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HOMER,  
THE EDUCATOR OF THE GREEKS

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The title of this paper has a double meaning. In speaking of 'Homer, the educator of the Greeks' I propose to discuss two different problems. The first problem concerns the question whether the poetry of Homer exercised an educative influence on the Greeks, and whether this influence surpassed the influence exercised by other poets to such a degree that Homer may be called *the* educator of the Greeks. It may further be asked—and this is the second problem—whether to this factual influence corresponded an educational intention, in other words, in which respects Homer tried to teach and instruct his public, or in a word, how far his work may be called didactic poetry.

It is important to distinguish these two questions, for a didactic intention may remain unsuccessful and not lead to any practical effects; on the other hand, such an effect need not be based on a corresponding intention: the evaluation of a work of art by later generations often runs counter to the spirit of the original. This is a matter of course which hardly deserved to be mentioned if it had not been disregarded by a scholar of such a high repute as Werner Jaeger. In his work *Paideia* he devoted a special chapter to 'Homer the Educator'. Here we read the following words: "The Greeks always felt that a poet was in the broadest and deepest sense the educator of his people. Homer was only the noblest example, as it were the classic instance, of that general conception" <sup>1</sup>). It might be asked in which respect Homer was the classic instance of a general conception: was he regarded by the Greek public as the prototype of the poet-educator, or was he the prototype of the poet regarding *himself* as an educator? The vagueness of Jaeger's words is not an occasional flaw in his argument but it springs from a basic conviction, viz. the belief that there is "an unbroken, organic, necessary line of development" between the earlier and the later stages of Greek culture, and that even this development is not an evolution in the modern sense of the word but "a gradual unfolding of the essential elements in the earliest form of that Greek spirit which throughout all the variations of its history remains fundamentally one and the same" <sup>2</sup>). The consequence of this biological interpretation of history is the assumption that the germ of any conception as developed in a later period must be present in the earliest period. Thus, finding

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<sup>1</sup>) W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, I (Oxford 1945), 35.

<sup>2</sup>) *Op. cit.*, 34. See further my paper *Het derde humanisme*, Ts. v. Gesch. 64 (1951) [225-44], 231-5.

that in the classical period poets were expected to educate the public<sup>3</sup>), Jaeger concluded that Homer was animated by the same educational spirit.

He tried to substantiate this view by an analysis of the text, but his interpretations turn out to be forced and unconvincing, e.g. when he concluded from the heroism of Achilles, who deliberately chose to perform great deeds at the cost of his own life, that "the *Iliad* has an ethical design"<sup>4</sup>). It is therefore not to be wondered at that his picture of the Homeric epic has not met with much approval<sup>5</sup>). On the contrary, there seems to be a growing tendency to deny the poet any didactic intention<sup>6</sup>). This

<sup>3</sup>) Cf. e.g. Ar. *Ran.* 1008–10 (Aesch.) ἀποκρινάι μοι, τίνας οὐνεκα χρηθάνμαζεν ἄνδρα ποιητήν; / (Eur.) δεξιότητος καὶ νοῦθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους ποιούμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν. 1034–6 (Aesch.) ὁ δὲ θεῖος Ὀμηρος / ἀπὸ τοῦ τιμῆν καὶ κλέος ἔσχεν πλὴν τοῦδ' ὅτι χρηστ' ἐδίδαξεν, / τάξεις, ἀρετάς, ὀπίσεις ἀνδρῶν; 1054–5 (Aesch.) τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν / ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖς ἡβῶσιν δὲ ποιητάι. Pl. *Lys.* 214 a οἱ τοὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὡσπερ πατέρες τῆς σοφίας εἰσὶν καὶ ἡγεμόνες. *Phdr.* 245 a (poetry) μὴρία τῶν παλαιῶν ἔργα κοσμοῦσα τοὺς ἐπιγνηγμένους παιδεύει. —B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (3 Hamburg 1955), 163, is wrong in maintaining: "Diese Moralisierung der Poesie hat Aristophanes erfunden"; 164: "er will nicht eine ästhetische Lehre geben, sondern nur die ihm verhasste Dichtung [of Euripides] durch eine Folie charakterisieren, und da ist ihm der Vorwurf moralischer Minderwertigkeit schon deswegen der liebste, weil er der größte und wirksamste ist". Snell says: "Diese moralische Forderung übernimmt Platon", but this would be extraordinary, the more so if Aristophanes was not in earnest.—I cannot agree either with C. M. J. Sicking, *Aristophanes' Ranae* (Assen 1962), 141–3, who argues that Aristophanes conformed Aeschylus to his own educational ideals and that the historical Aeschylus could not have thought in such terms.—A. W. Gomme, *The Greek Attitude to Poetry and History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1954), 50, writes: "There were ignorant Greeks . . . who thought it the main purpose of poetry . . . to make men better. Aristophanes makes fun of these", but there is nothing in the text to suggest that this view of poetry was characteristic of ignorant people.—Th. G. Rosenmeyer, *Gorgias, Aeschylus, and Apatē*, A.J.P. 76 (1955) [225–60], 238, thinks that Aristophanes inherited this way of looking at literature from the sophists, who "had a knack of looking at all poets, ancient and recent, as if they were forerunners and colleagues of themselves". But the sophists adopted the educational conception of poetry from the general public and used it for their own purpose, viz. to gain support from the poets for their own theories.—See also W. Kroll, *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart 1924), Ch. IV: 'Die moralisierende Auffassung'.

<sup>4</sup>) *Op. cit.*, 47.

<sup>5</sup>) Cf. the reviews by B. Snell, G.G.A. 197 (1935), 348–9, R. Pfeiffer, D.L.Z. 56 (1935), 2126–7, R. K. Hack, C.P. 37 (1942), 200. See also W. Kraus, *Die Auffassung des Dichterberufs im frühen Griechentum*, Wien. Stud. 68 (1955) [65–87], 69–71.

<sup>6</sup>) Cf. Kraus, *op. cit.*, 71: "Eine erzieherische, auf Menschenformung gerichtete Tendenz können wir also bei Homer nicht finden, wohl aber in Einzelheiten eine belehrende, auf Befriedigung des Wissenstriebes abzielende"; Sicking, *op. cit.*, 138–9, who admits a didactic aim only "in so far as the epic satisfies a certain desire of knowledge of the past"; H. Maehler, *Die Auffassung des Dichterberufs im frühen Griechentum bis zur Zeit Pindars* (Göttingen 1963), 47 n. 4: "Es dürfte schwer halten, den homerischen

view is equally one-sided, and so there is some reason to try to determine the true scope of didacticism in Homer. But before entering into this problem it may be worth while to form an idea of his actual influence on Greek culture. For reasons of time I have imposed upon myself two important restrictions: (1) I shall confine myself as much as possible to the classical period, and (2) I shall almost completely leave aside the influence of Homer on Greek art, literature, and philosophy<sup>7)</sup>, and concentrate on his influence on the thought and life of the common people. In spite of these restrictions I hope to be able to show that Hegel was right in calling the Homeric epic "the element in which the Greek world lives as man lives in the air"<sup>8)</sup>.

The leading part played by Homer in Greek culture already appears from the simple fact that he, and he alone, could be denoted by the phrase 'the poet'<sup>9)</sup>. In modern times, his work has often been called 'the Bible of the Greeks'. This comparison might be criticized on the ground that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* do not embody a divine revelation<sup>10)</sup>. It should, however, be borne in mind that Homer for the creation of his work felt dependent on a goddess, the Muse<sup>11)</sup>. This belief in his divine inspiration was

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Dichtern pädagogische Absichten nachzuweisen"; N. Gulley, C.R. 14 (1964), 32: "didacticism is independent of the poet's motives"; B. A. van Groningen, *Functieveranderingen der Griekse poëzie*, Meded. Kon. Ned. Akad. v. Wet., Lett. N.R. 30: 8 (1967), 7: "De gedachte, dat poëzie nog een andere functie hebben zou dan die van te behagen, is den homerischen zanger vreemd".

<sup>7)</sup> Cf. W. Schmid, *Gesch. d. griech. Lit.*, I (München 1929), 175 n. 6; R. von Scheliha, *Patroklos* (Basel 1943), 297 ff., 404-5; J. P. Alaux—P. Claudel, *Homère, l'Iliade, l'Odyssée illustrées par la céramique grecque* (Bordeaux 1950-1); J. H. Jongkees-W. J. Verdenius, *Platenatlas bij Homerus* (Haarlem 1955); M. R. Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature* (New York-London 1963); K. Friis Johansen, *The Iliad in Early Greek Art* (Copenhagen 1967); O. Touchefeu-Meynier, *Thèmes odysseens dans l'art antique* (Paris 1970); F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris 1956); M. Detienne, *Homère, Hésiode et Pythagore* (Bruxelles 1962). See also my paper *Archaisch-Griekse wetenschap*, Meded. Kon. Vlaamse Acad., Lett. 30: 5 (1968), 5-7.

<sup>8)</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. G. Lasson (2 Leipzig 1923), 529: "Homer ist das Element, in dem die griechische Welt lebt wie der Mensch in der Luft".

<sup>9)</sup> Pl. *Gorg.* 485 d, *Leg.* 803 e, Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 667 F *ὡς γὰρ πολλῶν ὄντων ποιητῶν ἓνα τὸν κράτιστον ἐξαιρέτως ποιητὴν καλοῦμεν*. Cf. Schmid, *op. cit.*, I, 174 n. 1, Buffière, *op. cit.*, 12 n. 8, A. D. Skiadas, *Homer im griechischen Epigramm* (Athens 1965), 96 n. 3.

<sup>10)</sup> Cf. P. Decharme, *La critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs* (Paris 1904), VII: "Les Grecs ne crurent point que les dieux eux-mêmes eussent été les auteurs de leur théologie, où ils virent seulement l'œuvre des poètes".

<sup>11)</sup> Cf. e.g. A 1, B 484-92, a 1. There is no reason to deny that this feeling of dependence was to him a genuine religious experience. Cf. O. Falter, *Der Dichter und sein Gott bei den Griechen und Römern* (Würzburg 1934),

shared by the public, for it was customary to regard Homer as *θεῖος*, i.e. as a man who had access to the higher world<sup>12</sup>). In later antiquity he was even worshipped as a divine being<sup>13</sup>). From this point of view his work may be called a divine revelation: although it did not serve as a medium for a particular god to reveal himself<sup>14</sup>), it could claim a divine origin for its authority.

The Homeric epic even surpassed the Bible in point of cultural power by its central position in the system of education. The exercises of reading and writing were as soon as possible based on the text of Homer<sup>15</sup>). The next stage was that of learning by heart large portions of the text<sup>16</sup>). There were people who knew the whole *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by heart<sup>17</sup>). These may have been exceptions, but it is safe to assume that the average Greek who had received some primary education had his head full of Homeric

3-11; G. M. Calhoun, *The Poet and the Muses in Homer*, C.P. 33 (1938), 157-66; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1951), 81 and 100 n. 116; Snell, *Entdeckung des Geistes*, 184-6; Maehler, *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>12</sup>) Cf. Democr. B 21, Ar. *Ran.* 1034, Pl. *Io* 530 b, *Phd.* 95 a, *Leg.* 682 a. See also A. Delatte, *Les conceptions de l'enthousiasme chez les philosophes présocratiques* (Paris 1934), 32-3; J. van Camp-P. Canart, *Le sens du mot ΘΕΙΟΣ chez Platon* (Louvain 1956), 41-2, 70, 327-9, and my review, *Mnemos.* IV 14 (1961), 51-3; Sicking, *Aristophanes' Ranae*, 147; A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik* (Heidelberg 1965), 12-13; Skiadas, *Homer im gr. Epigramm*, 63 ff.—The divine character of the poet's inspiration forms the background of Herodotus' assertion that Homer and Hesiod gave shape to Greek religion (II 53, 2). Cf. P. Boyancé, *Le culte des Muses chez les philosophes grecs* (Paris 1937), 121-2: "On se méprend souvent sur la portée de cette affirmation . . . On y voit la marque d'une critique rationaliste et d'une foi moins grande dans les cultes établis. C'est oublier qu'Homère et Hésiode sont inspirés par les Muses".

<sup>13</sup>) Cf. Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, I, 175 n. 2; von Scheliha, *Patroklos*, 401 n. 293; Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère*, 25-6; Skiadas, *op. cit.*, 73.—A schoolboy wrote on his tablet: *Θεός οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος Ὅμηρος* (E. Ziebarth, *Aus der antiken Schule*, 2 Bonn 1913, nr. 26). Cf. also the marble relief of the second cent. B.C. representing Homer crowned by the World and Time, reproduced in A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings, *A Companion to Homer* (London 1962), Pl. 1.

<sup>14</sup>) It approaches this function in Neoplatonism. Cf. Buffière, *op. cit.*, 25 ff.

<sup>15</sup>) Cf. H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (6 Paris 1965), 231 ff., 246-7.

<sup>16</sup>) Pl. *Prot.* 325 e, *Leg.* 810 e. Cf. Marrou, *op. cit.*, 251-2.

<sup>17</sup>) Xen. *Symp.* 3, 5. J. van Leeuwen, *Enchiridium dictionis epicae* (2 Leiden 1918), 23, rightly remarks: "Talia loquentem non induxisset Xenophon, si perpauci inter aequales tantum vigiissent memoria". For a modern parallel cf. T. R. Glover, *The Ancient World* (Cambridge 1935), 22: "I have met a Finnish girl (she was a cook in New York State) who had learned by heart the epic of Finland, the Kalevala, at school in Finland. It had taken her three years". Dio Chrys. 36, 9 maintains that the inhabitants of Olbia *τᾶλλα οὐδέτι σαφῶς ἐλληνίζοντες διὰ τὸ ἐν μέσοις οἰκεῖν τοῖς βαρβάροις ὁμῶς τὴν γε Ἰλιάδα ὀλγοῦ πάντες ἴσασιν ἀπὸ στόματος*, but this must be an exaggeration (cf. van Leeuwen, *loc. cit.*).

lines. This may be concluded from the ease with which people of the most divergent occupations produced quotations from Homer on the most divergent occasions<sup>18</sup>). It should, however, be added that the primary aim of school-teaching was not the achievement of literary education but the formation of character. Aeschylus is made by Aristophanes to say that Homer has won his renown from teaching us manly virtues<sup>19</sup>), and there is every reason to assume that this opinion represents a current view. By absorbing the wisdom of the past and by imitating the virtues of the heroes the pupil was supposed to become a man<sup>20</sup>). As early as the sixth century Xenophanes observed that "from the beginning all have learnt in accordance with Homer"<sup>21</sup>). This means that for the Greeks Homer was a guide for life<sup>22</sup>).

In order to be able to draw such practical guidance from the epic the schoolboys had not only to know the text but also to be familiar with the names and the facts. These were hammered into their heads by means of a catechism which went into considerable detail<sup>23</sup>). This kind of education could also build on a foundation laid in still earlier years. Plato (*Rep.* 377 bc) refers to the fact that children first hear the epic stories from their mothers and nurses and that this is the most impressionable age. So already in the nursery Greek children received a Homeric stamp on their minds.

<sup>18</sup>) Cf. J. Teufer, *De Homero in apophthegmatis usurpato* (Leipzig 1890). One example: Aristotle argues that the great-souled man dislikes being reminded of the benefits he has received, and adds (EN 1124 b 16): "This is why the poet makes Thetis not specify her services to Zeus". Although Achilles had advised her *τῶν νῦν μὲν μῆσασα* (A 407), she expresses herself in general terms (503-4). This has been misunderstood by Rackham (Loeb-ed., 222 n.a), probably because he took 396 *παρὸς* to refer to Zeus.

<sup>19</sup>) *Ran.* 1034-6, quoted above, n. 3.

<sup>20</sup>) Pl. *Prot.* 325 e-6 a, *Symp.* 209 a, Xen. *Symp.* 3, 5. The imitation of the heroic virtues is recommended by Isocrates (4, 159) for the preparation of a new war against Persia: Homer, he argues, has been given a central position in Greek education in order that the young may learn and adopt his hatred of the barbarians and may rival the virtues of the besiegers of Troy and aspire to similar exploits. J. A. K. Thomson, in the *Companion to Homer* (quoted above, n. 13), 3, concludes that "the *Iliad* was an immense stimulus to pan-Hellenic patriotism". Similarly, von Scheliha, *Patroklos*, 295, B. Snell in *Festgabe K. Reinhardt* (Münster-Köln 1952), 8. This is possible but cannot be proved. See also Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère*, 354-6.

<sup>21</sup>) B 10 *ἐξ ἀρχῆς καθ' Ὅμηρον ἐπεὶ μεμαθήκασι πάντες*. M. Untersteiner, *Senofane* (Firenze 1955), CXIX, 129, is wrong in translating *ἐξ ἀρχῆς* by 'fino da antico': the phrase does not refer to ancient times but to the beginning of everyone's education.

<sup>22</sup>) Cf. Plut. *Caes.* 41 *Ὅμηρος καὶ πρῶτος καὶ μέσος καὶ ὕστατος παντὶ παιδὶ καὶ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γέροντι*.

<sup>23</sup>) P.S.I. 1 (1912), nr. 19 (5th cent. A.D.). Cf. Marrou, *op. cit.*, 252. For another catechism from Byzantine times cf. J. Schwartz, *Un manuel scolaire de l'époque byzantine*, Ét. de pap. 7 (1948), 93-109.

This stamp was not easily effaced, for the knowledge of the epic was continually refreshed by listening to the recitations of the rhapsodes who, according to Xenophon, could be heard almost everyday<sup>24</sup>). These recitations had a strongly dramatic character. Plato, in his dialogue *Io*, has drawn a vivid picture of such a performance, in which an audience of 20,000 people was completely carried away by the impressive voice of one man, the rhapsode. When this reciter related piteous incidents he moved the whole audience to tears, and at the frightening passages they looked terrified and astounded<sup>25</sup>). At such occasions the impressions they had received from the epic in childhood were revived and deepened.

From the same Platonic dialogue we learn that the rhapsodes not only recited the Homeric poems but also lectured on them (530 c, 532 bc). The contents of these lectures are not described in detail, but it may be assumed that they consisted of a pragmatical exegesis in which the speaker tried to bring out the topical interest of Homer's views<sup>26</sup>). The evidence for this assumption is twofold. In the first place, the rhapsode *Io* boastfully claims that his ability to produce beautiful thoughts on Homer surpasses that of Metrodorus and Stesimbrotus, who were experts at allegorical interpretation<sup>27</sup>). Secondly, Socrates calls him an 'encomiast of Homer'<sup>28</sup>), and these encomiasts are mentioned again in the *Republic*: they say that Homer is the educator of Greece "and that on questions of human conduct and culture he deserves to be constantly studied as a guide by whom to regulate your whole

<sup>24</sup>) *Symp.* 3, 6. Cf. Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, I, 156-9, H. Flashar, *Der Dialog Ion als Zeugnis Platonischer Philosophie* (Berlin 1958), 22 ff.

<sup>25</sup>) *Io* 535 c and e. When Plato (*Rep.* 595 c, 598 d, 605 c, 607 a, *The.* 152 e) and Aristotle (*Poet.* 1448 b 34-9 a 1) regarded Homer as the originator of tragedy, they did not only think of the fact that he supplied tragedy with much of its subject-matter, but also of his dramatic manner. Aristotle explicitly praises him for his *μυμησεις δραματικαί* (b 34). K. J. Freeman, *Schools of Hellas* (2 London 1912), 97, makes the plausible suggestion that when boys recited the Homeric poems at school, "they acted them, delivering even the narrative with a great deal of gesture, and dramatising the speeches as fully as they could".

<sup>26</sup>) L. Méridier in the introduction to the Budé-edition of the *Io* (Paris 1931), 11, suggests that *Io*'s lecture consisted of "une paraphrase élogieuse, par où il s'attache à faire ressortir les beautés d'Homère", but this certainly was not his primary object.

<sup>27</sup>) *Io* 530 cd. R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford 1968), 35, observes that in the fragments of Stesimbrotus' book on Homer "there is not the slightest trace of allegorical interpretation". But Xen. *Symp.* 3, 6 seems to show that he occupied himself with *ὑπόνοια*. See further Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère*, 132-5. For the question whether the rhapsodes, too, practised allegorical interpretation cf. my article *L'Ion de Platon*, *Mnemos.* III 11 (1943) [233-62], 252-3.

<sup>28</sup>) "*Ομήρου ἐπαινήτης* (536 d, 541 e, 542 b). LSJ wrongly translate *ἐπαινέω* at 536 d and 541 e by 'recite, declaim publicly'.

life" 29). According to these people, Homer "knows all about arts and crafts, and all about human virtue and vice, and divine matters" (598 de).

It has been suggested that these encomiasts of Homer were a kind of sect mainly consisting of sophists 30). It is certainly true that a special interest in Homer was found among the sophists 31), but they were no out-and-out supporters of the poet. They did not refrain from criticizing him 32), and in general used the poets for no other purpose than supporting their own theories 33). Plato is more likely to have the rhapsodes in mind, for the creed of the encomiasts of Homer as described in the *Republic* fully corresponds to the practice of the rhapsode *Io* as described in the dialogue of the same name. *Io*, for instance, maintains that such an art as strategy can best be learned from Homer 34). It should not be concluded, however, that the circle of votaries of Homer was confined to the rhapsodes. At the beginning of the dialogue *Protagoras* Socrates is meeting a friend who gives voice to his opinion that Alcibiades is still a beautiful young man, although his beard is beginning to grow. Socrates then says: "What of his beard? Are you not an encomiast of Homer, who said that the age when the beard first appears is most charming?" (309 ab). This text shows that besides the rhapsodes there were other people who referred to Homer for everything. They were probably not looked upon as eccentric, for the wisdom of Homer was not only acknowledged within the class-room: he was commonly regarded as the wise poet *par excellence* 35). It may further be concluded that the lectures of the rhapsodes were readily absorbed by any educated

29) *Rep.* 606 e, transl. F. M. Cornford (Oxford 1941).

30) Jæger, *Paideia*, II, 360, who even assumes that Plato "is attacking one particular essay or speech by a sophist".

31) Cf. Pl. *Prot.* 316 d, *Alc. min.* 364 c, 369 c, Isocr. 12, 18, and O. Friedel, *De sophistarum studiis Homericis* (Halle 1873).

32) Cf. e.g. schol. Y 269, Pl. *Prot.* 338 e-9 a, Ar. *Poet.* 1456 b 15. See also W. Vollgraff, *L'oraison funèbre de Gorgias* (Leiden 1952), 98 ff., Pfeiffer, *Hist. of Class. Scholarship*, 37-8, W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, III (Cambridge 1969), 221 n. 2.

33) Cf. e.g. Ar. *Nub.* 1055-7. See further C. P. Gunning, *De sophistis Graeciae praeceptoribus* (Amsterdam 1915), 53, W. Nestle, *Platon, Protagoras* (Leipzig-Berlin 1931), 8 n. 1, J. Tate, C.Q. 27 (1933), 77, Vollgraff, *op. cit.*, 98-9.

34) *Io* 540 d ff. Cf. also 530 d and *Rep.* 599 e, where the 'Ὀμηρίδαι (i.e. the guild of the rhapsodes) appear as 'encomiasts of Homer'.

35) Cf. Heracl. B 56 τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφώτατος πάντων, Pl. *The.* 194 e δ πάσσοφος ποιητής, Leg. 776 e δ σοφώτατος ἡμῖν τῶν ποιητῶν, Isocr. 13, 2 "Ὀμηρος ὁ μεγίστην ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ δόξαν εἰληφώς, Kaibel, *Epigr. Gr.* 1093 (from the *Tabulae Iliacae*) Ὡ φίλε παῖ, Θεοδῶρηον μάθε τάξιν Ὀμήρου, ὄφρα δαεῖς πάσης μέτρον ἔχῃς σοφίας. See also Skiadas, *Homer im gr. Epigramm*, 100-1.

Greek, for the lessons he heard from them concurred with the lessons he had received at school.

There may have been a few exceptions. The rhapsode *Io* is ridiculed by Socrates, and Xenophon makes Antisthenes put the rhetorical question: "Do you know a more silly sort of people than the rhapsodes?" (*Symp.* 3, 6). But Socrates chooses *Io* as an object of ridicule for a special reason: the wisdom to which the rhapsode pretends is a test case serving to show the weakness of any knowledge not based on rational principles<sup>36</sup>). The remark made by Antisthenes seems to be inspired by professional jealousy. We have seen that the rhapsode *Io* compares his activity as a lecturer with that of the allegorists. Now Antisthenes used Homeric texts as themes for his sermons, in which he indulged in moralizing interpretations<sup>37</sup>). It is still a debated question whether his explanations should be called allegorical<sup>38</sup>). However that may be, Antisthenes probably looked upon the rhapsodes as his rivals, and this accounts for his unfavourable judgment.

Antisthenes was not the only one who sought for a moral sense in the epic stories. Anaxagoras is said to have been the first to maintain that the main subjects of Homer's poetry are virtue and justice<sup>39</sup>), but such views were probably fairly current. At any rate they were popular among the Pythagoreans<sup>40</sup>). It is interesting to note that even a sober mind like Aristotle did not refrain from moralizing interpretations of Homer. In the ninth book of the *Iliad* (203-4) Achilles, when he sees Aias and Odysseus approaching his tent, says to Patroclus: "Put less water in the wine, for here are my dearest friends". Aristotle thought this inappropriate, since it would characterize the heroes as toppers; so he suggested that

<sup>36</sup>) Cf. *L'Ion de Platon* (quoted above, n. 27), 242 ff.

<sup>37</sup>) Fr. 25-33 Mullach, 51-60 Deleva Caizzi. Cf. F. Wehrli, *Zur Geschichte der allegorischen Deutung Homers im Altertum* (Borna-Leipzig 1928), 64 ff.; J. Tate, C.Q. 24 (1930), 5-10, Eran. 51 (1953), 14-22; J. Geffcken, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, II 2 (Heidelberg 1934), 21 n. 34; F. Caizzi, Stud. Urbin. N.S.B. n. 1-2 (1964), 43 ff.

<sup>38</sup>) Cf. Caizzi, *op. cit.*, 58-60; Pfeiffer, *Hist. of Class. Scholarship*, 36-7. Tate, C.Q. 24 (1930), 5, maintains: "not one of them [the fragments of A.] sets aside the literal sense in favour of a deeper meaning", but this seems to imply a too narrow definition of allegorism (cf. *L'Ion de Platon*, 253 n. 3). Pfeiffer (*loc. cit.*) writes: "Homer was to Antisthenes an authority for moral doctrines; he paid no attention either to hidden meanings or to the literal sense". But where could Homer's moral authority be found except in hidden meanings? Such titles as *Περὶ τοῦ Κύνλωπος ἢ περὶ μέθης* clearly point to allegorism.

<sup>39</sup>) Diog. L. II 11. Wehrli, *Alleg. Deutung*, 67, objects that Anaxagoras is not likely to have been the first to recognize the moral signification of the epic. But An. may have been the first to systematize the current moral interpretations.

<sup>40</sup>) Cf. A. Delatte, *Études sur la littérature pythagoricienne* (Paris 1915), 112 ff.

the phrase *ζωρότερον κέραει* does not mean 'mix it stronger' but 'mix it quicker'<sup>41</sup>). He did so contrary to his better knowledge, for *ζωρός* was commonly used for a strong mixture<sup>42</sup>).

It is well-known that Plato did not make such attempts at saving Homer but simply banished him from his ideal state (*Rep.* 398 a). This negative fact, however, is of the highest importance for our problem, for it confirms our impression that the moral influence of the Homeric epic must have been considerable. Plato starts from the same assumption as his compatriots, viz. that a poet should be able to make men better in private and public life (*Rep.* 599 d). But he concludes that Homer, instead of making men better, makes them worse by inducing them to rely more on their emotions than on reason<sup>43</sup>). This emotionalism was strengthened by the fact that a Greek audience easily assimilated its feelings to those of the *dramatis personae*<sup>44</sup>). But Plato has also in view the habit of justifying one's opinions and actions by appealing to mythological examples and precedents. An adulterer could excuse his conduct by referring to the escapades of Zeus and arguing that a human being could not be blamed for imitating things approved by the gods<sup>45</sup>). A man ill-treating his father could do the same and quote

<sup>41</sup>) *Poet.* 1461 a 14. Cf. H. Hintenlang, *Untersuchungen zu den Homer-Aporien des Aristoteles* (diss. Heidelberg 1961), 64-5.

<sup>42</sup>) E.g. *Hdt.* VI 84, 3, *Emp.* B 35, 15 (quoted by Aristotle at 1461 a 251), *Theophr. Char.* 4, 9.—Another moralizing interpretation is his treatment of B 183, where Odysseus takes off his cloak when he has to bring a message to the Greeks. This again was considered to be unbecoming for a hero, and Aristotle invented the following justification: Odysseus made the unseemly gesture in order to attract the attention of the Greeks (fr. 143 Rose; cf. Hintenlang, *op. cit.*, 102-5). It is remarkable that Ar., in his moralistic zeal, overlooked the most obvious explanation, viz. that Odysseus took off his cloak to be able to run faster (cf. the parallel § 499-501). See also fr. 155, 165, 174 (Hintenlang, 95 ff.).—In another case Ar. seems to have preserved the original text, although it was altered by others for moral reasons: in *Poet.* 1461 a 22 and *Soph. El.* 166 b 6 he quotes B 15 as *δίδομεν δέ οἱ εὐχος ἀρέσθαι* instead of *Τρώεσσι δὲ κήδε' ἐφήππαι*. The latter reading was probably invented to free Zeus of the blame of deception (cf. *Pl. Rep.* 383 a).—On Ar. as a 'philologist' cf. Pfeiffer, *Hist. of Class. Scholarship*, 67-73.

<sup>43</sup>) Cf. my article *Platon et la poésie*, *Mnemos.* III 12 (1944) [118-50], 126-8.

<sup>44</sup>) In addition to the passage already quoted from the *Io* (535 e) cf. *Rep.* 605 cd: "When we listen to some hero in Homer or on the tragic stage moaning over his sorrows in a long tirade, or to a chorus beating their breasts as they chant a lament, you know how the best of us enjoy giving ourselves up to follow the performance with eager sympathy" (Cornford's transl.).

<sup>45</sup>) Cf. Ar. *Nub.* 1079-82, *Eur. Tro.* 948-50, *Ion* 449-51. See further Vollgraff, *L'oraison funèbre de Gorgias*, 15-7. The argument that a man should not try to be stronger than the gods greatly appealed to the religious feeling of the Greeks. E.g. Isocrates (13, 2) argues that Homer describes the gods as deliberating on the future in order to show that to foresee the future is difficult even for the gods and therefore impossible to men.

the story of Zeus who put his father Kronos in irons<sup>46</sup>). It is true that these stories are mentioned only incidentally in the *Iliad* (8, 203-4, 317-27), but they must have formed part of other epic poems, and in the classical period most of these were ascribed to Homer himself<sup>47</sup>). Moreover—and this is more important—it was Homer who had definitely established the authoritative position occupied by Zeus and the other Olympians in Greek religion<sup>48</sup>). Plato therefore was fully justified in making this poet chiefly responsible for the corrupting influence of mythology. In order to counter this influence he devises an elaborate system of censorship (*Rep.* 377 e ff.), from which we get a further idea of the ease with which the Greeks adduced mythological examples to cover their own misconduct. For instance, Plato forbids telling the stories of the rape of Helen committed by Theseus, the son of Poseidon, and of the attempt to abduct Persephone made by Pirithous, the son of Zeus, for young people, he says, will become very lenient with their own misdeeds if they know that similar actions were committed by children of the gods<sup>49</sup>). That this is no figment of Plato's imagination is apparent from the words Lucian attributes to Menippus, a philosopher from the third century B.C.: "While I was a boy, when I heard from Homer and Hesiod about wars and quarrels, not only of the demigods but of the gods themselves, and besides about their adulterous amours

<sup>46</sup>) Pl. *Euth.* 5 e. A. E. Taylor, *Plato, the Man and his Work* (4 London 1937), 150 n. 1, maintains that such stories "were not taken seriously by Athenians in general". Similarly, Burnet in his commentary on *Euth.* 6 a 8 thinks that respectable Athenians rejected them and that Euthyphro was "a sectary of some kind" (*ad* 2 a 1; cf. *ad* 6 b 5). J. Tate, C.Q. 27 (1933), 78, argues that that what differentiates him from the other Athenians "is his acceptance of the new (sophistic) principle that the actions of the gods imply rules for men". But such passages as Aesch. *Eum.* 641, Eur. *H.F.* 1317-18, Ar. *Nub.* 904-6, Pl. *Rep.* 378 b show that the argument was a traditional one. H. Bolkestein, *De godsdienst in het leven der Grieken gedurende hun bloeitijd* (Haarlem 1947), 52-6, argues (1) that the ideas put forward on the stage do not always represent the opinions actually held in real life, and (2) that intellectuals such as Plato are inclined to overrate the influence of literature. But (1) Greek drama was much more rooted in real life than modern drama, and (2) Plato was not an isolated man of letters but had a keen eye for the weaknesses of his fellow-citizens.

<sup>47</sup>) Cf. Pfeiffer, *Hist. of Class. Scholarship*, 43-4.

<sup>48</sup>) See below, p. 17 ff.

<sup>49</sup>) *Rep.* 391 ce. Cf. also *Leg.* 941 b and Isocr. 11, 38. This criticism was foreshadowed by Xenophanes, who wrote (B 11) that Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods all actions that are shameful and a reproach among men, such as theft, adultery, and deception. It is a recurrent theme in Christian apologetics. Cf. J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig-Berlin 1907), XVIII and 62, and W. C. van Unnik, *Het karakter van de Oudchristelijke apologetiek in de pseudo-Justiniaanse 'Oratio ad Graecos'*, Ned. Theol. Ts. 7 (1953), 129-41, who rightly concludes (139) that as late as the 2nd cent. A.D. the Olympic religion was a reality.

and assaults and abductions and lawsuits and banishing fathers and marrying sisters, I thought that all these things were right, and I felt an uncommon impulsion toward them. But when I came of age, I found that the laws contradicted the poets and forbade adultery, quarrelling, and theft. So I was plunged into great uncertainty, not knowing how to deal with my own case; for the gods would never have committed adultery and quarrelled with each other, I thought, unless they deemed these actions right, and the lawgivers would not recommend the opposite course unless they supposed it to be advantageous" 50). A similar moral crisis will probably have been rather common among young people in earlier centuries.

This is not to suggest that Homer's influence on Greek morals was all for evil. Plato himself admits that the epic contains a number of positive values, such as the self-reproof of Odysseus, "Endure, my heart, for worse hast thou endured" 51). In general, it may be said that the constructive elements of Greek ethics have developed from the Homeric poems. This does not mean that the cardinal virtues are directly exemplified by the epic heroes. For instance, *σωφροσύνη* is not a specific heroic virtue 52), but the ways in which the self-assertion of Agamemnon, Achilles, Patroclus, and Hector comes to grief in the *Iliad* are clear, though indirect, manifestations of the necessity of self-restraint and self-knowledge 53).

We must return to Plato for a moment. In spite of his conviction that a poet is devoid of rational insight, he sometimes makes Socrates quote Homeric lines in support of his own views. In the *Laches*, for instance, Socrates argues that true bravery does not exclude the possibility of retreating before the enemy, and that Homer already praised the horses of Aeneas for being equally quick in pursuit and in retreat and called Aeneas himself a 'master of retreat' 54). In such cases Socrates and Plato do not credit

50) *Necyom.* 3. Transl. A. M. Harmon (Loeb Library) with slight modifications.

51) *Rep.* 390 d, referring to *v* 18.

52) Cf. H. North, *Sophrosyne. Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1966), 2-6.

53) Cf. J. T. Sheppard, *The Heroic Sophrosyne and the Form of Homer's Poetry*, J.H.S. 40 (1920) [47-67], 47-57. See also North, *op. cit.*, 6-7.

54) *Lach.* 191 ab, E 223, 272, © 108. The true meaning of *μῆστορ φόβου* is 'originator of retreat'. In *Leg.* 904 e, too, Plato twists the meaning of a Homeric phrase (taking *δίκη* at τ 43 to mean 'judgment') for a moralizing effect.—The practice of referring to the testimony of Homer was characteristic of the historical Socrates, as is apparent from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (e.g. I 2, 56). He even subjected the text to allegorizing interpretations; e.g. *Mem.* I 3, 7 he explains the fact that the companions of Odysseus are transformed by Circe into swine and wolves as the influence of self-indulgence turning men into beasts. This interpretation was adopted by Dio Chrys.

Homer with any real authority but speak in a playful vein<sup>55</sup>). Their quotations have a purely illustrative value, but still they are characteristic of the Greek veneration of Homer, for they show that even the most enlightened minds could not completely disengage themselves from the practice of quoting Homeric parallels for any opinion to defend.

This applies also to the Presocratic philosophers. Although they felt themselves infinitely superior to the poet, they could not completely disregard him. Heraclitus, for instance, declared that Homer deserved to be excluded from the contests of the reciters, probably because Strife is at the root of Heraclitus' world-picture and Homer expressed the wish that strife might disappear from the world<sup>56</sup>). This criticism did not preclude the philosopher from calling Homer "wiser than all the other Greeks" (B 56). This appreciation explains why Heraclitus worried so much about Homer's condemnation of strife. He obviously felt that Homer's words threatened to undermine the foundation of his own philosophy and therefore opposed them as sharply as possible.

In point of fact, in the line referred to by Heraclitus (*Iliad* 18, 107) Homer does not pronounce his own opinion but makes Achilles in an access of melancholy utter the wish, "May strife disappear from the world". The authority of Homer was such that, just as with the Bible, passages were torn from their context and given an independent value<sup>57</sup>).

The text of Homer was sometimes altered in order to make it fit for supporting a preconceived opinion. Aristotle (*P.A.* 673 a 14) relates that those who believed that a man's head could continue speaking after it had been cut off, cited the Homeric line (*Iliad* 10, 457, *Od.* 22, 329), "As he spoke, his head was mingled with the dust", but altered *φθεγγομένου* into *φθεγγομένη*, "as it spoke".

The text was falsified also for political purposes. In the second book of the *Iliad* (553-4) the Athenian commander Menestheus is said to excel all others in marshalling horses and men. These lines were alluded to in an inscription set up by the Athenians in honour

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8, 21 and by Erasmus in his treatise *De ratione studii*. See also Wehrli, *Alleg. Deutung*, 74-5.

<sup>55</sup>) Cf. *Platon et la poésie* (quoted above, n. 43), 141 ff.

<sup>56</sup>) Heracl. B 42, A 22. Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, I (Cambridge 1962), 447.

<sup>57</sup>) Another example of the tendency to attribute a general or abstract meaning to isolated passages or phrases is an argument advanced by Anaxagoras, who maintained that the fundamental colour of snow is black, since snow consists of water, and water is called 'dark' by Homer (A 97-8). He overlooked the obvious objection that snow is regarded by Homer as white (K 437).

of the victory over the Persians at the Strymon (Aeschin. 3, 185), and they were quoted by an Athenian envoy at Syracuse in support of the claim of his fellow-citizens to take command of an eventual expedition against the Persians (Hdt. VII 161, 3). Pericles probably had the passage in mind when he argued that the greatness of Athens is so obvious that it does not need the praises of Homer (Thuc. II 41, 4). Now elsewhere in the *Iliad* Menestheus is always a second-rate warrior<sup>58</sup>). Zenodotus therefore was certainly right in rejecting the lines as an interpolation serving to compensate the fact that the Athenians play such an insignificant role in the expedition against Troy<sup>59</sup>).

The Homeric epic was used not only for moral and political guidance but also for technical instruction, especially in the fields of housekeeping, warfare, and rhetoric<sup>60</sup>). In the case of housekeeping and warfare it is not easy for us to imagine the practical value of Homer's descriptions, and so various attempts have been

<sup>58</sup>) Cf. Leaf *ad loc.*; J. A. Scott, *The Unity of Homer* (Berkeley 1921), 48-9; D. L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1959), 145-7. H. J. Rose's argument, that the Athenians, if they had had the opportunity of inserting pro-Athenian passages, would have done so on a much larger scale (*Handbook of Greek Literature*, 4 London 1950, 49 n. 85), is inconvincing.

<sup>59</sup>) Hdt. V 94, 2 also shows that it was important to the Athenians to be certified participants in the Trojan expedition.—The question whether B 557-8 are a forgery inserted to strengthen the claims of the Athenians to Salamis is more difficult to decide. Cf. Leaf, *Prolegomena*, XVIII; Scott, *op. cit.*, 49-51; T. W. Allen, *The Homeric Catalogue of Ships* (Cambridge 1921), 56-7; Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, I, 160-1; M. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (Oxford 1950), 447-8; P. von der Mühl, *Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (Basel 1952), 56-9; W. Spoerri, *Lex. frühgr. Epos*, 222; J. A. Davison, T.A.P.A. 86 (1955), 15-8; E. Heitsch, *Herm.* 96 (1968), 641-60.

<sup>60</sup>) Xen. *Symp.* 4, 6; Niceratus, who knows the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by heart, says: ὅστις ἂν οὐκ ἔμελλεν βούληται ἢ οἰκονομικὸς ἢ δημηγορικὸς ἢ στρατηγικὸς γενέσθαι . . . ἐμὲ θεραπευέτω, *Ar. Ran.* 1034-6 "Ὀμηρὸς . . . χρηστὸν ἐδίδαξεν, τάξεις, ἀρετάς, ὀπλίσις ἀνδρῶν, *Pl. Rep.* 598 de τινῶν ἀκούομεν ὅτι οὗτοι (Homer and the tragedians) πάσας μὲν τέχνας ἐπίστανται, *Io* 540 e-1 b: the rhapsode *Io* claims to have learnt generalship from Homer. In later antiquity such claims became even more extravagant: cf. Liban. *Gent.* 1, VIII p. 106 F. ὁ μὲν πολεμικὸς "Ὀμηρον θαυμάζέτω τῶν τακτικῶν, ὁ δ' αὖ τεκτονικὸς τῶν περὶ τεκτονικῆς ἐμπειρῶς ἐξημέων. οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τοὺς λατρῶς εἰποι τις ἂν ἀπορεῖν ὄθεν αὐτὸν ἀγασθῆσονται. ἴδιοι δ' ἂν καὶ ἡνίοχος καὶ ναυτικὸς ἀμφοτέρω τὰς ἑαυτῶν τέχνας παρ' αὐτῷ. μακρὸν δ' ἂν εἴη λέγειν μαντικὴν, χαλκευτικὴν, τοὺς ὑπὲρ δικαιοσύνης, τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῶν θεῶν λόγους, ἀλλ' ὁ μοι δοκεῖ κοινῇ πάντα ὄφελειν, τοῦτο ἔγωγέ φημι τὰς γνώμας, ἃν αἱ μὲν εἰργονοῖσι τῶν πονηρῶν, αἱ δὲ ἐπαίρουσι πρὸς τὰ χρηστά. Cf. also J. Tate, *C.Q.* 22 (1928), 70: "That the arts which Homer knew included strategy, was a view to be reckoned with even in the second century of the present era; this is clear from the rhetorical treatise of Hermogenes (*Rhet. Gr.* III p. 375), who praises Homer as the best of poets and rhetors, but adds regretfully that perhaps he is not the best of generals or statesmen, although he produced a most excellent imitation of such in accordance with the best models".

made to explain the testimonies away <sup>61</sup>). But Plato's persistent criticism of the technical competence of the poets shows that the public really looked for such practical knowledge in the Homeric poems <sup>62</sup>). The use of these poems for rhetorical instruction played an important part in the teaching of the sophists <sup>63</sup>), but it was popular also in wider circles. The rhapsode *Io*, for instance, argues that we can learn from Homer the ways of speaking suitable to a man and a woman, a slave and a freeman, a subordinate and a commander (540 b). Plato mocks at this practice by speaking of "the manuals of oratory composed by Nestor and Odysseus in their leisure hours at Troy" <sup>64</sup>).

The words of *Io* just quoted show that there was a close connection between rhetoric and psychology. The sophist Hippias (Plato *Hipp. min.* 364c-5 c) taught his pupils to regard Achilles as a model of bravery, Nestor of wisdom, and Odysseus of cunning. This may seem to us not a very spectacular discovery, but it should be realized that the elementary principles of psychological orientation had still to be mastered by the general public. Homer helped them in getting a clearer view in this field, and what the sophists did was developing an approach which had already been practised in the primary schools. There the Greeks had been accustomed to regard the Homeric heroes as models worth of imitating, now they learned more consciously to concentrate their attention on the fundamental traits of character. The next step was to apply this knowledge to an analysis of contemporary characters. Thus in

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<sup>61</sup>) E.g. with reference to Ar. *Ran.* 1034-6 Sicking, *Aristophanes' Ranae*, 140, writes: "Niet zozeer de genoemde concreta als wel de heroïsche sfeer van het epos zullen belangrijk zijn geacht". V. Goldschmidt, *Le problème de la tragédie d'après Platon*, R.E.G. 61 (1948) [19-63], 26 n. 4, suggests that "Aristophane ajoute aux *ἀρεταί* les *ὀπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν* pour permettre à Dionysos la plaisanterie sur Pantaclês qui, ayant mal profité des leçons homériques, avait ajusté trop tôt sa jugulaire". But what about *τάξεις*? *Ibid.*: "Le Banquet de Xénophon III 5-IV 7 s'inspire manifestement dans sa critique homérique de l'Ion", but this does not explain the claims of Niceratus. *Ibid.* on Pl. *Rep.* 598 d: "Il semble plutôt que ces 'techniques' étaient principalement la médecine ou l'art du commandement suprême, c'est-à-dire des connaissances traditionnellement revêtues d'un aspect religieux". But the text has *πάσας τέχνας*. 26 n. 6 on *Io*: "Si Socrate peut l'amener à revendiquer l'art du stratège, c'est d'abord à cause du prestige moral (les exhortations, 540 d 2) de cet art". But such a moral point of view is not evident from the context.

<sup>62</sup>) Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, 25, rightly observes that the reference to technical knowledge is a typical feature of Socratic dialectics, but this does not imply that it always has a purely analogical function.

<sup>63</sup>) See above, n. 31.

<sup>64</sup>) *Phdr.* 261 b. Odysseus is called the prototype of the *ἀσφαλής ῥήτωρ* by Socrates in Xen. *Mem.* IV 6, 15. Antisthenes (fr. 51 Caizzi) explained the epithet *πολύτροπος* as *ἐπιστάμενος πολλοῦς τρόπους λόγων*. See further Wehrli, *Alleg. Deutung*, 6 ff.

Plato's *Symposium* (221 cd) Alcibiades observes that Brasidas may be compared with Achilles, Pericles with Nestor and Antenor — but Socrates is incomparable. There is some evidence for the assumption that such comparisons formed an amusement at social gatherings, where those present had to guess the real names of the persons denoted by mythological names <sup>65</sup>).

The last, and not the least important, domain of Homer's educational influence to be discussed is that of religion. His religious authority appears from the fact that oracles were derived from his work <sup>66</sup>), that his verses were used as incantations, and were inscribed on amulets <sup>67</sup>). Still more important was his influence on the official cult. Herodotus (II 53, 2) says that Homer and Hesiod defined the descent of the gods, gave them their surnames, divided their offices and capacities, and described their forms <sup>68</sup>). It is especially in the last respect that Homer left his mark on the religious imagination of the Greeks. The superhuman beauty of the gods combined with their human form is one of the most essential elements of Greek religion <sup>69</sup>). But also special forms of the gods were due to Homeric influence. For instance, Pisistratus seems to have introduced the figure of the Homeric, i.e. youthful and martial, Athena into Athens to replace an older, matronly goddess <sup>70</sup>). It is probably no mere accident that at the same time — in the middle of the sixth century B.C. — the armed Athena accompanied by an owl begins to appear on Athenian vases <sup>71</sup>). This may reflect Pisistratus' effort to give the Homeric poems and the Homeric views their place in Athenian culture <sup>72</sup>). The addition

<sup>65</sup>) Cf. Pl. *Meno* 80 c (and Thompson *ad loc.*), *Phdr.* 261 bc.

<sup>66</sup>) Cf. Ar. *Pax* 1088–94 and Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, I, 175 n. 9.

<sup>67</sup>) Cf. Emp. A 15 and Schmid, *loc. cit.*, Boyancé, *Le culte des Muses*, 126 ff.

<sup>68</sup>) See above, n. 12.

<sup>69</sup>) Cf. Scheliha, *Patroklos*, 407; Bolkestein, *De godsdienst in het leven der Grieken*, 56–7.

<sup>70</sup>) W. Zschitzschmann, *Pisistratos und die Akropolis*, *Klio* 27 (1934), 209–17, esp. 214; Scheliha, *op. cit.*, 305. Cf. also the famous story of the armed Athena bringing back Pisistratus on her chariot from exile (Hdt. I 60). This example sufficiently disproves the view of Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, I, 176: “die religiösen Vorstellungen Homers haben auf den Kultus der griechischen Städte im einzelnen keinen Einfluss von irgendwelcher Bedeutung ausgeübt . . . mochte die bildende Kunst, von Homer inspiriert, Göttergestalten von höchster Schönheit schaffen — die magischen Kräfte waren und blieben an die hässlichen alten Götterpuppen gebunden, die von Urzeiten her in den Tempeln verwahrt wurden”.

<sup>71</sup>) Cf. J. H. Jongkees, *Notes on the Coinage of Athens*, VIII: *The Owl of Athens*, *Mnemos.* IV 5 (1952), 28 ff. The explanations mentioned on pp. 37–8 are unconvincing.

<sup>72</sup>) Cf. J. A. Davison in *Companion to Homer*, 238.

of the owl is certainly to be explained from the interpretation of *γλαυκῶπις* as 'with owl-eyes' <sup>73</sup>).

It has often been assumed that the Olympian pantheon was an artificial construction, a literary fiction which did not appeal to the religious feelings of the common people <sup>74</sup>). This is a serious misunderstanding, as will appear from the following considerations. (1) The criticisms levelled at Homer's representation of the gods by Xenophanes <sup>75</sup>) and Plato show that the Olympian gods were the object of a living belief that had to be reckoned with. (2) In Plato's *Euthyphro* (6 a) Socrates supposes that the charge of impiety brought against him is based on the fact that he does not believe in such tales as the imprisonment of Kronos by Zeus. He probably used to say, just as Euripides (fr. 292, 7), that if the gods do shameful things they are no gods. When his contemporaries interpreted such criticism as impiety, they obviously took the gods of mythology to be the real gods <sup>76</sup>). (3) According to Plato (*Leg.*

<sup>73</sup>) Jongkees, *op. cit.*, 32 ff., argued that the combination of the armed Athena and an owl made its first appearance on Athenian coins at the same time and that it was the coins that made the picture popular. This dating, however, has been disputed and there is a tendency to put it down to the last quarter of the century. Cf. E. J. P. Raven, *Problems of the Earliest Owls of Athens*, in C. M. Kraay-G. K. Jenkins, *Essays in Greek Coinage Presented to S. Robinson* (Oxford 1968), 40-58.

<sup>74</sup>) E.g. O. Kern, *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 1935, 256-7: "zur Empfängnis des Glaubens an die grossen olympischen Götter haben sie [the Homeric poems] nie geführt . . . Homers Götter sind keine lebendigen"; Nilsson, *Gesch. d. gr. Religion*, I, 734: "Die athenischen Bürger haben persönlich den kleinen Göttern gehuldigt, die Staatsreligion mit ihren grossen Göttern und vielen Festen war sozusagen das Sonntagskleid"; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London 1950), 214: "We have already seen how impossible it was to conceive of anything like human communion with the divine in connexion with the gods of Homer. Their relations with men are purely external", 276: "The sway of Homer's marvellous literary creations over Greek religious thought was certainly artificial, and indeed a hindrance to the development of a real and inward religion"; Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, IV (München 1946), 558: "Die tiefen und echt religiösen Gedanken der Theodizee des Solon, Aischylos, Pindaros, verbunden mit der in dem neuen Apollon und in der Heraklesfigur, später in Asklepios verkörperten Retteridee, hätten Bausteine für eine wurzelechte Erneuerung griechischer Religion abgeben können, wenn nicht die Verwachsung mit dem anders gerichteten Geist der epischen Sage ein Hindernis normaler Entwicklung gebildet hätte, das eine Verkümmernng des religiösen Sinnes und eine Entseelung des Staatskultes zur Folge hatte"; Bolkestein, *De godsdienst in het leven der Grieken*, 51: "In de goden zijner verhalen heeft Homerus zelf zomin als zijn hoorders geloofd: hoe zouden zij dan voorwerp van godsdienstig geloof en godsdienstige verering zijn geweest bij de Grieken van de historische tijd?"

<sup>75</sup>) It is interesting to add that Xenophanes (B 23-26) developed the positive qualities of his own god from the negation of the characteristics of the Homeric gods: plurality, corporeity, mobility. Cf. J. Tate, *C.Q.* 28 (1934), 105-7; F. Mehmel, *Homer und die Griechen*, *Ant. u. Abendl.* 4 (1954) [16-41], 22.

<sup>76</sup>) Cf. J. Tate, *Plato, Socrates, and the Myths*, *C.Q.* 30 (1936) [142-5],

887 de), the use of telling the traditional myths to young children is that these get convinced of the existence of the gods. (4) Aristotle (*Poet.* 1460 b 36) observes that the tales about the gods may be as wrong as Xenophanes thought them to be: people still do tell them. He distinguishes this example from the case where an ancient belief is no longer held. So it may be concluded that the belief in the Olympian gods was still unshaken in Aristotle's times <sup>77</sup>).

It might be objected that this belief referred to the gods of the state and that a state-religion usually does not embody the intimate and personal feelings of the citizens. But the Greek city-state, the *polis*, formed part of the very substance of the citizen's life; it was a divine element to which the gods belonged as its supreme manifestation, living the same life as the citizens except on a higher level <sup>78</sup>). In this atmosphere personal religion largely coincided with state-religion <sup>79</sup>).

144. Burnet (*ad Euth.* 6 a) argues that Socrates' supposition is not to be taken seriously: "No one could be prosecuted for disbelieving Hesiod's *Theogony*. The conception of orthodoxy as implying assent to the historical character of certain documents was unknown to ordinary Greeks, who had no 'sacred books' ". Similarly, *Greek Philosophy* (London 1914), 183, and H. Gundert, *Gymn.* 61 (1954), 529 n. 6. Socrates, however, did not disbelieve a sacred book but sacred tales which formed part of a current belief. Burnet says: "when Euripides makes Heracles exclaim that they [such stories about the gods] are 'the sorry tales of poets' (*Her. Fur.* 1346 *αἰδιῶν οἶδε δόσθηροι λόγοι*) he was saying nothing to shock Athenian sentiment". But when Euripides was accused of atheism (cf. *Ar. Thesm.* 451) and left Athens, the fear of an action for *ἀσέβεια* probably was one of his motives. Cf. Schmid, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, III (1940), 325. Decharme, *Critique* (quoted above, n. 10), VII, was wrong in thinking that "critiquer les fables sacrées . . . c'était . . . s'en prendre aux poètes d'autrefois; ce n'était pas attaquer les dieux". Similarly, M. P. Nilsson, *Greek Piety* (Oxford 1948), 8: "everyone might think and say what he chose concerning the gods, for it was not the communal religion, but only poetry and myth which described the gods' appearance and activity".

<sup>77</sup>) It is difficult to say how long this belief persisted. Libanius is perhaps not a very reliable historian, but it is interesting to see that he admonishes his fellow-citizens at Antiochia to dedicate their town to the gods whose existence they have learned in childhood from Homer and Hesiod (*or.* XVII 4). Cf. Tate, *C.Q.* 27 (1933), 76. See also above, n. 49.

<sup>78</sup>) Cf. H. D. F. Kitto, *The City*, in *The Living Heritage of Greek Antiquity* (Den Haag 1967), 162-4: "We must not forget the strong emotions and no doubt strong reflections generated by the thought that the gods, or some of them, had their chosen homes in the city . . . they were unseen Powers living among the citizens . . . The polis, like food, drink, the sea, was elemental, something that belonged to the very nature of things; therefore, like them, it had its inherent *theoi*; like them, it was 'divine' ". Cf. also L. R. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* (London 1912), 63 ff.; F. Solmsen, *Plato's Theology* (Ithaca-New York 1942), Ch. I: 'Religion in the City-State'; A. J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1954), 6 ff.; C. J. Herington, *Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias* (Manchester 1955), 55-6.

<sup>79</sup>) Cf. Solmsen, *op. cit.*, 6: "The connection between the city and her god or goddess is so close that it is no overstatement to say that they are identical", 8: "Piety of a non-political character or a purely secular patriotism

We shall now pass from the actual influence of Homer on Greek life to the problem of his educational intention. I have already pointed out that Werner Jaeger greatly overrated the educational aspect of the epic and that his thesis has not commended itself to the scholarly world. Yet a few years ago it was revived by Eric Havelock<sup>80</sup>), who gave it a new turn by emphasizing the encyclopaedic rather than the moral character of Homer's didacticism. But the didacticism itself is given an even more central and absolute position than it had been done by Jaeger. Havelock contends "that the warp and woof of Homer is didactic, and that the tale is made subservient to the task of accommodating the weight of educational materials which lie within it"<sup>81</sup>). For instance, he tries to show that the tale of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in the first book of the *Iliad* "becomes in the first instance a vehicle for illustrating the governing apparatus of the Achaean society"<sup>82</sup>). One example will suffice to show Havelock's technique of turning Homer's poetry inside out, making the background the centre and pushing the foreground back into obscurity. The soothsayer Calchas demands from Achilles the assurance that he will protect him in case his explanation of the wrath of Apollo might offend Agamemnon. He then enlarges upon the helplessness of a commoner against the anger of a supreme commander and king. This passage (78-83) is called by Havelock "a 'pedagogic' observation"<sup>83</sup>). He omits to observe that the passage is enclosed by Calchas' call for help addressed to Achilles and that this framework gives it its dramatic function and its proper signification<sup>84</sup>).

would have been a contradiction in terms". Cf. also M. P. Nilsson, *Cults, Myths, Oracles, and Politics in Ancient Greece* (Lund 1951), 17: "Many scholars may think this form of religion low, but its importance was great. There was room in it for a sincere piety, a living, unreasoned faith in the gods. Such a piety is the outcome of a long living together of a limited circle of men, such as the Greek *polis* was, and their gods".

<sup>80</sup>) E. A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Oxford 1963).

<sup>81</sup>) *Op. cit.*, 61.

<sup>82</sup>) *Op. cit.*, 66.

<sup>83</sup>) *Op. cit.*, 69.

<sup>84</sup>) An extreme case of Havelock's violence in representing the poet's report as "a series of recommendations" (87) is his interpretation of A 91 (Agamemnon) πολλὸν ἀριστος Ἀχαιῶν εἴχεται εἶναι as "prescriptive no less than descriptive, an encouragement to the learner himself to admire the status which is 'best' and perhaps to aspire to it" (76). When he regards A 142 ἐπιτηδές as didactic (81), he forgets that it is explained by A 309: for this solemn occasion a select company of rowers had to be chosen. Havelock's 'didactification' of the epic reminds one of the rage for educational truths manifested by the scholia, e.g. on δ 450 (ἐνδιος δ' ὁ γέρον ἦλθ' ἐξ ἄλός): κατὰ τὴν συνήθη ὥραν · ἔστιν οὖν καὶ τοῦτο παιδεύμα τοῦ Ὀμήρου τὸν σόφρον τεταγμένη τῇ διαίτη χρῆσθαι καὶ μὴ ἄλλοτε ἄλλη. For more examples cf. V. Bérard, *Introduction à l'Odyssée*, II (Paris 1924), 237 ff.

This is not to say that all of Havelock's observations are worthless. When Achilles proposes to consult a soothsayer, a priest, or an observer of dreams, he adds the motivation, "for dreams too are sent by Zeus" (A 62-3). This addition does not have any dramatic function and we do not expect it from the mouth of Achilles. It is a piece of theological didacticism inserted by the poet to inform his audience about the nature of dreams<sup>85</sup>).

There are more of such didactic remarks. I have tried to classify them and shall give a few examples of each class.

(1) The non-human world. The shield of Achilles is decorated with pictures of the earth, the sea, and the sky with its constellations; these are described as follows: "the Pleiads, the Hyads, the mighty Orion, and the Bear, which is also called the Wagon, a constellation which always wheels round in the same place and watches Orion, and is the only one that never bathes in Oceanus" (*Iliad* 18, 486-9). Such details are out of place in the description of a work of art and properly belong to a manual of astronomy. Another example: during his quarrel with Agamemnon Achilles asseverates that the Greeks will need his help, as the staff he has in his hands "will never put out leaves or twigs again, since it left the tree-stem in the mountains, and will sprout no more; for the bronze stripped it of its foliage and its bark" (1, 234-7). The last sentence is superfluous from a dramatic point of view and even sounds rather ridiculous: Achilles suddenly turns into a lecturer in botany. But it is Homer himself who is lecturing and who takes the opportunity to enlighten his audience on natural causes<sup>86</sup>).

(2) Man and his condition. Odysseus gives one of the suitors a warning based on his own experience: as long as he lived in prosperity he did not refrain from reckless deeds, thinking that he

<sup>85</sup> Similarly, Ψ 103-4 ὦ πόποι, ἦ ῥά τι ἔστι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι / ψυχῇ καὶ εἰδῶλον, ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ ἐνὶ πάμπαν are out of place from a dramatic point of view (cf. E. Kammer quoted by Ameis-Hentze, *Anhang*, ad loc.: "Wie hätte Achill das sagen können, wenn es bereits volkstümlicher Glaube war, dass die Abgeschiedenen in der Unterwelt als ψυχαὶ und εἰδῶλα . . . existierten?").

<sup>86</sup> A similar case is τ 206 (the snow) ἦν τ' εὐρος κατέτηξεν, ἐπὴν ζέφυρος καταχέυη. This explanation does not disturb the dramatic situation, as an epic comparison is often developed beyond the bounds of its proper function. Yet its occurrence in the midst of this graphic description (205 ὡς δὲ χιῶν κατατῆκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν . . . 207 τηκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες) makes a slightly pedantic impression. This becomes still more obvious if we compare M 132-4, where the causal explanation forms an integral part of the picture. On the other hand, a didactic intention seems to underlie E 305-7 τῷ βάλεν Αἰνεῖοιο κατ' ἰσχίον, ἐνθά τε μηρός / ἰσχυῶ ἐνστρέφεται, κοτύλην δὲ τέ μιν καλέουσι / θλάσσε δὲ οἱ κοτύλην, πρὸς δ' ἄμφω ῥῆξε τένοντε.

would never suffer any misfortune; but now he is forced to bear his misery (*Od.* 18, 130–40). This speech is introduced by a general reflection on the condition of man which exceeds the limits set by the practical purpose of warning: “The earth does not nourish anything more feeble than man, among all creatures that breathe and move on earth”. Similarly, the change in man’s attitude brought about by the turning of prosperity into misery is explained by another maxim: “The state of mind of earthlings depends on the circumstances which befall him”. The whole speech has been called a “pedestrian and silly sermon”<sup>87)</sup>, and it must be admitted that the general reflections are difficult to account for by the dramatic situation. They have been inserted by the poet just as *his* general reflections on the condition of man.

The same sermonizing tone is heard from Odysseus when he wishes Nausicaa conjugal bliss: “May the gods give you a husband and a home and a happy harmony of thought; for there is nothing superior and nobler than when two people unanimously keep house as man and wife, an annoyance to their enemies but a joy to their friends, and when these reactions come to *their* ears most of all”<sup>88)</sup>. The addition of this reflection seems to be especially odd if we realize that it comes from a shipwrecked man in a very helpless position. But again it is Homer himself who speaks and gives his opinion on a situation of human life<sup>89)</sup>.

In other cases the didacticism is less explicit. Menelaus proudly declares that few men can rival him in wealth; then he continues: “But while I was collecting these treasures on my travels, my brother was murdered. So it is without pleasure that I am lord over all this wealth” (*Od.* 4, 80–93). This reflection contains the implicit idea that wealth is not enough to make a man happy<sup>90)</sup>.

(3) History. In a sense, the whole story teaches the audience about the past, but there are some passages where the supply of historical information overgrows the dramatic situation. The whole

<sup>87)</sup> Bérard, *Intr. à l’Odyssée*, II, 261: “la plate sottise de ce prêche”.

<sup>88)</sup> ζ 181–5. If you are happy, it is an extra pleasure to hear with your own ears that your enemies are annoyed and your friends are rejoiced at your happiness. The common interpretation, “they know their happiness best themselves”, is linguistically impossible.

<sup>89)</sup> Bérard, *op. cit.*, wrongly rejects 180–5.—Some more examples are M 270–1 *ἐπει οὐ πω πάντες ὁμοῖοι / ἀνέρες ἐν πολέμῳ*, ξ 228 *ἄλλος γάρ τ’ ἄλλοισιν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτέρπεται ἔργοις* (rejected by Monro and Bérard, 245), β 276–7 *παῦροι γάρ τοι παῖδες ὁμοῖοι πατρὶ πέλονται, / οἱ πλεονες κακίους, παῦροι δέ τε πατρὸς ἀρείους* (rejected by Bérard, 50, 245–6), ι 34–6 *ὡς οὐδὲν γλόκιον ἤς πατριδος οὐδὲ τοκῆων / γίνεται, εἰ περ καὶ τις ἀπόπροθι πλοῖνα οἶκον / γαίῃ ἐν ἀλλοδαπῇ ναίει ἀπάνευθε τοκῆων* (rejected by Aristarchus and many modern editors).

<sup>90)</sup> Cf. the schol. *οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῷ κτήσασθαι πλοῦτον τὸ ἡδεσθαι ἔστιν . . . ἔστιν οὖν παιδευτικὸν ὅτι οὐ χρῆ εἰς τὴν πολυτέλειαν τῶν οἴκων ἀφορᾶν, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὴν διάθεσιν τῶν ἐνοικοῦντων*.

of the so-called *Teichoskopia* (*Iliad* 3, 121–244) is such a historical digression, in which Helen informs the Trojans—but in reality informs the audience—about the appearance of some Greek commanders, to which Antenor adds a report of the embassy of Odysseus and Aias. Another example is the end of Andromache's speech to Hector, in which she advises him to station his men at a point where the wall is easiest to scale: "For three times already their best men, under the two Aiantes and the famous Idomeneus, the Atreidae and the valiant son of Tydeus, have tried to break in at that point. Either someone who is well versed in oracles has told them, or their own intuition moves them" (6, 435–9). These lines were athetized by Aristarchus, who is followed by some modern editors<sup>91</sup>). They are certainly unsuitable in the mouth of a woman, but they have been added by the poet as an interesting military detail.

(4) Language. A number of words is followed by an explanation of their meaning, e.g. "a late presage (*ὄψιμον*), which is fulfilled late" (*Iliad* 2, 325), "evil-beginning ships (*ἀρχεκάκους*), which proved an evil to all the Trojans" (5, 63), "prize-bearing horses (*ἀθλοφόρους*), who have won prizes by their feet" (9, 124), "an unsubdued cow (*ἀδμήτην*), whom no one yet has led beneath the yoke" (10, 293), "a driven-out shield (*ἐξήλατον*), which a smith had hammered out" (12, 295–6), "surrounding people (*περικτίονας*), who dwell around" (*Od.* 2, 65–6)<sup>92</sup>). In all such cases Homer added an explanation to words that had become obsolete or were ambiguous. The term *ἄδμητος*, for instance, could easily be misunderstood as 'virgin'<sup>93</sup>). The emphasis put by the poet on his explanations shows that he not only desired to make himself clear but also intended to impart some linguistic knowledge to his audience. This intention stamps him as the first philologist<sup>94</sup>).

(5) Social behaviour. Telemachus asks his host Menelaus to let him return home. The latter replies: "Telemachus, I shall not keep you here for a long time, now that you wish to return home. I condemn also another host who is excessive in his affection or in his antipathy. Moderation is better in all things. It is equally wrong to speed a guest who would like to stay and to detain one who is anxious to leave. One should treat a guest with affection

<sup>91</sup>) E.g. Ameis-Hentze. Cf. also von der Mühl, *Kritisches Hypomnema*, 121–2.

<sup>92</sup>) See further L. Ph. Rank, *Etymologiseering en verwante verschijnselen bij Homerus* (Assen 1951), 74 ff. To his examples may be added  $\Xi$  172, where *τεθνωμένον* seems to be an explanation of *ἔδανόν*.

<sup>93</sup>) Cf. Rank, *op. cit.*, 83.

<sup>94</sup>) Pfeiffer, *Hist. of Class. Scholarship*, 4, objects to this name, because he overlooks the didactic emphasis of Homer's etymologies.

while he is with you, but let him go when he wishes" (*Od.* 15, 68–74). The authenticity of the gnomic part of this speech has often been called in question<sup>95</sup>), but it perfectly agrees with Homer's practice of inserting didactic remarks in his poems<sup>96</sup>).

I shall add a case where the didacticism is implied in an illustration. When Priam arrives at the tent of Achilles to ransom the dead body of Hector, he is so impatient that he refuses to take a seat (*Iliad* 24, 553). Achilles, on the other hand, wishes to give him an official reception including a supper. So he urges the old man to think of food reminding him of the example of Niobe, who did not forget to eat, though her twelve children were killed in her own house (602–17). The length of this story—16 lines—is out of proportion to its immediate purpose and it disturbs the dramatic atmosphere. It has been added—and probably even been invented<sup>97</sup>)—by the poet as a model of social behaviour.

It has sometimes been argued that the adducing of mythological examples does not serve a didactic purpose but belongs to the poet's task of glorifying the past<sup>98</sup>). Now it is true that this glorification of the past does not always have a proreptic character<sup>99</sup>).

<sup>95</sup>) Cf. Bérard, *op. cit.*, 258; G. M. Bolling, *The External Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* (Oxford 1925), 44.

<sup>96</sup>) Some more examples are ξ 464–6, τ 328–34, χ 373–4 (cf. Bérard, *op. cit.*, 262–5). They are hardly to be found in the *Iliad*, but the famous passage on the *Aral* (I 502–12) contains a number of details (lines 503, 505–7) which are strictly irrelevant to its practical purpose. M. van der Valk, *Textual Criticism of the Odyssey* (Leiden 1949), 202–4, argues that in the *Odyssey* "noblemen or women wish to display their culture". But I can hardly imagine that such a wish could once have been a historical characteristic of the upper class.—It is not to be wondered at that moral didacticism is more conspicuous in the *Odyssey*, as the whole story has a moralizing tenor: Aristotle (*Poet.* 1453 a 32) already observed that it has "an opposite issue for the good and the bad personages", i.e. the good characters are rewarded, the bad ones are punished. Cf. L. A. Post, *The Moral Pattern in Homer*, T.A.P.A. 70 (1939), 158–90, esp. 159, 163; *id.*, *From Homer to Menander* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1951), Ch. I; H. D. F. Kitto, *Poiesis* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1966), 139 ff. The *Iliad* does not have a moral pattern. Cf. A. W. Gomme, *The Greek Attitude to Poetry and History* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1954), 16–7. It should be added that the moral point of view, although it does not dominate the whole composition, determines some of its aspects. Cf. e.g. Sheppard, *op. cit.* (see above, n. 53), 50: "It is no accident that the *Iliad*, which began with the wrong done by Agamemnon to a suppliant old man, ends with the right done by Achilles to the helpless Priam".

<sup>97</sup>) Cf. J. T. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches* (Lund 1949), 96–105; M. M. Willcock, *Mythological Paradeigmata in the Iliad*, C.Q. 14 (1964) [141–54], 141.

<sup>98</sup>) E.g. by Kraus, *op. cit.* (see above, n. 5), 70; Sicking, *Ar. Ranae*, 138; G. Lanata, *Poetica pre-platonica* (Firenze 1963), 11, 15. Cf. α 338 ἐγ' ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε τά τε κλείουσιν αἰοδοί, θ' 73 ἀειδέμεναι κλέα ἀνδρῶν.

<sup>99</sup>) This was Jaeger's misunderstanding. Cf. *Paideia*, I, 40: "he [the poet] educates them [his hearers] by the very act of preserving the glory of the past in his poetry".

But when Phoenix reminds Achilles of the case of Meleager, who at the end gave up his stubbornness<sup>100</sup>), the story points a moral, viz. that stubbornness should not be pushed too far. This lesson is meant for Achilles, but also for the audience<sup>101</sup>).

(6) Technique. The description of warfare sometimes oversteps the limits of poetical economy. For instance, the armament of Paris (3, 328–38) and the equipment of Hera's chariot (5, 720–32) are told in greater detail than would have been necessary. These passages betray a technical interest which appears also in other situations. Nestor gives his son Antilochus a number of directions for taking part in a chariot race (23, 306–48): one should keep the chariot from swaying; turnings should be made as short as possible, while the driver leans to the left and gives the reins to the right horse; most of all, one should constantly keep one's eye on the turning-post, "a dry piece of wood, standing about six feet high, of an oak or a pine; for that does not rot in the rain" (327–8). The whole of this speech is a condensed manual of chariot driving. Within this context the remark on the durability of two kinds of wood is certainly irrelevant and can hardly be explained from Nestor's usual prolixity. But it is not unlike Homer<sup>102</sup>), for it may be regarded as a kind of footnote to the manual referring to another province of practical knowledge<sup>103</sup>).

The universal character of Homer's technical interest further appears from his references to metal-work<sup>104</sup>), agriculture<sup>105</sup>), and ship-building, especially from the elaborate description of Odysseus' raft (*Od.* 5, 234–61), which is full of technical details.

(7) The gods. When Athena admonishes Achilles to check his

<sup>100</sup>) I 524–99. Cf. Willcock, *op. cit.*, 147–53, who argues that the story has been invented by Homer.

<sup>101</sup>) Similarly the glory of Orestes held before Telemachus by Athena (*a* 298–302; cf. *γ* 196–200) is at the same time intended to exhort the hearer never to let down his father. The whole story of Telemachus himself may even be regarded as a model of behaviour to be imitated by anyone desiring to become a perfect young gentleman. Cf. Sheppard, *op. cit.* (see above, n. 53), 58–67.

<sup>102</sup>) Leaf *ad loc.*: "An irrelevant line, and totally unlike Homer".

<sup>103</sup>) Theophr. *H.P.* V 4, 3 confirms Homer's statement that oak and pine are least liable to rot through moisture. The reading *οἷ* mentioned as the vulgate by Aristotle (*Soph. El.* 166 b 3, *Poet.* 1461 a 22) may be an attempt to free the line from its didactic character.

<sup>104</sup>) E.g. ι 391–3 *ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ χαλκένυς πέλεκυν μέγαν ἤε σκέπαρον / εἰν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ βάπτῃ μεγάλα ἰάχοντα / φαρμάσσων · τὸ γὰρ αὐτὲ σιδήρον γε κράτος ἐστίν*, where the last line is irrelevant to the comparison. Cf. L. J. D. Richardson, *Hermath.* 86 (1955), 61–2, who rightly observes that in such cases as Ω 318 *ἔθ κληῖσ' ἀραρνία* "constitutional details creep in superfluously and are elaborated where they have no relevance". See also the emphasis on artistic skill in the description of the shield of Achilles (Σ 548–9, 562–5, 574, 598).

<sup>105</sup>) K 351–3 *ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὄ' ἀπέην ὄσσόν τ' ἐπὶ ὄρα πέλονται / ἡμιόνων — αἶ γὰρ τε βοῶν προφερέστεραι εἰσιν / ἐλκόμεναι νεοῖο βυθίης πηκτὸν ἄροτρον*.

anger, the latter replies: "A man must observe your command, however angry he may be; for it is better this way. The man who obeys the gods is much listened to by them" (*Iliad* 1, 216-8). When Odysseus thinks that he has been deceived by the Phaeacians, he says: "May Zeus punish them, the god of the suppliants, who watches also other men and punishes whoever does wrong" (*Od.* 13, 213-4). When Eumæus observes that the suitors pay no regard to the gods, he adds the words: "Truly the blessed gods do not like licentious deeds, but they honour right and decent deeds of men" (14, 83-4). When Pisistratus gives a cup of wine to Mentor, he tells him to pray to Poseidon and when he has made his drink-offering and his prayer, to pass the cup to Telemachus: "for I think that he too will pray to the gods; for all men have need of the gods" (3, 47-8). When Odysseus pays Eumæus a compliment on the dinner he offers him, the swineherd replies: "Please eat, wonderful guest, and enjoy these things such as we can offer. God gives one thing and withholds another, just as he likes; for he can do anything" (14, 443-5). When Euryclea is about to exult at the death of the suitors, Odysseus keeps her by saying: "It is an impious thing to exult over the slain. These men fell victims to divine Fate and to their own misdeeds. For they did not pay respect to any man, from the lower or the higher classes, who came near them. Therefore their own recklessness has brought them an awful end" (22, 412-6).

In all these cases the speakers—but in fact the poet himself—indulge in theological reflections exceeding the scope of what the situation requires them to say. The theological didacticism is especially prominent in the *Odyssey*; here we find a tendency towards preaching which is almost entirely absent from the *Iliad*<sup>106</sup>.

It is time to draw a conclusion. When Odysseus is sailing along the Sirens, they try to stop him by the following promise: "Whoever has listened to our song, has enjoyed it and has increased his knowledge. For we know all about the Trojan war and we know all that happens on earth" (*Od.* 12, 183-91). It has long been recognized that the poet here expresses his own pretension<sup>107</sup>: his songs produce two things, pleasure and knowledge. This knowledge is first specified as knowledge of the past but then taken in

<sup>106</sup> In addition to our first example cf. *II* 387-8. Leaf *ad loc.* is right in observing that this couplet "spoils the balance of the simile by laying weight on a point which is far removed from the required picture", but wrongly concludes that it is spurious. Z 132-40 is another theological digression. *I* 66 is probably an interpolation.

<sup>107</sup> Kraus, *op. cit.*, 72 n. 14; Maehler, *op. cit.* (see above, n. 6), 30.

its broadest sense as embracing everything<sup>108</sup>). This formula shows that Homer included his didactic function in the programme of his poetry<sup>109</sup>). It is true that in other places he emphasizes the other function of the poet, his ability to delight his audience<sup>110</sup>). It should be granted that this is his main object and that the Homeric poems should be read for pleasure. But we should beware of concluding that pleasure is the only object<sup>111</sup>). The Homeric epic does not have one single object and it cannot be characterized by one single name. It is usually called heroic poetry as distinct from the work of Hesiod which is said to be didactic poetry. This distinction is misleading if it is used as an absolute contrast<sup>112</sup>). Hesiod's poems are not 100 per cent. didactic: they contain, for instance, some descriptions of nature which have a poetic value of their own<sup>113</sup>); other passages, such as the Titanomachy<sup>114</sup>), have a strongly marked heroic character. On the other hand, Homer's poems are not 100 per cent. heroic: they contain a number of didactic elements. Most of these are not essential to the story, but they should not be disregarded. I have drawn attention to them, since it is the task of philology to look not only at the main-lines but also at the side-lines.

<sup>108</sup>) Ameis-Hentze (followed by A. Rieu in his Penguin-translation) are wrong in taking 191 to refer only to the future. They are also wrong in taking *τερωόμενος* to refer to 189-90 and *πλεσινα εἰδώς* to 191.

<sup>109</sup>) The same didactic pretension is implied in his remark that the Muses know everything (B 485).

<sup>110</sup>) Cf. *α* 346-7, *θ* 44-5, *ρ* 385, and Maehler, *op. cit.*, 15, 28-9; Lanata, *op. cit.* (see above, n. 98), 8-9.

<sup>111</sup>) Van Groningen, *Functieveranderingen* (quoted above, n. 6), 6-7: "Het werkelijke doel van den dichter en de werkelijke functie van zijn werk zijn, om Homerus' eigen woorden te gebruiken, *τέρωις*, 'vermaak, genoegen' . . . De gedachte, dat poëzie nog een andere functie hebben zou dan die van te behagen, is den homerischen zanger vreemd". Cf. also Sicking, *Ar. Ranae*, 138; C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London 1952), 29: "The poet wishes not to instruct but to delight his audience"; 48: "bards avoid moralising comments". Cf. however *ibid.*, 149 ff. (on descriptions of weapons and ships).

<sup>112</sup>) Cf. van Groningen, *op. cit.*, 9: "aan het begin van de Griekse poëzie staan reeds twee functioneel volkomen verschillende vormen naast elkaar. De ene stelt zich verpozing, de andere lering ten doel".

<sup>113</sup>) Cf. *Op.* 505-35, 582-96.

<sup>114</sup>) *Theog.* 617 ff.

