος ἐμὰς ἄτας κατέλεξας·
ἄσάμην, οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἀναίνομαι. ἀντί νυ πολλῶν
λαῶν ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ὃν τε Ζεὺς κῆρι φιλήσῃ,
ὥς νῦν τοῦτον ἔτισε, δάμασσε δὲ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν.
ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἄσάμην φρεσὶ λευγαλέῃσι πιθήσας,
ἂψ ἐθέλω ἀρέσαι δόμεναί τ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα. (9.115-20)

Old man, not falsely did you recount my madness.
I acted foolishly, and I myself do not deny it.
The man whom Zeus loves in his heart is worth many men,
as now he has honored this man and brought low the army of the Achaeans.
But since I acted foolishly, having listened to my baneful heart,
in return, I am willing to make amends and give boundless compensation.

Here Agamemnon is non-defensive and does what Achilles has wanted him to do: he recognizes Achilles' value and his *ātē* in mistreating Achilles (e.g., 1.408-12). Agamemnon admits that he should not have treated Achilles this way but does so only because disaffecting Achilles has been disastrous for the army (9.116-18). He does not care how much he has hurt Achilles or acknowledge that others are persons and deserve respect for that reason alone.

Perhaps this talk of respect for others as persons seems out of place for the *Iliad*. Even though in the *Iliad* those who are in a position to mistreat others may see negative consequences

(e.g., punishment or retaliation) as the only reason not to do so and may not see others as persons or consider hurting them morally wrong, those suffering mistreatment are likely to disagree.⁶⁵ The characters do not speak in these terms, but they understand the relational message that certain actions send. When Achilles complains that Agamemnon has treated him as a “dishonored vagabond” rather than as an equal (ὄμοιον [16.52-59; 9.648]), he, too, might be implying that only persons who can enforce respect deserve it and therefore that it is acceptable to mistreat vagabonds (cf. Odysseus’s treatment of Thersites in book 2). Even if the characters of the *Iliad* are not consistently motivated to treat others with respect unless there is the threat of punishment or retaliation, Achilles surely believes that he does not deserve to be treated despitefully, regardless of what he can do in retaliation. That is, while the damage that Achilles can do is a reason not to mistreat him, it is not the reason why he does not want to be mistreated, nor is it the only reason why he thinks that he should not be mistreated. That mistreatment feels bad is reason enough for him. Achilles’ point about vagabonds is not that Agamemnon will not get away with this treatment because Achilles, not being a vagabond, can retaliate. In Achilles’ thinking, vagabonds are essentially non-persons, and only those of his status are persons. His complaint that Agamemnon treated him as a vagabond rather than as an equal is thus his way of saying that Agamemnon treated him as a non-person. He is explaining how bad Agamemnon has

⁶⁵ These points are directed against Adkins, who says of Agamemnon’s invocation of *aretē* again in book 19, “he is ‘wrong’ in the sense that he has miscalculated the effect of the loss of Achilles” (Adkins 1960, 50-51). “The fact that Agamemnon has incurred social disapproval for his failure,” he continues, “gives the transaction an appearance of ‘quiet’ morality which it does not possess. The only aspect of *aretē* in which Agamemnon has fallen short is success in war” (Adkins 1960, 51). My point is that although Agamemnon may think that his behavior was wrong only because it had negative consequences, Achilles certainly does not agree that there was nothing morally wrong with it. Even Odysseus sees it as immoral. He tells Agamemnon to be “more just” in the future, and Agamemnon agrees (19.181-86). As he does here, Adkins oddly brings *aretē* into discussions in which it has no place, as if morality were either not involved or not important until *aretē* became a moral concept. He does, however, acknowledge at one point that “[w]rong-doing is not admired by those who suffer from it” (Adkins 1960, 55).

made him feel. The characters implicitly recognize their own personhood but do not extend personhood to persons generally.

In recognizing his *ātē* and Achilles' value, Agamemnon is doing most of what Achilles wanted him to do (e.g., 1.408-12).⁶⁶ In the event, however, Achilles needs more than this. He needs something that redresses the wound he suffered as a person rather than merely his loss of status. When not made in the right spirit, offers of amends are worse than meaningless. They are deceptive and manipulative. Now, although Achilles needs concern and contrition to redress his wound, he may not be aware that he needs them, or if he is, he realizes that they are more than he can expect from Agamemnon. He is focused on the rage that the wound has produced and consequently seeks a sadistic remedy. At the least, he wants Agamemnon to be humbled, and that would not be an unreasonable demand, even if destroying the army is an unacceptable way of having it met. The humbling of Agamemnon might or might not have been enough for Achilles initially, but after hearing Agamemnon's offer, he requires Agamemnon to suffer more, to suffer the pain of humiliation (9.386-87).⁶⁷

Although Agamemnon is not quite contrite at the beginning of this speech, his non-defensiveness is nevertheless promising, and his willingness to make amends might suggest that he has been humbled. The lavishness of his offer gives us doubts about that, however. The coda to the speech confirms our suspicions about the meaning of his offer and makes clear that he has not been humbled. Listing the gifts brings back his defensive grandiosity and culminates in his defiant coda:

ταῦτά κέ οἱ τελέσαιμι μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο.

⁶⁶ Achilles wants to be recognized not only as valuable but as the best of the Achaeans.

⁶⁷ Scodel 2008, 147.

δμηθήτω· Ἄϊδος τοι ἀμείλιχος ἢδ' ἀδάμαστος,
τοῦνεκα καί τε βροτοῖσι θεῶν ἔχθιστος ἀπάντων·
καί μοι ὑποστήτω ὅσσον βασιλεύτερός εἰμι
ἢδ' ὅσσον γενεῇ προγενέστερος εὔχομαι εἶναι. (9.157-61)

These things would I do for him if he were to cease from his anger.
Let him yield. Hades is implacable and inflexible,
and for that reason he is the most hateful to mortals of all the gods.
And let him submit to me insofar as I am more kingly
and insofar as I declare that I am older by birth.

Agamemnon will make good his offer only if Achilles stops being angry. By sending the embassy, Agamemnon is the first to yield. But his conditional participial phrase and the following δμηθήτω (literally “let him be tamed or subdued”), which ἀδάμαστος (literally, “untamable”) echoes, might suggest that Achilles must be the first to yield. In any case, Agamemnon’s attitude is adversarial: Achilles must be broken and must submit to him. Agamemnon tries to make Achilles’ renunciation of his anger a sign of his submission. Lines 160-61 indicate most clearly that Agamemnon has not been humbled. In fact, we may even understand him to be implying here that he did not act wrongly or reprehensibly because Achilles was being insubordinate. He implies that Achilles ought to submit to him because he is more kingly and Achilles’ elder. If Agamemnon’s references to his *ātē* in this speech (9.115, 116, 119) admit any fault on his part, and it is not clear that they do, he seems to retract that admission by the end of the speech. At the least, he is certainly not sorry for how he has treated Achilles even if he regrets the consequences of that treatment.

Agamemnon uses a “potlatch strategy,” but this strategy sends the wrong message and in a way repeats the original offense.⁶⁸ He tries to preserve or enhance his honor and status through

⁶⁸ Scodel 2008, 142, 149. Cf. Donlan 1989, 1993; Beidelman 1989; Wilson 2002, 80. Donlan, followed by Wilson and Scodel, calls Agamemnon’s offer a “gift attack” (Donlan 1993, 164).

the lavishness of his offer. His wealth and power are so great that he can afford to give away parts of his territory. This makes him “kinglier” (βασιλεύτερός [9.160]) than Achilles and therefore superior to him. This approach is misguided for a few reasons. As we have said, Agamemnon shows no concern for Achilles as a person. He thinks that Achilles can be bought, as if only things and not feelings mattered.⁶⁹ He would rather give away all of this wealth than humble himself before Achilles. Although the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles revolves around honor and status, Agamemnon is effectively reasserting his superior status.⁷⁰ Seizing Briseis was a similar assertion of status and power, so Agamemnon’s offer is a further display of the grandiosity that Achilles has objected to. The original offense humiliated Achilles and treated him as a non-person. It was a gross and traumatic empathic failure. Agamemnon thus repeats the original offense by once again trying to dominate and subjugate Achilles.

Odysseus’s Speech (9.225-306)

Odysseus fails to persuade Achilles to return to battle largely because he and Agamemnon fail to empathize with Achilles. The reasons often given for why Odysseus does not persuade Achilles to return fall under the category of empathic failures. This speech provides evidence for the empathic failures of Achilles’ childhood even as it repeats them. The empathic failures of the speech in many cases appear in the messages that are being sent rather than in the content of what is being said. What is the difference between the message and the content? The content consists of the particular details involved, whereas the message is the type of relational interaction that is taking place between people. The relational message can be thought of as a

⁶⁹ Gottschall 2008; Edwards 1987, 222.

⁷⁰ Redfield 1975, 15-16; Wilson 2002, 75-85.

higher order communication. It can be verbal or non-verbal. For example, someone can communicate rejection by saying “I don’t like you” or by physically shunning the other person.⁷¹ I try to bring out the relational messages that Odysseus is sending throughout his speech and to show how the content generates them. Paradoxically, to perceive the larger message, we have to pay close attention to the details of the content. For instance, how the content is ordered can affect the message it sends. When we see the relational messages of the speech from the perspective of self psychology, we appreciate that they are especially problematic for someone with Achilles’ personality and understand why Odysseus’s approach is destined to fail.

In the first half of the speech (9.225-60), after some perfunctory courtesies, Odysseus sets out the plight of the Greeks, the cause of their predicament, and their need for Achilles. The Trojans have made camp near the Greeks’ wall and ships, and the Greeks fear that the Trojans will burn the ships and that the Greeks will perish at Troy (9.229-46). The causes of this are Zeus, who is giving favorable omens to the Trojans, and Hector, who is in a frenzy and declares that he will burn the ships and slay the Greeks (9.236-43). Laying out the plight of the Greeks in itself would imply that they need Achilles, but Odysseus frames (ring composition) his description of the Greeks’ situation with clearer appeals for Achilles’ help: “Whether we will save the well-benched ships or / whether they will be destroyed is in doubt unless you put on valor” (9.230-31); “But up! if you are minded, even though it is late, / to rescue the oppressed sons of the Achaeans from the Trojans’ din” (9.247-48).⁷² Odysseus concludes the first half of

⁷¹ Conversational implicatures and speech acts are similar to what I am talking about in that they both recognize that what is meant can be more than what is said. If I tell someone that I am cold, I may be asking her to turn up the thermostat.

⁷² Odysseus creates another ring and connects it to this one when at the end of the speech he once again appeals to Achilles to save the Greeks from Hector (9.301-06).

the speech by warning Achilles to return before some irreversible evil happens and by recounting Peleus's parting advice to Achilles (9.249-59). The second half of the speech (9.260-306) consists primarily of Agamemnon's offer to Achilles (9.260-99).

What is missing from this speech? Odysseus does not empathize with Achilles' situation or emotions. He does not say that Agamemnon should not have treated Achilles this way. He does not say that Agamemnon is contrite or regrets his actions or accepts responsibility. He does not say that he would be furious and in pain too if he were in Achilles' position. He does not say that Achilles was right to withdraw. He does not say that the Greeks miss or support Achilles. And he gives no indication whatsoever that he or anyone else cares about Achilles.⁷³

Odysseus's failure to express empathy affects what he does say. He emphasizes the plight of the Greeks and its cause, Hector, and implies that the Greeks need Achilles. While emphasizing the Greeks' suffering, he ignores Achilles'. The message is that he is interested in what Achilles can do for the Greeks rather than in what the Greeks can do for Achilles (apart from bribing him with the prospect of honor). He says in effect, "What about us?" When the Greeks appeal to Achilles while focusing on themselves and failing to empathize, the message is clear: they are trying to use Achilles and care nothing about him, and their gross empathic failures belie any protestations to the contrary.

Perhaps by implying that the Greeks need Achilles (cf. 9.230-31, 247-48, 301-03), Odysseus is responding to Achilles' need to be needed (1.240-44, 340-42; 9.197). As we will see below, this is unlikely to be the case. Even if Odysseus were doing this, he should have made his point clearer by using Achilles' language of need (e.g., *χρεώ*) and yearning (e.g., *ποθή* [1.240-44,

⁷³ Cf. Edwards 1987, 222, 224, 234; Scodel 2008, 144.

340-42; 9.197]) and should have said that Agamemnon himself recognizes his need for Achilles.⁷⁴

Odysseus patronizes Achilles by baiting him with Hector:

Ἔκτωρ δὲ μέγα σθένει βλεμεινῶν
μαίνεται ἐκπάγλως πίσυρος Δίι, οὐδέ τι τίει
ἀνέρας οὐδὲ θεούς· κρατερὴ δὲ ἐλύσσα δέδυκεν.
ἀρᾶται δὲ τάχιστα φανήμεναι Ἥῳ δῖαν·
στεῦνται γὰρ νηῶν ἀποκόψειν ἄκρα κόρυμβα
αὐτάς τ' ἐμπρήσειν μαλεροῦ πυρός, αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὺς
δηώσειν παρὰ τῆσιν ὀρινομένους ὑπὸ καπνοῦ. (9.237-43)

σὺ δ' ἄλλους περ Παναχαιοὺς
τειρομένους ἐλέαιρε κατὰ στρατόν, οἷ σε θεὸν ὧς
τίσουσ'· ἧ γὰρ κέ σφι μάλα μέγα κῦδος ἄροιο·
νῦν γὰρ χ' Ἔκτορ' ἔλοις, ἐπεὶ ἂν μάλα τοι σχεδὸν ἔλθοι
λύσσαν ἔχων ὀλοήν, ἐπεὶ οὐ τινά φησιν ὁμοῖον
οἷ ἔμεναι Δαναῶν οὓς ἐνθάδε νῆες ἔνεικαν. (9.301-06)

Hector, exulting greatly in his strength,
rages terribly, trusting in Zeus, and he doesn't respect
men or gods. A strong madness has entered him.
He prays for divine Dawn to appear most quickly,
for he declares that he will chop off the tops of the ships' sterns
and burn the ships themselves with furious fire and by them slay
the Achaeans panicked from the smoke.

But pity the other Pan-Achaeans
oppressed throughout the army, who will honor you
like a god, for truly you can win very great glory in their eyes,
for now you might kill Hector since very close to you he would come,
having a destructive madness, since he says that not equal to him
is any of the Danaans whom the ships brought here.

According to Odysseus, Hector fears no one and thinks that he is better than all of the Greeks, Achilles included. Odysseus is doing more than confirming Achilles' prediction that Hector would kill many Greeks and Agamemnon would be powerless to stop him (1.240-44). He is

⁷⁴ I will discuss what the gifts imply below.

trying to manipulate Achilles by arousing his competitiveness and by dangling honor and glory before him. It is reminiscent of how one might talk to a child: “Don’t you want to win honor by killing Hector? Hector says that he’s best. Don’t you want to be the best?” He is also trying to get Achilles to displace his rivalry with Agamemnon onto Hector. Even though Achilles no doubt relishes the fulfillment of his prediction, Odysseus comes across as manipulative, and his patronizing is insulting.⁷⁵ Whatever empathy might be involved in appealing to Achilles’ need to be needed, if that is what Odysseus is doing, is undone by Odysseus’s blatant manipulateness: empathy in the service of manipulation is not true empathy.

The empathic failures become worse: Odysseus implicitly criticizes Achilles’ actions and then exacerbates the empathic failure of Agamemnon’s offer.⁷⁶ When Odysseus quotes Peleus’s parting instructions to Achilles, he is implicitly criticizing Achilles:

αὐτῷ τοι μετόπισθ’ ἄχος ἔσσεται, οὐδέ τι μῆχος
 ῥεχθέντος κακοῦ ἔστ’ ἄκος εὐρεῖν· ἀλλὰ πολὺ πρὶν (250)
 φράζεω ὅπως Δαναοῖσιν ἀλεξήσεις κακὸν ἦμαρ.
 ὦ πέπον ἦ μὲν σοί γε πατὴρ ἐπετέλλετο Πηλεὺς
 ἦματι τῷ ὅτε σ’ ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε·
 τέκνον ἐμὸν κάρτος μὲν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἴηρη
 δώσουσ’ αἱ κ’ ἐθέλωσι, σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν (255)
 ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι· φιλοφροσύνη γὰρ ἀμείνων·
 ληγέμενα δ’ ἔριδος κακομηγάνου, ὄφρα σε μᾶλλον
 τίωσ’ Ἀργείων ἡμὲν νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες.
 ὧς ἐπέτελλ’ ὁ γέρων, σὺ δὲ λήθου· ἀλλ’ ἔτι καὶ νῦν
 παύε’, ἔα δὲ χόλον θυμαλγέα· σοὶ δ’ Ἀγαμέμνων (260)
 ἄξια δῶρα δίδωσι μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο. (9.249-61)

You yourself will have pain hereafter, and there is no means to find a remedy for harm that’s been done. But much before then consider how you are going to ward off the day of evil from the Danaans. Dear one, your father Peleus certainly gave you this injunction on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon:

⁷⁵ Cf. Scodel 2008, 145.

⁷⁶ Scodel (2008, 144-45) notes that Odysseus is critical.

‘My child, Athena and Hera will give you strength
if they are willing, but restrain your great-hearted spirit
in your breast, for friendliness is better.
And leave off evil-devising strife so that both
the young and the old of the Argives will honor you more.’
Thus the old man enjoined you, but you are forgetting. But still even now
stop and let go of your heart-grieving anger. Agamemnon is
offering you worthy gifts if you cease from your anger.

As lines 259-60 show, the injunction to Achilles to restrain his great-hearted spirit means more specifically that he should control his anger, and the strife that he is to leave off refers to quarrels resulting from this temper. Peleus told Achilles to do this so that he might win more honor. Odysseus says that Achilles is forgetting these instructions and therefore is not doing what he is supposed to be doing. Odysseus is saying, then, that Achilles is doing something wrong by being angry and quarrelling with Agamemnon.

Not only is Odysseus not empathizing, but he is even criticizing Achilles.⁷⁷ His censure is all the worse because he omits what Agamemnon has done, as if Achilles did not have a good reason for reacting this way. By criticizing Achilles and ignoring Agamemnon’s part, Odysseus invalidates Achilles’ experience and dismisses his injury and pain. That would be outrageous enough, but Odysseus goes further. Not only is Achilles’ experience invalid, but he is wrong to be having it, and it is Achilles rather than Agamemnon who is at fault.

Odysseus’s criticism of Achilles affects the meaning of the Greeks’ need for Achilles. Peleus told Achilles that friendliness is better than quarrelling because it will bring him more honor. Odysseus says that Achilles is forgetting this. We must understand Achilles’ strategy to understand the implications of Odysseus’s criticism. Achilles’ strategy has been to make the Greeks, and above all Agamemnon, recognize their need for him. Their recognition of this need

⁷⁷ Scodel 2008, 144-45.

is supposed to show that Achilles is superior to Agamemnon because Achilles has greater value to the army in that Achilles alone will be able to stop Hector, whereas Agamemnon will be powerless to stop the rout. The mere recognition of Achilles' greater value is supposed to make his honor greater than Agamemnon's. Achilles' honor must come through recognition rather than material compensation, since Agamemnon has far more wealth than Achilles does. In other words, recognition alone essentially marks Achilles' victory in the quarrel, and he needs only to find a way to return that solidifies rather than undoes his triumph.

Odysseus reverses Achilles' understanding of what will bring him honor. According to Peleus and Odysseus, friendliness brings more honor. Achilles has not been friendly. Therefore, Achilles has less honor than he would have had if he had been friendly. Now, although this does not logically imply that Achilles has lost honor, only that his honor would have been greater than it is now, Odysseus may nevertheless be suggesting that Achilles has lost honor.⁷⁸ In any case, Odysseus disagrees with Achilles: recognition alone has not brought Achilles honor. He will get that honor only when he shows friendliness by returning. The Greeks' need for Achilles, far from giving Achilles honor automatically, has potentially cost him honor, for the need indicates his unfriendliness.

It is clever on Odysseus's part to defer whatever honor Achilles may gain from the Greeks' need for him to the future, when Achilles has rescued the Greeks.⁷⁹ Achilles has pretended that the army needs him and not he the army. Odysseus tries to correct this belief: not only does Achilles need the army to need him, but according to Odysseus, Achilles will not

⁷⁸ Scodel 2008, 145.

⁷⁹ Cf. Scodel 2008, 144. Or if Odysseus is suggesting that Achilles has lost honor because of unfriendliness, Achilles must return simply to regain the honor that he has lost.

derive honor simply from the army's recognition of its need for him but from the army actually honoring him, which will only happen if he returns.

From Achilles' and Agamemnon's perspective, Odysseus's argument is not particularly strong, for it requires honor that is derived from being liked and respected for friendliness. It is more difficult to assess honor derived from that source than honor derived from *aretē*, wealth, and political power, and the honor of friendliness is open to more people, and it is probably harder to distinguish oneself with that honor. Nobody thinks that the kind and gentle Patroclus has more honor than Achilles or Agamemnon. Even if Achilles and Agamemnon were disliked, it seems unlikely that the resulting loss of honor would justify sacrificing the honor that they gain from *aretē*, wealth, and power. Even though Achilles and Agamemnon would have the greatest honor if they had honor both from friendliness and from the other sources, by their own thinking, the latter sources are more important than the former. Achilles' and Agamemnon's thinking is narcissistic, and Odysseus's opinion, if honest, may be less narcissistic. As long as Achilles and Agamemnon persist in their beliefs, however, Odysseus's argument will seem weak.

Agamemnon would have benefited from adopting Odysseus's perspective from the outset, but Achilles would not have as far as honor is concerned. How others assess honor is to some extent irrelevant for Achilles, for he has defined victory in the quarrel as Agamemnon's recognition of his need for him, provided that he can return on acceptable terms. If others disagree with Achilles' assessment, he can retreat into defensive grandiosity and "splendid isolation."⁸⁰

Odysseus and the other Greeks not involved in the quarrel have a legitimate perspective, namely, that yielding by offering gifts and making amends and yielding by accepting gifts do not

⁸⁰ Kernberg 1975, 230.

have to mean what Agamemnon and Achilles think that they mean. That is, the other Greeks will not think less of either Agamemnon or Achilles for yielding.⁸¹ But these other Greeks should not pretend that these actions do not have certain meanings for Agamemnon and Achilles.

Odysseus's criticisms have implications in terms of self psychology. Achilles came to Troy for mirroring in the form of honor and fame. He has treated the Greeks' need for him as the token of his superior honor, so their acknowledgement of this need will constitute mirroring. As we have seen, Odysseus reverses Achilles' assessment: the Greeks' need signifies honor lost rather than honor gained. This is the opposite of mirroring. Instead of approval and praise Achilles has received disapproval and censure.⁸² The same thing happened to him in the quarrel. Selfobjects (i.e., attachment figures) are supposed to be sources of idealized strength that provide comfort in times of distress. Odysseus not only fails to provide comfort by empathizing but invalidates Achilles' experience and criticizes his response while ignoring Agamemnon's behavior. Odysseus responds only to Achilles' anger and not to the deep wound of shame, humiliation, and rejection that his anger conceals.

Odysseus's quotation of Peleus immediately precedes the introduction of Agamemnon's offer. By saying that Achilles is forgetting his father's instructions to control his anger, Odysseus is also implying that Achilles would be wrong to persist in his anger and to refuse Agamemnon's

⁸¹ A person with a still less narcissistic perspective would be able to tolerate non-defensively others thinking less of him without the risk of annihilation. That is, his self-esteem would not depend nearly as much or at all on the external support of selfobjects.

⁸² I am not suggesting that he deserves approval and praise here, even though he deserves empathy, at least if the Greeks do not know of his appeal to Zeus. In therapy, although the narcissistic patient may want mirroring, the therapist is not supposed to gratify the patient's wishes by praising him unless appropriate praise is called for and to withhold it would be overly rigid or sadistic. In therapy, giving mirroring usually means that the therapist empathizes with the patient's need. That is, the therapist expresses his understanding and acceptance of the need and its appropriateness in light of the patient's history rather than disapproval of it. He validates the patient's experience and makes him feel understood rather than judged or criticized.

offer of reconciliation since Achilles would be losing the honor that comes from friendliness and part of this honor would come in the form of Agamemnon's gifts.⁸³ Odysseus tells Achilles to stop his anger and then says that Agamemnon is offering "worthy" (ἄξια) gifts if Achilles will stop his anger (9.260-61). Odysseus is implying both that Achilles should return, since friendliness brings more honor than anger, and that he should accept Agamemnon's gifts, since they are worthy and will bring him honor. He pressures Achilles to accept by making it appear unreasonable to refuse.

What Odysseus is doing is underhanded and sinister. Peleus's advice does not necessarily apply in this case because Achilles' anger and behavior are warranted, as far as the others know, and may indeed bring him the most honor. What else is missing from Odysseus's speech? Odysseus nowhere says that Agamemnon regrets his behavior.⁸⁴ He says even less than Agamemnon does on this point. At least Agamemnon's talk of *aitē* shows a recognition of error. Without being prefaced by some remarks about Agamemnon's regret or desire to make amends, the offer cannot become an offer of reparation and must remain an offer of payment for services to be rendered. Perhaps it is to Odysseus's credit that he has omitted the required prefatory remarks, for in this case the offer appears as what it has always been at heart, a bribe. This omission could be accidental on Odysseus's part, perhaps because he does not care about Achilles, or could be intended to limit his references to the hated Agamemnon.⁸⁵ His attempts to

⁸³ At the end of the speech, Odysseus says that Achilles should return out of pity for the Greeks if Agamemnon and his gifts have become too hateful (9.300-303). At the midpoint of the speech, however, Odysseus is suggesting that Achilles should accept the gifts.

⁸⁴ Edwards 1987, 222, 224; Wilson 2002, 85.

⁸⁵ Scodel thinks the latter (2008, 145). Wilson says that Odysseus "cuts Agamemnon out of the picture altogether, so that Achilleus' *timē* and status are measured solely by his standing in the army" (2002, 84).

deceive and manipulate elsewhere in the speech make it improbable that he is omitting the prefatory remarks for the sake of transparency. Because critics have access to Agamemnon's last speech in which he says that he is willing to make amends, they tend to assume that Agamemnon's gifts are restitution. That is indeed what Agamemnon intended them to be, at least superficially, and Achilles may even suspect that that is what they are supposed to be, but Odysseus does not tell him this. Critics observe that Odysseus omits this information as well as Agamemnon's admission of his *ātē*, but they fail to note that these omissions drastically change the message that is being sent and what the Greeks are asking of Achilles.⁸⁶ Achilles will make clear what he thinks of the offer.

Odysseus's tactics are underhanded and sinister because he treats the offer as appropriate and then pressures Achilles to accept. There are two major problems with what Odysseus is doing. First, he is pretending that Agamemnon's offer means one thing when he knows it means another. Second, he is doing so to exploit Achilles even though he knows that this could cost Achilles his life.⁸⁷ As for the first, Odysseus treats an offer that is effectively a bribe as acceptable. Furthermore, Odysseus heard the coda to Agamemnon's speech and consequently knows well that Agamemnon's offer is an attempt to dominate Achilles. That he suppresses Agamemnon's coda is hardly surprising.⁸⁸ But the coda makes little difference, for the attitude and intentions that are explicit in the coda (e.g., sense of superiority and desire to dominate) are

⁸⁶ E.g., Edwards 1987, 233; Scodel 2008, 144-45.

⁸⁷ At this point, Odysseus knows only that Achilles' return could cost him his life, but as Achilles will say shortly, his return would cost him his life. Again, Odysseus's behavior is more excusable in that as far as he knows, he is not asking Achilles to take any risk that he is not taking himself.

⁸⁸ I agree with Scodel's observation that Agamemnon does not intend his coda to be reported to Achilles (2008, 141). On the other hand, Agamemnon does not specify which parts of his speech the embassy should repeat to Achilles.

implicit in the offer itself.⁸⁹ What is objectionable is that Odysseus pretends that Agamemnon's offer does not reflect this attitude or these intentions, that it does not mean what it means. By doing this, Odysseus is invalidating Achilles' perceptions in advance. If Achilles thinks that the offer has the meaning that it in fact has, he is mistaken: the offer is acceptable, is worthy. Odysseus has said so, and Achilles will be misperceiving reality if he believes otherwise. Achilles will be not only mistaken in his perceptions but perverse and unfriendly to refuse.

After Odysseus recounts Agamemnon's offer, he changes tack and urges Achilles to return for the sake of the distressed Greeks and for the honor that they will give him, particularly for killing Hector:

ταῦτά κέ τοι τελέσειε μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο.
εἰ δέ τοι Ἀτρεΐδης μὲν ἀπήχθετο κηρόθι μᾶλλον (300)
αὐτὸς καὶ τοῦ δῶρα, σὺ δ' ἄλλους περ Παναχαιοὺς
τειρομένους ἐλέαιρε κατὰ στρατόν, οἳ σε θεὸν ὦς
τίσους· ἦ γάρ κέ σφι μάλα μέγα κῦδος ἄροιο·
νῦν γάρ χ' Ἔκτορ' ἔλοις. . . . (9.299-304)

These things he would do for you if you were to cease from your anger.
But if Agamemnon has become more hateful in your heart,
himself and his gifts, pity the other Pan-Achaeans
being worn down in the camp, who will honor
you like a god, for surely you could win very great glory among them.
For now you might slay Hector. . . .

The sequence of thought is revealing. Immediately after recounting Agamemnon's offer, Odysseus entertains the possibility that Achilles may have come to hate Agamemnon so much that he will be unwilling or unable to accept Agamemnon's offer. The juxtaposition of the offer itself and Odysseus's fear that Achilles will refuse is leakage: Odysseus betrays his knowledge of the offer's meaning by giving voice to this fear. He is eager to change tactics to avoid the

⁸⁹ Cf. Wilson 2002, 85.

outcome that he fears, but in the process he unconsciously and inadvertently supports the very interpretation of the offer that he has sought to conceal.

For Odysseus to urge Achilles to pity the Greeks when they are trying to use him and show no signs of caring about him as a person is misguided. But giving Achilles a way to return that makes it clear that he is not returning for Agamemnon's gifts will be important for Achilles, and to the extent that this is what Odysseus is trying to do here, the tactic is well conceived.

Agamemnon and Odysseus are both guilty of a series of empathic failures. Agamemnon's offer shows that he is still arrogant and grandiose and is still trying to dominate Achilles. Instead of making amends, Agamemnon repeats his original offense. He has not learned his lesson and has not been humbled. Achilles is a thing to be bought and used. While contrition may be more than can be expected of Agamemnon, he should at least refrain from repeating his offense. We have seen Odysseus's empathic failures in this speech. He invalidates Achilles' experience and then criticizes him. For Odysseus, as for Agamemnon, Achilles is not a person but a collection of useful qualities to be harnessed and exploited. Agamemnon and Odysseus are sending largely the same message. It is hardly surprising, then, that Achilles will respond to Odysseus in largely the same way that he did to Agamemnon in book 1, namely, with rage and moralizing.

Odysseus repeats the empathic failures not only of Agamemnon but also of Peleus. He shows us what these failures were even as he repeats them. Odysseus is a father-figure here: he is an older man giving Achilles advice, and he is representing Agamemnon, who is himself a father-figure to Achilles.⁹⁰ Agamemnon is offering to give Achilles a wife, to make him his son-in-law, and to honor him like his beloved son Orestes. More importantly, Odysseus is giving

⁹⁰ Cf. Scodel 2008, 144-45.

Achilles the same advice as Peleus did while quoting Peleus himself. He is using Peleus's own words to fail Achilles. Achilles has acted in such a way as to put Agamemnon and Odysseus in the role of his father. The repetition is so obvious and striking that another character perceives it and realizes that he can use Peleus's own words. Homer and Odysseus have discovered transference. That what has been happening between Achilles and Agamemnon and Odysseus is an enactment should be clear, but it will become still clearer later when we explain how it works and when we add Phoenix's material.

How do we know that Peleus's instructions are evidence of empathic failures? The enactment is itself evidence enough: Achilles has put Odysseus into the position of feeling compelled to lecture him about his anger, and the situation is similar enough that he can repeat Peleus's words, and when he does so, he fails to empathize. The enactment aside, Peleus would not have said this if he had not thought that Achilles' anger was a problem. This strongly suggests that he had experienced Achilles' anger. How did Peleus handle Achilles' anger? He told him to restrain it and to leave off quarreling. Now, of course, Achilles could not be allowed to do whatever his anger prompted him to do. But Peleus pays no attention to the circumstances or reasons for the anger. He simply tells Achilles to restrain his spirit and stop quarreling. This suggests that Peleus has not been interested in the reasons for Achilles' anger. Odysseus, too, ignores the reasons and circumstances for Achilles' anger and withdrawal. Peleus has struggled to control Achilles' anger and quarreling and thinks that they are therefore bad and need to be stopped.

The reasons that Peleus gives are also instructive. He says that Achilles should control his spirit and leave off quarreling because friendliness is better. On its own, that injunction might or might not be problematic, depending on the circumstances in any particular case. But Peleus's

rationale for preferring friendship, namely, that Achilles will win more honor through friendliness, is going to be problematic much of the time and therefore renders the urging of friendliness problematic. Why this is problematic we will discuss at length later, but here suffice it to say that Peleus is more interested in the honor that Achilles will win through agreeableness than in the needs and emotions that he might have to sacrifice in the process. That is an empathic failure, and it is being repeated by Odysseus in the present.

Achilles' Great Speech

Although the scholarship on Achilles' reply to Odysseus is voluminous and I agree with much of it, I cannot ignore his "great speech." I show that the empathic failures of Odysseus's speech and Agamemnon's offer do indeed trouble Achilles by showing how he responds to them. Their empathic failures and Achilles' reply make the interaction a repetition of that between Agamemnon and Achilles in book 1.⁹¹ When I began work on this speech, I subscribed to Whitman's and Schein's interpretation, which we can call the "transcendental position": they think that Achilles transcends the heroic code by refusing Agamemnon's gifts.⁹² As I read the speech over and over again and tried to work out its logic and structure, I concluded that the transcendental position, at least as they formulate it, is untenable. Interpreting certain things that Achilles says as rejections of the heroic system renders the speech highly contradictory. But when we pay attention to the context of his apparent rejections (e.g., the man who fights and the man who shirks fighting have equal honor), they turn out not to be rejections at all but rather

⁹¹ Lohmann 1970, Scodel 2008.

⁹² Whitman 1958, 181-220; Schein 1984, 89-127. The scholarship on the embassy, this speech in particular, is extensive. Some other works that I have found helpful include Bowra 1930; Eichholz 1953; Adam Parry 1956; Lohmann 1970; Reeve 1973; Redfield 1975; Griffin 1995; Donlan 1982, 1989, 1993; Lloyd-Jones 1983; Edwards 1987; Lynn-George 1988; Beidelman 1989; Martin 1989; Hainsworth 1993; Wilson 2002; Buchan 2004; Scodel 2008; Elmer 2013.

complaints, and some of the contradictions disappear.⁹³ Throughout this study I have not shied away from bringing out the characters' internal conflicts as they are reflected in the tensions and contradictions of their speeches, so my reading of Achilles' great speech does not stem from any desire to save him from contradiction. There are two other reasons for concluding that Achilles does not transcend the heroic code in this speech. First, he refuses for the sake of honor, and such a reason is an instance of following rather than breaking the heroic code. Second, Achilles is not the only character to value intangible honor more than the tangible honor of wealth. Now, I do think that Achilles causes the heroic code to implode, but actualizing possible contradictions in the code is not the same as transcending and then replacing it.

As Scodel says, "There has been vigorous scholarly debate about this speech and whether Achilles here rejects the heroic code or expresses a particular aspect of it."⁹⁴ In reading the scholarship, I thought those holding the transcendental position and those opposing it both made good points, but it was only in working out the logic and structure of the speech for myself that I could decide between the two.⁹⁵ As we progress through the speech, we must make a series of interpretive decisions. We can imagine that each decision is a fork in the road, one branch representing the transcendental position, the other the "remain (within the code) position." At any given fork, each branch may seem equally appealing. But these decisions are sequential and therefore have consequences for each successive decision. The "remain" branches lead to their

⁹³ Some tensions that remain are (1) saying that Agamemnon can keep Briseis but then proceeding to emphasize his love for her and (2) saying that he will go home in the morning but also that Agamemnon cannot persuade him to return until he has paid for his outrage (9.336-43, 356-361, 386-87; Scodel 2008, 146-47).

⁹⁴ Scodel 2008, 146.

⁹⁵ This does not mean that I believe only one interpretation can be valid, and I am actually sympathetic to the transcendental position, but those who hold it will need to answer my criticisms or use different arguments.

destination in a relatively direct way, whereas the transcendental branches require the ad hoc creation of new paths in order to reach theirs. The scholarship has not offered the systematic interpretations of this speech that allow one to see the consequences of these sequential decisions, so I thought that it might prove useful not only to give my answer to the question of whether Achilles transcends anything but also to show, by expounding the logic of the speech, how I arrived at that answer.

Hateful as Hell

We have seen that Odysseus fails to empathize with Achilles by ignoring what he is feeling and what Agamemnon did, by criticizing him, and by trying to manipulate and use him in various ways. One way that Odysseus attempts this is by trying to conceal the meaning of Agamemnon's offer. We have also seen that Agamemnon's offer is a "gift attack" and is therefore aggressive while purporting to be reparative.⁹⁶ Achilles begins his reply by denouncing duplicity:

διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ
χρὴ μὲν δὴ τὸν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποειπεῖν,
ἢ περ δὴ φρονέω τε καὶ ὡς τετελεσμένον ἔσται, (310)
ὡς μὴ μοι τρύζητε παρήμενοι ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος.
ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Αἴδαο πύλησιν
ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθη ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἶπη.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω ὡς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα·
οὔτ' ἔμεγ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα πεισέμεν οἴω (315)
οὔτ' ἄλλους Δαναούς, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἄρα τις χάρις ἦεν
μάρνασθαι δηΐοισιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσι νωλεμέσ αιεί. (9.308-17)

Zeus-sprung son of Laertes, Odysseus, of many wiles,
I must speak this speech bluntly,
in what way I am inclined and how it will be accomplished,
so that you don't sit by me muttering, one on one side, another on another.
For hateful to me like the gates of Hades is that man
who hides one thing in his heart but says another.

⁹⁶ Donlan 1993, Wilson 2002, Scodel 2008.

But I will tell you how it seems best to me.
I think that neither Atreus's son Agamemnon
nor the other Danaans will persuade me, since there was no gratitude after all
for always fighting ceaselessly against the enemy.

Scholars have thought that Achilles' remarks about honesty here (9.309, 312-13) are a jab at Odysseus, Agamemnon, or both.⁹⁷ I think that Achilles is referring to both of them. He says repeatedly in this speech that Agamemnon has cheated him and that he will not let Agamemnon cheat him again with words, so Agamemnon evidently belongs to the set of men referred to by the description in 312-13 (9.344-45, 375-76, cf. 371). As Griffin notes, line 312 has "a disobliging second meaning, in its implied contrast with what has just been said."⁹⁸ This applies to Odysseus, as well as to Agamemnon: Odysseus has just spoken and tried to deceive Achilles by concealing the meaning of Agamemnon's offer, is the addressee of Achilles' speech, and has a reputation for craftiness (hence Achilles' πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ, "Odysseus of many wiles," in 308). We saw how Odysseus omitted Agamemnon's coda, implied that Achilles would be wrong to refuse Agamemnon's worthy gifts, and then inadvertently leaked the meaning of Agamemnon's offer by entertaining the possibility that Agamemnon and his gifts might be too hateful to Achilles. The "implied contrast" of 309 and 312-13 is Achilles' way of saying that he knows what Odysseus and Agamemnon are trying to do and is disgusted by them.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Agamemnon's offer is designed to subjugate Achilles while appearing generous and satisfying the other Greeks. Odysseus endorses Agamemnon's offer by saying that the gifts are "worthy"

⁹⁷ E.g., Whitman 1958, 192; Edwards 1987, 222; Griffin 1995, ad loc. Wilson 2002, 86. Griffin is certainly right that line 312 applies in the first place to Achilles: "I speak frankly—any other way would be hateful to me" (Griffin 1995, ad loc.).

⁹⁸ Griffin 1995, ad loc. He does not give his opinion as to whether this "implied contrast" is referring to Odysseus, Agamemnon, or both.

⁹⁹ This will become even clearer later in the speech when Achilles shows that he knows the meaning of the offer.

and implying that Achilles would be wrong to refuse. Since Odysseus endorses the offer, Agamemnon's words and deceit become Odysseus's as well. In this way, Achilles' loathed concealer refers to both Odysseus and Agamemnon.

Achilles' ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Αἴδαο πύλησιν ("For hateful to me like the gates of Hades is that man") echoes Agamemnon's coda: δηθήτω· Αἴδης τοι ἀμείλιχος ἦδ' ἀδάμαστος, / τούνεκα καὶ τε βροτοῖσι θεῶν ἔχθιστος ἀπάντων ("Let him yield. Hades is implacable and inflexible, / and for that reason he is the most hateful to mortals of all the gods" [9.158-59]).¹⁰⁰ The poet thus refers us to Agamemnon's coda and thereby reminds us of the meaning of Agamemnon's offer, a meaning that Odysseus has attempted to suppress and that Achilles has nevertheless intuited. Agamemnon cannot have intended the ambassadors to repeat the coda.¹⁰¹ Since the poet refers us to what Agamemnon wanted concealed, he points to Agamemnon's duplicity in making the offer: Agamemnon tries to mask domination with generosity. By suppressing Agamemnon's coda and pretending that the offer is innocuous, Odysseus participates in this duplicity. Any reference to the coda reminds us that Odysseus has omitted it. Thus with this echo of the coda the poet tells us that Achilles has sensed both Agamemnon's and Odysseus's duplicity.

Not only in the exordium but throughout the speech, Achilles complains of Agamemnon's duplicity in the past and refuses to be cheated again: ἐκ γὰρ δὴ μ' ἀπάτησε καὶ ἤλιτεν· οὐδ' ἂν ἔτ' αὐτίς / ἐξαπάφοιτ' ἐπέεσσιν, "For he thoroughly deceived me and wronged

¹⁰⁰ Griffin notes the "ironical echo" (Griffin 1995, ad 9.312-13).

¹⁰¹ Scodel 2008, 141.

me, but he can't / deceive me again with words" (9.375-76; cf. 9.344-45, 371). Later we will see that in refusing to be deceived again, Achilles is referring to the nature of Agamemnon's offer.

Empathic Failures

It is a gross empathic failure on Agamemnon's part that ignites the quarrel in book 1. I am referring to his threat to take Achilles' prize, to which threat Achilles responds by moralizing about Agamemnon's ingratitude. Agamemnon then greatly aggravates the insult by taking Achilles' prize. As we have seen, Agamemnon's offer in book 9 repeats his original offense in that it is grandiose, is designed to subjugate Achilles, attempts to buy Achilles, and shows that he has not been humbled. Odysseus fails to empathize with Achilles by ignoring Achilles' suffering and Agamemnon's behavior (e.g., his ingratitude), by criticizing Achilles, by trying to manipulate and deceive him, and by making Achilles' honor contingent on his saving the Greeks from Hector. I show that Achilles' reply to Odysseus addresses all of these failures.

After denouncing duplicity, Achilles addresses Agamemnon's (and Odysseus's) ingratitude directly. He complains that he has not received *charis* ("gratitude," "thanks") for his labors:

οὐτ' ἔμεγ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα πεισέμεν οἴω (315)
οὐτ' ἄλλους Δαναούς, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἄρα τις χάρις ἦεν
μάρνασθαι δηϊοῖσιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσι νωλεμέσσι αἰεὶ.
ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι·
ἐν δὲ ἰῆ τιμῇ ἡμὲν κακὸς ἦδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός·
κάτθαν' ὁμῶς ὅ τ' ἀεργὸς ἀνὴρ ὃ τε πολλὰ ἐοργῶς. (320)
οὐδέ τί μοι περίκειται, ἐπεὶ πάθον ἄλγεα θυμῷ
αἰεὶ ἐμὴν ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος πολεμίζειν.
ὥς δ' ὄρνις ἀπτῆσι νεοσσοῖσι προφέρῃσι
μάστακ' ἐπεὶ κε λάβῃσι, κακῶς δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλει αὐτῇ,
ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ πολλὰς μὲν ἀϋπνοὺς νύκτας ἴαυον, (325)
ἤματα δ' αἰματόεντα διέπρησσον πολεμίζων
ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενος ὄρων ἔνεκα σφετεράων.
δώδεκα δὲ σὺν νηυσὶ πόλεις ἀλάπαξ' ἀνθρώπων,
πεζὸς δ' ἔνδεκά φημι κατὰ Τροίην ἐρίβωλον·
τάων ἐκ πασέων κειμήλια πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ (330)

ἐξελόμεν, καὶ πάντα φέρων Ἀγαμέμνονι δόσκον
 Ἄτρεΐδῃ· ὃ δ' ὄπισθε μένων παρὰ νηυσὶ θοῆσι
 δεξάμενος διὰ παῦρα δασάσκετο, πολλὰ δ' ἔχεσκεν.
 ἄλλα δ' ἀριστήεσσι δίδου γέρα καὶ βασιλεῦσι·
 τοῖσι μὲν ἔμπεδα κεῖται, ἐμεῦ δ' ἀπὸ μούνου Ἀχαιῶν (335)
 εἴλετ', ἔχει δ' ἄλοχον θυμαρέα· τῇ παριαύων
 τερπέσθω. τί δὲ δεῖ πολεμιζέμεναι Τρώεσσι
 Ἀργείους; τί δὲ λαὸν ἀνήγαγεν ἐνθάδ' ἀγείρας
 Ἄτρεΐδης; ἧ οὐχ' Ἑλένης ἔνεκ' ἠῦκόμοιο;
 ἧ μούνοι φιλέουσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων ἀνθρώπων (340)
 Ἄτρεΐδαι; ἐπεὶ ὅς τις ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐχέφρων
 τὴν αὐτοῦ φιλέει καὶ κήδεται, ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ τὴν
 ἐκ θυμοῦ φίλεον δουρικτητὴν περ' ἐοῦσαν.
 νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ χειρῶν γέρας εἴλετο καὶ μ' ἀπάτησε
 μή μιν πειράτω εὖ εἰδότος· οὐδέ με πείσει. (345)

I think that neither Atreus's son Agamemnon
 nor the other Danaans will persuade me, since there was no gratitude after all
 for always fighting ceaselessly against the enemy.
 An equal portion belongs to a man who hangs back and to a man if he fights hard.
 And in one honor are both the coward and the brave.
 Alike die the man who does nothing and the man who has done much.
 And there is nothing extra for me after I have suffered pains in my spirit
 always risking my life in fighting.
 As a bird brings a mouthful to her unfledged chicks
 whenever she catches anything, but it goes badly for her herself,
 so also did I spend many sleepless nights
 and pass through bloody days in making war,
 fighting men for the sake of their wives.
 Twelve cities of men I sacked by ship,
 and I say that I sacked on foot eleven throughout fertile Troy.
 From all of them I carried off much good treasure,
 and I would bring everything and give it to Agamemnon
 Atreus's son. But he stayed behind by the swift ships and
 received it and distributed little but kept much.
 And to the chieftains and kings he gave other prizes.
 Their prizes are stored away secure, but from me alone of the Achaeans he took
 away a prize and holds my wife who suits my spirit. Let him
 take pleasure sleeping with her. Why must the Argives fight
 the Trojans? And why did Atreus's son gather and lead
 an army here? Was it not for fair-haired Helen?
 Are the sons of Atreus the only men who love
 their wives? No, since any good and sensible man
 loves and cares for his wife, as I loved her
 from the bottom of my heart even though she was a captive.
 But as it is, since he took my prize from my hands and cheated me,

let him not make trial of me who know him well. He will not persuade me.
(9.315-45)

Achilles will continue to refer to his grievances, explicitly or implicitly, for much of the remainder of the speech (9.367-409).

As Lohmann observes, Achilles' complaint about *charis* is first of all answering the third part of Odysseus's speech (9.300-06), in which he says that Achilles can win honor and glory from the Greeks by killing Hector.¹⁰² By taking up this point, Achilles is able to address many of the empathic failures from the outset.¹⁰³ Indeed, he spends far more time on his grievances than is necessary to answer Odysseus. He dwells on Agamemnon's misconduct, which Odysseus omits, and thereby both reminds Odysseus of why he is not helping the Greeks and implicitly answers Odysseus's criticism of him. Odysseus urges Achilles to pity the worn-out (τειρομένους) Greeks (9.301-02). Odysseus also used τειρομένους ("worn-out") in the first part of his speech (9.248), where he emphasized the plight of the Greeks (9.229-48).¹⁰⁴ Odysseus

¹⁰² I am following Lohmann's analysis of the organization of Achilles' speech (Lohmann 1970, 236, 233):

Part 1 of Achilles' speech (315-45) answers part 3 of Odysseus's speech (300-06).

Part 2 of Achilles' speech (346-74) answers part 1 of Odysseus's speech (225-51).

Part 3 of Achilles' speech (378-416) answers part 2 of Odysseus's speech (252-99).

Part 4 of Achilles' speech (417-29) consists of a conclusion and transition to Phoenix's speech.

While I agree with Lohmann's analysis, the speech is messier than this schematization suggests, and nothing is preventing Achilles from addressing multiple parts of Odysseus's speech at once or from addressing additional topics of his own. For example, the ring composition in Odysseus's speech (part 3 forming a ring with part 1) means that Achilles can be addressing points from both places that the same material appears.

¹⁰³ Wilson 2002, 86: "The beginning of Achilleus' speech can almost be read as a catalog of what is *not* in Agamemnon's, or Odysseus', speech and should be. He reasserts his own complaint, set forth in the quarrel, about Agamemnon's abuse of the *timē*-based fluid system. . . ."

¹⁰⁴ This is an example of how the organization of Achilles' speech is messier than Lohmann's analysis would suggest. Because of the ring composition of Odysseus's speech here, Achilles is replying to two parts of Odysseus's speech at once.

says, “Look at the Greeks’ suffering!” and Achilles replies, “What about my suffering?”

Beginning this way allows Achilles to cast Odysseus’s empathic failures in his teeth.

Achilles here objects to Agamemnon’s role in distributing spoils. Agamemnon remains behind, keeps much, and dispenses little. Achilles objects to this situation, and yet it is similar to that implied by Agamemnon’s offer. The grandiosity of the offer, which we will discuss below, recalls this objectionable arrangement. We notice, too, that Agamemnon is hanging back here and distributing prizes just as he does in the arrangement objected to. How much of what Agamemnon is offering had been captured by Achilles originally? We cannot say, but we do know that at least Briseis originally belonged to Achilles. When Achilles says that Agamemnon still has her, we are reminded that Agamemnon is making the restoration of Achilles’ original prize conditional on his return to battle.¹⁰⁵ Even if Agamemnon were to make the rest of his offer conditional, he could at least restore Briseis to Achilles without requiring anything in return as a gesture of goodwill. Achilles also reminds us that Agamemnon’s behavior is doubly outrageous in that it resembles the cause of the war, Paris’s abduction of Helen. Agamemnon offers Achilles seven cities. Achilles answers that he has sacked twenty-three.¹⁰⁶

Achilles’ complaint about the lack of *charis* implies that he interprets Agamemnon’s offer and Odysseus’s promise of future honor as somehow faulty. Otherwise, even if there was no *charis* in the past, since Agamemnon is offering to compensate him now for this past lack, it would not make sense for Achilles to make this complaint the basis for his refusal (i.e., they will

¹⁰⁵ Scodel 2008, 142.

¹⁰⁶ Lynn-George 1988. This is another example of Achilles’ reply deviating from the organization proposed by Lohmann, since according to Lohmann, part 3 rather than part 1 of Achilles’ speech is supposed to be answering part 2 of Odysseus’s speech (9.252-99), the part in which he conveys Agamemnon’s offer (Lohmann 1970, 236, 233).

not persuade him because there was no *charis*). Understanding why Achilles refuses for this reason provides the key for the rest of the speech and for deciding whether he transcends anything.

There was no *charis* previously in that Achilles was not adequately compensated with prizes and honor and had to give the spoils to the greedy and undeserving Agamemnon, who kept too much for himself. Moreover, Agamemnon “cheated” him (ἀπάτησε [344, 375; cf. 370, 376]), “wronged” him (ἤλιτεν 375), and “committed outrage” against him (ἐφουβρίζων, λώβην, “outrage” [368,387]). (Odysseus mentions none of this, but Achilles returns repeatedly to his injury.) Achilles’ ἐκ χειρῶν γέρας εἴλετο καὶ μ’ ἀπάτησε (“he took my prize from my hands and deceived me”) is Homer’s paratactic way of saying that Agamemnon cheated Achilles by taking his prize (344). Taking Achilles’ prize is part of the deception in that “Agamemnon has not kept the implicit promise that he [i.e., Achilles] will be treated like a hero.”¹⁰⁷

Since Agamemnon is offering to compensate Achilles for this lack of *charis*, what sense does it make for Achilles to complain that there has been no *charis* and to refuse for that reason? Achilles fears being cheated again: ἐκ γὰρ δὴ μ’ ἀπάτησε καὶ ἤλιτεν· οὐδ’ ἂν ἔτ’ αὔτις / ἐξαπάφοιτ’ ἐπέεσσιν· ἄλις δέ οἱ, “For he thoroughly deceived me and wronged me, and he cannot / thoroughly deceive me again with words, but that is enough for him” (9.375-76). Because Achilles says earlier that Agamemnon cheated him by taking his prize, we might think that he fears that Agamemnon will take his prize again or fail to make good on the offer. That is not the issue here. In 378-416, Achilles imagines a scenario in which he would have all that Agamemnon has promised, but he rejects Agamemnon’s offer all the same. How, then, does

¹⁰⁷ Griffin 1995, ad 9.344.

Achilles fear that he will be cheated again? He fears that the offer is insincere, both because of Agamemnon's past behavior and because of the nature of the offer.¹⁰⁸

As for Agamemnon's past behavior, *charis* can refer both to the feeling of gratitude and to displays of this feeling. So far we have been discussing displays of *charis* in the form of prizes and honor. It seems, however, that the affective component of *charis* is also important to Achilles, because it makes the signs of *charis* real. Achilles' prize is supposed to be a sign of honor. If his prize can be taken away so easily, the *charis* must not have been genuine, and Agamemnon must not have had genuine respect for Achilles. This calls Agamemnon's offer into question. If Agamemnon is not offering genuine honor and Achilles is risking his life to win honor, it does not make sense for him to continue fighting. Agamemnon has shown how little respect he has for Achilles, so his gifts do not represent honor but only things, and mere things are not worth Achilles' life. It is essential that prizes and gifts represent tokens of appreciation rather than payment; otherwise, the recipient of the prizes is a laborer in the service of the giver and is thereby subordinated to the giver, and the inequality between them is reaffirmed or increased with each new transaction. Now, as we will see below, that Agamemnon's past lack of *charis* makes his offer untrustworthy does not mean that honor is now impossible or meaningless for Achilles, only that he needs a guarantee that the gifts represent honor.

Achilles distrusts Agamemnon's offer not only because of Agamemnon's past deception but also because of the nature of the offer itself. Achilles' angry response to the offer shows that he perceives its meaning:

ἐχθρὰ δέ μοι τοῦ δῶρα, τίω δέ μιν ἐν καρὸς αἴση.
οὐδ' εἴ μοι δεκάκις τε καὶ εἰκοσάκις τόσα δοίη
ἄσσά τέ οἱ νῦν ἔστι, καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλα γένοιτο, (380)

¹⁰⁸ Cf., Whitman 1958, 191, 193; Scodel 2008, 148.

οὐδ' ὅσ' ἐς Ὀρχομενὸν ποτινίσεται, οὐδ' ὅσα Θήβας
Αἰγυπτίας, ὅθι πλεῖστα δόμοις ἐν κτήματα κεῖται,
αἶθ' ἑκατόμυλοί εἰσι, διηκόσιοι δ' ἀν' ἑκάστας
ἀνέρες ἐξοιχνεῦσι σὺν ἵπποισιν καὶ ὄχεσφιν·
οὐδ' εἴ μοι τόσα δοίη ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε, (385)
οὐδέ κεν ὥς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει' Ἀγαμέμνων
πρὶν γ' ἀπὸ πᾶσαν ἐμοὶ δόμεναι θυμαλγέα λώβην.

Hateful to me are his gifts, and I don't have a shred of respect for him.
Not even if he were to give me ten or twenty times as much
as he has now and if he got other things from somewhere,
not even if he were to give as much as goes to Orchomenos or Egyptian Thebes,
where possessions in the greatest quantities are stored in the houses,
Thebes, which has a hundred gates, and through each of them
two hundred men with their horses and chariots go forth;
not even if he were to give me as many things as there are grains of sand and dust,
not even so would Agamemnon now persuade my spirit,
until he pays me back for all the heart-grieving outrage. (9.378-87)

This is but the first of three priamels that constitute Achilles' refusal of Agamemnon's offer.¹⁰⁹

In the second, Achilles rejects marriage to Agamemnon's daughter (388-40). In the third, he returns to the theme of wealth: all the wealth of Delphi and of Troy at its peak is not worth his life, because he can always get more possessions but cannot get his life back once it passes the fence of the teeth (401-16). The priamels total 39 lines (378-416) and respond directly to Agamemnon's offer, which is 35 lines long (9.122-56 ≈ 264-98).

Achilles objects to the grandiosity of Agamemnon's offer. He expresses his objection in part through the iconicity of his reply: his priamels, which are essentially a type of list, are themselves grandiose and parody Agamemnon's grand list.¹¹⁰ To be sure, anger is driving

¹⁰⁹ Lohmann 1970.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Richardson 1993, ad 9.378-87.

Achilles' expansiveness, but Achilles casts Agamemnon's list back in his face, declares himself Agamemnon's equal, and shows how little he needs him or his gifts.

Achilles here objects to Agamemnon's grandiosity in other ways. He says that Agamemnon's gifts are hateful to him and that he does not respect Agamemnon (378). Now, wealth is not normally hateful to Achilles. For example, he spent the first part of the speech complaining that he has not been given enough wealth for his labors (314-36). So certain features of the situation must be tainting the wealth that Agamemnon is offering, and one of these is the grandiosity of the offer.

The grandiosity also appears in the arrogant and patronizing offer of marriage, which Achilles resoundingly rejects with his second *priamel* (388-40). It is arrogant of Agamemnon to think that it would be a privilege for someone to marry one of his daughters, especially for someone who hates him.¹¹¹ Achilles says that he and Peleus can find a wife for him on their own and that he did not come to Troy for wives, since there are plenty of nubile women back in Hellas and Phthia (393-97). Scorning Agamemnon's claims to superiority based on status, Achilles says, ὁ δ' Ἀχαιῶν ἄλλον ἐλέσθω, / ὅς τις οἷ τ' ἐπέοικε καὶ ὃς βασιλεύτερός ἐστιν, "But let him choose another of the Achaeans, / someone who suits him and is more kingly [than I am]" (391-92). Achilles' βασιλεύτερός, "more kingly," once again refers us to Agamemnon's coda, where he uses just this word to justify why Achilles should submit to him: "let him submit to me insofar as I am more kingly" (9.160).¹¹² Achilles is effectively saying that Agamemnon

¹¹¹ This would be true even if Agamemnon's motives were good.

¹¹² Noted by, e.g., Griffin 1995, ad 9.392.

need not condescend to ally himself with someone so lowly. Achilles' false humility points to and mocks Agamemnon's arrogance and grandiosity.

Achilles' prior experience makes him doubt the genuineness of Agamemnon's offer, but his continued presence at Troy implies that there is some sort of compensation that he considers trustworthy and satisfactory. Evidently, then, there is something about Agamemnon's offer that elicits Achilles' fear of being deceived again, and that thing is grandiosity. Agamemnon's grandiosity here repeats the original offense.¹¹³ Let this grandiosity refer not only to grandiosity proper but also to Agamemnon's arrogant attempt to subjugate Achilles by luring him into a subordinate position as his son-in-law and vassal and by establishing himself as the dispenser of honor.¹¹⁴ If Agamemnon is repeating the original offense, then he has not been thoroughly chastened or humbled. If Agamemnon is then pretending to offer compensation (Odysseus never tells Achilles that the offer is supposed to be compensation) or at least to show his respect for Achilles, the grandiosity of the offer shows that Agamemnon does not genuinely or sufficiently respect Achilles and therefore that he is trying to deceive him.

This grandiosity, which shows that Agamemnon has not been humbled and that his offer is insincere, provokes Achilles' fear of being deceived again. Not only in voicing this fear and in objecting to Agamemnon's grandiosity but also in envisioning what adequate compensation would look like does Achilles show that the problem for him is Agamemnon's lack of humility and sincerity. For instance, he tells Odysseus:

τῷ πάντ' ἀγορευέμεν ὡς ἐπιτέλλω
ἀμφοδόν, ὄφρα καὶ ἄλλοι ἐπισκύζωνται Ἀχαιοὶ (370)
εἴ τινά που Δαναῶν ἔτι ἔλπεται ἐξαπατήσειν

¹¹³ Cf. Scodel 2008, 149.

¹¹⁴ Redfield 1975, 15-16; Donlan 1993, Wilson 2002, 93.

αἰὲν ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένος· οὐδ' ἄν ἔμοιγε
τετλαίη κύνεός περ ἔων εἰς ὧπα ιδέσθαι· (9.369-73)

Declare everything to him publicly as I enjoin you,
so that the other Achaeans too may be angry with him
if perhaps he still hopes to deceive any of the Danaans,
always clothed in shamelessness as he is. He wouldn't even
dare to look me in the face, even though he's shameless.

I think that Achilles' complaint about Agamemnon's unwillingness to look him in the face refers to the present embassy rather than to the seizure of Briseis.¹¹⁵ Achilles complains about Agamemnon's absence because he wanted Agamemnon to suffer the pain of humiliation, as he surely would have if he had had to come in person.¹¹⁶ Achilles' desire for his reply to be made public (369-72) shows his desire to humiliate Agamemnon. That he has this desire in lines 369-72 suggests that his complaint in 372-73 reflects the same desire. Wanting his reply to be made public is designed to correct Agamemnon's absence from the embassy. The contrast between presence and absence belongs to the series of binary oppositions that the speech has created: presence, openness, gratitude, sincerity, honor, a humbled Agamemnon, and victory and superiority for Achilles versus absence, deception, ingratitude, insincerity, wealth, an arrogant and grandiose Agamemnon, and defeat and subordination for Achilles.

That being humbled and sincere would constitute, or are required for, adequate compensation is clearest in 386-87: οὐδέ κεν ὧς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει' Ἀγαμέμνων / πρὶν γ' ἀπὸ

¹¹⁵ In book 1, Agamemnon says that he will go in person to Achilles' tent to take Briseis (1.184-85). In the event, he sends his heralds to do it. According to Scodel, this is what Achilles is referring to here. In support of that interpretation, she adduces the fact that Nestor does not say that Agamemnon needs to go on the embassy (Scodel 2003; 2008, 142). She recognizes, however, that even if it would normally be appropriate for the atoner to remain behind, that might not be the best way to deal with Achilles. Furthermore, the material immediately preceding this passage refers to the seizure of Briseis (9.367-69). But in this passage and in what follows, Achilles refers to the past, present, and future.

¹¹⁶ Edwards 1987, 223; Richardson 1993, ad 9.387; Griffin 1995, ad 9.370; Scodel 2008, 146-47.

πᾶσαν ἐμοὶ δόμεναι θυμαλγέα λώβην, “not even so would Agamemnon now persuade my spirit, / until he pays me back for all the heart-grieving outrage.” Achilles says that no amount of wealth is going to satisfy him, but he does say that he could be satisfied if Agamemnon paid for the injury. This obviously implies that Agamemnon’s current offer is not doing that. Since the current offer is generous and such offers are recognized as acceptable compensation for outrages, what is it that Achilles wants? He wants Agamemnon to suffer as he has suffered.¹¹⁷ More precisely, he wants Agamemnon to suffer the pain of humiliation by admitting his *ātē* publicly, which he eventually does in book 19. As Achilles says to Thetis in book 1, Agamemnon’s *ātē* is that “he did not at all honor the best of the Achaeans” (ἦν ἄτην ὅ τ’ ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτισεν [1.412]).¹¹⁸ Thus for Agamemnon to “recognize” (γνῶ) his *ātē* is to recognize that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans (1.411). (Not having honored the best of the Achaeans carries the presupposition that the person who has not been honored, Achilles, is the best of the Achaeans.) By Achilles’ reasoning, admitting that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans would imply that Achilles has the greatest honor, and Agamemnon’s discomfort and loss of honor at admitting this would compensate Achilles for his suffering. Agamemnon’s suffering (e.g., being humbled and humiliated) thus represents honor for Achilles. It is, above all, honor that Achilles wants, and that this honor would come from Agamemnon’s suffering would ensure that it is genuine. Once Agamemnon has been humbled and Achilles has made clear that he is returning

¹¹⁷ As Hainsworth notes (1993, ad 9.387), Achilles corrects Odysseus’s *χόλον θυμαλγέα* (“heart-grieving anger” [9.260]) to *θυμαλγέα λώβην* (“heart-grieving outrage”). Odysseus saw only Achilles’ anger and ignored the humiliating injury that produced it. Achilles does not miss the opportunity to point out both Agamemnon’s and Odysseus’s empathic failures.

¹¹⁸ Although Achilles is speaking to his mother here, earlier he says essentially the same thing but at greater length to Agamemnon and the others: he wants Agamemnon to recognize that he needs Achilles to save the Greeks from Hector and that he should have honored the best of the Achaeans, (1.240-44). The need for Achilles is supposed to show that he is the best of the Achaeans.

on his own terms rather than for the sake of the gifts, it becomes safe for him to accept the gifts, which can once again represent genuine honor.¹¹⁹

When Achilles says that the wealth of Troy and Delphi is not worth his life, he is not saying that nothing is worth his life (9. 401-16). Honor and fame are both worth his life. This claim may seem odd seeing that Achilles proceeds to mention his choice of fates and then, by deciding to go home, apparently chooses long life over imperishable fame (9.410-16, 427-29). Achilles is not rejecting fame here, though. He mentions Thetis's prophecy in order to explain why he will not return to battle for wealth alone: because of the prophecy, he can be sure that doing so would cost him his life. That he mentions the prophecy to explain this is clear from the connective (*γὰρ*, "for") that introduces the prophecy: "for my mother says . . ." (9.410). "But he has still chosen long life over imperishable fame," one might object. The explanation for this is that he feels he cannot stay unless he has the honor he deserves. The injury to his honor is too great, and he can protect his honor better by going home in protest than by submitting to Agamemnon. It is more that he is choosing honor over fame than that he is choosing life over fame. He may also believe that he cannot win the sort of fame he wants unless he defeats Agamemnon in this struggle for honor.

If wealth represents honor, when Achilles says that wealth is not worth his life, is he not also saying that honor is not worth his life? No, because wealth does not always need to represent honor (see next section). Furthermore, Achilles has just said that he can be persuaded to stay if Agamemnon pays him back for the outrage he has committed, and we know that staying will result in Achilles' death (9.386-87). As we have seen, Achilles' plan has been to

¹¹⁹ Eichholz 1953.

force Agamemnon to recognize that he needs Achilles and therefore that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans and has the most honor. Agamemnon does recognize his need for Achilles, so Achilles has almost succeeded, but Agamemnon remains arrogant and grandiose. Humbling and humiliating Agamemnon will allow Achilles to extort honor from Agamemnon and thereby complete his victory.¹²⁰ Achilles is therefore willing to die for honor. Consequently, honor is worth his life, and he remains within the heroic code.

Transcendence?

Scholars have debated whether Achilles transcends the heroic code in this speech. Those who think he does include Adam Parry, Whitman, and Schein.¹²¹ Those who think he does not include Reeve, Redfield, Edwards, Hainsworth, Wilson, Buchan, and Scodel.¹²² As I have said, I do not think that he transcends the heroic code. The distance between the two camps is actually not as great as it might seem. For instance, scholars on both sides think that Achilles is “disillusioned.”¹²³ The differences often come down to what qualifies as “transcendence” or to how the heroic code is understood. As Scodel and others have shown, the heroic code is not as clear-cut as is often assumed and is open to interpretation by the characters.¹²⁴

Whitman and Schein can serve as examples of the transcendental position. While I often agree with Whitman on certain details, I do not agree with his interpretation of Achilles’

¹²⁰ Once Agamemnon has been humbled, Achilles can accept Agamemnon’s gifts. Achilles’ refusal to treat wealth as honor is in any case only temporary.

¹²¹ Parry 1956, Whitman 1958, Schein 1984.

¹²² Reeve 1973, 195; Redfield 1975, 17; Edwards 1987, 235-36; Hainsworth 1993, ad 9.307-429; Wilson 2002, 83; Buchan 2004, 112; Scodel 2008.

¹²³ Whitman 1958, 188; Schein 1984, 106; Redfield 1975, 17; Edwards 1987, 235-36; Hainsworth 1993, ad 9.307-429.

¹²⁴ Scodel 2008, 146, *passim*; Wilson 2002, 35, 83; Taplin 1992, 50-52, *contra* Finley 2002 (1977), 115.

idealism, which is actually a sign of his rigidity and fragility. For Whitman, Achilles' idealism represents transcendence. For me, it represents masochistic and narcissistic defenses. Whitman says, for instance, "Personal integrity in Achilles achieves the form and authority of immanent divinity, with its inviolable, lonely singleness, half repellent because of its almost inhuman austerity, but irresistible in its passion and perfected selfhood."¹²⁵ Achilles' "integrity" does not represent "perfected selfhood" but rather precarious selfhood. Achilles must insist on absolute satisfaction or risk annihilation. Whitman also says that Achilles seeks a higher honor, "'honor from Zeus,' by which he means he will risk all in the belief that nobility is not a mutual exchange of vain compliments among men whose lives are as evanescent as leaves, but an organic and inevitable part of the universe, independent of social contract."¹²⁶ It is true that Achilles wants real honor rather than "vain compliments" and that he believes that he is entitled to it, but I do not accept this allegorical or symbolic interpretation of Zeus's role. First, it was Agamemnon's violation of the social contract that created this situation, and Achilles refuses the offer because its insincerity prevents it from restoring the social contract. As Whitman himself says, "There can be little question that Achilles' rejection of the embassy is essentially a rejection of Agamemnon's gifts and the spirit in which they are offered."¹²⁷ Second, it is only because Thetis invokes a social contract of sorts, the obligations of reciprocity, that Zeus helps Achilles, and not because Zeus is particularly concerned about Achilles' honor. Zeus "honors" Achilles insofar as he helps Achilles toward a concrete goal, namely, extorting honor from the Greeks. Thus, there is nothing special or transcendent about the honor that comes from Zeus.

¹²⁵ Whitman 1958, 182.

¹²⁶ Whitman 1958, 183.

¹²⁷ Whitman 1958, 193.

Schein's position seems based on a misreading of 9.318-20: "An equal portion belongs to a man who hangs back and to a man if he fights hard. / And in one honor are both the coward and the brave. / Alike die the man who does nothing and the man who has done much." Schein says that these lines "signify a radical break from the heroic value system prevalent elsewhere in the poem" and that here "he [i.e., Achilles] is contradicting the notion of honor he himself in Book 1 held strongly enough to quarrel over and to which everyone else in the poem subscribes."¹²⁸ Schein does not give enough weight to the context of these lines. They follow Achilles' complaint about the lack of *charis*, which he gives as his reason for refusing (9.315-17). These lines simply, if hyperbolically, explain how there has been no *charis*. That they are generalizing his grievances is clear from the lines that follow, in which Achilles lists his specific grievances (9.321-45). He is saying that there has been no honor for him, not that there is no honor or that honor is impossible. Nor is he saying that he does not want honor.

Schein also implies that the "radical break from the heroic value system" that these lines supposedly represent consists in their rejection of the material bases of honor (i.e., honor defined "in terms of women, land, and the other tangible possessions that Agamemnon offers in such abundance").¹²⁹ Now, in lines 401-16 Achilles does talk as if he rejects the equation of wealth with honor, but he certainly does not do so in lines 318-20, which, if anything, equate wealth with honor. Even in lines 401-16, however, this rejection is only a way of speaking: the gifts do symbolize honor, but because Agamemnon is not offering them out of respect for Achilles but rather out of a desire to dominate him, we can say that they do not "really" represent honor.

¹²⁸ Schein 1984, 105.

¹²⁹ Schein 1984, 105.

Hence, Achilles can appear to reject the equation. That he does not actually reject the equation is clear from his reply to Phoenix. Phoenix tells Achilles that if he returns to battle without the gifts, he will not be “equally honored” (ὀμῶς τιμῆς); that is, he will have less honor (9.604-05). Achilles responds that he does not need “this honor,” which includes the honor of the gifts (9.607-08). This implies both that Achilles still recognizes the honor that Phoenix is referring to as honor and that there is some honor that he does need. Furthermore, in book 16, Achilles even says that he wants gifts from the Greeks (16.83-86).

Achilles refuses because he recognizes that there are sources of honor more important than wealth. Some types of honor are more honorable than others.¹³⁰ Even when Achilles recognizes this, he is not transcending the heroic value system because he is not the only character to recognize it. Although this could instead mean that other characters are transcending the value system as well, if other characters, too, value other forms of honor more than wealth, it makes more sense to say that the heroic code is not as simple or as rigid as Schein suggests. This is perfectly clear if we remember why heroes want wealth in the first place: it is supposed to symbolize honor. But although wealth may symbolize honor, *wealth* does not signify “honor.” *Wealth* signifies “wealth,” that is, the sense and reference of *wealth*. If asked to gloss *ploutos* (“wealth”), the characters would give *aphenos* (“wealth, riches”) or the like rather than *tīmē* (“honor”).¹³¹ The characters can also use *tīmē* without referring to wealth. Every character thus implicitly understands the gap between honor and wealth, and for Achilles or anyone else to

¹³⁰ Achilles implies this even in book 1 when he refers to Agamemnon as greedy, thereby devaluing the honor represented by Agamemnon’s great wealth.

¹³¹ As we have seen, Achilles uses *aphenos* and *ploutos* in the synonymia of 1.171.

insist on the gap does not constitute a rejection or transcendence of the heroic code.¹³² In seeking honor and fame above all else, Achilles and the other characters are following rather than transcending the heroic code when they reject wealth in favor of other types of honor. Even if this sense of honor were unique to Achilles, he would still be within the heroic value system because whatever sense of honor might be motivating him would nevertheless remain a sense of honor. But not even Achilles' sense of honor is unique in the poems.

Within this very book of the *Iliad*, other characters recognize that other motivations can supersede the desire for the tangible honor of wealth. Odysseus recognizes that Agamemnon and his gifts might be too hateful to Achilles and therefore that something, viz., some other type of honor, could be more important to Achilles than the tangible honor of Agamemnon's gifts. It is perfectly comprehensible to Odysseus that Achilles' sense of honor might not allow him to accept gifts that carry the wrong meaning. For this reason, Odysseus tries to satisfy Achilles' sense of honor by offering him a different type of honor, the intangible honor that the Greeks will give him if he saves them from Hector. They will honor him "like a god," Odysseus says (9.302-03). Phoenix's exemplum of Meleager also shows that a person's sense of injury can be more important than material honor, since he, too, remains unmoved by the wealth he is offered to induce him to fight. Beyond the *Iliad*, in book 22 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus rejects the suitors' offer of compensation for their transgressions (*Od.* 22.61-64). His refusal even echoes Achilles' in 9.379-87:

οὐδ' εἴ μοι πατρώϊα πάντ' ἀποδοῖτε,
ὄσσα τε νῦν ὑμῖν ἐστὶ καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλ' ἐπιθεῖτε,
οὐδέ κεν ὧς ἔτι χεῖρας ἐμὰς λήξαιμι φόνοιο,
πρὶν πᾶσαν μνηστῆρας ὑπερβασίην ἀποτεῖσαι.
νῦν ὑμῖν παράκειται ἐναντίον ἢ ἐμάχεσθαι (65)

¹³² Cf. Scodel 2008, 148.

ἢ φεύγειν, ὅς κεν θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξει·
ἀλλὰ τιν' οὐ φεύξεσθαι ὄϊομαι αἰπὸν ὄλεθρον.

not even if you all were to give me all of your inherited wealth in requital, as much as you have now and if you were to add other things from somewhere, not even so would I stop my hands from killing until the suitors had paid for every transgression. (*Od.* 22. 61-64)¹³³

The honor that comes from killing the suitors and thereby avenging the insult to his intangible honor is more valuable to Odysseus than the honor that they offer him in the form of wealth.

Agamemnon himself might be taken as someone who sees other forms of honor as more important than that based on wealth. He would rather offer Achilles material honor than lose the honor that would come from humbling himself before Achilles. Agamemnon is a complicated case, however, because we could see him as downplaying or as emphasizing material honor. The former we already mentioned: he considers the honor lost from all the wealth that he is offering Achilles to be less or less important than the honor he would lose from humbling himself, that is, from letting himself be publicly humiliated by Achilles. On the other hand, Agamemnon could be insisting on honor in the form of wealth: he has so much honor in the form of wealth that he can afford to give Achilles so much material honor, and his ability to do so only proves how much more honor he has than Achilles and therefore how much greater he is. Paradoxically, Agamemnon is employing both strategies at once: his willingness to lose material honor shows both how important intangible honor is to him and how much more honor (in the form of wealth) he has than Achilles does (hence, the potlatch strategy). But this strategy yields another paradox: the more he honors Achilles, the more he dishonors him. It is this paradox that explains why it is

¹³³ This similarity of Odysseus's response has been noted (e.g., Griffin 1995, ad *Il.* 9.380). He says the difference (e.g., their length) between them is "an example of the milder nature of the other epic." Or this difference could reflect personality.

so difficult for Achilles and his interpreters to say what he means. Because Agamemnon is insincere, is not offering the gifts out of respect for Achilles, and is trying to dominate Achilles by making him his dependent and himself the source of honor, the gifts do not symbolize honor (hence 379-416). But in order for the potlatch strategy to work, the gifts must symbolize honor. Thus we arrive at the paradox: the gifts must symbolize honor in order not to symbolize honor. It is no wonder, then, that Achilles struggles to articulate what is wrong with the offer and that most of the other Greeks cannot quite understand what the problem is.¹³⁴

Conclusion

To summarize my argument about ingratitude, Achilles complains that there is no *charis* in the form of honor and prizes (i.e., wealth). Agamemnon is offering gifts (i.e., wealth) to remedy this situation, so if Achilles' complaint is to make sense, he fears either that he will be deprived of them, whether because they will never be given or because they will be taken away, or that there is something wrong with the honor that they are purporting to offer. Since in the scenario that Achilles rejects he envisions himself having what Agamemnon is offering, his fear is not that the gifts will not be given or that they will be taken away. Therefore, he fears that

¹³⁴ I agree with Scodel: "the heroes [i.e., Homeric heroes in general] both care profoundly about what others really think and implicitly agree to accept public and conventional representations of honor as if it were the real thing. Achilles is insisting on the gap. If the taking of Briseis represents the truth of Agamemnon's view of Achilles, and the rest of the Achaeans are willing to acquiesce in that evaluation, the insult really may be a form of irremediable loss.

"Because Achilles interprets Agamemnon's actions as he does, the immense offer is useless however Achilles fits it into his understanding of Agamemnon. If it is so large because only such an immense offer is adequate to the offense and to the merits of Achilles, its size only reminds him of how bad the offense was and how insincere Agamemnon is, even though accepting it would win Achilles *timē* from everyone who shared his understanding of the offer. If it is larger than it needs to be because Agamemnon wants to display his superiority to Achilles, it repeats the offense, and accepting it would actually diminish Achilles' prestige. Once Achilles abandons the social expectations that would expect him to allow Agamemnon to save his own face and to accept public compensation as if it were the true representation of how he is valued, Agamemnon cannot win, because Achilles does not believe that Agamemnon respects him" (Scodel 2008, 148-49).

there is something wrong with the honor. He could fear this because he thinks that honor is now meaningless and essentially does not exist, because he has rejected honor, or because he does not trust that the gifts are offering genuine honor. Achilles says that he does not want to be deceived again. This concern suggests the third reason but does not eliminate the first two. These are ruled out by the possibility of being adequately compensated: if Agamemnon were to pay for his outrage, he could persuade Achilles by offering him great wealth. If Agamemnon were to pay for his outrage, the wealth would become true honor. The honor of this wealth would nevertheless remain less important to Achilles than that arising from Agamemnon's humiliation. Agamemnon would pay for his outrage by suffering the humiliation of having to admit his *ātē*. By Achilles' reasoning, for Agamemnon to admit this would be to admit that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans and has the greatest honor.¹³⁵ Agamemnon's humiliation would represent the flow of honor from Agamemnon to Achilles and would ensure that the honor is genuine, even though it would be genuine from pain rather than from positive feelings toward Achilles. The possibility of adequate compensation therefore shows that Achilles is actually seeking, rather than rejecting, honor and therefore that he has not transcended the heroic code. The possibility of compensation also shows that it is not only Agamemnon's past deceit that elicits Achilles' suspicions of duplicity but also something about the offer, namely, its grandiosity. This grandiosity, including the attempt to cast Achilles in subordinate roles (son-in-law, vassal), shows that Agamemnon is unchastened and that the purported honor of the offer is not genuine respect. Although Agamemnon is purporting to offer Achilles honor in the form of gifts, his insincerity means that

¹³⁵ Agamemnon does admit his *ātē* but surely does not admit that Achilles is the best of the Achaeans. Because of the way in which Achilles has defined the contest (Agamemnon will need Achilles to save the army from Hector), he can interpret Agamemnon's admission of *ātē* and his need for Achilles as victory even if Agamemnon does not.

the offer is an attempt to cheat Achilles again. The attempt to dominate and cheat Achilles shows Agamemnon's lack of *charis*, constitutes an empathic failure, and thus repeats the empathic failure of book 1.

Phoenix, Ajax, and Achilles

In his great speech, Achilles responds in his usual relational manner. His anger, indignation, and bitterness burst forth once again and are given expression in his violent and forceful rhetoric. For example, the priamels in which he refuses Agamemnon's offer run to thirty-nine lines (9.378-416). He moralizes at length about Agamemnon's and the Greeks' ingratitude and the unfairness of the situation (9.315-45). Achilles' rhetoric of honesty is on display when he decries deception ("I must speak this speech bluntly," "For hateful to me like the gates of Hades is that man / who hides one thing in his heart but says another" [9.309, 312-13]). He casts his complaint about how he has been treated in general terms, so that some have interpreted it as a rejection of the heroic system (9.316-20).¹³⁶ He poses moral dilemmas. "Why must the Argives fight the Trojans?" he asks, for example (9.337-38). Wealth, he declares, is not worth his life, because he can always acquire more wealth but not another life once it has passed the barrier of his teeth (9.401-16). Finally, although saying that he will go home in the morning, he may be willing to stay if Agamemnon suffers more and thus cedes honor to him. All of this, then, illustrates the same relational manner that we saw in his speech at 1.149-71. Moreover, Achilles' great speech even repeats the structure of that earlier speech.¹³⁷ Both speeches, for instance, begin with a complaint about Agamemnon's ingratitude and end with Achilles'

¹³⁶ Schein 1984, 105. For Achilles' habit of generalizing, see Redfield (1975, 17). See Scodel for Achilles' susceptibility to his own rhetoric (2008, 146).

¹³⁷ Lohmann maps out how the two speeches correspond in structure (Lohmann 1970, 239-40).

declaration that he will go home (1.150-60, 169-71; 9.315-45, 427-29, cf. 356-63). Achilles thus experiences Agamemnon's and Odysseus's empathic failures in book 9 as repetitions of those in book 1.

Phoenix's reply to Achilles is long and rich, but we will discuss only a few aspects of it and so offer a synopsis here. After Achilles finishes speaking, Phoenix bursts into tears (δάκρυ' ἀναπρήσας [9.432-33]). He says that he cannot be separated from Achilles, whom he was to teach to become a speaker of words and doer of deeds (9.434-448). A dispute with his own father caused Phoenix to flee and enter into Peleus's service (9.447-84). He lists his credentials as Achilles' surrogate father (9.485-95). Achilles is to stop his anger and learn from the allegory of the *Litai* ("prayers, entreaties" [9.496-514]). If Achilles does not respect others' begging, he may be punished by Zeus with *ātē*. If Agamemnon were still violently angry and were not offering gifts, Phoenix would not urge Achilles to yield (9.515-519). Agamemnon is offering gifts, however, and has sent the best of the Achaeans to beg (λίσσασθαι) Achilles (9.519-23). Until now, Achilles' anger has not been a cause for indignation, the implication being that it will be if it continues (9.523). Achilles should yield as the heroes of old did when they were angry (9.524-27). The exemplum of Meleager shows that if Achilles is going to yield eventually, he should do so sooner rather than later so that he can be sure that he will receive gifts for returning to battle. If he waits too long, as Meleager did, he will not get the gifts and his honor will be less (9.520-605).

We have all developed characteristic ways of relating that enable us to connect with our particular families. Our relational manner is our manner of being with other people ("implicit relational knowing") and managing them, based on our expectations of how they will behave, in

ways that allow us to stay safe and get our needs met.¹³⁸ We perceive the world through templates derived from past relationships and act according to scripts learned from these same relationships. In a sense, then, there is an element of transference in every interaction. An enactment is the enacting of the transference.¹³⁹ Our relational templates or schemas consist of generalized representations of interactions in which self and other occupy particular roles. While our schemas affect what we are able to perceive, features of a situation also activate these schemas (i.e., object relations). In an enactment, after we have assigned the other person to a role in the activated schema, we follow our script for how to interact with people in this role and thereby exert pressure on the person to act in accordance with the role. Once the other person succumbs to the pressure and acts the part that she has been cast in, we have an enactment.¹⁴⁰ Edgar Levenson calls our characteristic ways of patterning and structuring our experience in all areas of life “isomorphic transformations.”¹⁴¹ The therapist is supposed to “resist transformation” by refusing to play the role that she is being cast in so that the patient “can meet the new experience by changing.”¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Now, a person’s relational manner may be maladaptive, and he may seem addicted to people and behaviors that cause pain. We will discuss these problems below. *Implicit relational knowing* is procedural, implicit, non-verbal memory of how to be with and do things with others (Boston Change Process Study Group 2010, 31).

¹³⁹ McWilliams 1994.

¹⁴⁰ Enactments are cocreated, so the other’s personality is always contributing something to the enactment even if we are willing to say that it is primarily the relational world of the person exerting the most pressure that is being recreated in the present. For the cocreation of enactments, see, for example, Mitchell 1988, Wachtel 2008, Safran 2012.

¹⁴¹ Levenson 1972. We recreate the same relational experiences throughout our lives and thus manage to avoid new experiences that might change our characteristic patterns.

¹⁴² Levenson 1972, 214, 215.

Although we have various ways of relating and multiple conflicts, some issues will recur more often, and our isomorphic transformations will center on certain themes. Lester Luborsky and Ellen Luborsky call these themes “Core Conflictual Relationship Themes” (CCRTs).¹⁴³ A CCRT, “the repeating pattern a person follows when conducting relationships,” consists of a wish, a response, actual or anticipated, from the other, and the response of the self.¹⁴⁴ One of the CCRTs given by Luborsky and Luborsky captures Achilles’ central conflict:

WISH (W): To be recognized or to feel important
RESPONSE FROM OTHERS (RO): No recognition
RESPONSE FROM SELF (RS): Anger or angry behavior¹⁴⁵

The plot of the *Iliad* centers on this narcissistic CCRT, which appears multiple times in Achilles’ interactions with others. We have described this CCRT in the terms of self psychology. The wish to be recognized is a wish for mirroring. The contest with Agamemnon is also designed to demonstrate Achilles’ importance to the Greeks. The lack of recognition corresponds with the series of empathic failures (e.g., lack of mirroring, criticism, Agamemnon’s grandiosity and attempt to dominate Achilles). Achilles’ anger is narcissistic rage in reaction to these failures. His transference pattern, the CCRT above, is an instance of what Kohut calls the “mirror transference.”¹⁴⁶

We are now in a position to explain the enactment that Achilles has repeatedly tried to draw others into. In his speech at 1.149-71, in his speech swearing by the scepter and in his subsequent actions (e.g., dashing the scepter to the ground [1.225-46]), and in his great speech

¹⁴³ Luborsky and Luborsky 2006.

¹⁴⁴ Luborsky and Luborsky 2006, 31, 32. I would not insist that there can be only one CCRT for each person.

¹⁴⁵ Luborsky and Luborsky 2006, 32.

¹⁴⁶ Kohut 1971.

(9.308-429), Achilles displays his characteristic violent, forceful, and coercive relational manner, which is designed to intimidate the other into giving him what he wants, above all, recognition (i.e., honor, fame). This recognition takes the form of begging. The groveling of the other marks Achilles' superiority and importance, in short, his intangible honor. Agamemnon senses the role that Achilles' speech at 1.149-71 tries to force him into. He says to Achilles, φεῦγε μάλ' εἴ τοι θυμὸς ἐπέσσυται, οὐδέ σ' ἔγωγε / λίσσομαι εἴνεκ' ἐμεῖο μένειν, "Go ahead, flee, if your spirit is impelled to. I'm not / begging you to stay for my sake" (1.173-74). The role is that of the suppliant, and Agamemnon refuses to assume it. He "resists transformation," to use Levenson's phrase, but the new experience he offers Achilles is hardly healing. Agamemnon's refusal to beg forces Achilles himself to beg: he instructs Thetis to supplicate Zeus (1.407-12, 427, 500-02, 512-13). Until Patroclus's death interrupts the enactment, Achilles' strategy is effectively to force Agamemnon to beg him to fight. After Achilles swears by the scepter and dashes it to the ground, Nestor senses the pressure to assume the suppliant's role, but he begs the wrong person. He begs (λίσσομαι) Agamemnon rather than Achilles (1.282-84). With Phoenix's speech, Achilles at last gets the begging that his relational manner has evolved to elicit. In book 11, Achilles says that he wants the Greeks to set themselves around his knees and beg (λίσσομένους) him (11.609-10). Priam likewise supplicates Achilles in book 24 (24.478, 485).

Phoenix never says "I beg you to stay," but what he does do is nevertheless begging. He expressly defines what he is doing as begging. Agamemnon sent the ambassadors to beg (λίσσασθαι) Achilles (9.519-23). In introducing the allegory of the *Litai*, Phoenix says that humans prevail upon even the gods by begging (λίσσόμενοι) and by making offerings (9.499-501). The point of the allegory itself is that Achilles should be persuaded by the embassy's

begging because those who refuse entreaties are punished with *ātē* (9.502-12).¹⁴⁷ In Phoenix's concluding exemplum, Meleager is repeatedly begged to return to battle (λίσσοντο, λιτάνευε, γουνούμενος, λίσσετ' [9.574, 581, 583, 591]). Phoenix bursts into tears before beginning his speech. His pitifulness makes his importuning of Achilles non-threatening. He is pleading rather than giving orders. For these reasons, we can conclude that Phoenix does in fact beg Achilles even though he never says "I beg you."

Phoenix's begging is a partial success and brings the enactment closer to completion. After Odysseus's speech, Achilles resolves to go home in the morning. After Phoenix's speech, he says that he and Phoenix will consider in the morning whether to leave or stay (9.618-19). Achilles is also much calmer and less angry than he was after Odysseus's speech. Unlike Nestor and Agamemnon, Phoenix succumbs to Achilles' pressure and plays the role of the suppliant. Phoenix's begging allows the enactment to proceed to its final turn: Achilles calms down.

That Achilles' relational manner repeatedly pressures others to play a certain role itself indicates that what he does with Agamemnon and Nestor is an enactment. Phoenix's behavior provides further evidence of that interpretation and shows us how Achilles developed his relational manner. Phoenix is a father figure.¹⁴⁸ Agamemnon, Nestor, Odysseus, Patroclus, and Priam are all father figures, too, but Phoenix's paternal position is explicit. In fact, *father figure* is too weak a term. He is a foster father or second father. For instance, Achilles was unwilling to go to the feast with anyone else or to eat in the palace until Phoenix had fed him (9.486-90). This preference indicates that Phoenix was an attachment figure, perhaps one higher in the hierarchy

¹⁴⁷ As Wilson notes, however, Phoenix's allegory does not apply, because the offender, Agamemnon, is not the one who begs Achilles (Wilson 2002).

¹⁴⁸ Everyone notes this (e.g., Schein 1984, Edwards 1987, Lynn-George 1988, Scodel 2008, Holway 2012).

of attachment figures than even Peleus or Thetis. Denied his own children and needing someone to ward off unseemly destruction for him in old age, Phoenix made Achilles his child (σὲ παῖδα, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, / ποιεύμην [9.493-95]). Achilles' relational manner, characterized by bullying and intimidation, tries to elicit begging or submission. Unlike other characters, Phoenix obliges. The type of interaction that helped create Achilles' relational manner is therefore being repeated before our eyes in the present. We should note that Achilles' and Phoenix's behavior evolved together. Achilles behaves forcefully because he wants something, above all, recognition. He does not want begging or submission per se, or rather, he did not want them initially. But they are what Phoenix gave him, and consequently he has come to want them or at least to be appeased by them.

Why does Phoenix's manner of handling Achilles succeed? Achilles wants to be recognized as best and to have the most honor. These goals are not new for Achilles. He came to Troy to win honor and fame. Peleus instructed Phoenix to make Achilles a doer of deeds and speaker of speeches, because fighting and speaking bring honor and fame (9.442-43). Peleus's parting instructions to Achilles, as recounted in book 11, are "always to be the best and to be superior to others," αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπέρροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων (11.784). This superiority refers to being distinguished, eminent, or outstanding among others, but being outstanding will make Achilles superior in other respects.¹⁴⁹ It will bring him superior honor and status and give him a narcissistic sense of his superiority. When Achilles tries to extort recognition in the form of honor and status by means of his violent relational manner, he is demanding that his superiority be recognized. This is an exercise of force and an assertion of interpersonal

¹⁴⁹ GE, sub ὑπέρροχος.

dominance. When he grows angry over the empathic failures of the quarrel and embassy, he is defending his status, grandiose self-image, and psychic equilibrium. Agamemnon, both in his seizure of Briseis and in his grandiose offer, is asserting, overtly or covertly, his superiority and dominance and trying to force Achilles to submit and accept a position of inferiority. Phoenix assumes the submissive and pitiful role of the suppliant. Phoenix's conspicuous position of inferiority is non-threatening and disarms Achilles. Although begging Achilles is not the same as offering him praise and gifts spontaneously, it implicitly recognizes his power, dominance, and superiority. Begging is an acceptable way to treat people who are the best and outstanding. The person begging is humbled and expresses both his own inferiority and his need for Achilles. This is what Achilles is trying to force Agamemnon to do and what Agamemnon has avoided doing by making a grandiose offer. Begging is thus a way of honoring Achilles.

Although Achilles initially wants the honor of praise and prizes, because begging implicitly recognizes his superiority and confers honor, it sends the correct relational message and becomes an acceptable substitute for spontaneous recognition in the form of praise and prizes. Phoenix could not always offer Achilles what he wanted, but he could beg. Once begging came to satisfy Achilles, his violent relational manner could exert pressure on the other to assume the role of the suppliant. In this way, his relational manner makes it seem as though he wants begging even though what he really wants at the beginning of a conflict is recognition in an obvious form (e.g., praise, the best prize, express acknowledgment of his supremacy). Phoenix's method of handling Achilles and Achilles' relational manner evolved together in that the begging Phoenix offered Achilles determined the role, that of the suppliant, that Achilles would pressure others to play. Phoenix's begging reinforced Achilles' bullying, and Achilles' susceptibility to begging reinforced Phoenix's begging.

One way to determine a person's internal objects is to infer them from how the person behaves. For example, a friend's dog, which she got from a shelter, was afraid of men and would cower whenever a man raised his hand even though raising the hand had nothing to do with the dog. We can infer a few things about this traumatized dog's internal object: she was (1) beaten (2) by a man (3) habitually, probably severely, and perhaps arbitrarily. The role that we cast others in reflects the schemas by means of which we are interpreting what is happening around us in the moment. The schemas also tell us what to expect next and therefore how we need to act to get what we want.¹⁵⁰ We develop our relational schemas in our interactions with our families, and our schemas are adaptations for living with them.¹⁵¹ We act according to them because acting that way has worked for us in the past. Achilles' relational manner therefore tells us about his internal objects.

From Achilles' relational manner we can infer that his paternal objects, both the internal mental representations and the external people that these are based on, are weak. We know this because Achilles has learned to bully people and expects them to beg. He would not have learned this if bullying had not worked and people had not begged. That Phoenix, Achilles' second father, begs Achilles only confirms this inference. Achilles' internal objects are potentially withholding. It is difficult to decide whether they are actually withholding or are only experienced that way because Thetis has fostered a sense of entitlement in him. Achilles'

¹⁵⁰ One problem is that our schemas, i.e., object relations, may be biased or maladaptive. By acting according to them, we pressure others to conform to a relational role and thereby create what we expect to find. We thus end up recreating the situation that gave rise to the schemas in the first place and seem to find evidence that confirms our expectations. This makes the schemas difficult to change. See Wachtel 2008.

¹⁵¹ This is not to imply that we learn our relational schemas only as children and only with our families. While our schemas are largely adaptive in our families, they are not necessarily the best adaptations for dealing with our families, much less for dealing with other people.

bullying and the paternal weakness and withholding are all related. Achilles learned to bully because it worked, but he only bullied because he had to. Expressing a wish or need was insufficient and unsuccessful since his paternal figures did not respect his subjective experience (see below).¹⁵²

MacCary and Holway both note that Achilles' father and father-figures are weak, but they do not show how the weak father appears in the way that Achilles relates to people.¹⁵³ To use therapy as an analogy, it is as if they know what a patient's parents are like solely from his descriptions of them and not at all from their manifestations in the patient's behavior and transference. Such descriptions are helpful but belong to declarative and episodic memory, whereas what gets enacted belongs to procedural memory and is elusive and must be brought to the patient's awareness.

Although Phoenix and Ajax are themselves guilty of empathic failures, why do they succeed where Odysseus failed? Phoenix and Ajax are slightly more empathic than Odysseus is yet still fail Achilles. They both say or imply that Achilles' anger has been acceptable up to this point but will become reprehensible if it continues now that Agamemnon is offering gifts and is no longer violently angry (9.515-20, 628-38). Phoenix says that offerings, gifts, and entreaties win over even the gods and worked on the heroes of old as well (9.496-526). Ajax tells Achilles that men accept wergild even for a brother or son who has been killed (9.632-36). Achilles, however, is still angry over one woman, even though Agamemnon is offering seven, as well as other things (9.636-39). In saying that Achilles' anger has been justified until now, Phoenix and

¹⁵² The enactment that we have been dealing with is not Achilles' only object relation.

¹⁵³ MacCary 1982, 93 and Holway 2012, *passim*. MacCary does not establish Achilles' object relations at all, and Holway only in an abstract, distant, theoretical way that conforms to his one model.

Ajax implicitly acknowledge that Agamemnon has treated Achilles badly. This is more than Odysseus does. Quoting Peleus's injunction to cease from strife, Odysseus criticizes Achilles for quarreling up to this point and for allowing the Greeks to be in this perilous position. Phoenix tells Achilles that he must not have a "pitiless" (νηλεῆς) heart (9.496-97). This is an implicit criticism of Achilles if he remains angry and aloof. Ajax criticizes Achilles outright, calling him νηλής ("pitiless") and σχέτλιος ("unfeeling, inflexible, cruel") and his spirit ἄγριον ("wild, savage"), ἄλληκτόν ("implacable"), and κακόν ("bad" [9.629, 630, 632, 636]). Phoenix and Ajax miss, conceal, or ignore the meaning of Agamemnon's offer and seem not to have listened to anything that Achilles has said.¹⁵⁴ Even though the offer itself is a covert attack and allows Agamemnon plausible deniability, Phoenix and Ajax were present for Agamemnon's coda and therefore should know the spirit of the offer. Finally, they do not respond at all to Thetis's prophecy.

After these failures, how do Phoenix and Ajax have any success? One important factor we have already discussed: Phoenix's self-abasing begging constitutes a recognition of Achilles' honor, status, and superiority and deactivates the narcissistic defenses that Agamemnon's grandiose offer, a covert reassertion of his superiority, triggered. There are two other important

¹⁵⁴ I do not agree with Donlan that the characters and audience would have automatically seen Agamemnon's offer as a gift attack even if they were familiar with competitive gift giving (Donlan 1993). The offer is a gift attack, and the audience may well have perceived its meaning, but the meaning, even if relatively clear, must allow for doubt or plausible deniability. Otherwise, Agamemnon could not have attempted it with everyone's, especially Nestor's, approval (see Scodel 2008). We have already mentioned the elements of Agamemnon's offer that make it problematic. Agamemnon's coda also makes clear the attitude behind the offer. Scodel says that competitive gift giving can exist "at the margin" but that "Homeric heroes do not compete directly against each other with gifts for general social prestige, although they may well compete indirectly and covertly" (Scodel 2008, 42, 43). "Potlatch – direct competition for prestige through lavish generosity and even destruction of property in a display of wealth – is not a Homeric practice, whether in simultaneous gift-giving or in long-term gift exchanges" (Scodel 2008, 42-43). The funeral for Patroclus might be an example of potlatch, and competitive giving does exist in the contest for brides (Scodel 2008, 43). For this reason, I have followed Scodel in calling Agamemnon's offer a "potlatch strategy" rather than "potlatch" (Scodel 2008, 43). Now, such competitive gift giving may have been common and obvious at some point in the poetic tradition, and what we see in book 9 might be a remnant of that practice.

factors in Phoenix's speech. First, Phoenix's pitifulness and emotionality elicit reciprocal emotions in Achilles, namely, pity or compassion. Phoenix, we remember, bursts into tears before he begins speaking. Achilles even remarks on the effect that Phoenix's tears are having, or might have, on him:

μή μοι σύγχει θυμὸν ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχεύων
Ἄτρεΐδῃ ἥρωϊ φέρων χάριν· οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ
τὸν φιλέειν, ἵνα μή μοι ἀπέχθῃαι φιλέοντι.
καλὸν τοι σὺν ἐμοὶ τὸν κήδειν ὅς κ' ἐμὲ κήδη·
ἴσον ἐμοὶ βασίλευε καὶ ἥμισυ μείρεο τιμῆς
οὔτοι δ' ἀγγελέουσι, σὺ δ' αὐτόθι λέξῃο μίμνων
εὐνῇ ἔνι μαλακῇ· ἅμα δ' ἠοῖ φαινομένηφι
φρασσόμεθ' ἢ κε νεώμεθ' ἐφ' ἡμέτερ' ἢ κε μένωμεν. (9.612-19)

Don't try to confound my spirit by wailing and sorrowing,
doing Agamemnon a favor. You should not
love him so that you don't become hateful to me who love you.
It is a good thing for you, along with me, to distress the man who distresses me.
Be king equally with me and receive half of my honor as your share.
These men will report the news, but you stay here and lie down
in a soft bed, and when the dawn appears,
we will consider whether to return to our land or remain.

Phoenix's tears deactivate Achilles' defenses and activate his caregiving system, which is reciprocal to the attachment system. That Achilles is moved itself indicates that Achilles' caregiving system has been activated, but his fussing over Phoenix, viz., ensuring that he sleeps in a soft bed, is an instance of caregiving. At the end of his great speech and before Phoenix bursts into tears, Achilles does suggest that Phoenix spend the night (9.427-29), but Achilles shows more concern (e.g., the soft bed) in the passage above after Phoenix has spoken.

The second factor is that Phoenix draws on his love of Achilles and his claims to Achilles' gratitude. Phoenix is not willing to be separated from Achilles (9.434-448). He made Achilles as great as he is now (σε τοσοῦτον ἔθηκα) and made him his own child (9.485, 494-95). He loves Achilles from the bottom of his heart, and Achilles loves him, as Achilles' childhood

attachment to Phoenix shows (9.486-89). Phoenix raised him and suffered and toiled very much for him (9.486-92). He has Achilles' best interests at heart: Achilles should return to battle so that he can be sure of getting gifts and avoid being punished with *ātē* (9.496-523, 600-05).

Phoenix's love and labors should elicit gratitude and motivate Achilles to reciprocate by caring for the childless Phoenix in old age: "I made you my child, godlike Achilles / so that you might at some time ward off unseemly destruction for me [ἵνα μοί ποτ' ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμύνης]" (9.494-95). In book 24, Priam reminds Achilles that there is no one to ward off harm and destruction for Peleus (οὐδέ τις ἔστιν ἀρῆν καὶ λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι [24.489]). For his part, Achilles regrets that he, Peleus's only son, is not taking care of his father in his old age (24.538-42). Protecting elderly parents is thus an acknowledged way of reciprocating.¹⁵⁵ Conveniently, to ward off destruction is what the Greeks are asking Achilles to do.¹⁵⁶ Phoenix thus appropriates Achilles' talk of *charis* and uses it against him: Achilles is the one who will be ungrateful if he refuses to ward off destruction. Although Phoenix says that he is not willing to be separated from Achilles, since he clearly wants to stay at Troy and is urging Achilles to protect the Greeks, he associates his wish for Achilles to save the army with his claim to Achilles' protection so that Achilles' sense of obligation to Phoenix might be extended to the army as well.

¹⁵⁵ The Homeric Greeks even had a word, *threpra*, for the recompense owed one's parents for one's rearing (4.477-78 = 17.381-82). Lowenstam 1993, 93: "Because Phoenix believes Achilles has a filial obligation to respect his wishes, he tells his autobiography to explain how he acquired such a paternal role."

¹⁵⁶ Odysseus's and Phoenix's speeches use forms of the verb ἀμύνω ("ward off," "defend," "protect") frequently but only use the phrase "ward off unseemly destruction" once, in the passage from Phoenix's speech mentioned above (ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμύνης [9.495]), where Achilles is warding off destruction for Phoenix rather than for the Greeks in general. Various related expressions (e.g., ἀλεξήσεις κακὸν ἡμᾶρ, "ward off the evil day," Ἀργείοισιν ἀμυνέμεναι, "defend the Argives") in their speeches do, however, apply to the Greeks or to the ships (9.251, 435, 518, 601; cf. 9.597, 599). Furthermore, Achilles himself has already used the phrase to refer to the Greeks (1.341-42). The phrase is a formula belonging to the *mēnis* theme (see Slatkin 1991, Muellner 1996).

Ajax, who is the most critical of the ambassadors, has the advantage of following Phoenix, whose deactivation of Achilles' narcissistic defenses and activation of his caregiving system makes Achilles more receptive to Ajax's speech than he otherwise would have been. As critics have observed, it is Ajax's appeal to φιλότις ("friendship, affection, love") that moves Achilles: "and he [i.e., Achilles] doesn't care about the friendship of his companions, / with which by the ships we honored him beyond others, / the pitiless man" (9.630-32).¹⁵⁷ He also tells Achilles to respect the obligations of hospitality—the ambassadors are under Achilles' roof—and to consider that they are eager to be "the most cared for" (κήδιστοί) and "dearest" (φίλτατοι) of all the Achaeans to Achilles (9.639-42). Just as Phoenix does, Ajax appeals to love and gratitude. Reciprocating by helping the Greeks would be a sign of Achilles' gratitude for their love. Unlike Odysseus and Phoenix, Ajax speaks of the honor Achilles has received in the past rather than the honor that he will receive in the future if he returns. In Ajax's speech, honor becomes an obligation to reciprocate instead of a bribe. Why this use of love is problematic we will discuss below in the context of the causes of narcissism.

Causes and Conclusions

For Kohut, developmental trauma, specifically the parents' repeated empathic failures in respect to the child's needs for mirroring, idealizing, and twinship, is the cause of narcissism. While the parents' failure to satisfy these particular selfobject needs may play a causal role in certain cases, the more important insight is the traumatic effect of the empathic failure itself.¹⁵⁸ That is, what is traumatic is not so much that a particular need went unmet as that the parent

¹⁵⁷ GE, s.v. See, for example, Schein 1984, Edwards 1987, Scodel 2008.

¹⁵⁸ Academic psychologists have found preliminary empirical support for Kohut's, Kernberg's, and other psychoanalysts' explanations (see below). See Horton 2011 for a review of this literature. As we mention earlier, Kohut himself recognized that there are more selfobject needs than the three he identifies.

failed to respond to the child's subjective experience appropriately. We might say, then, that there is an overarching selfobject need, the need for empathic responsiveness, which is being appropriately attuned to the child's experience and responding accordingly. This includes seeing and appreciating the child for who she is and accepting her subjective experience as valid.¹⁵⁹ This does not mean giving the child everything she wants or approving of everything she does. Although there are various theories about the causes of narcissism, they typically agree in according leading roles to developmental trauma and problematic forms of relating.¹⁶⁰ Different forms of this relational trauma result in different forms of narcissism, but the different traumatic experiences are often united at a higher level in that they can all be seen as varieties of empathic failure.

John Fiscalini distinguishes three etiological patterns of narcissism: the shamed child, the spoiled child, and the special child.¹⁶¹ These are "ideal types," he says, and in actual cases, all three are present "in complex combination."¹⁶² The type of parent who is faulty in one of these

¹⁵⁹ Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood add the need to have one's experience validated as a selfobject need (1987). This is similar to the echoing and confirming of Kohut's mirroring (Kohut 1971, 250-51).

¹⁶⁰ E.g., Kohut 1971, Kernberg 1975, Mitchell 1988. See Ronningstam 2005, 49-61 for a review of various explanations. These theorists' explanations of narcissism are not as different as they may at first appear. Compare Kernberg 1975, 235 with Kohut 1971, 180-85, 277, for example (see below). And where they are different, they may not be incompatible, or one theory may be incorporated into another. Mitchell, for instance, questions whether there are needs for mirroring, idealizing, and twinship, but he does not deny that narcissists frequently want these things. Using Harry Stack Sullivan's terminology, Mitchell regards these as ways of "integrating relationships," i.e., ways that the families of narcissists related (1988). This is a chicken-and-egg problem. Do narcissists relate through mirroring, idealizing, and twinship because these are the ways that narcissistic personalities relate, or are narcissists narcissistic because their families related in these ways? If the latter, how did the first family in the series of families come to relate in narcissistic ways without already being narcissistic? The explanations of all three theorists have merit and are likely to be more or less relevant depending on the case.

¹⁶¹ Fiscalini 1993, 74-83.

¹⁶² Fiscalini 1993, 74.

respects may be faulty in others.¹⁶³ The spoiled pattern is relevant to Achilles. For instance, Thetis helps him harm the Greek army. She feeds his sense of entitlement and the all-good self-image that the entitlement implies. Her treatment of him effectively tells him that he is all good. This is similar to MacCary's position. He thinks that because of the absence of "proto-oedipal' conflict," Achilles fails to invest libidinally in his mother and invests in her image of him instead.¹⁶⁴ I agree that the mother's image of the child influences the child's self-image, and I think that the child strives to become the person the mother wants him to be in order to obtain her love. But I do not accept the elements of Freud's theory of narcissism that MacCary retains.

Achilles is above all the special child. "This pattern of parent-child interaction," Fiscalini says, "combines aspects of the shamed child with a variant of the spoiled child" and "typifies many of those patients who are most commonly, or unequivocally, diagnosed as narcissistic personalities."¹⁶⁵ Much of Fiscalini's description applies to Achilles:

As with shamed children, the parents of special children are often rejecting and neglectful: too busy, moralistic, competitive, envious, angry, anxious, perfectionistic, or otherwise self-preoccupied to relate and respond to their children's developmentally appropriate needs for attention, admiration, acceptance, and affirmation in significant aspects or dimensions of their living. But unlike shamed children, special children are also highly prized. At the same time that important aspects of their egocentric and naively grandiose needs for approval are spurned or shamed, these children are "spoiled" in self-centered ways, used narcissistically, by their parents. In this situation, the parents, because of their uncentered selfness and narcissistic self-centeredness, treasure or prize the children for ways of being that are construed by the parents as bringing glory or reflected self-esteem to themselves. Thus, "special" or superior qualities,

¹⁶³ The special child corresponds most closely with Kernberg's narcissist, the shamed child with Kohut's (Kernberg 1975, Kohut 1971). Both authors recognize both patterns, however. Kernberg's cold, hostile, callous mothers are going to induce shame (Kernberg 1975, 234-35; Kohut 1971, 180-85, 277).

¹⁶⁴ MacCary 1982, 92, 95. He calls this situation an "*Achilles complex*," which he "*posit[s] as the thematic core of the Iliad, and a formative stage in the development of every male child*" (MacCary 1982, 95).

¹⁶⁵ Fiscalini 1993, 81. To this category belong "Kernberg's narcissists and Kohut's 'noisy' or 'demanding' narcissists" (Fiscalini 1993, 81).

achievements, or talents are “overmirrored” and become the selective basis for the children’s self-esteem. These “special” qualities may be real or illusory; in either case, there is a rewarding of a “false” self and simultaneous disparagement of a “real” self—the child’s actuality—which, to a greater or lesser extent, remains unloved and unadmired.

The developmental experience of special children leads, in varying pattern, to compulsive strivings for success of one sort or another; feelings of specialness; demands for praise and special treatment; and manifest arrogance and grandiosity, often rationalized by feelings of entitlement. And it leads, inevitably, to secret fears of inferiority and inadequacy. . . .

These “mismirrored” special children end up feeling special, yet unworthwhile. The children get what they do not need and do not get what they do need. Unconscious longings for “mirroring” from ideal, caring parents coexist with manifest narcissistic pathology stemming from parental misapproval and overapproval. Loved only for their “special” features, and not for their greater being, these special children grow into archetypal narcissists—only secure interpersonally when experiencing themselves as special or superior, always anxious about their shamed and unacceptable “ordinary” humanity and unique individuality. Rage, aloofness, controllingness, demandingness, and contempt are frequently adopted ways of protecting the narcissistically distorted “good me,” the superior self.¹⁶⁶

In summary, these parents use their children as narcissistic extensions of themselves, do not see them as persons, and are not interested in the real children or their subjective experience.

The parents excessively and inappropriately pressure the child to be the person that they require him to be. This affects the child’s self image. Because only the image of the ideal child is acceptable to the parents, only that image is acceptable to the child, so that the child comes to believe that his ideal self is his real self. That is, instead of realizing that a representation is the person that he would like to be (the ideal self), the child thinks that he is the ideal and may strive excessively to live up to the ideal.¹⁶⁷ The corollary is that the qualities that the parents cannot tolerate may have to be excluded from the representation of the real self that is usually active.

¹⁶⁶ Fiscalini 1993, 81-82.

¹⁶⁷ This confusion of real and ideal selves is what Kernberg means when he says that real and ideal selves are fused in narcissism (Kernberg 1975, 231).

These negative qualities are relegated to an all-bad self that is repressed, suppressed, disavowed, or dissociated. There is nevertheless an implicit acknowledgment on some level that this bad self contains part of the real self; otherwise, the narcissist's constant vigilance and defensive activity would be unnecessary.¹⁶⁸ The fused ideal-real self is unrealistically good and the bad self is unrealistically bad in part because they are dissociated and cannot balance each other. But the nature of good and bad is also different in narcissism. The person with a healthy self-image, one based on being loved and accepted, feels lovable, worthy, and "good enough."¹⁶⁹ The narcissist's good self is good in the sense that the person is superior and is prized for his talents and accomplishments. The bad is different in narcissism as well. It is not simply the way in which a child may be "bad" for misbehaving. It is the bad of being rejected as a person by the parents. The child must live up to the ideal fostered by the parents and must defend against information incongruent with the grandiose self in order to avoid the agony of being rejected by the parents.

How is Achilles the special child? He is the son of a goddess, one whose son is destined to be mightier than his father. He is the best warrior, and his superiority in that respect is acknowledged by all. Achilles' personality itself tells us that he is the special child: by deciding to go to Troy, he knowingly chose honor and fame over long life. He did not make his choice in a vacuum. Somebody made him the sort of person who values honor and fame above life.

Phoenix, for instance, says that he made Achilles "as great as this" (τοσοῦτον), i.e., as great as Achilles is now (9.485). And who is he now? He is a speaker of words and doer of deeds (9.442-43). Phoenix, on Peleus's order, taught him to be both of these, because speaking in the assembly

¹⁶⁸ I said that the bad self contains part of the real self, because the bad self can be as unrealistically bad as the good self is unrealistically good.

¹⁶⁹ Mikulincer and Shaver 2007.

(ἀγορή) or council (βουλή) and fighting in battle are activities that bring honor (9.440-43).

Achilles is “this great” in that he is the greatest warrior and has an embassy offering gifts to induce him to return. Culture, to be sure, plays an important role here and partly explains where Peleus’s, Thetis’s, and Phoenix’s ideas of parenting came from. Nevertheless, certain parenting practices, regardless of whether they are common to the culture or unique to the parents, will tend to produce narcissism.

Peleus’s instructions to Achilles offer support for seeing him as the special child. When Achilles was departing for Troy, Peleus told him “always to be the best and to be superior to others,” αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων (11.784).¹⁷⁰ It is not enough for Achilles simply to survive the war or to perform well enough. Since Achilles is in fact the best, it is interesting that being the best is not enough. Peleus requires him to prove it. From our perspective, this is a violation of boundaries: Achilles should be allowed to decide on his own whether he wants to prove that he is the best. For Achilles to prove his superiority will bring him honor (and fame). Glaucus’s father and Odysseus enjoin their sons not to disgrace the family and diminish its honor by fighting badly. Peleus thus requires Achilles to demonstrate his superiority so that he may bring honor to Peleus as well as to himself. He uses Achilles as a narcissistic extension. Achilles’ wishes and needs are subordinated to Peleus’s and the family’s honor.

Phoenix likewise uses Achilles as a narcissistic extension. Exasperated by Agamemnon’s offer, Achilles says that he is going home in the morning because wealth is not worth his life. This is not mere hyperbole or hysteria. Thetis has told him that he will die if he

¹⁷⁰ Glaucus receives the same advice from his father and is also told not to disgrace his family (6.207-09). At the end of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus tells Telemachus not to disgrace the family in the fight that seems about to begin, and Laertes rejoices that his son and grandson are having a contest over ἀρετή, “excellence, valor” (*Od.* 24.506-15).

stays at Troy. The gifts really would be payment for his life. Phoenix ignores this information. It does not occur to him that what Achilles wants, namely, life rather than the false honor of Agamemnon's gifts, deserves respect simply because it is what he wants. Even though Phoenix realizes that Achilles might go home, he never accepts Achilles' declaration of his intent to do so as a valid position. Since Phoenix's purpose from the outset is to change Achilles' mind, he invalidates Achilles' subjective experience (e.g., what Achilles wants) from the beginning. This failure to respect Achilles as a separate person is all the more despicable in that what Achilles purportedly wants is to live. For Achilles to live out his life in peace is not enough for Phoenix. He is willing to sacrifice Achilles for the sake of the army. Although he does not care about Achilles' life, which he never mentions, he does care about Achilles' honor. He urges Achilles to accept the gifts while they are being offered so that his honor does not suffer, as it would if he returned to battle without them (9.601-05). When Phoenix pretends to have Achilles' best interests at heart, he speaks of Achilles' honor rather than of his life (9.515-22, 601-05).

Fairbairn

W. Ronald D. Fairbairn was an object-relations theorist who anticipated parts of John Bowlby's attachment theory. One of Fairbairn's most important revisions to psychoanalytic theory is his argument that libido is primarily "object-seeking" rather than "pleasure-seeking."¹⁷¹ In other words, humans primarily seek connection with other people rather than relief from sexual tension (pleasure): "The real libidinal aim is the establishment of satisfactory relationships

¹⁷¹ Fairbairn adduces some passages to show that Freud implicitly agreed with him (Fairbairn 1952, 82-83). He also says, "The claim that pleasure-seeking is inherent in the state of tension itself seems to me an argument based on the principle that *post hoc* necessarily means *propter hoc*" (Fairbairn 1952, 137-38). For Fairbairn, "the tension which demands relief is the tension of object-seeking tendencies" (Fairbairn 1952, 149).

with objects; and it is, accordingly, the object that constitutes the true libidinal goal.”¹⁷² This change of emphasis puts object relations at the center of Fairbairn’s theory. For him, ties to bad (internal) objects are a source of pathology, because “[t]he child bonds to the parents through whatever forms of contact the parents provide, and those forms become lifelong patterns of attachment and connection to others.”¹⁷³ What indications do we have of these bad objects? Identifications are one manifestation of them. The person can take over ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving from the parents in order to connect with them: “The essential struggle in Fairbairn’s model involves the person’s irreconcilable loyalties in his longings for and identifications with various features of his significant others, in the outside world and as they have been internalized in an effort to control them.”¹⁷⁴ The person tries to connect to the parents and gain their love by becoming like them and by adopting or conforming to their ways of being and relating. Assuming aspects of the parents may also allow the person to access otherwise inaccessible parts of the parents’ personalities.¹⁷⁵ Patients persist in self-destructive behaviors because it allows them to maintain ties to their objects. They may try to break free, only to feel the internalized bad object reassert itself by attacking the part of the self that tried a new way of

¹⁷² Fairbairn 1952, 138. Humans have many motives, including sex, and these should not all be reduced to relatedness. Whatever the role of pleasure in motivation, Freud’s drive theory has been outdated for decades, and Fairbairn’s change of emphasis from the relief of sexual tension to connecting with others should be uncontroversial, especially in light of attachment theory. Although relational psychoanalysis tends to privilege the desire for connection, the validity of the theory does not depend on how often this motive is active, because most motives are embedded within a relational context and have a relational history (Mitchell 1988).

¹⁷³ Mitchell and Black 1995, 115.

¹⁷⁴ Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 167.

¹⁷⁵ Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 174. Mitchell 1988, 277: “Each child is likely to develop a deep tie to both conscious and unconscious or disowned currents within the parent’s character structure; how well the child can integrate these currents is partially limited by how integrated the parent is, how flexible his or her self-organization is. Further, accommodation and connection to one parent always comes into conflict, in some fashion, with accommodation and connection to the other.”

living.¹⁷⁶ When patients do succeed in developing new ways of living, they often feel alone and ungrounded.¹⁷⁷

One of Mitchell's clinical vignettes illustrates how ties to bad objects manifest themselves in real life. Sam, whose "parents both felt resigned and crushed by life," was confused about how he always became romantically involved with very depressed women:

Over the course of analysis, Sam began to realize how much depression had served as a family ideology: Life is miserable; therefore, anyone with any moral fiber or intellectual integrity is miserable; the best we can hope for is to connect to each other through our unhappiness; anyone who is happy is shallow and morally suspect. Sam came to see that he believed any deeply meaningful connection with someone else could only be achieved through pain. Crying with someone was the deepest form of intimacy; laughing with someone was shallow and distancing. Being a good person necessitated bringing oneself down to the level of the other's unhappiness. To be happy in the presence of another's sadness was callous and cruel. It became more and more apparent that, despite his desperate wish for more pleasurable relationships with happier people, Sam selectively and systematically shaped all his important relationships around depressive ties to miserable others.¹⁷⁸

When Sam's depression was beginning to lift toward the end of treatment, he had a dream in which he is on an island with his depressed family.¹⁷⁹ He takes a boat to the mainland to run an errand. There is a carnival on the mainland, and he has a "great time" participating. Then he remembers that he must return to his family. He gets in the boat and tries to row back, but insects

¹⁷⁶ Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, 166. In Fairbairn's final theory, it is not the bad object per se that attacks the self but rather part of the self, the antilibidinal ego, that identifies with and is attached to the rejecting object. The antilibidinal ego hates and attacks the part of the self, the libidinal ego, that holds out hope for love from the exciting object. See below for more details.

¹⁷⁷ Mitchell 1988, 304; Mitchell and Black 1995, 119, 122: "the neurosis embodies the only forms of relation with others the analysand believes in. She feels connected to others, both in the real world and to the presences in her inner world, only through painful states of mind and self-defeating patterns of behavior. She is convinced that renouncing these painful states and old patterns would lead to total isolation, abandonment, annihilation" (1995, 122).

¹⁷⁸ Mitchell and Black 1995, 116. Mitchell discusses this case at greater length elsewhere (Mitchell 1988, 301-05).

¹⁷⁹ The dream is from Mitchell 1988, 304-05.

sting him whenever he does. He is “very conflicted about what to do.” Eventually, he “give[s] up with a sense of relief” and returns to the mainland. Even late in the treatment when happiness was becoming possible, Sam “felt bound by his loyalties to his family and their ways.” His ties to his objects try to pull him back into the life of misery.

Fairbairn’s ideas apply to Achilles particularly in his attempt to leave Troy. When Peleus “sent” Achilles off to Troy, he told him “always to be the best and to be superior to others” (9.439, 11.784). Peleus also instructed Phoenix to make Achilles a speaker of words and doer of deeds (9.438-43). Clearly, Peleus is grooming his son to be a hero, that is, to be a warrior whose life is devoted to winning honor and fame from fighting and speaking. The day Achilles left for Troy was surely not the first time that he received such instructions from Peleus or Phoenix. Peleus is himself a distinguished hero, and Achilles even wields his ashen spear and wears his armor, until Hector takes it. Achilles thus identifies with Peleus’s instructions and the heroic life. The quarrel with Agamemnon, which comes to center on Achilles’ demand to be recognized as the best of the Achaeans, shows the degree to which Achilles has identified with Peleus’s instructions.

In his exasperation with Agamemnon, Achilles resolves to go home. Since Achilles is motivated by honor, he has not abandoned the heroic code altogether. He is nevertheless threatening to abandon the life that Peleus and Phoenix have envisioned for him.¹⁸⁰ (Achilles may be in earnest when he says that he is leaving, but whether he is does not much affect the larger point that I am making.) If Achilles returns home, he will be choosing the long but unremarkable life over the short life that brings imperishable glory. He will be abandoning the

¹⁸⁰ By “threaten,” I do not mean that Achilles is stating what he will do if his conditions are not met. I am using it in the weaker sense of “saying what he intends to do or what he is considering or on the verge of doing.”

life of the warrior. We can now see how he makes the heroic code “implode”: he is abandoning the life of the warrior (one manifestation of the heroic code) for the sake of defending his honor (another manifestation of it).

What happens when Achilles threatens to leave Troy and break free from his identification with his father? Phoenix, Achilles’ second father, bursts into tears and begs him to stay. To awaken Achilles’ sense of guilt and obligation, Phoenix mentions his love for Achilles and recalls all that he has done for him. Appealing to Achilles’ love, Phoenix activates Achilles’ tie to the bad object, Peleus and Phoenix. Just as Achilles threatens to leave and break free from the bad object (the identification that will cost Achilles his life), the bad object (in the form of Phoenix) reasserts itself to recall Achilles to the path that it has laid out for him. The tie to the bad object wins, pulling Achilles back when he is on the verge of escaping a life of self-destruction. What happens here is both an allegory for what happens intrapsychically and a literal example of how ties to bad objects keep people trapped in ways of being and relating that make them unhappy.

Fairbairn also helps us understand Achilles’ attachment to Agamemnon. Why does Achilles not leave as soon as the alliance becomes unsatisfying? Why is he set on wringing recognition from Agamemnon?¹⁸¹ Fairbairn thinks that the object is first split into a good object and a bad object.¹⁸² By “good” and “bad,” he is usually referring to whether the object is libidinally satisfying or unsatisfying (e.g., whether it is loving). The bad object is then split again

¹⁸¹ For the phrase “wring recognition,” see Whitman 1958, 204.

¹⁸² Sometimes Fairbairn says that only bad objects are internalized because they are the only ones that need to be controlled (Fairbairn 1952, 110-111). At other times, he says that the good object is internalized as the ideal object of the central ego (Fairbairn 1952). I do not accept that only bad objects are internalized, nor do I accept his schematic model of the mind, but the insights behind his model of the mind are still useful.

into an exciting object and a rejecting object. The exciting object is that part of the bad object that may still offer love. The rejecting object is the part that only frustrates or rejects the child's requests for love. Part of the self, the libidinal ego, is attached to and identifies with the exciting object. It forever holds out hope that it may yet receive the exciting object's love. Another part of the self, the antilibidinal ego, is attached to and identifies with the rejecting object. It hates and attacks the libidinal ego and exciting object.¹⁸³

To restate this in terms that do not commit us to Fairbairn's structural model, part of a person may be attached to a parent who repeatedly fails to give the desired loving response in a certain type of interaction. The person holds out hope of getting this response in spite of repeated failures. Then, later in life, the person picks a romantic partner similar to the parent and tries to get the desired response from the partner. Another part of the person thinks that such behavior is madness, so that the person attacks herself for being so foolish as to have these longings and to allow herself to be hurt yet again in the same way. She tries to break free and start new patterns but feels alone and adrift. The new ways of connecting do not feel important. Her object ties hold her back, and she is only interested in fighting the same old battles, which might just end differently this time, she fondly hopes.

We can now revisit the enactment that Achilles has been involved in. We saw that for Peleus it was not enough for Achilles simply to be the best. Since Achilles already is the best,

¹⁸³There is also a central ego that is directed toward external objects but also has an ideal object as an internal object. The libidinal and antilibidinal egos and their respective objects are repressed, while the central ego can be conscious, preconscious, or unconscious (Fairbairn 1952, 104). Fairbairn holds that energy cannot exist apart from structure, so there can be no id, no realm of directionless energy; there must be an ego having the impulses (Fairbairn 1952, 126-27). Impulses are not directionless but rather object-seeking (Fairbairn 1952, 126). Objects must be structures, if "the conception of the existence of such objects" is not to be "utterly meaningless" (Fairbairn 1952, 95). Impulses are only bad because they are attached to bad objects (Fairbairn 1952, 62). Therefore, what is repressed is not an unacceptable impulse arising from the id, as Freud thinks, but an object relation consisting of an ego and a bad object, both of which are structures.

Peleus's instructions, "always to be the best and to be superior to others," require Achilles to demonstrate that he is the best (11.784). The purpose of being the best is to win honor and fame, but winning honor and fame requires others to recognize Achilles as the best. Peleus's instructions therefore implicitly require Achilles to receive recognition for his supremacy. Achilles, as we have seen, has thoroughly identified with Peleus and adopted his heroic ethos. An identification is a way of gaining the object's love or of feeling connected to the object. This has two consequences. First, if the identification is to please the object and win its love, the object needs to recognize the identification. In this case, Peleus needs to recognize that Achilles has been recognized as best and honored accordingly. This has the effect of requiring others, including Agamemnon, to recognize Achilles as best in order for him to satisfy Peleus. Receiving Peleus's love depends on receiving recognition from Agamemnon. If Achilles receives this recognition, he will be rewarded with the love of both the external object, i.e., the real Peleus, and the internal object. As for the internal object's "love," Achilles will feel proud of himself and enjoy heightened self-esteem.

The second consequence is that Peleus's instructions lead Achilles to put Peleus, Phoenix, and Agamemnon in similar roles. Receiving Peleus's love requires him to recognize that Achilles has been recognized as the best. Achilles requires Agamemnon to recognize him as the best. Agamemnon is already a potential father-figure. In his offer to make Achilles his son-in-law and treat him like Orestes, Agamemnon explicitly sets himself in a paternal role. Achilles thus requires a father and a father-figure to give him recognition. He recreates his relation to Peleus with Agamemnon. Hence, this is an enactment.

Why does Achilles not leave after he has been mistreated by Agamemnon? He seems determined to make Agamemnon recognize him. The enactment shows that Achilles has learned

to expect something, particularly recognition, to be withheld. His violent relational manner developed in response to habitual frustration and evolved to elicit begging, which is a compromise that diffuses his anger. All of this suggests that Agamemnon is an exciting object: Achilles both seeks recognition, is used to frustration, and refuses to stop trying to force Agamemnon to recognize him. Agamemnon, for his part, dangles recognition in front of Achilles in book 9 but does not quite give it to him.¹⁸⁴ After hearing Odysseus's speech, Achilles rants about being deceived by Agamemnon and refuses to be deceived a second time. In Fairbairn's language, Achilles' angry response, which contains an element of self-reproach, is the antilibidinal ego attacking the libidinal ego (and the exciting object) for hoping for recognition (i.e., love). The best course is to go home and stop trying to win recognition. Then the exciting object pops up once more in the form of Phoenix, and the pattern begins again, ultimately leading to Achilles' early death.

We said that Phoenix and Ajax both appeal to love and the duty to reciprocate. This is an abuse of love. They are requiring Achilles to renounce his anger in order to maintain his ties to them. Honor also plays a role here. Odysseus repeats Peleus's injunction to Achilles to avoid quarreling and control his temper so that others will honor him more (9.252-58). Phoenix is likewise concerned that Achilles' honor will be less if he does not accept Agamemnon's offer now. We also saw how Odysseus and Phoenix invalidate Achilles' subjective experience. Pressuring the child to disavow his needs and emotions curtails his subjective experience.¹⁸⁵ What he is allowed to think and feel is affected by the parents. The dynamic unconscious is

¹⁸⁴ Agamemnon is humbled by book 19, however.

¹⁸⁵ See Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987 and Stolorow and Atwood 1992 for these ideas.

determined in part by the intersubjective matrix: what is unacceptable to the parent's subjectivity will be unacceptable to the child's subjectivity and will need to be repressed or remain unformulated.¹⁸⁶ Having to accommodate to parental requirements can lead to what Donald Winnicott famously called a "false self," which is a sort of lifeless, empty shell composed of accommodations to others' demands and impingements.¹⁸⁷ The vital core of the person has had to go underground for the sake of safety, with the result that the person loses access to her needs, emotions, authenticity, creativity, spontaneity, and ability to play. Although Achilles has not lost access to his emotions, he is being pressured to accommodate to others' demands in a way that leads to a false self. The person with a false self is essentially cut off from life. Achilles' life will be cut short. The narcissistic self can itself be seen as a species of false self. The child is pressured to treat the ideal self as the real self and cannot express needs and emotions that are incongruent with what the parents deem admirable. With the curtailment of subjective experience, the establishment of a false self, and the adaptation to narcissistic parenting, the child is forced to sacrifice himself to maintain his ties to his objects. In the same way, Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax are requiring Achilles to sacrifice himself out of his love or affection for them.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ See Stolorow and Atwood's three realms of the unconscious (1992). The analyst's empathy, i.e., putting herself in the patient's position, allows her to access emotional experience that the patient is repressing or dissociating. She can then help the patient gain access to this experience in various ways so that the patient's subjective experience and ways of living and relating become less constrained, richer, and more satisfying (Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987; Stolorow and Atwood 1992).

¹⁸⁷ Winnicott 1965.

¹⁸⁸ Sacrificial parenting is the topic of Holway 2012, but he is mainly concerned with how mothers use their sons as narcissistic extensions and so misses the best examples of narcissistic parenting in the poem. His main argument is as follows. Fathers have incestuous or pseudoincestuous relationships with their daughters, who then feel special and superior to their mothers. Their fathers betray these special daughters by suddenly marrying them off to husbands chosen by the fathers. The women consider their husbands inferior to their fathers and consequently devalue and despise them. The forced marriages leave the women feeling humiliated. They use their sons as narcissistic extensions and raise them to be superior to their fathers (i.e., the devalued husbands). This allows the women to avenge the humiliation of their forced marriages. Although Holway and I use similar theories and our paths occasionally cross, because our starting points and emphases are different, we have surprisingly little in common.

We have seen examples of Peleus's and Phoenix's narcissistic parenting, which requires Achilles to sacrifice himself. These will not have been the only times that Achilles was treated this way. Rather, as the products of Peleus's and Phoenix's values and object relations, they show how Achilles has been treated his whole life. Indeed, that some of the examples are pedagogical implies that the practices were repeated: Achilles was not made a speaker of words and doer of deeds in a day. In most of the examples, Peleus and Phoenix are instructing Achilles to be a certain way habitually (e.g., "be the best always"). The sort of person who would say this would have said similar things to Achilles regularly. The relational experiences that made Achilles who he is are being repeated in the present for us to see. As Holway thinks, the values, parenting practices, and object relations that we see here to some extent reflect the psychology of the people and culture responsible for the poems.¹⁸⁹ The poets get their model (Achilles) right, even down to the experiences that would produce an Achilles, because it reflects what they knew.

Another way that Phoenix, as well as Patroclus and Peleus, require Achilles to sacrifice himself is by forcing him to assume the role of the caregiver. In the enactment that Achilles has drawn others into throughout the *Iliad*, there is an implicit role reversal. As the instantiation with Phoenix shows, when Achilles' relational manner is successful, the other resorts to begging and weeping, thereby deactivating Achilles' narcissistic defenses and activating his caregiving system. He is forced to take care of his father or surrogate father. This is problematic for a number of reasons, one of which is that forced precociousness leads to immature solutions to

¹⁸⁹ Holway 2012.

adult problems.¹⁹⁰ The child must sacrifice not only his needs and emotions but also his childhood in order to take care of the adult. The parent is supposed to be a source of comfort and strength so that she may help the child regulate his emotions. In this way, the child learns to integrate his emotions and regulate them in healthy ways. Achilles is first told to renounce his anger in order to win more honor from his friends (Peleus's instructions repeated by Odysseus [9.252-58]) and is then pressured to renounce his anger and take care of Phoenix. It does not matter that Achilles' anger, withdrawal, and refusal to return, though not his destruction of the army, are warranted under the circumstances. The role reversals even appear in Achilles' similes in books 9, 16, and 23.¹⁹¹ In book 24, Achilles will take care of Priam and regret that he cannot take care of Peleus.

¹⁹⁰ See Fiscalini's "shamed child" (Fiscalini 1993). Schein (1984, 107) mentions this role reversal, and Holway discusses role reversals generally (2012, *passim*).

¹⁹¹ In his great speech, Achilles is the mother bird who suffers in order to feed her chicks (9.323-24). Compare his τρῶζητε ("murmur, mutter, whine, badger, coax"), related to τρυγών ("turtle dove"), earlier in the same speech (9.311; Griffin 1995, *ad loc.*) In book 16, Achilles occupies the mother's role again when he says that Patroclus is like a little girl wanting to be picked up (16.7-11). Schein briefly mentions these similes in connection with role reversals but does not discuss them in the context of Achilles' object relations (Schein 1984, 107). In book 23, Achilles is weeping for Patroclus as a father does for a dead son (23.221-25).

Conclusion

To conclude, I offer some ideas for applying my approach to Homer in the future. Some of these are continuations of the current project. Others are departures and represent new ways of using the same theories. In both cases, I would like to incorporate the contributions of psychoanalytic theorists whom we have not had time for, Klein and Lacan, for instance.¹

The quarrel and embassy having been our focus, most of the *Iliad* and all of the *Odyssey* remain unanalyzed. Indeed, we have not even exhausted the material on Achilles and his family. The three examples below, which concern Achilles and Thetis, show how this project might be continued. Other examples might have come from Agamemnon or the Trojans or the gods.

There is more to say about Thetis. Her interactions with Achilles are problematic because she fails to provide the comfort that Achilles needs and uses him as a narcissistic extension in a subtle way. Thetis does indeed come to Achilles when he is upset, but she fails to act as a source of idealized strength, powerful though she is. Instead of focusing on Achilles' experience, she shows up weeping herself, repeatedly foretells his fate, laments his death prematurely, and bemoans how unluckily she is to have a child who will die young (1.413-18; 18.70-72, 24.131-32). Achilles may need her to appeal to Zeus or procure new armor for him, but he does not depend on her for comfort in a straightforward way. In book 1, for instance, when Thetis urges him to tell her why he is upset, he asks why he should tell her what has happened when she already knows (1.365). Even though he ends up complying, his question is dismissive and shows

¹ Their influence, especially Klein's, is discernible in a few places. Klein, who can be considered the founder of the object relations school, is the starting point for the object relations theorists (Fairbairn, Winnicott, Bowlby, Kernberg) that I use. Kernberg combines Klein's object relations with Jacobson's and Mahler's ego psychology (Kernberg 1976, Greenberg and Mitchell 1983, Mitchell and Black 1995). Object relations theory and interpersonal psychoanalysis are the two main strands making up relational psychoanalysis, so Klein is also represented in that way (Mitchell 1988, Aron 1996).

a reluctance to try to obtain comfort by sharing his subjective experience with her. Her response shows why he is reluctant. She begins with a rhetorical question, “Alas, my child, why did I go through the pain of childbirth and raise you?” (1.414). Evidently, because Achilles is unhappy and going to die young, it would have been better for both of them if they had been spared the ordeal of his existence (1.414-18). Thetis is not being malicious here, yet she is hardly comforting.

Achilles has grown up hearing Thetis lament her misfortune in marrying a mortal and giving birth to a short-lived son. She laments this situation twice in book 18, once to her sisters and once to Hephaestus (18.52-64, 428-43). In the same book, Achilles wishes that his mother had not been forced to marry Peleus so that she might have been spared the grief of his early death (18.86-91). He echoes what she says in both book 1 and book 18 (1.414-18; 18.52-64, 428-43). He is well acquainted with her self-pity. This suggests that historically she has narcissistically focused on herself instead of comforting Achilles.

In lamenting Achilles’ early death while he still has the opportunity to reverse his decision, Thetis assumes that he will not do so. Repeatedly telling Achilles that he is doomed to die young influences his self-concept and implicitly pressures him to act in accordance with her expectations. As we saw in chapter 3, Thetis portrays herself as pitiful and dishonored. She is a victim of fate. Because she was destined to give birth to a son mightier than his father, Zeus had to marry her off to a mortal. This marriage is the source of her dishonor. Her pitifulness and dishonor are paradoxically a source of honor since it was her native power that necessitated her humiliating marriage. Therefore, the more pitiful and dishonored she is, the greater her power and honor must actually be. Achilles’ early death is what makes her pitiful. Her identity is predicated on her son’s death. Regardless of her intentions, Thetis can increase her honor by

suggesting that Achilles choose the short life. This can be considered an instance of sacrificial parenting and of using one's child as a narcissistic extension. It is also a source of Achilles' masochism.²

Winnicott's "transitional object" (e.g., a "security blanket") sheds light on Achilles' treatment of Hector's corpse.³ A substitute for the mother, the transitional object functions as an attachment figure and puts the mother at the infant's disposal so that she is effectively always present.⁴ In this way, the transitional object allows the infant to soothe itself.⁵ Achilles is reluctant to relinquish Hector's corpse and soothes himself by mutilating it.⁶ This works because the transitional object allows him to keep alive his ties to Patroclus. The sadistic treatment of Hector's corpse enables him to prolong his revenge and avoid moving forward. To refuse to move on is to hold on to the dead, who can only be made present through the love and memory of the living. Vengeance is a way for Achilles to atone for, and assuage his guilt over, getting Patroclus killed. There is an element of undoing in atonement. In this case, Achilles is undoing

² Holway argues that Thetis uses Achilles as a narcissistic extension, but he provides little evidence (Holway 2012). The most he offers is her attempt to immortalize Achilles by putting him in the fire, his mortality being unacceptable to her.

³ Winnicott 1975.

⁴ One of the evolutionary functions of the attachment system is to ensure proximity to the attachment figure (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). The loss of proximity, or the threat of loss, activates the attachment system, which instigates proximity-seeking behaviors (e.g., crying, clinging, protest, approach).

⁵ Winnicott 1975, 235. Winnicott emphasizes the importance of illusion and points to art as a use of illusion in adulthood (1975, 240): "The transitional phenomena represent the early stages of the use of illusion, without which there is no meaning for the human being in the idea of a relationship with an object that is perceived by others as external to that being." The transitional object serves as bridge between internal reality and external reality and occupies "an intermediate area . . . between primary creativity [i.e., the infant believing that it creates what it perceives] and objective perception based on reality-testing" (Winnicott 1975, 230, 239). I am skeptical of "primary creativity," but the infant's sense of control and security from the transitional object, a substitute for the attachment figure, may depend on illusion, and Achilles' use of Hector's body certainly does.

⁶ Infants sometimes subject their transitional objects to aggression (Winnicott 1975, 233).

death and making present (alive) what is absent (dead). Dishonoring Hector by mistreating his corpse is a way of honoring Patroclus. Killing Hector, keeping and mistreating the body, and refusing to move on are all expressions of Achilles' love for Patroclus. His love makes the absent loved one feel present. The illusion of the loved one's (i.e., the attachment figure's) presence is soothing. In this way is Hector's corpse, which Achilles uses to express his love for Patroclus and thereby create the illusion of his presence, a transitional object.

By the end of the *Iliad*, Achilles has begun to change and become slightly less narcissistic. His plan has worked. He has won honor and fame. But he is unhappy and unsatisfied. For example, he says that even though Zeus has done the things that he asked him to do, he has no pleasure (ἡδονή) from them, since Patroclus is dead (18.79-82). What Achilles wants now is Patroclus, so there is something more important than honor and fame, namely, other people. Achilles' unhappiness illustrates how narcissism is ultimately unsatisfying. Exultation from praise and triumph is fleeting, and the emptiness soon returns. Hence, narcissists need constant supplies of admiration to regulate their mood. Narcissistic triumph is not happiness, the poem shows.

The encounter with Priam in book 24 also helps Achilles begin to change. Priam assumes the suppliant's role and essentially tries to induce transference by telling Achilles to remember his father (24.504-07). There is something more than transference here, however. This encounter, I would suggest, is a "moment of meeting," a heightened affective moment in which patient and therapist respond authentically and connect in a new way, so that the therapeutic relationship reaches a higher level.⁷ Such intense moments of connection are healing. The damage to the

⁷ Stern 2004, Boston Change Process Study Group 2010.

patient was done in a relationship and can best be repaired in one. Achilles is struck with wonder as he looks at the godlike Priam, who has grasped his knees and kissed his hands in supplication (24.477-86). Even though Achilles knows that a Trojan is coming to ransom Hector's corpse, Priam's appearance shocks him, jolting him out of his present pattern of mourning Patroclus and mistreating Hector's corpse. It is Priam's bravery and suffering in particular that move Achilles (24.518-23, 541-51). After Priam's initial appeal, the two enemies cry together, Priam for Hector, and Achilles for Peleus and Patroclus. Later, they sit in silence and marvel at each other (24.629-32). This form of relating is still narcissistic: each is in his own head mourning his own loved one, and they connect through silently idealizing each other. It nevertheless signifies progress for Achilles, and even though they have to some extent withdrawn into themselves in their mourning, the shared vulnerability of weeping for loved ones in front of each other is still intensely intimate. The shared experience of loss softens Achilles and makes him regret that he is not in Phthia taking care of Peleus (24.540-42). He comes to a deeper appreciation of the effect he has on other people and gains in empathy and compassion. For example, he appreciates that instead of taking care of Peleus, he is causing pain (κρίδων) for Priam and his children (24.540-42).

Patroclus's death, Peleus's decline, and Priam's suffering have taught Achilles that life, people, and relationships are more important than honor and fame.⁸ This marks a shift away from more narcissistic motives and toward relatedness for its own sake.⁹ Now that honor and fame

⁸ Having to confront his own imminent death has also contributed to Achilles' change. In his distress in book 18, Achilles shows a disregard for his own life, but that is not the same as the acceptance of death. He does not come to accept his death until his encounter with Priam.

⁹ As we have seen, even narcissistic motives are relational. Receiving mirroring, for instance, is still an object relation. Furthermore, the history of Achilles' narcissistic motives shows that in origin they are a form of object-seeking. He adopted them in order to obtain the love and approval of his attachment figures. There is nevertheless a

have proven a source of death and unhappiness, Achilles regrets his choice of the short, glorious life over the long, obscure one. This is explicit in the *Odyssey*, where Achilles' shade says that he would rather be the laborer of a poor man than the king of the dead (11.488-91). Achilles' regret does not necessarily mean that honor and fame are no longer worth seeking, only that they have been demoted a few positions in Achilles' hierarchy of motives. This reshuffling brings Achilles into conformity with how others sometimes rank values. Nestor, echoed by Patroclus, implies that Achilles should not be the only person who benefits from his *aretē*, as would be the case if he refused to help the Greeks in order to defend his honor (*Il.* 11.762-63; 16.29-32). Achilles will regret his intransigence later, Nestor predicts, when the army has perished (*Il.* 11.764). In book 18, Achilles reproaches himself for not protecting Patroclus or his other comrades (18.98-106; cf. 19.56-63).

In *Iliad* 9, Achilles is contemplating abandoning the heroic code, or at least parts of it. By the end of the poem and by the time we encounter him in the *Odyssey*, the process of abandoning it is underway. Significant and lasting changes to the personality do not happen overnight, and Achilles remains ambivalent. Honor and fame have not lost their appeal entirely. In *Odyssey* 11, for example, immediately after expressing regret at his decision, he is nevertheless pleased that Neoptolemus is distinguishing himself as a warrior (11.488-540).¹⁰

Future work could go in a different direction. This project has focused on character and personality. Moving forward, I might like to apply the same method to the culture and larger themes of the Homeric poems. Can any generalizations be made about how Homeric characters

difference in adulthood between using relatedness as a means to an end (to shore up the self) and seeking connection with others for its own sake.

¹⁰ In *Odyssey* 24, Achilles may likewise enjoy hearing about his heroic death and funeral, which contrast with Agamemnon's ignominious end (24.24-97).

relate to one another? What do the characters' beliefs, assumptions, and ways of relating tell us about the psychology of the people and culture that produced these epics? What themes, motives, or conflicts recur? Are there deeper patterns? Are there relational messages (as opposed to the particular content of an interaction) that get sent repeatedly? Are there substantial differences in psychology between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*? Such an approach would still be psychological rather than ethnographic in that it would be concerned with the kinds of things that psychodynamic clinicians look for. Certain actions, thoughts, and feelings that go unnoticed or unappreciated by laypersons stand out as meaningful and revealing for clinical psychologists. For example, psychologists will recognize instances of the DSM's diagnostic criteria when they encounter them. But they will notice far more and far subtler things.

To give another example, we saw that Phoenix negates Achilles' subjectivity by ignoring what he says, namely, that he is going home in the morning. What Achilles wants does not matter to Phoenix, whose goal from the beginning is to change Achilles' mind. He does not treat Achilles' subjective experience as inherently worthy of respect. Consequently, Achilles is forced to fight off Phoenix's influence. "Don't upset my spirit by wailing and sorrowing" (μή μοι σύγχει θυμὸν ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχέϋων), Achilles tells him (9.612).¹¹ The other's wishes must either coincide with Phoenix's own or be justified by custom or argument.¹² This action alone tells us a surprising amount about Phoenix's personality and helps us understand why Achilles is

¹¹ Griffin says that σύγχει θυμὸν means "shatter my resolution" (Griffin 1995, ad loc.). That is indeed Achilles' point. He does not want Phoenix "doing Agamemnon a favor" (Ἀτρεΐδῃ ἥρωϊ φέρων χάριν [9.613]).

¹² I am not saying that others must always be given what they want. Living with others is a constant negotiation of subjectivities. Yet there are areas in which insisting on negotiating would itself be an intrusion and boundary violation. For example, telling a parter what to feel, what to like, what to eat, what to want is always, or almost always, inappropriate. Phoenix's intrusion is egregious because he is telling Achilles that he is wrong to choose to live.

the way he is. It is a boundary violation, and a pernicious one, and suggests that Phoenix has mediocre or poor self-other differentiation and possibly narcissistic object relations. He uses Achilles as a narcissistic extension. This is an example of the sort of meaningful behaviors that we might look for throughout the poems. We would be trying to establish the psychology of the poems rather than the psychology of particular characters.

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