

EPIC MODERATION : STRUCTURE, NARRATIVE
TEXTURE, AND PURPOSE IN HEROIC LITERATURE

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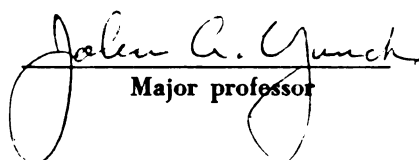
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ABSTRACT

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By

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This thesis examines representative examples of classical and medieval heroic narrative to show the relationship between form and structure and theme and idea. It also explores the narrative methods and related techniques of epic-heroic poetry and investigates the significant standards and values of the backgrounds which created the heroic poems. The two main purposes of this study are to afford a fuller, more integrated view of epic-heroic poetry than most recent studies present and to show the development and transformation of the genre.

The investigation of these aspects of heroic narrative uses an analytical technique which examines the story situation, demonstrates the narrative methods of developing the story element through plot and action, reveals the manner of creating the epic scope, explicates the values and standards of the heroic figures and the societies they represent, and shows the total story-structure framework of each example of epic-heroic poetry. The examination furnishes conclusions about the individual poems, about heroic narrative in general, and about the development and transformation of the genre.

Section One discusses recent critical studies of epic-heroic poetry to show what emphasis they give to the various aspects of heroic narrative and to indicate their limitations. The limitations concern three aspects of heroic narrative that often get inadequate treatment: the significant narrative core and conflicts, the manner of resolving the conflicts, and the story-structure framework which encompasses all elements of epic-heroic poetry. These three aspects are fully discussed with the others to furnish a thorough overview of the genre. Central to the discussion of all aspects of heroic narrative is the tension between heroic self-assertion and heroic self-restraint; consequently, examination of this tension in respect to all aspects of epic-heroic poetry furnishes much of the explication of the heroic narrative analyzed in this study.

Section Two consists of five chapters which discuss Homeric epic, Greek tragedy, Virgil's epic of Rome, and the transformations of the heroic figures and heroic values. Chapter I illustrates how heroic self-assertion creates an expanding pattern of chaos and disorder that is halted and reversed by the exercise of epic moderation. Chapter II shows the receding annular movement which takes Odysseus from Troy to Ithaca, subjects him to obstacles and suffering that result from self-assertive behavior and develop his moral endurance, and demonstrates his use of heroic moderation to reverse the conditions of chaos and disorder in his life and kingdom. Chapter III presents the importance of epic moderation in Greek tragedy. Chapter IV shows the transformation of the self-assertive warrior of Troy to the self-restrained ideal leader of Augustan Rome. Chapter V summarizes significant changes in the heroic figure and heroic values and indicates the importance of such changes.

The five chapters of Section Three deal with Germanic heroic poetry, Chanson de Roland, Russia's miniature epic, Poema del Cid, and the perspective of medieval heroic narrative. Chapter I discusses primitive heroic narrative and Beowulf. The Beowulf author praises heroic moderation by contrasting Beowulf's character and conduct with the heroic excesses of other Germanic heroes. Chapter II shows the tragic consequences of multiple self-assertion for French chivalry. Chapter III, Slovo O Polku Igoreve, illustrates the criticism of self-assertive Russian princes and urges the exercise of epic moderation for the good of the Russian land. Chapter IV presents an exemplar of heroic moderation whose conduct opposes and transforms the conditions caused by heroic self-assertion. Chapter V indicates the significant qualities of medieval heroes of epic-heroic poetry and the pertinent values of medieval heroism.

Section Four presents conclusions about heroic narrative, demonstrates relationships between epic moderation and all aspects of the genre, and indicates how heroic moderation transforms epic-heroic poetry.

EPIC MODERATION: STRUCTURE, NARRATIVE TEXTURE,
AND PURPOSE IN HEROIC LITERATURE

By

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PREFACE

The study presented in this thesis grew out of work done in special seminar courses of medieval epic, saga, and romance. Those courses involved work with the original languages of the material, but for the needs of a less specialized audience and a more generalized purpose it seemed reasonable to present the quotations in English translations and to provide for the specialist the original material in the form of footnotes. One deviation from this rationale is the absence of Greek, a language with which I, most unhappily, have only the nodding acquaintance that this study has afforded. A second deviation is the omission of the Latin text of the Aeneid, except where it is deemed essential for a point of interpretation.

The work on this material has made me realize how well John Donne's oft-quoted reminder that "no man is an island" applies to the community of students and scholars. Certainly no serious student or scholar is an island apart from the mainland of scholarly endeavor, and with pleasure I now wish to acknowledge the many ties which have joined me to that mainland.

One of my greatest debts will always be to three dear friends and teachers who introduced me to the charms and challenges of intellectual effort. Professor Ralph H. Goodale, Professor Lee E. Cannon, and Mrs. Irma Cannon, all of Hiram College, will ever have my profound gratitude for their challenging teaching and their warm interest in my endeavors. Professor Fielding D. Russell, of Georgia Southern College, has my heartfelt appreciation for his support, his suggestions, and his

constant understanding. My colleague, Dr. Patrick Spurgeon, has carefully read the material at all stages of preparation and has often provided me with excellent suggestions and needed encouragement. The extent of my debt to Dr. John Yunck, of Michigan State University, defies description, for he, as mentor, friend, and mid-wife of this Caesarean birth, has suffered with me from conception to delivery of this thesis. If Sisyphus has been able to get his rock over the crest of the hill, it is only because he has had Nestorian sagacity and Odyssean endurance to help him do it. What good this study contains these men have contributed and what deficiencies it has must be attributed to my self-assertive insistence about the content and presentation.

The men have been admirable in their contributions, but the women have been wonderful in their patience, understanding, and cooperation. My typist, Mrs. Carolyn Mandes, has survived the "crash" course in hieroglyphics required by my written copy and kept her composure despite the confusion of strange letters, symbols, and markings which she had to cope with along the way. Rumor has it that she now plans to try her hand at several undeciphered remnants of antiquity. Last of all, but most important, are the patience, understanding, sacrifice, and cooperation shown by my wife over far too many months; without her help the other contributions could not have been used effectively.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study and Fundamental Definitions

Epic and heroic poetry constitute a vast and ancient literary domain that has for centuries provided terrain for exploration by scholars and critics. Aside from the linguistic and textual studies, modern discussions tend to center on form and structure,¹ theme and idea,² narrative methods and related techniques,³ and significant standards and values.⁴ Such studies by their nature present partial views of heroic narrative and stress the variety and diversity of the works within the genre at the expense of the surprising unity of the genre as a whole. This study will present an analytical technique intended to provide the reader a thorough overview of the total literary experience of epic-heroic

¹Two examples of such works are C. M. Bowra's Tradition and Design in the Iliad (Oxford, 1950) and Cedric Whitman's Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958). Both of these deal with other aspects, but the major emphasis is on structure.

²Most analyses touch upon this, but H. V. Routh, in God, Man, and Epic Poetry (Cambridge, England, 1927), and Cedric Whitman, in the work cited (Chaps. VIII and IX, pp. 154-220), both focus attention on theme and idea.

³Though not exclusively devoted to these aspects, Brooks Otis' Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford, 1963) discusses such aspects in chapters 6 and 7. Much of C. M. Bowra's Heroic Poetry (New York, 1961) concerns narrative methods and related techniques.

⁴Many studies have much to say about this aspect. Routh's previously cited work is perhaps the best example of a major study. Otis' book on the Aeneid and its author is equally important. George F. Jones' The Ethos of the Song of Roland (Baltimore, 1963) combines textual explication with this aspect. L. L. Schuecking's "Das Koenigsideal im Beowulf," in Englische Studien, Vol. 67 (1932), pp. 1-4, discusses the standards and values presented in Beowulf.

poetry, and to do something toward integrating the many excellent but partial analyses and explications which have been made by modern scholars. Very few of these many discussions treat in any detail the story-structure framework, the significant narrative core and conflicts of heroic narrative, or the manner of resolving these conflicts,⁵ and all of these are required for a thorough overview and for a meaningful integration of the partial analyses. Through a full analysis of them, and in the light of other investigations, this study intends to provide a broader and more integrated view of the genre than most recent scholarship affords.

The terms "story-structure framework" and "significant narrative core" require clarification. Since they are inter-related, the latter serves as a point of departure for the former. "Significant narrative

⁵C. M. Bowra's Tradition and Design in the Iliad is quite pertinent here, but Bowra does not go beyond the "wrath" theme and its consequences. Furthermore, he does not analyze the motivations for the "wrath" theme and relate them to the larger structure of the work. These and other limitations will be emphasized later. Whitman's Homer and Heroic Tradition has much of interest to say about the organizational structure of events within the various books and the patterned arrangement of the books. He does this to show the relationship between Geometric Art and the structured arrangement of The Iliad; Bowra also says much about the brilliant heroic imagery of the works and about the heroic attitudes. He does not develop the inter-relationships involved and their relevance to the total structure of the poem, as this study does. Bowra's Heroic Poetry is a major contribution to the study of the methods and techniques of heroic narrative poetry, and it says much about the heroic attitudes. Because of the extensive coverage of representative heroic poetry, Bowra's analysis can only be partial or limited to a few aspects of the genre. The same comments might be applied to Routh's God, Man, and Epic Poetry, which, despite its age, is still one of the better, more complete treatments of the subject. There is much to be said about E.M.W. Tillyard's The English Epic and Its Background (New York, 1966), which sets forth the general characteristics of the epic but, as the author admits, seeks "a definition of the epic other than the old heroic one."

core" designates the complex kernel of both the conflict situation between protagonist and antagonist and the conflict circumstances produced by the opposition of personal desires and group demands. This core is important for the working out of the story element and the significant meaning toward which the handling of the story element is directed. To get from the narrative core to the completed work, the author uses a controlling framework that encompasses the plot structure and the narrative growth to develop implicitly (and/or explicitly) the significant meaning of the work. This controlling framework will be referred to as the "story-structure framework."

Fundamental to the interpretation of epic-heroic narrative presented in this study is the ancient but continually relevant concept of moderation, which--as this study expects to show--lies near the heart of virtually all narrative conflicts in the genre.⁶ Students of medieval literature, especially of epic and romance, early encounter the conscious use of the concept of moderation and its relationship to the conduct of life.⁷ The frequency with which this concept occurs and its importance in the structuring of various works of these genres provide

⁶Moderation is the modern approximation of a concept appearing in the literature of many European nations under various names such as sophrosyne, via media, mezura, mâzze/mâze, mesure.

⁷The concept appears in and is important to Beowulf, where it appears in the antithetical form un-gemete. It is also prominent in La Chanson de Roland, where Oliver forthrightly tells his friend that mesure would be desirable in his conduct. It appears in the works of Hartman von Aue and in the poetry of Walther von der Vogelweide. It is especially important in Das Nibelungenlied and in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival. Wace's Thèbes and various chansons de gestes also use the concept.

reason enough for an investigation of its source and a study of its development and significance. By means of an analysis of the concept of Moderation and the idea of epic moderation in characteristic samples of epic-heroic narrative from the Homeric to the Medieval period, this study intends to show the relationship of epic moderation to the aspects of heroic narrative mentioned above.

The French designate the concept of Moderation as mesure, which André Moret defines as follows:

La mère de toutes les vertus est . . . l'observation constante de la juste mesure et du juste milieu en toutes choses et en toutes circonstances, mesure signifie aussi modération, domination de soi-même, victoire de la volonté sur les passions, et enfin tempérance . . . Même dans le combat le chevalier use de modération.⁸

Two valid comments are important in respect to Moret's definition. First of all, his definition omits one aspect of mesure whose importance will become abundantly clear during the course of this study. Since the virtue of moderation develops almost always in a highly self-conscious social situation, and since its presence or absence has an immediate effect on the welfare of the social group, it is necessary to identify moderate conduct (mesure) as group-oriented and immoderate conduct (démesure) as self-assertive and usually destructive of the welfare of the group. Secondly, as the definition indicates, mesure is a mean; and a mean both assumes and requires a tension between two opposite courses of action, an internal tension in the heroic character. This internal tension can be illustrated by several key situations in epic and by reference to Aristotle's discussion of the mean.

⁸ André Moret, Wolfram D'Eschenbach: Parzival (Paris, 1943), p. 26. Moret's definition is used throughout for moderation and mesure.

The first book of The Iliad shows Agamemnon threatening to take Briseis from Achilleus, and the latter cannot decide whether he should kill Agamemnon or control his anger. Melanthius, in The Odyssey, kicks Odysseus, who is torn between resorting to violence or controlling his wrath. Both Achilleus and Odysseus control their desire to react violently to their treatment. Roland, under somewhat different circumstances, sees his forces reduced to sixty men and cannot decide if he should continue to fight without aid or moderate his former position and sound the call for aid. He asks Oliver if he should not blow the oliphant, and Oliver's response is quite meaningful in respect to understanding La Chanson de Roland.

Aristotle's discussion of bravery in the Nicomachean Ethics⁹ provides a further illustration. Conflicting emotions and passions act upon the warrior confronted by the enemy in battle; he may be prompted to rush into battle without hesitation or he may be urged to flee the fight. However, his rational-moral faculties also have a part in what he does. Dominated by the emotional faculties, he will rush to the extremes of rashness or cowardice. Controlled by the rational-moral faculties, he will choose the mean, which is bravery. This is the desirable choice, for, even though it may produce death or some lesser ill, the moderate position serves the group needs and also assures the personal glory and fame of the individual. Both cowardice and rashness are immoderate, unrestrained positions which serve neither the ultimate best interests of the individual nor the welfare of the group.

⁹"Nicomachean Ethics," in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941), Bk. II, ch. 2, 954.

Long before Aristotle Greek literature reflects the tension between unrestrained, self-assertive urges and disciplined, group-centered self-restraint. In fact, the tension is central to most literary experience, ancient and modern. The importance of the group to Greek thinkers can be suggested by a few random examples, some of which receive further treatment in this study.

In The Iliad Nestor, Patroklos, and in one respect even Agamemnon show concern for the best interests of the group. Nestor attempts to mediate the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilleus, both for the well-being of the two men and the Greeks who suffer from the absence of their best warrior. Only Agamemnon's concern for the group he leads permits him to accept grudgingly the advice of Nestor to make up his quarrel with Achilleus. A similar but even more group-oriented attitude causes Patroklos to get approval from Achilleus to lead the Myrmidons into battle and push the Trojans back to their walls.

Greek tragedy provides many examples of the importance of the group, but two can furnish adequate illustration. In the Suppliant Maidens of Aeschylus, Pelasgos, even though personally touched by the plea of the suppliants, must ask the citizenry of Argos if they will offer shelter to the maids and thus risk the danger to the polis. The decree of Creon (that Polyneices cannot receive burial) in Sophocles' Antigone rests upon the fact that Polyneices' attack on Thebes made him an enemy of the polis.

The point made here is that all these examples, both the earlier and the later, show how important group values and standards were in Greek thought and life. Such standards and values provided the core

around which developed the polis, the city-state of Periclean Greece.

Of the polis as a political and social structure Gilbert Murray says:

It has in common with the other, that it implies in each citizen the willing sacrifice of himself to something greater than himself. . . . It has its roots in knowledge and real human need, not in ignorance and terror. Its rules of conduct are based not on obedience to imaginary beings, but in serving mankind; not on observance to taboos, but on doing good.¹⁰

Even when Greece had outgrown the polis for the acropolis of Athens, the basic values of the former still dominated Greek thought. This is evident in both the Gorgias and The Republic of Plato. In the former Plato judges the statesmen of Athens in terms of their service to their fellow citizens. He asks if they made Athens better and happier, and he answers his own question by declaring that they have merely filled the city with various sorts of trash instead of "Sophrosyne and righteousness." Furthermore, the social and political organization of The Republic is but a logical extension and reformulation of the values that serve the best interests of the political and social group.¹¹

The development of Greece from the simple tribal society of the Mycenaean Age to the developing polis of Homer's time, and later to the fully developed polis and acropolis of Periclean Greece complicated the tensions experienced by the warriors of heroic narrative.

¹⁰Gilbert Murray, The Rise of the Greek Epic (New York, 1960), p. 59.

¹¹Both Gilbert Murray and William C. Greene discuss at some length the importance of the polis and the values which support it. In both cases, these values are the significant values of Greek epic (arete, aidos, nemesis, hybris, ate, atasthalie) and, to various degrees, of all heroic narrative. In Murray's The Rise of the Greek Epic the first three chapters (pp. 1-92) discuss these related issues. The first two chapters (pp. 3-46) of Greene's Moirai: Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1944) discuss the subject in respect to Greek epic.

As a warrior of Mycenaean tribal society, the hero could respond to danger situations in a relatively simple fashion. The choice of responding to the emotional urges or the rational-moral faculties was influenced, at the primary level, only by what conscious and unconscious influence family and tribal obligations exerted upon the rational-moral faculties. However, when the warrior became part of a military elite with developing mutual obligations to his fellow warriors, the tension began to involve not just the self, but both the self and the group. Even when the Mycenaean warrior had no absolute and prescribed obligations to the temporary political group (such as the confederation of tribes attacking Troy), he still had understood obligations to the other warriors whose values and standards he shared. The mean came to involve adjustment of the emotional urges, rational-moral faculties, and the social values of the group. As social organization developed from the loose confederacy of tribes to the unit of the polis and acropolis, social standards and values exerted a greater influence on the mean.

In effect, the choice of the mean became less the ethical choice of an isolated individual and more of a social choice; it became less of a balance between the emotional urges and the rational-moral faculties and more of a balance between the desires of the self and the demands of some set of group values. This gradual change influences the developing thought and literature of Greece and is reflected in both.

The effects of that change are first discernible in epic and heroic narrative, where the change influences what the heroes do or fail to do. The time span of Homeric epic bridges the distance between the Mycenaean Empire and the developing polis of Homer's time. Between the former and the latter ends of that span, the relative freedom and self-assertion of

the earlier period has been modified by the discipline and self-restraint of the latter. As a consequence, the heroes of epic and heroic poetry from Homer on demonstrate some degree of inner tension between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint in conduct. The effects of this tension and the subsequent importance it has in heroic narrative provide a useful means of analyzing the form, structure, content, and significance of epic and heroic poetry. This study will analyze the function which that tension serves in heroic narrative, show its relation to form, structure, and significance, and also demonstrate its relationship to the idea of epic or heroic moderation, i.e. mesure.

Epic moderation may appear to be an improper or impossible term, but an analysis of epic and heroic poetry shows that heroic moderation has as much significance and validity as does heroic rashness. The hero of epic or tragedy is often faced by a situation which demands a choice between unrestrained, self-assertive action or disciplined self-restraint.¹² Caught in this tension between démésure and mesure, the hero must act to resolve his problem. When he prefers the former to the latter, his choice provides the tragic core that is shared by both epic and tragedy. In fact, any action he takes and any factors which determine him to take action will have a great bearing on the nature and development of epic and heroic poetry.

The action of The Iliad is set in motion by the self-assertive action of Agamemnon in refusing to accept the ransom offered by Chryses for the release of his daughter. This action brings down upon the Greeks

¹²This statement is not meant to suggest that such a situation is the single significant aspect of tragedy, but often the choice made under such conditions has considerable importance in the context of the play.

the punishment of Apollo. The efforts of Achilles to determine the cause of the anger and find the means of appeasing that anger lead to the personal conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles. The former agrees to perform the act of moderation needed to appease Apollo's anger, but only by a greater act of self-assertion at the expense of Achilles. This produces the "wrath" theme that is based on the self-assertive positions taken by both Agamemnon and Achilles. The tragic consequences to the Greeks and to Achilles can be ended only when both men have exercised heroic moderation.

The action of The Odyssey is generally created by a combination of the self-assertiveness of Odysseus and his men, and only when Odysseus accepts and practices self-restraint does he resolve all of his problems. In La Chanson de Roland the self-assertive desires of Charlemagne and Marsile provide the circumstances for the contention of Roland and Ganelon: a contention produced by the self-assertion of the two men and having dire consequences for them and for French chivalry. The démesuré conduct of Igor and the other princes in Slovo O Polku Igoreve (Word of Igor's Regiment) produces the tragic consequences for their followers and for the Russian land. In these and other examples of heroic narrative, démesuré actions play a major role, but the internal tension in the hero between mesure and démesure is sometimes modified and in some cases externalized; i.e., it is developed into a conflict between two principal figures or between two groups. The modifications and externalizations of the tension produce changes in epic-heroic poetry, and the relevance of those changes will be one aspect of this study of heroic narrative.

The concept of mesure has such relationships to key concepts of Greek literature (to metrion, sophrosyne, and hybris),¹³ to the ethical mean of Aristotle, and to the via media of Rome that the investigation of Greek and Roman literature should provide the information to ascertain the genesis of mesure and trace its subsequent importance in epic and heroic poetry.

Though this study is primarily concerned with the epic genre and heroic poetry, some consideration of Greek tragedy must be included to follow the development of the concept of mesure, or epic moderation, through classical literature and into medieval literature. During the classical period of Greece no significant epic was produced, but tragedy made use of the same material that went into epic. Though the form and function of tragedy differ from those of epic, at least one element of Greek tragedy is related to the tension of epic and heroic narrative. The idea of sophrosyne, though not the central issue of Greek tragedy, is the form of moderation which is often advised during the Periclean Age. From there it passes into ethical thought and writing such as Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.

Relevant Discussions of Epic in Recent Scholarship

One of the best and most wide-ranging discussions of epic and heroic poetry is H. V. Routh's God, Man, and Epic Poetry. Though his

¹³All three of these expressions have involved and complex meanings that often lead to oversimplification and distortion, but the first two refer to a course of action best expressed by the via media, or middle way of Roman thought. These are terms of approved conduct, but the term hybris concerns overweening pride and wanton arrogance, terms of disapproval. These terms and other related terms are discussed in the works cited in footnote 11 on page 7.

work deals with many historical-sociological aspects of epic and heroic poetry from Homer to Dante, its primary focus is upon the heroes, the heroic society, and the values and ideals presented in the different works. He traces in detail the influences that transform the primitive hero of strength and courage into the intellectual hero. Routh also traces the circumstances which combined religious fervour and patriotic sentiment in La Chanson de Roland. From that point on he demonstrates how most of the works of the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries fall short of epic idealism by reason of a change of focus and emphasis. His final chapters present the developing importance of religious ideas in the Middle Ages and their relation to Dante's Commedia.

Routh's major concern is with the idea-content of the works and the related historical-sociological significance. He says very little about structure, narrative methods, or the literary core of epic-heroic poetry. Routh's treatment suggests much about change and modification of epic and heroic poetry which is important to this study, but never examines this beyond the external evidence of the change. What he develops partially can readily be related to structure, narrative methods, and the literary core of heroic narrative, to make possible a more complete view.

A second major work in this area is Tillyard's The English Epic and its Background. Like Routh, Tillyard's coverage is extensive; indeed, it is more extensive in certain respects than Routh's work. Tillyard discusses epic and heroic poetry from the classical beginnings until the neo-classical periods of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Admittedly "bred a Classic," the author shows that orientation throughout

his discussion, which is organized to lead to Miltonic and other neo-classical epic.

As a consequence of his orientation, Tillyard gives little space to Germanic or Scandinavian epic. His grounds for this exclusion are justifiable in terms of his purpose and intention, for he separates epic from heroic poetry and redefines epic by setting up several criteria for the concept of epic he accepts. His criteria have been selected to define the epic spirit by "seeking its [epic] differentiae in matters other than nominal and formal."¹⁴ Though this study is not concerned with defining epic, all of Tillyard's criteria have a great deal of relevance to the epic and heroic poetry treated here. Though his third criterion (control and pre-determination) suggests something of a structural idea, Professor Tillyard is primarily concerned with discussing a great deal of literature that satisfies his criteria or fails to, even though it may manifest some characteristics of the epic spirit.

Like Routh, Tillyard offers perceptive insights into heroic literature, but does not treat several aspects with which this study is concerned. He does, however, touch upon certain values central to this study. In discussing the epic spirit Tillyard makes the point that the epic writer "must express the feelings of a large group of people living in or near his own time."¹⁵ He elaborates upon this to arrive at his last criterion, which he presents as follows:

Epic, in similar fashion, must have faith in the system of beliefs or way of life it bears witness to. . . . Only when people have

¹⁴Tillyard, p. 3.

¹⁵Tillyard, p. 12.

faith in their own age can they include the maximum of life in their vision and exert their will-power to its utmost capacity.¹⁶

These two ideas of Tillyard's are quite relevant to the analyses contained in this study, and they will be treated in the proper place. To them must be added another statement which Tillyard makes in reference to The Iliad and The Odyssey. He stresses the idea that, after the first work, there is no question of creating a form, but only of modifying it. Then he says of Homer's two works:

Whereas the Iliad dealt with exceptional happenings and their results, though constantly reminding us of the norm, the Odyssey was centered in it.¹⁷

Both of these ideas are very important to fundamental aspects of the present study.

Bowra, in Heroic Poetry, deals with a wide range of literary works which incorporate the heroic spirit. He defines heroic poetry and distinguishes it from panegyric and lament. He then discusses a great many aspects of heroic poetry with extensive illustrations. His discussion of scale and development is particularly useful in distinguishing related types which concern the heroic spirit. However, his primary emphasis is on the heroic ideal, its values, and its varied manifestations. His second and third chapters constitute one of the best short presentations of all aspects of the heroic background. In his third chapter Bowra discusses the variety of heroes presented in heroic poetry. There he suggests that Hektor straddles the boundary between the heroic world and the city-state that replaced it. This important point will be further considered in this study.

¹⁶Tillyard, p. 13.

¹⁷Tillyard, p. 30.

During his discussion of scale and development Bowra suggests various justifications for the introduction of allusive tales and illustrative stories not connected with the main plot into the texture of heroic poetry.¹⁸ This aspect of epic and heroic poetry will also receive further treatment in the present study.

When he discusses The Iliad and The Odyssey, Bowra suggests that the former has importance beyond the presentation of the heroic action. Of the latter he affirms that there is no connection between the theme of the return and some wider issue. This study will suggest, to some extent, that The Odyssey does concern some wider issue than the theme of the return.

One of Bowra's later chapters presents an excellent discussion of the varieties of the heroic outlook and of the nature and importance of heroic poetry. Of the latter he says:

. . . the poet is really the voice of the people whom he addresses and whose feelings and thoughts are his own. For this reason, heroic poetry throws an intimate light on the society to which it belongs and illustrates what its outlook and tastes are.¹⁹

That statement is very close to the opinions expressed by Tillyard (cf. p. 13 above), and taken together those opinions furnish the point of departure and approach for this thesis.

That approach assumes that most literary creations reflect to some degree, positively or negatively, the historical and sociological backgrounds of the society producing them. Where history or chronicle

¹⁸When Bowra discusses the origins of The Iliad in his earlier work, Tradition and Design in the Iliad, he offers some fragmentary considerations regarding the introduced material. In this later work he elaborates a bit more.

¹⁹Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 476.

concerns itself with the reasons for a conflict, the major phases and the direction of the conflict, and the results produced by it, heroic song concerns itself with the natures and qualities of the heroes involved. When a more developed society that postdates the events of heroic songs or lays has need of the heroic qualities which it wishes to glorify as part of its tradition, that society assimilates those qualities into certain literary creations. But because these come some time after the event and because they have developed since the event they cannot and do not reflect merely the standards and values of the time of the events which they celebrate.

In effect, as both Bowra and Tillyard suggest, the epic reflects the standards and values of the heroic past but also modifies them or adds to them as needed or desired by the later, more developed society in which it was written. Thus The Iliad reflects not only the splendors of early heroic self-assertion, but also all the related values of a much later age when the polis has become more important than the loose tribal confederation of the Greeks who attack Troy.

The developments that take place between the earlier and the later environments also bring with them an expanded scope that goes beyond the mere presentation of the events and deeds of the Greek and Trojan confrontation. The same situation holds true for most of the other literary creations of heroic narrative. The changes and developments that occur alter the tension between the self-assertive and the self-restrained response. The handling and treatment of that tension will reveal both the fixed and changing aspects of heroic narrative.

In discussing The Iliad Bowra suggests, in a general and brief fashion, an overall structural framework which is determined by the

wrath of Achilles introduced in the first book and the resolution of that wrath in the final book. In Heroic Poetry he does not present much more than the general outlines of the idea; however, in Tradition and Design in the Iliad,²⁰ he furnishes the details of that framework and structure. Indeed, he goes further and shows the integral relationships of framework and structure, of narrative core and narrative conflicts, of the resolution of narrative conflicts and the narrative method and development involved, of themes and ideas, of values involved and the total significance of the work. Bowra is not specifically concerned with these, but his discussion of The Iliad touches all of them to some extent. The study presented in these pages is not derived from Bowra's work, but his explication and analysis of The Iliad is the nearest to what this study intends to do.

Cedric Whitman's Homer and Heroic Tradition is similar in some respects to Bowra's work, but Whitman develops some aspects of The Iliad not treated elsewhere. He presents a detailed structural analysis, which, though stretched at points, is very enlightening. Much of what Professor Whitman says is remarkably close to Bowra's ideas, but Whitman's special approach and focus can be seen in his statement that

Poetry, conceived in image and executed through formal design, may reasonably ask to be analyzed in terms of its motivating forces and essential processes.²¹

The methodology of the present study of representative works of epic and heroic poetry derives in part from the explications Whitman and Bowra provide for The Iliad; however, it does not follow Whitman in his concern for imagery.

²⁰Bowra, Tradition and Design, p. 15 ff.

²¹Whitman, p. 2.

Scope of Study

The study contained in these pages has for its general purpose the desire to present a relatively thorough overview of classical and medieval epic-heroic poetry. That overview will examine the narrative core of representative works of both these periods and show how the tension at the center of this core is related to the development of the story element, the action, the narrative movement and methods, the epic scope, and the pattern (or patterns) used or developed within the poems. The discussion of these aspects of heroic narrative will serve to demonstrate the standards and values of the poet and the society he represents as they are pertinent to the significance of the works involved. Central to the entire discussion will be the modifications of the mesure-démeseure tension and the important role played by heroic moderation in determining the character and nature of epic-heroic poetry.

This study will begin with a discussion of Homeric epic, will proceed in order to the tragedy of Classical Greece (briefly), Virgil's Aeneid, certain of the Germanic heroic poems, La Chanson de Roland, and the Russian classic Slovo O Polku Igoreve (Word About Igor's Regiment), and will conclude with Poema del Cid.

The analyses will focus upon several aspects of the works. The examination of the classical works begins with the story-structure framework, but the approach to the medieval works will be a variation of the basic method.²² This will lead to an examination of the narrative core and narrative conflicts involved. For this it will be necessary to review the standards and values of the heroic environment presented in

²²No detailed analyses of the type presented by Whitman will be attempted.

the various works. Such a review will reveal the circumstances which create the mesure-démésure tension and will demonstrate the modifications of that tension which affect the development of the epic and of heroic poetry. The modifications of the tension permit a close and thorough explication of the resolution of the narrative conflicts and the means used to resolve them. For the purpose of this thesis the scope of the study will be limited to heroic works untouched by the spirit of medieval romance or the courtly love tradition.

SECTION TWO
CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Chapter I

Homer's Iliad

Basic Relationships in the Epic

One need not go beyond the first two books of The Iliad to get a clear idea of the substance of the entire epic, for behind the flash and fire of battle three basic relationships stand in stark relief. These relationships determine the content, force, direction, and emphasis of the heroic action presented. From Homer's opening lines these relationships dominate both content and structure. They deal with the epic hero's position in respect to his gods, in respect to his overlord, and in respect to his obligations and duties toward the warrior society. All of these are broadly sketched in the first two books and clearly illustrated and elaborated on in subsequent books.

While the first of these is of considerable importance in the epic and in all Greek literature, it is not of paramount importance for the present investigation because, except for infrequent and temporary lapses, the Greek heroes are almost uniformly mindful of their religious obligations.

In introducing his subject matter, Homer tells us:

. . . the will of Zeus was accomplished
since that time when first there stood in division
of conflict
Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant Achilles.¹ (Il. I, 5-7)

¹Richmond Lattimore, The Iliad of Homer (Chicago, 1961), p. 59.
All subsequent references to The Iliad will be from this source.

And this is precisely what happens throughout the twenty-four books of The Iliad. Despite the attempts of the gods to frustrate his plan and oppose his will, despite the contention of the gods with one another because of their personal motivations and with the human participants in the struggle, and despite the chaos and disorder produced by the "wrath of Achilles" theme, order and harmony are restored on all levels of the action. The action and the story do not end until the will of Zeus has been accomplished, and the whole work is encircled by that religious frame. Within that frame and the general frame of the Trojan-Greek conflict the plot, the themes, the narrative development, and the epic scope will grow.

Once this double frame has been established, the author leads toward the narrative core by focusing the reader's attention on the chaos and disorder created in the Greek camp by Agamemnon's callous, reckless, and ill-considered action in his treatment of Chryses, the priest of Apollo whose supplications and offer of ransom for Chryseis he had refused, despite the advice of his Achaean comrades-in-arms. Agamemnon's action brings down the wrath of Apollo on the Greek host for dishonoring Chryses and denying the suppliant's rights, and the Greek host is subjected to the "foul pestilence" sent by Apollo until proper relationships are restored with Apollo and his priest.

The Chryses incident serves several useful functions in the epic. First, it clarifies the relationships between gods and men by showing what is expected of man and by revealing what man can expect according to his success or failure in performing the proper religious rites or maintaining the proper religious attitude. Chryses expects and gets aid from Apollo because he has conducted himself properly, but the Greeks suffer

because their leader has exceeded the measured limits he should accept in his relations with gods and men. The various reactions to his conduct indicate clearly that there are such measured limits. Yet it is equally clear that, even though his fellow Achaeans do not approve of his action, they do not question his right as leader to take that action, however harmful to them it may be. The Chryses event does not quite put the reader in medias res in respect to the main theme, but it leads toward that theme.

Secondly, the Chryses incident begins to show what sort of a person Agamemnon himself is and, in certain respects, what the epic hero is. The self-assertive and self-centered aspects of his character will be revealed as significant aspects of the epic warrior in general and the epic hero in particular.

The last and most significant function of the Chryses incident is that its resolution highlights the "chaos-disorder" condition produced by Agamemnon's actions. The resolution of that "chaos-disorder" situation leads to contention between Achilles and Agamemnon. That contention becomes the "wrath of Achilles" theme, which dominates the action of the epic and creates three other "chaos-disorder" conditions, involving the Greek forces in general, the divine level of the action, and the personal life of Achilles.

Once the "wrath" theme has been introduced, the resolution of that theme and of the "chaos-disorder" conditions motivates the action and determines the subsequent plot structure. Both the action and the plot structure are firmly connected to the religious frame represented by the "will of Zeus" and the martial frame of the Greek-Trojan war. It is only when the will of Zeus has been accomplished that the wrath of

Achilleus comes to an end and all three "chaos-disorder" conditions have been replaced by "order-harmony" situations.

The story-structure framework suggested here is obliquely related to the structural framework and organization of The Iliad as presented by C. M. Bowra and C. H. Whitman. Bowra's Tradition and Design in The Iliad frames the detailed structure of the work between the presentation of the wrath of Achilleus in the first book and the resolution of that wrath in the terminal book. Within this external frame Bowra groups the other books to show the story of the wrath and its consequences. He tells the reader, "The poem is built on a plan at once simple and majestic. The crescendo of the opening is paralleled by the diminuendo of the closing book."² Bowra's comment suggests what is presented in this study as conditions of chaos and disorder being transformed to conditions of harmony and order, for he later adds the comment that "the poem begins with an uncontrolled scene of wrath and ends with the appeasing of the wrath."³ When the author discusses the return of Achilleus to the fighting, he states:

If he had upset the balance, he now begins to restore it. Order slowly spreads around him in a widening ring. The full meaning of the Shield, which was order as well as passion, begins to come true. . .⁴

Bowra's statement emphasizes the "widening ring" of order, but the effect is equally that of halting and reversing the growing circle of chaos and disorder.

²Bowra, Tradition and Design, p. 15.

³Bowra, Tradition and Design, p.

⁴Bowra, Tradition and Design, p. 215.

Though the idea was not drawn from Cedric Whitman's work, Homer and the Heroic Tradition, one can find the idea of circular narrative structure there. Whitman develops this idea to show the relationship between the concentric design of Geometric Art on Greek pottery and the structural design of The Iliad.⁵ In explaining the use of concentric circles in Geometric Art, Whitman states:

. . . the principle of balance around a central point which is implied in concentric circles is far and away the dominating formal principle in the Iliad. The poem as a whole forms one large concentric pattern, within which a vast system of smaller ones, sometimes distinct and sometimes interlocking, gives shape to the separate parts.⁶

What Whitman says about The Iliad is, with minor modifications, true for much of epic and heroic poetry. The examination of heroic literature in this study is intended to demonstrate that idea.

Within the framework of the "will of Zeus" and the Trojan-Greek war the narrative structure develops around the "wrath" theme and the aristeia (displays of warrior excellence) presented. This is done by a shuttle-focus technique which shifts the focus, physically or figuratively, from one level of the action to another or from one side of the struggle to the other. For example, the first book starts on the human level and presents all the circumstances leading to Achilles' decision to have his honor vindicated. This occasions a shift from the human to the divine level, when the gods assemble. Such shifts occur at several points throughout the narrative, including the terminal book, where the shift is from the divine level back to the human level. Once Achilles

⁵For details refer to Chapter V, pp. 87-101, and Chapter XI, pp. 249-284.

⁶Whitman, p. 97.

has withdrawn from the battlefield, the focus moves or shuttles between the Trojan forces and the Greek army to present the heroic values and the heroic examples, or aristeia, of the principal combatants. In addition, the focus shifts from the battlefield to the tent of Achilles and then back again.

This shuttle-focus technique is often reinforced by the use of prospective or retrospective narration; i.e., what we call foreshadowing and flashback. This is generally short in length. When Achilles tries to decide what to do about Agamemnon's treatment, Pallas Athene approves the action he is considering. She assures him he will receive triple rewards if he does not kill Agamemnon. When Achilles withdraws from the struggle, he predicts that the day will come when Agamemnon will regret his treatment of Achilles. These are two examples of short prospective narration or foreshadowing. When Phoinix tries to persuade Achilles to give up his wrath, he tells both of his past and of the example-story of Meleager. This is just one of the examples of longer retrospective narration, or extended flashback, used in the poem. Generally, the retrospective narration provides either an example-story or an expansive incident which broadens the scope of the action beyond the plains of Troy.

Despite the frequent shifting between the divine and the human levels, the narrative development shows the center of attention to be the heroes of both sides and their way of life. The narrative development grows out of the presentation of the nature of heroism and the values and ideals which constitute the heroic mold. These can best be approached by examining the "wrath of Achilles" theme.

The Wrath of Achilles: Source and Significance

When the Greek forces suffer from Apollo's anger, Achilles alone takes steps to discover the reason for the god's anger and the means to appease it. Ironically, that initial concern for his fellow warriors produces results which alter the situation and the conduct of Achilles; unfortunately, the results produced work against the well-being of the warrior group Achilles desired to help.

Kalchas is willing to provide the answer to the situation, but he knows the character of Agamemnon and has no wish to become the object of his wrath. The blind seer characterizes Agamemnon as one ready to assert authority over those subordinate to him, quick to anger at any attack, and sure to hold bitterness until his ruffled pride has been soothed. Achilles readily promises Kalchas his protection from any Danaan, even if he means Agamemnon, "who now claims to be far the greatest of all the Achaians."

The statement of Achilles shows that even Agamemnon's position as overlord of the Greek forces does not guarantee him unquestioned authority and respect from those supporting him. Achilles also reveals some dissatisfaction about or conflict with the overlord in respect to their relative worth as warriors. When Kalchas declares that both Chryses and Apollo must be properly honored by the return of Chryseis to her father without ransom and by the propitiating sacrifice to the god and his priest, Agamemnon reveals his easily provoked anger and his reluctance to give up Chryseis. Yet, he does want to satisfy his duty as overlord, provided his pride of position and possession will not suffer:

'Still I am willing to give her back, if such is
the best way.

I myself desire that my people be safe, not perish.

Find me then some prize that shall be my own, lest I only
 Among the Argives go without, since that were unfitting.'
 (Il. I, 116-119)

Achilleus responds to this statement and the latent hostility of his earlier comment to Kalchas becomes overt hostility, for he openly accuses Agamemnon of being the "greediest of all men," a suggestion that the overlord has passed the limits of normal expectancy for rewards. Achilleus adds an even stronger accusation:

'O wrapped in shamelessness, with your mind forever on
 profit,
 how shall any of the Achaians readily obey you, either
 to go on a journey or fight men strongly in battle?'
 (Il. I, 149-151)

This accusation concerns a personal attribute of the Greek overlord, but it also suggests that Achilleus questions Agamemnon's leadership because the latter demands something beyond normal expectations of reward. Achilleus implies that Agamemnon relegates his obligations as a leader to second place by excessive concern for personal profit at the expense of the men who follow him. Achilleus also charges that the assembled Argives are really fighting the battle of Agamemnon and Menelaos, rather than their own. Yet this is not their only reason for being there, nor for staying there, as the development of the contention between Achilleus will show.

Both Routh and Whitman comment upon the circumstances of the Quarrel. In discussing the position of a chieftain in a military Confederation Routh states:

'... as long as he could overawe them /subordinates/ by his own imperious personality and lead them by his superior prowess to the booty which follows victory, his position was secure.'⁷

⁷Routh, Vol. I, p. 34.

Then he explains how the leader was free to enjoy the tangible pleasures and possessions gained "and to fortify his sense of worth with the homage of his fellows."⁸ Agamemnon has been doing just that, but the accusation of Achilles now challenges the leader's right to such homage. The implication is that even though Agamemnon leads them to booty his personal greed denies them the fair share they expect. Consequently, Achilles suggests that the men have little reason to obey him or fight for him.

Whitman's comments clarify even more about the situation. He explains that Achilles, in his "typically torrential way," rather vigorously asserts "that a federation of princes such as Agamemnon was leading can hold together only on the basis of mutual respect for each other's honors and rights."⁹ Then Whitman suggests that Achilles may have tolerated the unfair distribution for some time, but that the ruthless action of Agamemnon in demanding a captive from one of his chief warriors now requires assertive action. Consequently, Achilles makes himself a test case because the situation "is an overt and wholesale attack on the supposed social system."¹⁰ Though he cites his own case in his outburst at Agamemnon's demand, he still speaks for his fellow warriors as well as for himself.

When Agamemnon reacts to the news that Chryseis must be returned by insisting that he will take a girl from one of his chief warriors to replace her, he is conforming to the self-assertive principle of the aristos (one of the elite, the well-born and noble warrior society)

⁸Routh, Vol. I, p. 34.

⁹Whitman, p. 184.

¹⁰Whitman, p. 184.

and to what he considers his right as overlord. But the reaction of Achilleus questions the portion taken by the overlord:

'Never, when the Achaians sack some well-bounded
citadel
Of the Trojans, do I have a prize that is equal to
your prize.
Always the greater part of the painful fighting
is the
Work of my hands; . . . (Il. II, 163-166)

Achilleus, as well as the other Greek warriors, has come to Troy to win fame as a warrior and to share in the wealth of Ilion by his skill and courage as a warrior. He and all members of the noble warrior class live for fighting, for in the fighting they can bring honor to their fathers, their tribes, and, most of all, to themselves. It is their function and joy to fight, both for the honor it may bring and for the rewards they expect to get from it. Only these can build up something against the inevitable confrontation with death (which they know to be their mortal lot).

The statement of Achilleus reveals that he has been weighing the actual operation of the system against the theoretical. For some time he has felt that his contributions to the Greek cause have not always been properly rewarded by prizes commensurate with his efforts and worth. Whitman's discussion of the situation¹¹ supports what has been said in the last paragraph, but he suggests that Achilleus has re-evaluated his assumptions about himself.

Whitman suggests that any difference between Achilleus and the others was determined by the quantity of his superior talents, which he

¹¹Whitman, pp. 182-183.

could expect to win him a greater degree of glory and more tangible rewards for his contribution. However, the relations between value and reward have turned out to be quite out of balance in the real world. The imbalance may be tolerated for a time, but eventually such imbalance becomes an affront to superior ability; consequently, the superior warrior begins to question what "is to be valued in a man."¹²

This is precisely the point Achilles has reached when he reacts to Agamemnon's demand for a prize to replace Chryseis. That demand and the subsequent ruthless action of Agamemnon require a self-assertive response. The first concern of every noble Greek warrior is to insist upon proper recognition of his worth. To do less is to fail to live up to his arete (proper level of honor, worth, and dignity) or to fall short of deserving it. Because he feels that he is no longer properly honored, Achilles does not intend to continue piling up wealth for Agamemnon. The latter's reaction to this produces effective characterization by contrast of the two men.¹³ It also assures the withdrawal of Achilles from the fighting.

Agamemnon's response suggests that he envies the favored position Achilles holds with the gods; it also suggests that he has an underlying fear for his personal stature. That envy and that fear break out in Agamemnon's declaration to show his power by personally taking Briseis from Achilles. Whitman calls attention to the basic insecurity of Agamemnon's statement and suggests other weak spots of the

¹²Whitman, p. 183.

¹³This is the basic means of characterization in The Iliad, for **all** heroes are presented in relationship to Achilles and to the heroic ideal.

overlord's character when he tells us:

. . . . he is magnificently dressed incompetence, without spirit or spiritual concern; his dignity is marred by pretension; his magnificence by greed, and his prowess by a savagery which is the product of deep uncertainty and fear.¹⁴

These characteristics are developed by Homer, and Agamemnon becomes "the nadir, as Achilles is the Zenith, of the heroic assumption."¹⁵

The threat made by Agamemnon on such a directly personal level of individual worth demands a reply from any aristos worthy of his arete. Both the threat and the response of Achilles to it show something of the typical and expected recklessness of the warrior of notable mettle, but it is significant to note that Achilles does not, despite extreme provocation, react with physical violence. He is so moved that his mind is divided between the thoughts of killing Agamemnon or restraining his anger.

Intelligent reflection prevents the unrestrained act and Pallas Athena also urges restraint; if he does not kill Agamemnon, he will receive triple rewards to enhance his honor and reputation. Achilles is quite cognizant of the proper relationships to maintain with the gods and readily obeys to assure himself of their favor. He does allow himself to deliver scathing abuse to Agamemnon and to warn him that "longing for Achilles will come to the sons of the Achaians" when they are confronted by "manslaughtering Hektor" and that Agamemnon will "eat out the heart within" because he "did no honour to the best of the Achaians." (Il. I, 244)

¹⁴Whitman, pp. 162-163.

¹⁵Whitman, p. 162.

Whitman's comments at this point indicate certain things relevant to the characterization, narrative development, and significance of the work after this point of the poem. He asserts that Achilles begins to show a qualitative difference from his fellows when he starts to conceive his higher goal, a demand for the absolute of heroic self-assertion and honor. Agamemnon's action prompts Achilles to question the creed of heroic behavior, and as a result:

He will not seek honor as the others seek it. He will have "honor from Zeus," by which he means he will risk all in the belief that nobility is not a mutual exchange of vain compliments among men whose lives are evanescent as leaves, but an organic and inevitable part of the universe, independent of social contract.¹⁶

To implement that desire Achilles will withdraw from the fight and get the aid of Thetis to assure the acknowledgement of his personal greatness and to establish the integrity of his honor.

Once Achilles demands the absolute of heroic self-assertion and honor, the actions and reactions of the other warriors will serve to characterize him and them, as well as to show the full range of values pertinent to the heroic ideal. The consequences of his demands and the final disposition of them provide part of the significant meaning of the poem.

The abusive words which Achilles directs at Agamemnon seem both to glorify the former and suggest that the latter is often remiss in his duty as overlord. Such a charge is hard to evaluate, but Achilles, even in his most furious wrath, would hardly make such a charge openly without grounds and provocation. In any event, no violent rebuttal is offered by Agamemnon or his men. However, wise Nestor steps in to remind both of

¹⁶Whitman, p. 183.

them to curb their tempers and keep within sensible limits. Here, as elsewhere, Nestor is the arbiter of the heroic society, or as Whitman states, "the embodiment of the rules of the heroic game."¹⁷

Nestor's age and experience qualify him to remind both men of the accepted rules. He urges the overlord not to take Briseis from Achilles, and he reminds Achilles that Agamemnon is a sceptred king. Even though Achilles is admittedly the stronger man and the son of a goddess, Nestor reminds him that his portion of honor can never equal that of the sceptred king. Nestor points out that, whatever personal justification Achilles may have in his quarrel with Agamemnon, there are still political and social limits which Achilles is transgressing. Yet he also makes it clear that Agamemnon too forgets certain social obligations and limits. Despite Nestor's reasoned plea, neither man alters his position; both will insist upon unrestrained personal self-assertion.

Whitman's comments on this impasse are quite instructive. He says that Nestor and the others deny the worth of the god-given valor of Achilles (as compared to Agamemnon's kingly social worth); however, he asserts that the appearance of Pallas Athene confirms the importance and worth of that valor, even over Agamemnon's kingly importance. Whitman points out that even though Athene assures Achilles of extensive material rewards he wants more than material things; consequently, he demands (and eventually gets) something Agamemnon and the Greeks cannot give him: honor from Zeus above and beyond any of the other warriors.

Neither warrior yields ground, but Agamemnon precipitates the fateful decision by adding insult to injury; he threatens to take Briseis

¹⁷Whitman, p. 174. Bowra also emphasizes this in his discussion of the wrath-theme, pp. 15 ff. of Tradition and Design.

from Achilles not by personal strength, but by force of numbers. Achilles gives up Briseis without further contention, but not without making clear his attitude. He suggests that Agamemnon's headstrong conduct jeopardizes the Greek forces and that his absence will be of great import.

Achilles feels sure that his position will be respected, and his attitude suggests that the overlord's responsibility may work to his advantage. Shrewd foresight characterizes the action of Achilles, even under the stress of his titanic anger at the insult of Agamemnon. He takes the irrevocable step by removing himself from the battle and getting Thetis to secure the aid of Zeus in vindicating his honor and exalting his worth.

Both Achilles' statement of what will happen when he is absent and the agreement of Zeus to assure his honor are examples of the foreshadowing that links the incidents of the plot development. Furthermore, the promise of Zeus to Thetis links the two major themes set forth in the opening lines: the "will of Zeus" and the Agamemnon-Achilles contention. That promise permits Zeus to give honor to Hector and the Trojans before their defeat, and in doing so to assure the greater glory of Achilles by allowing the Trojans temporary success. As a result, at this point in the poem the chaos and disorder caused by the Chryses incident has been ended, only to produce a larger chaos and disorder situation in the contention of Agamemnon and Achilles. This, in turn, becomes even larger when it results in the absence of Achilles from the fighting, an event which has tragic consequences for the Greeks and for Achilles himself. From this point on the action and narrative development focus on the consequences of the self-assertive action of Agamemnon and

Achilleus, the values and standards of the heroic milieu, and the means of resolving the growing circles of chaos and disorder that fill out the story-structure framework.

With Achilleus absent, attention is focused on the deeds and values of the other warriors on both sides. Bowra sees this as an essential part of the total organization of the work,¹⁸ for it gives rise to the aristeia of the various warriors. Furthermore, the aristeia and the "wrath" theme put all the warriors into contrasting relationships with respect to Achilleus. The contrasts shown individualize them and display the full range of values and varieties of the heroic milieu.

When the plight of the Greeks becomes desperate, Agamemnon gathers his dispirited Argives and suggests that they give up hope of taking Troy. Diomedes reacts vigorously to such suggestion and offers both criticism and example by declaring that he and Sthenelos will remain to fight no matter what the rest do. The action of Diomedes here demonstrates the normative function which Whitman assigns him, for he is the exemplar of "brilliant daring and glory" but without the insistence on the absolute. Whitman further describes him as "the heroic pattern without thought, victory without implicit defeat,"¹⁹ and indicates that Diomedes does not attempt to break the heroic framework or go outside the rules. As a consequence,

He is the product, not the creator, of the heroic assumption, and as such he can state more clearly than anyone else, the norm of high valor, without reference to any embarrassing complexities.²⁰

¹⁸Bowra, Tradition and Design, pp. 15 ff.

¹⁹Whitman, p. 167.

²⁰Whitman, p. 169.

At this point and elsewhere Diomedes embodies the heroic norm, despite his attacks against Aphrodites and Ares. He has the divine sanction of Hera and Pallas Athene to attack them, and he does so without any sense of inflated pride or desire to pamper his ego. As Whitman says, he is the warrior in motion, actively engaged in performing the task at hand.

Nestor supports the stand taken by Diomedes and urges an assembly to determine their course of action. At that assembly Nestor again assumes the role of arbiter and presents the normative position. He does so by tactfully reminding Agamemnon of his obligations as leader and of how he dishonored Achilles. Nestor urges that they should persuade Achilles "with words of supplication and with the gifts of friendship." Agamemnon admits he was wrong and offers to make matters right:

'I was mad, I myself will not deny it. Worth many
fighters is that man whom Zeus in his heart loves,
as now
he has honoured this man and beaten down the Achaian
people.
But since I was mad, in the persuasion of my heart's
evil,
I am willing to make all good, and give back gifts in
abundance.' (Il. IX, 116-120)

Though his words and the tremendous wealth he offers to Achilles indicate how much Agamemnon is willing to yield, he is still insistent that Achilles must yield place to him:

'Let him give way. For Hades gives not way, and is
pitiless,
And therefore he among all the gods is most hateful to
mortals.
And let him yield place to me, inasmuch as I am the
kinglier
And inasmuch as I can call myself born the elder.' (Il. IX, 158-161)

Agamemnon then sends the men Achilles most respects to deliver the offer and plead the cause of the Argives. And they use every possible appeal to get his agreement.

Odysseus cleverly uses the appeal of respect for a father's advice by recalling to him these words of Peleus:

' . . . but be it yours to hold fast in your bosom the anger of a proud heart, for consideration is better.'
(Il. IX, 255-256)

This plea for moderation and discipline echoes Nestor's earlier words. Odysseus then uses the double appeal of Achilles' obligations to his companions and the promise of glory:

'But if the son of Atreus is too much hated in your heart, himself and his gifts, at least take pity on all the other Achaeans who are afflicted along the host, and will honor you As a god. You may win very great glory among them. For now you might kill Hektor, since he would come very close to you. With the wicked fury upon him since he thinks there is not his equal Among the rest of the Danaans the ships carried hither.'
(Il. IX, 300-306)

But even resourceful Odysseus fails to move Achilles from his decision to stay away from the field of battle and return home.

At this point Achilles further determines in his own mind just what he wants. He says he has decided to go home because there is no principle of justice in his treatment by Agamemnon, who deceived him and took the "bride of his heart" from him. All the gifts now offered do not convince him of any major change on the part of Agamemnon, whom he does not appear to trust. Furthermore, all of these gifts do not make up for the insult to his still-developing inward sense of honor. Whitman makes much of this and declares:

Briseis has become a symbol of Achilles' own integrity, a thing which does not depend on the king or the heroic system. She is not on the same level with the other possessions, therefore; she stands for something quite internal, which Agamemnon can trespass against, but not understand.²¹

²¹Whitman, p. 186.

Then he proceeds to show that the other possessions are concerned with force and fighting, the mode of self-assertion in which Achilles has been supreme, but which he now finds inadequate for his needs. Consequently, he is ready to go home and leave Agamemnon with the problems of his overblown ego.

Whitman credits Achilles with getting the better of Odysseus when the latter reports the offer made by Agamemnon, even though Achilles had no way of knowing that Odysseus failed to report the last part of Agamemnon's speech. Whitman indicates that the answer of Achilles is a double entendre which suggests that Achilles senses something has been omitted and that Agamemnon simply wants to use him and buy his submission.²² Odysseus had not reported the words with which Agamemnon insisted that Achilles should yield place to him, but Achilles answers Odysseus in these words:

'without consideration for you I must make my answer,
the way I think, and the way it will be accomplished,
that you may not
come one after another, and sit by me, and speak softly.
For as I detest the doorways of death, I detest that
man, who
hides one thing in the depths of his heart and speaks
forth another.' (Il. IX, 309-313)

There may be a double entendre in these words, but they hardly seem to indicate any more than the perception of Achilles that Agamemnon has not really had a change of spirit. Achilles could make such a statement on the basis of the petty and mean qualities he already knows Agamemnon to possess.

²²Whitman, p. 193.

Phoinix makes the second plea and prefaces it with an account of his family problems and how he came to serve Peleus. After this bit of retrospective narration, he urges Achilles:

' . . . beat down your great anger. It is not yours to have a pitiless heart. The very immortals can be moved, their virtue and honor and strength are greater than ours are,
and yet, with sacrifices and offerings for endearment, with libations and with savour men turn back even the immortals.' (Il. IX, 496-500)

The devoted old friend of Achilles also urges him to heed the spirits of Prayer so that Ruin will not overtake him. To support his position Phoinix uses the example-story of Meleagros, whose hardness of heart denied the entreaties of his friends so long that they were no longer willing to honor him with the gifts promised, even though he went back to the fight at the very last minute. Whitman points out²³ that Phoinix unwittingly helps Achilles decide upon the pattern he will follow and the role he will play; like Meleagros he will not return to the fight until the moment of imminent disaster.

The response of Achilles to Phoinix shows that the Greek hero conceives a higher honor:

'Phoinix, my father, aged, illustrious, such honour is a thing
I need not. I think I am honoured already in Zeus' ordinance.' (Il. IX, 607-608.)

Achilles remains unmoved and the Argives learn they must continue to face the onslaught of raging Hektor without their best man. This is precisely what Achilles wants, for he is ready to risk all to satisfy his feeling about his inner worth by insisting upon the absolute. Yet he

²³Whitman, p. 191.

makes one concession when he asks Phoinix to stay the night with him. He says that they can decide on the morrow whether to go home or remain.

Blunt Aias is the last to make an appeal, and the simple humanity of his words has more effect than the pleas of the others. He says it is useless to waste time with Achilleus because

'He is hard, and does not remember that friends' affection
wherein we honored him by the ships, far beyond all
others.

Pitiless. . . .' (Il. IX, 630-632)

Nevertheless, Aias makes a final plea:

'Respect your own house; see, we are under the same roof
with you,
from the multitudes of the Danaans, we who desire beyond
all
others to have your honour and love, out of all the
Achaians.' (Il. IX, 640-642)

Though he had answered Odysseus by declaring his intention to depart and told Phoinix he would make a decision the next day, after Aias has spoken he says he will not fight until Hektor approaches the ships of the Myrmidons.

Whitman presents a comprehensive analysis of the offer of Agamemnon and the reporting of that offer by the three warriors.²⁴ He shows that the embassy was not a complete failure because Achilleus was moved somewhat. He also points out that the envoys failed to report that Achilleus would fight, but only at the crucial point in the struggle.

After Phoinix and the three ambassadors have failed to move Achilleus by warning of the consequences of ate (ruin, harmful moral and physical consequences) and appealing to his sense of aidos (shame prompted by what others will think of his action), Diomedes shows his

²⁴Whitman, pp. 190-192.

irritation. He makes it clear that he does not approve of pampering the excessive pride of Achilleus:

'I wish you had not supplicated the blameless son of
 Peleus
 with innumerable gifts offered. He is a proud man without
 this,
 and now you have driven him deeper into his pride.'
 (Il. IX, 698-700)

Diomedes is clearly as interested in personal fame and glory as Achilleus is, but he indicates that there are limits which Achilleus has exceeded. He does not condemn pride as such, but he does condemn the excess that harms other qualities. As he had earlier accused Agamemnon of a deficiency of "heart" in the consideration of his fellow warriors, so does he here accuse Achilleus of an excessive pride that destroys the greatness of heart he could and perhaps should display. Phoenix expresses the same point of view when he criticizes the excessive self-assertion of Achilleus who he says has a "pitiless heart."

Though the rancor of Achilleus has hardened his heart and mind enough to make him disregard the suffering and desperate plight of his fellow warriors, Patroklos, his dearest friend and alter ego, not only retains the more normal response to aidos toward his fellow warriors that one normally expects of the aristoi (noble military elite), but he also acts in response to it. When the Trojans break down the Greek ramparts and bring the fighting to the ships, Achilleus still does nothing. But Patroklos is greatly moved by the Greek plight and when his plea fails to get Achilleus back into the fight, he gets permission to lead the Myrmidons in an effort to drive Hektor and the Trojans back from the ships.

Whitman feels that Achilles is beginning to realize the weakness of his position, but still tries to follow the decision he has made. Thus he views the action of Achilles in permitting Patroklos to substitute for him as a compromise "to preserve both sides of his will, both human and divine; both life and the absolute." Even as he sends Patroklos out with cautionary advice, he wishes that he and Patroklos alone might survive as conquerors of Troy. Whitman says this indicates the realization developing in the mind of Achilles that his position has defects:

Caught between the jaws of his self-esteem and his magnanimity toward others, he half foresees the insoluble tragedy of his position and reels back from it, wishing that all the world were dead except himself and his friend. He still has hope, but it is growing less and less reasonable. In the end, he will assert death for himself too.²⁵

Patroklos has considerable success because he does more than merely fill the armor of Achilles; he becomes Achilles. He disregards the advice of Achilles not to attempt more than securing the safety of the ships and not to try to storm Ilion alone. His failure to heed that advice pits him against Hektor and thus causes his death, an event which finally brings Achilles back to the fighting.

Whitman elaborates on the intertwined nature of the roles of the two men, particularly in respect to the change that occurs when gentle and compassionate Patroklos replaces Achilles and becomes the savage fury that beats the Trojans back to their walls; he virtually becomes Achilles until he encounters Hektor. When Hektor slays Patroklos, the crest of Achilles falls in the dust for the first time. Whitman views this as symbolic, for after that event he sees Achilles as the death-devoted.

²⁵Whitman, p. 199.

Something as striking and shocking as the death of his closest friend was needed to shake Achilles from the hardness of his rancor and make him see to what his unbending pride and stubborn self-assertion had led. The anger formerly directed at Agamemnon will now be intensified and turned upon Hektor and the Trojans. Though the main concern of Achilles is now to avenge the death of his friend, he takes stock of the situation and condemns himself for his anger and its consequences:

'since I was no light of safety to Patroklos, nor to my
other
companions, who in their numbers went down before glorious
Hektor,
but sit here beside my ships, a useless weight on the
good land.' (Il. XVIII, 102-104)

The death of Patroklos is seen by Whitman as both Recognition and Reversal for Achilles, who now realizes the limitations mortality places on "the man who seeks perfected glory in the heroic stance without blot."²⁶ In trying to avenge the deception of Agamemnon, Achilles caused the death of his comrades and particularly Patroklos. After that, the direct simplicity of human relationships vanishes and the emotions stop being human relationships; they become "part of the hero's relationship with the absolute."²⁷ No longer does he desperately wish to satisfy the standards and wring recognition from all. He "yearns only to satisfy his own burning self-esteem"; consequently, "his prowess takes on an indescribable terror and glory which demolishes all resistance."²⁸ Since death is the only absolute possible for him,

²⁶ Whitman, p. 187.

²⁷ Whitman, p. 198.

²⁸ Whitman, pp. 204-205.

Achilleus insists upon absolute vengeance as he moves toward the final absolute. Whitman's explication of this accounts for his conduct in the fighting and for his treatment of Hektor's body.

Even though Thetis tells him his death must soon follow Hektor's, he receives that news with indifference. Though he says he will go to "win excellent glory," it is obviously not in the spirit of his insistence on the absolute of heroic fame. A colder, more savage fury moves him to cast off his normal response to aidos and promise Patroklos the head of Hektor and the sacrifice of twelve Trojans at the funeral pyre of his friend. The splendor of fame and glory has been so dulled by the death of his fellow warriors that he openly makes an end to his anger against Agamemnon:

' . . . thus not all of these too many Achaians would have
bitten
the dust, by enemy hands, when I was away in my anger.
This way was better for the Trojans and Hektor; yet I
think
the Achaians will too long remember this quarrel between
us.
Still we will let all this be a thing of the past, though
it hurts us,
Now I am making an end to my anger. It does not become
me
unrelentingly to rage on. . . . ' (Il. XIX, 61-68)

Eager to avenge Patroklos, Achilleus no longer has interest in the rewards previously insisted upon, and he shows no reaction to Agamemnon's self-justifying argument that the gods were responsible for the overlord's conduct. To Agamemnon's assurance that he is willing to "make all good," Achilleus returns an indifferent response:

'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon,
the gifts are yours to give if you wish, and as it is
proper,
or to keep with yourself . . . ' (Il. XIX, 146-148)

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Achilleus goes through the ritual of reconciliation automatically because it is proper to his station, but he indulges in no self-assertive enjoyment of it. No more apt description of the situation exists than Whitman's words:

Personal integrity in Achilleus achieves the form and authority of imminent divinity, with its inviolable, lonely singleness, half repellent because of its almost inhuman austerity,²⁹ but irresistible in its passion and perfected selfhood.

Achilleus has agreed to actions which will eliminate the social chaos, but he cares not for rewards, nor for eating or any normal pleasures. Impatiently and with "sorrow beyond endurance" in his heart he waits for the coming of day so that he can fight "till the Trojans have had enough." "As inhuman fire sweeps on in fury," so does the savagery of Achilleus sweep the Trojans before him and pile up corpses on the plains of Ilion and in the stream of Skamandros where he nearly loses his life in a struggle with the god of the river. The rage of Achilleus dulls all gentler concerns and he ruthlessly rejects the supplications of Tros and Lykaon when he cuts them down. With "strong madness forever holding his heart and violent after his glory," he drives the Trojans to seek the safety of their walls.

When Achilleus returns to the fighting part of the growing circle of chaos and disorder has been halted, for the distress of the Greeks has been lifted by the accord between Agamemnon and Achilleus. Only the Trojans and Achilleus still suffer from chaos and disorder. In transferring his wrath from Agamemnon to the Trojans and Hektor, Achilleus really increases the chaos and disorder of his moral life. This is

²⁹Whitman, p. 182.

evident in his denial of the supplications made by Tros and Lykaon, as well as in his treatment of Hektor's body later.

During the absence of Achilleus, the other Greek and Trojan heroes have their aristeia. These provide comparisons and contrasts to fill out the presentation of the heroic mold and provide further examples of epic moderation, or mesure. The functions of Diomedes, who has the greatest aristeia except for Achilleus and Hektor, and of Nestor have already been indicated, but the roles of Aias, Odysseus, and Hektor will complete the picture of epic heroism.

If Diomedes is the hero in motion, Aias is the norm of tlamosyne (rugged endurance and fortitude) and martial aidos. Diomedes may show more dashing and active heroism, but Aias is always in the forefront of the fight and takes the brunt of the fighting after Achilleus has quit the field. Whitman characterizes him and indicates his function in these words:

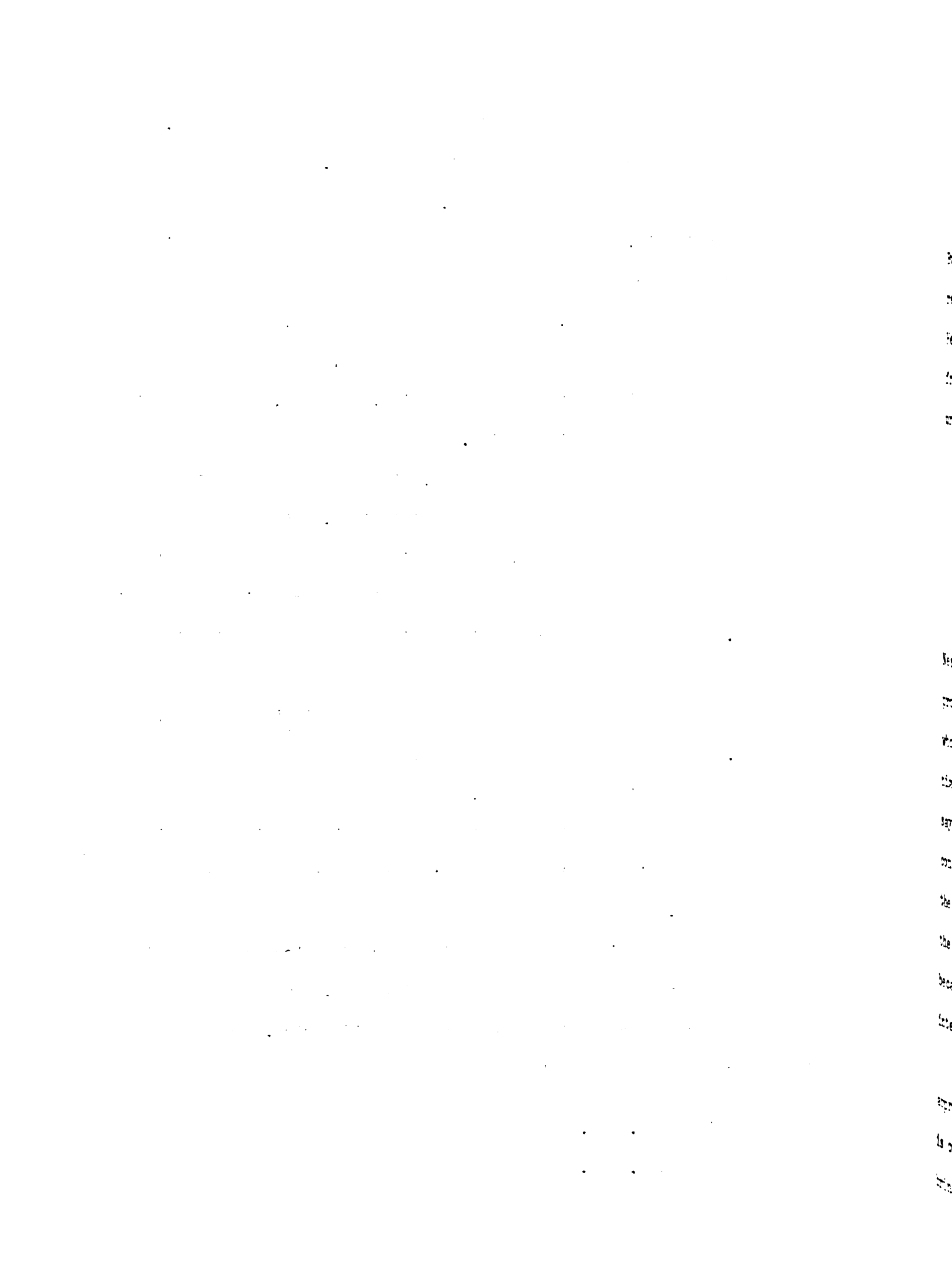
It is his massive and steadfast devotion, not brilliant display, which makes Aias what he is, both in the Great Battle and elsewhere. For all his clear personality, The Iliad represents him primarily as a hero among heroes, a fighter shoulder to shoulder with friends, mighty yet modest.³⁰

Then he sums up the significant position of Aias in relation to Achilleus by stating that "his relationship is not to the absolute but to other fellow warriors."³¹

When the fighting begins to go in favor of Hektor and the Trojans, Nestor is trapped in the center of the battlefield. Odysseus and Diomedes are both near, but Odysseus fails to aid Nestor. Consequently Diomedes rebukes Odysseus with

³⁰Whitman, p. 172.

³¹Whitman, p. 210.



'Where are you running, turning your back in battle
 like a coward?
 Do not let them stick the spear in your back as you run
 for it,
 but stay, so that we can beat back the fierce man from
 the ancient.' (Il. VII, 94-96)

But when Odysseus pays more attention to the sign of Zeus than to the rebuke of Diomedes, the latter rescues Nestor and boldly goes against Hektor with some success until Zeus unleashes another thunderbolt in front of the horses of Diomedes. The doughty Nestor drops the reins and urges Diomedes to flee as he asks:

'Can you not see that the power of Zeus is no longer with
 you?
 For the time Zeus, son of Kronos, gives glory to this
 man;
 for today; hereafter, if he will, he will give it
 to us also; no man can beat back the purpose of
 Zeus, not
 even one very strong, since Zeus is by far the greater.'
 (Il. IX, 140-144)

Nestor's words give tacit approval to the withdrawal of Odysseus and provide a pointed suggestion for such restraint on the part of Diomedes, who is greatly concerned that Hektor may boast how Diomedes ran from him. This is precisely what Hektor does to get him to fight, but Nestor says that nobody will reproach him for avoiding the fight under the given conditions. Despite this disagreement between Diomedes and Odysseus, the former chooses the latter from among the Achaians to go with him on the dangerous mission into enemy territory. Diomedes chooses Odysseus because he represents military strength and valor, as well as shrewd intelligence.

In addition to the contrast between Odysseus and Diomedes and the approval of epic moderation, the scene of Nestor's dangerous predicament is of major importance to the unified structure of the poem. The scene brings the reader back to the controlling part of the story-structure

framework, the "will of Zeus," and demonstrates how Zeus makes his promise to Thetis a part of the working out of his will. In order to assure the honor of Achilles, Zeus must deceive Hektor and the Trojans by granting them the success they are enjoying at this point. Only by putting the Greeks in the most compelling danger can Zeus make Agamemnon and the Greeks grant Achilles the absolute honor he wants. Nestor's words to Diomedes carry the reader retrospectively back to the introduction of the "will of Zeus" and the promise of Zeus, both in the first book. At the same time, Nestor's mention of the power of Zeus and the possibility that he may favor the Greeks another day prospectively project the reader forward to the accomplishment of the "will of Zeus." Lastly, the scene suggests the dilemma posed for Zeus in respect to his treatment of Achilles and Hektor. This aspect will be discussed later.

Even though he is of the enemy camp, Hektor's role in the work is an essential one. In Book Six Hektor leaves the battle temporarily to get Alexandros (Paris) back to the fight. Before returning to the fight, Hektor talks with Andromache, who fears that his great strength may cause his death. He readily admits he has thought of such a possibility, but adds,

' . . . Yet I would feel deep shame before the Trojans,
and the Trojan women with trailing garments,
if like a coward I were to shrink aside from the
fighting;
and the spirit will not let me, since I have learned
to be valiant
and to fight always among the foremost ranks of the
Trojans,
winning for my own self great glory, and for my
father.' (Il. VI, 440-446)

Hektor here reveals his sense of aidos, his concern for valorous reputation, for his fellow warriors and his people, and for keeping unstained

the family name and also for adding to its fame. He is a warrior who balances the demands of the group and the desires of the individual in his conduct. Even though he fears for his life and knows for certain that "sacred Ilium shall perish," he still plucks up his courage to satisfy both demands. When granted such apparent success by Zeus, he does not question it or mistrust it; he pushes it to the limit in the hope that he just might manage to succeed and survive. He is not quite prepared for the deception, betrayal, and reversal that come, but he faces those things as best he can.

Both Bowra and Whitman have much to say about Hektor's admirable qualities. Whitman sees him as part of the circle of heroes used to illuminate the character of both Achilles and those with whom he is compared or contrasted. Whitman stresses the appealing gentleness, loyal civic and familial devotion, straightforward bravery, and touching weakness which sometimes unjustly draw sympathy away from Achilles. Both men are seen as tragic figures, but even though "Hektor foresees his own death as likely enough, he behaves as though he might well win -" and "out of loyalty and aidos he does what he can."³²

Bowra stresses the same contrast by noting that Achilles thinks only of his glory but Hektor thinks of home and family and city. Yet he also notes that Hektor "acts like a hero and has a glorious triumph when he comes near to burning the Achaean ships," but he "hardly thinks of displaying his personal prowess."³³

³²Whitman, p. 210.

³³Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 112.

Bowra suggests the special significance of Hektor more than Whitman does:

Perhaps in Hektor we may see the emergence of a new ideal of manhood, of the conception that a man fulfills himself in the service of his city more than in the satisfaction of his own honour, and in that case Hektor stands between the heroic world and the city-state which replaced it.³⁴

Bowra never lets the reader forget that Hektor has the requisite attractiveness and nobility of the hero. Though Hektor may be inferior to Achilles, yet "he is a formidable warrior who is carried on by his impetuous might" and "in him love of country is the driving motive, but through it he realizes a destiny which is certainly heroic."³⁵

After Hektor has killed Patroklos, Poulydamas realizes that Achilles will return to the fight; consequently, he urges the Trojans to seek the safety of Ilion's walls. Because Hektor speaks against the idea the Trojans fail to listen to the good advice of Poulydamas. Though Athene receives credit for taking their wits away, this should not be construed to suggest that the men were helpless pawns. It is the nature of men in a warrior society to be fallible, particularly when they respond to the heroic example rather than the urging of prudence or caution. Their response to the heroic example results in the death of many before those left finally seek the safety of Troy's walls. Then only Hektor remains outside the walls, and he does so despite the strongest appeals directed to him by Priam and Hekuba. Having once urged the Trojans to disregard the words of Poulydamas, his sense of aidos now urges him not to seek the security he had previously denied

³⁴Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 112.

³⁵Bowra, Heroic Poetry, p. 112.

his fellow Trojans, for he fears the reproach of Poulydamas if he does.

He realizes what his self-assertion produced and condemns himself for it:

'Now, since by my own recklessness I have ruined my
people,
I feel shame before the Trojans and the Trojan women with
trailing
robes, that someone who is less a man than I will say
of me:
"Hektor believed in his own strength and ruined his
people."' (Il. XXII, 104-107)

Consequently, both his personal sense of honor and of duty to his people urge him to face Achilles. When Polydoros is killed by Achilles, Hektor disregards the advice of Apollo, who has told him not to face Achilles alone. Even though he is quite aware that Achilles is much stronger than he, Hektor tries to stand his ground.

However, the very human fears of Hektor cause him to flee before the Greek champion. Zeus, even though he has promised great glory to Achilles and even though he realizes Hektor is fated to die, is so moved that he wants the gods to permit him to save Hektor. The gods do not permit it and Hektor is deceived and abandoned by them. Athena halts the flight of Hektor by beguiling him with the illusory presence of Deiphobos. When he realizes Deiphobos is not really there, he knows that death is imminent and resolves:

'Let me at least not die without a struggle,
ingloriously,
but do something first that men to come shall know
of it.' (Il. XXII, 304-305)

Hektor, in his simple goodness, urges a mutual promise of respect for whichever one is killed. But Achilles will make no such promise then, nor do the entreaties of the dying Hektor later change his position. Savage vengeance for the death of Patroklos is his only thought as

Achilleus delivers the fatal thrust against Hektor. Not only does he reject Hektor's plea for decent treatment of his body, but he also thinks "of shameful treatment of glorious Hektor" and proceeds to subject the corpse to such treatment. As he had promised over the corpse of Patroklos, he sacrifices twelve Trojans at the funeral pyre of his friend. At the funeral games, Achilleus shows the extent of his reconciliation with Agamemnon by granting him a prize for spear-casting without benefit of a contest. When Achilleus continues his outrageous treatment of Hektor's body, few of the gods approve his conduct and Apollo condemns his action because Achilleus has destroyed pity and feels no shame.

Apollo wants to give Hektor pride of place equal to that of Achilleus, but Hera's objection is supported by Zeus, who reveals his plan to help Priam secure Hektor's body. Thetis is told to reveal to her son that the gods frown upon his treatment of Hektor's body and to urge him to permit Priam to ransom the body (a plan Priam had already conceived by himself.) Though Achilleus readily agrees to the suggestion of the Olympians, it is the personal supplication of Priam that unlocks the springs of compassion and normal response to aidos by evoking "a passion of grieving for his father." He takes special care to have Hektor's body properly prepared for the return to Priam's palace and personally lifts it onto a litter. He also arranges for the comfort and safety of Priam during the night and further guarantees as much of a truce as Priam desires to give his son proper mourning and burial rites. By that action Achilleus eliminates the moral and spiritual chaos in his life. With that act, the last "chaos-disorder" condition has been

transformed to one of peace and harmony, for within the "wrath of Achilleus" theme the "chaos-disorder" conditions in the Greek camp, in the overlord-retainer relationship, in the relationships of the gods, and in the moral and spiritual life of Achilleus have all been removed. The "will of Zeus," which encircles all else, has been worked out on both the human and the divine levels. Within that encircling frame, the growing patterns of chaos and disorder which resulted from excessive heroic self-assertion have all been resolved by heroic self-restraint or moderation.

The importance of the poem's development toward this normative position has been suggested by both Bowra and Whitman. Bowra stresses the moral tragedy at the heart of The Iliad by stating that "the theme is how Achilleus' temper leads both to disaster and to moral degradation."³⁶ The disaster he mentions is Achilleus' preference of his inordinate pride to his obligations toward his fellow aristoi and his alter ego, Patroklos. Furthermore, Achilleus realizes "he has fallen from heroic standards of virtue" and consequently "there is another tragedy in his soul."³⁷ His tragedy, says Bowra, "turns on the failure of Achilleus to keep his aidos for gods and men, and it does not end until he has regained it [aidos]."³⁸ As Bowra indicates, the tragic circumstances resulted from the absolute self-assertion of Achilleus, whose conduct had not been fully approved by his fellow-warriors and whose thoughts reveal the regret he later experiences. What Bowra says is valid, but he fails to stress that Agamemnon's self-assertion was

³⁶Bowra, Tradition and Design, p. 17.

³⁷Bowra, Tradition and Design, p. 17.

³⁸Bowra, Tradition and Design, p. 21.

also involved. The only difference is that Agamemnon, even if grudgingly, was willing to moderate somewhat his position for the good of his forces.

Even after the death of Patroklos, Achilles' accord with Agamemnon was in part pro forma. Real accord comes only during the funeral games in honor of Patroklos, as Whitman shows. Then Achilles reasserts the principle which Agamemnon had destroyed by his excessive self-assertion. Though possessions mean little to Achilles at this point, "the courtesy with which they may be given, the honor rightly accorded to ability, is the first law which Achilles observes after his return to his colleagues, and rightly, since it was the breach of this law which drove him away."³⁹

Whitman further explains how balance and order are restored by the conduct of Achilles. To give point to his discussion he suggests that just as both passion and order were represented on the shield of Achilles so must there be a balance of passion and order in the context of the story. This is only another way of asserting the normative values.

Whitman also arrives at the idea of a balance or compensatory adjustment toward the normative position when he discusses the nature of the material of heroic poetry. That material is half primitive and comes from a time "when heroism meant chiefly physical prowess, murderous dexterity, colossal self-assertion." "Yet," he adds, "it is also perhaps of essential human equipment that the germs of a corrective to this self-assertion are not wholly lacking among the original types themselves."⁴⁰

³⁹Whitman, p. 215.

⁴⁰Whitman, p. 155.

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The same point is demonstrated in a slightly different fashion when Whitman discusses the gleaming heroic vision which Achilles both seeks and creates. Despite the compelling passion and perfected self-hood of that vision, Whitman reminds the reader:

Yet the scale is not weighted in favor of this gleaming vision.
Homer has allowed the human world the fullness of all its
claims upon our sympathy.⁴¹

For Achilles the absolute realization of that gleaming vision was not possible in the world of human demands and he could achieve it only by willing the absolute of death. He did will that absolute for himself, but not before having accepted the norms of self-restraint and moderation implicit in the social reality of the heroic milieu.

The Wider Heroic Vision and Epic Structure

The incidents, scenes, events, and illustrations so far presented have their individual validity in respect to the values of the heroic milieu and to the structure of the poem. But even more important is the composite portrait of the epic hero and the full representation of the epic ideal. What then is the epic hero? What are the significant features of his background? What meaningful and significant values and standards determine the fullest representation of the wider heroic vision? And, lastly, how are these related to the overall structure of the epic?

First, the epic warrior belongs to a noble warrior class, an aristocratic military elite. He is a man whose raison d'être is to

⁴¹Whitman, p. 182.

fight, whether in defense of his homeland, his clan, or his family, or whether to win rewards and possessions. In any event, he is greatly concerned about both possessions and glory, for they give his life its meaning and value. A natural concomitant is that he both is and is expected to be a proud, self-assertive man. He takes pride in his lineage, in his clan and kingdom, and in the fame he can achieve with his strength, skill, and courage. Through his techne (military or battle skill), arete, and tlemosyne he hopes and expects to win kudos.

For this reason he goes on raids against other towns and other kingdoms, for that is how he can build his fame and increase his possessions. Though he may be a prince or king in his own land, he may join just such an expedition under the most powerful or widest ruling king of the region because of family relations, of oaths taken, or of his desire to gain fame and fortune as a warrior both for himself and for his family. He expects what strength, skill, and bravery he devotes to a cause to fill his ships and his home with valued possessions. When such expectations do not materialize, there can be trouble, as, for example in the Agamemnon-Achilleus quarrel and in the suggestion of bitterness on the part of Aineias.

Though an epic hero may put himself and his comrades-in-arms under an overlord, he will not be subject to the will of the leader without something to say in the councils. When criticism seems warranted, he will feel free to criticize the overlord. He is quite prepared to insist upon and defend his personal and individual rights and privileges in whatever way he sees fit. But even though he is decidedly individualistic and even egoistic, he has other concerns.

Once he has entered the fighting, the epic warrior is expected to be and will be as bold, brave, and skillful as possible. Only by demonstrating such qualities can he gain glory for himself, his lineage, and his land; and that glory comes only from what his comrades witness on the battlefield. He is therefore very concerned with how he conducts himself in the conflict.

He knows he is expected to stand by his fellow warriors in the most dangerous encounters, and he often helps to remind himself and his companions of this. Though he generally fights individual encounters, he is much concerned with the approval and esprit de corps of the group to which he belongs. Thus his sense of duty to the highest ideals of arete will remind him how much his companions and people depend on him, and his sense of aidos will sometimes motivate him to perform certain deeds or to refrain from certain acts. He is expected to be ready to aid his fighting companions and at times to seek their aid. When a companion falls, he is expected to face danger and perhaps death to protect the body of the fallen warrior.

In satisfying these obligations, the epic warrior is expected to act boldly, courageously, and unselfishly to exhibit the qualities of his class. Though he may often act rashly, he is not committed to rashness or foolhardiness, for there are times and situations where discretion, restraint, and caution are both urged and approved. This is where the tension between self-assertion and self-restraint, between heroic rashness and heroic moderation, becomes significant in The Iliad.

Once Homer provides the controlling frame of the "will of Zeus," which encircles the Greek-Trojan conflict and the contention between

Agamemnon and Achilleus, that story-structure framework is filled by the narrative development which grows out of the tension between heroic self-assertion and heroic moderation. Agamemnon's ruthless self-assertion in refusing to accept ransom for Chryseis and to return her to Chryses creates the first "chaos-disorder" situation.

The concern of Achilleus for his fellow warriors prompts his efforts to find the reason for Apollo's anger and effect a change. The results of those efforts produce the confrontation between Achilleus and Agamemnon, and their confrontation concerns a point of honor which results in excessive self-assertion on the part of both men.

The anger of Achilleus caused by Agamemnon's treatment furnishes an example of the double-choice decisions presented to the epic warrior. When anger comes upon the son of Peleus it is heroic and epic anger that only the prospect of vindicating and enlarging his honor can restrain. He exercises heroic moderation by checking "the spleen within" because it will assure him more substantial benefits and greater glory than could the mere killing of Agamemnon. Yet that temporary display of heroic moderation leads to the excess of heroic self-assertion needed to counter the extreme self-assertion of Agamemnon. Only by his absence can he hope to force Agamemnon to acknowledge his superior worth.

Despite the strong reminders of Nestor to both men that they are transgressing certain political and social obligations, both men insist upon a totally self-centered stand. Despite their obdurate positions, no one rejects them, deserts them, or reviles them. This amounts to tacit approval of their right to maintain such positions. It is only in the results of their actions and the resolution of their quarrel that significant comment is suggested.

When Achilles gets Zeus to assure his honor, the controlling frame of the "will of Zeus," the frame of the Greek-Trojan conflict, and the central theme of the wrath of Achilles are effectively linked. The contention between Achilles and Agamemnon and the principle at the heart of it involve both sides and both major Greek figures in a massive and disastrous pattern of chaos and disorder that can be transformed only by both of them moderating their positions. They both regret their self-assertion and modify it, though with quite different attitudes and for quite different reasons. The return of Achilles to the fight halts the spread of chaos and disorder among the Greeks, but not that in his moral being.

Only the bold visit of Priam and his moving paternal plea can release the gentler responses from the hardened heart of Achilles and restore his normal humanitas and sense of aidos. That visit is the last step of the working out of the "will of Zeus," for he had already settled the dissension in the divine family before the battle between Hektor and Achilles. Complete reconciliation between Agamemnon and Achilles had also taken place at the funeral games for Patroklos. Thus within the controlling frame of the "will of Zeus" aggressive and passive self-assertion spread the growth of chaos and disorder, but the acceptance of self-restraint, or heroic moderation, transforms the "chaos-disorder" conditions of the Greek warrior society and in the moral life of Achilles to conditions of order and harmony.

Both Agamemnon and Achilles are led to realize and admit how wrong they were in their extreme self-assertion. Achilles does have his honor vindicated, but at a price which finds him no longer greatly

concerned about it. Though there is tacit acceptance of their immoderate, reckless actions and excessive pride, there is also an equally tacit suggestion that both have been remiss in their obligations to their fellow warriors and to the group cause. To balance unrestrained self-assertion, there must be disciplined self-restraint; to balance epic rashness, there must be epic moderation. In other words, the whole plot movement and narrative development serve to glorify the individualistic self-assertive conduct of the epic warrior, but not the absolute positions represented by Agamemnon and Achilles. It is clearly suggested that other considerations modify the heroic absolute and that more prudent conduct would have been better for them and for their fellow Achaeans. Nor is prudent conduct advised for these two alone. Within the plot movement, the actions, deeds, and comments of the other warriors stress the needs of the various heroes to satisfy their varied obligations with regard for the limits that are part of man's condition and for the exercise of moderation in both their own and the group cause. Thus the epic hero of The Iliad finds himself caught in a tension between immoderate, rash, and even arrogantly individualistic conduct on the one hand and moderate, reasoned, and unselfishly group-oriented action on the other.

It is this tension between individual self-assertion and group-oriented self-restraint that serves as the literary core for the epic genre and heroic literature. It is this tension that permits The Iliad to glorify the heroic absolute which Achilles believes in and represents, but at the same time to show the limitations and defects of that position. It is this tension which serves to define the heroic mold and the relation of the various warriors to it. Thus what characterization

there is in The Iliad develops in part from the tension between these two poles of conduct. This tension is somewhat akin to and as important as the Dionysiac-Apollonian dichotomy Nietzsche finds at the center of Greek tragedy.⁴² The tension is central to The Iliad, but examination of The Odyssey and later heroic literature will demonstrate its further importance.

⁴²Indeed, one can examine the sets of values that motivate Achilles and Hektor, and, by a certain amount of over-simplification, show Achilles to be the equivalent of the Dionysiac frenzy and Hektor to be that of Apollonian order. However, Homer has not made the heroes quite as uncomplicated as such an interpretation would make them, for Hektor possesses some of the very qualities and attributes that identify Achilles with the Dionysiac frenzy. Even so, within restricted limits, this view has a degree of validity.

SECTION TWO
CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Chapter II
Homer's Odyssey

The Odyssean World

The world of The Odyssey is a somewhat different world from that of The Iliad. There is an obvious change of milieu, of focus, and of scope. Instead of the limited physical confines of the plains of Ilion, the hero has the geographical expanse of the Mediterranean world in which to demonstrate his excellence and establish his worth. In fact, it is a double environment, for the action is divided between what Odysseus does in attempting to reach Ithaca and what he does once he gets there.

The focus of The Iliad is upon the warrior society of both sides in the Greek-Trojan conflict, but The Odyssey focuses more closely upon the hero who gives it his name. The maritime-geographical background in which Odysseus experiences the problems and challenges met on his way from Troy back to Ithaca provides greater geographical and moral scope than does The Iliad. Yet, despite these changes, the dominant emphasis rests upon the hero and heroic values.

In The Odyssey the author sets us more directly in medias res and then proceeds to develop the narrative structure by the same "shuttle-focus" technique used in The Iliad. In the former the focus shifts from where Odysseus is to where Telemachus is, or from where Odysseus is to where he was. In addition to the physical shift, there is movement backward in time and then forward again, with resulting retrospective and

sometimes prospective narration. The in medias res device establishes the two primary "chaos-disorder" conditions which furnish the narrative core that will be developed by the adventures Odysseus experiences between Troy and Ithaca, as well as by what takes place after he returns home. Only when all the adventures and events have ended are the "chaos-disorder" conditions transformed into peace and order. Within this structural framework the world and values of the aristos are examined and detailed.

The first book establishes the two "chaos-disorder" conditions and shows the concern of the gods about them. Nine years after the Trojan conflict, Odysseus has not yet returned to Ithaca, and the gods, except for Poseidon, want to get him on his way. His absence from home and family creates chaos and disorder in his personal life, as well as in his homeland. The wanton suitors of Penelope are the source of the trouble in Ithaca, for they are consuming the wealth of the absent Odysseus and disrupting both the family life and the social order of the land. Telemachus has not yet grown to man's estate, and Penelope and the citizenry can do nothing to halt their depredations. Zeus sets things in motion to assure the return of the father, husband, and ruler so much needed by son, wife, and kingdom. Once this has been done, the gods have little direct participation in the action except for Pallas Athene and Poseidon. Zeus is more evidently in command than he was at the start of The Iliad, and it is made clear that even Poseidon must submit to the will of Zeus and the other gods. Consequently, the center of attention is fixed on the experiences of Odysseus and his men in attempting to reach Ithaca and then on what he does when he reaches there.

To get the full story of those experiences and their significance, the best place to start is Book Seven, where the reader finds Odysseus in Phaeacia. There at the court of Alcinous, Odysseus tells his hosts of his adventures from the end of the Trojan war until his arrival on the beach at Phaeacia. But before considering these adventures, one should note the hero's situation at Phaeacia.

When Demodocus sings "of the great deeds of heroes" and of the feuds and troubles that split their ranks, Odysseus weeps in his "deep-drawn agony." When Laodamas tries to encourage him to take part in the games, the fashion of his heart "is more like grief than game." Only the sneering insult of Euryalus can rouse him to display anger and demonstrate his prowess. With tact and concern for decorum, Alcinous manages to restore concord so that the guest may be properly entertained. Odysseus requests that Demodocus sing of Epeius and his wooden horse, and of its part in the fall of Troy.

That song of the glory of the Greek heroes, and especially Odysseus, should have been a welcome one to the warrior's ears, but Odysseus "melted and tears from his eyelids bedewed his cheeks." Here is a warrior who responds to something more than the consuming flame of the heroic absolute and who feels something more than the giddy exultation of revenge and hatred. Though at the time he fully gloried in the savage destruction of the enemy, the imagery with which it is now associated represents the horrifying picture of war to which a man since schooled in tribulations responds with an enriched and dignified sense of aidos. The image associated with his tears shows a different orientation to the event, and that change comes through to the reader despite the clearly objective style of Homer, who reveals:

So it is when a loving wife flings herself, wailing, about the body of her man who had fallen before his township and fellow-citizens, defending the town and his children from their cruel day of sack and rapine. The sight of him labouring his last breath and dying makes her wail and wind herself about him. Yet do the enemy from behind beat her with their spearshafts across her bowed shoulders and lead her into servitude, to her fate of toil and grief. Just as that woman's cheeks are ravaged with despair, just so piteously did the tears fall from Odysseus' brows. (*Ody*, VIII, p. 118)¹

In "The Odyssey and the Western World," George de F. Lord discusses this point at length. He indicates that this incident is part of the self-revelation of Odysseus and shows the release of suppressed compassion and sympathy for the enemy, for the victims of war and not the victors.² Thus the event is a measure of all the effects of the experiences endured between Ismarus and Phaeacia. Of this Lord says:

The brutal side of heroic action is suddenly revealed in the question which the simile dramatically presents: does not the warrior's code destroy more than it creates?³

Lord also shows that the question is asked or suggested elsewhere in different ways: in the picture of post-war Ithaca suffering from the ruler's absence and the release of lawless instincts on the part of the suitors; in the question-response exchange between Polyphemus and Odysseus, who answers almost proudly that he and the Greeks are the sackers of cities and killers of people mentioned in the question of Polyphemus. Lord then continues to develop the change effected in Odysseus and the need for it so that he can become the "judge and

¹T. E. Shaw, *The Odyssey of Homer* (New York, 1956). All subsequent references will be from this translation.

²George de F. Lord, "The Odyssey and the Western World," in *Essays on the Odyssey*, ed. Charles H. Taylor, Jr. (Bloomington, Indiana, 1963), pp. 36-53.

³Lord, "Odyssey and Western World," p. 50.

restorer" at Ithaca. Lord's purpose in this article is to correct the picture T. S. Eliot gives of the Homeric hero as contrasted with Aeneas and to show the part the character of Odysseus played, consciously or unconsciously, in Virgil's conception of Aeneas.⁴

Homer's simile and Odysseus' identification with it serve as an effective and meaningful frame of reference for the recital that Odysseus presents to the Phaeacian court, for the recounting of his adventures reveals where Odysseus has been, in both a physical and moral sense, and how he got to be where and what he is now, again in both senses.

The Odysseus who participates in the first adventure after the fall of Troy is the Odysseus we met in The Iliad. He is both something more and something less than the heroic mold which Achilles represents. When the situation requires it, he can be bold, daring, and destructive in the face of the enemy. Like the other heroes he can be concerned with his arete and techne and, at times, even with aidos, but he considers none of these in terms of an absolute. He is a relativist and a practitioner of prudent, reasoned intelligently determined conduct most of the time. Thus, under given circumstances, he can leave Nestor in danger in the middle of the battlefield, even when reprimanded by Diomedes. He can be cunning, crafty, shrewd, scheming, devious, politic, and diplomatic as circumstances may require. To the qualities of the epic hero he adds intelligence, intellectual curiosity, and a moral toughness that goes beyond the simple eleemosyne of such a

⁴T. S. Eliot, "Virgil and the Christian World," in Sewanee Review (Winter, 1953), pp. 1-14.

warrior as Telemonian Aias. But he has also been given an added role in The Odyssey, for he is now a "shepherd of the people" and has the responsibility to lead himself and his men safely back to Ithaca. Yet despite the combination of qualities and his responsibility, Odysseus does not start as a "fixed" character. Nor does he become a "fixed" character until he reaches Phaeacia.

Judgements about the nature of Odysseus' character are quite varied. Whitman is rather ambiguous at times. Though he sometimes insists that the hero is a "fixed" character and that the adventures show Odysseus revealing himself rather than discovering himself, Whitman sometimes seems to wander from that position and to suggest the aspect of "becoming" in the characterization of Odysseus.⁵

Like Whitman, Charles H. Taylor, Jr.⁶ sees Odysseus as a fixed personality revealed by his experiences. Thus he says of Odysseus that the "source of accomplishment is rather his maturity than his growth, his struggles are with the enemies of growth."⁷

A careful reading and consideration of what Odysseus does or fails to do at various points before reaching Phaeacia, coupled with the evident change of conduct upon and after his arrival there, reveals Taylor's comments as an oversimplification. Odysseus does more than struggle with the enemies of growth; he actively conquers both the external and internal enemies of becoming and self-hood, as well as the

⁵Whitman, Ch. XII, pp. 299-309.

⁶Charles H. Taylor, Jr., "The Obstacles to Odysseus' Return," in Essays on the Odyssey, ed. Charles H. Taylor, Jr. (Bloomington, Indiana, 1963), pp. 87-99.

⁷Taylor, pp. 87-88.

agents of grief, death, and personal annihilation. But beyond these things, the how and the what of his becoming are even more important.

Odysseus manifests in his person the tension between rash self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint which was shown in the total context of The Iliad. This tension is demonstrated throughout the series of adventures before his arrival at Phaescia, usually by Odysseus, but now and then by his followers.

In "The Untypical Hero," W. B. Stanford discusses the relationship of Odysseus to other heroes such as Achilleus, Aias, and Agamemnon.⁸ Stanford illustrates both the qualities he shares with his fellow warriors in The Iliad and those in which he deviates from some of the norms presented there. Speaking of Homer's presentation of the character of Odysseus, he says:

Yet Homer does seem to hint occasionally not at cowardice, but at a kind of tension between prudence and boldness.⁹

Stanford adds to his discussion by citing that part of Book XI of The Iliad where Odysseus alone faces the enemy after the others have retreated. Odysseus also thinks of retreating, but he reminds himself of his duty and continues to fight. Stanford makes the following point:

On the contrary, the man who forsees danger and then goes on to meet it is more truly courageous than an insensate Ajax or a furious Achilles.¹⁰

This statement reveals the normative position Odysseus occupies between the rashness of Achilleus and the unconcern of Aias. For

⁸W. B. Stanford, "The Untypical Hero," in Homer, ed. George Steiner and Robert Fagles (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), pp. 122-138.

⁹Stanford, "Untypical Hero," p. 130.

¹⁰Stanford, "Untypical Hero," p. 135.

Stanford, the point is to show how the intransigent heroes die unhappily while Odysseus uses both the qualities he shares with them and those he alone possesses pro bono publico. In serving the public good Odysseus also best serves his own interest.

The account Odysseus delivers to his Phaeacian hosts reveals the transformation he has undergone. At Ismarus he is still the ferocious and rapacious sacker of cities. Yet he is a good leader who makes sure his men receive a just share of the spoils. With caution in mind he urges that "all flee, hot-foot." However, his "utter fools of men" are too concerned with eating and drinking to listen. Their immoderation results in the death of six from each crew when the neighboring Cicones aid those of Ismarus.

Having left Ismarus, Odysseus nearly reaches his homeland before a storm drives his ships across the sea to the land of the lotos-eaters. There they replenish their water supply and the men nourish themselves. Odysseus, desiring to learn about the land and the people, sends out a scouting party. The party is welcomed and fed with the lotos-flower, which takes from them all memory of home and any desire to return there. Odysseus returns them to the ships by force and restrains the others to keep them from eating the lotos-flower. To eat of this flower is to surrender one's being and individuality for a blissful, but vegetable-like existence. Odysseus rejects such a state for his men and rescues them from it. Taylor's essay emphasizes how little attraction such a state holds for Odysseus, who "is always conscious of who he is and of what he wants to achieve and is never willing to trade his consciousness

for some kind of euphoria."¹¹ Though the self-centered desires of Odysseus had exposed his men to danger, his quick action and care save them in spite of themselves.

When they reach the land of the "arrogant, iniquitous Cyclops," there is no reason for them to get in trouble. The fertile island where some god has seemed to guide them furnishes provisions for a feast, and they have no reason to encounter the Cyclops. But Odysseus is not satisfied to settle for the sounds that come from their land; he must take his crew to "find out if they are brutal savages, or kindly to guests, reverent and just." (Ody. IX, p. 124) Very providentially he takes with him corn and a skin of potent wine given to him by Maron for his one act of piety at the sack of Ismarus. Odysseus tells how he sensed trouble because

. . . some powerful instinct warned me that we might have to do with a strange fierce being of vast strength, knowing neither right nor wrong, and ungovernable. (Ody. IX, p. 125)

Yet he takes twelve men with him and disregards their unusual display of caution. As a result, they are imprisoned by the Cyclops, who devours two of them. Odysseus reacts in heroic fashion and rashly considers killing the Cyclops, but his intelligence and foresight halt what would have been a courageous, but useless, blow. As his intellectual curiosity had drawn them into trouble, so now must his intelligence and ingenuity effect their release from the imprisoning cave of Polyphemus. But in the process his immoderate, stubborn curiosity causes the death of six of his crew.

¹¹Taylor, p. 89.

Stanford's article¹² indicates how Odysseus (Ody. IX, pp. 228-230) criticizes himself for the trouble with the Cyclops, but he also points out how Odysseus later used a different approach to hear the song of the Sirens without danger for himself or his men.

Though Odysseus at first craftily uses the stratagem of the No-Man name, he later must taunt Polyphemus and proclaim himself as the one responsible for the blinding. It is thus that he brings down upon himself the wrath of Poseidon and must return home "late and miserably" to "find trouble there in the house."

With the help of Aeolus, Odysseus nearly gets them home, but his imprudence and recklessness combine with the foolish greed of his men to thwart their hopes. He fails to inform them of the contents of the bag of Aeolus, and he recklessly handles the sails longer than he should. Their careless avarice prompts them to open the bag and drive them far away from their goal. Odysseus, greatly dejected, ponders whether or not it is worthwhile to prolong a life that is "so great a burden of ill-luck to bear in silence." Yet from deep within him comes the decision to endure and survive.

In the land of the Laestrygons both the insatiable curiosity of Odysseus and a bit of fortuitous prudence create danger for all, death for some, and safety for Odysseus' crew. His desire to investigate the area sends three men into danger, and the danger becomes general and costly when Antiphates arouses the other giants. All the crews of the other ships, anchored in the secure shelter of the cove, furnish the

¹²Stanford, "Untypical Hero," pp. 134-137.

Laestrygonians their "loathsome meal," but Odysseus' crew manages to escape because of their anchorage outside the cove. Safe, but disconsolate and disheartened, this group makes its way to the island of the formidable Circe.

The comforting rest and the favorable provisions they enjoy there for three days are but a deceptive prelude to further troubles. The compelling desire of Odysseus for knowledge sends half of his men to investigate Circe's house, where they are transformed to swine. The help of the gods, in the person of Hermes, permits Odysseus to combat Circe's magic and restore his men to their normal state. Odysseus submits to Circe with "proofs of love and intercourse," and the goddess encourages the "haggard and heartsick" to forget the evil of their wanderings and quit being "strangers to feasting and gladness." They do so eagerly for quite some time, but after a year his men urge Odysseus to depart for home. Circe does not hold him against his will, but she does urge that he visit the House of Hades to consult Teiresias. His men make the trip quite unwillingly, but the visit there is meaningful for him and for them.

Circe's instructions to establish contact with Teiresias require that he keep all other spirits away from the blood-pool until the seer slakes his thirst. This is quite a strain for Odysseus because he must keep the spirit of Anticleia away even though "the sight of her melted his heart and made him weep with quick pain." Men might be challenged to perform bolder, more dangerous deeds, but certainly nothing more soul-wrenching could be demanded of any hero. Yet the prophecy given by the blind seer reveals that even tougher moral stamina will be demanded of Odysseus to get home and to face problems there.

From Teiresias Odysseus learns that he and his men must master their greed on Thrinacia if they hope to return to Ithaca. From the shade of Anticleia he learns what his absence meant to her and what it means to the loved ones yearning for his return. From the shade of Achilles he learns of the hollow value of fame and glory in death. The one who in life had lived for the heroic absolute now would gladly live in the most menial circumstances among the living. Yet, almost ironically, Achilles can still glory in the valorous reputation established by his son at Troy. All these experiences are important, but two other aspects of his visit in Hades are more significant.

Odysseus' attempt to talk with the shade of Aias seems to foreshadow the spirit Odysseus will need to put matters in order at home. He tells Aias, "Veil your fierce pride of heart," and appears ready to follow that advice himself. The account of the punishments of Tantalus and Sisyphus also seems to illustrate the value of such advice. At the same time, their punishments suggestively underline, or perhaps highlight, the frustrations and heart-breaking reverses Odysseus has experienced and how he reacts to them. Tantalus and Sisyphus are condemned to repeat their actions, even in the face of continual frustration; Odysseus, however, returns to the struggle of life and to his task without being condemned to do so. The visit to the House of Hades carries the reader back to the harrowing adventures of Odysseus and suggests what sort of a man he was and what kind of a man he has become. At the same time, that visit also projects the reader toward what is ahead for Odysseus.

Before Odysseus leaves Circe's land he learns of the many dangers he and his men must avoid. He presumptuously suggests fighting against

the gruesome danger of Scylla, but Circe urges prudent conduct by telling him, "Resign yourself: to flee from her is the better part of valor." (Ody. XII, p. 172) Odysseus follows most of Circe's advice and thus avoids many dangers. His intelligence provides the means of hearing the Sirens without harm to himself or his crew. He conceals from his men the information about Scylla and, by rashly disregarding Circe's advice, he loses six of his best men. This bit of renewed heroic response is his last self-assertive act. When he later has good reasons for such action, he will control his response.

Whitman notes this turning point in the conduct of Odysseus when he says:

In a moment of recrudescence of boastfulness, he tries to face Scylla with shield and spear, and assert the self who fought at Troy, but he cannot even see her. Troy and that world is past; he has just come from its ghost in Hades, where the panorama of the heroic life was reviewed in a dreamlike confusion.¹³

Odysseus attempts to avoid Thrinacia, but the self-assertion of Eurylochus and the imprudence of the crew combine to put them there and to cause them to disregard the warnings of their leader about the cattle of Helios. Eurylochus easily urges them to break their oaths to Odysseus and to commit the forbidden act that brings destruction from the thunderbolts of Zeus. Battered and discouraged, Odysseus alone saves himself.

Washed up on Calypso's island, Odysseus spends seven tearful years there without making a definite effort to leave for home. Even his tough moral fiber needs time to recover from the heart-rending shocks

¹³Whitman, p. 300.

he has endured. Despite Calypso's offer of immortality and a divine mate, Odysseus does not consider surrendering his human identity. The wounds of his painful experience heal slowly, but they do heal. The qualities which gradually restore him have been made evident by Stanford's pertinent comment:

Resiliency, elasticity, concentration, these are the qualities that maintain his [Odysseus] temperamental balance.¹⁴

Whitman also describes Odysseus at this point in his journey and indicates what his experiences mean:

All that Odysseus has experienced when he comes to Calypso has defined him in lowest terms. Everyman has almost become Noman.¹⁵

Odysseus does not become Noman because he possesses the qualities cited by Stanford. They save Odysseus here, and they will be needed later to recover from the destruction of his raft near Phaeacia and to endure the rude treatment of the suitors in Ithaca.

Adrift in a hostile sea, Odysseus searches deep in his being for understanding and comprehension of his situation. In need of help, he asks for divine aid, and both divine aid and his native wisdom get him ashore. Woefully spent, helpless, and possessed by a terrible weariness, he crawls into his rude bed of leaves. Brought down very near to the level of animal existence, Odysseus virtually becomes Noman, and perhaps he must become Noman before he can again become himself. His accumulated experiences enhance his heroic endurance as well as his moral toughness and resiliency.

¹⁴Stanford, p. 136.

¹⁵Whitman, p. 300.



Cedric Whitman supports this by pointing out the tremendous difference between "the reckless self-reliant adventurer who comes to Circe, and the fate-driven, desperate wanderer who meets Nausicaa."¹⁶ He credits the change more to the journey to Hades than to the arts of Circe and says that the change "betokens the fading of an earlier and smaller self before the demands of an even more puzzling and vast world of possibility."¹⁷ Then Whitman states that the years with Calypso strip away the former disguises and put him before Nausicaa as the "genius of rebirth, only to begin a series of disguises which this time he controls and will abandon in his own time."¹⁸ Odysseus twice becomes Noman so that he may be not just the man he once was, but a more developed version of his old self.

When Odysseus rises from his bed of leaves, he also rises from the depth of despair and discouragement to new epic stature, but not in the absolute fashion of Achilles. From this point on, he is a different Odysseus, an Odysseus who follows the advice he had given Aias during his visit to the House of Hades. Except for two brief bursts of anger, he begins to temper his actions with caution, prudence, and restrained conduct; he replaces self-assertion by self-discipline and self-restraint.

At the court of Alcinous and Arete, Odysseus does not proclaim the identity which is certain to guarantee him the hospitality and adulation of the Phaeacians. The naked and battered suppliant found by

¹⁶Whitman, p. 299.

¹⁷Whitman, p. 299.

¹⁸Whitman, p. 299.

the charming Nausicaa conceals his identity and wins the friendship of the Phaeacians by his own qualities of excellence, quite without the benefit of his fame.

A number of those who have commented on the work see a great deal in his relationships to not only Nausicaa, but also to Calypso and to Circe. In "Personal Relations,"¹⁹ W. B. Stanford compares and contrasts his relations with each of the three women as part of the larger pattern of the relationships which define Odysseus. Thereby Stanford suggests some of the significance of the work. Odysseus is shown as one who prefers action, society, and renown to the idle hedonism offered by Circe and Calypso; consequently, he rejects the dolce far niente they offer in favor of the rugged harshness of Ithaca and the normal, natural, sociable life as husband, father, and king.

In "The Obstacles to Odysseus' Return,"²⁰ Taylor sees Odysseus' relations with Circe, Calypso, and Nausicaa as part of the complex of temptations faced by him to thwart his homecoming: the temptations to moral irresponsibility, to sexual immorality, and to surrender of the individuality. Taylor suggests that the relations of Odysseus with the three women are important for the completeness of his being. Taylor says:

Odysseus' quest for identity is in fact profoundly involved with the feminine. In seeking the wholeness of his being, he passes through intimate experience with various embodiments of

¹⁹W. B. Stanford, "Personal Relations," in Essays on the Odyssey, ed. Charles H. Taylor, Jr. (Bloomington, Indiana, 1963), pp. 11-35.

²⁰Taylor, "Obstacles to Odysseus' Return," pp. 87-89.

archetypal women, each reflecting some aspect of what he as masculine hero lacks.²¹

George de F. Lord²² makes different use of the relations of Odysseus with the women in the poem. Though he discusses Circe and Calypso, Lord focuses on Arete, Nausicaa, and Penelope. He is concerned with the values these women represent and with how those values are important to Odysseus and to the poem. Of them Lord says:

It can be shown, I think, that the domestic and social values embodied in and emanating from these women act as a critique of the code of the male warrior just as much as the actions of Turnus or Nisus or Euryalus or of Aeneas on the night that Troy fell reveal Virgil's view of the inadequacy of the heroic code.²³

The comments of Stanford, Lord, and Taylor nicely complement and supplement each other to provide the full picture of the feminine charms that tempt but do not win Odysseus. The delicate and gentle loveliness of Nausicaa is certainly the crowning offer made to him in the course of his adventures. Nevertheless, even it cannot dim for him the vision of a return to Penelope, where home and heart are.

When Alcinous suggests that he might be a god, Odysseus speedily and humbly informs him, "I am not like the Immortals of spacious heaven, either in my body or my nature." (Ody. VII, p. 99) His tact, decorum, and sensitive regard for propriety help win for him the promise of aid to return home. His conduct so endears him to their hearts that he not only secures the needed aid but also obtains precious gifts and wealth to take with him. Only when he is ready to depart does he

²¹Taylor, "Obstacles to Odysseus' Return," p. 96.

²²Lord, "Odyssey and Western World," pp. 36-53.

²³Lord, "Odyssey and Western World," p. 43.

identify himself. The recital of his tribulations, his reaction to the songs of Demodocus, and his self-effacement all serve to show what he has become; and the Odysseus he has become is the one needed to solve the chaos and disorder of his family, his people, and his land. He eagerly leaves behind the wealth and luxury of Phaeacia for the ruder comforts of Ithaca, the place where his identity has most meaning.

Once he has returned there, Pallas Athene appears before him ready to help actively to restore order to Ithaca. Athens had helped somewhat just before he reached Phaeacia and had pleaded to Zeus for him while he was still with Calypso, but she had furnished no major active support since his part in the desecration of her temple at Troy. Now she will actively participate in all he does. She begins by making him aware of what he will have to face. With this declaration she advises how he must face what is to come:

' . . . I have to warn you plainly of the grave vexations you are fated to shoulder here in your well-appointed house. So temper yourself to bear the inevitable and avoid blurting out to anyone, male or female, that it is you, returned from wandering. Subdue your pride to plentiful ill-treatment and study to suffer in silence the violence of men.' (Ody. XIII, p. 190)

Instead of a joyous, exuberant homecoming and sudden, bloody revenge against the wanton suitors, Odysseus must further conceal his identity and assume that of an old beggar. He must share the bare comforts of the swineherds and endure the vile rudeness and insults of the suitors. Indeed, he must persuade Telemachus to "harden his heart's love" for his father so that he can endure whatever physical assault or insult Odysseus may receive. Not only must Odysseus control the "black rage within" and endure the rude treatment directed at him by the wanton, overbearing suitors and the goatherder, but he must also stiffen his

emotional being to keep "his eyes hard" in the presence of his sorrowing wife, to whom he cannot yet reveal himself. The pressure created by the insolence of the lechery of his serving women was tremendous, but

He so conjured himself and rated his passions that his soul's patience survived to the end; but the strain tossed his body about, like the basting punch stuffed with blood and fat that a man who wants it immediately cooked will turn over and over before a blazing fire. (*Ody. XX*, p. 271)

The turmoil of this situation and his control of it are only a necessary part of the strategy that will enable Odysseus and Telemachus, with the aid of two loyal servants and helpful Pallas Athene, to arrange the conditions for the destruction of the suitors. Once again Odysseus can declare his identity by the display of skill with the bow and then with martial prowess in the attack on the suitors.

Cedric Whitman's condemnation of the slaughter of the suitors, however justified it may be from a modern point of view, is inappropriate and unwarranted. Of this event he says:

It is meant to be a re-establishment of right order, but an orgy of blood vengeance peers through the moral scheme, the less sympathetic for being committed, unlike the gory and self-destroying vengeance of Achilles, in the dispassionate conviction of moral rightness.²⁴

Such a modern, and essentially moralistic, distinction between the acts of Achilleus and those of Odysseus hardly seems appropriate to the Homeric world. Furthermore, such a view disregards the evident effort made to emphasize the wrongness of the suitors' deeds and the retribution one can expect when men trample aidos in their rash arrogance. Such a view also neglects the warnings they disregard and the active

²⁴Whitman, p. 306.

participation of Athene to trap them by "their own villainous example" and "to distinguish the just from the lawless."

The physical victory is only part of what Odysseus must do, for he must also re-establish his identity in his home, re-establish Laertes in his household, and re-establish concord in the land. All these Odysseus soon accomplishes and the conditions of chaos and disorder that marred his personal life and the life of his land are soon changed to conditions of peace and order.

Structure, Development, and Significance

Even though The Odyssey concentrates attention primarily on a single hero, it still examines heroic motivations and values. The opening book provides the structural framework to be filled out. Because Odysseus is far from home nine years after the destruction of Troy and because his family and people need him, the action starts with serious "chaos-disorder" conditions in his personal life, in that of his family, and in that of his native Ithaca. Because the gods are concerned about getting him home, a double frame, the frame of the "will of the gods" and the frame of "Odysseus' return," encircles the action that gets Odysseus back to the central part of the story structure, Ithaca, where the rest of the action takes place.

The direction and movement of the action fill out this framework through the adventures on the return to Ithaca and what happens there. All the experiences and the action are organized to transform the "chaos-disorder" conditions presented at the start to order and peace at the end. The direction and movement of the action is inward and reverses the outward annular growth and development of The Iliad.

Odysseus starts at the outer periphery of martial experience when Troy falls and begins a different, more meaningful sequence of experiences moving inward, like receding circles of waves toward Ithaca and then inward toward his restoration as father, husband, son, and ruler in Ithaca. But the significance of the work develops from how Odysseus conducts himself during the adventures and from what effect the experiences have on him. The effect of those experiences is reflected in the contrast of the hero's conduct before he reaches Phaeacia and after his arrival there. That effect is but a part of the total organization and development of the work, both of which serve to approve and praise the group-centered approach while it disapproves of and criticizes imprudence, recklessness, and self-assertion.

Cedric Whitman insists that the organization and structure of The Odyssey is much different from that of The Iliad. Of the former he says:

Total design is no longer a matter of inner strains and balances; instead it is achieved through scenes marking stages of the advancement of the story, and the effect is not annular, but linear.²⁵

Whitman's entire statement is open to criticism. During the adventures from Ismarus to Phaeacia, everything depends on the "inner strains and balances" in the nature and actions of Odysseus, or those between his conduct and that of his men. At Phaeacia there is no explicit strain, but there is implicit contrast between his former self and his present self. In Ithaca the strains and balances are external ones between the actions of the suitors and the conduct of Odysseus.

²⁵Whitman, p. 290.

Some of the adventures serve as scenes to mark stages in the advancement of the story, but most of them not only do not advance the story element but even serve to retard it. The majority of the adventures show the qualities and attributes which cause Odysseus and his men to create obstacles to their safe return home. Only in two respects do most of the adventures serve to advance the story: in respect to their cumulative effect on Odysseus and in respect to the general direction towards Ithaca. They do not move Odysseus in a direct-line, or linear, fashion towards Ithaca; indeed, some of them move him away from home. Yet the overall movement is annular and inward, and it is difficult to understand why Whitman can insist that the circular pattern is appropriate for The Iliad and still declare that "the linear movement of The Odyssey is wholly inevitable for a poem of becoming."²⁶

Though he does not discuss extensively the structure of The Odyssey, W. B. Stanford, in his essay, "Personal Relations," says of that work:

The movement of The Odyssey is essentially inwards, homewards, toward normality.²⁷

This point of view more adequately applies to the narrative movement of The Odyssey than does Whitman's statement.

Odysseus brings to the adventures some of the qualities he displayed in The Iliad. As one of the prominent Greek warriors, he possessed the requisite martial techné to maintain his arete. Though

²⁶Whitman, p. 290.

²⁷Stanford, "Personal Relations," p. 19.

he was not particularly concerned with either aidos or tlemosyne in The Iliad, he is concerned with the latter in The Odyssey. Odysseus' outstanding traits in The Iliad were his intellectual gifts: craftiness, cunning, adaptability, tact, daring, wise counsel, and diplomacy. The combination of all these qualities made him the outstanding leader after the death of Achilleus. His brilliant scheme to make and use the wooden horse did what the consummate bravery of Achilleus and all the others failed to do, for it alone permitted the Greeks to destroy Troy and end the war. Though Aias was considered the next best warrior after Achilleus, Odysseus received the treasured armor of Achilleus as a mark of his worth. Yet when Odysseus is confronted by the dangers and problems of getting himself and his men back to Ithaca and putting things in order there, he must develop other qualities to achieve that goal and transform the "chaos-disorder" conditions presented in The Odyssey.

From the start of that work the ruler of Ithaca is presented as polytlas (long-suffering) or polymetis (of many resources) Odysseus. These two adjectives best illustrate the dominant traits he exhibits during the course of his experiences. In fact, he develops these as a result of his adventures. Each adventure tests one or more of the many qualities of Odysseus, and the obstacles and suffering strengthen his physical and moral fortitude. He thus develops tlemosyne far beyond that of Aias, and the challenges met sharpen his practical intelligence.

The Odysseus of the adventures cited is sometimes a leader of prudence, caution, and self-restraint. Those qualities and his practical intelligence often save his men and himself. Yet despite the

frequent use of the epithet wise, Odysseus is more often imprudent, reckless, and self-assertive. Actions based on these characteristics sometimes bring danger and death to his men. Both he and his men exhibit a tension between prudent and imprudent action, between caution and recklessness, and between self-restraint and self-assertion. Both he and they tend more toward the latter of each of these poles of conduct, and the result is death for all except Odysseus. The result for him is increasing isolation and gradual alienation from part of what he was.

Each obstacle and set-back demands a little more physical and moral resiliency, and somewhere deep in his being Odysseus finds it. And because he finds it his conduct eventually changes. The reckless self-assertion he manifested by the ruthless sacking of Ismarus, by the blatant proclamation of his part in the blinding of Polyphemus, and by the arrogance of arming himself against Scylla (despite pointed advice to the contrary) disappears in the waves that wash him on the shore of Phaeacia. There he is ready to benefit from his experiences.

In place of the self-assertive chest-beating displayed after the blinding of Polyphemus, there is self-concealment and self-effacement until he has established his worth in restrained, prudent fashion. He gains the friendship, respect, and aid of the Phaeacians on the basis of his personal merits, and only when he has been offered the aid he needs does he declare his identity.

While at Phaeacia Odysseus also shows how the experience has enlarged his response to aidos. When Demodocus sings of the destruction of Troy and of the renown of the Greek heroes, Odysseus does not respond to the brilliance of heroic fame and glory, as one might expect him to

do. Instead, his enlarged sense of aidos responds to the fate of the victims and the misery of war.

The Odysseus whom the Phaeacians escort to Ithaca has been thoroughly tested in physical and moral fortitude. He has grown in his sense of aidos. His practical intelligence has been keenly sharpened. He has in effect already learned to subdue his pride to ill-treatment. Consequently, he need only continue to do that and obey the second part of Athene's later advice "to suffer in silence the violences of men." (Ody. XIII, p. 190) When he reaches the shores of Ithaca, he has abandoned the pole of self-assertion for that of self-restraint.

After his arrival in Ithaca, the rest of the epic framework is filled out by what he does to transform the "chaos-disorder" conditions. As his self-assertion had formerly produced danger and death for the group he was leading from Troy, so now does his self-restraint bring order, concord, and happiness to his family, to his people, and to himself. Instead of recklessly and vengefully charging into his house, declaring his identity, and slaying the suitors, he follows Athene's advice and submits to the ill-treatment of the suitors in the disguise of a beggar. This provides time for him to prepare for the punishment of the suitors and also opportunity for them to cease their wanton, arrogant conduct. When they do not do so, Odysseus moves with caution, prudence, and self-restraint to punish the recalcitrant suitors, to re-establish himself in his household and family, and to bring peace and order to the land.

The contrast between the characteristics and conduct of the hero in the first and the last halves of the poem highlights a major significance.

The episodes from Troy to Phaeacia demonstrate imprudent, reckless, and self-assertive actions of Odysseus and his men, but such actions are not approved. In fact, some are pointedly criticized. The frustrations, disappointments, and set-backs of the first half are the results of such actions. On the other hand, after Phaeacia Odysseus discards such disapproved behavior and adopts prudent, cautious, and self-restrained conduct to combat the disapproved behavior of the suitors. The success of his endeavors and the restoration of peace and order are the results of his acceptance and exercise of the approved group-oriented approach.

SECTION TWO
CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Chapter III

The Periclean World and Greek Tragedy

Between the time of Homer and the Periclean Age of Greece, the epic genre was displaced by the development of tragedy. The mythos, the personages of the mythos, and many of the epic attributes of the heroes appear in the subject matter and themes of tragedy. In particular, the motivations, standards, and values of the heroic society live on in the milieu of tragedy and receive significant emphasis and development. For that reason, the examination of Greek tragedy will serve as a bridge between Homeric epic and Virgil's Aeneid.

Between the world of Homer and the world of Aeschylus, the polis has become all-important. But for a few exceptions, the major portion of all Greek tragedies involves some values that are important to or concerned with the polis or various aspects of its life. The concerns and conduct to which Odysseus applies his energies and talents in the latter half of The Odyssey admirably suit the needs of the polis. Even though the demands made upon the hero and the problems faced by him are not quite the same, a general examination of Greek tragedy will reveal what motivations, standards, and values of heroic society impinge upon the central figures of Greek tragedy.

The discussion which follows does not pretend to be a full or definitive evaluation of a single one of the plays treated. No claim

is made that the aspects or elements here presented constitute the essential core of tragedy. The complex of ambiguities that is so central to the understanding of the greatness and the explication of the full significance of Greek tragedy cannot be presented here. The only intention is to show that certain aspects of Greek epic are also common to and have importance in Greek tragedy.

The first two plays of Aeschylus do not concern an individual or a group of individual heroes. In both, religious respect and the force of religion are the most significant features, but that respect and that force are pertinent to the concerns of the social body, the polis, which expresses the former and depends upon the latter. In The Suppliants the population of the town is the hero, for it chooses to support religious rights against the tyranny of force, even at the risk of war with Egypt. The whole conception and execution of The Persae centers about the failure of the Persians against Athens because the hybris and wanton arrogance of the Persians cannot crush the religious and moral rectitude of Athens. Though the form is that of tragedy, the central focus and point of view depend upon the position taken by the author. He suggests that Greek might derives from "right and good" religion as contrasted to the "wrong and evil" religion of the Persians. This position will be taken centuries later by the author of La Chanson de Roland.

The Seven Against Thebes is in some respects like the Agamemnon-Achilleus conflict, but transferred to the milieu of the polis. In this milieu brother is pitted against brother, and both insist upon the right to self-assertion and dominion in Thebes. They do so in such

self-assertive fashion that they bring death to themselves and to others. But their deaths are not the end of the matter, for the Theban polis is involved in the consequences. The people's council acts in accord with what the members believe to be the best solution for the political well-being of the polis and decrees that Polynices will be denied burial, but Eteocles will receive proper burial. The citizens of the town are divided over this decision. Some of them, like Antigone, feel that the religious principle has as much validity or even more than the political principle. Though they have no action, Antigone defies Creon's ruling and brings about the confrontation that produces tragedy for those around Antigone and Creon.

Though only fragments of the plays related to Prometheus Vincit exist, the evidence seems to suggest that the material was the first tale of crime and punishment, of sin and expiation and reconciliation, put into literary form in the Western world. From the divine point of view, Prometheus receives punishment for the hybris of having stolen fire for mankind, and in the struggle between Prometheus and Zeus neither wins decisively.

Zeus is the youthful tyrant bent on asserting his dominion, but the godlike Titan endures the punishment for his crime. In the process he develops from weakness to strength and clearly predicts the end of his punishment and his reconciliation with Zeus after expiation. It is the Agamemnon-Achilleus contention on a higher plane, and both participants are forced to a more moderate position. Thus the general theological picture is roughly similar to that presented by Homer's two epics, which show Zeus in the process of establishing his authority in the earlier work and

acting as the divine dispenser of justice and order in the later work. The Prometheus Vinctus deals mostly with the former situation, but indicates how Zeus will arrive at the latter situation. There is a major difference, however. In the tragedy he asserts his authority over men, and, just as he had to compromise with Hera in The Iliad, so must he compromise with Prometheus in the tragedy. He must learn to govern with the help of law and order rather than the exercise of self-assertive tyranny.

The trilogy of the Oresteia shows the abandonment of the practice of blood vengeance in favor of the legally constituted justice organized and administered by the citizens of the polis. The three plays of the trilogy (Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, and The Eumenides) present a tale of passion and of crime, of blood vengeance and punishment, of expiation and reconciliation. The pattern of chaos and disorder created by the events of the first two plays is transformed to peace and harmony by the establishment of Olympian order and concord in the third play. In that play the divine justice of Zeus is given a secular counterpart in the establishment of the Aeropagite court to judge crime and the avenging Furies are transformed to the gentle Eumenides. As Zeus has been forced to moderate his tyranny, so must the social group modify the manner of dealing with passion, crime, and punishment. The social group must learn that the well-being of the polis takes precedence over the violent excesses and extremes of individual or family action.

As a son of Atreus, Agamemnon inherits the evil stain of the Atreus-Thyestes conflict and deeds of violence. This is a major part

of the fatality that engulfs him. But, at least to some extent, part of his fate results from other reasons. Within the context of the play the presentation of his character suggests a disposition toward wanton arrogance. If one keeps in mind that the circumstances of both Greek epic and tragedy encouraged and permitted a considerable amount of allusive or suggestive reference on the part of the author, it is possible to assign Agamemnon's self-assertive tendencies some part in his fate. The audience of both epic and tragedy knew of Agamemnon's wanton arrogance when he desecrated the temple of Pallas Athena. In the action of the play he demonstrates no such active hybris, but he does display what Albert Cook refers to as "passive hybris."¹

When Agamemnon returns home, he has the effrontery to bring his war-prize concubine, Cassandra, to live under the same roof as Clytemnaestra. Then when Clytemnaestra offers the temptation of the

¹All too often, hybris is improperly used to mean little more than pride, but the meaning of the word goes beyond this over-simplification. Richmond Lattimore, in Story Patterns in Greek Tragedy (Ann Arbor, 1965), comments upon this and indicates some of the variations of meanings:

Hybris, with its family of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, simple or compounded, may signify assault and battery, rape, foul play, or plain physical disaster without motivation, the activity of wild animal spirits, rapacity and greed, sexual lust; in general, violence; violent or criminal behavior, . . . the abuse of superior strength to humiliate the helpless living or outrage the helpless dead, mutiny or rebelliousness in an inferior toward a superior. . . . (p. 23)

Cook's use of "passive hybris," which he discusses on pp. 88-89 of The Dark Voyage and the Golden Mean (Boston, 1949), is a convenient way of avoiding the frequent oversimplification. Cook summarizes his definition in these words:

In active hybris egotism seeks its own death, in passive hybris the jealous searcher for justice unwittingly makes justice even greater by sacrificing his personality for equity in material exchanges. (p. 89).

royal purple, he succumbs to that temptation readily despite his hypocritical pretense of not wanting or deserving such treatment. His obvious lack of restraint or moderation in the play seems to be used to suggest his reckless self-assertive tendencies. Of course, his actions within the play do not provide sufficient reason for his death. However, they do help to show him as a deficient king and husband, who, despite the heinous treachery of his slaughter, is not presented as a character to draw sympathy from the audience.

Agamemnon's death in the play results from both the purported personal motivation of Clytemnaestra to avenge the death of Iphigeneia at Aulis and the certain personal motivation of Aegisthus to avenge what his father, Thyestes, suffered at the hands of Atreus. Yet, these reasons may be just the human working out of the divine retribution that pursues Agamemnon as a result of his desecration at the temple of Pallas Athene at Troy. That act of hybris was a consequence of his general recklessness and wanton self-assertion, of which his conduct in the play is a small part. The important point here is that there is suggestive disapproval of his self-assertive tendencies, of his lack of moderation.

The work of Sophocles starts at about the point where Aeschylus stops, but it adds something of the Homeric view of life in certain plays. In Homer and Heroic Tradition, Cedric Whitman has said, "The Iliad's view returns only in Sophoclean tragedy."²

The Ajax has some similarity to the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, but it concerns several types of active hybris. After the death of Achilles the Greek warriors award his armor to Odysseus. As a result, noble,

sensitive, and self-reliant Ajax loses all sense of proportion. Because he thought he should have received the armor for his services, he is moved to unrestrained self-assertive action. For this reason his nobility becomes ambition, his sensitive nature becomes morbidity, and his self-reliance turns to excessive pride.

Like Agamemnon, Ajax offends the divine level, but more than his haughtiness is involved. Burning with resentment as strong as that of Achilles and Agamemnon in The Iliad, he tries to kill the Greek leaders in their sleep, but the gods thwart his plan. They inflict him with madness so that he slaughters cattle instead of his fellow warriors. His unrestrained pride has tarnished his arete. He responds to his sense of aidos and feels the shame of what he tried to do, but his great pride will not permit him to be humbled by Agamemnon and the others. He is not really punished, for he chooses his own terms of existence or non-existence. In this respect, he makes the same decision as Achilles; he kills himself. Agamemnon and Menelaus want to deny proper burial to Ajax, but Teucer boldly defies the Atreides just as Antigone will defy Creon in a later play. The death of Ajax really vindicates his honor, for his enemy, Odysseus, intercedes to have the Atreides agree to honorable burial for Ajax.

In discussing the story patterns of Greek tragedy, Richmond Lattimore provides relevant comment on the Ajax. Of it he says:

And yet, this pattern of fault or pride and fall does not work all the way to the end. For Ajax in his death scene is not punished but vindicated. He sets himself a test (peira) and passes it, and attains his salvation. He leaves life on his own

²Whitman, p. 297.

terms, keeps his pride, and at the end his chief enemy, Odysseus, acknowledges his greatness.³

The play presents a balance between unrelieved and immoderate self-assertion and moderation and restraint, with an implied approval of the latter position. Ajax, like Achilles, realizes that his excessive self-assertion is not completely excusable, but he also is not willing to compromise his honor. He is willing to and does pay the price for his honor. Thus Sophocles approves of and praises the heroic ideal as does Homer, yet he also suggests the same limitations and adjustments as Homer.

Sophocles' Antigone elaborates upon the closing portion of Aeschylus' The Seven Against Thebes, for it presents the confrontation between Creon and Antigone. Many modern readers frequently arrive at either a partial interpretation or a distorted interpretation; generally they side with Antigone and categorically condemn Creon's position. But to do this is to neglect the total environment in which the tragedy takes place. The significant tragic dimensions are not to be found simply in the death of Antigone because she disobeyed Creon's orders and buried Polynices. Nor are they to be found in the death of Haemon, which resulted from Antigone's entombment by Creon. They are rather to be found in the situational relationship developed between Creon and Antigone as a result of what the brothers did to settle matters.

In the view of Thebes, Polynices is a state enemy and Creon, in condemning him, is fulfilling his function as a protector of the

³Lattimore, Story Patterns of Greek Tragedy, p. 20.

polis. Antigone, in defying Creon, insists upon the primeval laws of Greek religion. Both claims have validity in the Greek world of the times, even though many modern readers support the claims of human decency rather than the claims of the sanctity of national or communal life. As defenders of their respective stands, both Creon and Antigone demonstrate excessive obstinacy and narrowness in much the same way as Achilles and Agamemnon did in their conflict. The idea of an effective application of moderation and compromise never occurs to either. As a result, when Antigone defies the decree, Creon condemns her to death.

Creon's action leads not only to Antigone's death, but also to that of Haemon and Eurydice, the son and wife of Creon. As Creon sacrifices Antigone for his ideal duty, so does Antigone sacrifice Haemon to hers. Their self-assertive actions bring grief, sorrow, or death to themselves or to those they love most. Only the anger of the gods produced by the unburied corpse of Polynices and the threat to his family force Creon to swerve from his position. But then it is too late. The tragedy grows out of the self-assertive unrestrained positions taken by those who apply the principles and not out of the confrontation of two irreconcilable principles.

The Oedipus Tyrannus presents a central figure who is magnificently self-assertive, and, by an ironic set of circumstances, that excessive self-assertion both serves and does not serve the best interest of the polis. As the play opens, Thebes is in the throes of a "chaos-disorder" condition, and Oedipus acts to change it because he concerns himself with the well-being of his city and people. Much as Achilles did in The Iliad, Oedipus sets in motion an investigation to

discover the reason for the "plague" that holds Thebes in its grip. He then takes action to remove the source of infection so that the order and social health of the suffering community may be restored. Because his city and people suffer, he too suffers a personal "chaos-disorder" condition.

As he had once before saved Thebes from the evil of the Sphinx, so must he again attempt to rid the polis of another evil. His temperament and character motivate all the actions and furnish all stages of the discovery that leads to the tragic denouement. He is too imperious, suspicious, choleric, and self-confident for his own good, and, indeed, for the good of others. These qualities blind him with the same reckless ate that drove Agamemnon and Achilles to the excesses which brought harm to so many around them.

In his unrestricted zeal, Oedipus callously and falsely accuses Creon and Tiresias of conspiracy against him and later intimidates the faithful old servant who would prefer to suppress the horrifying truth. With ruthless and uncompromising vigor he condemns unequivocally to religious and civil excommunication whoever or whatever is the source of the infection. Then he proceeds with absolute ferocity to lay bare all of the details that will proclaim him the polluter. His absolute insistence upon getting at the facts and facing them results in the suicide of Jocaste and in the self-determined and self-executed punishment that makes of the blind observer the seeing blind. Just as Antigone had sacrificed Haemon to her ideal, so does Oedipus sacrifice Jocaste to his.

Though the pollution of the polis has been removed and order and well-being have replaced the "chaos-disorder" condition of the community, it is not quite possible to assert that his actions brought only benefits to the polis. The transformation of chaos and disorder was achieved at the tragic price of a noble individual destroyed, a good though not perfect ruler lost, and the royal family subjected to extreme distress and disintegration. Those things are, of course, part of the significant tragic ambiguity of the work.

The distress is never really lifted from the family, for the self-blinding of Oedipus is only the beginning of a hard life of misery and exile that Antigone shares with her father. Even though he is morally innocent, Oedipus suffers from actions that are wrong and improper. Even though what happens in Oedipus at Colonus first appears to be safety and reconciliation after suffering and expiation, yet ambiguity remains. Though a certain amount of restraint and moderation is suggestively approved by Oedipus Tyrannus and Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus does not meet his end as a restrained and repentant hero. Peace and reconciliation come in his apotheosis at Colonus, but Oedipus ends his life on his own conditions as an unrepentant hero. The tension between self-assertion and self-restraint is evident, but Oedipus' position is nearer the former than the latter, as Richmond Lattimore has indicated:

Oedipus keeps his anger. It brings down his enemies, not himself. He goes out as a great hero, unrepentant, just after cursing his sons.⁴

⁴Lattimore, Story Patterns of Greek Tragedy, p. 21.

The handling, treatment, and the balanced point of view taken in Sophocles' Oedipus plays are very close to those Homer presents in The Iliad.

At first glance the Philoctetes seems to be a tragedy of sordid intrigue, but a more thorough reading reveals it to be much more than that. It is quite possible for the modern reader to react to it as one reacts to a melodrama and put Odysseus in the role of a villain and hiss him for the scheme he has devised to get Philoctetes and his bow back to Troy after the Greeks have abandoned him and neglected him for so many years. But to do this is to neglect the social circumstances that bring together Odysseus, Neoptolemus, and Philoctetes. The Greek audience could readily demonstrate sympathy for the past treatment and present situation of Philoctetes, both of which were caused by the actions of his fellow warriors. It could readily regard with a jaundiced eye the callous execution of Odysseus' schemes and his use of the innocent Neoptolemus. Yet it could not (nor should we) regard Odysseus as the villain of the work. The handling of the material and the resolution of the problem reveal this most clearly.

Nine years after having left Philoctetes on Lemnos, the Greeks at Troy learn that they must have Philoctetes and his bow and arrows at Troy to assure their success. As they had once abandoned him for what they considered the welfare of the group, so must they now seek his help to assure the well-being of the group, their paramount concern. Consequently, they send Odysseus to bring Philoctetes to Troy.

The situation is comparable to the Achilles-Agamemnon conflict. As Agamemnon had given Achilles good reason to hate him and abandon the

fight, so has the Greek host given Philoctetes more than adequate reason to refuse to go to Troy with his all-important weapons. As Agamemnon's counselors urged him to woo back Achilles, so must the Greek forces woo back Philoctetes. As Achilles was offered enormous booty, so is Philoctetes offered the temptation consisting of a chance to be healed, to secure happiness, and to attain glory by accepting again the friendship of those he hates and fighting beside them. Odysseus, whom Philoctetes hates most, comes to handle the arrangements by any means possible.

Odysseus wages his campaign with guile and with the innocent Neoptolemus as the means to deceive Philoctetes. Odysseus approaches the task as the spirit of the state (or polis) personified and, since he is concerned about the welfare of the group, any means (for him) is justified to gain his ends; however, young Neoptolemus responds to other values. As he develops understanding of the pathetic situation of Philoctetes and of the manipulation to deceive him, Neoptolemus sees the sordid compromise of war rather than the brilliant blaze of glory to which his father responded. He rebels and reverses the situation of Philoctetes by returning his weapons and promising him a safe return home.

Thus the Creon-Antigone conflict is re-duplicated with Odysseus in Creon's position and Neoptolemus in Antigone's. But tragedy is avoided by the deus ex machina appearance of Heracles. Many readers are dissatisfied with this ending, but, whatever attitudes one may have concerning this, the only meaningful way to understand and interpret its inclusion in the play is to accept Gilbert Norwood's view that the

appearance of Heracles is to personify conscience and prevent a tragic resolution.⁵ Heracles does not insist that wrongs to the individual can be expected to be forgotten and forgiven at once, but his position causes Philoctetes to realize that life is too short and too precious to be wasted upon self-assertive revenge.

Heracles' position rises above the conception of personal injury or personal benefit as the motivation for action. The solution he offers prevents a tragic denouement and transforms the "chaos-disorder" conditions in the social and moral life of the Greek host and in the personal life of Philoctetes. For the well-being of the group, adjustment is made between the individual self-assertive demands and the group-oriented values.

The absence of Euripides from the present discussion requires comment. Obviously, without Euripides, only half of Greek tragedy has been considered, but the method of treating the material, as well as the purpose and approach of Euripides, is so evidently different than those of Aeschylus and Sophocles that the exclusion is justified. Except for The Supplices and The Orestes, the dramatic problems Euripides treats and the solution he offers have very little in common with the dramatic problems presented and the solutions given by the earlier writers of Greek tragedy.

In The Supplices of Euripides certain features of the similarly titled play of Aeschylus are apparent. The hero of the work is the citizenry of Athens, which promises and provides aid to the bereaved

⁵Gilbert Norwood, Greek Tragedy (New York, n.d.), Ch. IV, pp. 161-167. Much of this discussion owes a great deal to Norwood's book and also to H. D. F. Kitto's Greek Tragedy (New York, 1950). Both afford valuable insights into the subject.

mothers of the warriors who died before the gates of Thebes. Their sons are refused burial until Theseus secures those rites by attacking Thebes. The Orestes of Euripides presents the confused complications resulting from the vengeance taken on Clytemnaestra and Aegisthus by Orestes and Electra. The focus is largely on the intrigues that attend the decision regarding the punishment of brother and sister, but emphasis is also placed on what they and Pylades can do about the plans against them. In the confusion that results, Apollo appears to stop the quarrel by declaring what is to take place. Helen is to become a sea-godess; Electra shall marry Pylades; Hermione shall wed Orestes, who is to stand trial at Athens. Apollo will reconcile Orestes to the Argive state. In this play, all the events which took place after the fall of Troy are treated as if they took place in Periclean Greece. The significant point is that Orestes, who exacted vengeance with his own hand, learns that the vendetta is an outrage upon law and society, and, what is more important, punishment for crime rests with the state (i.e., the polis) alone.

The transformation of the Orestean mythos into terms acceptable to Periclean Greece is but one part of the vast complex of changes that were occurring during that age. Another one relevant to this study is the segmentation of Greek thought into well-defined areas of scientific, moral, ethical, philosophical, and religious thought. Considerations of moderation and self-restraint pass from the domain of the stage to those of moral, ethical, or philosophical writings. Eventually they find their most precise and complete expression in the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle.

From what has been discussed of Greek tragedy, it is evident that one of its central concerns was the further use of the tension between group-oriented self-restraint and individual self-assertive conduct. Thus both Greek epic and tragedy make use of the possibilities inherent in The Iliad by showing the significance of the tension and the general movement away from self-assertive conduct and toward group-oriented self-restraint and moderation.

The warrior society of The Iliad both expected and approved of individual self-assertive action on the part of the epic hero, but it did not approve of absolute self-assertion. The work thus shows a fine balance and adjustment between unrestrained self-assertion and moderate, restrained action that is mindful of and consistent with group needs and values. In The Odyssey, the hero, who has the double role of individual warrior and responsible leader, is caught in the same tension between self-assertion and self-restraint, but with the entire course and direction of the action in which he is involved leading toward the insistent needs and values of the group rather than those of the individual. The major portion of Greek tragedy, excepting the bulk of Euripides' work, firmly establishes the idea of self-restraint for the moral health and well-being of the polis. There the idea remained without extension and development in the national life of Greece, except as a key concept of moral and philosophical thought as expressed in the term

sophrosyne and as exemplified in the entire texture of Aristotle's
Nicomachean Ethics.⁶

⁶One wonders what might have happened if Greece had adopted the idea as a principle for a united political entity rather than returning to the self-assertive principle underlying the struggle between Athens and Sparta, or between various other city-states. That return to the self-assertive principle was the primary reason for the failure of the many leagues formed in Greece to meet the threat of foreign invaders or to establish and maintain the influence of a particular city-state and its allies.

SECTION TWO
CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Chapter IV

The Aeneid and the Warrior of Moderation

Virgil was fully cognizant of the epic works produced after Homer, such as the Bellum Punicum of Naevius and the Annales of Ennius, but he chose to go back to Homer for material and method. He did so even though he approached his task with a specific extraliterary purpose that was determined by particular social and political considerations.

The disorder and confusion that plagued the Roman commonwealth for nearly a century had been brought to an end by the success of Augustus Caesar at Actium. The policies developed after that victory created the Pax Romana, which brought with it a special climate favorable to literary creation. Part of that climate was the system of patronage which established bonds between outstanding literary artists (such as Virgil) and the emperor, Augustus Caesar. The trouble of the period prior to the establishment of the Pax Romana had unhappily touched Virgil's own life, and he, as most Romans, was enthusiastic about the peace and order which Augustus had a part in bringing. Virgil was equally in favor of the normative and group-oriented values which the Roman empire fostered to support that peace and order. As a result of these considerations and influences, Virgil purposely sets out to create an epic that will flatter the empire and the emperor, as well as approving of and insisting upon the group-oriented values which support the empire. Homer's epics and native tradition provided the material Virgil

needed to give a distinguished ancestry to Augustus Caesar by linking the emperor to the line of Aeneas and his descendants. The Iliad and The Odyssey also provided a structural framework and a narrative method to tell the epic story of the founding of Rome, of the hero responsible for it, and of the glory of Rome. Virgil took what he found and shaped it by his tightly compressed narrative, by his striking subjective treatment, and by his specific extra-literary purpose into a splendid artistic work.

The opening books of the Aeneid establish the story-structure framework, present the basic themes to be developed, and suggest the direction the narrative movement will follow. As in The Odyssey, the reader is plunged in in medias res but quickly carried back to Troy by the retrospective narration Aeneas presents at Dido's court.

In respect to their significance, the experiences which Aeneas relates fall into five major groups: the actions and reactions of the hero at Troy, the wanderings until the death of Anchises, the sojourn in Carthage, the return to Drepanum and the descent of Aeneas to the lower world, and the problems of resettlement in Italy. All of these serve to show the character of Aeneas, the slow acceptance of his divine mission and the assumption of his responsibility, and finally the complete devotion he shows to the mission once he has accepted it.

The account of the last hours of Troy reveals the qualities he must discard and those he can develop; in addition, it reveals the source of chaos and disorder and the task which Aeneas is given. Though he is an epic warrior of the Achillean mold, Aeneas also reveals traits which develop into the pietas that will become his dominant trait.

Though urged by the spirit of Hektor to save the household gods and find a new home for them, Aeneas responds to the sorrow and confusion in Troy and acts with frenzy and furor. He hears the duty imposed on him, but does not seem to comprehend it or act upon it. Instead, he rushes forth to seek a "decent death in battle." For a cause he knows to be hopeless, Aeneas gathers a group to fight and meet death with reckless unconcern.

His unrestrained bravado is shared by his comrades, who accept the rash proposal of Coroebus that they don Greek armor. Few of them outlive that splendidly insane act, but the surge of battle sweeps Aeneas toward Priam's palace. There he witnesses the slaughter of Priam by Pyrrhus, and the event makes him think of his family. He reports the experience in these words:

'Grim horror, then came home to me. I saw
My father when I saw the king, the life
Going out with the cruel wound. I saw Creusa
Forsaken, my abandoned home, Iulus,
My little son. I looked around. They all
had gone, exhausted, flung down from the wall,
Or dead in the fire, and I was left alone.' (Aen. II, p. 51)¹

The thoughts revealed by these lines show four of the major traits which will contribute to the complex pietas that Aeneas develops: his veneration for his father, his love for Creusa, his concern for their home, and his love for his son.

Before he can respond to these thoughts and the feelings they prompt, his glance falls upon Helen, who tries to hide at Vesta's shrine. He explodes with savage, unreasoning anger at the sight of one he blames

¹Rolfe Humphries, The Aeneid of Virgil (New York, 1951). All subsequent references in English to the Aeneid are from this translation.

for the grief suffered by both Greeks and Trojans. Only the vision of his divine mother prevents a violent act of "relentless anger." Venus reminds her son of his obligations to Anchises, Creusa, and Iulus. She shows him why Helen is not to be blamed and sends him to his father's house.

When Anchises stubbornly insists he will not outlive Troy and endure a barren exile, both Creusa and Aeneas resolve to die with him. Their foolish intention is altered when the divine portent of light appears about the head of Iulus and the gods confirm the omen. Anchises agrees to leave and Aeneas, with his concern for religious propriety, entrusts the household gods to the unstained hands of his father.

The panic and confusion of dodging the Greek troops separates Creusa from the others, and her absence produces his usual frenzied response; he rushes back to the dangers of burning Troy. His "endless rushing" through the city of "terror and silence" produces no trace of Creusa, and once again a vision is needed to halt his emotional conduct. Creusa's spirit appears to calm his "frantic grief," to predict what is ahead for him and his people, and to send him back to father and son.

At Troy Aeneas is evidently not a stable character. His actions are rash and undisciplined. His response to every crisis is hasty and emotional; no disciplined, rational response is shown or suggested. His actions reflect the chaos around him. At this point his credentials are rather weak for a man charged with the heavy responsibilities of restoring Trojan fame. He has martial techne, heroic boldness, and a will to fight bravely as long as he can. He has other important potential qualities. His concern for home and family is a nucleus for

the complex of values suited to the Roman world whose hero he is to be. His piety is also part of that complex. He has the basic qualities which, when developed, will constitute his pietas. What he lacks is a firm belief in and total commitment to his destiny and to that of the new Troy. He must develop the qualities and virtues which subjugate the passionate self to the group demands and needs. Then he must take active physical, moral, and military direction of his people.

Aeneas displays very little of these qualities during the course of his wanderings up to the death of Anchises. He does show his respect for religious rites and for his father. He respects and follows the advice of Anchises without question as he does when Anchises directs them toward Crete. While he is alive, Anchises has as much to do with where the Trojans go and with what they do as does Aeneas, who has some vague administrative duties and certain obligations as a law-giver. He performs those duties with little indication of vigor or élan. His future role as planner and builder may be indicated by his act of laying out the walls of Pergamea. In the Strophades he urges the men to fight the Harpies, but such action is futile.

What useful functions he performs result from no purposive or planned action. When Anchises leads them to Crete as the result of information received on Delos, Aeneas helps get them back on the way to Italy by reporting what the vision of the household gods tells him. Yet when he learns of the presence of Helenus in Chaonia, Aeneas urges that they go there so that he may hear of the adventures of Helenus and how he created a little Troy there. Almost as an afterthought Aeneas asks for the advice and counsel that indicate what is still ahead for the Trojans.

Anchises' death at Drepanum deprives Aeneas of his "comforter in all . . . care and trouble," and its effect suggests how much Aeneas had depended on his father to endure the false starts, frustrations, and reverses experienced. When Aeneas must accept the responsibility of leading the Trojans to Italy, he has as yet shown few great qualities of leadership to establish the new Troy.

Once he has assumed the leadership, he begins to demonstrate and develop more actively the qualities and virtues he needs for his task. The combined efforts of Juno and Venus provide the circumstances. Juno's hatred creates the storm that drives the Trojans to Carthage, and the maternal solicitude of Venus causes her to accept Juno's suggestion that will assure a kindly welcome by Dido. Those actions create favorable circumstances for Juno's attempts to prevent the destined Trojan settlement in Italy, for the greatest obstacle to the mission of Aeneas, and for the tragedy of Dido. The temporary self-indulgence of Aeneas makes the plan a partial success, but Aeneas' devotion to duty and obedience to the gods thwart the plan.

When Aeneas and his "weary children" beach their vessels on Libyan shores, he becomes the provider and comforter for his people. He locates a herd of deer and provides meat for his crews. Though he is as weary and disconsolate as they are, yet

He kept to himself the sorrow in the heart
Wearing, for them, a mask of hopefulness. (Aen. I, p. 10)

He recalls the dangers they have survived and calms their troubles with these consoling words:

'. . . This too the god will end.
Call the nerve back; dismiss the fear, the sadness.
Some day, perhaps, remembering even this
Will be a pleasure. We are going on



Through whatsoever chance and change, until
 We come to Latium, where the fates point out
 A quiet dwelling-place, and Troy recovered.
 Endure and keep yourself for better days.' (Aen. I, p. 10)

Though Aeneas has not previously shown the tenacious hold on life which characterizes Odysseus, one must assume that his words here reveal an evident change in his personal development and his obligations to the mission. Though his adventures do not show him to have the tleмосyne of Odysseus, Aeneas has learned something about endurance. Having accepted the need for endurance, Aeneas urges it upon his followers.

Despite his declared intention to move on to Italy, developments at Carthage keep him and the Trojans from pressing on to Latium. The ordered process of Tyrian construction rouses his admiration and envy for those "whose walls already rise." As he views the splendid temple being raised to Juno, the scenes of the Trojan war move him to tears. Yet he draws consolation from the fact that he and his band of refugees survived both the destruction of the war and the dangers of their wanderings. Virgil pointedly tells the reader:

. . . Here Aeneas first
 Dared hope for safety, find some reassurance
 In hope of better days . . . (Aen. I, p. 19)

Before Dido and Aeneas meet, he sees her magnanimously offering the men he had presumed lost at sea the chance to share the kingdom with her people. Before he makes his appearance, she includes him in the generous offer. Dido and Aeneas, two fortune-driven sufferers, find much to admire and respect in one another, but the schemes of Venus and Juno lead to the tragic love relationship. Venus inflames Dido's heart with passion for Aeneas, but she does not inflict her son with a consuming passion. She does only what is needed to make sure no harm comes to him.

Juno deceitfully arranges matters to bring together Dido and Aeneas in the cave where Dido gives herself to Aeneas. Pushed by her consuming passion, she

Is unconcerned with fame, with reputation,
With how it seems to others. This is marriage
For her, not hole-and-corner guilt; she covers
Her folly with this name . . . (Aen. IV, p. 93)

Even though he clearly suggests a certain amount of sympathy for Dido, Virgil makes it clear that she is foolish to justify the relationship with the false sanctity she gives it.

Though Aeneas has not been wounded by Cupid, Virgil clearly indicates that Aeneas responds to Dido's passion and indulges his own. Virgil tells the reader:

And now the couple wanton out the winter,
Heedless of ruling, prisoners of passion. (Aen. IV, p. 93)

Both neglect their reputations and their duties to those who depend on them. Nobody aids Dido, but Jupiter sends Mercury to remind Aeneas of his mission, of his fame and fortune, and of his obligations regarding the future of Iulus.

Some readers charge Aeneas with unfeeling haste in obeying the divine order and heartlessly abandoning Dido; however, a close reading indicates otherwise. Virgil's presentation reveals this event as the most trying experience Aeneas has.

Aeneas prepares to flee without a farewell to Dido, but Virgil shows the reason for that decision and the grief involved in doing it. His respect for and awe of the divine command accounts for the decision, but Virgil carefully records Aeneas' response to the order.

. . . Appalled, amazed Aeneas
Is stricken dumb; his hair stands up in terror,
His voice sticks in his throat. He is more than eager

To flee that pleasant land, Awed by the warning
 Of the divine command. But how to do it?
 How get around that passionate queen? What opening
 Try first? His mind runs in all directions,
 Shifting and veering . . . (Aen. IV, pp. 96-97)²

Knowing no effective way to cope with the violent passion of the queen, Aeneas decides to depart secretly. The suspicious queen discovers his attempt to depart and turns the fury he had hoped to avoid on him. Though he feels his counter-pleas and reasoned arguments cannot mean much to a woman who feels both deceived and scorned, Aeneas tries as best he can to meet her unrestrained, self-assertive arguments and pleas. Aeneas is not unmoved by her appeal, but Virgil makes it clear that Jupiter orders him to control his feelings:

. . . Jove bade him keep
 Affection from his eyes, and grief in his heart
 With never a sign . . . (Aen. IV, p. 98)³

As Aeneas expected the justification he attempts falls on deaf ears. His forthright honesty about the nature of their relationship increases Dido's vehemence, and arguments based on obligations to his son and his people are futile. Even his ardent declaration, "I follow

²Here it seems appropriate to cite the Latin text. The source is H. Rushton Fairclough's translation of Virgil's Aeneid for the Loeb Classical Library (New York, 1920). All latin lines quoted are from this source.

At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutit amens,
 arrectaeque horrore comae et vox faucibus haesit.
 ardet abire fuga dulcisque relinquere terras,
 attonitus tanto monitu imperio que deorum.
 heu! quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem
 audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat?
 atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc
 in partisque rapit varias perque omnia versat. (Aen. IV, 279-286)

³The Latin text gives:
 . . . ille Jovis monitis immota tenebat
 lumina et obnixus curam sub corde premebat. (Aen. IV, 331-332)

Italy not because I want to," (Aen. IV, p. 100) can not satisfy her.

Aeneas is deeply moved and though he longs

To ease her grief with comfort, to say something
To turn her pain and hurt away, sighs often,
His heart being moved by this great love, most deeply,
And still - - the gods give orders, he obeys them;
He goes back to the fleet . . . (Aen. IV, p. 101)⁴

Despite his evident feeling for Dido, Aeneas must respond to the higher duty of his mission. Anna makes an impassioned plea for Dido, but the gods stop his ears to prevent any emotional response. Virgil shows the force and power of the emotion Aeneas must withstand by the vigorous imagery of the simile which describes Anna's plea and his response to it:

. . . as northern winds
Sweep over Alpine mountains, in their fury
Fighting each other to uproot an oak-tree.
Whose ancient strength endures against their roaring
And the trunk shudders and the leaves come down
Strewing the ground, but the old tree clings to the mountain,
Its roots as deep toward hell as its crest toward heaven,
And still holds on - - even so, Aeneas, shaken
By storm blasts of appeal, by voices calling
From every side, is tossed and torn, and steady.
His will stays motionless, and tears are vain. (Aen. IV, p. 103)

Aeneas is sorely tried, but the moral and rational faculties now control the emotions and Aeneas is close to assuming completely the mantle of responsibility.⁵

⁴The Latin text gives:
At pius Aeneas, quamquam lenire dolentem
solando cupit et dictis avertere curas,
multa gemens magnoque animum labefactus amore,
iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit. (Aen. IV, 393-396)

⁵H. V. Routh, in God, Man, and Epic Poetry, supports the points made here in his analysis of the Dido-Aeneas relationship. He tells the reader:

Aeneas has to endure her /Dido's/ infinitely pathetic supplications, then her withering scorn, then her utter debasement of spirit,

The return to Drepanum provides a certain amount of relaxation before the Trojans face the task of establishing themselves in Latium. It also provides further reason for the descent to the underworld, for Nautes and the spirit of Anchises advise Aeneas to go there to learn more of the future, just as Helenus had advised him to do. At Cumae his piety secures from the Sibyl the information that troubles are still ahead, but that success will crown their efforts. The Sibyl warns that the ascent from the realm of Pluto will be most dangerous, but because Aeneas is one of "A few, beloved/ By Jupiter, descended from the gods,/ A few, in whom exalting virtue burns," (Aen. VI, p. 148) he has no problems. The doves of Venus help him find the golden bough to present to Proserpine, and the Sibyl guides him to the lower regions.

The visit to the lower world is Aeneas' final step toward full assumption of the mantle of responsibility. All that he sees and experiences has importance, but two aspects of that visit are most significant. In going to greet the spirit of Anchises, Aeneas passes Tartarus. There those who in life were guilty of unrestrained self-assertive conduct are punished so that they may learn justice and reverence for the gods. Their deeds of "unspeakable ambition" and their punishments serve as a reminder to act in restrained, morally-oriented fashion. Their crimes and punishments serve as a marked contrast to the conduct of Aeneas, who put aside his self-assertive urges during the

which he knows will turn to fury. As Virgil cannot possibly have intended the future founder of the Roman state to appear, in Dr. T. E. Page's phrase, "as a man . . . contemptible" he must have wished to portray him as sorely tried and beset. To judge by the sympathy and insight with which her agony is unfolded, he must have intended this desertion to be the hardest of all his super-man's trials.

final adventures of the Trojan wanderings. The situation of those being punished presents an effective contrast with what Aeneas sees in the Elysian Fields. By showing Aeneas against this background, Virgil seems to be approving and praising the exemplary behavior and conduct of his hero.

Aeneas takes the last step toward total commitment to his mission just before he leaves Hades. He is shown the vision of the future leaders of Rome who will come from his line and from that of Iulus. That vision gives him certain proof of the greatness of his mission and banishes doubt and uncertainty. Aeneas is now ready to exercise his talents and virtues to complete his great mission.

After Aeneas returns from Hades, Virgil patterns the second half of the epic on The Iliad. The action and narrative movement which developed in an inward direction from Troy to Latium starts to move outward to fill the central part of the story structure. The Trojan arrival in Latium becomes a "chaos-disorder" condition because of the responses Juno, Latinus, Amata, and Turnus manifest. Latinus, in accord with established prophecies and omens, welcomes the Trojans and starts to arrange a marriage between Lavinia and Aeneas. Juno, however, gets the human agents of furor and violentia to start hostile actions against Aeneas and the Trojans.

Amata and Turnus are both passionate, self-assertive individuals who have no regard for disciplined or restrained conduct, and both have a personal involvement in the consequences of Latinus' plan. Amata wants Turnus as her son-in-law, and Turnus has no intention of yielding Lavinia to the Trojan stranger. Consequently, Allecto has little trouble

in rousing them to action. However, Allecto is needed to arrange circumstances for a Trojan-Latin conflict. As a result, the general circumstances of the Greek-Trojan conflict and the Achilles-Hektor confrontation are repeated, but with significant alterations.

The scope is enlarged beyond the conflict of Latins and Trojans because both Turnus and Aeneas seek and secure allies among Italian tribes. The resulting pan-Italian conflict creates a new "chaos-disorder" condition that Aeneas must resolve along with the "chaos-disorder" problem presented at the start. As in The Iliad, the martial conflict provides the circumstances for the aristeia of warriors from both sides. These warrior performances lead toward the combat between Aeneas and Turnus.

As in The Iliad, a proud exemplar of the heroic absolute opposes an equally proud exemplar of duty to family and to his people, but in the Aeneid there is both alteration and reversal in the roles of the two principal warriors. Turnus is the exemplar of the heroic absolute; he fights for his personal pride and glory, for his egocentric desires rather than any strong patriotic concern about Latium. His cocky self-assurance appears in his response to Allecto's visit. He tells her to leave war and peace to the warriors, and he neither wants nor needs any help. Nevertheless, she spurs him to violent action and

. . . he cries for arms, he seeks
Arms at his bedside, through the hallways lusting
For sword and steel, war's wicked frenzy mounting
To rampant rage . . . (Aen. VII, p. 193)

Turnus is eager to oppose all who threaten whatever he wants, and he

intends to keep Lavinia at any price. Like Achilleus, his boldness and his excesses will involve those around him in grief and death.⁶

Aeneas, on the other hand, is the exemplar of moderation, of restraint, and of duty toward the people he leads. He does not come to Latium to provoke trouble and his personal actions do not start the conflict. Yet, because it is necessary to end the chaos and disorder created by Juno and Turnus, to fulfill his high mission, Aeneas does what he must to defeat the forces raised by Turnus. In some respects Turnus plays Achilleus to the Hektor of Aeneas, except for the reversal of the tragic results of their encounter. Although the martial strife between the Latins and the Trojans dominates the Iliadic portion of the Aeneid, something more than the usual techne, arete, tlemosyne, and aidos is demanded of the hero who hopes to establish the new Troy. Thus Aeneas has to combine some of the qualities and attributes of Achilleus, Hektor, and Odysseus.

From the start Aeneas has the requisite techne and the other warrior qualities needed to lead the Trojans in battle. He had demonstrated these during the last hours of Troy, and the fearful reaction of the Greeks in Hades attests to his warrior status. His adherence to the noble warrior ideal of arete is never in question. His task requires some of the tlemosyne of Odysseus, and though he never actively demonstrates the endurance of the hero of The Odyssey or even of stalwart Aias in The Iliad, his response and encouragement to his men on the Libyan shores indicates that he has developed enough for his needs.

⁶Except for the absence of certain social and religious values shown by Aeneas at Troy, Turnus shares the furor and violencia Aeneas displayed during the destruction of Troy.

In addition, the cumulative effect of the experiences has given him some of the intelligent adaptability of Odysseus.

To the foregoing qualities he must add the sense of aidos and the patriotic concern of Hektor. His account of the last hours of Troy reveals that he has a great deal of the former and enough of the latter to serve as a point of departure. He need only develop a stronger, differently-oriented commitment to his duty toward his people. His concern for the safety of Troy exists from the start, but only to the extent that he will fight and die for it if need be. He has to learn to accept the need to live after the destruction of Troy, to struggle to re-establish it elsewhere, and to be prepared to fight for it again. Rather than assure the fame of its past, he must guarantee the glory of its future in the pre-eminence of Rome. He needs time to reach that stage, and he does reach it after his father's death. The adventures from Troy to Cumae permit him to combine the qualities of Achilles, Hektor, and Odysseus, as well as to develop qualities and values that are centered in duty and obligation to the group--even at the expense of the individual. In effect, he must and does become an exemplary figure incorporating the special qualities and talents appropriate to the Roman world.

Brooks Otis, in Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry, says of the situation Aeneas faces in Latium:

Now his problem ceases to be merely one of his own re-motivation; of internal struggle with his own individual passion and nostalgia --and becomes, instead, one of leadership, of action, of exemplifying in a great war the social meaning of pietas, or, still more, of humanitas.⁷

⁷Otis, p. 316.

H. V. Routh's great work on epic offers a similar point of view when the author says of the Aeneid:

The hero of the poem, the founder of the Roman nation, is meant to be worthy of his destiny. He is no mere chieftain of the warrior class, satisfied with earthly honour. Fate exacts from him the most rigorous allegiance to his high mission. His arduous career of battle and adventure is also a moral pilgrimage in which he gradually becomes perfect in the duties of public service.⁸

The fact that Aeneas is "no mere chieftain" requires him to have experience in administration and organizational planning to guide the military effort and build the new Troy. He developed those talents during the wanderings. Because Turnus unites Italian tribes against him, Aeneas must demonstrate skill in diplomacy to win allies to his cause. This he does most effectively. Having learned to endure the external forces of furor and violentia encountered on the wanderings and having learned to suppress and control those forces within himself, Aeneas is quite prepared to cope with the problems Juno and Turnus create.

When Aeneas reached Latium he had only one group cause to fight for; however, the various reactions to his arrival give him two added group causes to defend. King Latinus receives Aeneas as the expected stranger who is to marry his daughter Lavinia, but Turnus does not accept this plan. He deposes Latinus and leads the Latins against the forces of Aeneas. Turnus also forms an alliance with Mezentius, a warrior who has established a tyranny over the Arcadians. As a result, Aeneas becomes the agent for re-establishing the political and social well-being of the Trojans, the Latins, and the Arcadians.

⁸Routh, Vol. I, p. 203.

While Aeneas is away on his diplomatic mission, the Trojan forces chafe under the restraint he imposed on them. They want to go out to fight the enemy, but they control their warrior zeal and sense of shame to submit to his order that they must maintain the security of the camp and avoid battle in the open. As a contrast to the disciplined leadership of Aeneas, Virgil presents two rash and immoderate acts during his absence. When Turnus cuts off the Trojans' means of escape, Furyalus and Nisus undertake to penetrate the enemy lines and get word to Aeneas. However, their lack of moderation and discipline makes them neglect the importance of their mission. Trapped by their reckless boldness, the two young men meet death because of their great friendship. When circumstances permit Turnus to get inside the Trojan enclosure, he has the opportunity to let in his forces. He does not think of it because his unrestrained passion to kill the enemy dominates him. Mnestheus meets the grave danger by appealing to the aidos of the Trojans, and they rally to the appeal. Their unified strength forces Turnus out of the enclosure and ends that crisis.

Even after Aeneas returns with his allies the two principal warriors do not meet for some time. This confrontation is delayed to permit the warriors of both sides to demonstrate their skill and courage in the aristeia that lead up to the Turnus-Aeneas battle. Turnus thoroughly enjoys the field of battle and the death and destruction he can create. In fact, most of the warriors on both sides share this propensity with the Homeric heroes; Aeneas alone does not.

When fighting is required, Aeneas can and does fight with all the energy and skill he commands. He can match every savage blow of

Mezentius and kill him with little compunction. Yet Aeneas no longer has the Homeric gusto for fighting that he had at Troy. His techne and arete are merely the means to the peaceful end he wants for all of them. Provoked to anger by Lausus, he can slay the young man to defend himself, but not without demonstrating pity and respect for the brave young warrior. Only something as traumatic as the death of Pallas can disturb his normal pietas and humanitas. Even then, the savage anger provoked by that death is nearly softened later.

The slaughter of Pallas by Turnus fills Aeneas with cruel rage, and he callously kills even those who, as suppliants, plead for their lives. In the manner of Achilles he also takes live captives to sacrifice at the funeral pyre of Pallas. Yet, even his intense and profound grief over the death of his young friend does not cause him to blame and punish the Latins for what Turnus did. When the Latins request a truce to bury their dead, Aeneas grants that request and offers them a chance to make peace. He directs all his anger at Turnus, who is finally driven into the battle of the "two wild bulls" by his concern for his lineage, by his love for Lavinia, and by his regard for martial glory. Wounded by Aeneas, Turnus supplicates for his life and an end to hatred. Aeneas is moved by that supplication and on the point of agreeing to it when he spies the belt of Pallas on his enemy's shoulder. That sight evokes the bitter memory of his young friend's death and he savagely kills Turnus. With that death blow, Aeneas ends the "chaos-disorder" conditions in the Latin land, in the lives of the Trojan survivors, and in his personal life. Once those conditions have been transformed to peace and order, Aeneas has fulfilled his high destiny to make possible the future of Augustan Rome.

At least two commentators on the Aeneid reinforce the views presented above. Brooks Otis points out how the restraint and moderation of Aeneas contrasts with the conduct of Turnus, Nisus, Euryalus, and Camilla. Then he adds:

Unlike them also, he does not manifest any eagerness for fighting, except when dominated by a special emotion such as his affection for Pallas. Unlike them, he regrets and sorrows over the war. He alone realizes the true pathos of the marcelli, the noble young doomed to premature death, and thus pays the price of peace with some sense of the magnitude.⁹

W. Y. Sellar, in his book on Virgil's works,¹⁰ discusses the differences between Aeneas and the other warriors in respect to what they show of the author's feelings. He points out that Virgil captures and conveys the vigor and action of battle and that Virgil can also express the Roman contempt for death and sympathize with the energetic daring of his Italian heroes and heroines. Yet, says Sellar, he shares the sentiment with which the hero looks forward to peace as the crown of his labors and with which he regards the war he was compelled to wage. Sellar is correct in stating that Aeneas regarded the war as a hated task imposed on him by the Fates, but once he fully accepted the mission he completed it despite the difficulties.

The analysis presented above shows the clear integration of story-structure framework and narrative development, and the importance of the tension between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined restraint.

The story-structure framework and the method of filling it is nearly the same in the Aeneid as in The Odyssey. The work starts in

⁹Otis, p. 315.

¹⁰W. Y. Sellar, Virgil (3rd. ed., Oxford, 1897).

medias res with the central figure and his followers far from their destined goal in Italy. This general situation represents chaos and disorder for the Trojans and for Aeneas personally, and the divine level also recognizes it as such. Fate has ordained that the Trojans will build the new Troy in Latium, and the divine level, in the person of Jupiter, acts to get Aeneas and his people moving toward their goal. Thus the "will of Jupiter" encompasses and frames the Trojan wandering and the central point of the action, Latium. Since the Trojans are not where they are destined to be, the action and plot movement of the first half of the epic are organized to get them from where they were to where they are, or from where they are to where they are going. The action and narrative movement advance inward through the series of trials and obstacles experienced by the Trojans from the destruction of Troy until they reach Latium, and those experiences fill out the first half of the story-structure framework. The development of the action and the narrative line makes use of a shuttle-focus technique that is combined with both retrospective and prospective narration.

After the Trojans reach Latium, the central part of the story structure is filled out in the manner of The Iliad. The arrival of Aeneas in Latium and the reactions to his arrival create a "chaos-disorder" condition for both Trojans and Latins. Aeneas must exert his skills and virtues to transform that condition in order to fulfill his mission. The nature of the reactions to his arrival makes the "chaos-disorder" conditions grow and spread about Aeneas and Turnus in a growing circle of destruction that involves much of Italy and the Trojan newcomers. Aeneas' best efforts are used to halt the spread of destruction and to bring about the defeat of the Latins and the death

of Turnus. This combination of inward movement in the first half of the epic and the outward development in the last half fills out the story-structure framework and gives the work its epic scope.

In the process of filling out the framework, Virgil emphasizes the development of the exemplary character and the pietas in the first half of the work and the exercise of his exemplary and heroic qualities to defeat the impii in the latter portion. All the action (and inaction) of Aeneas and the general movement of the narrative are gradually transferred to the needs and values of the Roman empire of Augustus Caesar, who, at the climax of the visit to the lower world is made part of the genealogical line of Aeneas and his descendants. In effect, Jupiter gives way to Augustus, who is after all Jupiter's civil and divine representative, both Caesar and Pontifex Maximus. In that fashion, the "will of Jupiter" is equated with the "will of Augustus" in the controlling external portion of the story-structure framework. The political and social aspects of the work become more important than the religious. For that reason, added emphasis is given to the values and standards of conduct demonstrated by the hero.

At the destruction of Troy Aeneas is completely the unrestrained and self-assertive hero. His major concern is to live up to the highest ideals of military valor and send as many Greeks to their deaths as he can before they end his life. He is absolute energy and passion. The least excuse sends him back to danger and possible death, even after he has been told of his duty to the Trojans and his family. He exhibits no rational conduct, no disciplined demeanor, and no significant concern for group values. Only his concern about religious propriety and his

feelings toward his family show something of the pietas that will become his dominant character trait.

During the early adventures Aeneas does not really stand out one way or another. He seems to take care of some functions and responsibilities, but he displays no great evidence of leadership. While Anchises is alive he has as much to do with the important decisions as does Aeneas. The one exception is the visit to the land of Helenus. It was a fortuitous trip for the Trojans, but Aeneas went there only out of sheer curiosity to hear the adventures of Helenus. Only after the death of Anchises at Drepanum does Aeneas begin to show himself as the responsible leader and to act according to the best interests of the group. However, one can readily account for Aeneas' apparent lack of leadership as a result of his filial devotion and obedience. Thus viewed, it is an essential part of his pietas.

From that point on Aeneas suffers with them and for them, and, except for his temporary self-indulgence with Dido, creates no problems for them as a result of his self-assertive urges. He guides and leads; he reassures and consoles them through every set-back without the passionate individualism Achilles usually demonstrated and Odysseus often revealed during his return to Ithaca.

The visit with Helenus tells Aeneas what dangers are ahead and how he can avoid them. Odysseus had often received such advice, but either his personal self-assertiveness or that of his men caused them to disregard that advice. But Aeneas knows how to use instructions and follow orders, and for that reason the Trojans avoid the hazards on the way. Though Aeneas is bowed by grief at the loss of his father, he still leads his followers toward the Italian mainland.

The storm that scatters his ships and drives them to Carthage drags the spirit of Aeneas to the very edge of despair, but he hides his feelings from his people. He acts consciously and positively for the good of the group by hiding his own weariness and offering them words of hope and courage, as well as caring for their needs. Even his first thoughts about staying at Carthage grow out of his desire to see his people at peace and erecting their own walls.

The temporary neglect of his duties after he meets Dido is not conscious or willful neglect. The conditions which made it possible were determined by Juno and Venus. At most Aeneas can be charged with self-indulgence. Just as soon as he gets Jupiter's reminder, he prepares to leave. However, Virgil makes it quite clear that Aeneas departs with reluctance. It is at this point of the action that the reader realizes most clearly how Virgil has self-consciously been developing the virtues of moderation and self-control in Aeneas.

Homer had offered implied approval and praise of these virtues in The Iliad and emphasized them even more in The Odyssey, but without any great amount of philosophical self-consciousness. Homer had presented them as part of the balanced texture of life, but Virgil consciously makes them the dominant traits of his hero.¹¹ The Greek world appreciated and encouraged such virtues, but never made them the cornerstone of their national life. Greek literature and thought

¹¹This marked contrast between the relative freedom of the Homeric hero and the limitations imposed upon Virgil's hero is generally the source of most readers' positive preference for the Homeric heroes and even for Turnus as opposed to a negative attitude toward Aeneas. However human it may be to do so, it is critically unfair to judge them by the same standards or to expect the Roman standards to conform to the Homeric ones.

nourished such virtues, but even when sophrosyne and the idea of "nothing to excess" are recognized as desirable norms in the Periclean Age, they do not go beyond the areas of moral and philosophical speculation. But the Augustan world and Virgil make them the central values of philosophy, morality, and the practical conduct of its citizens. Since Aeneas is the one who will be responsible for the beginnings that lead to that Augustan world, he furnishes the virtues and qualities which will be most meaningful for the obligations he has and for the support of the future Roman commonwealth.

Though Aeneas demonstrates an acceptable amount of character in the early adventures, he reveals no conduct that is based on a conscious choice between differently oriented values. But after his arrival in Carthage, he consciously acts against his personal orientation because he is more concerned for the group. When Mercury tells him he must leave Carthage, he suppresses his personal considerations and prepares to go. He does not disregard or demean the relationship with Dido, but for him the demands of the higher obligations are quite clear. His obligations to the Trojans and to Iulus are more compelling than any demands that grow out of his relationship with Dido. Even so, he has to make a conscious and determined effort to restrain his personal desires for the sake of the group whose destiny depends on him. Virgil thus makes Aeneas' experiences at Carthage the greatest obstacle to his arrival in Latium, and in Dido's land Aeneas makes his first major step toward acceptance of his duty. Having managed the self-control to leave Carthage, Aeneas needs only the assurance provided him by his visit to Hades. Then he becomes the exemplar of disciplined self-restraint to do what his destiny demands.

When Aeneas reaches Latium there is nothing within him to create any tension between self-assertion and self-restraint. There the single concession to heroic excess is his martial ability, and even this is exercised only after such action becomes the one way to counter the unrestrained self-assertiveness of those who oppose his settling in Latium.

In place of an internal tension for the hero, Virgil substitutes an overt conflict in which Turnus is the epitome of absolute self-assertion and Aeneas is the exemplar of thorough self-restraint. The central conflict is between Turnus and Aeneas, but all the forces that face Aeneas represent some form of unrestrained self-assertion.

Juno is from the beginning the spirit of absolute self-assertion in going against both the will of Jupiter and the prophesied destiny of Aeneas and the new Troy. She merely intensifies her efforts in a last-chance attempt to use those who, on the human level, are as thoroughly unrestrained in their insistence upon what they want, even against the established prophecies and omens concerning Lavinia.

Mezentius, who is drawn into the conflict, has all the reckless arrogance of the suitors in The Odyssey and also represents the self-assertion of tyranny. Camilla, who is certainly an admirable figure, dies because she shares the self-assertive qualities of Turnus and Mezentius. Even the charming young marcelli of the work, Pallas, Lausus, Nisus, and Euryalus, possess varying degrees of heroic unrestraint.

Against these adherents of absolute self-assertion, Aeneas brings all the qualities of the epic warrior, plus the significant virtues of Achilleus, Odysseus, and Hektor: techne, intellectual adaptability and

moral elemosyne, devotion to race and family. All this, plus a thorough religious piety, helps to make up the pietas that is the dominant characteristic of Aeneas. In addition, Aeneas has learned to obey the gods, which, in the Aeneid, means to act in the best interests of the Trojan nation for the future of Augustan Rome. Furthermore, he is a capable Roman leader who can handle administrative duties, military tasks, and, if necessary, diplomatic arrangements. As a result, Aeneas surpasses Turnus in all respects except boldness and bravery; when the final confrontation comes, his purpose, motivation, and techne are all superior to those of Turnus.

Aeneas has the heroic qualities he needs for his task, but his significant achievements stem from the acceptance of the normative values of the group and from the exercise of moderation and self-restraint, qualities which are an important part of the Roman pietas he exemplifies. In the new world he makes possible by the completion of his high mission, those qualities replace the magnificent, but outdated values of the Homeric world. The words of George de F. Lord about the confrontation of Aeneas and Turnus provide a fitting conclusion to this discussion. Lord says:

The conflict between Aeneas and Turnus in the final book of the Aeneid epitomizes the victory of the new hero, the builder of a civilization, over the old--one might say obsolete--warrior hero with his narrow tribal loyalties, his jealous personal honor, and his fierce passions, who is, whatever his motives, the foe of reason, order, and civilization.¹²

Virgil's structure and treatment feature three high points of action and tension, but the narrative plains between them are equally

¹²Lord, p. 37.

important. The in medias res opening presents the general "chaos-disorder" condition for the hero and his people, and it introduces the action which provides the turning point in the conduct of Aeneas. That opening also indicates that the two-part pattern of The Odyssey will be part of the structure; the two parts of the story element will deal with the problems of the Trojan refugees during their wanderings in the first half and with the problems of re-settlement in the second half. This manner of beginning the work requires retrospective narration to present the initial "chaos-disorder" situation which creates the general one and to develop the action and narrative movement up to the opening scene. Then the action and narrative movement advance the story element toward Latium, where the action of the second half unfolds. In this fashion are presented the three high points of action and tension, as well as the narrative plains in between. The central high point is the Dido-Aeneas relationship and the stay of Aeneas in Carthage, where Aeneas is for a time caught in a tension between the personal desires and the demands of his destiny. The first high point is the account of the death throes of Troy, and there Aeneas starts to experience the tension between the instinctive, uncontrolled actions of his Homeric self (which dominates) and the obligations to his family, his people, and his high destiny. The final high point is the struggle between the forces of furor and violentia and the developed pietas of Aeneas. Between the initial and the final high points heroic moderation and disciplined restraint dominate the story and the narrative development.

The result is a bland and neutral texture for most of the first half of the work. If the Aeneid had presented the same texture in the

latter half, the work might well have lost all heroic verve and perhaps even literary effect. It is saved from this by the return of the tension between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint, not as an internal tension for the hero but as an external tension between Aeneas and Turnus. At the same time, heroic moderation and group-oriented, disciplined self-restraint are insisted upon and exercised to transform the "chaos-disorder" conditions existing for Aeneas, for the Trojans, and for the Latins. Brooks Otis adds support to these ideas when he says of the Aeneid:

We see the individual and social and demonic aspects of violence brought face to face with pietas and humanity, and we see that Fate is finally on the moral side because the moral forces have put themselves on the side of Fate.¹³

Aeneas, the moral force, put himself on the side of Fate after the visit to Hades and exerted his pietas and humanitas against the individual, social, and demonic aspects of violence created by Juno and Turnus to settle the chaos and disorder on all levels.

As a result of the controlling frame of the duty and the divine destiny of Aeneas, the balance between self-assertion and self-restraint has been seriously disturbed. For some readers, that disturbed balance makes Aeneas something of an anti-hero and the Aeneid something approaching anti-epic. Those readers who insist upon that point of view do so because of their limited appreciation and rigid conceptions of epic-heroic poetry, which always takes into account and reflects the social and moral conditions relevant to the age for which it is written. Such readers would deny to the genre any capacity or need to grow; they would make of it a fixed and frigid formula. They can, understandably, enjoy the

¹³Otis, p. 319.

greater vigor, freedom, and self-hood permitted to the Iliadic hero upon which Turnus and Mezentius are patterned; however, they cannot expect that the epic hero always be cut from the same cloth, nor that the epic of one age or land conform to the norms of earlier ages and lands. Yet some readers do make such demands and, on the basis of those demands, label Aeneas as an anti-hero and the Aeneid as anti-epic. In this respect they overstate the case and distort some of the meaningful values of epic poetry. As a corrective, the full significance of the disturbed balance in the Aeneid must be assessed from the perspective of all three classical epics.

SECTION TWO
CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Chapter V

Classical Heroic Literature in Perspective

Major Characteristics

Examination of the major classical epics reveals the following significant characteristics of the genre: story-structure framework, plot movement, narrative development, narrative devices and techniques, epic scope, and literature texture and significance. All but the last two of these will be discussed together; then the relevance of the measure-demesure tension to the last two will be discussed.

Each of the works has a similar structure framework within which the story element is developed. This framework consists of a concentric frame enclosing a "chaos-disorder" condition or set of conditions. Development of the story element requires the transformation of the central condition or set of conditions to order and harmony. The action and plot movement grow in annular fashion to fill out the basic framework, but that annular growth varies somewhat in each work. For The Iliad it is outward; for The Odyssey it is inward; for the Aeneid it is inward for the first half and then outward for the latter half.

The movement of action and plot is reinforced by various methods and techniques of narrative development. These can be organized under three general groupings. The first is the in medias res opening, which, despite some minor differences of definition, puts the reader in the center of an action or a set of circumstances already in progress. Such

an opening requires some method of traveling back in time and returning to the present again, or shifting back and forth between actions taking place at the same time. The circumstances of the story also frequently require actual or imagined shifting of physical location or level of action. Both of these narrative requirements are satisfied by a shuttle-focus technique that is combined with brief flashback and foreshadowing, and sometimes with more developed retrospective and prospective narration.

To such methods can be added what might generally be designated as supplemental and complementary additions which expand the geographical, social, heroic, and moral horizons while also expanding the time span of the works. These additions include the catalogues of the participants, dreams or visions, and various illustrative stories. All of these combine with the aspects already cited to produce the scope of the epic.

The manner of transforming the "chaos-disorder" condition or set of conditions determines the literary texture of the works and also indicates some of the significance of the works. Such a condition or set of conditions involves the warrior hero or heroes, the values and attributes of the members of a warrior fellowship, and the actions and conduct used to transform both the initial and the developed chaos and disorder.

As a member of the warrior society, the hero is expected to and generally does demonstrate a high degree of personal self-assertion in maintaining his arete and living up to the best traditions of his family and clan. But the moment he becomes part of a noble warrior society engaged in combat against hostile forces, a group code begins to develop.

At some point, the values of that group code begin to infringe upon the strictly individual code and upon personal motivations. As a consequence, the warrior heroes involved in the "chaos-disorder" conditions find themselves in a tension between unrestrained self-assertion and group-oriented self-restraint. Though the heroes do not all adopt the latter position or even move decisively in that direction, each of the works requires some adjustment of the balance between the two positions to bring about the transformation of the "chaos-disorder" conditions. That adjustment is determined by the degree of heroic moderation displayed in the various works, and the degree, though not uniform, moves in a definite direction. The degree of heroic moderation in the works affects their literary texture and significance.

Homeric Balance: Self-assertion and Self-restraint

The Iliad, which presents the chaos and disorder created by the reckless self-assertion of Agamemnon and Achilles, demands enough heroic moderation to balance their conduct; consequently, the author maintains a delicate equilibrium between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint. Neither Agamemnon nor Achilles gives more than grudging approval of the latter. Both see and realize the consequences of their extreme self-assertive behavior, but they do not alter either conduct or behavior primarily as a result of that realization. Neither of them is far enough removed from the primitive heroic society to do so.

Agamemnon makes amends to Achilles only because he hopes to avoid failure in the mission he leads. Achilles makes his peace with Agamemnon only because the personal motivations are no longer important

to him. He regrets the tragic consequences of his self-assertiveness to his fellow warriors and to Patroklos, but he merely intensifies his unrestrained behavior and directs it against new targets. He ends his ruthless self-assertion not because he sees that such conduct is wrong, but because Priam's visit and plea served as an effective counter-shock to the death of Patroklos and appealed to his instinctively fine qualities.

In effect, neither of the principal Greek warriors totally commits himself to disciplined self-restraint, yet both exercise some degree of heroic moderation to resolve the chaos and disorder which their actions produced. Though the principal figures do not exemplify disciplined self-restraint, they and the entire warrior society are urged to develop and exercise heroic moderation to combat the reckless self-assertion of the primitive heroic society of Mycenae.

The centuries between the Mycenaean world and Homer's world demanded and produced some modifications of the considerable freedom of Mycenaean times by the exercise of heroic moderation. As admirable as the Mycenaean hero was in his pride, his self-confidence, his self-sufficiency, and his egoism, other less self-centered qualities and values were needed and exercised in the developing Greek world of Homer's time. The character of Hektor reveals this combination of the Mycenaean and Homeric worlds. Though he retains all the dynamic qualities of the Argive warriors, his concern for family and race place him closer to the ideal of the polis which replaces the Mycenaean world. All of these circumstances and considerations produce the balanced texture of The Iliad, in which the recommended and approved heroic moderation puts the

heroic qualities and values somewhere between unrestrained heroic self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint.

The Odyssey displays an energetic fluctuation between the two positions, not on one level but on two. The hero's rash behavior and the excesses of his men create chaos and disorder for them; consequently, heroic moderation is required of Odysseus to balance both his own and their unrestrained conduct. But this situation concerns only the period of his travels toward Ithaca, for after his arrival in Phaeacia there is for him no great tension between the two positions. He has learned to rule his conduct and behavior by discipline and restraint, and the tension becomes an external one between his moderation and the excesses of the wanton suitors. His use of discipline and restraint ends the chaos and disorder in his homeland, in his household, and in his personal life. Heroic moderation has become a necessary part of the significant qualifications of the warrior hero, and Odysseus has taken a further step in the direction of disciplined self-restraint. Like Hektor, Odysseus at the end of the poem is closer to being a representative of the polis than to being a typical Mycenaean warrior. In this respect, Odysseus and The Odyssey have a significant place in the development of the heroic figure and the literary history of the Western world.

Several authors have provided significant comment about this subject, and George Steiner's article in Homer is one of the most representative. He says of The Odyssey:

With marvelous acumen, Homer chose for his protagonist the one figure of the Trojan saga nearest to the "modern" spirit. Already in the Iliad, Odysseus marks a transition from the simplicities of the heroic to a life of the mind more skeptical, more nervous, more wary of conviction. Like Odysseus, Homer himself abandoned the stark, rudimentary values in the world of Achilles. When composing

the Odyssey, he looked back to the Iliad across a wide distance of the soul--with nostalgia and smiling doubt.¹

The consequences of these developments are that The Odyssey has not one uniform and consistent texture as does The Iliad; instead it has two. The fluctuating balance of the first half creates a vigorous texture marked by dynamism and élan. This is balanced by the more restrained and homogeneous texture of the latter half. Only when considered as parts of the same whole do the two halves leave the reader with any sense of equilibrium.

Balance Disturbed

Virgil's Aeneid takes the final step in the direction of disciplined self-restraint and completely upsets the balance of the tension. The author self-consciously sets out to transform the self-assertive hero of Troy to the exemplar of discipline, moderation, and selfless devotion to duty. Aeneas not only learns to exercise heroic moderation, but he also comes to personify heroic moderation to the same extent that Achilles personified the heroic absolute. The manner of molding and transforming the hero gives to the Aeneid its distinct literary texture. Part of that texture results from Virgil's subjective style.² The other part of that texture results from the handling of the tension between the self-assertive position and disciplined self-restraint.

¹George Steiner, "Homer and the Scholars," in Homer, ed. George Steiner (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), p. 14. Other similar comments can be found on p. 309 of Whitman's Homer and Heroic Tradition, on p. 37 of Lord's "Odyssey and Western World," and on p. 129 (Vol. I) of Routh's God, Man, and Epic Poetry.

²The details of that subjective style have been well explicated in chapters two and three of Brooks Otis' book on Virgil. Though the explication is germane to the study of epic in general, it is not essential to the present discussion.

Only at three points in the story does Virgil permit Aeneas to display any great degree of rashness, recklessness, or self-indulgence: at Troy, at Carthage, and at the death of Turnus. While still in Troy, Aeneas has all the gusto, verve, and recklessness of the more primitive heroic figure. Yet, he also shares the devotion to family and race that Hektor displayed. He leaves the battlefield reluctantly and starts his wanderings with little enthusiasm or vigor of purpose. For some time he is a seemingly reluctant leader and fulfills his duties quite passively. Only after the death of Anchises does he begin to act as both protector and guide for his people.

His experiences in Carthage show both his concern for his people and some degree of self-indulgence. Before he meets Dido, the sight of the Carthaginians erecting their walls in peace prompts him to desire similar safety and comfort for his people. Because Dido offers to share her land with the Trojans and because Juno and Venus arrange to bring Dido and Aeneas together, he allows his relationship with her to become a self-indulgent one. Yet when Mercury reminds him that he has greater obligations than those to Dido, Aeneas suppresses personal desires for the good of the social group and leaves both Dido and Carthage. Soon after that experience his visit to Hades provides the vision of the future greatness of his line, and once he has been granted that vision there is no further reluctance about accepting his mission. He then fits his behavior and actions to arrange and assure the Trojan re-settlement in Latium.

Though Aeneas wants only peace when he reaches Latium, he goes to war to transform the chaos and disorder produced by the self-assertion

of Juno and Turnus. With prudence, restraint, and discipline he solves every problem posed by the ruthless conduct of the forces of furor and violentia. Only in his slaughter of Turnus does he display any excess, and that results from the piercing memory of grief caused by the death of Pallas.

With the Aeneid the character of the principal heroic figure and the nature of heroic narrative have come full circle. Though the primary concern of heroic narrative is to glorify and exalt the heroic society and standards, no classical epic does only that. Heroic narrative as we have it is written after the fact and removed in time from the mythos (legendary or created); consequently, the standards and values of the later time are imposed on the primitive material. Such circumstances account for the delicate balance of the tension between reckless self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint shown in The Iliad. The work is removed in time from an age whose heroic qualities it wants to preserve but cannot fully accept in the extreme form represented by Achilles and, to some extent, Agamemnon. On the other hand, the advance of social and moral conditions in The Iliad is not yet great enough to demand complete discipline and restraint. Just enough adjustment in that direction is demanded to balance the self-assertion that creates the "chaos-disorder" conditions.

Both the altered background and the situational circumstances of The Odyssey require a different adjustment in the tension. Heroic excesses must be curbed if the returnees hope to save themselves from the natural and supernatural dangers of the adventures and challenges encountered on the trip back to Ithaca. Heroic moderation must be

developed and exercised more in the direction of considerable self-restraint; only such conduct can provide an effective transformation of the "chaos-disorder" conditions that exist or develop within the work as a result of reckless self-assertion. Odysseus develops and exercises considerable heroic moderation to bring harmony and order to himself and his world, but he does not become the exemplar of complete self-restraint. The balance of the restraint in the latter half of the poem and the excesses in the first half produces the special texture of The Odyssey.

In The Greek Experience C. M. Bowra comments upon the gradual transformation of the heroic ideal because the heroic standards are put in the service of the political community:

One of the reasons why the heroic ideal survived in Greece was that it was attached to the service of a city. In the true heroic world Achilles fights not for his city, nor even for his fellow Achaeans, but for his own glory. The hero is an isolated, self-centered figure, who lives and dies for a private satisfaction. But just as against Achilles Homer sets the antithetical figure of Hector who fights for Troy and with whose life that of Troy is inextricably bound up, so in Greek history the ideal takes on a new meaning when it is placed at the disposal of a city.³

Bowra only cites Hektor's role as a representative of the polis, but the idea is even more pertinent for the hero of The Odyssey.

Greek tragedy also makes use of the tension between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint, and, even though that tension is only a part of the intricate complex of ambiguities of Greek tragedy, the self-assertive principle is exemplified by various personages as an important part of the tragic effect. Without ever

³C. M. Bowra, The Greek Experience (New York, 1964), pp. 37-38.

making the principals exemplars of disciplined self-restraint (which would be inimical to the spirit and purpose of tragedy), Greek tragedy generally puts more explicit emphasis on heroic moderation by its reiteration of "nothing to excess." That emphasis soon passes into the realm of ethical and philosophical thought, where it culminates in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.

When Virgil begins to write an epic for a civilized urban society that has gone beyond the needs and demands of the city-state organization, he need only emphasize certain heroic qualities and reduce the importance of others. The self-assertive hero he presents at the last hours of Troy must become the exemplar of self-restraint so needed to assure the civic foundations for the future Roman empire. Heroic qualities and civic virtues must be alloyed in the hero who is to assure the proper foundation for that empire. In Aeneas those qualities and virtues are joined. The process of their unification and the exercise of what results gives to the Aeneid a great part of its special literary texture. As a result, the Aeneid seriously strains the heroic impression and image because Aeneas, the exemplar of heroic moderation, stands at the periphery of the heroic world; he exists at the extreme limits of heroic narrative. From The Iliad to the Aeneid the response to changing social and moral needs has altered the balance of the tension between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint. The result is the gradual alteration and transformation of the heroic ideal and of heroic narrative. Achilles and The Iliad are the alpha of the heroic ideal and of heroic narrative; Aeneas and the Aeneid are the omega.

SECTION THREE
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Chapter I
Germanic Heroic Literature

Primitive Form and Values

The waves of Germanic invasion and migration which spread across Europe from the fourth to the tenth century produced many heroes and possibly many heroic accounts of those exploits. Unfortunately, we have been denied all but a few fragments and some fragmentary suggestions of what epic lays or epics were composed for and about the Goths, the Lombards, the Burgundians, and the Saxons. What has come down to our time is relatively late, and the fullest extant representative of Germanic epic, Beowulf, reached the form in which we have it centuries after the time of its origin. Consequently, Beowulf does not present to the reader just primitive heroic material, nor does it reflect a totally primitive society. The poem clearly presents material of a later period. As a result, the attitudes and values of both the early Germanic society and a later age appear in the work. To get a clear picture of the heroic code which represents the more primitive time one must consult those works or fragments which reflect the more primitive conditions.

Three fragments and the text of a nearly complete heroic poem afford literary examples of the values and ideals of the Germanic warrior society described by Tacitus in Germania. Like the Greek warrior society of The Iliad, Germanic warriors served an overlord under whom and for whom they fought to exercise their military skills and earn fame and

fortune. But the bonds which united overlord and retainer were more demanding and more personal than in the Greek society. The warrior who became a part of the comitatus of the overlord could expect to share the mead-hall, the food, and the shelter provided by the overlord for his retainers. If he performed courageously and skillfully for the lord, he could expect presents of red gold, clothing, and war-gear. For this and for the oaths taken he was expected to stand by his hearth-companions and fight to the death for and beside his fellow-warriors and overlord. His loyalty, once pledged, took precedence over all bonds of friendship and kinship, and the highest ideal was to win fame in battle for himself, his family, and his lord.¹ In effect, this code demands unrestrained and démesuré action for the benefit of the lord and the ideal, with little moderation or restraint expected or tolerated.

The fragment known as Das Hildebrandslied shows one consequence of the commitment to the overlord, for it brings together a man and his son fighting on opposite sides. Hildebrand, Dietrich of Bern's loyal retainer, had to leave his wife and infant son when Odoacer forced Dietrich into exile and his retainers followed. Loyalty to his lord did not stop then for Hildebrand, for some thirty years after the loss of home and family he is still the devoted retainer fighting in the front rank of battle:

¹Tacitus, "Germany and Its Tribes," in The Complete Works of Tacitus, trs. A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb (New York, 1942), pp. 712-716. It should be noted that Tacitus says nothing about the red gold or the ring bands with which the lord rewards his retainers in many Germanic works. The Germans of Tacitus prefer silver to gold. Tacitus also indicates that giving ground in a hard fight is prudent conduct and such action becomes cowardly only if the warrior fails to return to the fight.

the trustiest thane in Theotrich's service
 ever front in the folk-rank, too fain for battle,
 famous was he among fighting-men bold! (Hildebrand Lay, ll. 27-29)²

That devotion pits him against the son he had to abandon, and the son is as rigid in his obligation to the code of the warrior society as his father. Consequently, Hathubrand rejects the gold rings offered by Hildebrand and utters this doughty challenge:

'With the spear should a man receive his gifts,
 point against point. . . . ' (Hildebrand Lay, ll. 38-39)³

Since the father must meet the challenge,

Then strode to the struggle those sturdy-warriors,
 hewed in hate on the white-faced shields,
 until both of the lindens little grew,
 all worn with weapons. . . . (Hildebrand Lay, ll. 67-70)⁴

Though the ending of the poem is lost, the nature of the theme and evidence from other fragments suggest a tragic conclusion in which the father kills the son. To the absolute and demesure demands of the code, Hildebrand sacrifices his personal self, his family relations, and the life of his son.

²Francis B. Gummere, "The Hildebrand Lay," in The Oldest English Epic (New York, 1914), pp. 173-177. The English lines are from this source and the original lines from the following source: Wilhelm Braune and K. Helm, Althochdeutsches Lesebuch (Tuebingen, 1958), pp. 81-82. Braune and Helm, p. 81:

degano dechisto	miti Deotrichhe
her was eo folches at ente;	imi was eo fehta ti leap:
chud was her . . .	chonnen mannum
	(<u>Das Hildebrandslied</u> , ll. 26-28)

³Braune and Helm, p. 82:

'mit geru scal man	geba infahan
ort widar orte'	(<u>Das Hildebrandslied</u> , ll. 37-38)

⁴Braune and Helm, p. 82:

do stoptum to samane	staim bort chlodum,
heuwun harmlicco	hutte, scilti,
unti im iro lintum	luttilo wurtun,
giwagan miti wabnum. . . .	(<u>Das Hildebrandslied</u> , ll. 65-68)

The second plot has come down to us in the Latin hexameters of Waltharius and in the Anglo-Saxon Waldere, which represents what is left of an Anglo-Saxon epic. The latter work is older in form than the former and of more pertinence here. The Waldere tells how Attila the Hun took hostages from the rulers of various kingdoms to insure the payment of tribute. The hostages were raised as wards of Attila and given the best of training and treatment. Three of them developed a close relationship; Hagen, hostage from the Frankish king; Hiltigund, daughter of the Burgundian king; and Walter, son of the king of Aquitaine. Hagen and Walter are blood brothers, and all three are friends in captivity. When Gunther succeeds to the Frankish throne, Hagen escapes to join his master. Walter and Hiltigund also find the opportunity to escape as a betrothed pair, and they take treasure with them.

When Gunther learns of their presence in his domain, he sends his vassals to capture the treasure and the maiden. Hagen fails to dissuade Gunther from executing his plan and must go as part of the retinue of twelve warriors. Walter selects an excellent spot for defense and kills eight of the warriors, including the son of Hagen's sister, who failed to listen to Hagen's advice. In the next assault Walter kills three more and only Gunther, Hagen, and Walter are left. Hagen is obliged by family loyalty to fight his friend and is commanded by Gunther to entice Walter from the protected spot by a feigned withdrawal. When Walter and Hiltigund continue their journey, the two men attack Walter. In the fight all three are mutilated in some way, and Hiltigund has to care for them. Only their serious wounds limit

the immoderate and excessive demands of the code and permit the restoration of peaceful conditions.

The third work is an almost complete poem that grows out of a specific historical event, but the tone and treatment are vibrantly heroic. The Battle of Maldon comes from material much later than Beowulf, but the attitudes and values are closer to more primitive heroic material. The poem tells the story of Byrhtnoth, an ealdorman of Aethelred, who owes to his lord the power of his sword and the skill of his leadership. When the Danes invade Aethelred's territory, Byrhtnoth gathers his warriors to make a stand in the estuary of the Blackwater just below Maldon. Their stand is heroic but unsuccessful, yet out of a glorious defeat comes a splendid epic lay.⁵

The opening passage presents a young English nobleman releasing his hawk and leaving his pastime of falconry because he knows Byrhtnoth, who is rallying his retainers to defend the land, will expect bravery and devotion to duty from his marshalled forces, which he has organized and constantly encourages with strong personal leadership. Once his forces have been placed, Byrhtnoth joins his trusty hearth-companions to meet the attack. When the Vikings come, they stand upon the river bank on the other side of the ford and shout across a demand for tribute, which if given will speed the invaders on their way. Byrhtnoth has not

⁵Historical accounts supplement the material of the poem. The Parker manuscript (dated 993) of the Anglos-Saxon Chronicle gives a short account of how a Dane, Olaf, harried the region near Maldon, where Aethelred's ealdorman opposed him and lost his life. A Life of Archbishop Oswald of York, written soon after the battle, tells of Byrhtnoth's heroic defense. The twelfth-century Histories of Ramsey (Ch. LXII) and Ely (II, 6) refer to the battle. Both battle and Byrhtnoth are mentioned by Florence of Worcester

gathered his forces to pay tribute and contemptuously spurns the Viking demand with a spirited ironic challenge:

'Hear you, sea-rover, what my people say?
The tribute they'll send you is tribute of spears,
Ancient word-edge and poisoned point,
Weapons availing you little in war!
Pirate messenger, publish this answer,
Proclaim to your people tidings more grim:
Here stands no ignoble earl with his army
Guarding my lord Aethelred's country and coast,
His land and his folk. The heathen shall fall
In the clash of battle. Too shameful it seems
That you with our tribute should take to your ships
Unfought, when thus far you've invaded our land.
You shall not so easily take our treasure,
But sword-edge and spear-point first shall decide
The grim play of battle, ere tribute is granted.'
(The Battle of Maldon, p. 162)⁶

The tide in the estuary at first prevents close combat, but when the ebb-tide uncovers the bricg that parallels the shoreline Byrhtnoth posts his bravest men there to hold the ford. This they do so admirably

⁶Charles W. Kennedy, "The Battle of Maldon," in An Anthology of Old English Poetry (New York, 1960), pp. 161-169. English lines are from that source and original lines are from this source: F. V. Gordon, ed., The Battle of Maldon (London, 1964), pp. 41-62. For the transliteration the Anglo-Saxon voiced eth is transcribed as th and the ae as ae. Gordon, Maldon, pp. 45-47:

'Gehyrst þu, saelida, hwae þis folc segeth
Hi willath eow to gafole garas syllan,
aettryne ord 7 ealde swurd,
þa heregeatu þe eow aet hilde me deah.
Brimmana boda, abeod eft ongean,
sege þinum leodum miccle laþre spell,
þæt her stynt unforcuth eorl mid his werode
þe wile gealgean eþel þysne
Aþelredes eard, ealdres mines
Folc 7 foldan. Feallan sceolon
hæ þene aet hilde. To heanlic me þinceth
þæt ge mid urum sceattum to scype gangon
unbefohtene ne ge þus feor hider
on urne eard in becommon.
Ne sceole ge swa softe sinc gegangen:
us sceal ord 7 ecg aer geseman,
grim guthþlega aer we gofol syllon.' (Maldon, ll. 45-61)

that the invaders have to request permission to pass over the ford to the mainland so that they may join in battle there. Byrhtnoth, with pride in his force and unmeasured over-confidence, permits them to make the crossing.

Byrhtnoth's magnificent defiance is the only response that honor and duty permit, and his warriors can scarcely prove their mettle without engaging the enemy. No one stands beside Byrhtnoth and suggests that he is acting without mesure. Indeed, none of his men would understand such an idea, and, if they did, would not expect it of him, nor he of them. They live by an absolute which demands only that they exercise skill, courage, bravery, and fortitude without restraint even in the face of death. Byrhtnoth lives fully by that code, and he and his companions die for that code.

Though the death of Byrhtnoth prompts Godric and his brother to flee to safety, the others are moved to greater deeds and vows of vengeance or death. Aelfwine reminds the retainers of their mead-hall boasts and urges them to avenge their lord or die in the attempt. As the band of retainers is gradually decimated by the superior numbers of the Vikings, aged Byrhtwold joins the battle and fights shoulder to shoulder with the young and the strong. He furnishes the final clarion call to fortitude and heroic death: a call "whose echoes will never die while friendship and loyalty are dear, and men defend the things they love."⁷

⁷Charles Kennedy, The Earliest English Poetry (New York, 1943), p. 348.

'Heart must be braver, courage the bolder,
 Mood the stouter as our strength grows less!
 Here on the ground my good lord lies
 Gory with wounds. Always will he regret it
 Who now from this battle thinks to turn back.
 I am old in years; I will never yield,
 But here at the last beside my lord,
 By the leader I love I think to lie.' (The Battle of Maldon, p. 169)⁸

It is to the strains of this unadorned and moving credo that
 Byrhtnoth's band assures itself a glory that outlasts the defeat and
 death that is the lot of his retainers. The lines remain forever

. . . an unforgettable assertion of man's unconquerable courage
 in the face of adversity and earthly defeat. They embody the spirit
 of that ultimate choice by which death is eagerly preferred to
 those capitulations which surrender integrity. They set the mood
 for all hours of heroic striving in which deep-rooted and unshake-
 able devotion to a moral imperative breeds a contempt for the odds
 of battle.⁹

The fragments of Das Hildebrandslied, Waldere, and the Battle of Maldon all have a single common characteristic. All concern the obligations of the warrior to his overlord, to his fellow warriors, and to the code of which they all approve, by which they all live, and for which they are willing to die. That code is an absolute which demands only the unrestrained expenditure of their skills, their energy, and their devotion in the service of their overlord. Démesuré actions are standard and expected and there is no room for or comprehension of mesuré conduct.

⁸Gordon, Maldon, p. 61:
 'Hige sceal þe heardra, heorte þe cenre,
 mod sceal þe mare, þe ure mægen lytlath.
 Her līth ure ealdor eall forþeawan
 god on greote, a mæg gnornian
 se the nu fram þis wigplegan wendan þenceth.
 Ic eom frod feores. Fram ic ne wille,
 Ac ic me be healfe minum hlaforde,
 be swa leofan men licgan þence.' (Maldon, ll. 312-319)

⁹Kennedy, p. 348.

When Hildebrand's lord is exiled, there is no provision for releasing him from his obligations because he has a wife and child. Honor demands that he follow his lord regardless of the consequences to himself and his family. When he encounters his son, there is no way to let familial ties and paternal affection set aside the obligations to the comitatus. Both must give their full and unrestrained energies to this harsh but honorable code. Such circumstances provide the tragic core of many medieval works.

In like manner, when Gunther decides he wants Hiltigund and the treasure she and Walter have with them, Hagen must attack his dearest friend. No words can keep Gunther from carrying out his plan, and no words can restrain Hagen's nephew from braving the deadliness of Walter's sword. Such unrestrained zeal brings about the death of Hagen's nephew, and Gunther's reckless self-assertion results in the death of his retainers. Their immoderate insistence on the obligations of the code causes all three to be maimed in some way.

The Battle of Maldon differs only in situation and degree. Hildebrand and Hagen do not purposely choose the circumstances under which they must attack someone for whom they care. In a sense, Byrhtnoth's action is more démésuré, for he does choose the circumstances. His granting of the Viking request results from démésure, a démésure of excessive pride in his own strength and in that of his hearth-companions. It is démésuré in the sense that he is carried beyond the bounds of sensible precaution when he gives up the advantage of defending the ford from the bricg. In addition to the responsibility of furnishing the example of strong personal leadership, one might expect

some sense of responsibility toward his men and his lord. Once Byrhtnoth has permitted the Vikings to cross the ford, that decision can only lead to tragedy for himself, his men, and his lord. But in the world he lives in, none of his hearth-companions or compatriots blames him for his action or expects him to act in any restrained or moderate way. He and his companions live for and die by the démesure deed that glorifies the individual and the code without concern for the well-being of the group. The Battle of Maldon is probably the most complete and best exemplar of primitive heroic song, i.e., the epic lay, and it differs significantly from the more elaborated epic in which the glory of the individual and the welfare of the group coincide. The Battle of Maldon emphasizes the individual response and the tragic circumstances rather than individual-group relationships.

What has been said of the Battle of Maldon is equally true for Das Hildebrandslied and Waldere. The inhabitants of that primitive heroic world live in and for unrestrained self-assertion or démesure. They have no conception of, understanding about, or need for disciplined self-restraint. Indeed, if any of the principals were to act with mesure, such action would be neither comprehended, nor approved, nor praised by their companions. Any honor or fame they might hope to gain would be lost by such conduct. Even though some of the standards and ideals of that primitive heroic world are kept alive in Beowulf, the great socio-literary distance between the works just discussed and Beowulf will be readily evident upon examination of the latter work.

Beowulf: From Heldenleben to Epic

Friedrich Klaeber's great study of Beowulf¹⁰ established the basic conception of the work as Heldenleben, for the German scholar saw the work as two distinct parts joined loosely and held together by the person of the hero. However, Klaeber, like W. P. Ker,¹¹ considered the second part to be a late-conceived sequel to the first and not part of the original plan. But J. R. R. Tolkien's more recent view¹² has been widely accepted by major modern scholars. Of Beowulf he said:

It is essentially a balance, an opposition of ends and beginnings. In its simplest terms it is a contrasted description of two moments in a great life, rising and setting; an elaboration of the ancient and intensely moving contrast between youth and age, first achievement and final death.¹³

R. W. Chambers¹⁴ and Kemp Malone¹⁵ approve of Tolkien's viewpoint.

No discussion or study of the poem can be very meaningful if it neglects either Klaeber's or Tolkien's views. However, it is both possible and fruitful to accept both views and go beyond them to arrive at a fuller conception of the structure and significance of Beowulf.

¹⁰Friedrich Klaeber, Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg (Boston, 1922; 3rd ed., 1936; supplements, 1941, 1950). All citations of Anglo-Saxon lines in Beowulf come from the 1950 edition.

¹¹W. P. Ker, Epic and Romance (2nd ed., London, 1922), pp. 90, 111, 160-161.

¹²J. R. R. Tolkien, "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics," in Proceedings of the British Academy, XII (1936), 271-272.

¹³Quoted by Arthur Brodeur in The Art of Beowulf (Berkeley, Cal., 1960), pp. 71-72.

¹⁴R. W. Chambers, Beowulf, An Introduction to the Study of the Poem (Cambridge, England, 1921).

¹⁵Kemp Malone, "The Old English Period," in Literary History of England, ed. Albert Baugh (New York, 1948), pp. 3-95.

The Beowulf plot consists of three major events in the life of a great heroic figure, but three events in a hero's life hardly constitute a Heldensleben. However, at both the Danish court and in the hero's own land, the author provides additional information to tell the reader what Beowulf is, what he was, and, suggestively, what he will be. Once his overlord and the son of the overlord have died, Beowulf changes from ideal retainer to ideal ruler. In that role he gives his life to defend his land and people. The total effect of the three major events and the many subsidiary details furnished with each adventure is to present the story of an exemplary and heroic figure. Though the closing lines indicate the importance the poet gives to the heroic and exemplary attributes of the hero, the details presented along the way reveal that Beowulf was not always an exemplary or heroic figure. The total structure and significance of the work can best be presented by examining how the details presented as adjuncts to the three principal heroic deeds develop the central narrative framework into a Heldensleben of a definite kind and then go beyond that to create a work of epic scope and structure. The qualities and values developed and given prominence within that total structure determine the purpose and significance of the work.

When Beowulf hears of the trouble at Heorot and prepares to go to Hrothgar's aid, the poet begins to present the hero's qualifications by telling the reader:

He was the mightiest man of valor
in that same day of this our life,
stalwart and stately. . . . (Beowulf, ll. 196-198)¹⁶

¹⁶Francis B. Gummere, "Beowulf," in The Oldest English Epic (New York, 1914), pp. 22-158. All English quotations come from Gummere's

When they step ashore in Hrothgar's land, the guard who greets them describes Beowulf as a peerless warrior. When Wulfgar tells Hrothgar of their arrival, he too praises the impressive appearance of Beowulf. Hrothgar recognizes the son of his old friend and describes the great strength of Beowulf, of whom he says:

' . . . --he has thirty men's
heft of grasp in the gripe of his hand,
the bold-in-battle. . . .' (Beowulf, ll. 379-381)¹⁷

Like all epic heroes, particularly Germanic, Beowulf is not bashful about proclaiming his talents:

' . . . Fame a plenty,
have I gained in youth! . . . ' (Beowulf, ll. 408-409)¹⁸

Then he relates how he fought and captured giants and slew sea-beasts in the service of his people. Having offered his warrior credentials, he asks Hrothgar to accept his offer to fight Grendel. For the combat, Beowulf scorns the use of weapons and proposes to match strength with the monster.

After Hrothgar's gracious welcome, Beowulf is insultingly challenged by envious Unferth, who charges both Beowulf and Breca with arrogance when they undertook their famous swim. The insult comes in

translation and the original lines will be taken from Klaeber's edition of the poem (cited in footnote number 10). Klaeber, p. 8:

se was moncynnes maegenes strengest
on þam dæge bysses lifes,
aþele ond ðacen. (Beow., ll. 196-198)

¹⁷Klaeber, p. 15:
' þæt hē þritiges
manna maegencreaft on his mundgripe
heaporðf haebbe,' (Beow., ll. 379-381)

¹⁸Klaeber, p. 16:
' haebbe ic maertha fela
ongunnen on geogope' (Beow., ll. 408-409)

Unferth's declaration that Breca was stronger and better and defeated Beowulf. But the hero of the Geats is not one to let his honor be sullied. With vehemence, but not with unrestrained anger, Beowulf sets the record straight in the disciplined and restrained fashion that characterizes most of his conduct. In his almost matter-of-fact way of setting forth the details, the Geat hero admits to the youthful exuberance which prompted the contest. But the details Beowulf adds about the swim and the dangers faced enhance his heroic qualifications. He also repays Unferth in kind by reminding him that neither Breca nor Unferth can claim such deeds as he performed, and he also reminds all present that nobody can charge him with the killing of kinsmen as they can Unferth. He adds the coup de grace by pointing out that Unferth has done nothing to put an end to the evil of Grendel, but that he has come to fight the monster. The encounter with Unferth serves to characterize Beowulf by suggestive contrast and is only the first of a number of such suggestive contrasts presented in the work. In addition, that encounter provides details essential to the development of the Heldensleben.

After Beowulf's victory over Grendel, one of Hrothgar's men composes a lay about the deed. In that lay the composer compares Beowulf's deeds to those of Sigemund.¹⁹ The deeds of the latter include the slaying of a dragon and the acquisition of a treasure. In addition to ranging Beowulf with the great heroes of Germanic legend, the account, particularly that of the dragon, suggests a dramatic foreshadowing of

¹⁹Though Sigemund is an outstanding Germanic hero, the deeds alluded to appear to be those of his son, who is Sigurd in the Volungasaga. The same deeds are performed by Siegfried of Das Nibelungenlied.

Beowulf's later experience. That account also introduces the figure used as the bad example, the anti-type Heremod, who might have rivalled and surpassed Sigemund but did not. The details are presented as part of a later event.

When Hrothgar reports the visit of Grendel's dam to Heorot and asks for Beowulf's help, the Geat hero responds affirmatively with a vigorous statement of his personal heroic code and later shows his exemplary character by arranging for the care of his retainers in the event he should perish in the fight. He also makes certain that his obligations to Hygelac will be carried out by requesting that his overlord be sent the gifts Hrothgar presented to him.

At the celebration after Beowulf's second victory, Hrothgar delivers his sermon on pride and avarice (ll. 1700-1784). In it, he returns to the earlier allusion to Heremod. The Danish king reveals how Heremod fell short of his great promise and potential by growing slack in battle, by neglecting the welfare of his people, and by becoming a tyrant. Hrothgar praises Beowulf and hopes that he will combine his "mighty strength with mood of wisdom," unlike Heremod, who failed to do that and brought trouble to his land and dishonor to himself. Hrothgar relates:

'He slew, wrath-swollen, his shoulder-comrades,
companions at board! So he passed alone
chieftain haughty, from human cheer.
Though him the Maker with might endowed,
delights of power, and uplifted high
above all men, yet blood-fierce his mind,
his breast-board, grew; no bracelets gave he
to Danes as was due; he endured all joyless
strain of struggle and stress of woe,

long feud with his folk. Here find thy lesson!
Of virtue advise thee!' (Beowulf, ll. 1713-1723)²⁰

Though Beowulf had not given the least evidence of such unrestrained self-assertion, Hrothgar offers the story as an example of action that a leader, a man of worth would shun. Hrothgar knows that success and fame such as Beowulf has earned by his acts can readily lead to overweening pride and arrogance that destroys both the man possessing it and the people who depend upon him. Consequently, Hrothgar urges Beowulf that he must exercise disciplined self-restraint to curb any excesses. By the very fact that Beowulf has not and does not later act in such fashion, the episode serves by contrast to show his exemplary character.

When Beowulf prepares to leave Hrothgar's court, his parting from Unferth is quite in contrast to the greeting given by him at Beowulf's arrival. Beowulf returns the sword Unferth loaned him and says nothing about its failure to serve him. He very graciously and magnanimously praises it and thanks the owner for its use. To Beowulf's courteous and dignified leave-taking speech Hrothgar responds with high praise by saying,

²⁰Klaeber, p. 64:
'breat bolgenmod beodgeneatas,
ealgesteallen, op paet he ana hwearf,
maere peoden mondreamum from,
theah pe hine mihtig God maegenes wynnum,
eafepum stepte, ofer ealle men
forth gefremede. Hwaepere him on ferhpe grew
breosthord blodreow; nallas beagas geaf
Denum aefter dome; dreamleas gebad,
paet he paes gewinnes weorc browade,
leodbealo longsum. Du pe laer be pon,
gumcyste ongit!' (Beow. ll. 1713-1723)

' No sager counsel
 from so young in years e'er yet have I heard.
 Thou art strong of main and in mind art wary,
 art wise in words! . . . ' (Beowulf, ll. 1842-1845)²¹

After a sad parting, the "lord unpeered" returns to the land of the Geats to report his experiences and to offer to his overlord, Hygelac, the gifts he received from the Danes.

The accounts of his conduct and the supplemental episodes connected to his visit to Hrothgar's court fill out the Heldensleben and establish Beowulf as a mighty warrior and an exemplary retainer. Even before any account has been given of his physical prowess, Beowulf is reported as a commanding figure. His tremendous physical strength, his courage, his endurance, and his concern for personal honor and fame are established by his conduct and action prior to the encounter with Grendel. Hrothgar tells of his superior strength, and his account of the contest with Breca supports what Hrothgar said. The same account also establishes his courage and endurance. The vigorous defense of his honor shows Beowulf's great concern for it, but, even in the face of Unferth's insulting charges, he does not display unrestrained self-assertion. Though he admits to reckless and unrestrained exuberance in his youth, all his actions at Hrothgar's court show him to be a man of disciplined self-restraint, of moderation, of mesure. In addition, he is sociable, urbane, tactful, and magnanimous. He supports every declared claim to fame by his performance in both battle and mead-hall. He

²¹Klaeber, p. 65:
 ' ne hyrde ic snotorlicor
 on swa geongum feore guman þingian
 þu eart mægenes strang, ond on mode frod,
 wis wordcwida! . . . ' (Beow., ll. 1842-1845)

proves that he is the exemplary retainer and warrior and is therefore worthy of being a part of the select circle of Germanic heroes.

Viewed in terms of Beowulf's behavior at Heorot, Hrothgar's admonition to Beowulf seems almost gratuitous. But in view of the self-assertive tendencies any man of mettle has to struggle with, that advice can be expected of the older warrior. Hrothgar seems to foresee the possibility of great leadership in Beowulf, and he knows the danger of excessive pride to the individual and to the well-being of the group which depends on the individual (as his example shows). His advice to Beowulf is offered so that his young friend may use it to achieve his full potential, as Heremod did not.

When Beowulf returns to Hygelac's court, he continues to be the ideal retainer. At this point the poet offers praise of Beowulf's character, but he also includes a contrast of the hero's present stature and a time before Beowulf had any reputation or status among the Geats:

Thus showed his strain the son of Ecgtheow
as a man remarked for mighty deeds
and acts of honor. At ale he slew not
comrade or king; nor cruel his mood,
though of sons of earth his strength was greatest,
a glorious gift that God had sent
the splendid leader. Long was he spurned,
and worthless by Geatish warriors held;
him at mead the master-of-clans
failed full oft to favor at all.
Slack and shiftless the strong men deemed him,
profitless prince; but payment came,
to the warrior honored, for all his woes.-- (Beowulf, ll. 2177-2189)²²

²²Klaeber, pp. 81-82:

Swa bealdode bearn Ecgtheowes,
guma guthum cuth, godum daedum,
dreaþ aefter dome; nealles druncne slog
heorþ geneatas; naes him hreoh sefa

In view of this undesirable reputation the deeds described by Beowulf at Hrothgar's court must have taken place after this period, but before Beowulf's trip to Denmark. When Beowulf puts the treasure he won at Hygelac's disposal, the poet commends such conduct.

Before presenting the third major act of heroism performed by Beowulf, the poet presents various examples of Beowulf's service to Hygelac and later to Heardred. When Hygelac makes a bold raid into Frankish territory, the king of the Geats is killed by Daeghrefn. In recalling his life and deeds just before he goes to meet the dragon, Beowulf tells how he killed Daeghrefn and survived the destruction by an epic swim from Frisian territory to Geatland with thirty coats of mail on his back. Though Hygd offered him marriage and the rule of the land, Beowulf remained the ideal retainer and declined to replace Heardred. Instead he served the son as he had served the father. Not long after Heardred gave refuge to Eamund and Eadgils, who had fled from Sweden after an unsuccessful plot against their uncle Onela. However, the uncle pursued them into Geatland and Heardred was killed in the fighting. As a result Beowulf became the ruler of the Geats and supported Eadgils to help him regain the Swedish throne. That action produced the peace that existed between the Swedes and the Geats during Beowulf's reign.

ac he mancynnes maeste craefte
 ginfæstan gife, þe him God sealde,
 heold hildedeor. Hean waes lange,
 ne hyne on medobence swa hyne Geata bearn thodne ne tealdon,
 drihten Wedera micles wyrthne
 swythe (wen)don, gedon wolde;
 aetheling unfrom. þaet he sleac waere,
 tîreadigum menn Edwenden cwom torna gehwycles,-

(Beow., ll. 2177-2189)

When the devastation of the dragon ends the long reign of peace, Beowulf dons his armor and prepares to fight the monster. He instructs his retainers to leave the fighting to him and await the outcome. But, when Beowulf is in grave danger, all of them except Wiglaf run to the safety of the woods. Beowulf's nephew lives up to the highest demands of the Germanic comitatus in both word and deed. He reminds the retainers of their oaths, of the benefits received from Beowulf, and of their obligations to warrior honor. He urges them to aid their lord and declares his intention to stand by Beowulf and die with him if need be:

' . . . For God is my witness
I am far more fain the fire should seize
along with my lord these limbs of mine!
Unsuited it seems our shields to bear
homeward hence, save here we essay
to fell the foe and defend the life
of the Weder's lord. I wot 'twere shame
on the law of our land if alone the king
out of Geatish warriors woe endured
and sank in the struggle! My sword and helmet
breastplate and board, for us both shall serve!'
(Beowulf, ll. 2650-2660)²³

He follows his exhortation with personal example, and together Wiglaf and Beowulf kill the dragon.

²³Klaeber, pp. 99-100:
' God wat one mec,
paet me is micle leofre, paet minne lichaman
mid minne goldgyfan gled faethmie.
Ne bynceth me gerysne, paet we rondas beren
eft to earde, nemne we aeror maegen
fane gefyllan, feorh ealgian
Wedra theodnes. Ic wat geare,
paet naeron ealdgewyrht, paet he ana scyle
Geatu duguthe gnorn browian,
gesigan aet saecce; urum sceal sweord ond helm,
byrne ond beaduscrud bam gemaene.' (Beow., ll. 2650-2660)

Grievously wounded and knowing he will die, Beowulf can face death with the sure knowledge of a life of accomplishment and honorable service to warrior ideals and to his people. His summary of his life shows justifiable pride in the disciplined self-restraint that has avoided the excesses which bring chaos and disorder to an individual and to the people who depend on him:

' This people I ruled
fifty winters. No folk-king was there,
none at all, of the neighboring clans
who war would wage me with 'warriors' friends'
and threat me with horrors. At home I bided
what fate might come, and I cared for mine own;
feuds I sought not, nor falsely swore
ever on oath. For all these things,
though fatally wounded, fain am I!
From the Ruler-of-Man no wrath shall seize me,
when life from my frame must flee away,
for killing of kinsmen! . . . ' (Beowulf, ll. 2732-2743)²⁴

Beowulf's last acts are to arrange for his tomb and give to loyal Wiglaf his golden collar and helmet, breastplate, and ring. Then passes from life he of whom his hearth-companions said,

Of men he was mildest and most beloved,
to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.
(Beowulf, ll. 3781-3782)²⁵

²⁴Klaeber, p. 103:

' Ic thas leode heold
fiftig wintra naes se folccynning,
ymbesittendra aenig thara,
þe mec guthwimum gretan dorste,
egesan theon. Ic on earde bad
maelgesceafta, heold min tela,
ne sohte searonithas, ne me swor fela
atha on unríht. Ic thaes ealles maeg
feorhbennum seoc gefean habban;
forþam me witan ne thearf Waldend fira
morthorbealo maga, þonne min sceaceth
lif of líc. . . . (Beow., ll. 2732-2743)

²⁵Klaeber, p. 120:

manna mildust ond mon(thw)aerust,
leodum lithost ond lofgeornost. (Beow., ll. 3181-3182)

But before he left he had slain another monster and settled the "chaos-disorder" condition created by the dragon. Unfortunately, his death also presents the possibility of an even greater "chaos-disorder" condition when the Swedes and the Merovingians renew their feuds against the Geats. The implications of this are germane to a later stage of the discussion.

Every act of Beowulf is consistent with his personal honor and fame, but they are performed only in the best interests of and for the well-being of the group. After his period as a "male Cinderella" and his youthful exuberances with Breca, there is never a trace of overweening pride or ruthless self-assertion. Without having an awesome destiny imposed on him, Beowulf becomes the epitome of disciplined self-restraint, the ideal man of measure. And with such conduct he has upheld the highest standards of Germanic heroic society as both retainer and overlord.

The standards of Beowulf are not those of the more primitive heroic society presented in Das Hildebrandslied, Waldere, and even the later Battle of Maldon. In those works no more would have been demanded of Beowulf than the uncomplicated heroic responses of the comitatus ideal--exercise of courage, strength, and loyalty in the defense of comrades, lord, land, and honor. He does exercise such qualities, but he also demonstrates more complex responses.

If he had responded as Hildebrand, Gunther, or Byrhtnoth, he might well have answered Unferth's insulting behavior with violence and bloodshed. Instead, he deals with the situation forcefully and intelligently to deflate the pompous Danish courtier and protect his honor.

Without creating trouble in Hrothgar's court, he affirms his warrior qualifications and enhances his stature. If he had reacted as Walter or Aelfwine, he might well have fought the Franks until his corpse lay beside Hygelac's in the Frankish land. The poem does not provide enough details of the raid to indicate why he did not fight to the death, but it does show that he avenged the death of Hygelac before escaping. Nowhere does the author suggest that it was wrong for him to flee the battle, and Hygd and the Geats never condemn him for fleeing. If he had conducted himself as Hygelac, he might well have led his warriors to danger and death as Hygelac had done in raiding the Frankish territory. However, Beowulf avoided such behavior and explicitly mentions the importance of this in his final summary of his life. He is proud of his deeds of strength and courage, but he is more proud of never having killed a kinsman and never having created strife at home or abroad by his leadership.

These contrasts between the direct and uncomplicated response of the heroic figures of Das Hildebrandslied, Waldere, and Battle of Maldon and the more deliberated actions of Beowulf reveal the changing social circumstances of heroic values. The comitatus ideal of early Germanic heroism has been filtered through more developed ethical attitudes and so modified as to require a hero with the conduct and qualifications of a Beowulf.

Though there is never any evident tension between self-restraint and self-assertion for Beowulf (except briefly in his youth), the tension is exhibited within the work by contrasts between Beowulf and other characters, and (in one passage) between the youthful Beowulf and the

mature Beowulf. Nearly every episode or allusion worked into the fiber of the central Heldensleben reveals the tension and serves a two-fold expansive function. The flyting between Beowulf and Unferth provides two contrasts that highlight both Beowulf's superior physical and moral qualities: the former over Breca and both the former and the latter over Unferth. The latter contrast is reinforced by the magnanimous conduct of Beowulf just before he leaves Hrothgar's land. The episode also shows the self-assertive youth Beowulf as contrasted with the self-restrained warrior he became, and by so doing it expands the Heldensleben. Finally, the information about Breca and Unferth further expands the work to build up the general picture of Germanic heroic society. That picture is later completed by other episodes which serve the same purpose.

The allusions to Sigemund and Heremod serve such a purpose, and the story of Heremod provides Hrothgar with an exemplum for his sermon on pride and also highlights by contrast the exemplary conduct of Beowulf. Hrothgar's words effectively condemn Heremod's self-assertive actions, and Beowulf's disciplined self-restraint, both earlier and later, is favorably presented and praised by the author's implied point of view. The poet's account of Beowulf's "slack" youth shows, by contrast with what he became, precisely what conduct the poet (and perhaps the society he represents) finds laudable. Wiglaf's participation in the fight with the dragon serves a two-fold purpose. First, it is part of the expanded milieu of the enlarged Heldensleben. Wiglaf was the son of Weohstan, who was involved in the trouble between the Swedes and the Geats. Weohstan had slain Eanmund in Onela's service during that

conflict and had to seek safety in Geatland when Eadgils was settled on the Swedish throne. Furthermore, Wiglaf's courage and his loyalty to his lord contrast with the conduct of the ten retainers who ran away, and the contrast condemns their action but praises Wiglaf's.

In this manner the episodes directly related to the Beowulf Heldensleben provide highlighting by contrast for Beowulf's exemplary conduct and also expand the scope of the work beyond a simple Heldensleben. Most of the other supplemental episodes introduced into the account of Beowulf's three major deeds further expand the scope of the poem.

The first of these is the introductory section (ll. 1-52) which gives the genealogy of the Scylding line up to Hrothgar. The second concerns Ecgtheow's feud and his relations with Hrothgar (ll. 459-472). The third, which is presented in several places (ll. 1202-1214^a; 2200-2323; 2354^b-2396; 2910^b-2998), gives details about Hygelac's disastrous raid in Frankish territory and about Beowulf's service to Hygelac and Heardred while they were alive. Part of that account reveals how Heardred gets involved in the Swedish power struggle by giving refuge to Eamund and Eadgils. The fourth episode (ll. 2428-2508^a) adds more information concerning Beowulf's services to Hygelac during the raid on the Franks, but it also tells of the family background of Hygelac and the early wars between the Swedes and the Geats. The fifth episode (ll. 1999-2069) is part of Beowulf's report to Hygelac. This gives details of the Danish-Heathobard feud and Hrothgar's attempts to settle it by the marriage of Freawaru to Ingeld. Beowulf sees things quite clearly and predicts that Freawaru will not be the "weaver of peace"

Hrothgar hopes she might. All of these supplemental episodes serve to relate the Beowulf poem to the broader vistas of the epic world of Germanic heroism. But they also do this in a very definite direction. This will be seen by a further examination of them and of others related to them.

The sixth episode (ll. 1069-1159²⁶) also serves to expand the background of the work, but it adds something more. This episode is the often discussed Finnsburg tale, which recounts the Danish-Frisian feud, its temporary settlement, and the later savage eruption of destructive vengeance. Although certain details about Hildeburh are not available, the whole Finnsburg tale serves as an allusively suggestive parallel to the Danish-Heathobard feud which Beowulf predicts will erupt again. With suggestive foreshadowing, the poet very early makes an allusion to the later burning of Heorot (ll. 82-85). Danish history, as Klaeber shows,²⁶ reports that despite the marriage with Freawaru, Ingeld later invaded Danish land, and, though routed, he burned Heorot. Though Hrothgar survived this trouble, his heir Hrethric was less fortunate. During Beowulf's visit to the Danish court, the poet introduces several references to the peace between Hrothgar and his nephew Hrothulf. In these references (ll. 1017-1019, 1162-1165, 1180-1187) the poet indicates that conflict has not yet developed, but that it will come. The third reference supports this likelihood, for Wealtheow makes an ingratiating plea to Hrothulf for kindly treatment of her sons in the event of Hrothgar's death. Francis

²⁶Klaeber, p. xxxvi.

Gummere interprets this as an indication of the distrust she and Hrothgar share about Hrothulf.²⁷

In his connected summary of the details concerning these allusions,²⁸ Klaeber indicates that Hrothulf seizes the kingship after Hrothgar's death and kills Hrethric. Though Beowulf does not deal with further consequences of these events, Hrothulf later falls from power when Heorowearð asserts his rights: rights which had been passed over when his father Heorogar died and Hrothgar became king.²⁹ Thus the result of a number of supplemental episodes related in conjunction with Beowulf's three major deeds is to expand the Heldensleben to epic scope and to suggest the tragic chaos and disorder which is ahead for the Danes and the Geats. Beowulf predicts some of the troubles to come and others are alluded to in the context of the work.

The self-restraint and measure of men like Hrothgar and Beowulf brought harmony and order to the Danes, but when these men are gone self-assertive men like Hrothulf and Ingeld will assure the return of chaos and disorder to the Danish land: darkness will descend upon them. In similar fashion, the harmony and order Beowulf created for the Geats will be ended after his death when the Swedes and the Franks will rekindle old enmities that had been allayed because Beowulf's strength and ability protected his land and because he had not sought aggressive wars abroad. The poet reports this in Beowulf's final reminiscence after his fatal encounter with the dragon (ll. 2732-2743). Later, through the herald who

²⁷Gummere, p. 75.

²⁸Klaeber, p. xxxvi.

²⁹Klaeber, p. xxxvi.

reports the tragic results of Beowulf's defense of his land, impending doom is announced for the Geats (ll. 2892-3030).

The consequences of all the preceding discussion are pertinent to a totally integrated view of the structure and significance of Beowulf. The poet begins with two focal points, the land of the Danes and the land of the Geats. In these two areas he focuses attention upon three major deeds of Beowulf: the destruction of Grendel, the battle with Grendel's dam, and the fatal struggle of the hero with the dragon in his own land. Around these three events he builds a Heldensleben by adding allusions and references to other events before the visit to Hrothgar's court and also after the hero's return to Hygelac's court. But the creation of the Heldensleben is not the principal purpose of the author, for he goes beyond that. Some of the accounts of Beowulf's deeds serve to situate him firmly in the world of Germanic heroism. However, the poet makes a point of presenting him as something more than a Sigemund, or a Hrothgar, or even a Hygelac. In the presentation of the three major deeds of Beowulf, the hero is depicted first as an ideal retainer and later as an ideal ruler. His actions are those of the exemplary hero, and some of his earlier deeds demonstrate that he was not always the hero of self-restraint and discipline. Those earlier deeds and the deeds of some Germanic heroes are presented for effective contrast with Beowulf's achieved excellence. Major contrasts are made by the account of Beowulf's "slack" youth, by the allusive reference to Heremod's héroisme manqué, and by the flyting with Unferth.

The importance of moderation and restraint to the poet is made evident by Hrothgar's sermon on pride and avarice, which, though seemingly

gratuitous in light of Beowulf's exemplary conduct, is delivered with the best of intentions by Hrothgar. Minor suggestive contrasts are apparent even in Hrothgar's relations with Heorowearð, who was pushed aside when Hrothgar came to power, and with Hrothulf, who has reason to create trouble for Hrothgar's sons. Another suggestive contrast is offered by Hrothgar's well-intentioned, but ineffective, manner of trying to settle the Danish-Heathobard feud by the marriage of Freawaru to Ingeld. Beowulf solved two major "chaos-disorder" conditions for the Danes, but he will not be around when the self-assertive forces of Heorowearð, Hrothulf, and the Heathobards are unleashed to bring chaos and disorder to the Scylding line.

In his own land the excellence and superiority of Beowulf are presented by the contrast between what he once was and what he came to be. Though Hygelac is honored and respected by Beowulf and his people, he is not quite the equal of Beowulf in heroic qualities or exemplary attributes. This is subtly but clearly indicated by the results of Hygelac's acts and leadership as contrasted with Beowulf's. Hygelac's self-assertive behavior furnished part of the background of hostility between the Swedes and the Geats, but Beowulf's leadership, after the death of Hygelac and his son, created a lengthy peace between the two lands. Hygelac's reckless expedition into the Merovingian territory also resulted in his death and in the destruction of his forces. All indications suggest that Beowulf alone escaped the slaughter after having avenged the death of his lord.

After his return to his homeland, Beowulf's military skill, wisdom, and exemplary leadership assure peace in his land until his

death in the fight with the dragon. After his death, the herald who reports the sad news also reveals the fear of the Geats. In so doing, he indicates the significance of Beowulf's death and the meaning of his life: without the qualities of Beowulf to guide them, the Geats will become prey to the suppressed, aggressive hostility of the Swedes and the Franks. Chaos and disorder will descend upon the land in the Heldendaemmerung to come. As a result of this and the similar chaos and disorder which came to the Danish land after Beowulf's departure, the total story-structure is evident. The three major deeds in the life of Beowulf are expanded into a Heldensleben, which is further expanded to epic scope by added episodes that make Beowulf a part of the select membership of Germanic heroism. Not only does he share all the best abilities and skills of the primitive heroic figure, but he also possesses all the moral and ethical excellence of the exemplary hero. In his final commentary on his life, Beowulf makes a point of suggestively comparing himself to others who, by aggressively self-assertive acts or by failure to exercise moderation and restraint, brought trouble to themselves or their heirs. Though he makes no direct reference to anyone, Beowulf is proud of the fact that he has taken care of matters at home and not gone looking for trouble. He may be alluding to the trouble Hygelac created by his raid against the Franks or some similar situation. In any event, chaos and disorder is to be the lot of both the Danes and Geats when there is no exemplary figure like Beowulf to transform the chaos and disorder. Thus the Heldensleben of Beowulf and the expanse of the Germanic heroic world are encircled by the controlling frame of a Heldendaemmerung that parallels the Goetterdaemmerung of Germanic mythology.

SECTION THREE
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Chapter II

"Douce France" and La Chanson de Roland

Plot Structure

Though various critics and commentators have discussed the importance of mesure and démésure in La Chanson de Roland, they have done so only in a limited way or as part of some other aspect of the work.¹ The purpose of the following discussion is to show that these concepts are far more significant to the total structure and meaning of the work than has yet been demonstrated.

The story element is developed in nine steps of plot incidents arranged in evident dramatic fashion: the unsatisfactory situation for Marsile and Charlemagne, the delivery of Blancandrin's plan to the Franks, the reception of the plan and the choice of an emissary, the trip of Ganelon and his treachery, the selection of the rear guard, the destruction of the rear guard, the vengeance of Charlemagne, the trial and punishment of Ganelon, the new task of Charlemagne. However, the handling and treatment of these steps gradually reveals the full structural framework of the epic.

¹Three such discussions appear in the following works: Joseph Bédier, Les Légendes Épiques (Paris, 1912), III, 400-445; Alfred Foulet, "Is Roland Guilty of Desmesure?," Romance Philology, X (1956), 145-148; Alain Renoir, "Roland's Lament: Its Meaning and Function in the Chanson de Roland," Speculum, XXXV (1963), 572-583. Though Renoir's discussion is meaningful for this thesis, he discusses mesure only as part of the significance and function of laisse CXL in respect to the unity of tone and structure in the first half of the poem.

Circular Growth and Multiple Démesure

The first two laisses of La Chanson de Roland establish half of the structural framework, for they put the reader in medias res of the general "chaos-disorder" condition of the Moslem-Frankish war. At the center of that part of the frame the author presents the situation of Marsile and his forces as an "affliction" (from Marsile's point of view). However, it is also evident that the French, particularly Charlemagne, consider the situation as quite undesirable, though for very different reasons. For Marsile and his forces, the "affliction" is the presence of Charlemagne in Spain and around Saragossa. For the French generally and Charlemagne especially, the undesirable situation is still to be away from "douce France" after seven years of weary war. Because both leaders would like very much to alter the situation, the specific circumstances presented at the start furnish an incipient "chaos-disorder" condition at the center of the story-structure framework.

Blancandrin's proposal to Marsile in the third laisse offers great advantages to both leaders. Charlemagne will get the surrender of Marsile, considerable wealth, the promise of Marsile's conversion, hostages to bind the agreement, and the chance to return to France. Marsile will get Charlemagne out of Spain and have a chance to make plans to reverse the defeat and avoid death or conversion at the hands of a Christian conqueror. Marsile has no compunctions about breaking any promise he might make or about callously sacrificing the hostages, for he obviously considers his life and the lives of his warriors more important than the deaths of whatever hostages he may send. He accepts the plan eagerly and commissions Blancandrin to deliver the

proposal to Charlemagne. This requires the first of several shifts from the Moslem camp to the French camp, and those shifts are handled by the same shuttle-focus technique that has been seen in the other epics. In the latter portion of the work, the shift will take the reader from where Roland is to where Charlemagne is, as well as from one group to the other.

When Blancandrin delivers the proposal to Charlemagne, the incipient "chaos-disorder" situation becomes a growing "chaos-disorder" condition for the French. Charlemagne indicates at once that he has some reservations about trusting Marsile, but he places the proposal before his council of nobles. Charlemagne admits that he is not sure of Marsile's true purpose, and the French are unanimous in declaring that they must be on their guard. Then Roland, Charlemagne's outstanding warrior, hears the plan and attacks it with fury. In so doing he begins to display his proud, brash, and often arrogant nature.

Roland's unrestrained outburst surprisingly contains some sound advice that the French cannot trust Marsile and the Paynims. He reminds them of Marsile's previous treachery and urges his lord:

'Spend all your life, if need be, in the siege,
Revenge the men this villain made to bleed!'²

In view of the wariness expressed by Charles and the Franks, one might expect ready agreement to Roland's advice. However, the Franks are

²Dorothy L. Sayers, tr., The Song of Roland (Baltimore, Maryland, 1960), p. 58. English quotations will be from this source, and French quotations will be from the following source: Joseph Bédier, ed., La Chanson de Roland (65th ed., Paris, 1963). Bédier, Ch. de Rol., ll. 212-213:

'Metez le sege a tute nostre vie,
Si vengez cels que li fels fist ocire!'

silent. Perhaps they feel that his declaration reveals his démesuré fondness for battle; perhaps his outburst is too blatantly self-assertive or egoistic for them; perhaps they are less keen about fighting than they were earlier. In any event, there is no reaction until Ganelon speaks.

Ganelon starts with a reasonable warning that the reckless and proud should not be heard. He urges the king to seek his own welfare, and Charlemagne virtually follows that advice through most of the epic. Ganelon's warning soon develops into a tirade of unrestrained vindictiveness against Roland, and the violent manner with which he delivers it reveals he is quite as démesuré as Roland. Despite this evidently excessive conduct, Charlemagne and the Franks approve Ganelon's words. Evidently, they listen to what they want to hear, for even the presumably wise Naimon supports Ganelon's position. That support is enough to make the assembled Franks forget their suspicion of and experience with Marsile. One must assume that they are so eager to return to France that their eagerness makes them a bit short-sighted. Even the venerable and experienced Charles exercises no discriminating judgment in evaluating Ganelon's advice. As a consequence, incipient chaos and disorder move in the direction of real chaos and disorder for the Franks.

Charlemagne exercises even less discrimination in the choice of an ambassador to Marsile's camp. Considering his reservations about Marsile and his responsibility to his warriors and his land, one might reasonably expect him to want an experienced and skillful ambassador who might tactfully accomplish the mission. Yet Charlemagne refuses offers from both Turpin and Naimon, men who seem ideally qualified for such a task. In fact, he is thoroughly self-assertive in refusing to let

any of the Peers undertake the mission, and he is even rudely commanding to Turpin. Such behavior can only be the result of a great self-assertive desire to accept the plan despite his suspicion and fear that something may go wrong.

Charlemagne then asks the Peers to select a baron for the mission, and Roland, with no apparent suggestion of malice, proposes his stepsire. Considering the ruler's request, Roland's choice seems an excellent one. The mission may be fraught with danger and death, but almost any noble warrior or loyal retainer should accept it as a duty to his lord and an honor to enhance his personal glory. However, Ganelon appears to consider Roland's proposal purposely vindictive rather than naively brilliant, and does not accept it in heroic fashion. Obviously in the throes of unrestrained personal hatred for Roland, he takes it as an attempt to get rid of him. His vehemence in venting his anger by a threat to bring ruin to Roland suggests a vicious nature and a lack of mesure.

Charlemagne could perhaps overlook such behavior, but one has difficulty understanding how he can overlook Ganelon's threat to play some deadly trick to satisfy his "unbounded rage." Charlemagne not only permits him to go, but he orders him to go. How he can entrust such a mission to one so obviously immoderate in his passion is comprehensible only if we regard it as a point of honor with Charlemagne once he has made his request and his nobles have approved Roland's choice.

Just after this point in the action, the potential chaos and disorder for the Franks virtually becomes kinetic chaos and disorder as a result of what Charlemagne fails to do in respect to the Roland-Ganelon

animosity. Charlemagne might be expected to realize the disastrous possibilities of the conflict between the two men, but he does nothing to restrain either of them. Roland, who is naive in many respects, knows how to make use of Ganelon's pride. He taunts Ganelon by declaring a good man is needed and by offering to replace Ganelon. Roland's taunts and laughter in the face of Ganelon's threats build Ganelon's rage to explosive proportions. Yet, at the end of laisse twenty-two and in the following laisse he curbs his anger and offers what sounds very much like a plea for Charles to change the decision.

However, when Charlemagne commands Ganelon to go, the latter loses all sense of restraint and unleashes one of the most blatant demonstrations of demesure in the poem. His vile oath of revenge extends his personal quarrel with Roland to include Oliver and the other Peers. Such action is a gross and unforgivable insult to ruler, to country, and to the warrior society of which he is a part. That action should certainly rule out Ganelon as one worthy to perform the mission. One would expect that Charlemagne might think of the best interests of the group and reconsider the matter. Though Charlemagne tells Ganelon his passion is too hot, the king does not replace him.

Charlemagne turns over the glove of responsibility and Ganelon promptly drops it. All are aghast at this ill-omen, but Charlemagne disregards the incident. Even when Ganelon assures them they will experience misfortune, Charlemagne neglects that warning just as he had neglected other warning omens. His self-assertiveness and, very likely, his desire to reap the benefits of Blancandrin's tempting plan combine to eliminate the exercise of whatever mesure Charlemagne might otherwise have. The quality, extent, and nature of his self-assertion

are not the same as that of Ganelon or Roland, but Charlemagne's somewhat passive démésure places Ganelon in exactly the position that will permit him to plan the treachery and assure extensive disaster for the Franks.

Ganelon's visit in Marsile's camp affords the pagans a chance to make Blancandrin's plan even more useful to them than originally anticipated. In addition, it reveals the extent of Ganelon's cunning and treachery. Like Blancandrin, Ganelon appears to know his enemy.

Ganelon's every action and word is a craftily designed "deadfall" for Marsile. He stresses the ignominious defeat and treatment that the agreement will cause Marsile. He makes it clear that Marsile will have to share Spain with his hated foe, Roland. He supplies every bit of information Marsile desires, but carefully arranges his praise of Charlemagne and the Peers to suggest that Roland, Oliver, and the Peers are the major obstacle the Moslems must eliminate. Step by step, Ganelon makes sure that Marsile will be receptive to his suggestions of treachery (a superb bit of double irony). By convincing Marsile that he can make sure that the Peers are in the rear-guard when Charlemagne heads back to France, he offers Marsile a way to destroy that obstacle.

Ganelon convinces Marsile that the proposed actions will end the capability and desire of Charlemagne to oppose Marsile. The latter readily approves of Ganelon's plan because it offers him the same temptation Blancandrin's scheme had offered Charlemagne--wealth, honor, and the end of the war on his terms. He therefore acts without mesure in accepting the plan and Ganelon's assurance about Charlemagne's reaction to the loss of the rear-guard and the Peers. It would be sheer folly to think that Ganelon really believed the king would act as he has led

Marsile to believe. Ganelon's gambit is based on his thorough understanding of the démesuré desires of the two men to satisfy their wishes and exercise their self-assertion. Ganelon's mental gymnastics depend on his understanding of the two men and their psychological attitude about the loss of their chief warriors. Marsile is warned that he will lose many of his men in the attack on the rear-guard, but he is quite willing to make that sacrifice. Perhaps because he is willing to lose his men he may think Charlemagne will take the same point of view. He does not understand the bond that exists between Charlemagne and the Peers, and Ganelon does not enlighten him. Marsile accepts Ganelon's evaluation and in so doing assures the success of what one can only comprehend as brilliantly executed double treachery on the part of Ganelon.

After Ganelon's return Charlemagne has two dreams (laisses 56 and 57) which symbolize Ganelon's treachery and the trouble ahead, but he says or does nothing. He does not assign the Peers to the advance guard, where they normally serve, nor does he designate them for other special tasks. By throwing the selection of the rear-guard open to suggestion, Charlemagne affords Ganelon the chance to propose Roland and the Peers. Even though Charlemagne calls Ganelon a "fiend incarnate" possessed by malice, he does nothing to reject the choice.

Subsequent developments have been prepared for earlier. Oliver's comments during the selection of the emissary pointed out Roland's extreme pride and stubborn mood, qualities which Roland actively demonstrates at this point and which Ganelon uses to his advantage. Roland does not trust Ganelon's motives, but he gladly accepts the task

'Men for their lords great hardship must abide,
Fierce heat and cold endure in every clime,
Lose for his sake, if need be, skin and hide.'

(Song of Roland, ll. 1010-1012)⁵

Oliver indicates the advancing mass and suggests Ganelon has betrayed them, but hardheaded Roland will have no evil spoken of his step-sire. Oliver's report of the Moslem strength draws a typically heroic and demesure response from the Franks:

. . . 'Foul shame it were to flee!
We're yours to death; no man of us will yield.'

(Song of Roland, ll. 1047-1048)⁶

Thus Oliver, who realizes the possible consequences of such absolute demesure and knows the value of mesure, urges Roland to sound the oliphant and summon needed aid. Pride-swollen in his individual might and recklessly demanding in his concern for personal glory, for the pride of his lineage, and for his country's honor, Roland scornfully refuses with a further declaration of what he believes. He asks God to forbid

'That e'er by me fair France should be disfamed!
I'd rather die than thus be put to shame;
If the king loves us it's for our valour's sake.'

(Song of Roland, ll. 1090-1092)⁷

Roland and his fellow Peers certainly prove their valor in the battle that follows. At the very start of it, Marsile's nephew Adelroth

⁵Sayers, p. 91/Bédier, p. 86:

'Pur sun seignor deit hom susfrir destreiz
E endure e granz chalz egranz freiz,
Sin deit hom perdre e del quir e del peil.'

⁶Sayers, p. 92/Bédier, p. 90:

. . . 'Dehet ait ki s'en fuit!
Ja pur murir ne vus en faldrat uns.'

⁷Sayers, p. 94/Bédier, p. 94:

'Que ja pur mei perdet sa valor France!
Melz voeill murir que huntage me venget.
Pur ben ferir l'emperere plus nos aimet.'

proclaims a bitter truth they cannot accept or comprehend:

'You've been betrayed by him that should protect you,
Your king lacked wit who in the passes left you.'
(Song of Roland, ll. 1192-1193)⁸

Roland, angered by such an insult to his king, slaughters Adelroth, denies the charge, and assures his men that right is on their side. Adelroth may have wrong on his side, but he could not be more right about Charlemagne, who has not exercised any degree of mesure and whose passive demesure well deserves the word fols applied to him.

The savagery of the battle gradually forces Roland to admit to himself and to proclaim openly the baseness of Ganelon's deed. When the Paynim blades have reduced the rear-guard to sixty, Roland's awareness of the tragic deaths leads to his first big step towards understanding and humility. He asks Oliver if they should report their desperate situation. With the chilled edge of irony, Oliver throws back at his friend the words and sentiments Roland had used to reject his friend's suggestion. Roland now wants to sound the oliphant, but Oliver, with bitter irony, again throws his friend's word back at him:

. . . 'It would be foul disdain,
And to your kindred the reproach would be great:
All their lives long they'd not live down the shame.'
(Song of Roland, ll. 1705-1707)⁹

Then gentle Oliver unleashes his pent-up anger and, with blunt bitterness, points out Roland's demesure in having refused to sound the

⁸Sayers, p. 98/Bédier, p. 102.
'Trait vos ad ki a garder vos ont.
Fols est li reis ki vos laissat as porz.'

⁹Sayers, p. 117/Bédier, p. 114:
. . . 'Vergoigne sereit grant
E repruver a trestuz vos parenz;
Iceste munte dureit al lur vivant!'

oliphant earlier. Roland, sensing the anger and rebuke in his friend's voice, must know the reason for them. Oliver obliges by detailing the nature of Roland's demesure:

. . . 'Companion, you got us in this mess.
There is wise valour, and there is recklessness.
Prudence is worth more than foolhardiness.
Through your o'erweening you have destroyed the French.'
(Song of Roland, ll. 1723-1726)¹⁰

Bishop Turpin halts the quarrel and urges Roland to blow the oliphant so that Charlemagne may come to avenge them and give them proper burial. Roland, in his typically unrestrained fashion, blows so vigorously that he bursts the veins of his temples and does what all his enemies could not do.

Despite Ganelon's efforts to urge him otherwise, Charlemagne responds to the "desperate lament" of the oliphant and heads for Ronceveaux. Ganelon's outburst reveals clearly his deceit and takes Charles a step closer to recognition of his responsibility in the events.

At Ronceveaux Roland, sobered by Oliver's words and the carnage around him, begins to perceive his demesure and its consequences. He reflects upon the brave deeds and service his dead companions gave to France, which has been deprived of their skill and bravery. His reflections make him understand and admit, with chastened humility, his responsibility for their deaths. When Oliver is wounded and, in his blindness, strikes Roland, the latter no longer demonstrates the wild

¹⁰Sayers, p. 131/Bédier, pp. 144-146:
. . . 'Cumpainz, ves le feistes,
kar vasselage par sens nen est volie;
Mielz valt mesure que ne fait estultie.
Franceis sunt morz par vostre legerie.'

and reckless response of pride one has come to expect of him; instead, Roland, with questioning tenderness, asks why he did it. Oliver's reply settles the matter, and the two friends part with great affection.

Roland performs all his final actions in the same humble spirit of contrition. When he alone remains alive, he places himself facing Spain and the slaughtered enemies, as befits a warrior. However, this last act is without the élan and panache of the willfully brash knight he had always been. The mechanical reflexes to set himself facing the enemy are there, but the démesuré spirit is no longer there. With grieving penitence and abject humility, he offers his glove to the service of God.

Charlemagne reaches the battlefield when it is too late to help any of his Peers, and the carnage he sees makes him reproach himself for not having been with them. Before he can bury his dead warriors Charlemagne must avenge his rear-guard by destroying Marsile's forces. That task is quickly performed and Charlemagne returns to Ronceveaux, where he takes the final step toward realization of the consequences of what he has done and what he has failed to do.

Roland's death affects him so profoundly that he declares:

'Roland, my friend, God have thy soul on high
With the bright Hallows in flowers of Paradise!
Thy wretched lord sent thee to Spain to die!
Never shall day bring comfort to my eyes.
How fast must dwindle my joy and my might!
None shall I have to keep my honour bright!'

(Song of Roland, ll. 2898-2903)¹¹

¹¹Sayers, p. 162/Bédier, p. 240:
'Ami Rollant, Deus metet t'arme en flors
En pareis, entre les glorijs!
Cum en Espaigne venis a mal seignur!
Jamais n'ert jurn de tei n'aie d'ulur.
Cum decarrat ma force e ma baldur!
N'en avrai ja ki sustienget m'onor.'

Furthermore, he realizes that the consequences of his conduct will always be with him:

'All my life long in sorrow must I reign.
Nor any day cease grieving and complaint.'
(Song of Roland, ll. 2914-2915)¹²

He grieves for his household and for desolate France, but that grief must be put aside to meet the onslaught of Baligant's pagan reinforcements. Charlemagne's victory over Baligant's forces is quick and decisive, and with that victory he settles most of the chaos and disorder created by the combined demesure of Marsile, Ganelon, Roland, and himself. Only the matter of Ganelon's punishment remains.

Ganelon's punishment does not turn out to be quite the simple matter of justice one would expect. When Charlemagne convenes the nobles to judge Ganelon, that wily baron justifies his actions by his hatred for Roland and insists he did not betray the state. Pinabel and his followers support Ganelon with a show of strength and a demand that he be freed. This creates a serious rift in French chivalric society and becomes a "chaos-disorder" condition for that society and for Charlemagne's authority. Charlemagne asserts his authority to punish Ganelon's treachery, but only Thierry supports his ruler. Thierry declares that Ganelon had no right to be disloyal to the king and to French chivalry no matter what his motives were. Then he demands punishment to fit the deed and declares he will support his position by meeting Pinabel in combat. Thierry's victory in the trial by combat supports Charlemagne's judgment, and Ganelon and the pledges receive the

¹²Sayers, p. 162/Bédier, p. 242:
'A grant d'ulur tendrai puis mon reialme;
Jamais n'ert jur que ne plus ne n'en plaigne.'

punishment accorded to traitors and knaves. Thus "treason destroys itself and others too." (Song of Roland, l. 3959)¹³

Charlemagne seeks his rest after a trying day, but for him there is to be no rest. Both his positive and his passive self-assertion have permitted favorable circumstances for Ganelon, Marsile, and Roland to exercise their demesure. Those circumstances and their demesure resulted in the tragic slaughter of the rear-guard and left Charlemagne with considerably less skill and leadership to fight the enemies of Christianity. Consequently, he must himself fill the breach and unrelentingly press the fight against the Heathens. No longer will he be permitted the self-indulgence of keeping his ease by neglecting the reasoned and prudent steps which could have served the well-being of the Peers, of his entire army, and of "douce France." Though he may grumble that his life is weary, Charlemagne will answer the call to duty with no trace of demesure.

Whether by calculated design or fortuitous circumstance, the author of La Chanson de Roland created a total structure for his epic that is remarkably similar to that of The Iliad. There are other modifications or expansions to the structural framework and the narrative handling of the Iliadic model, but the basic manner of expansive circular growth is the dominant characteristic. The significant modification to this is that the circular growth results from multiple demesure rather than the double demesure of The Iliad.

¹³Sayers, p. 201/Bédier, p. 328:
'Ki huns traist sei ocit e altroi.'

As in The Iliad, the poem starts at a particular point of time in the martial conflict between the two forces, the Franks of Charlemagne and the Paynims of Marsile. The designated point of time provides a specific set of circumstances within the general situation of the Frankish-Moslem struggle for Spain: neither leader likes the current status of the war.

The apparent impasse at Saragossa represents a "chaos-disorder" situation for both Marsile and Charlemagne; Charlemagne would like to end hostilities and get back to France, and Marsile would like a respite to arrange more favorable conditions for himself. Both react in a generally démesuré way to Blancandrin's plan, and the subsequent results of their desires to arrange the details transform the "chaos-disorder" situation of the opening into a far greater condition of chaos and disorder for both sides, particularly the Franks.

The efforts to get agreement on the plan require an exchange of emissaries, and that exchange brings into play the shuttle-focus technique that shifts action back and forth between the two camps (and later from where Charlemagne is to where Roland is). That exchange also introduces the other elements of démesure which convert Blancandrin's plan from a simple deceptive ruse to a complex scheme of deception and treachery that will have tragic consequences for the Peers, Charlemagne, French chivalry, "douce France," and the Christian world. The double démesure of Charlemagne and Marsile is added to the double démesure of Ganelon and Roland, and the resultant complex of multiple démesure expands the initial chaos and disorder to involve the Peers, French chivalry, France, and the Christian world.

Like Oedipus in Oedipus Rex and Gloucester in King Lear, Charlemagne is figuratively blinded even when he sees what he should do. For this reason, Charlemagne's positive démésure (in respect to his self-assertive desires) and passive démésure (in respect to his failure to take mesuré action when he should) permit the unrestrained self-assertive conduct of Marsile, Ganelon, and Roland to make inevitable the tragic consequences at Ronceveaux. Only when he has seen the tragic results of his action and inaction (as Achilles after the death of Patroklos) does Charlemagne take positive action.

Like Achilles, Charlemagne needs something catastrophic to shake him out of his entêtement, his particular brand of démésure. As Roland had earlier experienced the knowledge of what his self-assertion produced, so does Charlemagne learn to recognize his failure. However, where recognition had come to Roland as he observed the decimation of his fellow warriors, it comes to Charlemagne in four steps.

Charlemagne's first step comes when the sound of the oliphant proclaims Ganelon's treachery and starts the Franks away from France and toward Ronceveaux. At this point, the French leader is sure of Ganelon's treachery, but he does not realize his personal involvement. As he gazes on the lifeless bodies of Roland and the Peers, he takes his second step; he grieves that he was not with them during the attack. Though he does not dwell upon the details, his remarks here and later clearly suggest that he regrets his failure to heed the disquieting presentiments he had and to exercise the mesure he sensed was needed. The third important step occurs after he returns to bury his dead warriors. The sight of them moves him to tears, and he reproaches himself for his responsibility in their deaths. He has avenged them by positive

action, but he can never bring them back. However, his positive actions against Marsile and later against Baligant halt and reverse the spread of chaos and disorder for the Franks and for Christendom. Further similar action in declaring the treason of Ganelon and demanding proper punishment settles the rift in French chivalric society and restores concord to "douce France" (thanks to the stellar performance of Thierry, his champion).

However, Charlemagne is still left with the bitter fruits of the harvest sown by his failure to exercise mesure in the negotiations with Marsile. He achieved his desire to return to France, but at the expense of the flower of French chivalry. Now he must take the place of the Peers and leave "fair France" to meet other pagan forces which threaten his land and the Christian world. Charlemagne's final and full recognition of his demesure shows in his actions when he is summoned to meet the new threat; he grieves about the weariness of his life, but he goes to perform his duty.

The statement of the final action and the conclusion of the work is that there is not and there will not be any further demesure. The consequences of the multiple demesure of Charlemagne, Marsile, Roland, and Ganelon have provided explicit disapproval of such unrestrained self-assertion and given both explicit and implicit approval of mesure. Marsile, Roland, and Ganelon are responsible for much of what has happened by reason of their unrestrained excesses, but without the active and passive demesure of Charlemagne their conduct alone could not have created the tragic events at Ronceveaux. They have suffered for their self-assertion, but Charlemagne will continue to suffer for his by leaving "douce France" so that he may serve her and the Christian community of Europe.

Though the first half of the poem puts the emphasis on the conflict between the Franks and the Paynims of Marsile, the latter half of the epic reveals the larger issues that constitute the controlling frame of the story-structure framework. The suggestion of the Christian-Pagan conflict is always in the background of the Charlemagne-Marsile struggle, but it comes to the foreground of the poem after Charlemagne has destroyed Marsile's forces. After that task, the Frankish leader must confront even greater Pagan forces: first Baligant's army and later the army besieging King Vivien. In addition, Charlemagne must restore feudal order to French chivalry. Thus the social and political well-being of French chivalry and Christian Europe becomes the controlling frame within which the story, action, narrative growth, scope, and significance of the epic develop.

SECTION THREE
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Chapter III
Russia's Heroic Literature

Medieval Russia produced a number of historical and literary documents, and two of them occupy a special place in Russian chronicle and literature. The Kiev Chronicle of 1111-1202 and the Slovo o Polku Igoreve (Word About Igor's Armament) are, in a sense, the opposite sides of the same coin. The first is both an historical chronicle of literary worth and a source for Russia's chief contribution to medieval heroic narrative. Consequently, a discussion of the Kiev Chronicle will illustrate the tragic elements it contains and furnish important background for The Word About Igor's Armament.

The Kiev Chronicle

The Kiev Chronicle records the details of Igor Svyatoslavich's expedition against the Polovtsy, a marauding tribe from the Russian steppes. In the year 6693 (1185), Igor, son of Svyatoslav, rides out of Novgorod on April 23 with nephew Svyatoslav Olgovitch, son Vladimir, and a Kovuan (Finnish) chief, Ostin Oleksich. They begin collecting a druzhina¹ to head for the Don River basin, which they hope to wrest from the Polovtsy.

¹The druzhina is the Russian equivalent of the comitatus, the retinue, the association of hearth-companions.

As they approach the Donets River, all are dismayed by the strange appearance of the sun that hangs in the sky more like the moon than the sun. They consider it an ill-omen, but Igor tells them:

'Brothers and druzhina! Nobody knows God's mystery, and God is the creator of mystery as well as of all His world; but we shall find out in time whether God means our good or our evil.'²

Having come too far in their eagerness for glory, they cross the Donets and go on to Oskol, where Igor's brother Vsevolod joins them. They then push on until the vanguard sights the massing enemy. To retain their tactical advantage they must ride against the foe at once, but they delay the attack by their indecision. Igor urges:

'If we return without fighting, our shame will be greater than death.'³

Spurred on to demesuré action by their code of honor and desire for glory, they contact the enemy, enjoy an initial success, and plunder the Polovtsy tents.

Igor offers praise to God for their success, but he is uneasy about their position. He considers the possibility that the enemy might not have been fully assembled for the first encounter and thinks it prudent to move on and avoid the risk of being caught by a superior force. However, Svyatoslav insists that his men and horses are too tired to travel, and they make camp. Thus imprudence prevails over the mesure action Igor had suggested.

²Leo Wiener, ed., Anthology of Russian Literature (New York, 1902), Vol. I, p. 73. All quotations in English are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

³Wiener, Vol. I, p. 73.

Their rest that night is dearly purchased. The next morning they are surrounded by a large force. Instead of staying on horseback and seeking safety, the princes dismount and head toward the Don with this thought in mind:

If we remain on horseback and leave our soldiers behind, we shall have sinned before God, but let us live or die together!⁴

In the battle Igor is wounded and the Kovuans desert. Igor attempts to bring them back, but he fails. When he returns to gather the others, the Polovtsy capture all of them. His capture leads him to reflect upon the actions which caused slaughter and bloodshed in the Christian land, as well as upon how

The Lord has repaid me for my lawlessness and my meanness, and my sins have this day come upon my head.⁵

The initial success is thus followed by the pagan victory, and the princes are led into captivity.

At this point the chronicle shifts back to Rus, where Vsevolod's cousin, Svyatoslav, has been trying to raise adequate forces to attack the Polovtsy. At Chernigov he learns that the brothers attacked with dire consequences for them and for their forces. Displeased by their reckless action but yet concerned about them, Svyatoslav expresses his desire to see the pagans crushed and also criticizes the démésure of the brothers:

'But they, impulsive in their youth, have opened the gates into the Russian land.'⁶

⁴Wiener, Vol. I, p. 74.

⁵Wiener, Vol. I, p. 74.

⁶Wiener, Vol. I, p. 76.

News of the defeat spreads sadness through the land, and the saddened land grieves more for the princes than for the relatives and friends lost with the druzhina. While the Russians talk indecisively about defending their land, the Polovtsy move quickly to the attack in two groups.

One group attacks Pereyaslavl, where Vladimire meets the pagans, turns them back once, and then sends to Rurik, David and Svyatoslav⁷ for help. David, whose men had defended Kiev, says his forces are too exhausted to look for another war and leads them elsewhere. Then Svyatoslav and Rurik head for the Dnieper River without him. The Polovtsy hear of the force moving against them, leave Pereyaslavl, and attack Rimov on their way. Vladimir again requests aid, but Svyatoslav and Rurik, delayed by David's apathetic blundering, are too late to help. During this time, the second group of pagans lays waste to Putivl, burns the villages and castle, and returns to the steppes.

The chronicle then returns to Igor, who, in the care of a special guard, enjoys considerable freedom of movement as a prisoner. Igor makes the acquaintance of one of the guards, who, as the result of a "blessed thought," tells Igor he intends to go with him to Russia. Calmly, but with an excess of pride and honor, Igor declares he has no intention of debasing his reputation by escaping to Russia:

'For glory's sake I did not run away from my druzhina and even now I will not walk upon an inglorious road.'⁸

⁷This Svyatoslav should not be confused with Svyatoslav Olgovitch, who was with Igor. This is the uncle of Igor and Vladimir. The Vladimir mentioned here is a noble warrior of Kiev and not Igor's son.

⁸Wiener, Vol. I, p. 79.

However, his advisers convince him that God wants him to escape and that to refuse to do so would be a demesure deed of proud thought not pleasing to God:

You harbor a proud thought and one that is not pleasing to God; you do not intend to take the man and run with him, but why do you not consider that the Polovtses will return from the war, and we have heard that they will slay all the princes and all the Russians, and there will be no glory for you, and you will lose your life.⁹

Their advice suggests that escape would be an act of mesure to return to the homeland that needs him. Their argument convinces him, and, aided by Lavar, Igor escapes and brings joy to the Russian land by his return.

Slovo O Polku Igoreve

The Russian heroic poem Slovo O Polku Igoreve (Word About Igor's Armament)¹⁰ recounts the same events as the chronicle with considerable

⁹Wiener, Vol. I, p. 79.

¹⁰A. C. Orlov, ed. and tr., Slovo O Polku Igoreve (Moskva, 1938). On the basis of historical fact and the content of the poem, the work cannot have been written earlier than the latter part of 1185, probably shortly after the failure of Igor's campaign, nor can it have been written much later than the latter part of 1187 or the early part of 1188. The oldest known copy, which was discovered by Count A. I. Musin-Pushkin in 1795, has been established by paleographic and philological methods as a sixteenth century manuscript; however, this source was destroyed in the Moscow fire of 1812 and extant sources are derived from a copy of it made for Catherine II or from the printed copy made of it in 1800. Full details are presented in Gudzy's History of Early Russian Literature (see footnote 37). All quotations in the original are from Orlov's edition of the poem. They are given in transliterated forms based on the needs of typing rather than upon phonemic or phonological criteria. In the transliteration of the Russian lines Cyrillic letters are replaced by Latin equivalents. For the Russian zhe the Latin zh is used. Latin y is used for Russian short i. Latin y is also used for the Russian oo as in yrok. For the Russian e Latin f is used. For the Russian tseh the Latin ts is used. For the Russian shah Latin sh is used. For the Russian shchah the Latin combination schh is used. For the Russian yerih Latin i with a circumflex over it is used. For Russian yoo the Latin yu is used. For Russian yah the Latin ya is used. For the Russian hard sign an apostrophe is used. For the Russian soft sign this symbol is used: ъ.

rhetorical and poetic embellishment. There are also differences of form, structure, and content. The thirty-five divisions of the poem can best be divided into four general sections: the march toward the Don and the initial success against the Polovtsy, the second encounter and the capture of the princes, the grief of the land without its prince, and the escape of Igor which returns joy to the land.

The first two sections of the poem indicate the general theme, Igor's campaign against the Polovtsy, and the third section indicates the specific situation from which the action develops, the desire of Igor to regain access to the Don. These three sections furnish part of the story-structure framework. The "chaos-disorder" condition of the conflict between the Russians and the Polovtsy provides part of the external frame. At the center of the frame is the circle that represents the particular "chaos-disorder" situation created by the conflict: the land of Russia is denied access to its beloved Don basin and desires to do something about the situation. Between that center and the circle of the outer frame develop the action, narrative development, and whatever epic scope the work attains. Most of these grow out of what Igor, Vsevolod, and their fellow warriors do.

Igor, who desires to emulate the deeds of his relative Vladimir and win fame for himself and his men, decides to lead an expedition against the invaders from the steppes and regain access to the Don. He gathers a retinue which includes Svyatoslav, his own son Vladimir, and a Kovuan chief to join the expedition. On his way to join with the forces of his brother Vsevolod he experiences the first hint of disaster. The bright sun is suddenly covered by an eclipse, a definite omen of

evil for them. Nevertheless, he says to them,

'O brothers and druzhina! It is better to be cut to pieces than to be made a captive! Let us, O brothers, mount our swift horses that we may behold the beautiful Don.'¹¹

His code and theirs urges that the heroic deed should be attempted regardless of the consequences. The poet explicitly tells the reader that the omen was screened from Igor's mind because of his great desire to "drink a helmetful of the Don." For that reason,

They race over the fields like gray wolves, seeking honor for themselves and glory for the Prince.¹²

As Igor leads his men toward the Don, all the animals try to warn them of the misfortune to come. But the warriors ignore Nature's warnings and head for the enemy. To the other omens the poet adds the refrain, "O Russian land, you are already behind the mound."¹³ That refrain of impending grief serves as a dramatic foreshadowing of what is to come in the action and also as a comment of retrospective regret on the part of the poet, who speaks as a representative Russian.

Their first clash with the pagan steppe-dwellers is a resounding success and they drive the enemy from the field toward the Don. Booty and all the pleasures and privileges of victory are theirs. In view of the chronicle material, one can assume that the same imprudent action

¹¹Wiener, p. 82/Orlov, p. 66.
'Bratie i druzhino! lytzezh' bî potyaty bîti, nezhe poloneny bîti; a vsyadem, bratie, na svoi b'rziya komoni, da pozrim' sinego Dony.'

¹²Wiener, p. 83/Orlov, p. 67.
. . . sami skachyutâ, aki seriî vl'tzi v' pole, ishchychi sebe chti, a knyazyu slave.

¹³Wiener, p. 84/Orlov, p. 67.
O, Ryskaya zemle! yzhe za shelomyanem' esi!

shown there is understood to be in the background of the poem. In any event the dawn of another day has something different to offer.

That dawn greets them with portent evil:

. . . a bloody dawn announces the day. Black clouds
come from the sea and try to veil four sons, while blue
lightning quivers through them. There is to be a mighty
thunder, and the rain is to go down in arrows by the great
Don.¹⁴

The poet repeats his sad refrain and Nature furnishes more grim proof
of imminent tragedy. The winds blow arrows from the sea on Igor's
valiant forces; the earth groans, the rivers flow turbid; dust covers
the fields. The massive force of the Polovtsy buffets the courageous
band, and

the devil's children fill the field with their
cries, but the brave Russians line it with
crimson bucklers.¹⁵

They battle for three days, and the dark earth beneath the
hoofs of the horses is planted with bones and arrosed in blood to
yield a harvest of grief for the Russian land. Then, on the third
day at noon, the standards of Igor fall. Thus, on the banks of the
rapid Kayala,

. . . the brave Russians ended the feast; they
gave their host their fill to drink and themselves fell

¹⁴Wiener, pp. 84-85/Orlov, p. 68.
Drygago dni velmi rano krovaviya zori svet'
povedayut'; chr'niya tychya s' morya idut',
xotyat' prikriti d solntza, a v' nix' tre-
peschcyt' sinii ml'nii. Biti gromy velikomy!
Itti dozhdyyu strelami s' Dony velikago!

¹⁵Wiener, p. 85/Orlov, p. 68.
Deti besovi klikom' polya pregorodisha, a xrabrii
Rysitzi pregradisha chr'lenimi shchiti.

for the Russian land. The grass withered from sorrow, and the trees in anguish bent down to the earth.¹⁶

In such a fashion does Igor's démesuré bid for honor and fame bring himself, his men, and his land to distress, for

Sadness spread over the Russian land, and a heavy gloom. The princes fostered discord among themselves, and the pagans victoriously overrun the country, receiving tribute. . . .¹⁷

The poet also makes it clear that the démesure of the princes has brought dishonor to the land, for

It is Igor and Vsevolod, Svyatoslav's brave sons, who through discord have wakened dishonor which their father, Svyatoslav of Kiev, the great, the mighty, had put to sleep.¹⁸

As a consequence,

Here Igor was unseated from his golden saddle and placed upon the saddle of a slave.¹⁹

Thus Igor's well-intentioned desire to regain access to the Don has been thwarted by his excessive pride and ill-considered execution of his self-assertive desires. Instead of relieving the

¹⁶Wiener, p. 87/Orlov, p. 69.
Ty pir' dokonchasa xrabrii Rysichi:svatî popoisha,
a sami polegosha za zemlyu Ryskyu. Nichitê trava
zhaloschami, a drevo s tygoyu k' zemli preklonilosê.

¹⁷Wiener, p. 87/Orlov, p. 70.
Toska razliyasya po Ryskoj zemli, pechalê zhirna
yteche sredê zemli Ryski. A knyazi sami na sebe
kramoly kovaxy; a poganii sami (s') pobedami
karishchyshche na Ryskyu zemlyu, emlyaxy
danê po bele ot' dvora.

¹⁸Wiener, pp. 87-88/Orlov, p. 70.
Tii bo dva xabraya Svyat'slavichya, Igorê i Vsevolod',
yzhe lzhy ybudista kotoroyu. Ty byashe yspil' otetz' ix'
Svyat'slavê groznîy velikiy Kievskiy grozoyu.

¹⁹Wiener, p. 88/Orlov, p. 70.
Ty Igorê knyazê visede iz sedla zlata, a v' sedlo koshchievo.

chaos and disorder of the land, his actions and those of his fellow princes have made matters worse by depriving the land of those warrior leaders needed to provide the unity and fighting strength to combat the pagans. Just as personal and self-assertive demesure on the part of Achilles brought grief to his fellow warriors, so do the actions of Igor and the princes create trouble for the Russian land.

After the capture of the princes, the poet takes the reader back to the Russian land to present the reaction there. Great prince Svyatoslav pours out his "golden words" that are mingled with tears and criticism concerning the demesure of the "falcons," who sought too eagerly and recklessly honor and glory. In his references to Boyan the poet had provided a brief change of focus, and in the central part of the poem the reader is shuttled back and forth in time and space by the comments of Svyatoslav and the poet.

Svyatoslav's words are meant for Igor and Vsevolod when he says:

'Too eagerly did you begin to strike the land of the Polovtsy with your swords, and to seek glory for yourselves. You were vanquished ingloriously, for ingloriously have you spilled the blood of pagans!'²⁰

Svyatoslav clearly places the responsibility on the reckless self-assertion of Igor and Vsevolod, who, with willful pride and lust for fame, said,

'We alone will vanquish! Let us ourselves gain the future glory, and share the glory of our fathers!'²¹

²⁰Wiener, p. 89/Orlov, p. 71.

'Rano esta nachala Polovetzkyyu zemlyu mechi tzveliti, a sebe slavi iskati; n' nechestno odoleste, nechestno bo krov' poganyyu proliyste.'

²¹Wiener, p. 89/Orlov, p. 72.

'Myzhaimo sya sami, prednyuyu slavy sami poxitim', a zadnyuyu si sami podelim'.'

Svyatoslav laments for the land that has no adequate protection because the princes of the land are not taking proper action. Instead, they are feuding among themselves.

To Svyatoslav's lament the poet adds apostrophes to the current princes of the land, who are also urged to join forces so that they may avenge the insult to the national honor. Both Svyatoslav and the poet present accounts of past sorrows created by various warriors guided by self-assertive desires, but at the same time they also offer accounts of bravery and selfless conduct for the welfare of Russia.

Those accounts, coupled with an earlier reference to the feuds stirred up by Oleg Malglory (in the poetic exordium at the beginning), serve two functions. In general, they give some epic scope to the poem in the same way that the historical and legendary inserts into the story provide epic expansion in Beowulf. In more specific fashion they serve as either examples of discord created by self-assertive conduct or successful heroic action motivated by the well-being of the social group. The princes of the poet's time are urged to emulate the bravery of their ancestors, who put their courage and skill in the service of the land, rather than to follow the conduct of those warriors who created feuds in the land for their personal benefit. An examination of them will show how they are used.

When Svyatoslav reacts to the news of Igor's rash expedition and its dire consequences, he laments that he no longer sees the power of his strong, rich, and most war-loving brother Yaroslav going against the enemy. He praises the Chernigov druzhina which served Yaroslav and went against the enemy without bucklers, with knives in their boots,

and vanquished armies with war cries that echoed the ancestral glory.²² Svyatoslav regrets that the present-day warriors are not properly responding to the glory of their ancestors or the needs of their land.

The author follows Svyatoslav's lament with extended apostrophes to the contemporary princes of the land. His first is made to prince Vsevolod, whom Vladimir Nabokov identifies as Vsevolod of Vladimir (a town in the Suzdal region), a powerful prince descended from Vladimir Monomachus.²³ He praises the great ability of Vladimir and asks him why he does not think of coming from afar to protect the golden throne of his father. The praise does not stress specific military talents, but merely suggests great strength and power. The poet says that Vladimir could scatter in drops the Volga with his oars, and that with his helmets he could scoop the Don dry.²⁴ He appeals to Rurik and David to use the bravery of their warriors to avenge the Russian land and the wounds of Igor. Imbedded in the appeal is a request to forget their personal differences with Igor and think of the Russian land.²⁵

²²Orlov, pp. 71-72.

'A yzhe ne vizhdy vlasti sil'nago i bogatago i mnogovoya brata moego Yaroslava s' Chernigov'skimi bilyami . . . ti bo bes shchitov' c' zasapozhnikl klikom' pl'ki pobezhdayut', zvon'yachi v' pradednyuyu slavy.'

²³Vladimir Nabokov, tr., The Song of Igor's Campaign (New York, 1960), p. 120.

²⁴Orlov, p. 72.

Velikiy knyazhe Vsevolode! Ne misliyu ti preleteti izdalecha otnya zlata stola poblyusti? Ti bo mozheshi Volgy vesli raskropiti, a Don shelomi vil'yati!

²⁵Nabokov, p. 121. Nabokov reports a feud between Igor and these two princes (who had earlier fought the Polovtsy) seven years before the time of the poem.

The next appeal is made to Yaroslav of Galich, a great warrior and the father-in-law of Igor. The poet cites the bravery shown when Yaroslav dared the Hungarian mountains with his iron warriors, when he barred the path of the Hungarian king, when he closed the gates of the Danube by tossing great missiles through the clouds and setting up his courts to the Danube shore. Since he shoots at sultans in far lands, he is asked to shoot his arrows at the pagan scoundrel Konchak and thus avenge the Russian land and the wounds of Igor.²⁶

The poet next urges Roman and Mstislav to stir up their bravery and put on their famous war equipment. They are asked to shake the land as they have often done before and make the pagans bow down their heads and drop their spears as so many foes had done.²⁷ In addition, the sons of Mstislav are urged to arm against the Polovtsy, and all the Russian warriors are urged to emulate Izyaslav, who responded to the needs of his land when no others did and died courageously in defense of his people. Yet the poet seems to feel that his words fall on deaf ears, for he ends the apostrophes on a sad note. He tells Yaroslav and all the descendants of Vseslav that it is time to lower their

²⁶Orlov, p. 72.

Galichki Osmomisle Yaroslave! visoko sedishi na svoem' zlatokoyannem^u stole, podper' gori Igor^{skii} svoimi zheleznimi pl'ki, zastupiv' korolevi pyta, zatyoriv' Dynayu vorota, mecha bremeni chrez oblaki, sydi ryadya do Dynayu. Grozi tvoya po zemlyam' tekyta; otvoryaeshi Kiev^y brata; strelyaeshi s' otnya zlata stola sal'tani za zemlyami. Strelyay, gospodine, Konchaka, poganogo koshcheya, za zemlyu Ryskyu, za rani Igorevi, byego Svyat'slavliche!

²⁷Orlov, pp. 71-72.

Syta bo y vayu zheleznii parobtzi, pod' shelomi latin^{skimi}. Temi tresny zemlya, i mnogi strani, Xiova, Litova, Xatvzyazi, Deremela i Polovtzi sylitzi svoya povr'gosha, a glavi svoya podklonisha pod tii mechi xaralyzhni.

banners and sheathe their battered swords because they have fallen from the ancestral glory. They have done this by emulating those who provoked feuds, rather than emulating their great ancestors who fought the enemies of Russia. In fighting among themselves the present-day princes have allowed the pagans and their violence to enter the Russian land.²⁸

Following the apostrophe to present-day princes, the poet presents an illustrative story of Vseslav, who is praised for his great courage and feats of magic but whose self-assertive deeds shattered the glory of the great Russian heroes, Yaroslav and Vladimir I. Vseslav brought death to many Russian heroes before he was finally defeated by the three sons of Yaroslav.²⁹ For effective contrast with this story of the self-glorifying knight, the poet adds a regret that Russia is now without the kind of leaders they once had, such as Vladimir of olden days (probably Vladimir I). The poet praises him because he could not be pinned to the Kievan hills (by enemy spear or sword). His banners always flew proudly with honor to himself and to Russia. Now his

²⁸Orlov, p. 72.

Yaroslave i vsi vnytzhe Vseslavi! Yzhe ponizite styazi svoi,
vonzite svoi mechi verezhni; yzhe bo viskochiste iz' dedney
slave. Vi bo svoimi kramolami nachyaste navoditi poganiya na
zemlyu Ryskyyu, na zhizn' Vseslavlyu; kotoroyu bo beshe
nasilie ot' zemli Polovtzki!

²⁹Nabokov, p. 125. Though he is a great-grandson of Vladimir I, Vseslav took advantage of an insurrection to push Izyaslav I, of the house of Yaroslav, off the throne. He fought with other princes for power and was routed by the sons of Yaroslav in a battle on the river Nemiga near Minsk.

banners have come down to Rurik and David, and they do not give to the plumes the honor and dignity which he gave to them.³⁰

The central portion of the poem closes with a charming and poignant lament by the wife of Igor, who gropes for understanding of what happened to Igor and his men.

The final section is brief, moves in hurried pace, and ends with a partial reversal of circumstances. Without a hint of explanation the poet informs us:

God shows to Igor a way out of the land of the Polovtses³¹
into the country of Russia to his father's golden throne.

When Ovlur, a friendly Kuman (Polovetsian tribe), urges him to consider the matter, he agrees to leave. From the account of the chronicle, we would assume that the planning made and the urging to convince Igor that he should escape also take place here. The chronicle tells us that Igor balked at the idea of escape as being unworthy of his nobility and honor, but that persuasion rid him of his "proud thought" and he agreed to flee. In the poetic account what takes place before the escape is merely suggested, and only the positive act is related.

On the escape route all Nature helps the two men by furnishing sustenance, shelter, and concealment from the enemy. The birds which ordinarily make so much chatter remain silent so that the two men may

³⁰Orlov, p. 74.
'O! stonati Ryskoy zemli, pomnyayvshe pr'vyu godiny i pr'vix knyazey! Togo starago Vladimira nel'ze be prigvozdit' k' goram' Kiev'skim'. Sego bo n'ne stasha styazi Ryurikov', a dryzii Davidov'; n'roz'no sya im' xoboti pashyt'. Kopia poyut'.'

³¹Wiener, p. 94/Orlov, p. 75.
Igorevi knyazyu bog' pyta kazhet' iz' zemli Polovetzkoj na zemlyu Ryskyu, k' otnyu zlaty stoly.

hear the pursuers, Gza and Konchak. Other birds peck out messages to show Igor the way. His pursuers, apparently convinced that they cannot recapture Igor, discuss whether or not they should kill the fledgling Vladimir or enmesh him with a fair maid.³² Gza astutely observes:

'If we enmesh him with a fair maiden, we shall have neither the young falcon, nor the fair maiden, and the birds will attack us in the Polovts plain.'³³

When that happens the Polovtsy may not fare so well.

With Igor's safe return, the "chaos-disorder" situation created by Igor's démessuré conduct in carrying out the raid on the Polovtsy has in part been changed into a situation of order and harmony in the Russian land. That change is effected only because Igor has discarded his self-assertive motivations and followed the group interest in breaking his confinement and returning to the land of the people who need him. Though the original "chaos-disorder" condition relative to the Don has not been changed, the return of Igor and the remark of Gza concerning young Vladimir clearly suggest that such a condition can be and may be changed.

³²All details are not clear, but this conversation and the poet's reference to the "glory" of Vladimir shows that the poet knew Vladimir was alive and married (by Kuman rites) to Konchak's daughter during a pleasant captivity from which he returned (summer 1187). The Ipatiev Chronicle reports that Vladimir returned to Novgorod-Seversk with wife and child in September 1187. A Christian wedding was then performed and Konchak's daughter was baptised, according to Tatishev's History of Russia, as Svoboda or Liberty.

³³Wiener, p. 95/Orlov, p. 76.

'Ashche ego opytaeve krasnoyu devitzeyu, ni
nama bydet'sokolétza, ni nama krasní devitze,
to pochnyt' nayu ptitsi biti v pole Polovetzkom'.'

The conclusion of the poem is relevant to such a possibility, for Igor's return to the Russian land spreads joy among his people. The concluding lines show how the land welcomes its prince and salutes the brave men who defend it against the enemy:

Hail, princes and druzhina, who battle for the Christians
against the pagan host. Glory to the princes and the drushina!
Amen!³⁴

These final lines suggest something like the effect at the end of La Chanson de Roland, for they concern the social and political well being of the land. D. S. Mirsky,³⁵ Adolf Stender-Petersen,³⁶ and N. K. Gudzy³⁷ have all commented on the work as a patriotic plea for conduct and action motivated by the needs of the political and social organization. Mirsky says that the spirit of the work is a blend of the warrior spirit of the aristocracy and a wider patriotic outlook that puts self-sacrifice for Russia above self-assertion for individual glory.³⁸ Gudzy calls the poem a poet-patriot plea to the nobles to end the disunity and quarreling that resulted from individual motives which were both commendable and disastrous.³⁹ Stender-Petersen also

³⁴Wiener, p. 96/Orlov, p. 76.
Zdravi knyazi i druzhina, pobaraya za
xristiyan! na poganiya pl'ki! Knyazem'
slava a drushine. Amin'.

³⁵D. S. Mirsky, A History of Russian Literature (New York, 1958) pp. 13-17.

³⁶Adolf Stender-Petersen, Geschichte der Russische Literatur (Muenchen, 1957), Erster Band, pp. 121-135.

³⁷N. K. Gudzy, History of Early Russian Literature, tr. Susan W. Jones (New York, 1949), pp. 149-181.

³⁸Mirsky, pp. 13-17.

³⁹Gudzy, pp. 162-163.

emphasizes how the egotism and self-assertive behavior of the princes are criticized by the poet. He analyzes the historical and social circumstances of Kiev's struggle with the invaders from the steppes and thus shows why the unknown poet could not help but present a plea for unity and a warning against the reckless satisfaction of individual desires.

Of the poet's approach to the material, Stender-Petersen says:

Kein Wunder auch, dass der Verfasser des Igor'Epos den eigenmaechtigen, tragischen Zug einer Teilfuersten gegen die Steppennomaden besang und mit zugleich gegen den wilden feudalen Egoismus und Individualismus schliesslich zur niederlage des Staates in den immer schwerer werden Kaempfen mit den angreifenden tuerkischen Wandervoelkern der Steppe fuehren musste.⁴⁰

All these comments support the point that the core of the poem manifests the tension between unrestrained self-assertion and more disciplined, restrained conduct and action to serve the best interests of the social and political community. The poet cannot and does not totally reject the principle of honor and fame by which the warriors live. Nor can he reject the warlike qualities of courage, daring, and knightly intrepidity which are attached to that principle. Yet as a representative Russian concerned about the civic well-being of the land, he must and does criticize excessive self-assertion which neglects the needs of the land for personal self-glorification. Thus measure, disciplined action and conduct, is praised and urged, but unrestrained self-assertion is criticized and rejected. The warrior-knight must put his principles and abilities in the service of the civic body.

⁴⁰Stender-Petersen, p. 133.

Epic Method in Miniature

The Word About Igor's Armament develops around the same general framework and uses the same type of narrative development as do the Beowulf and La Chanson de Roland. Though it aims at epic scope, the work does not develop the scope or breadth of any of the works discussed earlier.

The reader is not at once plunged in medias res, but only a brief poetic exordium introduces him to the two parts of the basic framework around which the development and the scope are achieved. Russia's conflict with the Polovtsy provides an external circle of the story-structure framework. At the center of that part of the frame is the circle which represents the particular "chaos-disorder" situation from which grow the action, narrative development, and the scope of the work. Because the Polovtsy have invaded the Don river basin, the Russians are denied access to their beloved river. Prince Igor decides to attack the Polovtsy and regain control of that area. For that purpose, he gets together a druzhina and, with three other princes who are as excessively eager for fame and glory as he is, attacks the Polovtsy. His concern (and theirs) for personal fame results in a rash and reckless bid for glory. He and the princes are captured, and their capture brings grief to the land. As all warriors in an heroic society, they are concerned with personal honor and fame, with living up to or surpassing their famous ancestors, and, to varying degrees, with the welfare of their land and people. Within the poem both the poet and Svyatoslav, an older warrior and leader who had earlier defeated the Polovtsy and other enemies, present the point of view that Igor and the princes have

concerned themselves too much with their personal self-assertion and thus deprived the land of its leaders. Both the poet and Svyatoslav lament the lack of proper heroic action to help Igor and the captured princes. In doing so, they refer to both past and present heroes or to warriors who created disorder in the land, as some of the present warriors are doing to satisfy their self-assertive desires.

All of these illustrative inserts, allusions, and developed exempla serve several purposes. They are designed to urge the present-day princes to follow the fine example of their ancestors who dedicated their valor to the service of the land rather than fighting among themselves for personal benefit. Thus the examples criticize personally oriented and self-assertive conduct while urging disciplined action for the well-being of the Russian land. Some of them also serve to praise the great strength and bravery displayed by present-day heroes, who are urged to use their gifts for the well-being of the group. In general, they also provide breadth and scope beyond the action of the campaign of Igor. These various additions and inserts present a gallery of Russian heroes (and troublemakers) from the line of Vladimir I to Igor's time. Even though these additions and inserts are reinforced by the introductory references to Boyan, the poet of a shadowy and legendary past, the reader never gets the impression of the epic breadth and scope of the Homeric works or even of Beowulf.

With the princes in Russia quarreling among themselves, the Polovtsy bring havoc to the Russian land, which laments for Igor and the princes in captivity. Thus Igor's abortive attack against the Polovtsy created a more serious "chaos-disorder" condition than that which

existed at the start. This grievous condition for the Russian land is partly reversed by Igor's escape and return to the land which so needs him. That escape brings joy to the land and also provides the possibility (as Gza has astutely observed to Konchak) that the Russian princes may be unified and defeat the Polovtsy another time.

It is possible to consider the "blessed thought" which started Igor on his way home as being somewhat akin to the "will of Zeus" in The Iliad or the actions of the gods in The Odyssey and the Aeneid to get Odysseus and Aeneas on their way to their destinations. The evidence to affirm this is rather meager, except for the closing lines which link the political cause of Russia with the greater cause of Christianity against the pagans, as in La Chanson de Roland. This is certainly consistent with the Russian theological point of view of the period. If this slim evidence is acceptable, then the outer circle of the external frame represents the political hegemony of Russia (in the Black Sea area) rather loosely and wistfully joined to the theological sovereignty of Christianity over the pagan invaders. However, the superficial nature of Christianity in the work rules this out as a serious consideration and leaves only the civic and political well-being of Russia as the controlling frame of the story-structure. This is quite compatible with the usual critical opinions that the poem is more a lament than an epic or a heroic poem. The poem is, as has been suggested above, epic or heroic poetry in miniature, and the overall story-structure framework of Word About Igor's Armament is similar to that of the other epics.

In the presentation of the additions and inserts, as well as during Igor's captivity, the author shuttles back and forth in both time and space with some attendant retrospective and prospective narration.

From the start of the action until the return of Igor to his homeland, the poem has much to say about demesure and mesure. When Igor leads the princes against the Polovtsy to free the Don basin, his intention is commendable, but he and Vsevolod in their demesure desire for personal fame and glory lead their forces on despite the omens and warnings. Even before the battle is over, the poet begins to cite examples of other warriors whose rash conduct brought distress to the land. When the banners of Igor fall on the third day, the poet describes the woe that comes to the Russian land and blames Igor and Vsevolod for having stirred up the violence that had been curbed by Svyatoslav III. The implication is that their self-assertive desires led them to act rashly and neglect the best interests of their men and their land. When Svyatoslav III gets news of their defeat and capture, he clearly charges that they acted rashly and recklessly just to achieve selfish fame and glory. Here, and in the other illustrative inserts related to the defeat of the princes, a point of view is developed by contrasting approval of the mesure acts of Svyatoslav III and others and censure of the demesure conduct of Igor, Vsevolod, and others whose self-assertive acts created discord in the land.

From the details furnished by the chronicle account we know that Igor continued his self-assertive position until convinced that the needs of the land were more important than his sense of honor. In the

poem there is no wavering between two courses of action. Presumably, what he had heard of the havoc created by Konchak in the region of Pereyaslavl prompted him to listen to the "blessed thought" and escape so that he might help his people and eliminate the discord.

Thus, in respect to organization of the action, direction of the plot movement, and the included contrasting examples, the significant overall statement of the work is praise and approval of mesuré, group-oriented values and needs, but criticism of démésuré self-assertive demands and values.

SECTION THREE
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Chapter IV

Poema Del Cid: Honor in Exile

Exile to Greatness

Favorable conditions for the development of heroic poetry and epic existed in Spain as early as the fifth and sixth centuries, when the Vandals and the Visigoths came to the Iberian peninsula,¹ and even earlier according to some documentary evidence.² However, no examples of any early period have been preserved. The earliest and most developed example of heroic narrative comes from the middle of the twelfth century and grows out of the Moslem penetration into the Iberian peninsula from 771 until as late as 1212. This outstanding example of medieval Spanish heroic narrative is the Poema del Cid (also called Cantar del Cid).³

Like the Russian Word About Igor's Armament, Poema del Cid is based upon historical people and events. Just as there is a considerable amount of extant material about Charlemagne and Igor, so is there a great

¹Crane Brinton, J. B. Christopher, and R. L. Wolff, A History of Civilization (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1958), Chapter V, pp. 165-207.

²J. D. M. Ford, Main Currents of Spanish Literature (New York, 1919), pp. 3-6. Ford reports Strabo's account of a history of verse compositions that was already 6,000 years old in Strabo's time. He also tells of the war songs of the Lusitanians described by Diodorus of Sicily and of the military funeral dirges recorded by the historian Appianus.

³The Poema del Cid has been assigned various dates between 1135 and 1175, but the date given by Menendez Pidal, 1140, is usually accepted by most scholars. The manuscript was copied from an older manuscript in 1307 and published in 1799 by T. A. Sanchez.

deal of material, both favorable and unfavorable, about Roderigo de Vivar, the historical figure whose life and deeds were transformed by an unknown poet into the heroic proportions of the Cid. The deeds and misdeeds of Roderigo appear in numerous chronicles and accounts that present every possible aspect of his life and times.⁴

Critical scholarship on Poema del Cid is less abundant than on other epics, but one much debated point concerns the structure of the work. The many critical disagreements about the structure of the poem may be summed up in the words of J. M. Cohen and James Fitzmaurice-Kelly. Cohen says of the poem:

The Cantar del Cid is a far more economical poem than the Chanson de Roland, but it is less well constructed. It falls, in fact, into two barely related halves, . . .⁵

Fitzmaurice-Kelly offers this judgment:

There is a unity of conception and of language which forbids our accepting the Poema as the work of several hands; and the division of the poem into separate cantares is managed with a discretion which argues a single artistic intelligence.⁶

Neither of these judgments is supported by extensive discussion, but the analysis that follows will disagree with most of Cohen's statement, support the view of Fitzmaurice-Kelly, and go beyond his view.

⁴The best source for those interested in a more thorough view is the English translation of Ramon Menendez Pidal's two-volume work La España del Cid (Madrid, 1929). This work is Pidal's The Cid and His Spain, tr. H. Sunderland (London, 1934). For a more limited, but thorough review, the reader may consult the introduction of W. S. Merwin's verse translation of Pidal's Spanish edition of the poem: W. S. Merwin, ed. and tr., Poem of the Cid (New York, 1962). Both English and Spanish quotations are from Merwin's book.

⁵J. M. Cohen, A History of Western Literature (Chicago, 1963), Ch. I, pp. 20-21.

⁶James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, A History of Spanish Literature (New York, 1928), p. 50.

As Fitzmaurice-Kelly indicates, the poem has three principal divisions or cantares: Destierro del Cid (Exile of the Cid), Bodas de las hijas del Cid (Wedding of the daughters of the Cid), and La Afrenta de Corpes (The outrage at Corpes). These divisions do not reveal all the heroic aspects of the work, nor do they indicate the full significance of it. These aspects will be found in the reason for the exile and in the consequences of the outrage at Corpes.

The title of the first cantar clearly suggests the central situation that dominates the poem: the exile of Ruy Diaz by his overlord and monarch, King Alfonso. What Ruy Diaz does and how he does it gives the work its special qualities and significance. In a situation that is quite similar to that of many of the French chansons de geste,⁷ Ruy Diaz does not take action that widens the rift between himself and his lord; instead he rebuilds, step by step, his wealth, his military power, and his bonds with lord and land. His restored glory produces a temporary and false lull in the hostile actions of the enemies who have been responsible for his exile, but the Infantes prove that varlets will be varlets. Their reckless and cruel conduct brings danger and

⁷ This situation parallels in various ways several of the chansons de geste concerning Charlemagne (or his sons) and his vassals. Some of these show the trouble that develops between lord and vassal and the means of reconciliation. Examples of such gestes are Floovant, Huon de Bordeaux, Renaus de Montaubon, Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarche, and Girart de Roussillon. In other gestes trouble develops, the vassal is exiled, and then the vassal exercises his self-assertion to the point that there is no chance of reconciliation. Examples of such gestes are Gormont et Isebart, and Raoul de Cambrai. The Couronnement de Louis in the William of Orange cycle tells of the hero's great prowess and extreme loyalty to Charlemagne's son, Louis. For details see Joseph Bédier, Les Légendes Épiques (3rd ed., Paris, 1929), Tomes I-IV. See also Urban T. Holmes, Jr., A History of Old French Literature (New York, 1937), Chapters VIII-IX, pp. 73-100.

destruction to them, to their family, and to their supporters. The Cid, on the other hand, rises to greater glory and eminence than before, and all is set right in Alfonso's kingdom and court. This is the gist of the story element of the epic, but we are more concerned with the specific how and why of structure and content.

The main parts of the story-structure framework are indicated by Pidal's reconstruction of the opening part of the poem from the account in La Cronica de Veinte Reyes (Chronicle of Twenty Kings). That reconstruction in verse tells how the Cid has been exiled because his enemies, García Ordóñez and the Heirs of Carrion, created trouble for him at court, most likely from envy of his ability and fame. Their efforts resulted in exile from his honor, his lord, his family, and his land. This is the essential "chaos-disorder" condition at the center of the work, and around it develop the action, narrative movement, epic scope, and significance of the poem.

The actions of Ordóñez and the Heirs arise from their self-assertive desires to be pre-eminent at Alfonso's court. When they persuade the king that the Cid has been disloyal, Alfonso asserts his authority as king and liege-lord to exile his foremost vassal. Without land, possessions, or the right to retainers, the Cid must leave Castile and his family. If he does leave, Castile will be denied his strength and leadership to confront her enemies. In this respect, Alfonso fails to consider the well-being of his kingdom. As a loyal retainer, the Cid prepares to go into exile, but he first calls together his retainers to tell them of the king's edict. Even though any who go with him will lose their wealth and land, his retainers affirm their determination to

go with him, and through the words of Alvar F[~]ñez, their code of loyalty:

'We shall go with you, Cid, through deserts, through towns,
and never fail you while we are whole in limb;
with you we shall wear out horses and beasts of burden
and our goods and our garments
and serve you always as faithful liege men.'⁸

Though grieved at the sight of his confiscated and barren palaces, the Cid blames neither his king nor his God. He praises God, and, in words well chosen and measured, places the blame on his enemies. That action establishes the piety and moderation which dominate his character, even though at times he can be proud, realistic, calculating, and ruthless.

On the way to Burgos, Ruy Diaz promises that those who follow him will return to Castile heaped with wealth and honor. The people of Burgos do not like Alfonso's decree, but most of them fearfully obey it by denying any sort of comfort or aid to the Cid and his men. Without solicitation, Martin Antolinez decides to disobey the edict, furnish provisions for the Cid, and risk the wrath of the king. The Cid shows his cunning and practical sense when he enlists Martin's aid to dupe the Jewish money-lenders, Raquel and Vidas, to get the funds needed to support his troops. He is not very easy about it, but he lets them believe two coffers filled with sand contain wealth he cannot take with him. Martin's clever handling of the matter secures six hundred marks for the Cid and the time needed to build up his forces and his wealth. Prior to this departure from Burgos, Ruy Diaz visits the cathedral, prays for aid, and

⁸Merwin, p. 37/p.36:

'Convusco iremos, Cid, por yermos e por poblados,
Ca nunca vos fallaremos en cuanto seamos sanos
Convusco despenderemos las mulas e los cavallos
e los averes e los panos
siempre vos serviremos como leales vasallos.'

promises wealth to the church. He also visits his family and arranges for their care by the Abbot of San Pedro of Cardena.

Despite the king's edict, the knights of Burgos flock to the Cid's banner and are promised ample rewards for their services. During his last night in Castile, the angel Gabriel appears before Ruy Diaz to console him with these words:

'Ride forward Cid, good Campeador
for no man ever rode forth at so propitious a moment;⁹
as long as you live, that which is yours will prosper.'

All along the route toward the Moorish kingdom of Toledo many knights and foot-soldiers join the Cid's band.

From that point on, the rest of the first cantar and the second one reveal the ever-growing success of the Cid in military strength, wealth, and fame. Led by their brilliant and skillful leader, the Cid's forces win battle after battle by superior tactics and daring. The Cid is deadly against his enemies in battle, but magnanimous in his treatment of them after the victory. He is just and generous to his followers, who grow rich with each success.

After the capture and successful defense of Alcocer against a large enemy force, Ruy Diaz sends Minaya to report the victory, deliver money to the church at Burgos, and take a gift to Alfonso. This provides the first of several shifts from where the Cid is to the court of Alfonso, which is where he wants to be, should be, and eventually will be (figuratively, if not actually). There Minaya delivers his

⁹Merwin, p. 65/p. 64:
'Cavalgad, Cid, el buen Campeador,
ca nunca en tan buen punto cavalgo varon;
mientras que visquieredes bien se farà lo to.'

news and presents the gift. Alfonso accepts the gift, but he says it is too soon to extend mercy to one he has banished. Though he does not yet pardon Ruy Diaz, he does pardon Minaya and return to him his lands and honors. In addition, he takes a further step toward eventual reconciliation by permitting all Castilians who wish to join the Cid to do so without fear of dishonor or loss of possessions. In thanking him, Minaya astutely observes:

'Thanks, thanks, my king and natural lord;
You concede this now, later you will grant more;
with God's aid we shall do such things as will persuade you.'¹⁰

The focus then returns to the Cid's camp, where Minaya delivers two hundred new warriors to the Cid's mesnada (retinue).

Just before the end of the first cantar, the Cid commits the sole act that could be conceived as a disloyal action against the king; he raids the lands under the protection of Count Ramon of Barcelona, a vassal of Alfonso. However, Ruy Diaz does not treat that conflict as anything but a personal dispute between himself and Ramon. Despite his ever-growing strength and prestige, he never once considers any action against Alfonso; he has no wanton pride or excessive arrogance that leads to désesuré deeds.

The second cantar presents his stunning successes at Murviedro and Cebolla, but those victories are only steps in the campaign to take Valencia. The Cid makes known his intention to win Valencia for

¹⁰

Merwin, p. 101/p. 100:
'Grado e gracias, rey como a senor natural;
esto feches agora al feredes adelant;
con dios nos guisaremos como vos lo fagades.'

Christianity by sending word to Aragon, Navarre, and Castile that:

'Whoever would leave his toil and grow rich,
let him come to My Cid, whose taste is for battle.
He would now lay siege to Valencia to give it to the Christians.¹¹

Many warriors answer the call, and the Cid's siege forces the Moslems to surrender Valencia. This victory and the successful defense against a Moslem siege constitute the height of Ruy Diaz's military achievements, and he will henceforth make Valencia his permanent center.

After the victory Minaya again travels to find Alfonso, deliver gifts to him and to others, and request permission for the Cid's family to join him in Valencia. Minaya finds Alfonso at Carrión and performs his duty. The Cid's enemy, García Ordóñez, is not happy about Ruy Diaz's success. When Ordóñez makes uncomplimentary remarks about the Cid, Alfonso rebukes him with the comment, "Leave off such talk;/ in whatsoever he does he serves me better than you do."¹² Minaya then presents the Cid's request, which Alfonso quickly grants. Furthermore, Alfonso rescinds all the terms of proscription placed upon those who joined the Cid. Alfonso also encourages those who wish to join the Cid, for he now realizes, "We shall gain more by this than by disaffection."¹³

¹¹Merwin, p. 127/p. 126:
'Quien quiere perder cueta e venir a rritad,
viniesse a mio Çid que a sabor de cavalgar;
percar quiere a Valençia pora cristianos la dar.'

¹²Merwin, p. 139/p. 138:
'... dexad essa razon
que en today guisas mejor me sirve que vos.'

¹³Merwin, p. 141/p. 140:
'Mas ganaremos en esta que en otra desamor.'

The Heirs of Carrion, who realize the Cid is approaching reconciliation with the king and who always look for ways to promote their personal interests begin to consider the advantages of marrying the daughters of Cid. Minaya, who has fulfilled his mission and prepared the Cid's family for their trip to Valencia, agrees to deliver the ingratiating words the Heirs wish to send to Ruy Diaz; however, his response to them indicates that he understands the implicit hypocrisy in their message.

With fitting pomp and splendor, the Cid and his family are reunited, and Ruy Diaz comes closer to his greatest desires. A new attack on Valencia by the King of Morocco gives the Cid an opportunity to display his skill for his family, completely devastate the huge Moslem army, and make every one of his retainers quite wealthy. The Cid's share provides a rich dowry for his daughters and his wife's ladies-in-waiting; it also assures another splendid gift for Alfonso.

Minaya again delivers the gift to the king's court, as well as renewed pledges of loyalty from the Cid. Alfonso is very pleased, but the news arouses the anger and envy of García Ordóñez and the Heirs of Carrion. They realize that the Cid's continued success will be at their expense. They have added reason to think so when Alfonso shows himself more benevolent toward Ruy Diaz and bestows gifts on Minaya and Pedro Bermúdez. The Heirs determine to bolster their position by having the king arrange a marriage with the daughters of the Cid. Alfonso agrees to arrange the marriage and plans a meeting to pardon the Cid.

Ruy Diaz does not look favorably on the marriage, but he is willing to do what the king wishes. After making prudent arrangements for the

protection and care of his town, the Cid travels to the banks of the Tagus. There the reconciliation of lord and vassal takes place amid great ceremony and splendor. With his select knights, the Cid prostrates himself before Alfonso and

. . . on his knees and hands he knelt down on the ground;
he took the grass of the field between his teeth
and wept from his eyes so great was his joy.¹⁴

The Cid is now back where he belongs, both physically and figuratively. By discipline, restraint, and concern for group values and relationships, Ruy Diaz has transformed part of the "chaos-disorder" condition created by the self-assertion of his enemies and, perhaps in a more passive sense, that of the king.

Alfonso's words of pardon delight all but García Ordóñez and the Heirs of Carrion. When the king proposes the marriage of the Cid's daughters to the Heirs, Ruy Diaz skillfully suggests that the girls are not ready for marriage; however, he says he will accept Alfonso's decision to give them in marriage. At the same time, the Cid pointedly makes it clear to the king and the assembly that "It is you, not I, who have married my daughters."¹⁵ He also refuses to hand over the daughters from his own hands, but he gets the king to appoint Alvar Fanez to perform the task as the king's representative. After his return to Valencia, the Cid reports the marriage arrangements and makes it evident that he agreed to them in deference to the king.

¹⁴Merwin, pp. 183-185/pp. 182-184:
los inojos e las manos en tierra los finco,
las yerbas del campo a dientes, las tomo,
llorando de los ojos, tanto avié el gozo mayor;

¹⁵Merwin, p. 189/p. 188:
'Vos casades mis fijas, ca non gelas do yo.'

The marriage of his daughters to the Heirs puts the Cid almost at the peak of his glory; however, at this point, the Cid has reversed the effect of self-assertive action by his enemies, but he has not dealt with the source of the troubles. Part of the "chaos-disorder" condition remains and it has importance for the Cid, for Spanish chivalry, and for Alfonso's kingdom. Despite the marriage, the enmity of García Ordóñez and the Heirs remains as a source of trouble for all three of these.

Soon after the wedding, the sons-in-law, who have been given into the Cid's care to serve as they should their father and to honor as they should their lord, begin to justify the Cid's misgivings about the wedding. For that reason the third cantar presents the further dishonorable acts of the Cid's enemies, their consequences, their punishments, and the total transformation of the chaos and disorder into order and harmony.

The Heirs show their cowardice when the Cid's lion gets loose, and they are mocked and shamed by the Cid's vassals, though not by the Cid. They demonstrate both greed and cowardice in the fight against King Bucar. They want to share the wealth to be won, but they do not want to take the risks. When they go into battle, it is quite pro forma. Don Fernando asks the honor of striking the first blow, but when he flees from the foe, Pedro Bermúdez must do what he cannot do. Pedro is devoted enough to the Cid to cover up the cowardice and let Fernando take credit for killing the Moor. The Cid's warriors rout the enemy, and the Heirs share in the booty without having deserved any part of it. The Cid does not know the truth, but all his vassals know how little the Heirs deserve any honor. Their continued mockery torments the Heirs

and prompts them to take their undeserved wealth to Carrion and to plan shameful acts against their wives. Their greed, vanity, and egoism are quite démessuré. Though hatred, evil, and treachery rule their thoughts, they accept the gifts and honor the Cid accords them.

On their way to Carrion the Heirs repay the hospitality of Abengalbon by trying to kill and rob their host. The plot is reported by a servant, and the Cid's Moorish friend restrains himself from violent action only out of respect for Ruy Diaz. The Heirs commit an even more wanton and reckless deed in the oak forest at Corpes. There they spend the night

with their wives in their arms showing them love;¹⁶
yet they meant to do them evil when the sun rose.

At sunrise they send the others ahead, strip their wives to their underwear, and beat them cruelly. The girls ask for a merciful death, but the Heirs are interested only in the unrestrained assertion of their pride, greed, and egoism. They leave the girls to die.

However, the daughters of the Cid survive their harsh treatment because Feliz Muñoz, suspicious of the Heirs returns to the oak grove, revives the girls, and takes them to safety. The Cid grieves when he learns of the outrage, but he does not rush after the Heirs in anger and destroy them, as he could easily do. He ponders a bit and promises to avenge them in these words:

'I swear by this beard, which no one ever has torn
these Heirs of Carrion shall not go free with this;
as for my daughters I shall yet marry them well!'¹⁷

¹⁶Merwin, p. 233/p. 232:
con sus mugieres en braços demuéstranles amor;
¡ mal gelo cumplieron quando salie el sol!

¹⁷Merwin, pp. 241-243; pp. 240-242:
'per aquesta barba que nadi non messo,
non la logardn ifantes de Carrion;
que a mis fijas bien las casare yo!'

The Cid, true to his word, takes immediate action by sending Muño Gustioz to seek justice of the king. The Cid's handling of the marriage arrangements has assured Alfonso's aid because the outrage against the girls makes the deed of the Infantes a flagrant insult to the king who had given them the girls in marriage. Alfonso responds to the Cid's plea by convening a court which all the vassals must attend.

The Infantes try to avoid the trip to Toledo, but Alfonso tells them refusal to attend will result in disgrace and exile. García Ordóñez supports the Heirs by calling together all the enemies who have abused and hope to abuse the Cid. For such a contingency the Cid prepares by arming a hundred of his best knights.

At the assembly the Cid declines the place of honor next to Alfonso, for his primary purpose is to press his claims against the Infantes. Each charge he makes is more serious and more damaging to the Heirs, who are forced to return Colado and Tizón, the swords given to them by Ruy Diaz. They are also ordered to pay back the dowry money. Having won his civil claims, the Cid openly proclaims their greatest infamy and demands satisfaction. Asur Gonzalez insults the origins of the Cid and thus becomes involved in the challenges to combat made by Pedro Bermúdez, Martín Antolínez, and Muño Gustioz. As a result of the challenges all details of the Heirs' cowardice and treachery are made public, including those which the Cid did not know about. Minaya offers a challenge that is accepted by Gomez Pelaez, but the king approves only the combats of the Cid's three champions. In the course of these activities messengers from Navarre and Aragon come to arrange marriages between the princes of their lands and the daughters of the Cid.

The Heirs try to have the swords Colado and Tizon, now the property of Bermúdez and Antolínez, banned from the fight, but their request is denied. Bermúdez unhorses Fernando and wounds him with his spear, and the sight of Tizón in Pedro's hand makes Fernando yield at once. Antolínez wounds Diego Gonzalez with Colado and, when Diego refuses to use his sword, strikes him an insulting blow on the posterior with the flat surface of Colado. Diego retreats outside the combat markers and thus admits defeat. Muño Gustioz has the only brave opponent, Asur Gonzalez, the father of the Heirs. Asur fights bravely and honorably, but Gustioz wounds him.

The Heirs leave the field in disgrace and the Cid returns to Valencia with the knowledge that his daughters have been avenged, his enemies disgraced, and his personal honor lifted to a new level. When the poem describes the second wedding of the Cid's daughters, he provides a summary that shows how completely the "chaos-disorder" condition has been changed into one of order and harmony. The poet compares the two marriages and then tells us:

See how he grows in honor who in good hour was born;
 his daughters are wives of the Kings of Navarre and Aragon.
 Now the Kings of Spain are his kinsmen,
 and all advance in honor through My Cid the Campeador.¹⁸

The phrase "he who was born in a good hour" suggests the singular and distinctive quality of both the Spanish hero and the epic poem written about him. Throughout the first two cantares the focus is on

¹⁸Merwin, p. 301/p. 300:

Veed qual ondra crece al que en buen ora nació.
 quando señoras son sues fijas de Navarra e de Aragón.
 Oy los reyes d'España sos parientes son,
 a todas alcança ondra por el que en bueno nació.

the efforts of the Cid to change the "chaos-disorder" condition produced by the self-assertive acts of his enemies, who have influenced Alfonso to exile Ruy Diaz from all that is important to him. The Cid, by the exercise of epic moderation and complete loyalty to the king who has unjustly exiled him, methodically transforms the chaos and disorder in his life to regain his proper position in Spanish feudal society. While doing this, the Cid demonstrates that he is the exemplar of that society, and the means by which he gains honor in exile expands the geographic scope of the poem; this, in turn, creates the epic scope of the work as he encounters and conquers all the foreign enemies of his ruler. Toward the end of the second cantar and in the third cantar his success in re-establishing himself creates a broader, more important goal for him. His success forces the malevolent nature of his enemies out into the open and causes them to perform actions which, though directed at the Cid, dishonor Spanish chivalry and insult Alfonso's authority. The Cid, in seeking redress for the outrage against his daughters, discredits his enemies and removes their malignant influence from Alfonso's court. In this fashion, the dominant external frame of the story-structure framework is gradually revealed to be the political and moral stability of Alfonso's court, which the Cid's actions protect both from without and within.

In one sense, the Cid is also a defender of Christianity against the pagans just as Roland is, but the fierce loyalty of the Cid to the feudal system dominates all else. Like Aeneas in the major part of the Aeneid, the Cid is an exemplary figure, but with a difference; he needs nobody to remind him of his duty to God, to his family, to his overlord, and to the men who serve him.

Like Beowulf, Ruy Diaz is both the ideal retainer and the ideal leader. He is the epitome of self-restraint and mesure in his conduct, and by such conduct he transforms the "chaos-disorder" conditions created for himself, for his followers, and for the court of Alfonso. His self-restraint and mesure are not just approved and praised, for the author virtually insists upon and glorifies them. Thus the range of heroic values has been skewed much more in a particular direction than in the Homeric poems. The normative values become the sine qua non of late medieval epic. The Cid, like Aeneas, is at best on the very fringe of the heroic world and Poema del Cid is on the outer perimeter of epic and heroic narrative. This aspect of the work will later be developed elsewhere.

Iliadic Configuration and Odyssean Parallel

Once the poem has been viewed in perspective it is evident that the organization, development, and structure reflect certain aspects of both Homeric poems. The terminal story-structure framework, despite some differences of handling, is essentially that of The Iliad. The story element, however, parallels that of The Odyssey, for the Cid, like Odysseus, has been separated from everything that is important to him. Consequently, his efforts will be to return to those things which have meaning for him. Unlike both The Iliad and The Odyssey, the start of the work indicates only part of the framework: the central chaos and disorder produced by the anti-Cid faction which has caused Ruy Diaz to be exiled from his proper place in Spanish feudal society. The narrative action and development that takes place to return the Cid to his rightful place in Alfonso's court gradually reveals the other parts of the story-structure framework and also produces the epic scope.

As the Cid systematically undertakes to transform the circumstances of his exile, the Spanish-Moorish conflict assumes importance in the poem; in fact, that conflict becomes a second frame in the total framework. The Cid's victories win back his honor and position, and each one of them reduces the dangers from the Moors. At the same time, those successes increase the possible danger to the Cid and to the court of Alfonso when the Heirs of Carrion and the anti-Cid faction feel their position threatened. As a result the latter part of the work shifts the emphasis to the conflict between the Cid and his enemies, whose actions make them enemies of the royal power. Their excessive self-assertion brings about their fall from favor, and the Cid, by seeking justice for what they have done, achieves his own ends and removes their pernicious influence from Alfonso's court. His actions thus establish the worth of true feudal loyalty and help to secure the well-being of Alfonso's court both from within and without. What the Cid establishes by disciplined self-restraint and mesure becomes the external controlling frame of the story-structure framework.

During the Cid's exile before he wins his way back to his proper position, the poem has a dual focus: where the Cid is and where he wants to be and eventually will be again. The shuttle-focus technique moves the reader from one place to the other and back again. There is virtually no flashback, but there is a great deal of foreshadowing in respect to the eventual reconciliation of overlord and vassal.

The nature of the "chaos-disorder" conditions of Poema del Cid is somewhat different from that of other epics. Only the exile of the Cid is an actual "chaos-disorder" condition for him and for his family.

However, the reason for it produces a potential condition of chaos and disorder for Alfonso's court and for his land. The anti-Cid faction which caused the exile of Ruy Diaz is proven to be a weak and incompetent group little concerned with their feudal obligations and apparently little concerned with the well-being of the land. Their extreme self-assertion in having the Cid exiled creates a potential "chaos-disorder" condition for the kingdom because the greatest military strength of the land depends upon the Cid and his loyal retainers. Because the Cid was as devoted to the feudal system and to his ruler as his vassals were to him the potential chaos and disorder never became actual. Even though unjustly exiled, the Cid devotes his disciplined efforts to fighting the enemies of Alfonso. This devoted service to the group cause wins everything the Cid as an individual can desire. His exercise of epic moderation either transforms what "chaos-disorder" situations develop or prevents the potential ones from developing as they might. His epic moderation both creates and maintains order and harmony in his own life and in that of his land.

Though the poem does not make an explicit point of the importance of resolving the conflict between the Cid and his enemies, the resolution of that conflict is quite important in the poem. The work stresses the importance of that resolution to the Cid, but within the context of the poem the ending of the conflict assumes great significance for Spanish chivalry and Alfonso's kingdom. The Cid, who appears to have some self-assertive tendencies, never indulges them to any great extent. If he were to behave as Agamemnon, Achilles, or even the Odysseus of the early part of The Odyssey, he could tear apart the fabric of Spanish

chivalry and also create serious problems for Alfonso. However, he does neither of these; instead, the Cid's exercise of epic moderation keeps the excessive self-assertion of the Gonzalez clan from corrupting Spanish chivalry and assures the well-being of Alfonso's court.

Though the overall story-structure framework parallels that of The Iliad, there is a significant modification in the action and development taking place within the framework. Where The Iliad presents an expanding circle of chaos and disorder that is eventually stopped and reversed by the actions of the principal figures, Poema del Cid presents an expanding circle of growing success that slowly and systematically reverses the initial "chaos-disorder" condition. In the process the Cid's actions and conduct bring out into the open the other "chaos-disorder" conditions so that the conduct of the Cid's enemies becomes an overt betrayal of proper chivalric principles and feudal loyalty. Consequently, the Cid and his warriors become the champions of chivalric honor and feudal loyalty, and their victories complete the transformation of chaos and disorder at all levels.

The heroic qualities are not played down or disregarded, but they are presented with a different orientation from that of The Iliad; they are generally presented without the excessive or exaggerated manner of earlier epics such as La Chanson de Roland.

The Cid and his forces oppose greater numerical forces, but they cut down the odds by tactical skill and daring, or by surprise and speed in splitting the enemy forces and out-maneuvering them. There are no accounts of each hero slaughtering hundreds of the enemy at one time; the emphasis is on group tactics and group success rather than on personal

superiority and glory. The individual knights may demonstrate outstanding strength, courage, and skill, but these qualities are put in the service of the social and political group. The hero and the heroic values have moved about as far away from the relative freedom of the Homeric position as it is possible to go and still deserve the appellation heroic. The warrior society, individually and collectively, has come to accept and exercise epic moderation and group-oriented values rather than personal and private motivations for fame and glory.

SECTION THREE
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Chapter V

The Perspective of Medieval Epic

Introductory Comments

The examples of medieval heroic narrative presented in the preceding sections have been analyzed with the intention of providing a thorough explication of the individual works and a general overview of representative medieval epic. The analyses have been organized with the following points in mind: the central pattern of chaos and disorder in the work, the story element and development, the action and plot movement, the narrative methods and development, the growth to epic scope, the values and standards of the principal figures and the social group, the total story-structure framework, and the significance developed from all of these. As a result of these analyses, it is possible to make valid conclusions about the nature, structure, and significance of heroic narrative in the Middle Ages.

Beowulf

Beowulf presents at its center three specific "chaos-disorder" situations for which the hero is not responsible but which he does transform by his skills and personal qualities. These situations form the core of a Heldensleben about the life and deeds of Beowulf, and the epic develops around that core.

The three situations of chaos and disorder occur in two fixed locations and time periods: several days at the Danish court of

Hrothgar and some threescore years at the Geat court of Hygelac and Beowulf. The poet, in presenting the three situations and the means by which Beowulf transforms them, adds further details about the hero's life. Those details give a relatively complete picture of Beowulf's life, and by annular expansion the three situations develop into the central Heldensleben. However, some of the details about Beowulf combine with other supplementary and complementary incidents to provide additional locations and a less restricted time span, and these extend the heroic environment in time and space. Thus they continue the annular growth and build the epic scope. More importantly, they do so from a particular viewpoint.

The three specific situations show Beowulf both as ideal retainer and ideal ruler. However, other details of his life show that he once fell short of being even a typical or representative warrior. Still other incidents and details show the reader how Beowulf became the exemplary figure he is at the time he performs the three central feats of the poem. In addition to the details about Beowulf, the supplementary and complementary incidents are added to the basic story elements.

These incidents serve two important purposes. First of all, they extend the heroic background in both time and space; consequently, they provide the epic scope of the work by making Beowulf part of the brotherhood of Germanic heroic society. Secondly, they provide examples of unrestrained self-assertion, or demesure, that serve to highlight the exemplary character of Beowulf. The mature Beowulf is shown in contrast to his two earlier selves, the "slack" youth and the reckless darer of the Breca incident. He is also contrasted with other figures of past and present times who were guilty of various degrees of reckless, self-assertive

action: Unferth, Heremod, Hrothgar, and even Hygelac. By their unrestrained conduct all of these men brought various sorts of chaos and disorder to themselves and their lands during their lifetimes or after their deaths.

On the other hand, Beowulf never caused his land, his family, or his people to suffer from his actions. By means of his heroic qualities and his disciplined, restrained behavior, he combatted the self-assertive deeds of others to become the exemplary retainer and, later, the ideal ruler. He was thus able to maintain peace in his land for many years. When trouble, in the form of a dragon, came to devastate his land, that trouble resulted from another's actions and not from his actions. He ends the menace of the dragon by giving his life for his land, but he cannot shield his people from the chaos and disorder which will come after his death; the seeds of trouble which Hygelac and others had planted earlier by their self-assertive acts against the Swedes and the Franks will bear bitter fruit for the Geats.

Beowulf had also earlier rid the Danish land of its monsters, but he could not save them from the self-assertive forces that were to be let loose after Hrothgar's death. From what takes place in the land of the Danes and the Geats, it is apparent that the monster threat in both lands was less of a problem than the troubles created by the reckless, unrestrained behavior of men.

In effect, the central tension of Beowulf is an external tension between immoderate self-assertion and disciplined, restrained, group-oriented behavior. The latter conduct is not only approved and praised in the work, but is also exemplified by the hero. When such influence and strength are missing from the political and social milieu, the forces

of self-assertion bring with them chaos and disorder in the Heldendaemmerung that parallels the Goetterdaemmerung of Germanic mythology. The Heldendaemmerung brought on by the demesure actions becomes the controlling and encircling frame of the story-structure framework.

The preceding discussion shows how the Beowulf poet has built his epic. He has developed three "chaos-disorder" situations into a Heldensleben by adding episodes from Beowulf's life. The hero's actions and behavior show that the author wants to present a special Heldensleben, for Beowulf's performance is exemplary. This aspect of the poem is further strengthened by the comparisons and contrasts between the hero's conduct and the action and behavior of those motivated by immoderate self gratification, or demesure. These comparisons and contrasts are part of the illustrative episodes that expand the material in time and space to create the epic scope of the work. The three "chaos-disorder" situations are only means to get to the essential thematic core that demonstrates the overt tension between mesure and demesure behavior, and the author reserves praise for the former and censure for the latter. Beowulf's deeds are important, but they are less important than the values which determine his conduct. While those values are exercised chaos and disorder are held in check, but when they are not the chaos and disorder resulting from immoderate self-assertion descend upon the land. This aspect of Beowulf reverses the usual pattern in the resolution of the mesure-demesure tension, and, in so doing, emphasizes more forcefully the value of mesure conduct, or epic moderation.

Chanson de Roland

Except for the evident dramatic handling of the plot, the Chanson de Roland is the medieval epic nearest to the general pattern Homer used in The Iliad. The general conditions of the struggle between the Franks and the Moors have created a specific "chaos-disorder" condition that both Marsile, the Moslem leader, and Charlemagne, leader of the Franks, would like to change. Charlemagne, wearied by seven years of war away from his beloved France would like to be able to return there in honor, and Marsile would like nothing more than to have him and his army out of Spain. Blancandrin's proposal, though devised to benefit Marsile, provides a solution for both leaders. All the Franks know that they should not trust Marsile, Charlemagne knows it very well, and Roland warns the Franks in his vigorously aggressive fashion; yet they do exactly what they know they should not do.

The council of the Franks to decide what course to take and whom to send to Marsile's camp produces the overt hostility between Roland and Ganelon. This adds the self-assertive wishes of Ganelon and Roland to those of Marsile and Charlemagne. Ganelon's unrestrained emotional outburst should be enough to disqualify him for such an important mission, but the presumably wise and venerable leader of the Franks shows little wisdom in ordering Ganelon to go. Charlemagne demonstrates even less wisdom in permitting him to go after Ganelon's malevolent attack on Roland and the Peers and after the warning omen of the dropped glove. Charlemagne's conduct can only be explained by an excessive desire to return to France. In this sense his action is at least passive self-assertion and certainly démésure conduct. Once

the king permits Ganelon to go Blancandrin and Ganelon can arrange the treachery that will so greatly affect French chivalry.

In Marsile's camp Ganelon adds the necessary elements to get his revenge on Roland and the Peers, but the plan now satisfies Marsile's fondest desires more completely than the original form. At this point, chaos and disorder are only potentialities created by the multiple self-assertion of Charlemagne, Marsile, Ganelon, and Roland. Potentiality becomes certainty when Charlemagne does nothing to keep Roland and the Peers from being assigned to the rear-guard or to assure an adequate force against any surprise attack. There is a modicum of reasonable argument in Bédier's explanation that Charlemagne could not do much to avoid the designation of Roland and the Peers to the rear-guard;¹ however, there can scarcely be any valid argument to justify Charlemagne's failure to insist on a larger force.

Under other circumstances, Charlemagne's action would be understandable, but in this case Charlemagne knows that Marsile is not to be trusted. He also knows that Ganelon has both threatened and promised trouble for Roland and the Peers. Charlemagne's dreams, which can hardly represent anything but his subconscious thoughts, have warned of the treachery. Charlemagne's failure to act as vigorously and positively as he did in refusing to let any of the peers serve as ambassador to Marsile can only be explained by his desire to accept the great booty and the chance to return to France. Though of a different sort, his action is nearly as démessuré as that of Roland and Ganelon. Charlemagne's failure to do what he clearly realizes he should do permits the more

¹Bédier, Les Légendes Épiques, Tome III, 421-424.

vigorous demesure of Roland to assure the success of the plan conceived by Blancandrin and further developed by Ganelon's treachery.

In this manner the original "chaos-disorder" condition grows annularly into successively larger conditions of chaos and disorder for the Peers, for French chivalry, for "douce France," and eventually for Christendom. Charlemagne's failure to act loses for him the finest fighting force of France and puts upon his shoulders the task of avenging the rear-guard, crushing the Emir's army, punishing Ganelon's treachery, and going forth from France to fight the enemies of Christendom.

The full impact of the consequences of Charles' behavior comes when the king demands Ganelon's punishment. Ganelon refuses to accept the accusation of treachery, and he secures strong support. No Roland, no Oliver, and no Peers stand ready to champion Charlemagne, and only at the last moment do Thierry's combat and victory save the honor of French chivalry and Charlemagne's kingdom. When new pagan forces create trouble, there are no Peers to send to quell their disturbance and Charlemagne himself must lead the forces of Christianity. The annular growth and development of the poem show the controlling frame of the story-structure framework to be the political well-being of France and of Christianity.

Several aspects of La Chanson de Roland are significantly different from those generally revealed in heroic narrative and epic. The shuttle-focus technique is used to switch from one place of action to another, but there is very little retrospective or prospective narration. Brief flash-backs present a few of the earlier deeds of Roland, and the

comments of the principal figures foreshadow the fate of Roland. Charlemagne's dreams and visions foreshadow events to come, but they are not developed units of narration such as the vision permitted to Aeneas during his visit to Hades. The French epic uses no supplementary or auxiliary incidents to expand the scope of the work in time and space. The poem achieves epic scope because the author indicates the relevance of the acts and conduct of the principal figures to the well-being of French chivalry, France, and the Christian struggle against the pagans.

Except for these variations, the story-structure framework, the narrative development within the framework, and the halting and transformation of spreading chaos and disorder are all very much like that of The Iliad. Unrestrained self-assertion spreads chaos and disorder throughout the social and political environment, but restrained, group-oriented action and conduct halt the spread of "chaos-disorder" conditions and transform them to order and harmony: mesure, or epic moderation, can and does combat multiple démésure.

Slovo O Polku Igoreve

Russia's example of heroic narrative is essentially a lament about a single heroic action, but the treatment given the material develops that action into something more than a lament and something less than an epic.

The general "chaos-disorder" conditions of the Polovtsian-Russian struggle has created a specific "chaos-disorder" condition for Prince Igor and the other Russian princes. They want to enjoy access to their beloved Don River basin and to gain the fame of making such access possible by defeating the Polovtsy. Their reckless desire for glory and

fame results in defeat and capture. That defeat and capture prompts the central lament of Svyatoslav, who criticizes their démesuré conduct and its consequences. Svyatoslav also condemns the self-assertion of the other princes who fight among themselves when they should be uniting for action that would benefit the Russian land rather than the Polovtsy. He does this by citing examples of Russian warriors who served the best interest of their land without excessive self-assertion and also by contrasting them with others who have demonstrated or are demonstrating the same reckless behavior as Igor and the captured princes. The poet also presents illustrative incidents of both démesuré and mesuré conduct. All the illustrative incidents are presented by shuttle-focus movement backward and forward in time, and there is also movement in space from the Russian homeland to where Igor is located.

These supplementary and complementary episodes serve two functions. They expand the scope of the work in time and space to give a view of Russian heroic society from the days of the earliest warrior figures up to the contemporary period of the poem. They are given significant focus and emphasis by the criticism of rash and self-centered behavior and the praise of warrior talents devoted to the service and well-being of the group. As a result of the pattern of the action (from reckless attack to initial success and then to the defeat and capture of the princes), the initial "chaos-disorder" condition expands in circular fashion to involve the knightly society of the past and present and the general safety of Russia. The supplementary and complementary episodes further broaden the scope in general epic fashion and create a work that is truly an epic in miniature.

Poema del Cid

Spain's major example of epic poetry continues the development of group-oriented values and carries that aspect of heroic narrative to its limits. The "chaos-disorder" condition at the center of the work is quite unusual, for the hero begins in disgrace and exile. That situation, which is not the result of any wrong done by the Cid, separates him from nearly everything meaningful to him: from Burgos, from his family, from his land, and from his king. His enemies, Don García and the Heirs of Carrion, caused his exile because of their envy and self-assertive desires. With nothing left him but his personal reputation and the loyalty of his retainers, the Cid might very well strike back at his enemies or rebel against his king. He does not even consider these actions, but he does take positive and concrete steps to reverse the chaos and disorder created by the deceit of his enemies and the willing accord of his sovereign. Thus the development of the story element, action, narrative method, scope, and meaning of the work will be by annular expansion around the central situation of the undeserved exile. Step by step, the Cid will reverse the conditions of his exile and by so doing force his enemies to actions that bring their downfall.

The Cid's means of doing this is a carefully prepared series of military campaigns of ever-increasing scale and degree of success. His victories provide positive demonstration of his worth as a warrior and a loyal vassal, and, at the same time, they show his intense regard for his followers, his land and people, his religion, and his ruler. He subordinates what self-assertive tendencies he has to group values and needs, and by service to the latter he achieves his personal fame and

glory. He experiences no tension between self-assertion and self-restraint, but the tension exists between his disciplined self-restraint and the unrestrained self-assertion of his enemies.

His successes and the conduct that accompanies them re-establish the bonds with king and kingdom. As a result, his enemies take action that reveals their unworthiness as knights, their pettiness as men, and their arrogant disloyalty to their sovereign. Their wanton self-seeking becomes inimical to the best interests of Spanish chivalry, of the king's court, and of the kingdom of Alfonso. The Cid, by his disciplined restraint and moderate conduct, crushes their reckless self-assertion and the harmful results it has brought to Spanish chivalry and to Alfonso's court and kingdom.

The Cid thus becomes the exemplar of Spanish and feudal chivalry, the epitome of epic moderation. He has in effect reached the position of Aeneas in the Aeneid and gone beyond it. Aeneas had been given the awesome responsibility for the re-settlement of Troy and the founding of the future Rome, but he had reluctantly put aside his personal desires for the group welfare. When he finally shouldered his burden fully, he subordinated his fondest desires to the needs of his destiny. By so doing he appeared as something of a tedious hero through part of the Aeneid and somewhat colorless when compared to the verve and dash of the more self-assertive Turnus. As a consequence of the special talents and qualities Aeneas needed for his task, he could not be the colorful hero of the Trojan war. Because of the importance of new and less self-centered values, he had nearly passed beyond the extreme limits of the

primitive heroic values of the old heroic world, a world in which Achilleus was the alpha and Aeneas the omega.

This comparison is equally true of the Cid's position in respect to the more primitive heroic figure, but with some differences. The Cid, without having any demanding destiny imposed upon him, acts with epic moderation from the start. For him there is no tension between the self-assertive and the self-restrained position; he acts with discipline and restraint against the external forces of self-assertion, and he achieves personal fame and success within the framework of group needs and values. The reason for this in respect to both Aeneas and the Cid is that the mean between self-assertion and self-restraint has shifted so far in the direction of the latter that it has become almost a prescribed choice. When that happens epic and heroic narrative virtually cease to exist as such and become something else. The ramifications of this are relevant to a later stage of the discussion and will be treated there.

The organization, development, and structure of Poema del Cid reflects certain aspects of both The Iliad and The Odyssey. Though there are some minor differences of handling, the terminal story-structure framework follows that of The Iliad. However, in respect to the story element, the Spanish epic more closely resembles The Odyssey. Both Odysseus and the Cid are separated from all that is meaningful to them, and their exercise of moderation and discipline (earlier or later) permits them to return to their proper positions and functions in their lands. There is, nevertheless, a difference in respect to the revelation of the controlling frame of the story-structure framework.

In both The Iliad and The Odyssey the full story-structure framework is revealed at the very start of the poem. The opening book of The Iliad indicates that the "will of Zeus" and the Agamemnon-Achilleus conflict will be the major parts of the framework within which all elements of the epic will be developed. From the first book of The Odyssey the reader is clearly aware that the controlling frame of the poem involves both the return to Ithaca and the effective handling of the chaos and disorder existing there. On the other hand, Poema del Cid at first appears to concern only the reversal of the Cid's situation; however, in the third cantar, confrontation with his enemies becomes important to the Cid, to Spanish chivalry, and to Alfonso. Only then does it become apparent that the security and welfare of the social groups of which the Cid is a part determine the controlling frame within which the story element, action, narrative movement, scope, and meaning of the work are developed.

The special quality of the story element in Poema del Cid eliminates various elements of epic method. Flashback and foreshadowing are absent, and there are no developed units of retrospective or prospective narration. No supplemental or illustrative incidents are used in the development of the story element or narrative method. There is no need for, or use of, the catalogues of heroes, which, however altered they may be from those of classical epic, still have a small part in other medieval epics. However, one element of epic technique remains unchanged: the separation of the Cid from all he values provides the reason for shifting the focus from where he is to where his king is. Except for this, the pace and the development are rapid and direct, and the narrative

development and scope expand to the limits of the Spanish feudal world of which the Cid is the ideal hero, the exemplar of epic moderation.

Overall Perspective

Medieval epic and heroic narrative, as demonstrated by these characteristic works, present a delightful combination of diversity and similarity. The general pattern of the story-structure framework is similar in all four poems. Each of them has a "chaos-disorder" condition (or set of conditions) at the narrative core, and this condition is important to the hero (or heroes) and to the social group of which the central figures are a part. Unlike classical heroic narrative, in which the controlling external frame of the story-structure framework is evident from the start, the controlling frame of medieval heroic narrative is presented in developmental fashion; consequently, it is not evident until the end of the work. Within this general framework, the narrative cores of the poems are developed by expansive annular growth. The nature of the controlling frame and of the tension at the center of the narrative core determines what minor variations exist within the general pattern. The central tension of each work determines a great deal about the action, narrative development, scope, and significance of the individual poems; however, the handling and use of the central tension leads to one major aspect the works have in common: the importance of epic moderation.

Beowulf shows this aspect in two ways. No internal tension between unrestrained self-assertion and group-oriented self-restraint exists for the hero of the central episodes of the poem, but the supplemental episodes from his past demonstrate that he was not always

the restrained and disciplined hero of the three major episodes. However, the external tension between his epic moderation and the self-assertion of others is the primary emphasis of the poem. This is true not only of the central incidents, but also of the supplemental illustrative incidents which contrast Beowulf's behavior with the conduct of other Germanic heroes. One need not agree completely with L. L. Schuecking's interpretation of this aspect of Beowulf,² but it is difficult to deny that the author has consciously made Beowulf the hero of epic moderation and the champion of group-centered values against selfish desires and standards. The action, narrative method, scope, and significant values of the work develop from the core of central tension between group-centered self-restraint and individual self-assertion.

La Chanson de Roland demonstrates the same characteristics in two ways, but it does so in a more complex fashion than the other epics. The initial "chaos-disorder" condition represented by the Marsile-Charlemagne conflict is, at least at first, a condition involving both self-assertion on the part of the two leaders and apparent concern for the well-being of the groups they lead. However, it soon becomes apparent that Marsile has no real concern for his group and that Charlemagne fails to act in the best interests of his group. Their self-assertiveness produces the circumstances favorable to the self-assertive conflict between Roland and Ganelon, and the results of that contention enlarge the pattern of chaos and disorder for both sides, much as a similar contention does in The Iliad.

²Schuecking, "Das Koenigsideal in Beowulf," pp. 1-14. Professor Schuecking develops the very tenable thesis that the poem was designed to serve as a handbook for princes.

The disastrous confrontation at Ronceveaux and the consequences to both forces there expand the action to massive proportions. Roland's continued unrestrained self-assertiveness at the pass rejects the sensible plea for group-oriented moderation made by Oliver. As a result Charlemagne and France lose the services of the elite force of French chivalry. Charlemagne's combination of active and passive demesure costs him a great deal, for he must correct the situations his conduct produced; he must become the active force to avenge his warriors, to destroy the pagan forces of the Emir, to restore order in French chivalry, and later to leave "douce France" to defend France and Christianity against the pagan world.

In such fashion the action, narrative movement, scope and significance develop in annular fashion around the complex core of external and internal tension between individual self-assertion and group-centered restraint and moderation. Because the material makes France the defender of Christianity against paganism, the development to full epic scope can be achieved with almost no retrospective or prospective narration and without supplemental episodes.

In much the same fashion Slovo O Polky Igoreve demonstrates similar characteristics, but it does so more in the manner of Beowulf. Prince Igor reacts to the chaos and disorder created by the Polovtsy invasion of the Don River basin, but his reaction to that situation is dominated more by self-assertive wishes than group-centered restraint and discipline. His conduct expands the scope of chaos and disorder by causing the destruction of the retinue and the capture of the princes. Thus an act intended to reduce the danger to the Russian land increases it.

The unknown author of Slovo O Polky Igoreve uses the act of unrestrained zeal to enlarge the scope of the action by connecting it to past and present examples of both self-assertion and self-restraint. These examples permit him to achieve a suggestion of epic scope in miniature and to urge the exercise of group-centered self-restraint on the part of the princes. Further approval of and support for such conduct is reinforced by the decision of Igor to respond to the needs of his land and escape so that he may give back to the people the strength of his leadership. Without the tension created by the examples of warrior behavior the poem would be only a limited account of one heroic failure. With the tension and the expansive narrative technique the poet creates a miniature epic.

Spain's Poema del Cid not only illustrates the same characteristics as the other three works, but it also carries them to their ultimate limits. The chaos and disorder at the center of the work is the result of self-assertive tendencies of the enemies of the Cid and of the ruler who is influenced by those enemies. The Cid is not without passion and he does have good reason to exercise considerable self-assertion against his enemies and his king for the exile to which they sent him; however, he does not display such conduct. He meets their unrestrained self-assertion by the most thorough epic moderation of all heroic narrative. This produces the central tension of the work, and that tension determines the action, narrative development, scope, and significance of the poem. By his epic moderation the Cid reverses the conditions of his exile, reveals the dangerous evil of his enemies, destroys that danger, and returns order and harmony to Spanish chivalry and Alfonso's kingdom.

The observant and interested reader of medieval heroic narrative will be led to some significant conclusions. He will note that medieval epic and heroic narrative show a remarkably unified, though not identical pattern. At the center of all medieval heroic narrative he will find a condition of chaos and disorder which affects the heroic figures and the social units of which they are a part. That condition (or set of conditions) results from a tension between uncontrolled self-assertion and group-oriented, disciplined self-restraint; however, the circumstances of the tension differ from those of classical heroic narrative.

In classical heroic narrative the tension generally exists within the individual hero but sometimes can be found both within the heroic figure and between him and another personage or group of individuals. On the other hand, medieval heroic narrative generally presents an external tension between the central figures and only occasionally presents or implies an internal tension for the hero. For this reason the "chaos-disorder" conditions of medieval heroic narrative are the results of the self-assertive positions of the principal figures and must be opposed and reversed by the disciplined, group-oriented self-restraint of the hero or other central personages. The importance of the self-restrained position of epic moderation is generally presented in more explicit terms by medieval heroic narrative than it was in the classical literature, where it was an implicit part of the work. However, the tension between heroic self-assertion and epic moderation furnishes the literary core of all medieval heroic narration, and from and around that core grow the story element, the action, the plot movement, the narrative development, and the epic scope. That growth depends upon the handling and resolution of the tension to transform

the "chaos-disorder" condition, and the way the tension is handled and resolved determines the major significance of the work.

The handling and resolution depend upon a guiding and controlling set of values which are both ethical and social in nature and which are held by the poet and the society for whom and about whom he is writing. The guiding and controlling set of values produces a story-structure framework that includes the "chaos-disorder" condition, the tension between self-assertion and self-restraint, and a controlling frame for the works. The growth of the story element, action, plot movement, narrative development, and epic scope fills out the story-structure framework.

There are variations in respect to most of these elements of heroic narrative, but the general pattern of growth is by outward annular growth. This pattern of outward growth may be accomplished by the use of supplemental incidents, as in Beowulf and Slovo O Polky Igoreve, or by some other means of expanding the physical and social scope of the work, as in La Chanson de Roland and Poema del Cid. In either case the handling of the tension presents the same point of view, for self-assertive tendencies enlarge the conditions of chaos and disorder while the exercise of self-restraint, or heroic moderation, stops the spread of "chaos-disorder" conditions and transforms them.

Either implicitly or explicitly, epic moderation is approved and praised by the contrast between the results of excessive self-assertion and those of disciplined self-restraint. Though the excesses of the heroic principals may make them commanding figures, such excesses are condemned by the poets of all the works. Such condemnation may be

presented in both an oblique and direct fashion (as in La Chanson de Roland and Slovo O Polky Igoreve) or in both a direct and representational manner (as in Beowulf and Poema del Cid). In La Chanson de Roland and Slovo O Polky Igoreve the excesses of the principal figures are subjected to criticism within the social texture of the work; in Beowulf and Poema del Cid the hero is the representative of epic moderation and other principal personages are criticized for their excesses.

In all cases the criticism is based upon the harm done to the well-being of the group which is dependent on the deeds and conduct of its heroes. Mere heroic exuberance and personal drive are not enough; the poet, speaking for the society and times for which he writes insists upon the exercise of epic moderation for the group well-being. Epic moderation is the only socially valid choice permitted to the medieval heroic warrior.

SECTION FOUR

HEROIC NARRATIVE IN FULL PERSPECTIVE

Epic and heroic poetry have for many years provided much to delight and stimulate both general readers and scholars. Quite fortunately no restrictive or formalistic criteria were imposed on heroic narrative during a major part of its chronological span, and yet it developed a remarkably effective configuration, a significant structure, and a characteristic spirit that set it apart from other types of literary creation.

Homer's epics provided the essential ingredients and inherent possibilities of epic-heroic poetry, and, even after Horace and others set down formalistic principles, heroic narrative never wandered far from the content and structure of Homeric epic. The ingredients and possibilities Homer provided probably account for both the remarkable diversity and surprising unity which characterize classical epic. Indeed, even though it is not possible to establish clear and precise relationships between classical and medieval epic poetry, medieval heroic narrative contains the same ingredients found in Homer's poems and continues to develop the inherent possibilities of Homeric epic.

Both the ingredients and possibilities of Homer's poems have been discussed in the developing sections of this study, but they may be usefully mentioned again before offering relevant conclusions about them. The story element is never the major focus of heroic narrative, but there is a story situation in all epic and heroic poetry. The story situation of heroic narrative concerns a central pattern of chaos and

disorder experienced and often created by the hero or heroes for himself and his social group, and the nature of epic is to show the reasons for the situation, to demonstrate the effects of it, and to effect a transformation of the chaos and disorder. These steps provide the action and plot structure developed by the special narrative techniques of epic and heroic poetry. These steps also produce a pattern of growth to epic scope, and that pattern creates a particular configuration and a characteristic total story-structure framework. The values and standards of the individuals and the group are presented by these steps within that characteristic framework. The significance of heroic narrative develops from the handling of all these aspects.

The developing sections of this study support certain conclusions about the inter-relationships between form and structure and theme and idea of epic-heroic poetry; these, in turn furnish meaningful comment on the development and significance of the genre.

The following conclusions may be made in respect to the inter-relationships of all four aspects of heroic poetry:

- (1) Both classical and medieval heroic narrative demonstrate a circular, concentric type of story-structure framework.
- (2) The story element, action, plot movement, narrative development, and epic scope are framed within that story-structure framework.
- (3) Some events of the action and plot movement may appear to be linear in structure, but the over-riding pattern of growth for heroic poetry is annular--usually outward or expansive, sometimes inward or recessive, or a combination of both.
- (4) Heroic narrative never has just one geographical or situational focus; it usually has two and, on occasion, more.
- (5) The time frame of heroic narrative is normally extensive, except for the Poema del Cid in which it is quite restricted.

- (6) The result of these last two and of the in medias res technique (which is not uniformly characteristic of heroic narrative) is that a shuttle-focus technique is used in all heroic narrative to change the geographical or situational focus, or to switch the action in time.
- (7) The three preceding conclusions help to establish the epic scope of heroic narrative, and are often aided by such devices as various types of catalogues and the supplementary or complementary incidents added to the basic story element. Such complementary and supplementary incidents are generally part of the shuttle-focus technique of the narrative development.
- (8) All heroic narrative has a central pattern of "chaos-disorder" conditions that results from reckless and unrestrained self-assertion.
- (9) The hero (or heroes) of the warrior society live in a tension (usually implicit but sometimes explicit) between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint.
- (10) Group-oriented, disciplined self-restraint is the conduct needed and approved, either implicitly or explicitly, to combat uncontrolled self-assertion.
- (11) The tension between undisciplined self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint is the significant literary core of heroic narrative.
- (12) Every example of heroic narrative reflects the need of some adjustments between the two poles of conduct, and the extent of this adjustment reflects the changing social backgrounds and the consequent transformation of the genre.

The last two of these conclusions take one back to the first two, and further discussion of the last two seems both warranted and required to set forth relevant comments about the heroic figure, the heroic environment, and the significance of heroic narrative.

The central figures and the environment of epic and heroic narrative are neither exclusively representative of primitive heroic standards and values nor fully characteristic of a more developed urban society. The Iliad, which should presumably reflect the Mycenaean age, reflects more than that in the characters and general background. Most of the heroes, as one might expect, demonstrate pride and prowess in

and for themselves, for their tribes, and for their families. Except for these obligations, they can be expected to have considerable freedom of choice and action. They do have, but they respond to other demands and obligations.

There are several reasons for this. As members of the confederation of tribes they have pledged their oaths to fight beside their fellow-warriors with all the courage, skill, and endurance they have to assure the fall of Troy. For their contributions to the general cause they expect to win fame, glory, and proper rewards. They have no obligatory political commitment, but they do have obligations to the principle of arete, the code of honor they all share, and to the standards of their warrior society. To satisfy all their commitments requires a fine balance between personal desires and expectations and group needs. That balance determines the central tension of heroic narrative, and adjustments of the balance show the variations of heroic narrative and reveal the significance of epic and heroic poetry.

Agamemnon and Achilles are probably more like the Mycenaean warrior than the other Greeks, and their self-assertion provides the central tension of the poem. Agamemnon's self-assertive conduct in the Chryses incident brings grief to the Greeks, and Achilles, concerned for his fellow warriors, takes steps to end their troubles. His efforts lead to conflict with Agamemnon, who responds by disregarding (as he had in the Chryses incident) the warrior standards and also degrading the principles of arete. Achilles therefore makes himself a test case for the absolute standards of the heroic society and the absolute principle of the code of arete. The bitterness of their personal

contention causes both men to push self-assertion to such an excess that the well-being of the group suffers. Neither man is condemned until their conduct affects other obligations and considerations of the warrior society. Then their absolute positions are both implicitly and explicitly criticized by the warriors around them. Nestor, Phoenix, and Diomedes all support the normative position between self-assertion and self-restraint, between individual demands and group needs. Neither moves from the absolute position until it is nearly too late for Agamemnon and quite too late for Achilles.

Agamemnon grudgingly admits how wrong his actions were only when it is necessary to get Achilles back and thus assure the success of the expedition. Achilles alters his own position only after his conduct has cost the life of his best friend and alter ego; however, even then he merely switches from one absolute to another. What he had desired no longer seems important after the death of Patroklos, and he cares for nothing except the absolute of vengeance. Achilles, by seeking his absolutes, nearly destroys his moral self; however, he preserves the principles of arete, and, at the last moment, saves his moral being. Achilles supports and validates the principles of the code, but he learns that the price for the absolute of self-assertion is the absolute, death, for himself and for Patroklos. After transferring his wrath to the Trojans and Hektor, Achilles reaffirms the principles of the code in his treatment of Agamemnon at the funeral games of Patroklos. Then he saves his moral self by responding to the pleas of Priam for the return of Hektor's body and its right to burial. However reluctantly or tardily they may do so, both Agamemnon and Achilles must

exercise epic moderation to combat the results of their heroic excesses before the chaos and disorder created by their actions can be controlled and transformed.

The Iliad does not present the tension between heroic excess and epic moderation in a forthright didactic fashion, but in an implicit balance between heroic self-assertion and heroic self-restraint, or epic moderation. The poet thus manages an adjustment between the values of Mycenaean times and those of his own time, a period when the less complex standards of the Mycenaean Age no longer serve the needs of a society in which the city-state is developing.

Hektor and Odysseus are just as much city-state heroes as they are Mycenaean warriors. They both share with the Mycenaean stalwarts the gusto and dynamic energy for fighting, for fame, and for glory; however, they add to these other qualities and motivations. Hektor also fights for his city and his people, and his obligations to them are as compelling as his self-assertive desires. To those obligations he devotes his life and his death.

Odysseus shares similar motivations, but in a different way. Though he is not fighting to save Ithaca, he defends the organizational principle of adherence to one responsible leader--a principle important to the well-being of the Greek confederation and to his kingdom. Since the tribes of the confederation had agreed upon Agamemnon as overlord of the expedition, Odysseus never deviates from that policy. He soundly affirms the principle in Book Two and elsewhere. He declares he will find no fault with Agamemnon and insists that there can be only one leader. When Thersites has the presumption to question Agamemnon's authority and to criticize his actions, Odysseus thrashes him for it.

Odysseus also possesses intelligence, cunning, and diplomatic talents which he uses to assure his self-preservation and the well-being of the group. Quite unlike Achilles and Agamemnon, he is not a warrior of self-assertion; in fact, his behavior more nearly represents the epic moderation which is implicitly approved in the texture of the work, but without didactic insistence. As a character of The Iliad, Odysseus straddles the distance between the Mycenaean period and the later city-state society.

The Odyssey presents the tension between self-assertion and self-restraint in a different way and with more emphasis on heroic moderation. Odysseus is much the same person he was in The Iliad, but he does not start out as an exemplar of epic moderation. In fact, the tension between self-assertion and self-restraint is the distinctive aspect of his character during his wanderings from Troy to Phaeacia. Many of the frustrations and obstacles experienced during that period result from his self-assertive actions, but others result from the self-assertive acts of his men. Consequently, the first half of The Odyssey presents the central tension in two ways. Internal tension is evident in his cautious and prudent action at times and his unwise or unrestrained conduct at other times. External tension is seen in the unrestrained acts of his men and the disciplined measures Odysseus takes to save his men from the consequences of either his or their self-assertion.

The second half of The Odyssey shows the hero as an exemplar of epic moderation, for every action taken after he reaches Phaeacia assures his self-preservation and the well-being of his kingdom. His exercise of epic moderation after reaching home puts an end to the chaos and disorder

created in Ithaca by the self-assertive behavior of the arrogant, wanton suitors. With heroic self-assertion he helped to create chaos and disorder, but with epic moderation he transforms them to order and harmony at all levels. By the way Odysseus re-establishes his identity as father, husband, son, and ruler, he becomes the ideal hero of the city-state.

The tendency toward moderation continued in Greek literature throughout the period of the polis and acropolis during the Periclean Age. Yet, despite its development into the reiterated refrain of Greek tragedy, "nothing to excess," and its importance in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, the tendency was not followed in Greek social and political life. The same sort of self-assertion shown by Agamemnon and Achilles was practiced by the rival city-states, except for short periods when they joined forces against a common enemy. The eventual result of such self-assertive rivalry was the subjugation of Greece by Phillip of Macedonia.

After three hundred years, heroic moderation was again expressed in Virgil's Aeneid. The circumstances of Virgil's life and of the Roman nation at that period were quite propitious for a heroic figure who could bridge the gap between the Greek world of the city-state and that of Augustan Rome. Virgil found the requisite potential for such a hero in the personage of Aeneas and made him into the ideal hero of Augustan Rome.

Aeneas possessed the best qualities shared by Greek and Trojans alike. He had the same driving urge for glory as Achilles, and he possessed the same concern for family and race as Hector and Odysseus. The former quality had to be restrained and directed toward less

self-assertive ends; the latter had to be connected to a more glorious destiny than that of either Hektor or Odysseus. Virgil did both of these by having Aeneas develop intellectual skills, the diplomatic touch, and resiliency in the face of hardships and obstacles. However, in respect to the first two of these, Aeneas demonstrated fewer scheming and crafty manipulations than Odysseus, and, in respect to the third, the reader seldom feels keenly the struggle of Aeneas in the way he feels that of Odysseus. Except for the Dido-Aeneas relationship, the reader must accept the idea that Aeneas has had a struggle to become something more than he was. The reader must also accept the idea that Aeneas has developed administrative and organizational talents he needs for his task in Latium. This may well be the reason for Virgil's dissatisfaction with his work, for it is not easy to reconcile the hero of the last days of Troy with the almost anti-heroic figure of the wanderings and the assured, disciplined leader of the Iliadic portion of the poem.

The controlling purpose of Virgil's work helps to reconcile the problems concerning Aeneas, for Virgil had to bring to Latium a hero with the intellectual gifts, the administrative and organizational talents, and the martial techne to assure the future of Rome. Virgil first converts the rashly self-assertive hero of Troy into a reluctant leader of his people by using the deep regard Aeneas has for family and race. Around these qualities Virgil builds the complex pietas needed to combat the furor and violentia created by Juno and Turnus. That pietas develops during the Trojan wanderings. Then Virgil must have his hero finally and fully accept the responsibility of his destiny; this takes place after the visit to Hades. From then on, Aeneas' exercise of epic moderation,

an important element of his pietas, meets all the problems created by the representatives of self-assertion and puts an end to chaos and disorder.

The transformation of Aeneas from the headstrong warrior at Troy to the self-effacing founder of Rome swings the balance between self-assertion and self-restraint so far in the latter direction that the warrior figures and the values of the heroic society are nearly destroyed. Aeneas in the Aeneid, as Odysseus in The Odyssey, had to give up a great part of his old heroic self to become the exemplar of epic moderation and the ideal Roman hero; consequently, Aeneas and the Aeneid exist at the very fringes of epic heroism and the heroic society. The society for which Aeneas has been remade by Virgil needs and uses only those old heroic qualities which it finds acceptable and discards the rest. Heroism and the heroic qualities have undergone a subtle and gradual transformation to satisfy the needs of social development from Mycenaean times to the Rome of Augustus Caesar, and the heroic figure no longer has much freedom of choice between self-assertion and self-restraint. Epic moderation is expected and demanded, and only within the framework of group-oriented values can the hero expect to earn fame and glory.

Medieval epic does not start at the point of development reached in the Aeneid; instead, the general development seen in classical epic appears to have been paralleled in the later works. This is not readily evident if one goes directly from Virgil's poem to the primary example of Germanic epic, Beowulf. However, it is evident if one considers other examples of early Germanic heroic narrative. Two of these draw their subject matter from material older than that of Beowulf. Das Hildebrandslied and Waldere both draw upon material of the fifth century.

The third work, Battle of Maldon, comes from material much later than Beowulf, and it is a more complete work than the other two fragments. All three of these poems afford examples of a more primitive heroic environment than does the heroic poem about Beowulf.

Both central figures of Das Hildebrandslied respond to the Germanic warrior code with unrestrained zeal. Hildebrand leaves his wife and young son to follow his lord into exile, and, when his son has grown to manhood, they are pitted against each other in combat. The harsh demands of the code allow no retreat from the exercise of self-assertive fame and glory; one of them (apparently the son) must be sacrificed to heroic self-assertion.

All three of the principal heroic personages of the Waldere respond to the excesses demanded by the code. When Hagen's overlord, Gunther, decides he must have Walter's maiden and his treasure, Hagen must attack his blood-brother whether he wants to or not. Because Walter kills Hagen's nephew family loyalty insists that Hagen avenge his kinsman. Once Gunther sets his plan in motion, he must complete it regardless of consequences. Fatal results to all are avoided only because the three men are so maimed they can no longer fight. All three satisfy the démesuré demands of their warrior code with tragic results.

In The Battle of Maldon Byrhtnoth defends Aethebred's land against the raids of the Vikings. He does so in such completely self-assertive fashion that he gives up the defensive advantage of the brig to demonstrate his heroic mettle and that of his hearth-companions. All but a few respond to the harsh demands of their warrior code and die in defense of the self-assertive action they approve.

These three works represent the most primitive material of all heroic narrative. There is no tension between heroic self-assertion and heroic restraint. The warriors of that more primitive heroic society neither understand nor practice the latter behavior, for their code demands only the uncomplicated, unrestrained display of skill, strength, endurance, and courage. By such display they assure their permanent fame and glory among their kinsmen and people.

The situation is quite otherwise in Beowulf, which, though it represents early Germanic epic, is quite close to the Aeneid in some respects and to Homeric epic in others. The poem presents much the same type of heroism and heroic values that Virgil used to tell of Aeneas and his divine mission. However, the author of Beowulf presents the hero as the exemplar of epic moderation, both as ideal feudal vassal and ruler. Nevertheless, the mesure-démésure tension is very much a part of the epic, for it is demonstrated in two ways. Some of the supplementary episodes attached to the three most important deeds of Beowulf show that he, like Aeneas, was once a warrior of self-indulgence and self-assertion. Thus there is a suggestive tension between what he was and what he became. There is also an external tension shown in the pointed contrasts between the destructive self-assertive acts of other Germanic warriors and the constructive exercise of epic moderation by Beowulf. Like Homer, the unknown author of Beowulf does not make a blatantly didactic demand for epic moderation; yet he implicitly approves and praises disciplined self-restraint and group-oriented conduct as opposed to personal egoism and private glory. When the hero of epic moderation is no longer around to oppose the consequences of heroic self-assertion, the dark night of the Heldendaemmerung will descend upon the Danes and the Geats.

The Chansen de Roland parallels The Iliad in many respects, but the handling of the mesure-demesure tension is by far the most complex of all heroic narrative. As in The Iliad, there is double demesure in the self-assertive desires of Marsile and Charlemagne. To this the author adds the reckless self-assertion of Roland and Ganelon. Set against these, though not adequate to balance such extensive demesure, is the mesure suggested by Oliver to Roland and that which is implicit in the action Charlemagne fails to take to combat his own self-assertive tendencies and those more positively self-centered acts of Roland and Ganelon. Thus double demesure is added to double demesure to produce multiple demesure, which creates catastrophe for the Peers, for French chivalry and "douce France," and for Charlemagne. Roland and Charlemagne are both led to realize how much their self-assertion contributed to the tragic consequences. Roland, like Achilles, learns it quite too late for his own well-being and that of the Peers. Charlemagne, like Agamemnon, learns it almost too late for French chivalry, "douce France," and Christianity. The author of La Chansen de Roland, like Homer, is not insistently didactic about epic moderation, but throughout the texture of the poem he very clearly provides praise of disciplined, group-centered action as opposed to personally oriented heroic excess. Eventually it is epic moderation which halts the spread of chaos and disorder and eliminates the disastrous consequences of self-assertive action.

Russia's miniature epic more explicitly condemns unrestrained self-assertion than any other example of heroic narrative. A major self-assertive act is the central subject of the poem, and both the poet and a contemporary heroic figure, the great Svyatoslav, criticize the well-intentioned but recklessly self-centered action of Igor and the

other princes. Fraise of disciplined, group-oriented action is achieved by illustrative episodes that contrast the actions of self-assertive heroes of both past and present to heroic actions that are more disciplined and group-directed. Igor and the other Russian princes are urged to emulate the latter actions. Igor follows that advice to the extent of subordinating his personal pride to the needs of the people by escaping and returning to lead them. One can note that the manner of handling the mesure-démasure tension is most like that of Beowulf, except that the "bad" example serves as a point of departure for a contrast between the "bad" example and the "good" examples, or for comparison with other "bad" examples. In this way the author provides a more positive insistence on epic moderation rather than heroic excess.

The final import of Poema del Cid is much the same, but the author arrives there by a modification of the methods of The Iliad, The Odyssey, and the Aeneid. In respect to the mesure-démasure tension the poem is most like the Aeneid, but it is further developed in the same direction. The hero is not tailored by the author to become the epitome of epic moderation, but he is presented as the personification of such conduct. The tension is totally an external one between the central figure and his enemies, whose thorough self-assertion causes the chaos and disorder which the Cid's exercise of epic moderation combats and transforms. Like Aeneas in the latter half of the Aeneid and Beowulf in the central episodes of the Germanic epic, the Cid is the ideal warrior and the ideal ruler. Unlike Aeneas, he needs no awesome destiny placed on his shoulders to make him become the exemplar of self-restraint and self-effacement; furthermore, unlike the many vassals of Charlemagne who were wronged by

their ruler, the Cid does not turn against the feudal system and his king. Instead he combats the self-assertive deeds of his enemies by epic moderation, and in so doing he assures the well-being of his family and his region, as well as that of Spanish chivalry and Alfonso's court.

The Cid's thorough subjugation of personal desires to the needs of the social group puts him in the same position as Aeneas in the Iliadic portion of the Roman epic, and for that reason the Cid, as epic hero, and the Poema del Cid, as late medieval epic, stand at the periphery of epic heroism and heroic narrative. The balance between heroic self-assertion and heroic self-restraint, between démesuré and mesuré action has moved so far in the latter direction that epic moderation is the only valid choice permitted. The force of social developments and needs has again pushed heroic narrative to its ultimate limits, for beyond this point of development epic and heroic poetry as such cease to be.

Whether or not heroic narrative was developed for conscious political or ethical purposes may not perhaps be conclusively determined, but there can be little doubt that epic and heroic poetry have from the beginning mirrored the social and moral development of society. This is eminently clear from The Iliad to the Poema del Cid, for every example of heroic narrative that can claim any degree of epic scope manifests either an implied or overt point of view recommending, praising, or demanding epic moderation from the hero for the good of the group and the individual. The extent to which each poem does this and the way each one does it show the transformations in the heroic figure and the heroic

values as they conform to the needs of a developing society. That development moves away from the relative freedom of the Mycenaean warrior toward more complex demands on the heroic figure, both for his own well-being and that of the social group. That development is a gradual evolution from the absolute self-assertion of Achilles to the virtually absolute self-restraint of Aeneas. Hektor in The Iliad and Odysseus in The Odyssey represent steps away from personally-oriented action toward group-directed conduct for the benefit of the polis, but without total self-effacement. Aeneas, in the Aeneid, repeats the steps of Hektor and Odysseus, but he is also made to take the final step toward virtual self-effacement, not just for tribe and polis but for race and nation. He becomes not just the one who exercises epic moderation for the interest of the group, but the very epitome of epic moderation. Personal fame and glory, which was the primary motivation of earlier heroic figures, must now be achieved within the confining restrictions of the group demands. The heroic figure has been retailored with talents and virtues appropriate to a more complex task than that of the Mycenaean warriors. Only the fact that certain primary heroic qualities are still needed by his society, and consequently left to him, keeps Aeneas within the domain of the heroic warrior society.

Medieval epic poetry recapitulates the development of classical heroic narrative, but not in the step-by-step movement of Homeric and Virgilian epic. The French epic presents epic moderation much like The Iliad; Beowulf and Slovo O Polku Igoreve somewhat approximate the position of The Odyssey; the Poema del Cid nearly duplicates the Aeneid.

The Chanson de Roland closely parallels The Iliad in the way it presents heroic moderation, for it depicts a warrior society that tends more toward self-assertion than group-oriented self-restraint. Yet the entire structure and movement of the narrative leads Charlemagne and Roland to realize what their démesure actions produced. Within the texture of the work there is both overt criticism of démesure (of Roland by Oliver) and implicit criticism of such action (in Charlemagne's realization of what his actions did to the Peers and later in the burdens placed on his shoulders), but, as in The Iliad, without insistence upon epic moderation.

The second step away from heroic self-assertion comes in the Beowulf and the Slovo O Polku Igoreve. Beowulf shows the hero as the "good" example of how to use epic moderation for the benefit of self and land, but the poem also shows he was not always such an example. Furthermore, the work presents many other heroic figures as "bad" examples of self-assertive conduct. The contrast between what Beowulf is and was, or between what he is and others are not, serves to recommend and advise group-oriented self-restraint as desirable pro bono publico.

The Russian poem reverses the method to arrive at the same end. The self-assertive deeds of Igor and the princes are presented as the "bad" example and, supplemented by other "bad" examples, are contrasted to supplementary "good" examples of epic moderation, which is urged upon Igor and the princes for the well-being of the land.

Finally, the Poema del Cid very nearly copies the Aeneid in relation to the presentation and importance of epic moderation. In fact, it goes beyond the Aeneid, for the hero does not have to be

retailored in the course of the poem. Nor does he have to be given any demanding or awesome destiny such as Aeneas. From the start he is the exemplar of epic moderation, even in circumstances that could well call for heroic self-assertion against his overlord and his enemies. He responds completely to the social demands of his feudal chivalric society and there is no tension for him; the tension exists only between the self-assertive deeds of his enemies and his use of epic moderation to restore his position in the feudal society. By so doing he restores order to that society and his lord's kingdom.

The full perspective of heroic narrative now becomes evident. Both classical and medieval heroic narrative chart the course of the tension between unrestrained self-assertion and disciplined self-restraint, between démésure and mesure, and that course responds to the changing needs of society. As a result, epic-heroic poetry develops great significance as a mirror of the moral maturation of the society.

This is somewhat surprising when one considers the tremendous inversion and distortion of history that takes place in heroic poetry. Yet, however much epic-heroic poetry may invert or distort the external aspects and details of human history, it records most clearly the necessary, though somewhat sad, journey of the heroic figure from the absolute of self-assertion to the absolute of self-restraint, and even of self-effacement. Every step of that moral journey requires that the hero give up a part of himself and a part of his heroic verve and élan for the well-being of his kingdom, his race, or his nation. When the hero has taken that final step, as Aeneas does in the Iliadic portion of the Aeneid and as the Cid has from the very beginning, the splendor

and glory of epic heroism have been covered by the penumbra of social development that has little room for the commanding epic figure. The epic hero has fulfilled his function and the literary medium which has recorded his transformation has reached its limits; both of them will, unfortunately, soon cease to be.

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