

Department of the Classics, Harvard University

Gods and Men in the Iliad and the Odyssey

Author(s): Wolfgang Kullmann

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 89 (1985), pp. 1-23

Published by: [Department of the Classics, Harvard University](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/311265>

Accessed: 14/02/2013 04:18

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Department of the Classics, Harvard University is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

GODS AND MEN IN THE *ILIAD* AND THE *ODYSSEY*

WOLFGANG KULLMANN

1

RELIGION in the Homeric epics has been an issue of classical scholarship for some time. I should like, however, to pick up one aspect on which no final certitude has as yet been established, the differences between the ways the epics represent relationships between gods and men.¹

The first scholar to speak about basic differences in the structure of the plot of the two epics was Aristotle. In chapter 24 of his *Poetics*, he writes that, as a genre, an epic has the same structure as a tragedy. In chapter 13 he speaks of the two types of tragedy. Apparently, he relates the *Iliad* to the onefold type, which in his opinion is the best one. As an example of the second type Aristotle does not quote tragedies but the *Odyssey*, which has a twofold structure in which the better characters change from bad to good and the worse from good to bad fortune. According to Aristotle, the pleasure deriving from such a plot is less characteristic of tragedy than of comedy. This same contrast Aristotle seems to have in mind in chapter 24 also, where he

This article is an enlarged version of a James Loeb Lecture given at Harvard University on 6 October 1983. The lecture was also given at the University of Minnesota on 17 October, at the University of Colorado on 20 October and at the University of Michigan on 25 October 1983. I thank my son, Thomas Kullmann, who translated my German manuscript into English.

¹ Cf. C. F. v. Nägelsbach, *Homerische Theologie* (Nürnberg ³1884); W. F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands: Das Bild des Göttlichen im Spiegel des griechischen Geistes* (Frankfurt/M. ⁴1956 [¹1934]); E. Ehnmark, "The Idea of God in Homer," Diss. Uppsala 1935; H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* ([¹1951] ²Munich 1962), 70ff.; A. Heubeck, *Der Odyssee-Dichter und die Ilias* (Erlangen 1954) 81ff.; W. Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter in der Ilias* (Berlin 1956); A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford 1960) 11ff., 62ff.; H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*, Sather Lectures 41 (Berkeley 1971) 1ff., 28ff.

calls the *Iliad* “pathetic” and the *Odyssey* “ethical”.² Simplifying Aristotle, we could say that the *Iliad* is tragic, the *Odyssey* “not tragic”.³ This seems to be a basic difference between both epics, as far as human fate is concerned. I shall now deal with the differences between *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the relationships between gods and men.

2

I propose to begin by giving some examples of the differences. Subsequently I shall try to interpret these differences. Finally, the post-Homeric development of the different conceptions will be looked at.

Possible differences between *Iliad* and *Odyssey* should not just be considered for their own sake; they are of some importance for the whole of contemporary Homeric scholarship. They would allow scholars to examine critically some consequences of the “oral poetry theory” of the school of Milman Parry, which considers the Homeric epics to be composed orally. Of course, after Parry no serious Homericist will deny that the formulaic language of the Homeric epics goes back to a long oral tradition. But according to this theory, taken in its orthodox form, all themes, as well as the *Weltbild*, the world picture, underlying those themes, belong to the common oral tradition with only the wording of the recitation changing every time. The quality of the recitation, as, for example, A. B. Lord says, depends on the singer, who is not, however, responsible for the contents of the epic song he recites, these contents being traditional. The singer, this theory has it, does not claim originality.⁴

²Besides, *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are called “simple” (ἀπλή) and “complex” (πεπλεγμένη) in this chapter. Here the concepts do not have the same meaning as in chap. 13 (onfold and twofold). In chap. 24 the composition of the *Iliad* is simple insofar as it does not possess “peripeteia” and “anagnorisis” (cf. 10.1452 a 14ff.) while the *Odyssey* is complex insofar as it is “recognition throughout” (1459 b 15 ἀναγνώρισις διόλου).

³In relating Homer to tragedy Aristotle follows Plato, who says in *Republic* 595 b 10ff.: ἔοικε μὲν γὰρ τῶν καλῶν ἀπάντων τούτων τῶν τραγικῶν πρῶτος διδάσκαλός τε καὶ ἡγεμὼν γενέσθαι. As for the criticism of Homer in *Republic* II and III there is no doubt that mainly, though not exclusively, Plato has the *Iliad* in mind.

Aristotelian terms are used in some interpretations of Homer by J. M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago 1975).

⁴Cf. A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass. 1964) 99ff.

If it should be found out that religion and the functions of the gods are completely different in the two epics and mutually exclusive, the oral poetry theory could not, or at least not without modification or further qualification, be applied to *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. We would rather have to reckon either with a long development of oral poetry between the fixation of the *Iliad* and the fixation of the *Odyssey* or with an individual shaping of these epics or at least one of them. Of course, they could not be both by the same poet.

In the treatment of the gods the epics certainly have much in common. The so-called divine machinery in the *Iliad*, that is, the intervention of gods in human actions, recurring in typical patterns, is also found in the *Odyssey*. Athena's appearances especially resemble those of the gods in the *Iliad*, whether she takes on the form of some human being who fits into the situation, such as Mentos or Mentor, or keeps her own shape, as a personal epiphany or an *eidolon*, before Odysseus or Penelope. Although exact interpretation has suggested that this sort of epiphany is, in contrast with the *Iliad*, comparatively artificial, based on mere imitation and linked to some details which have the appearance of archaic superstition,⁵ the difference between *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is, in this particular point, not so great as to indicate any individual particularities of the *Odyssey* with certainty. In a general form, this "divine machinery" is even found in Near Eastern poetry as early as the second millennium B.C., poetry of which we know a fair number of epic fragments.

Things are different with the *motives* the poet gives for divine intervention into human affairs. The poet of the *Iliad* interprets the world by taking the passions of the gods to be the determining factors of what happens on the human level. This is quite independent of the respective moral qualities of these passions. For example, Hera's and Athena's disappointment over the victory of Aphrodite in the Judgment of Paris determines the whole conduct of both goddesses in the *Iliad*. This is all the more astonishing as their beauty contest on Mount Ida is only mentioned in the last book of the poem; yet it is the cause of their hatred for Paris, the judge, and his town Troy, as Karl Reinhardt has shown.⁶

Poseidon also has a score to settle with the Trojan royal dynasty, as we can gather in outline. The Trojan ruler Laomedon had once ill-

⁵ Cf. P. Von der Mühl, *RE* Suppl. VII Sp. 741, 768 s.v. *Odyssee*.

⁶ Cf. K. Reinhardt, "Das Parisurteil," in *Tradition und Geist*, ed. Carl Becker (Göttingen 1960) 16ff. (originally 1938). See also F. G. Welcker, *Der epische Cyclus II* (Bonn 1849) 113ff.

treated him when some compulsory labour was inflicted upon him by Zeus.⁷

Aphrodite, on the other hand, keeps standing by Paris, her protégé, whom she had bribed in the Judgment on Mount Ida. This can clearly be seen in her epiphany before Helen in the shape of a familiar old wool-spinner in Book III.⁸ Their partisanship induces all the gods to intervene frequently, especially to give encouraging talks to their respective protégés while assuming the shape of a human being from their environment.⁹ Within this framework of divine appearance and intervention the gods do not even shrink from deceit. Athena, with the consent of Zeus (IV 70ff.), in Book IV 86ff., induces Pandarus, who has joined the Trojans as an ally, to shoot the disastrous shot in the direction of Menelaus in order to break the truce between both parties. At least as dreadful is Athena's conduct at Hector's death. With her utmost artfulness (*κερδοσύνη*) she lures Hector into destruction: in the shape of his brother Deiphobus she exhorts him to fight Achilles and then she leaves him at the decisive moment. In a soliloquy, Hector becomes aware of his having been deceived by Athena and of his imminent inescapable death (XXII 297ff.). Thus his tragic fate is attributed not only to his own infatuation but also to false and deceitful action on the part of the divine powers. The gods do, however, mutually respect their playing with the human beings. At the beginning of Book IV, Zeus, in order to tease his wife, ironically suggests ending the Trojan war, to save Priam's town and to render Helen to Menelaus. Hera's reaction is an outburst of anger. Zeus respects this anger although the Trojans have made all the sacrifices due to him. He only announces that he will not desist from his own wrath in the reverse case (IV 39ff.). The boundlessness of unwarranted divine wrath toward man can be seen when Hera subsequently invites Zeus to destroy the towns which are most dear to her, that is, Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae, if only he would not interfere with her wrath against Troy. The poet obviously does not even think of the possibility of one's taking offense at this kind of conduct shown by divinities such as Athena and Hera.

In a similar way the action of Apollo against Patroclus appears to be insidious and unfair. The god beats him and stuns him so that Euphorbos and Hector have the upper hand (XVI 787ff.).

⁷ *Iliad* XXI 441ff.; Cf. W. Kullmann (above n.1) 17, 27f.

⁸ Cf. W. Kullmann (above n.1) 113ff.

⁹ Cf. W. Kullmann, *passim*.

In Book XXIV the council of gods discusses the question whether to continue allowing Achilles to defile Hector's dead body. Although the gods in general pity Hector (23), with Apollo mentioning principles of decorum, the poet tells us that Athena, Hera, and Poseidon cling to their hatred for Troy. The eventual decision of Zeus to stop Achilles may certainly spring from his balancing clemency; however, the highest god does not justify it with ethical principles valid for man but with Hector's always having made the due sacrifices to the gods. We could therefore agree with Walther Kraus that in the *Iliad* human beings attain a higher moral worth than the gods.¹⁰ What is essential to the poet is that emotional actions of the gods allow for a rational explanation of fateful events in human life. As frivolous as the gods may appear to us, their actions account for the whole of human suffering and weakness. This explanation is given with great realism, without appealing to an unexplorable numinous power or to sentimental pathos.

In the *Odyssey*, things are quite different. The very first council of the gods (I 32ff.) introduces another way of thinking. We witness a speech of Zeus which is not directly related to the main plot of the *Odyssey*.¹¹ Taking the fate of Aegisthus, the adulterer, as an example, Zeus, in a kind of cabinet meeting of the gods, expounds the principles of his rule over the world. Aegisthus had been warned by Hermes not to kill Agamemnon and marry Clytaemnestra. He did not abide by this warning and, accordingly, suffered retribution from the hands of Orestes. Men themselves, not the gods, are responsible for their sufferings beyond their destined share. Gods, on the contrary, guarantee "poetic justice" when they warn men against doing evil.

¹⁰ Walther Kraus, "Götter und Menschen bei Homer," *Wiener Humanistische Blätter* 18 (1976) 29 (= Walther Kraus, *Aus allem eines. Studien zur antiken Geistesgeschichte* [Heidelberg 1984] 24). Cf. Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, Sather Lectures 46 (Berkeley 1979) 123.

¹¹ With regard to this scene cf. W. Jaeger, "Solons Eunomie," *Sitzungsberichte der Preuss. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl. Nr. XI* (1926) 73f. (= *Scripta Minora I* [1960] 321f.); E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951) 32; A. Heubeck (above n.1) 81ff.; H. Hommel, "Aigisthos und die Freier. Zum poetischen Plan und zum geschichtlichen Ort der Odyssee," in *Symbola I, Kleine Schriften zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte der Antike* (Hildesheim 1976) 1ff. (originally in *Studium Generale* 8 [1955] 237ff.); K. Rüter, *Odysseeinterpretationen: Untersuchungen zum ersten Buch und zur Phaiakia*, ed. K. Matthiessen, Hypomnemata H. 19 (Göttingen 1969) 64ff.; Lloyd-Jones (above n.1) 28f.; W. Kullmann, "Die neue Anthropologie der Odyssee und ihre Voraussetzungen," *Didactica Classica Gandensia*, 17–18 (1977–78) 37f.

There is a *théodicée* in the *Odyssey*, as Werner Jaeger first saw,¹² divinity is absolved of responsibility for the evil in the world. Athena alludes to the consequences of these principles for what happens in the epic when she gives her comment (I 47):

ὡς ἀπόλοιτο καὶ ἄλλος ὅτις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι.

So, too, may any other also be destroyed who does such deeds.

It is hard to understand how the central importance of this speech of Zeus for the whole of the *Odyssey* could so often be overlooked. It is not the actual contents of Zeus's statement which is important for the *Odyssey* but the principle of divine justice it contains. The speech of Zeus indirectly explains the plotting of Athena against the suitors, who are analogous to Aegisthus. The interventions of Athena mainly, though not exclusively, serve the purpose to assert the moral principles of the rule of Zeus, that is, to make the suitors and the maidservants suffer their merited punishment. In the wanderings of Odysseus, divine interventions are based on similar principles, Circe and Calypso excepted, who belong to folktale tradition. Poseidon is furious with Odysseus because of the blinding of the Cyclops, not however in the amoral sense of the gods in the *Iliad*. Odysseus is not totally innocent of what happens, if only because of his excessive curiosity, which needlessly makes him approach the island of the Cyclops. To this curiosity is added his insolence, which makes him reveal his true identity to the blinded Cyclops when leaving the island.¹³ Since, however, his fault is but slight, he will reach Ithaca at last, which is tolerated even by Poseidon (XIII 132f.). Even more fundamental is the moral aspect in the wrath of Helios to whom the comrades fall victim because they have laid hands on the cattle of the sun god, not heeding the warning of Odysseus. They break the oath which Odysseus had been careful enough to administer to them when he could not prevent the comrades from going ashore. The comrades perish because of an offense against property, having been warned against it before.¹⁴ This is totally consistent with the principles laid down by Zeus at the beginning of the epic.

We see that the religious system which underlies the *Odyssey* does not primarily give a comprehensive explanation of the tragic pattern of human life, as does the religious system of the *Iliad*. The religious system of the *Odyssey* rather gives something like a metaphysical

¹² W. Jaeger (above n.11).

¹³ Cf. J. Irmscher, *Götterzorn bei Homer* (Leipzig 1950) 57f.

¹⁴ Cf. J. Irmscher (above n.13) 64f.

foundation of the principle of justice; and this leads to a world picture quite different from that of the *Iliad*.

This cannot be expounded here in detail but only hinted at. With all the realism of detailed description, the *Odyssey*, in another way, appears to be quite idealistic: those who proceed with the necessary circumspection and patience and are sufficiently energetic, will, with the help of the gods, reach their journey's end, as Odysseus's fortunes and his return home seem to prove. Even events such as the confrontations with the Cyclops, Aeolus, the Laestrygonians, and Circe can be mastered by man, if he has the right attitude. And although the war may have lasted twenty years, the marriage of Odysseus and Penelope is not affected. After such a long period of time the wife can still hope for the return of her husband insofar as she can take his circumspection for granted. Tragic complications are not considered as possibilities. In the *Iliad*, the action of which takes place little before the end of the war, things have changed since the beginning of the war. Priam has lost the best of his sons and final destruction is imminent. Some of the major imitators of the *Odyssey* could not accept the hero's happy and successful return home after twenty years of absence.¹⁵ In one of the Cyclic epics, the *Telegonia*, which probably dates from the end of the seventh century B.C., the hero proceeds to the Thesprotians and contracts a new marriage, returns to Ithaca once more, and there dies at the hands of his son by Circe, Telegonus, who was unknown to him. In Dante's *Inferno* Odysseus, as he tells the poet in the presence of Virgil, does not even reach home, but, driven by a pagan thirst for knowledge, goes on with his voyage, until he at last founders near the South Pole. In Tennyson's poem *Ulysses* the hero is impatient to leave Ithaca soon after his return. He sets out again with unknown destination. The same course of action is found in the modern epic of Kazantzakis, in which Odysseus does not care for his wife anymore and his son aspires to power. There is always some form of protest against the idealized ending of the *Odyssey*. The view of man in the *Odyssey* and its hero attract attention in the highest degree. His fortunes, as told in the *Odyssey*, nevertheless, appear to be implausible to many of its imitators, who prefer a tragic world picture.

The same difference between *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, with which I have dealt as far as the *motives* of divine intervention are concerned, can be observed in an even higher degree, when a comparison is made

¹⁵ Cf. W. Kullmann, "Tragische Abwandlungen von Odysseethemen: Ein Beitrag zur Wirkungsgeschichte der Odyssee," *Archaiognosia* (Athens) 1 (1980) 75ff. See also W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme* (Oxford 1954).

between the ways divine action is *judged by men* in both epics. In the *Iliad* such utterances show much less reflection than in the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad* the heroes accept divine action as something fateful and inescapable while in the *Odyssey* they give much more thought and speculation to the gods' conduct. Take, for example, the scene in the *Iliad* in Book III 383ff. where Aphrodite, the goddess, forces Helen to leave the wall of Troy to return to her chamber to Paris, a scene which is very characteristic.¹⁶ Helen, who is extremely furious about this demand, at first refuses to comply but finally submits to the threats of the goddess. It is only by a personal intervention of Aphrodite that the poet accounts for, and makes plausible, the fateful erotic ties between Helen and Paris. For all that, the poet contents himself with giving divine action an anthropomorphic shape. He does not presume to *judge* divine action. In other parts of the *Iliad* divine action is felt in the same elementary way. The resigned attitude Hector exhibits in dying is most impressive. The deception of Athena who has left Hector after first having assisted him in the shape of Deiphobus, his brother, is only mentioned by way of a simple statement. The poet and his hero do not think of any criticism because divinity is seen as an explanation for the tragic nature of life, not as a force guaranteeing justice. When warned by the dying Hector, Achilles affirms that he will himself submit to death whenever Zeus and the other gods accomplish it. There is the same resignation to the will of the gods on both sides. In the *Odyssey* there is no equivalent to this resignation. No dying person speaks of the gods in the *Odyssey*.

In the *Odyssey* the conception of divine justice also underlies the speeches of men. In Book II Telemachus expels the suitors from the house and, in the event of noncompliance with his order, announces (II 143ff.):

... ἐγὼ δὲ θεοὺς ἐπιβώσομαι αἰὲν ἔοντας,
αἷ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς δῶσι παλίντιτα ἔργα γενέσθαι·
νήποινοί κεν ἔπειτα δόμων ἔντοσθεν ὄλοισθε.

... But I will call upon the gods that are forever, if haply
Zeus may grant that deeds of requital may be wrought.
Without atonement then you would perish within my halls.

¹⁶ Above n.8.

Zeus immediately sends a bird of omen so as to confirm this announcement. It is in exactly this way that the suitors will eventually perish in Book XXII. Of course, the gods can be invoked in the *Iliad* as well, but in quite another way. When in Book I the Achaeans have taken from Chryses, the priest, his daughter Chryseis, Chryses asks Apollo for help, in consideration of a temple he erected and the sacrifices he made. The idea of Zeus or any other god punishing injustice in general is quite foreign to the *Iliad*. The gods reciprocate for previous favors according to the principle *do ut des*. In Book XIV of the *Odyssey* Eumaeus gives Odysseus food and declares with reference to the doings of the suitors (83f.):

οὐ μὲν σχέτλια ἔργα θεοὶ μάκαρες φιλέουσιν,
ἀλλὰ δίκην τίουσι καὶ αἴσιμα ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων.

The blessed gods don't love reckless deeds, but they honor justice and the righteous deeds of men.

In Book XXIV 351f. the punishment of the suitors is felt by Laertes as a confirmation of the existence of the gods:

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ ῥα ἔτ' ἐστὲ θεοὶ κατὰ μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον,
εἰ ἐτεὸν μνηστῆρες ἀτάσθαλον ὕβριν ἔτισαν.

Father Zeus, truly you gods still exist on wide Olympus, if really the suitors paid for their reckless presumption.

That is, the belief that the gods exist is dependent on the manifestation of justice in the world, almost in the same manner as for some characters in Euripides' plays. We will see later on in which way this view was indeed adopted by Euripides. In the *Iliad*, no such conception of the gods is found. However, it is inconceivable that this idea should have had no forerunner in popular belief. Indeed, in the *Iliad*, there is one passage which shows that Zeus had something to do with justice in the poet's time, though not in his epic; Zeus has probably been considered as a guardian over the office of a judge. According to a simile in Book XVI 384ff., he sends tempest when he is angry with people who give crooked judgments, violating justice. Some scholars have taken these verses to be spurious and Hesiodic.¹⁷ It is true that

¹⁷ The verses 387f. are cancelled by W. Leaf ad loc. and P. Von der Mühl, *Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (Basel 1952) 247. Conversely, H. Lloyd-Jones (above n.1) 6 claims that they are not only authentic but also consistent with the theology of the *Iliad* as a whole. A. Lesky, "Homeros" in *RE Suppl.* XI

this function of Zeus is no factor in the action of the *Iliad*. But in the poet's environment this idea might have existed. It may perhaps be said that one function of Zeus in popular religion, that of protection of jurisdiction, has been developed in the *Odyssey* into a conception of the gods as guaranteeing a comprehensive moral world order. One can also cite Menelaus's hope for the help of Zeus Xenios in XIII 620ff. which likewise does not play a part in the plot of the *Iliad*. Another remotely related belief, the invocation of Zeus and other gods as witnesses of oaths is, of course, also known to the poet of the *Iliad*, as well as the related idea that because of their power gods also take upon themselves the task of punishing the perjured (III 298ff., VII 411, X 329ff., XIX 258ff., cf. XV 36ff.).¹⁸ After the shot of Pandarus, Agamemnon is sure that Zeus will some day punish the Trojans, who with that shot have committed perjury, and bring about the destruction of Troy. The same conviction of divine punishment for the perjured is found on both sides in several other instances as well, such as VII 345ff., 400ff. Antenor expects Troy to come to harm if Helen is not handed over. Diomedes maintains that even someone very stupid can perceive that the Trojans are bound for destruction. There is no doubt that popular belief has suggested the conception of punishment of the perjured to the poet of the *Iliad*. In its core, this conception may even date from "predeistic" times. It is, however, very striking, that this conception does not keep the poet of the *Iliad* from giving a very detailed account of how Athena, together with Hera and with the consent of Zeus, provokes the violation of the truce by Pandarus. Lloyd-Jones is certainly right that in popular belief as described in the *Iliad* there are some traces which later on will lead to the view of Zeus guaranteeing justice.¹⁹ But the crucial point is that the *plot* of the *Iliad* is dominated by the idea that the gods are also responsible for all evil and irrational events in the world.

The different conception of the gods in the *Odyssey* implies a greater remoteness of man from the deity, i.e., greater independence and responsibility. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is the prototype of a man who fits into this view of divinity. When Zeus declares in the council of gods that man is himself responsible for his doings—thinking

726 (= Sonderausgabe, Stuttgart [1967] 40), connects the passage with the morals of the lower class in contrast to the morals of the nobles. See also W. Burkert, "ΘΕΩΝ ΟΙΙΝ ΟΥΚ ΑΑΕΓΟΝΤΕΣ," *Mus. Helv.* 38 (1981) 195ff., esp. 199, and *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart 1977) 375.

¹⁸ Cf. W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion* (above n.17) 377f.

¹⁹ H. Lloyd-Jones (above n.1) 5.

mainly about the negative side—Odysseus comes up to this principle in a positive way. The comrades and the suitors who perish because of their own guilt serve mainly as a foil to Odysseus, who embodies the opposite qualities. By means of his energy, circumspection, and discretion he manages to get through every situation of life. How self-confident man can be when confronting a god becomes particularly evident in the tempest in which Odysseus gets caught after leaving Calypso on the raft. In Book V 333ff. when he is in the greatest distress, Ino-Leucothea, a sea goddess, appears to him. She advises him to leave the raft and offers him her kerchief as a life vest. Odysseus reacts in a way quite different from what one would expect from the heroes of the *Iliad*. He does not think of immediately seizing the opportunity. He is, on the contrary, very reluctant and declares his intention to stay on the raft as long as he can manage. He expresses his wish to rely on his own human technology as long as possible and says that putting one's trust in god is only sensible when technology and one's own skill do not help anymore and it is no longer possible to "make plans" (*προνοῆσαι*). Things eventually turn out to be as predicted. Toward the deity Odysseus feels much more autonomous than could be expected from the point of view of the *Iliad*. The *πρόνοια* of Odysseus is a quality which is quite characteristic of this autonomy.

Finally, I should like to set against each other two famous reflections on man's attitude toward fate and the deity. In Book XXIV of the *Iliad*, 525ff., the tragic view of the world which prevails in the *Iliad* comes out particularly clearly.²⁰ Achilles takes compassion on old Priam when the latter entreats him to release the body of Hector, his son, on receipt of ransom. Achilles comforts him with the allegory of the two casks in the palace of Zeus, containing good and bad gifts. In the best case man gets mixed gifts from these casks; or else he only partakes of bad gifts. At the same time it is clear that the distribution of these gifts depends on fate and not on any moral qualities. He who is given bad gifts and is wretched, Achilles continues, is not held in any esteem, neither by gods nor man. This lot is a sign of being abandoned by the gods, a lot which one has to submit to. Priam himself should submit to fate, as well as Peleus and Achilles himself.

There is a marked contrast between this passage and the warning speech in the *Odyssey*, with which Odysseus in the disguise of a

²⁰ See also E. R. Dodds (above n.11) 29, who, with respect to *Iliad* XXIV 525f., rightly says: "Achilles . . . pronounces the tragic moral of the whole poem."

mendicant addresses Amphinomus, who is the most sensible one of all the suitors (XVIII 125ff.).²¹ In this speech a basic anthropological statement is made which allows for inferences about the poet's view of the gods. Nothing, he declares, is more liable to be ruined than man. As long as he is well-off, he thinks nothing bad can happen to him. When, however, the gods accomplish bad things, he is extremely distressed (XVIII 135: *τετιηότι θυμῶ* ci. Schadewaldt).²² Subsequently, the alleged fate of the beggar himself (who is Odysseus in disguise) is given as an example. He had done much evil before he became a beggar, he says. The conclusion is drawn that one should not act totally unlawfully and that one should quietly accept the gifts of the gods and not act criminally as the suitors do. Even if the gods are not explicitly mentioned as punishers, there is no doubt that this is implied—in line with the speech of Zeus at the beginning, and also in line with the ending of the *Odyssey*. The speech is one of the warnings which precede the catastrophe, as is the message of Hermes in the case of Aegisthus. It is quite in keeping with the invocation of the gods by Telemachus (II 143ff.), who asks for retribution should the suitors continue to lay hands on the goods of the house. The speech of Odysseus is also in keeping with the *théodicée* of the speech of Zeus in Book I. According to Odysseus, men grumble unjustly (cf. XVIII 135 *ἀεκαζόμενος*) when the gods accomplish bad things (134 *λυγρὰ*). While the cask allegory in the *Iliad* symbolizes the tragic fate allotted to man by the gods, the speech of Odysseus is intended to show that correct behavior toward the gods may save man from coming to harm.

3

How can this difference between the two epics be accounted for?

The difference appears to be so great that it cannot be assumed that both epics are equally fortuitous actualizations of traditional heroic myths of a common and uniform oral culture as they should be according to the orthodox oral poetry theory. In the same way the *Odyssey* cannot be by the same poet as the *Iliad*.

It is true that a consistent attempt to harmonize completely the conceptions of divine action has never been undertaken. Some scholars have tried, however, to confine the conception of the gods in the *Odyssey* which I have just outlined to some parts of this epic. Werner

²¹ See W. Kullmann (above n.11) 44.

²² See W. Schadewaldt, *Homer: Die Odyssee*, transl. (Zurich-Stuttgart 1966) 447f.

Jaeger, for example, took the great speech of Zeus at the beginning to be “new,”²³ and Schadewaldt ascribed it to the poet “B,” while, according to him, the poet “A” is identical with the poet of the *Iliad*.²⁴ He tried, moreover, to clear from the *Odyssey* passages that do not fit into the view of the world which is given in the *Iliad* by declaring these passages to be spurious: this he does with Book XII. When Odysseus could not prevent his comrades from going ashore, he makes them swear an oath not to lay hands on the oxen which belong to the sun god. Schadewaldt comments: “Lines 296–304 provoke the suspicion of being inserted, this insertion being made to the purpose—contrary to the main tendency of the story as otherwise told—to charge the comrades of Odysseus with so grievous a crime that their subsequent destruction appears to be brought about by themselves and to be the just outcome of their own guilt, in the strictest sense of the word ‘just.’”

Although Schadewaldt is quite right in this interpretation of the function of the oath, his analytical conclusions are not convincing. He thinks that the comrades become guilty in the text of the poet “A” as well, but with “extenuating circumstances.” The comrades, he points out, only lay hands on the oxen when all the other supplies are exhausted. Their fault, he says, becomes a real crime only in the text of “B.”

But even if there were “extenuating circumstances” and even if no oath had been sworn, guilt would remain guilt. And when the gods consequently intervene to punish, this is clearly contrary to their function in the *Iliad*. Hector, for example, does not incur any guilt comparable to that of Odysseus’s comrades. He is infatuated, does not give heed to warnings and is also considered to be responsible for his doings: he does not, however, commit any offense against property or any other moral offense. This is where his tragedy lies. There is no such thing for the comrades of Odysseus. It is impossible to harmonize the *Odyssey* with the *Iliad* by cutting out certain portions of the text, as Schadewaldt does. The specific moral views permeate the whole *Odyssey*. Even if there was no oath, the guilt of the comrades would only be slightly less grievous.

The same is the case with the suitors. The mentioning of the fate of Aegisthus at the beginning of the epic suggests that it was the myth of the Atreidai which has decisively formed the view of the suitors

²³ W. Jaeger (above n.11) 73f.

²⁴ W. Schadewaldt, “Der Helioszorn in der Odyssee,” *Studi L. Castiglioni 2* (Florence 1960) 861ff., esp. 868 = *Hellas und Hesperien. Gesammelte Schriften zur Antike und zur neueren Literatur* (Stuttgart-Bern ²I 1970) 93ff., esp. 98f.

taken in the *Odyssey*. It has been found out that these suitors, who take possession of the house of Odysseus and commit crimes, are not in keeping with the motif of Penelope's stratagem of weaving. It was probably only the parallel case of Aegisthus which has brought the poet of our epic to make the suitors parasites in the house of Odysseus. The stratagem of weaving presupposes an original self-restraint of the suitors. The novella motif of the original story, Odysseus's coming home shortly before the marriage and his killing the suitors,²⁵ is superseded by the motif of the moral vindication for his murdering the suitors, which lies in their overbearing conduct in the house of Odysseus. In *our Odyssey*, the old novella motif is only left in a rather rudimentary form. Fritz Wehrli discovered this point some time ago.²⁶

Now that we have established the incompatibility of the religious conceptions of the two epics, the question arises how they are related to each other. The opinion is widely held, that the view of the gods in the *Odyssey* as compared to that of the *Iliad* announces a new epoch. The fact that the gods are more ethical in the *Odyssey* is taken to be the sign of a new age, and the view of religion in the *Odyssey*, according to Werner Jaeger, E. R. Dodds, A. W. H. Adkins,²⁷ and others reflects a "more advanced" state in the history of the human mind. It is, however, to be doubted that one view of the gods should not only be formulated later than the other but also have developed organically from the first one. The difference between the two views of religion is too fundamental to allow such an assumption. There are many indications that in the two epics two different religious conceptions are embodied, which in their core are independent from each

²⁵ I take a novella, according to Goethe's definition, to be an "unerhörte Begebenheit," an event unheard of (J. P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, 29 January 1827). As for the original novella motif of the *Odyssey* cf. A. Lesky (above n.17) 801f. (= Sonderausgabe 115f.); R. Friedrich, *Stilwandel im homerischen Epos: Studien zur Poetik und Theorie der epischen Gattungen* (Heidelberg 1975) 132ff. Parallels from literature are listed in W. Spletstösser, *Der heimkehrende Gatte und sein Weib in der Weltliteratur* (Berlin 1899) 31ff.

²⁶ F. Wehrli, "Penelope und Telemachos," *Mus. Helv.* 16 (1959) 228ff.; cf. U. Hölscher, "Die Atridensage in der Odyssee," *Festschrift Alewyn* (Cologne-Graz 1967) 1ff., and *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen* 228 (1976) 196; W. Kullmann, "Die neue Anthropologie" (above n.11) 42f.; A. D. Skiadas, "Τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦ Αἰγίσθου καὶ ἡ ἐνοχὴ τῶν θνητῶν (Ὀδύσσεια, α 32-43)," *Archaiognosia* (Athens) 1 (1980) 11ff.

²⁷ W. Jaeger (above n.11) 74; E. R. Dodds (above n.11) 32; A. W. H. Adkins (above n.1) 65.

other and only partly conditioned by the time in which they were given expression. With regard to the conceptions of the gods, Aristotle's typological distinction between the two epics in *Poetics*, ch. 24, where he declares the *Iliad* to be pathetic and the *Odyssey* ethical, seems to be confirmed.

Let us consider the assumption of a development of religious thinking from the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey* in detail. The Iliadic view of the gods must not be misconstrued as being primitive. It is quite different from the belief prevalent in many cultures in some sort of higher beings who dominate human life only because of their greater power. In the *Iliad*, men act according to the decision of their own will and are nevertheless influenced in their actions by the gods, for better or for worse.²⁸ Divine intervention mostly takes place indirectly, by way of exhortation, often in the shape of a person who is to be thought to be present anyway. This intervention does not clear people from being responsible for their doings, even if they sometimes blame the gods for their predicament. It does, however, account for the fact that people have to suffer quite disproportionately (mostly with their deaths) for their delusions, their wrong decisions. Surely, the tragic death of a hero is a traditional motif of heroic poetry.²⁹ But the way the death of a hero is so often accounted for in the *Iliad*, that is, by unprovoked divine intervention, seems unparalleled. The society of the gods is certainly some sort of projection of the aristocracy of the poet's own time and their ideas. This is, however, not the case as far as this special form of divine intervention prevalent in the *Iliad* is concerned. Klaus Rüter has pointed out that not only the *Odyssey* but also the other early Greek epics differ from the *Iliad* insofar as the view of the gods taken in these epics can be reconstructed. In the *Aethiopis*, for example, the divine interventions which lead to the death of the heroes are neutralized by the bestowal of immortality upon both Achilles and Memnon.³⁰ The traditional nature of the motif

²⁸ Cf., e.g., W. Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter* (above n.1) 106ff. ("Freie Willensentscheidung und göttliche Lenkung").

²⁹ Cf., e.g., G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore 1979) passim.

³⁰ K. Rüter (above n.10) 67f. For the priority of the myth of the immortalization of Memnon by Zeus at Eos's request, as compared with the story of Sarpedon's death in *Iliad* XVI, see W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* (Stuttgart 1965) 165ff.; W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* (= Hermes Einzelschriften H. 14) (Wiesbaden 1960) passim; M. E. Clark and W. D. E. Coulson, "Memnon and Sarpedon," *Mus. Helv.* 35 (1978) 65ff. G. Nagy, "On the Death of Sarpedon," in *Approaches to Homer*, ed. C. A. Rubino and Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (Austin 1983) 189ff., holds a different view, but he agrees that

of the immortality of a great hero (including the figure of Memnon) is emphasized by Gregory Nagy in his book on *The Best of the Achaeans*.³¹ That the heroes, or at least some of them, are given immortality by Zeus on the Isles of the Blessed is expressly stated by Hesiod, *Erga* 167ff. (cf. *Od.* IV 561ff. and Hes. fr. 204, 102f.). This idea seems to be much more in accordance with common aristocratic feeling than the extreme, tragic view of the *Iliad*. In the *Iliad* the heroes who receive a formal and ceremonial burial even seem to lack that semi-immortality which is so often ascribed to heroes, who are thought to be active in their tombs, in later periods of time. Archaeological evidence and careful examination of Iliadic passages show that hero cult must even have been familiar to the society of the poet's own time.³² Compare, for example, the expression ἡμίθεοι for dead heroes in *Iliad* XII 23 (and Hesiod, *Erga* 160) and the mentioning of the tombs of Erechtheus (II 550f.), Ilus (X 415, XI 166ff.), Aegyptus (II 604). Nevertheless the poet of the *Iliad* does not seem to believe in a lasting activity of the heroes in their tombs, that is, in a limited immortality, as presumably did many of his contemporaries.³³ For example, the statements of the soul of Patroclus about death sound quite definite in this respect (XXIII 75ff.). Compare also VII 84ff., XVI 453ff., 667ff.³⁴ One can also think of the reception of the Heracles of the legend in the Olympic society known to us from the

the motif of the immortalization of a hero, which we find in the *Aethiopis*, is old.

³¹ G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (above n.29) 205ff.

³² Cf. A. M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (Edinburgh 1971) 192ff., 393ff., 429ff.; Theodora Hadsisteliou Price, "Hero-Cult and Homer," *Historia* 22 (1973) 129ff.; J. N. Coldstream, "Hero-Cults in the Age of Homer," *JHS* 96 (1976) 8ff.; W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion* (above n.17) 312ff.; G. Nagy, "On the Death of Sarpedon" (above n.30).

³³ The hero cults of the eighth century may have been engendered by the influence of pre-Homeric oral poetry.

³⁴ The heroic tombs described at these passages as provided with τύμβος and στήλη (and perhaps the disputed etymology of the word ταρχύειν = "mummify," which now seems to have the significance "bury"; cf. M. M. Willcock, *The Iliad of Homer* II [1984] ad loc., and, on the other side, Nagy, "On the Death of Sarpedon" [above n.30] 195ff.) seem to presuppose a common belief in activity of the dead heroes in the vicinity of their graves, but the *Iliad* only mentions the honor which is paid to the dead. On the other hand compare the apparition of Darius in Aeschylus's *Persae* or the *kommos* in the *Choephoroi* or Oedipus's prophecy in Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus* 1518ff. Nagy, "On the Death of Sarpedon" (above n.30) 202 says: "Homeric poetry presents itself as the very process of immortalization."

Odyssey. This reception is ignored in the *Iliad*, consciously, I think. Achilles cites Heracles' death in Book XVIII 117ff. as a parallel to his own tragic fate in which, according to the *Iliad*, there is no room for immortality.³⁵ It is very improbable that the "softer" and milder version is the result of a later development. In this respect, the case of the Dioscuri is particularly revealing. According to the *Odyssey*, the twins remain unseparated after the death of the mortal Castor. By Zeus's pity they win mutual death and life every other day (XI 301ff.; *Cypria* fr. VI Allen = 6 Bethe). Conversely the *Iliad* speaks of the death of both of them, a death unknown to Helen (III 243f.). As for the Dioscuri it cannot be doubted that it is by Indo-European heritage that they are immortal heroes. They are worshiped as representatives of the young noble warriors.³⁶ This means that their tragic death alluded to in the *Iliad* must be a Homeric innovation. The poet does not allow for a miraculous mildness of Zeus, even in the case of his sons. In the *Iliad* we obviously get a special individual conception of the gods and no traditional pattern.³⁷

³⁵ Contrast *Iliad* XVIII 117ff. with *Odyssey* XI 602ff. Cf. W. Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter in der Ilias* (above n.1) 31, 34; K. Rüter (above, n.11) 67 n.25.

³⁶ Cf. W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion* (above n.17) 324ff.

³⁷ On this point I find myself in agreement with C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) 238; K. Rüter (above n.11) 68 and W. Burkert, *Mus. Helv.* 38 (1981) 203f., who, departing from different premises, arrive at similar conclusions. Whitman says: "Doubtless all oral epic used the gods, but in the *Iliad* we are confronted by a peculiar point of view, and one consistently developed, appropriate only to this poem." Burkert remarks: "Offenbar ist es nicht so, dass die ganz amoralischen Heidengötter erst nachträglich mit der strafenden Gerechtigkeit in Zusammenhang gebracht worden sind; zumal in der alltäglichen Praxis der Eide war die Erwartung göttlicher Strafe seit je vorausgesetzt. Der scheinbar angstfreie, 'aufgeklärte' Umgang mit Göttlichem in der *Ilias* ist dann keine schlechthin altertümliche oder allgemein griechische Gegebenheit, sondern eine besondere, in gewissem Sinn einmalige Leistung, vor einem durchaus bestehenden Hintergrund numinöser Ängste."

Cf. also J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 144ff. chap. 5 "Gods and Goddesses." Griffin's endeavor to emphasize the poetic values of the *Iliad* is much to be welcomed. Unfortunately, he does not always say with clarity to which extent, in his opinion, the poetic achievements of the *Iliad* are owing to the genius of an individual or to the tradition of an oral society. Hesitatingly he subscribes to the idea of an individual poet of the *Iliad* (XVI); on the other side he feels obliged to avoid "arguments which are ruled out by an oral origin for the work" (XIV). He compares, e.g., the stories of the immortality of Memnon and Achilles in the *Aethiops* with the stern view of the *Iliad*

Conversely, the Odyssean view of the gods should not be considered as the simple folktale morality which can be found anywhere and which lacks any originality.³⁸ Surely, the story of the return of Odysseus, which in its core is known to the poet of the *Iliad* (where Odysseus is already called *πολύτλας*), is in its end not tragic. But the ethical interpretation of the sorrowful circumstances of the homeward journey of Odysseus and his comrades and of the struggle against the suitors is no necessary consequence of the myth.³⁹ The story could have been told in quite another way. The consistency with which, in the *Odyssey*, morality is based on a divine program can, in my opinion, only be understood as the individual achievement of a great poet.⁴⁰ I personally believe that the important results of Havelock's anthropological studies concerning the differences between both epics with regard to justice point to the same conclusion:⁴¹ if we consider the remarkable degree of conformity of epic language and geographical

that the killed warriors are really dead (167), and he seems to consider this characteristic feature of the *Iliad* as a peculiarity of this poem. This would imply that, as I think myself, the stories of the *Aethiopis* correspond to common Greek feeling and are old in their core. But in his article "The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer," *JHS* 97 (1977) 39ff., he totally rejects the neoanalytic approach (n.5) and neglects the arguments of neoanalytic scholars who try to find out pre-Homeric motifs in the Cyclic epics, though they concede that the record of these epics in writing may be post-Homeric. To my mind, the uniqueness of Homer can be shown conclusively (if it can be shown at all) only by a comparison of Homer with post-Homeric as well as pre-Homeric motifs. And this exactly is the field of neoanalysis. Cf. W. Kullmann, "Zur Methode der Neoanalyse in der Homerforschung," *Wiener Studien* 15 (1981) 5ff.

Another question which Griffin leaves open is as follows: He convincingly compares the Homeric short "obituary notices" of heroes with archaic grave epigrams (*Homer on Life and Death* 140ff.). But he fails to ask how far the similarity is due to the direct influence of the *Iliad* or to a common feeling. So his sensitive study is very valuable for further interpretation but does not bring the old Homeric "querelles" nearer to a solution.

³⁸ Cf. H. Lloyd-Jones (above n.1) 31.

³⁹ In a way, the aid of Athena and the other gods to Odysseus, which is guided by moral principles, weakens the old element of surprise which is connected with the old novella motif of the returning husband.

⁴⁰ I agree with E. R. Dodds (above n.11) 52f. n.22: "We must, of course, remember that the *Odyssey*, unlike the *Iliad*, has a large fairy-tale element, and that the hero of a fairy-tale is bound to win in the end. But the poet who gave the story its final shape seems to have taken the opportunity to emphasise the lesson of divine justice."

⁴¹ E. A. Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato* (Cambridge, Mass. 1978) 123–192.

horizon in both epics it seems improbable that both epics originated independently from each other in different regions.

Walter Burkert, in his book on Greek religion, in a chapter entitled "Gods between Amoral and Justice," also expresses doubts about the possibility of viewing the contradiction between amoral gods and a religious morality in terms of a development.⁴² There are probably two popular approaches behind the religious conceptions of the two epics which are principally different but normally appear in a mixed form. If the simile in *Iliad*, Book XVI 384ff. is authentic, where Zeus's lightning is mentioned as punishing wrong legal decisions, this demonstrates that the conception of the gods as found in the *Odyssey* did already exist at the time the *Iliad* was composed, at least in a rudimentary form. The conception of the gods as avengers of broken oaths can also be adduced here.

To the poet of the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, the Iliadic conception is not quite unknown in its basic pattern, as can be seen in Book XII of the *Odyssey*, 295, where Odysseus uses a common saying when he speaks to his comrades who are staging a mutiny because they want to go ashore against Odysseus's will. Odysseus says:

καὶ τότε δὴ γίγνωσκον ὃ δὴ κακὰ μῆδετο δαίμων.
I realized that some god contrived bad works.

This is a casual utterance which springs from the spirit that is predominant in the *Iliad*. A religious conception which is near to the conception of the *Iliad* is also followed in Book I where Zeus attributes human suffering to man's wickedness only insofar as men suffer "beyond destiny" (*ὑπὲρ μόρον*).⁴³ That man is helpless against fate (*μοῖρα*) seems to be an Iliadic conviction. This nonmoral view of fate is, however, quite superficial, since the plot of the *Odyssey* does not show destiny (*μοῖρα*) prematurely destroying a human being without reason. In the conjuration of the dead in Book XI Elpenor accounts for his death not only with the fate he met from a wicked god (*δαίμονος αἴσα*) but also with the "immeasurable quantity of wine" he had drunk before his fatal step, that is, with his guilt (61).

What matters is that the poet of the *Iliad* and the poet of the *Odyssey* both, with the utmost consistency, base their works on one single aspect of the divine and relate it to their respective views of man.

⁴² W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion* (above n.17) 371ff.

⁴³ Cf. A. W. H. Adkins, "Homeric Gods and the Values of Homeric Society," *JHS* 92 (1972) 1ff.; A. D. Skiadas (above n.26) 16ff.

As I said in the beginning, these results have some importance for the oral poetry theory. An apparent originality in the religious views seems to suggest an individual poet, who can only be conceived as a writing poet because individual authorship depends on the possibility to write down an authentic manuscript. As it seems, the poets of both Homeric epics possess such an original *Weltbild*. For this and other reasons I think that the problems of orality and literality deserve new consideration.⁴⁴

4

I should like to conclude with some observations on the influence exerted by the religious conceptions of the Homeric epics on literary history, more particularly on tragedy.⁴⁵ Tragedy, as a genre which so obviously follows the views of the world found in the *Iliad*, seems to preclude the view of simply taking the Odyssean conception of the gods to be the more advanced one.

It is difficult to compare Aeschylus with Homer, as his tragedies contain elements springing from both epics. H. Hommel, for example, has admirably shown that the concept of justice in the *Eumenides*, that is, the advancement beyond *ius talionis*, is to a great extent influenced by Book XXIV of the *Odyssey* where Athena deters the families of the suitors from vendetta.⁴⁶ In the *Seven against Thebes* and the first two plays of the *Oresteia*, on the other hand, a tragic view is found which equals that of the *Iliad* in its rigor. Only man's ultimate discernment of his errors may have been considered as a final mercy of Zeus, as can be concluded from the hymn to Zeus in the *Agamemnon*.

In Sophocles the conception of the gods is very much in keeping with the tradition of the *Iliad*. Just consider the *Ajax*, the tragedy in which Athena takes delight in the madness of the hero. The dreadful-ness of the fate of Oedipus and the terrible death of Heracles in the *Trachiniae* are owing to the gods without any conception of justice

⁴⁴ See my paper "Oral Poetry Theory and Neanalysis in Homeric research," *GRBS* 25 (1984) 307ff.

⁴⁵ It is interesting to see how the *théodicée* concept of the *Odyssey* is mitigated in Hesiod and Solon. Both authors allow that the justice of the gods is not always executed immediately. Zeus's punishment sometimes only takes effect in the descendants. Cf. Hesiod, *Op.* 282ff.; Solon, fr. 13, 29ff. West. In *Iliad* IV 160ff. Menelaos believes that if Zeus does not punish the perjured immediately, he will do so later on during their lifetime.

⁴⁶ H. Hommel (above n.11) 13.

linked to them (at least without any easy, conceivable conception).⁴⁷ The anthropomorphic attribution of human suffering to some passions and rivalries of the gods, as found in the *Iliad*, is certainly lacking in Sophocles when he makes Oedipus exclaim: "That was Apollo" or when the chorus at the end of the *Trachiniae* observes "and there is nothing which is not Zeus." The purposes of the gods remain rather mysterious, in spite of their dreadfulness. But the type of religious conception is the same. The gods are responsible for the tragedy of human existence without any thought being given to any kind of immediate "poetic justice" on the part of the gods. The view of Zeus in the *Odyssey* is infinitely remote from that in Sophocles.

The relation of Euripides to the theology of the Homeric epics is particularly interesting.⁴⁸ Many scholars have tried to explain the Euripidean theology primarily with the intellectual currents of his own age and have therefore tended to overlook the influence of traditional elements. What is particularly fascinating about this poet is the way in which the different views of the gods which are found in the epics are ingeniously blended with each other in the several plays. In many cases the plot is a tragic one with the gods acting as do the gods of the *Iliad*, while some human characters of the play believe in gods who are just, or some parts of the action suggest them to be so, which corresponds with the Odyssean conception. It is quite clear that Euripides was conscious of his double imitation of Homer. There may certainly be modern, even sophisticated, ideas which have influenced Euripides' treatment of the gods. It is, nevertheless, amazing to what extent the two religious patterns of the Homeric epics can be traced in Euripides. For this Euripidean view of the gods I want to give just two examples.

In the *Hippolytus* the ruthlessness of Aphrodite with which she strives for the destruction of innocent Phaedra in order to be revenged upon her "enemy" Hippolytus is so great even in the prologue that the goddess might almost be regarded as a caricature of the goddess of the *Iliad*. Hippolytus is bound to die because he does not care for Kypris and what she stands for, that is, love, and because the goddess, in her vanity, is offended. One is reminded of the rigor with which in the *Iliad* the goddess forces Helen to return to Paris. The

⁴⁷ Cf. A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen 31972) 267ff. The relations of Sophocles to the archaic world view are rightly emphasized by E. R. Dodds (above n.11) 49. Lloyd-Jones (above n.1) 104ff., esp. 128, claims that Sophocles had a sophisticated view of the justice of the gods which is not easy for men to conceive.

⁴⁸ A fuller account of my view of Euripides will be given elsewhere.

words of Artemis have the same ring when she explains to dying Hippolytus that she is unable to help him because of the solidarity of the gods, that she will, however, when the occasion presents itself, take revenge on a favorite of Aphrodite. It sounds as if the poet wanted to give an example of Iliadic theology. The way Athena leaves Hector also comes to mind, as well as Hera's consent to sacrifice the towns which are dearest to her in order to have her revenge on the Trojans. But it is a sharp contrast to this conception when the old servant prays to Aphrodite for forbearance with Hippolytus and reminds the goddess that gods should be wiser than mortals. One immediately thinks of the religious conception of the *Odyssey*.

In the *Heracles* the same contrast comes out particularly clearly. Heracles appears at the last moment to prevent the destruction of the family, just as Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. In the *kommos* at the end of the first half of the drama (735ff.), which forms the background of the slaying of Lykos, the wicked usurper, the justice of the gods is praised. The death of Lykos is considered as the just divine retribution for his crimes. Lesky is correct in saying: "If the play ended here, we would have a play which leads through misery and doubt to a *théodicée* which shines brightly."⁴⁹ The Odyssean part of the drama, however, is followed by some sort of *Iliad*. Immediately after the *kommos* we witness the epiphany of Iris and Lyssa, who are about to plunge Heracles into madness and make him murder his wife and children. If this scene, which is unique in drama, can be classified in terms of literary history at all, it is connected with the *Iliad*. Iris, the messenger of the gods, is a figure taken from the *Iliad*, who does not appear in the *Odyssey* nor elsewhere in tragedy. Aristophanes makes her appear in the *Birds*, a play which was probably written in 414 B.C. after the *Heracles* (which dates from 415 or earlier). In the *Iliad*, it is Iris who with "ill message" announces war to the Trojans in Book II 786ff. Her connection with Lyssa in Euripides reminds one of the false dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon to induce him to make an unwise attack upon the Trojans without Achilles. The unscrupulousness and the cynicism of the divine intervention, however, are even more intense in Euripides, capable of provoking a censure of the gods by the spectators. The debate between Lyssa and Iris is also inconceivable without the influence of the *Iliad*: it is only reluctantly that Lyssa submits to her role. She points to the good deeds done by Heracles for the benefit of men and gods. This is suggestive of the altercations in the councils of the gods in the *Iliad*, for example, in the

⁴⁹ A. Lesky (above n.47) 374.

last book in which the same criteria for divine intervention are brought into play. A new contrast to this action of the gods is Heracles' subsequent question: who can pray to a goddess who out of jealousy of a rival woman destroys the son of this woman although he is innocent and a benefactor of Greece? Here the Odyssean concept of *theōdīcēē* breaks through again. The censure of this sort of divine action reaches its climax in the well-known lines 1340ff. in which a purified view of the gods is professed, proceeding on the assumption that the gods do not need anything. In lines 1341ff. Heracles says:

ἐγὼ δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς οὔτε λέκτρ' ἄ μὴ θέμις
στέργειν νομίζω δεσμά τ' ἐξάπτειν χεροῖν
οὔτ' ἠξίωσα πάποτ' οὔτε πείσομαι
οὐδ' ἄλλον ἄλλον δεσπότην πεφυκέναι.
δεῖται γὰρ ὁ θεός, εἴπερ ἔστ' ὀρθῶς θεός,
οὐδενός· αἰοιδῶν οἶδε δύστηνοι λόγοι.

I don't believe that the Gods rejoice at unallowed love affairs and I have never thought that they manacle each other nor that one god is the master of another god. The god, if he is a god indeed, does not need anything. These are only poor tales of the singers.

The main problem of interpreting Euripides lies in this coexistence of the two theological models. How does Euripides want to be understood? A final answer cannot be given here.⁵⁰ It is obvious, however, that Euripides' main interest lies not so much in the contrast between popular belief and sophistic enlightenment, as is often claimed, but in two religious positions which defy the classification as "old" or "new." The different positions are primarily those found in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

I break off my study of the influence of the Homeric epics on literary history here. Even in Christianity the different conceptions of divine grace and free will of man bear traces of the primary conceptions which were first set forth in the two Homeric epics. What matters here is that *Iliad* and *Odyssey* display two opposite original patterns of a religious explanation of the world which are mutually exclusive and which have been exceedingly influential on the history of the human mind.

ALBERT - LUDWIGS - UNIVERSITÄT, FREIBURG I. B.

⁵⁰ With regard to the present situation of Euripidean research cf., e.g., H. Strohm, "Zum Problem der Einheit des euripideischen Bühnenwerks," *Wiener Studien* 15 (1981) 135ff.