KEROSTASIA, THE DICTATES OF FATE, AND THE WILL OF ZEUS IN THE *ILIAD*

J. V. MORRISON

Death speaks:

> There was a merchant in Baghdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, "Master, just now when I was in the market-place I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture; now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me." The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the market-place and he saw me standing in the crowd and he came to me and said, "Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?" "That was not a threatening gesture," I said, "it was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Baghdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra."[1]

The atmosphere of inevitability—most importantly meeting or avoiding death—pervades the *Iliad*. One encounter seemingly intertwined

1 As told by W. Somerset Maugham, facing the title page of O'Hara 1952.

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with the threads of fate occurs near the end of the *Iliad*, when Homer presents the climactic contest between the great hero Achilles and Hector, the defender of Troy. Achilles chases Hector three times round the walls of Troy and then—on the fourth turn—Zeus performs the following action (22.209–13):

> Then father Zeus balanced his golden scales (χρύσεια . . . τάλαντα), and in them he set two fateful portions of woeful death (δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο), one for Achilles and one for Hector, breaker of horses. Balancing it in the middle, Zeus raised it high, and the fated day (αἴσιμον ἦμαρ) of Hector sank down: it went toward the house of Hades, and the god Apollo left him.[2]

At this point, Athene rushes in to help Achilles slay Hector. With the loss of its champion fighter, Troy too is destined to fall. In this first passage, Zeus weighs two "fateful portions of woeful death"—δύο κῆρε—in his scales. The one that drops signals it is that hero's day to die. The Greek term for this is *kerostasia*, literally, the weighing of an individual's death.[3] I wish to explore the significance of *kerostasia* in the *Iliad*. While there are only two instances in the *Iliad*, the act of Zeus setting out the scales represents a view of how the events at Troy came about—the view, namely, that certain events are destined to occur. After Zeus' action, the death of Hector is a foregone conclusion. The possibility of a divine rescue is precluded.

We find, however, that the poet of the *Iliad* juxtaposes a contrasting view of what happened between the Greek and Trojan armies locked in battle. According to this second perspective, heroes are not wholly subservient to fate—rather they make decisions which determine the course of subsequent events. The effect of this juxtaposition is that we in the audience are apparently left without one consistent "world-view" regarding—in

2 All translations are based on Lattimore 1951 except for the final passage (1.508–30) below which follows Fagles 1990.

3 The later and more common term is *psychostasia*, a weighing of souls, but it is best not to read later conceptions back into Homeric epic. *Ker* also contains the idea of one's manner of dying (see, e.g., 12.326–28). What is determined by Zeus' action is nevertheless clear. As Vermeule 1979.39 says, it "affirm[s] externally the identity of the one who will die." See her discussion at 39–41 (at 220 note 68 she discusses the etymology of *ker*—probably a loan word), and Erbse 1986.280–83. One problem is that *ker* may also be active, becoming a "death-bringing spirit of destruction," as Burkert 1985.180 puts it.

modern terms—fatalism and free will.[4] These two perspectives cannot be logically reconciled. The poet seems to swing back and forth, now activating the monolithic view of a narrow, unyielding path of destiny, now suppressing such an idea and activating instead a sense of openness and unpredictability for the course of events at Troy.[5]

This tension between contradictory movements is also evident at the divine level and at the poetic level. The gods contemplate acting against what had appeared to be unavoidable, and the poet suggests episodes which would violate the epic tradition. The purpose of this paper is to examine where and how the poet switches between these contradictory alternatives, between the controlling force of destiny and the autonomous action of heroes (and of the gods and the poet). My main point is that this dynamism between fixedness and flexibility operates at three distinct levels: the heroic, the divine, and the poetic. The analogous polarities at these three levels mutually reinforce one another, allowing one to conclude with some confidence that this alternation is a deliberate effect of the storytelling technique of the *Iliad*'s poet. It is possible to speak of Achilles making a decision *because* we find Zeus and the poet doing quite similar things. Still, the constraints of circumstance, destiny, and the tradition not only lie in the background; they are often highlighted—seeming to contradict the idea of individual autonomy.[6]

Related to all this is the will of Zeus, invoked in the proem to the

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4 The terms free will and fatalism are, of course, anachronistic when applied to the Homeric epics. I prefer to use looser terminology: on one side, openness, flexibility, the possibility of alternatives, on the other, fixity, the predetermined, etc.

5 The *Iliad*'s poet operates in similar fashion with respect to events from the mythological tradition, at times activating—or bringing to the audience's mind—certain events, such as the judgement of Paris (24.27–30). Alternatively, we find the poet suppressing features of the tradition (or a tradition). The possibility of immortality for heroes, e.g., is excluded as Achilles speaks of Heracles' fate (18.117–18), in sharp contrast to the idea expressed elsewhere of heroes' achieving everlasting life (see, for example, Hesiod *Works and Days* 170–73, *Odyssey* 4.561–69). The sacrifice of Iphigenia—if the poet knew of it—appears to be superseded by a homelife with three daughters in the house of Agamemnon (9.144–48~9.286–90, but cf. 1.106–08). For a valuable discussion of Homer's relationship to the traditions preceding him, see Slatkin 1991, esp. 1–16.

6 Fraenkel 1973 despairs of finding a single answer: "there is no effort to harmonize them [these two opposing views], for epic poetry has no desire to go into theology or formulate a consistent world picture (56) . . . any attempt on our part to rationalize the power of fate in Homer, and fit it meaningfully into the Homeric world system is doomed in advance" (58). Janko 1992.5 sees it somewhat differently: "Homer exploits the poetic advantages of both perspectives [fatalism and free will] without bringing them into direct confrontation."

epic. What might his will be? This is an elusive concept. It will be useful to see how the will of Zeus instantiates itself in the narrative of the *Iliad*. We must determine what the will of Zeus consists of, how narrow or specific it is, and whether it can change over the course of the Trojan War, or even during a few weeks near the end of the war. By examining the passages below, I hope to locate the promises and actions of Zeus—and the teleology of the epic itself—with respect to *kerostasia* and the dictates of fate.

Let me begin with some general observations as to how the narrative encourages us to think of the events in the *Iliad* as inevitable. First, we consider the epic tradition itself and, second, the pervasive network of predictions within the epic. Regarding the epic tradition, it might be said that the story of the Trojan War was traditional in Homer's own time, the last third of the eighth century B.C. Homer, like poets before him, looked back to a heroic age when the Greeks sacked the wealthy city of Troy.[7] His audience was familiar with this story. In fact, the audience was expected to know the general outline of how Paris, a Trojan prince, abducts Helen from Sparta; the Greeks then gather an army and sail across the Aegean Sea; finally, following a ten-year siege, the city of Troy is sacked and Helen is returned to her husband, Menelaus. While this background is only alluded to in the *Iliad* itself, the audience knows why the war began; it also knows that the war will end with the sack of Troy. Because the story of the *Iliad* is set against such a background—because there is no need to retell the whole story—the poet has the freedom to highlight particular episodes. The *Iliad*, in fact, focuses upon events in the tenth year of the war.

Given this traditional background, the audience might well expect nothing new or unexpected from the poet, and, in fact, the poet is continually preparing the audience for the major episodes which follow. From the opening lines of the epic, we learn of Achilles' wrath and its consequences (1.1–5):

> Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles, Peleus' son, and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaeans, and hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls of heroes, but gave their bodies to be

7 Such stories derive from the Mycenaean age: see, e.g., West 1988 and Morris 1989.

> the delicate feasting of dogs and birds; and the will of Zeus was accomplished (Διὸς δ᾽ ἐτελείετο βουλή).

We hear the theme of the work: the wrath of Achilles, its destructive force, the mutilation of corpses. Apparently this is the working out (ἐτελείετο) of the will of Zeus. This will could be limited to his promise to Thetis of a Greek defeat. It is also possible that the will of Zeus includes more broadly the wrath of Achilles, including its cause and effects. Given certain pronouncements (cf. 15.61–77), the will of Zeus may extend all the way to the sack of Troy. This grand phrase certainly suggests an overall governance of events.[8]

In spite of this ambiguity, the general effect of repeated foreshadowings is to strengthen the audience's confidence in its ability to foresee how matters will unfold. Early in the epic, Zeus promises Thetis that he will bring about a Greek defeat in order to honor Achilles (1.508–30). Later, the audience learns that Hector will kill Patroclus and that Achilles will slay Hector. As Zeus tells Hera (15.63–71):

> Let the Greeks be driven in flight and tumble back onto the benched ships of Achilles, Peleus' son. And he shall rouse up Patroclus, his companion. And glorious Hector shall cut down Patroclus with the spear before Troy, after Patroclus has killed many of the valiant fighters, and among them my own son, shining Sarpedon. In anger for Patroclus' death, brilliant Achilles shall then kill Hector. And from then on I would make the fighting surge back from the vessels always and continuously, until the Achaeans capture lofty Troy through the designs of Athene.[9]

There are various methods of Homeric foreshadowing—here we find one of the gods predicting later events (cf. also 8.470–77)—but the very presence

8 An ancient *problema*: Why did so many heroes die? Was it destiny and the will of Zeus, as line 5 suggests? Or was it the wrath of Achilles, the passion of one man, which sent so many heroes to Hades? See Scholia bT 1.1 and discussion with bibliography in Taplin 1992.136–43.

9 Evidently "the designs of Athene" (᾽Αθηναίης διὰ βουλάς) refers to the use of the wooden horse to bring the Greeks within the walls of Troy (see *Odyssey* 8.492–95).

of foreshadowing contributes to an atmosphere of inevitability, the feeling that what is about to happen is fated to occur.[10] If certain events are predestined, then the epic itself merely presents the working out of what has been preordained. From this perspective, even the gods are subject to fate. If a hero—Hector, for example—is fated to die, the gods are powerless to help. Even divinities must yield to the decrees of destiny.[11]

The weighing of *keres*—*kerostasia*—fits this interpretation nicely. As Hector is pursued by Achilles on the battlefield, one might normally think he had a chance of escape or even victory. But when Zeus sets out the scales and the *ker* (or individual doom) of Hector descends, this is a symbolic manifestation of Hector's imminent death.[12] Although he is still alive when this occurs, Hector is doomed. We find then two mutually reinforcing phenomena. There is a traditional story which is known to the audience and assumed by the poet: this implies that there will be no surprises. At another level—within the story—gods and sometimes even characters recognize in advance how events will turn out.

There are other passages, however, which call into question such

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10 Consider the foreshadowing of the deaths of Patroclus (8.470–77, 15.64–67, 16.46–47, 16.247–52, 16.644–51, 16.684–93, 16.724–25, 16.787) and of Hector (15.68, 16.852–54, 17.201–08, 18.91–93, 18.96, 18.114–15, 18.131–33, 18.334–35, 21.224–26, 21.296–97, 22.216–23; cf. 22.299–311). On foreshadowing, see de Jong 1987.81–90 and Morrison 1992b, esp. 1–22 with bibliography.

11 On *moira* and *aisa*, see Krause 1949.10–52, Pötscher 1960.5–39, and Erbse 1986.274–84.

12 Willcock 1976.86–87 says that this is "not a process of decision by Zeus; it is rather a symbolic representation of what is fated to happen." Edwards 1987.294 comments: "the scales are an indication of what will happen, an artistic means of creating tension, not a real decision-making device." Taplin 1992.141 note 20 remarks: "the scales do not decide this [the Trojan victory at 8.69–74]; they mark a crisis in the narrative. In some passages, indeed, they become a purely figurative way of indicating a turning point." Erbse 1986.289 finds that the scales only serve to give an expression of necessity. Vermeule 1979.76 sees it as "not a judgement, but an external affirmation of destiny." See also Pötscher 1960.14–21. The other instance of *kerostasia* in book 8 will be discussed below.

The artistic record of what comes to be called *psychostasia* is of interest, in part, to show how vase painters distinguished themselves from Homer. Coming mostly from the late sixth and the first half of the fifth centuries B.C., scenes of *psychostasia* show Hermes, not Zeus, holding the scales (Zeus and Hera may be seated as witnesses). The heroes depicted are often Achilles and Memnon (not Hector), as the mother-goddesses Thetis and Eos frame the scene. This may be evidence for the popularity of the Cyclic poems in the early fifth century (Aeschylus composed a play *Psychostasia*), yet note the caution in Snodgrass 1980.189–94. For *psychostasia* in general, see the discussion in Simon 1959.56–92 (and plates 45–49), and Vermeule 1979.246–47 note 22. For the scene as an adaptation of an Egyptian idea, see Wüst 1936.162–71. For a more modern and literal scheme for weighing a soul, see Daedalus 1993a and 1993b.

inflexibility. These offer us a second perspective which I now wish to explore. Even though Homer may appear to endorse some sort of fatalism, at times he makes clear that heroes (and the gods and even the poet) are autonomous. They deliberate, make decisions, and act upon those choices. If at one extreme we find destiny and lack of free will, the opposite polarity suggests an openness, a flexibility, a freedom of action. The resulting tension between these two poles causes the narrative to shift back and forth, now toward predestination, now toward openness and unpredictability.

I limit my analysis to Achilles, Zeus, and the poet himself. Let us begin with the hero Achilles. To what extent is he free to determine his future? In the first book, Achilles is dishonored by his Greek ally, Agamemnon, and calls upon his mother, the goddess Thetis. In asking for help, he apparently recognizes that he is fated to live a short life (1.352–54):

> Since, my mother, you bore me to be a man with a short life (μινυνθάδιον),[13] then Zeus of the loud thunder on Olympus should grant me honor at least. But now he has given me not even a little.

Achilles goes on to ask for a Greek defeat, which he hopes will force the Greeks to recognize his true worth. When Thetis conveys this request to Zeus, she bases her appeal, in part, upon the fact that Achilles will die young (1.503–07):

> Father Zeus, if ever before in word or action I did you favor among the immortals, grant this wish of mine. Honor my son, Achilles—doomed to the shortest life (ὠκυμορώτατος)[14] of any man on earth! For even now the lord of men, Agamemnon, dishonors him by seizing and keeping his prize.

One may reasonably conclude from passages such as these that Achilles' fate is unavoidable. He will die as a young man on the plains of Troy, across the sea from his home in Greece.

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13 αἶσα μίνυνθα (1.416) also refers to Achilles. The term μινυνθάδιος is not, however, restricted to Achilles: see 4.478, 17.302, 21.84 (discussed in note 20 below), and the comparative form at 22.54.

14 ὠκύμορος is exclusive to Achilles in the *Iliad*: 1.417, 18.95, 18.458 (except for arrows at 15.441). Thetis calls herself δυσαριστοτόκεια at 18.54.

Yet elsewhere in the epic Achilles appears to have a choice: he might stay at Troy or he might leave. At one point, he speaks of two fates (9.410–16):

> For my mother, Thetis the goddess of the silver feet, tells me that a twofold fate (διχθαδίας κῆρας) bears me on to the day of death. Either, if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans, my homecoming is lost, but my glory never dies; or, if I return home to the dear land of my fathers, my noble glory dies, but the life that's left to me will be long, and the stroke of death will not come to me quickly.

Achilles might gain glory on the battlefield and die young winning eternal fame, or he might go home and lead an obscure, long life. This contrasts sharply not only with the earlier passages (1.352–54, 1.503–07 cited above), but also with the end of the epic when Achilles comes to recognize—or perhaps to accept—that he will die at Troy. In the course of the epic, however, he questions whether such a fate is inescapable. On the face of it this is a logical contradiction. At some level Achilles seems to be free to leave Troy and return home to Greece, yet on the other side we find the idea that he is fated to die at Troy, being most short-lived of all mortals.[15]

If Achilles has no choice, then he must merely endure his destiny of staying at Troy. Yet the poet shows us that Achilles does make decisions. In fact most of the key events of the *Iliad* are determined by the choices of heroes. Two scenes considered here display Achilles' capacity to make a decision. In book 1, when Agamemnon first angers him, Achilles' first response is to threaten to leave Troy. When he is further insulted, Achilles contemplates slaying Agamemnon. As he draws his sword, Athene appears and Achilles tells the goddess that she will see Agamemnon die. Athene replies (1.207–18):

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15 Erbse 1986.282 argues that Achilles has no true choice in book 9, for he has only one *ker*. Yet there are countless ways to die (see 12.326–27). If Achilles does not have any sort of freedom (or any at this point in the story), the seemingly pivotal decisions in book 9 mean very little. This would be a failure of Homer as a poet. Fraenkel 1973.18–19 explains the passage in book 9 as serving to relieve "the inflexible monolith of its rigidity and to restore to it at least a momentary motion," thus exposing the legend to "real doubt." For Achilles' acceptance of his death in the last quarter of the epic, see, e.g., 18.101, 18.115–16, 19.420–22, 22.365–66.

> "I have come down from heaven to stay your anger—but will you obey me (αἴ κε πίθηαι)? The goddess of the white arms Hera sent me, for she loves both of you equally in her heart and cares for you. Come then, keep clear of fighting (λῆγ' ἔριδος), do not take your sword in your hand (μηδὲ ξίφος ἕλκεο), though indeed with words you may abuse Agamemnon, as that may be. And this also I tell you and it will be a thing accomplished. Some day three times over such shining gifts shall be given to you by reason of this outrage. Hold your hand then, and obey (πείθεο) us."
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> Then in turn swift-footed Achilles replied: "Goddess, there is a need that I preserve (εἰρύσσασθαι) the word of you two, angry though I am in my heart. So it will be better. If any man obeys (ἐπιπείθηται) the gods, they listen (ἔκλυον) to him also."

Achilles puts away his sword and abuses Agamemnon with words alone.

How should we interpret this scene? Athene does urge Achilles to keep clear of fighting and not take up his sword (λῆγ', μηδὲ . . . ἕλκεο). Yet overall this speech does not constitute a divine command.[16] Athene advises him, using forms of the verb πείθω as she asks "Will you obey me? Will you be persuaded (πίθηαι, πείθεο)?" Achilles' response clarifies the exchange (again using πείθω): "If any man obeys (ἐπιπείθηται) the gods, they listen to him." That is, he follows the advice of Athene because he is more likely to get help in the future. In this scene Homer shows us Achilles making a decision *not* to kill Agamemnon. It is presented as a conscious decision. This time, he says, I will refrain from violence.[17]

In fact, much of what Achilles does is wholly on his own initiative—without prompting from the gods. When he sees his mother in book 1, he asks for a Greek defeat. In book 9, in the midst of that defeat, he rejects Agamemnon's offer of gifts. In book 16, Achilles sends Patroclus to

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16 Willcock 1976.8–9 remarks: "Athene can advise, but she does not compel. The decision and the responsibility remain with Achilleus." Williams 1993.30 notes that the "god intervenes by giving the agent reasons."

17 On the question of double motivation and the gods' influence on mortals, see Lesky 1961, who describes the human and divine actions as two aspects of one and the same act (24); each action is caused by god and human (30) in an interwoven system (42). Lloyd-Jones 1971.10 argues that in each instance of a divinely motivated action, it can be explained in purely human terms (see also 24).

fight in his place, rather than go himself. These are all Achilles' decisions.[18] The gods are certainly powerful, but key events in the *Iliad* follow from the deliberation and subsequent choices of mortal men and women, who in a very real sense determine the course of the war.

Has the poet offered us two irreconcilable views? In the case of Achilles' ultimate fate, the possibilities appear contradictory, yet they are widely spaced in the narrative. This allows the poet to bring forth each alternative, while forcing the audience to seriously consider which path the narrative will follow. The language of determinism at times is pervasive. It is fated (μοῖρα) that Asios die (12.116–17), that Hector remain before the gates of Troy (22.5–6), and that Achilles die under the wall of Troy (23.80–81).[19] Fate (μοῖρα: 21.83, 21.110), a spirit (δαίμων: 21.93), or god (θεός: 21.47, 21.103) has brought Lycaon, one of Priam's many sons, into Achilles' hands on the fourth day of battle. Yet the exchange between Achilles and Lycaon puts the matter in a different light. Lycaon makes full use of his oratorical ability in appealing to Achilles' sense of pity (21.74–

The question arises: do mortals have to obey the gods? The answer is clearly no. Agamemnon rejects the plea of the priest Chryses (1.12–33), Helen disobeys Aphrodite until she is threatened (3.389–420: on which see Lesky 1961.15), Achilles fights in defiance of the river gods (see esp. 21.214–27). For the actions of Aegisthus referred to in the *Odyssey*, see Lesky 1961.33–35. More frequently, of course, mortals obey the gods: 5.436–44, 16.707–11.

18 In the aftermath of the Greek defeat and Patroclus' death, Thetis tells Achilles that this is what he asked for (18.73–77). Achilles' other decisions include sending Patroclus to see who is wounded (11.599–617, marked by the poet at 11.604), resolving to avenge Patroclus' death even if his own death will follow (18.86–121: see Schadewaldt 1965), abstaining from food and drink (19.209–13), and ransoming Hector's corpse (24.137–40: see Lesky 1961.14–15). Other decisions include Hector staying outside the walls (22.98–131: see Griffin 1990, esp. 360–62), Priam going to ransom his son (24.193–265), and the Trojans resolving to fight even after Hector's death (see 22.378–84).

On the topic of deliberation (often marked by μερμηρίζειν), see 17.90–107, 21.550–72, e.g., and discussion in Arend 1933.106–15. The recent scholarship on whether heroes actually are (or are capable of) making decisions might be said to begin with Snell 1960, who argues that in Homer there are no genuine personal decisions, because there is no concept of the self (20). Dodds 1959.20 note 31 endorses the idea that there is no concept of will in Homer, though he concedes that reasoned decisions do take place after a consideration of possible alternatives. Against this view, we find Lloyd-Jones 1971.10: Homer's "human characters are free to decide and are responsible for their decisions" (see also 17 and 22–23). Recent valuable contributions come from Sharples 1983.1–7, Duclus 1987.55–64, Gaskin 1990.1–15, and Taplin 1992.96–106.

19 The term μοῖρα is used by mortals (17.421–22, 17.478, 17.672, 18.119–21, 22.303, 22.436, 24.209–10; cf. the negative at 7.52), gods (16.433–34, 24.131–32), and the poet (21.5–6); cf. the personification of Moira at 16.849–50, 19.409–10. We also find the

96).[20] For his part, Achilles makes his motivation clear, resolving to have Lycaon and other Trojans die for the death of Patroclus (see esp. 21.100–05, 21.133–35). Encounters such as these offer a balance to the ubiquitous use of terms designating fate or destiny. At certain points—in, e.g., books 1 and 24—it appears fixed that Achilles will die young. Elsewhere (in book 9, for example) he is free to go. The poet returns time and again to scenes showing Achilles chosing one option over another. This does not discount the idea of destiny, but it qualifies its extent. The poet demonstrates that at certain junctures heroes can determine the subsequent course of events.[21]

Moving from characters within the story to the context of storytelling, we might ask related questions about the poet as well. The poet's relationship to his story is on a different plane from what characters experience within the story. Still, the poet operates within the epic tradition and, as noted above, has predicted that various events will take place. A similar dynamic of inflexibility against openness comes into play. It is fair

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related μόρος (19.421, 22.280, 24.84–86) and μόρσιμος (19.417, 20.302, 22.13). Similar usage occurs with αἶσα (16.707, 24.224–26), αἴσιμος (21.291), and, in connection with *kerostasia*, αἴσιμον ἦμαρ (8.72, 22.212).

20 Note Lycaon's use of μινυνθάδιος with reference to himself at 21.84 which echoes Achilles' fate (see 1.352).

21 Divine intervention manifests itself in diverse ways: giving advice (3.121–40, 7.44–54, 18.165–202, 20.375–80, 24.465–67), helping or harming (21.328–82, 23.382–84, 23.388–90, 23.768–77), and trickery (4.86–104, 21.599–605, 22.226–47). Athene instills nectar and ambrosia in Achilles (19.350–54); Zeus sends the dream to Agamemnon (2.3–38); see also 17.268–73, 17.648–50, 24.679–89. Mortals achieve goals with the help of the gods, as Athene helps Diomedes in book 5; see also 20.191–96, 20.242–43, 21.570, 22.130, 22.365–66, 22.445–46, 24.525–26; cf. 21.544–49. While Zeus and the other gods are blamed for mistakes (19.86–138, 19.270–74, for example), Taplin 1992.208 says that "men excuse themselves by blaming the gods for their own behavior, yet that behavior is seen nonetheless as the outcome of human motivation as well, and as liable to due blame or punishment." In his introduction to Fagles 1990.40, B. Knox admits the logical contradiction: without freedom and autonomy there is no individual responsibility (giving little meaning to mortals' hopes and motivations), yet without a pattern or overarching scheme, there is the danger of anarchy or utter chaos. Knox describes destiny as "flexible." We find the corresponding issues of divine action and human responsibility in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1328–33:

> ᾿Απόλλων τάδ᾿ ἦν, ᾿Απόλλων, φίλοι,
> ὁ κακὰ κακὰ τελῶν ἐμὰ τάδ᾿ ἐμὰ πάθεα.
> ἔπαισε δ᾿ αὐτόχειρ νιν οὔ-
> τις, ἀλλ᾿ ἐγὼ τλάμων.

Apollo predicted what would come to pass (τελῶν), but it was the hand of Oedipus which struck (αὐτόχειρ . . . οὔτις, ἀλλ᾿ ἐγώ).

to ask what sort of freedom the poet has in telling the story of the Trojan war. To what extent is Homer constrained by the tradition which is, in some sense, his "destiny?"[22] Even though he works within a tradition and the audience knows how the story will end, the poet, too, demonstrates a capacity to call the tradition itself into question.

Let us look at two examples. In book 2, Agamemnon has just told his troops that they will never take Troy. Although he is only testing their morale, they take him at his word and rush to the ships. At that point, Homer says (2.155–56):

> Then a homecoming contrary to fate (ὑπέρμορα νόστος) might have been accomplished for the Argives, had Hera not spoken a word to Athene.

Homer vividly presents the possibility of an early departure for the Greeks. But this runs counter to an essential feature of the epic tradition: the Greek sack of Troy. When Hera sends Athene to the Greeks, the possibility of a "homecoming contrary to fate" is averted. Rather than sailing home, the Greeks come back to the assembly and receive orders to begin battle. In this instance, however, Homer has called attention to the fact that, if not for the intervention of the gods, the Greeks would have returned home "contrary to fate"—which means, in poetic terms, contrary to the tradition.[23]

Later, the poet shows Patroclus driving the Trojans back and it is said that he nearly sacks Troy (16.698–701):

> There the sons of the Achaeans might have taken high-gated Troy under the hands of Patroclus, who raged in front with his spear, had not Phoebus Apollo taken his stand on the strong-built tower, with thoughts of death for him, but of help for the Trojans.

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22 Fraenkel 1973.57–58 contrasts "the outcome of an episode as the tradition laid it down and the outcome the poet wished . . . for him [the poet] the tradition which has predetermined the outcome took on the form of a predestined fate."

23 The expressions ὑπὲρ μοῖραν (or μόρον) and ὑπὲρ αἶσαν are used to indicate something contrary to the tradition (the premature death of Aeneas, 20.336, or Achilles sacking Troy, 20.30, 21.517) or, within the plot of the *Iliad*, some event contrary to Zeus' promise of a Trojan victory (16.780, 17.321). Among others, Nagy 1979.81 (paragraph 25 note 2) considers these "untraditional" incidents. It is, however, extremely hard to tell to what extent the main plot of the *Iliad*—Achilles' withdrawal and the subsequent Trojan victory—is traditional.

If Patroclus were to take the city, this would violate the tradition. It was fated, rather, that the Greeks take Troy through the stratagem of the large wooden horse.[24] Yet here the poet goes out of his way to comment that, without the intervention of Apollo, Troy would have been sacked "prematurely." We find other such passages. It is possible to distinguish between (A) events which would violate the tradition, such as an early return for the Greeks (2.155–56), the premature deaths of Aeneas, Menelaus, and Nestor (5.311–13, 7.104–08, 8.90–91, 20.288–91), and the taking of Troy by force (16.698–701, 21.544–46); and (B) violations of the plot as foretold early in the epic (6.73–76, 8.130–32, 13.723–25, 15.458–65, 17.319–25, all against Zeus' guarantees at 1.508–30 and 11.191–94∼11.206–09). These passages show that, just as Achilles contemplates alternatives to his fate of dying young, Homer is determined to challenge the tradition by showing how easily events—and his song—might have followed a different course.[25]

Homer is a traditional poet in many ways. By the end of the epic, the fate of Troy is obvious to all. As the narrative closes, the poet returns his audience to the story it had been familiar with. Yet repeatedly throughout his telling, the poet shows that, were it not for a specific action at the last moment, the story of the Trojan War would have been fundamentally altered. Again we find contradictory signals. There is the larger tradition in the background that, in conjunction with the network of foreshadowings, appears to determine the plotline. This suggests inflexibility and a lack of alternative. Yet that very tradition and the plot itself is called into question by the poet, as he interposes such comments, emphasizing how close the story comes to moving in a different direction.[26]

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24 See *Odyssey* 4.271–89, 8.499–520. This is implied in the *Iliad* as well: see Haft 1990.

25 Much recent work has been done on such "reversal" passages. See de Jong 1987.68–81, Lang 1989.5–26, Nesselrath 1992.1–38, Morrison 1992a, and Louden 1993. de Jong 1987.82 says that these passages contemplate "imaginary, not real, alternatives." Lang 1989.10 sees the poet as "having brought the action to the very brink of mythical impossibility and thus forcing a right about turn in the narrative." Schadewaldt 1938.153 note 3 argues that it appears as if events could have broken out of their prescribed route.

26 Louden 1993.187 characterizes 2.155–56 as a "passage describ[ing] an event that threatens the existence of the subsequent narrative." Lang 1989.7 finds the absence of such counterfactuals in books 1, 9, and 19 as endorsing the idea of Achilles' freedom to decide: "a statement by the poet that he [Achilles in book 1] would have killed Agamemnon if Athene had not stopped him would deny Achilles the freedom of choice that is so important for all his later actions." Bernstein 1995 uses the term "side-shadowing" to describe the situation when a narrative, by introducing "alternative plots," demonstrates the contingent nature of the choices of characters.

Finally we move to the divine plane, to the gods, who are akin to the heroes in that they too are characters within the story. One major difference, however, is that they generally foresee how events will turn out. They know the future, much as the poet and his audience do. Yet in spite of such providence, the gods also question the inevitability of preordained events. Let us direct our attention to Zeus with respect to prediction, deliberation, and intervention.

Zeus' prediction (15.63–71, cited above) anticipated the death of his own son, Sarpedon.[27] Yet when Patroclus and Sarpedon meet, Zeus ponders a last-minute rescue (16.433–38):

> Ah me, that it is destined (μοῖρα) that the dearest of men, Sarpedon, must go down under the hands of Menoetius' son, Patroclus. The heart in my breast is balanced between two ways as I ponder, whether I should snatch him out of the sorrowful battle and set him down still alive in the rich country of Lycia, or beat him under at the hands of the son of Menoetius.

Even as he acknowledges that his son is destined to die, Zeus considers providing an escape for his son. His wife Hera responds (16.440–49):

> Majesty, son of Cronus, what are you saying? Do you wish to rescue a man who is mortal (ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα) from ill-sounding death—one long since doomed by destiny (πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ). Do it then; but not all the rest of us gods shall approve. And put away in your thoughts this other thing I tell you: if you bring Sarpedon back to his home, still living, then surely some other god will wish to carry his own son out of the strong encounter, since around the great city of Priam are fighting many sons of the immortals. You will waken grim resentment among them.

Hera does *not* say: "You know you can't save Sarpedon—that would violate destiny." Instead she warns that Zeus would not receive approval from the

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27 On Zeus' foreknowledge, see Erbse 1986.226–27.

other gods, and that the result would be chaotic: other gods will want to save their sons. Zeus follows Hera's advice, "pouring bloody drops on the earth to honor his son." But like Achilles, Zeus appears to have been capable of following a different course of action.[28]

We now return to our first scene, the *kerostasia* of Hector and Achilles. In book 22 Zeus does put out the scales to weigh the *keres* of Achilles and Hector; Hector's death follows. The scene immediately leading up to this, however, offers a different outlook. As Achilles chases Hector, Zeus looks down and speaks to his daughter Athene (22.168–81):

> "Ah me, this is a man I love—right before my own eyes—being chased around the wall; my heart is mourning for Hector, who has burned in my honor many thigh pieces of oxen on the rugged peaks of Mt. Ida, or again on the uttermost part of the citadel; but now the brilliant Achilles drives him at a wicked pace around the city of Priam. Come then, you immortals, take careful thought, whether to rescue this man or whether to make him, for all his valor, go down under the hands of Achilles, the son of Peleus."
>
> Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athene spoke to him: "Father, lord of lightning, king of the black cloud, what are you saying? Do you wish to rescue a man who is mortal (ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα) from ill-sounding death—one long since doomed by destiny (πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ). Do it then; but not all the rest of us gods shall approve."

This exchange—echoing the scene in book 16—puts the fate of Hector in a new light. Zeus says, "Let us decide—should we save him or let him die at Achilles' hands?" This is remarkable, for Zeus himself had predicted the death of Hector in battle on the previous day.[29] Yet here he appears to allow

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28 Lloyd-Jones 1971.5 comments: "Moira . . . is in the last resort identical with the will of Zeus; when Hera reminds him that he cannot save his son Sarpedon she is only warning him that he cannot sacrifice to a sudden whim his own settled policy." Willcock 1976.19 says that it is "theoretically possible to frustrate [fate], but in practice this does not happen."

29 Zeus acknowledges the impending death of Hector at 15.68 and 17.201–08. See note 10, above.

for the possibility of a last minute rescue. We should keep in mind that gods and goddesses have been intervening in similar situations: Aphrodite rescues Paris, Poseidon saves Aeneas (3.373–82, 20.318–29).[30] Athene's response is that Hector's fate is sealed, but do what you like. The consequences? Not that Zeus would violate the dictates of destiny, not that the vault of heaven would come crashing down, but that none of the gods would approve.[31]

To what extent are the gods subject to fate? In general they know what it consists of. Still, if we distinguish between two broad situations—gods acting freely and gods being constrained in some way—there is an analogous dynamic at work here, too. At times the gods appear free to act: Zeus may sack Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae, whenever they prove hateful (4.51–53); Zeus allows Artemis to kill mothers in childbirth, if she wishes (ἤν κ' ἐθέλῃσθα: 21.483–84). When contemplating a course of action the gods appear capable of acting in one of two ways: Zeus ponders peace (4.5–20) or rescue (16.433–49, 22.168–81). When such action conflicts with the tradition or earlier authoritative predictions, the gods pull back. The effect, however, I would argue, is the same. The divine exchanges in books 16 and 22 appear to indicate—in spite of Zeus' previous predictions—that the gods may well upset such a course of events. It would get messy—all the other gods would start intervening to save their own sons—but the gods have the power to do so. The gods also speak of choices, even they consider alternatives.[32] Once the scales are balanced and the *keres* are weighed, however,

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30 Divine rescues and prevention of death are relatively frequent: see 3.373–82, 4.127–33, 5.22–26, 13.554–55, 13.562–65, 20.321–29, 20.443–44, 21.284–99, 21.596–98, e.g., but cf. 15.104–42.

31 Scholarly interpretation of this passage ranges widely. Synodinou 1986.158 feels that Zeus has "no intention of carrying it [the rescue of Hector] out, for the simple reason that the whole scheme of the war would have been annulled" (158). Taplin 1992.132 sees it this way: "Zeus could have his own way on everything; he could even annul something long-fated, even perhaps his own *boule*. But the repercussions would be so disagreeable that it would not be worth it . . . clearly this [Hera's threat that the other gods would not applaud his rescue—22.181; cf. 4.29, 16.443] threatens something far worse than merely withholding praise." I would take this further to say that, just as the leadership of Agamemnon may be threatened and subverted by Achilles, so Zeus' sovereignty—while absolute in a sense (8.5–27)—could be challenged by the other gods, who in an extreme case might physically fetter him (cf. 1.396–406). This he endeavors to avoid as he acquiesces to wife and daughter. On the mythological background to divine rebellion, see 1.396–406 and Krause 1949.

32 Williams 1993.31 argues that "the Homeric gods themselves deliberate and come to conclusions." Nesselrath 1992.26–27 surveys those passages where gods act at the last moment.

the poet goes on to present what had been promised.[33] But the outcome is now seen as only one of several possibilities. That is, the idea of fate is placed in a context of possible alternatives: it is subject to manipulation.

In the other instance of setting out the scales, Zeus weighs the *keres* of the Greeks and Trojans (8.69–74). He has resolved to bring about Achilles' request of a Trojan victory, for Hector and the Trojans will now drive the Greeks to their ships.[34] Whatever the traditional status of such a victory, this fulfills the earlier foreshadowings of the Greek defeat signalled in book 1. Yet if we consider the scene in book 1 between Thetis and Zeus when he first gives his assent, we find a more open-ended exchange. Thetis makes her plea (1.508–30):

> "Come, grant the Trojans victory after victory till the Achaean armies pay my dear son back, building high the honor he deserves!" She paused but Zeus who commands the storm clouds answered nothing. The Father sat there, silent. It seemed an eternity (δὴν). . . But Thetis clasped his knees, held on, clinging, pressing her question once again: "Grant my prayer, once and for all. Father, bow your head in assent! Or deny me outright. What have you to fear? So I may know, too well, just how cruelly I am the most dishonored goddess of them all."
>
> Filled with anger Zeus who marshals the storm clouds answered her at last: "Disaster—you will drive me into war with Hera. She will provoke me, she with her

33 Zeus' scales also appear at 16.658 and 19.223–24, where Zeus, called the "steward of war" (ταμίης πολέμοιο), is seen actively to incline the scales. After the scales have shifted in book 22, Athene tells Achilles that not even if Apollo suffered much, pleaded, and grovelled before Zeus on his knees would Hector escape death (22.219–21). Griffin 1990.363 comments: "The question whether he [Zeus] does or does not have the power to over-rule αἶσα, allotted fate, is not the point: apparently he has, but he admits that it would be wrong to use it." Fraenkel 1973.57, on the other hand, feels that "the idea of predestination is so alien and unconnected in the spiritual world of Homer that it must have a separate origin of its own."

34 Adkins 1960.17 believes that "the scales are something distinct from Zeus; the weight of the *kere* is independent of Zeus, for otherwise there would be no point in weighing them: and so there apparently exists a power over which Zeus has no control, and to which he bows." Yet the Greek defeat he brings about here fulfills his own promise to Thetis. Nesselrath 1992.14–15 note 26 interestingly finds that Diomedes' early actions on the second day of battle threaten to abolish the "decision" of the *kerostasia*.

> shrill abuse. Even now in the face of all the immortal gods she harries me perpetually, Hera charges me that I always go to battle for the Trojans. Away with you now. Hera might catch us here. I will see to this. I will bring it all to pass (τελέσσω). Look, I will bow my head if that will satisfy you. That, I remind you, that among the immortal gods is the strongest, truest sign that I can give. No word or work of mine—nothing can be revoked, there is no treachery, nothing left unfinished (οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον οὐδ᾽ ἀπατηλὸν οὐδ᾽ ἀτελεύτητον) once I bow my head to say it shall be done." So he decreed. And Zeus the son of Cronus bowed his craggy dark brows and the deathless locks came pouring down from the thunderhead of the great immortal king and giant shock waves spread through all Olympus.

Zeus initially hesitates in fear of Hera's reproach (1.511–12); then after further appeals from Thetis he reluctantly agrees (1.517–30). The implication, I think, is that Zeus might well have "decided" this time to avoid a confrontation with Hera and deny Thetis' plea. Zeus' momentous nod in book 1, reconfirmed in book 8 as the pan with the Greeks' *keres* descends, makes the Greek rout appear inevitable. But in book 1 Thetis is hard pressed to convince Zeus to act as she wishes.[35]

Against such a framework, we return to the will of Zeus. Read narrowly, the will of Zeus could be limited to his promise to Thetis in book 1 and his actions which are clearly designed to bring about a Greek defeat: the dream to Agamemnon (2.1–40), the prohibition to the gods against helping either side (8.1–52), and his promise to Hector of glorious victory for one day (11.191–94~11.206–09; cf. 17.453–55). Such is his explicit plan, as he desires to honor Thetis and her son.[36]

Yet the epic—read (or heard) book by book, scene by scene—shows the desires, plans, and actions of Zeus to be less systematic. He does intervene to advance the overall (and limited) plan of a Greek defeat by

35 On Zeus' ἄτη (book 19) and his failure to determine precisely what his promises may mean, see Heiden 1991, esp. 2–4 and 4 note 5.

36 In addition, Zeus predicts a wider range of events, including the deaths of Sarpedon, Patroclus, and Hector, and the sack of Troy (8.470–77, 15.59–71). The sack of Troy is ratified by his thunder as the Greeks set off for Troy (2.350–53).

sending threatening thunder against the Greeks and offering a helping hand to Hector, for example (8.133–36, 8.170–71, 15.694–95). At times, however, Zeus is either ineffectual or distracted. The Greeks are not defeated on the first day of battle (books 2–7); to the contrary, the Trojans are almost forced to retreat within their city's walls (6.73–76). On the day of Hector's great success, Zeus fails to enforce his prohibition against divine aid through neglect (book 13) or sexual dalliance (14.153ff.).[37] Conflict of a different sort occurs when Menelaus prays to Zeus to punish Paris (3.351–54)—it is surely one of Zeus' larger goals to punish those who violate the code of hospitality; in addition, punishing Paris might advance the larger objective of sacking Troy—but this conflicts with his more immediate aim of a Greek defeat. Thus Zeus remains impotent in the background.[38]

It is notable that while many of Zeus' actions in some sense follow from his inclinations, they appear to have little if any connection with a larger purpose conveyed by the phrase "the will of Zeus." His mind (νόος) overpowers Patroclus (16.688), he refuses to allow Hector possession of Achilles' horses (17.448–65), he orchestrates the ransom of Hector's corpse by sending for Thetis and delegating to Iris and Hermes (24.87–120, 24.143–88, 24.331–469). Such issues are clearly of concern to Zeus, yet they are not evidently part of a general plan to honor Achilles or even to bring about the destruction of Troy. Late in the epic, Zeus has gathered the gods to tell them his will (βουλή: 20.15, 20.20): they may intervene to help either side in battle (20.4–31). The immediate result is chaotic on the divine plane and even threatens Achilles with his own death (see 21.212–384, esp. 273–83, 318–23). Here the highly charged term βουλή is not apparently connected with a larger purpose.[39]

The will of Zeus, then, is not coincident with destiny. The poet uses the *kerostasia* scene to indicate to his audience there will be no further interruptions or digressions. The time has come to sing of the meeting of Achilles and Hector, now long awaited.[40] Hector evidently will not die until Zeus puts out the scales. What is remarkable is that when Zeus performs

37 Later the Greeks are said to gain an advantage "against the dispensation of Zeus" (ὑπὲρ Διὸς αἶσαν, 17.321), which is certainly contrary to his overall plan for the day.

38 On the absence of divine response to Menelaus' prayer, see Morrison 1992b.54–55.

39 Of course, allowing gods such as Poseidon, Hera, and Athene to aid the Greeks is perhaps to advance the ultimate goal of sacking Troy, certainly in so far as Athene helps Achilles slay Hector.

40 For the postponement of this scene, see Morrison 1992b.43–49.

this action, it is no longer evident that his will (βουλή) is monolithic. While the god yields to Athene's protest, his inclination is to consider the rescue of Hector. Zeus is pulled in two directions: by his larger design of a Greek victory and sack of Troy (outlined at 15.63–71) and by his pity for Hector. At the moment of *kerostasia*, there may indeed be two sides to the will of Zeus.

Such lack of definition may also be appreciated from the perspective of the audience, if we take into account their preconceptions. In addition to a general familiarity with the storyline, the phrase "will of Zeus" may trigger an association with other versions of the Trojan War story, e.g., the one told in the *Cypria* of Zeus' goal to depopulate the earth of an excess of people.[41] Confronted with apparently clear signals and outcomes, yet led astray by digressions and contradictory movements, the audience is forced to be sensitive to such ambiguities throughout the epic. Such "misdirection" serves a positive function in keeping the audience on edge, forcing it to juxtapose this narrative with previously generated assumptions and expectations—many of which are generated by the narrative itself. The audience's experience of hearing the epic, then, is analogous in crucial ways to the experience of characters within the epic who also confront the unexpected against a backdrop of what appears likely to occur. The tension between openness and inflexibility explored throughout this paper offers a framework against which the story itself unfolds.[42]

Such recurrent tension appears in the *Iliad* in a variety of ways. At times contradictory ideas are introduced but spaced widely: will Achilles die as a young man at Troy or sail home? The audience must contemplate the consequences of both movements, but, by separating the two possibilities, the poet is able forcefully to highlight both scenarios, one at a time. A second situation occurs when clear predictions are made (Zeus' promises and prophecies in, e.g., books 1, 8, 11, and 15), but the fulfillment is delayed or sidetracked. While, in book 2, Zeus sends a deceitful dream to Agamemnon as a way to honor Achilles, the first day of battle is won by the Greeks. Only in book 8 does the poet signal an end to such postponement,

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41 Zeus' goal to depopulate is described in the scholium to 1.5. Whether the *Cypria* as a text postdates the *Iliad*, surely the variants on the cause of the Trojan War were known in Homer's time. For a broader background to the idea of destruction brought by the gods, see Scodel 1982, esp. 37–40.

42 For the concept of misdirection and the audience's difficulties in negotiating the story, see Morrison 1992b, esp. 95–108.

as Zeus threatens the other gods and sets out the scales. The third and most frequent type of juxtaposition—and most characteristically Homeric—is one of immediate reversal. A situation is suggested (often as the inevitable outcome of a sequence of events), but within 30 lines or so the narrative moves in a sharply different direction. Such quick turns occur at all three levels. Achilles contemplates killing Agamemnon in book 1 (which undoubtedly would violate the tradition), yet Athene's intervention turns Achilles to withdrawal as he requests a Greek defeat instead. The poet contemplates an early homecoming or premature sack of Troy, only to quickly shift gears and move onto a contrary path. The gods act in similar fashion. Zeus may hesitate to grant Thetis' entreaty, but once he gives his momentous nod of assent the possibility that the Greeks will not suffer defeat is excluded. Elsewhere we find Zeus contemplating peace or rescue, yet within 20–30 lines he is persuaded to withhold such an impulse.

All three features of Iliadic narrative—the introduction of contradictory destinies, the postponement of foreshadowed events, and the immediate reversal—fuel a larger impulse of the *Iliad*'s poet. While sketching in the larger movements and ultimate terminus of the story (with an emphasis upon inevitability), the instinctive characteristic of this poet is to probe, to question, and to subvert the conception of predestination by showing the alternatives which explicitly offer themselves to poet, god, and hero. What is significant about *kerostasia* is that it brings the three contexts together. The setting out of the scales is an action by the gods. Yet the effect is to determine the future of heroes fighting on the field of battle. Finally, in narrative terms, *kerostasia* signals the imminent fulfillment of the story as earlier foreshadowed by divine and poetic predictions. In book 22, the poet juxtaposes Zeus' contemplation of a last minute rescue—suggesting that all is not fully resolved—with the scene of *kerostasia*, putting an end to such speculation.[43]

The *Iliad* offers a complex narrative. The central questions of man's free will, his relationship with the gods, and his relation to fate do not yield a simple answer. While there is a sense in which certain events must inevitably take place, a contrary movement appears at key junctures of the narrative, suggesting that something very different might have happened. Homer, I think, acknowledges the importance of the tradition, just as within

43 Erbse 1986.289 sees *kerostasia* as paradigmatic, serving as a symbol for the link between fate and the tragedy brought on by the gods.

the story the heroes and gods may recognize the inevitable: certain heroes will die in battle, eventually Troy will be sacked. Within the story itself, heroes ponder difficult choices, and the gods are free to contemplate intervention even if it would contradict what has previously been accepted as preordained, as the poet points out how easily this course of events might have followed another path.

The episodes examined above have been explained in various ways: as adding suspense or heightening the drama of a situation.[44] Each instance, viewed separately, may not be able to take us further. In this paper I have attempted to show that a parallel dynamic operates at three levels: heroic, poetic, and divine. Such parallelism suggests that the poet is reinforcing the same basic idea. We are being led to appreciate a tension, as the force of inevitability is undermined by the possibility of action which would lead somewhere unexpected. *Kerostasia* itself indicates a return to what had been promised, in line with previous foreshadowings of the epic. Yet like the scales of Zeus, the prevailing mood of the poem may suddenly shift as the poet juxtaposes the possibility of alternative outcomes. Unlike the fate of the merchant's servant in Baghdad, Homer shows us that events on the windy plains of Troy might have turned out quite differently.

Centre College

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44 These scenes certainly instill pathos, as we contemplate the ill-fated lives of the heroes. See Björck 1945.

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