The Controlling Forces of Man: Gods and Fate in Homer

by

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract:

From their birth, the deaths of mortal characters in the *Iliad* are fixed by moira. Until that moment, the gods may impact their lives through various interventions to ensure that they meet their fated end as intended. This thesis aims to examine the role of the gods in achieving fate, while considering the potential for mortal choice to alter fixed moments, such as the destiny of a character or certain events, like the fall of Troy.

The first chapter addresses the gods' limitations to understand their capability of enforcing fate effectively. The second examines the way in which moira is presented in Homer, as an abstract force, singular, and multiple personification, in addition to its limitations, to gauge its degree of changeability. The third chapter considers the parameters of Zeus' will, how it compares to moira, leading on to a discussion of the poet's techniques in employing the gods and fate to test the boundaries of the poetic tradition of the Trojan War myth. These three chapters will prepare for chapter 4's chronological examination of the cases in which the gods respond to situations that concern the fates of individuals or events.

To summarise the findings of this research, Zeus and moira frequently work together to determine what is fated to happen and the Olympian gods act as enforcers of fate to ensure that their plans come to fruition as intended, working together to account for each other's shortfalls. The poet enjoys opportunities in which he can test the boundaries of the narrative tradition through the threats to fate's integrity in the *Iliad*.

Contents

INTRODUCTION ... 7
Outline of research ... 7
Scholarship ... 9
Homer’s Epics and Translations ... 11
Hesiod’s *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and the *Homeric Hymns* ... 13
CHAPTER 1: THE GODS ... 16
Divine involvement in mortal affairs ... 16
Divine Limitation ... 18
Divine injury and the extent of immortality ... 18
The limitations of the divine gaze ... 26
The hierarchy amongst the gods ... 29
Conclusion ... 33
CHAPTER 2 : MOIRA ... 34
The abstract force: *moira* ... 34
Moira’s alternatives ... 36
Personification ... 40
The singular personification: Moira ... 43
The multiple personification: The Moirai ... 46
Κλῶθές in *Odyssey* 7 ... 48
Limitations ... 49
The image of spinning fate ... 50
Conclusion ... 52
CHAPTER 3: ZEUS’ WILL AND THE POET ... 53
What is Zeus’ βουλή? ... 53
The similarities and differences in moira and Zeus’ nature and power ... 59
The poet ... 61
The similarities and differences between Zeus, the poet, and their plans ... 62
Moira, Zeus’ will and the gods as narrative tools for the poet ... 65
Time ... 65
Unreal conditions ... 69
The creation and dissolving of conflict by the gods ... 73
Misdirection ... 75
Conclusion ... 79

CHAPTER 4: A CASE-BY-CASE ANALYSIS OF THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN THE GODS AND FATE IN THE *ILIAD* 81
Part A 81
Books 1-5: Restarting the conflict 81
Book 16: Sarpedon and Zeus 88
Book 22: Hektor's Fate 96
Book 24: Zeus' Jars 98
Part B 100
Kerostasia 101
Achilles' Fate 110
Conclusion 118
CONCLUSION 120
BIBLIOGRAPHY 128

INTRODUCTION

Fate is one of the more prevalent themes throughout Homeric epic, and yet it remains one of their most complex, raising questions about the gods' relationship with fate, the degree to which fate is fixed, and the ways in which the plan of the poet impacts fate and Zeus' will. Therefore, the aim of this research is to recognise the limitations of the gods and moira (fate), to acknowledge how these limitations could impact their ability to perform their role of upholding fate, and to understand how they work together to overcome these limitations to ensure that fated events duly take place. This will require a comprehensive understanding of how moira is presented and utilised in Homer, including a thorough examination the will of Zeus and the specifics of his plan. This builds a foundation for a narratological approach to consider how Homer utilises fate and the gods to present his knowledgeable audience with a poem that is both fresh and unpredictable, despite the restrictions placed upon him by the traditional narrative of the Trojan War myth.[1]

Outline of research

Chapter 1 will begin with a brief introduction on divine intervention, a topic that will appear heavily in chapter 4, to highlight the different types featured in the *Iliad*, including inspiration and suggestion, healing, preventing wounds, rescues, sabotage and various degrees of aid. This will be followed by an examination of divine limitation, such as the vulnerability of the gods to

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[1] A redundant approach, however, would be to question whether the gods, particularly Zeus, are more powerful than fate, as many scholars have already addressed this previously with no satisfying conclusion. For example, Cornford believed that Zeus was either superior to moira or its equal, while Duffy thought Zeus to be superior to moira. See: Duffy 1947; Cornford 2018. For this reason, I will not be discussing this here.

injuries, extent of their immortality, the divine gaze, and the complicated relationship of the divine hierarchy.

Chapter 2 turns to the subject of moira, discussing first the different alternative words Homer uses in his epics in place of moira, such as *moros*, *morisimos*, *meiromai*, *mello*, *aisa*, and *potmos*. As Homer presents moira as an abstract force, singular personification, and multiple personification, I will consider each individually, drawing attention to one unusual case of the κλῶθές in book 7 of the *Odyssey*. The chapter ends by addressing moira's limitations, and a consideration of the use of the word "spinning" in relation to moira weaving the fates of mortals.

Chapter 3 begins with an examination of the plan of Zeus: what it entails, when it is achieved, and where it begins and ends. A large section will then be dedicated to a comparison of the aims of the plan of Zeus and the poet's plan. In addition, the narrative aims and techniques of the poet will be considered, such as his use of time in relation to fate, the use of unreal conditions, the creation and dissolving of conflict by the gods, and misdirection, and what effect each has on the audience. This latter section will aid chapter 4 in explaining how the poet utilises the gods and moira to create an fresh contribution to the Trojan War narrative for his audience.

Chapter 4 opens with a section that examines certain occasions of divine intervention chronologically to highlight the reasons for the gods' actions, the potential consequence of what would happen contrary to fate if they had not intervened, followed by a consideration of the poet's choices and effects upon the audience. These include Apollo's plague in book 1, the Achaians' attempt

to depart on the ships in book 2, Paris and Menelaus' duel in book 3, and Aeneias' rescue in book 5. A longer section is dedicated to Sarpedon's death in book 16, as it is the most significant moment in which divine interests, particularly Zeus', clash with fate. This is followed by an examination of Hektor's death in book 22, and then a consideration of Achilles' comment about Zeus' jars of ills and blessings in book 24. Two more separate sections will follow to discuss the motifs of *kerostasia* and Achilles' fate.

Scholarship

There are many categories of research that are relevant to this thesis, with the broad topics spanning the gods, fate, and the poet in Homer. Therefore, the scholarship I mention below is categorised by its relevancy to specific chapters, leaving a final section to discuss key research that is frequently cited throughout this thesis.

Chapter 1's focus on the gods utilises research that considers their limitations. When concerning the subject of divine injury and extent of immortality, Clay's (1981) work differentiates immortality from agelessness, Andersen's (2004) considers the way in which Homer presents the vulnerability of the gods in relation to injury and death, and Baratz's (2015) article addresses the relationship between immortality and the substances ambrosia and nectar. Lastly, Lovatt (2013) draws attention to the limitations of the divine gaze, and McCall (2013) and Marks (2016) consider the difficulties of Zeus' control over the other gods in the *Iliad*.

As chapter 2 addresses moira, requiring the comprehension of linguistics and the personification of abstractions, Stafford (2000) aids in the understanding of personifications, preparing us to understand moira as such, while Eidinow (2011) is useful to consider the alternative terms associated with moira.

There are many useful scholarly works used in chapter 3 that cover the plan of Zeus, including those by Dowden (2005), Allan (2006), Wilson (2007), Satterfield (2011), and Pucci (2018). There is also an abundance of contributions to the discussion of the *Iliad*'s poet and the narrative tradition by Edwards (1987), Morrison (1992), Wong (2002), Lang (2005), Scodel (2009), and Graziosi (2013).[2]

As for relevant scholars discussed in chapter 4, Marks (2010) examines the different divine rescues in the *Iliad* and categorises the different ways in which the gods intervene, and Madrigal's (2022) thesis discusses the flexibility of Achilles fate in conjunction with fixed fate and the gods.

The work of Dietrich, Morrison, and Slattery are key to this thesis as a whole. Dietrich's Death, Fate and the Gods (1965) provided an invaluable exploration of moira in relation to the gods, and a quantitative examination of the uses of moira in Homer, the data of which is relevant for both chapter 2 in defining moira, and chapter 4 in considering the gods' role in maintaining fate. While useful, his approach in distinguishing the depiction of moira from early Greek popular belief was criticised for using much later sources, such as Pausanias' Description of Greece (150-170 AD);[3] this method could lead

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[2] I will briefly discuss oral composition in the following section.

[3] "D. [Dietrich] draws, of course, on a variety of witnesses: poets from Homer to Quintus of Smyrna, Orphic hymns, early and late inscriptions, Pausanias, Plutarch, pictures on pots, and so on. We can only share his regret that the heterogeneous materials gathered from

to guesswork as to the early presentation of moira, as the concept would have evolved centuries after its Homeric depiction. There are also certain occasions on which I disagree with his points, but they cannot outweigh the role the research plays in laying the foundations for discussing the gods and fate in Homer.

Morrison (1997) explores numerous topics covered in this study, such as the coexistence of mortal choice and fate, the will of Zeus, Achilles' fate, and the threats of misdirection against the traditional narrative. As for Slattery (2013), her article discusses many of the key matters addressed in this research, including Zeus' will, the gods as fate's enforcers,[4] Zeus' ability to choose to conform to fate, and Achilles' two destinies.

Homer's Epics and Translations

I devote most of my attention to the *Iliad*, as the *Odyssey* provides fewer situations in which the gods are present,[5] with the *Iliad* possessing more cases of divine intervention. The *Iliad* also contains more presentations of Zeus in relation to fate, which often converge around the topic of death, a theme that appears more prevalently in the *Iliad*'s setting of war.

Due to the epics' development through oral performance before being written down, as proposed by Milman Parry,[6] we can expect variations of the Trojan

many centuries of Greek civilization can often lead to only the most tentative and qualified conclusions about early beliefs and practices" see: Combellack 1967.

[4] I frequently describe the gods as fate's "enforcers," which refers to their responsibility to monitor and control mortal decisions and actions that have the potential to alter fate, ensuring that the circumstances in which this might become possible does not occur.

[5] Allan 2006, p. 26.

[6] Through a linguistic analysis of the epics in studying its oral development, it has been determined that the poems were composed during the "dark age" of ancient Greece, a

War story to have existed prior to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[7] This also raises issues relating to how we can define what is authentic, as the poems we receive today have evolved through each retelling by different bards before they were written down, and that the oldest manuscripts we have available have variations between them. West puts it well:

> The singers of tales portrayed in the Homeric epics are not represented as creating new poems, but as reproducing songs that they know about the deeds of heroes; the memory of those deeds is conceived as having been preserved through the ages by the Muses. This is how the epic poets of the Homeric age probably saw themselves: not as authors but as conservators and performers. Of course there was a creative element in their performances, and field research in modern cultures teaches us that an oral poet's recitations are never the same twice; each one is a retelling.[8]

As oral performances of the epics did not exactly match the previous retelling, it is consequently impossible to declare any part of Homer's epics as "original" or "authentic". As a result, the presentations of the gods and moira

period spanning 1100-750 BC, see: Foley 1997, p. 147, as evidence of pottery from the late geometric period appears to depict Homeric scenes. See: Knodell 2021, p. 193.

[7] For more on Parry's theory connecting the epics to an oral tradition, see: Parry, A and Parry, M 1971; Horrocks 1997, p. 194; West 2011, p. 384-9.

[8] West 2011, p. 389.

in Homer are affected by this, which may explain moira's depiction that varies from an abstract force to a personification.

As for selecting an appropriate translation for the primary texts, I use Green's translation of the *Iliad*,[9] and Wilson's of the *Odyssey*.[10] Green's accurate translation is championed for its style that encourages its perception as an oral poem, superseding its predecessors such as Rieu, Lattimore and Hammond,[11] while Wilson's fresh interpretation of Odysseus' tale is highly recognised amongst scholars for its translation quality and revised attention to women, slaves and metics within the epic, hence my choice of these translations.[12]

Hesiod's *Theogony, Works and Days,* and the *Homeric Hymns*

I occasionally utilise examples of early Greek epos (of the epic tradition) that are dated to the 6th century or earlier; this includes Hesiod's *Theogony*, *Works and Days* and a specific selection of *Homeric Hymns*.[13] While neither of these sources are composed by the same poet of the two epics, they were composed after the time that the Homeric poems reached their final form, which is generally agreed to have been between the late 8th and early 7th century;[14] while deciding the relevancy of sources based on its estimated time after the Homeric epics is subjective, these sources might provide a degree of

[9] Homer and Green 2015.
[10] Homer and Wilson 2018.
[11] See review by: Properzio 2016.
[12] Barrett 2019. I use Cashford's *The Homeric Hymns* and West's *Theogony and Works and Days* as faithful translations of the original Greek, see: Cashford 2003; West 2008.
[13] Rosen 1997, pp. 463-4. The *Theogony*, *Works and Days* and certain *Homeric Hymns* will be relevant for discussing Homer's gods and moira, the reasons for which will be explained shortly in the following section. See: Hornblower et al. 2012, s.v: Hesiod.
[14] Rosen 1997, p. 465; Croally and Hyde 2011, p. 26.

insight in interpreting the gods and fate in Homer, whilst not exceeding an unreasonable time frame beyond the composition of the epics.

The content of Hesiod's *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and Homer's epics all depict of an underlying cosmic order existing alongside the gods, expressed particularly in the relationship between the will of Zeus and the external force of fate.[15] In Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, this is presented through the value of justice and order that is dispensed by Zeus to other gods and mortals (Hes. *Works*. 239-247).[16] With Homer's epics being the earliest surviving source of ancient Greek literature and Hesiod being his contemporary or near contemporary,[17] I utilise the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* to consider the presentation of moira and the gods in early Greek epos and in Greek popular belief at the time of the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

As for the use of the *Homeric Hymns*, considering that the focus of this research concerns Homer's epics and the time that followed closely after, I only consider the earlier hymns that are typically agreed to have been dated

[15] Allan 2006, p. 1. While this is clearly evident in the *Iliad*, this idea of an external cosmic force is present in the *Odyssey*, with Poseidon's wish to avenge Polyphemus clashing with Odysseus' fated *nostos*. As set out in the chapter outline, the relationship between Zeus and moira will be addressed in chapter 3.

[16] Allan 2006, pp. 1, 28.

[17] Despite most scholars dating Hesiod after Homer, accurately dating his *Theogony* has proven difficult, with little evidence other than Hesiod's own work, which implies that he and Homer were each other's contemporaries, dating somewhere between 750-650 BC. See: Rosen 1997, p. 465-6. This uncertainty led West to controversially suggest that the *Theogony* might have come before Homer's epics, see: West 1966, pp. 40-8. His opinion remained largely unchanged in 2012, see: West. 2012, pp. 225-226.

shortly after Hesiod.[18] The hymns to Apollo,[19] Aphrodite,[20] Demeter[21] and Hermes[22] appear to fit this requirement, as the research of Allen, Halliday and Sikes conclude that they are the oldest and are dated to the early 6th century or before.[23]

Having introduced the planned course of this research, with a clear indication of which sources will be relevant and why, I will begin with chapter 1's examination of the gods to lay the foundation for chapter 4's exploration into the gods as fate's enforcers.

[18] The 33 *Homeric Hymns* were generated by a variety of different poets who imitated the style of Homer's epics, spanning across the Archaic to the Hellenistic period, the exact dating of each is still a debated topic, but are all agreed to follow after Hesiod, see: Clay 1997, p. 489.
[19] The *hymn to Apollo* is sometimes split by scholars like Janko into two and is recognised by most as the oldest hymn dated to the 8th century. See: Allen et al. 1936, pp. 183-6; Janko 1992, p. 1.
[20] *The hymn to Aphrodite* shares the most similarities to the author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* through its style and themes of the hymns and can be dated to around 700 BC. See. Allen et al. 1936, pp. 349-51; Clay 1997, p. 504.
[21] *The hymn to Demeter* is dated to the second half of the 7th century. See: Allen et al. 1936, pp. 111-4.
[22] *The hymn to Hermes* can be dated to no later than the 7th century. See: Allen et al. 1936, pp. 275-6.
[23] Clay 1997, p. 490.

CHAPTER 1: THE GODS

In preparation for considering the divine role in working alongside fate, this chapter will address the role of the gods in involving themselves in the affairs of mortals, in addition to their limitations such as their susceptibility to injury and the extent of their immortality, considering the possible affects of consuming ambrosia and nectar, continuing with an examination of the direction of the divine gaze and its potential limitations. This chapter will conclude with the discussion of the divine hierarchy, in which many of the gods attempt to thwart Zeus in order to impact the events.

Divine involvement in mortal affairs

Divine intervention appears to be a significant aspect of the *Iliad*'s narrative, where gods involve themselves in the matters of mortals. However, the extent of how literal their involvement is in the action is debated, with scholars like Willcock viewing these moments as metaphorical instead.[24] The example ἀρηιφάτους, translated literally as "slain by Ares," is often translated as "slain in battle" (*Il.* 19.31), because the mention of the god in this context is often interpreted as a metaphor for death in battle, since Ares is associated with war and its casualties. Instead, I will be focusing on examples that take the gods' interventions in a literal sense.

In the *Iliad*, the gods intervene in mortal matters in a number of different ways: by influencing them through inspiration or suggestion, by healing, by preventing fatal wounds, and even by rescuing mortals. It is Athene who

[24] Willcock 1970, p. 5-6, 9.

persuades Achilles to fight Agamemnon with words instead of swords in book 1 (*Il.* 1.188-221), and Apollo who inspires the Trojan army while Athene encourages the Achaian army in book 4 (*Il.* 4.507-16). Particularly in the case of Achilles and Agamemnon, if Athene had not intervened, Achilles might have killed Agamemnon before his destined time after the war (*Od.* 4.511-34). A similar matter can also be considered for Artemis and Leto's healing of Aeneias in book 5 (*Il.* 5.446-7), and Apollo's restoration of Hektor's strength and health in book 15 (*Il.* 15.239-62). If they had not been healed, they could have died sooner than their fated time, which is in book 22 for Hektor (*Il.* 22.361-3), and beyond the bounds of the poem for Aeneias (*Il.* 20.300-5). Zeus prevents his son Sarpedon from receiving a fatal wound twice (*Il.* 5.662; 12.402-3), as he was destined to be killed by Patroklos in book 16 and not sooner (*Il.* 16.502-4). Rescues are a more direct form of intervention, as seen when Aphrodite rescues Paris from being killed by Menelaus in book 3 (*Il.* 3.380-2) and Aeneias is rescued both by Apollo in book 5 (*Il.* 5.443-6) and Poseidon in book 20 (*Il.* 20.321-9). As previously mentioned with the case of Aeneias fate, Menelaus was also destined to outlast the Trojan war, appearing in the *Odyssey* in book 4.

There are other interventions in which the gods either aid or sabotage an individual, as seen in the case of Athene's aiding of Diomedes' *aristeia* in book 5 (*Il.* 5.1-8,793-834), where she grants him supernatural sight. She also assists in Achilles' fight with Hektor, by tricking Hektor into halting his flight by thinking he would be fighting Achilles alongside Deïphobos (*Il.* 22.226-47, 293-99), and by returning Achilles' spear to him (*Il.* 22.273-7).

Despite their intervening capabilities, the gods are not able to save mortals from their destined time of death, as seen particularly in the case of Sarpedon in book 16, a subject that will not be discussed here, but at length in chapter 4, when examining the relationship and interactions between the gods and fate.

Divine Limitation

The Homeric gods possess limitations that appear more frequently in the *Iliad*, due to the gods' proximity to mortals and their personal interventions in battles themselves. The first section explores divine injury and the examples presented in books 1 and 5 of the *Iliad*, aiming to address the possibility of a god dying in the Homeric world, and whether the gods use ambrosia and nectar to sustain their immortality. This is followed by an examination of the divine gaze, considering whether the direction of a god's gaze and their attention may impact the effectiveness of their awareness. Lastly, the drawbacks associated with the hierarchical structure of the gods in the *Iliad* are highlighted, including the conflicting interests between the gods and the threats to Zeus' control over them. These topics will assess the gods' shortcomings, and the ways in which they manage to circumvent them.

Divine injury and the extent of immortality

The threat of harm to gods is displayed in book 5 of the *Iliad*, where Aphrodite and Ares are injured by the mortal Diomedes (*Il.* 5. 330-43, 855-63). Despite this, they quickly recover, Dione healing her daughter Aphrodite (*Il.* 5.416-7) and Paean healing Ares (*Il.* 5.900-1) after they returned to Olympus.

Furthermore, Dione mentions that gods have endured suffering before, such as Ares' imprisonment in a bronze jar, and Hera's and Hades' wounds at the hands of Herakles (*Il.* 5.381-402). These examples confirm that the gods of Homeric epic can be harmed and have methods available to ensure a quick recovery. Furthermore, the gods of archaic Greek poetry can withstand serious injuries that would ordinarily kill mortals, possessing advanced regenerative abilities; consider the punishment of Prometheus, in which his liver was eaten and allowed to regenerate by the next day for the process to repeat (Hes. *Theo.* 521-29).[25]

These examples generate the interrelated questions of how gravely a god can be wounded and whether it is possible for them to die; these are addressed in both book 1 and 5 of the *Iliad* through retellings of tales concerning both Hephaestus and Ares, with Hephaestus being left with "little life left in [him]" after Zeus hurls him from Olympus, to land in Lemnos (*Il.* 1.590-4), and Ares' imprisonment inside a bronze jar for thirteen months by the giants Otos and Ephialtes, where "he would even have perished" had he remained in that state for much longer (*Il.* 5. 387-91).[26]

While one version of the myth is that Hephaestus was born lame, another suggests that he became lame due to being thrown from Olympus; the latter version seems to indicate that the gods could receive irreparable damage to their bodies from certain injuries.[27] The factor present in this second case that

[25] Also recall Ouranos' castration by Kronos, which seriously wounds him but does not kill him (Hes. *Theo.* 178-82).

[26] In some versions of the myth, it is an iron barrel that contains Ares. Otos and Ephialtes are also known as the Aloads. See: Brill's New Pauly, s.v. Aloads.

[27] Both versions of the myth are present in the *Iliad*: Hephaestus is born lame (*Il.* 18.395-405), which is supported by the *Hymn to Apollo* (*HAp.* 316-18), but in book 1 of the *Iliad*, the god explains that he became lame from a fall from Olympus to Lemnos (*Il.* 1.590-594).

determines this difference in wound severity is unknown, but indicates that there are degrees of severity in the injuries that gods can receive. More importantly, however, the poet implies here that at the extreme of this scale of harm is death, as in this example, Hephaestus came close to death with the phrase "ὀλίγος δ᾽ ἔτι θυμὸς ἐνῆεν" (little life is left in me).

Ares' imprisonment similarly implies that he might have died had he remained trapped for much longer, with use of ἀπόλοιτο (*Il.* 5.387), meaning to kill or to destroy utterly, combined with its place in a past, closed, conditional sentence.[28] It expresses a certainty in the apodosis that Ares would have died, "if" Eëriboia had not told Hermes, who would then rescue him. This would indicate that a Homeric god's immortality is not always guaranteed. Despite this, the potential cause of death is not clear, but we do know that at least in Homer's world that it might be possible for gods to die. However, the only mentioned ways in which this might come about are through prolonged imprisonment, or in Hephaestus' case, being severely wounded.

In addition to this interpretation of Ares' imprisonment, Kirk theorises that moira would not allow the death to occur, as he was never intended to be mortal, acting as a safety net to prevent the circumstances to achieve death from being met.[29] This is a likely possibility when we consider Apollo's statement to Achilles in book 22, "You'll never kill me: it's not in my destiny to die" (*Il.* 22.13). In this case, even if it were possible for a god to die, it is

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For more concerning Hephaestus in a general sense and the myths addressing the origins of his disability, see: Gantz 1993, pp. 74-5; Hornblower et al 2012, s.v: Hephaestus. For more assessing the type of disability, see: Kirk 1985, ad loc. 1.607.

[28] Smyth 1963, p. 519.

[29] Cf. Kirk 1990, ad loc. 5.388-91.

suggested that moira would prevent it from occurring by acting as their safety net. Keeping in mind the interpretation of the gods acting as enforcers of fate, this would ring true with the myth concerning Ares' imprisonment, as Hermes acts here as fate's enforcer, by saving him from the fate of dying, thus cancelling out this potential limitation of death.

Lastly, it is possible that immortality may be linked to the consumption of ambrosia and nectar.[30] Both are associated with immortality and overcoming death, as ambrosia means "food of undying" while nectar, through much deliberation concerning its etymological origin, is thought to mean "getting across death".[31] It also functions in the epics as the adjective "ambrosial" to describe something as immortal, such as Zeus' ambrosial hair (ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται) (*Il.* 1.529), or Hermes' golden, immortal sandals (πέδιλα ἀμβρόσια χρύσεια) (*Il.* 24.340-1).[32] More commonly however, ambrosia and nectar are recognised as physical substances, either as an ointment used by the gods cosmetically, or as food and drink.[33] Ambrosia is used in its consumable form six times in the *Iliad* and four times in the *Odyssey*.[34]

What then is the purpose of ambrosia and nectar to the gods? As our earliest source discussing this question, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* draws attention to two potential arguments: one, that the gods simply consume ambrosia and

[30] These substances are mentioned frequently throughout the *Iliad* (1. 596-7; 4. 1-5; 5.775-6; 14. 170-1; 16. 666-84; 19. 37-9, 346-8, 353-5) and *Odyssey* (4. 445-6; 5. 94-5, 194-200; 9. 353-8; 12. 59-65).
[31] Thieme 1968, pp. 102-32; Griffith 1994, p. 20.
[32] Baratz 2015, p. 157.
[33] For general information on ambrosia and nectar see: Wright 1917, pp. 5-6; Cf. Heubeck et al. 1990, p. 264; Baratz 2015, p. 151.
[34] *Il.* 5.368-9, 773-7; 13.32-8; 19.337-8, 352-4; 24. 93-102. *Od.* 5. 93, 199; 9.57-9; 12.58-63) Cf. Kirk 1990, p. 11.

nectar for pleasure, while the other suggests that they consume it to sustain their immortality:

> "those who do not eat the nectar and ambrosia are born
> mortal, clearly mentioning names that are known to them,
> and yet we have ourselves spoken about such a provision
> of causes. For if they addressed them for the sake of
> pleasure, then nectar and ambrosia are not at all the cause
> of their being, and if they are the cause of their being, then
> how could they be eternal if they need food?)"
>
> - Arist. *Metaph.* 1000a16-17.[35]

Aristotle only mentions this argument in passing, but indicates that the depictions of ambrosia and nectar in literature from the Archaic to the Classical period were inconsistent or were left ambiguous.[36] His last statement is of particular interest, where he questions how the gods could truly be regarded as immortal if they do indeed require food, which in turn questions what would happen to a god if they were not to consume these substances.

Ambrosia and nectar are not exclusively applicable to gods alone, as they have been used in the *Iliad* to prevent decomposition (*Il.* 16.677-80; 19.37-

[35] His *Metaphysics* is dated to be significantly beyond Homer's time, around the 4th century BC, but features our first known discussion of the uses of ambrosia and nectar, so might at least present a degree of understanding the potential uses of ambrosia and nectar in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
[36] Baratz 2015, pp. 151-2.

9), in desperate circumstances (*Il.* 19.352-4) and, more importantly for this discussion, to transform mortals into immortals.[37] This last point would imply that ambrosia and nectar, have properties making them integral for understanding the functionality of immortality in Homer's universe. To propose some possibilities as to why the gods consume ambrosia and nectar other than for pleasure, perhaps it is used by the gods to maintain their immortality. Without this immortal sustenance, do they become susceptible to death?

Gods who are known to have abstained from, or have been unable to access ambrosia and nectar have been consistently presented in Archaic poetry as weak, or associated with weakness during this time.[38] In the *Theogony*, Hesiod mentions an unnamed god, who lied under an oath of the Styx, became weak and "wrapped in a malignant coma," stating that he did not consume ambrosia and nectar during this time (Hes. *Th.* 795-8). In the *Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess displays signs of exhaustion in searching for her daughter, not eating or drinking ambrosia or nectar during her nine-day search (*Hymn Dem.* 47-50). Conversely, when the hundred-handers are given ambrosia and nectar by Zeus in the *Theogony* (Hes. *Th.* 639-42), they grow in strength, and in the *Hymn to Apollo*, the god, as an infant, consumes ambrosia and nectar and immediately becomes an adult (*Hymn Apo.* 127-135). In these examples, these substances act similarly to nutrients in the same way that mortals gain sustenance from mortal food, though with

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[37] Four examples of apotheosis in early Greek myth were in some way related to the use of ambrosia and nectar, as seen on Demophon, Iphimede, Tantalus and Aristaios. See: *H. Dem.* 231-45; Hes. fr. 23a.21-24; while Pindar came later, he presents two of these four examples: Pi. *O.* 1.51-64; Pi. *P.* 9.59-65.

[38] Hes. *Th.* 795-8; *Hymn Dem.* 47-50. Baratz 2015, p. 153.

significantly enhanced qualities, and as with mortals, it is implied the gods lack energy if they do not consume ambrosia or nectar.[39] Viewing these substances as nutrients would explain the tale of Ares' imprisonment, as he would have lacked access to nectar and ambrosia in both its ingested and topical form, and therefore lacked energy and potentially fallen susceptible to death. Even in the case of Hephaestus, his permanent injury might be due to a lack of ambrosia and nectar while he recovered on Lemnos, as it is unlikely that the Sintians had access to these immortal substances, therefore potentially limiting the supernatural extent of his recovery.

Baratz proposes that there is not enough evidence to suggest a dependency on ambrosia and nectar to maintain their immortality, as there is a significant lack of myths surrounding the concept of immortality-granting items compared to other examples from Indian, Nordic and Celtic myth.[40] Considering that Greek myths commonly possess multiple variants, and that lost sources that might connect ambrosia and nectar to divine immortality might have existed, Baratz's statement falls under scrutiny. This is particularly so in his failure to consider the case of Ares' imprisonment and the lengthy duration that the god was without ambrosia and nectar, since, unlike some of the examples he does consider in which gods abstained from the substances for a specified (such as Demeter who abstained for nine days), no other example comes close to Ares' thirteen months.

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[39] Baratz 2015, pp. 153-4.

[40] In an Indian tale from the Mahābhārata, the elixir of life is extracted from the ocean of milk and fought over by the gods and anti-gods. In Norse mythology, Loki is sent to recapture the goddess Idunn's apples that renewed the gods' youth. There follows two stories from Celtic myth: one in which the Tuatha Dé Danann became immortal by drinking Goibniu's ale, another where they became immortal by eating berries growing in the land of promise. See: Baratz 2015, pp. 158-61.

Alternatively, Clay believes that ambrosia and nectar are not imbued with the power to make the gods immortal, but rather prevents them from ageing instead.[41] She makes an important distinction in her article that being immortal and being ageless are two separate qualities that gods possess from birth: they physically age to a certain point of perfection depending on the deity – e.g. in Hermes' case he remains youthful, while Zeus fits the appearance of a paternal figure – and the gods therefore remain this way permanently.[42] The difference between being immortal and being ageless however, is expressed in the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, where Tithonus was made immortal, but not ageless (*Hymn Aph*. 239-46). There were attempts to make him ageless by feeding him ambrosia, but this failed to cure his ageing. Clay therefore suggests that it was fed to Tithonus "as if ambrosia might perhaps slow down the inevitable process of decay,"[43] but I believe this evidence should be interpreted differently: it failed to work because ambrosia and nectar does not affect ageing, but preserves immortality, which Tithonus already had, so that feeding him ambrosia did not 'cure' his ageing. Ambrosia and nectar do not prevent ageing but might preserve immortality when considering the cases of Ares and Hephaestus.

While it is unclear whether the gods depend on ambrosia and nectar to imbue themselves with immortality, a dependency on these highlights a potential limitation of the gods' immortality: that their strength and powers are dependent on its nourishment. It can provide a suggestion for understanding

[41] Clay 1981, p. 115.
[42] Clay 1981, pp. 112-3.
[43] Clay 1981, p. 115.

the nature of immortality, how it functions, and what potential limitations it may pose in the Homeric universe.

The limitations of the divine gaze

Grube notes that the Homeric gods "have the capacity to see everything and know everything when they care to use it, when their attention is engaged",[44] suggesting that the gods are not constantly aware, and that the extent of their knowledge depends on their focus and attention. An examination of their gaze and attention is therefore necessary to consider what they can and cannot see and at what time, to consider their potential limitations.[45]

In book 8 of the *Iliad*, Ares, along with the other gods, are ordered to keep away from the fighting (*Il.* 8.5-17). While following these orders, Ares' son, Askalaphos, dies in book 13 (*Il.* 13.516-20). Despite this, Ares is entirely unaware of its occurrence, as we are told by the narrator:

> As yet mighty loud-voiced Arēs knew nothing about (οὐδ᾽ ἄρα πώ τι πέπυστο) the fall of his son in the relentless grind of battle; he sat on the heights of Olympos, beneath the golden clouds, kept there by the will of Zeus, like all the other immortal gods, well away from the war and the fighting." – *Il.* 13.521-5.

[44] Grube 1951, p. 63.
[45] The divine view will later be contrasted with the temporal fluidity of the narrator's perspective, see: p. 62-3.

Ares' lack of awareness of his son's death is expressed by the words οὐδ᾽ ἄρα πώ τι πέπυστο,[46] with Green's translation particularly highlighting the extent of his ignorance with the words "knew nothing". Ares discovers Askalaphos death much later in book 15 through Hera, where he threatens to seek revenge and defy Zeus' orders (*Il.* 15.115-8). The fact that Ares did not know that his son was killed and had to be informed indicates that the gods' knowledge of the events in the *Iliad* are limited. Janko also highlights that Ares could not see through the golden clouds,[47] which appear again in the following book when Zeus conceals himself and Hera (*Il.* 14.343-51); as Helios could not see through the golden clouds in that scenario, it would suggest that Ares' view of the battlefield and his son was obstructed by them, implying that if a god's line of sight is obstructed by something, they may not be able to perceive it.

In another case, Zeus draws his attention away from the fighting temporarily to focus on other peoples:

> "Zeus. When he'd brought the Trojans and Hektōr
>
> to the ships, abandoned them (μὲν...ἐχέμεν) there… but
>
> himself turned his bright eyes away (πάλιν τρέπεν
>
> ὄσσε φαεινὼ νόσφιν),[48] gazing far off at the lands of
>
> the Thracian horsemen…but to Troy he [no] longer

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[46] In later versions of the tradition, Askalaphos survived the Trojan war and battles Penthesileia in Aristotle's *Dictys*. While Janko suggests that Homer rewrote Askalaphos' fate to die to emphasise the "gulf between mortals and gods", Marks believes that his fate was changed, because it did not align "with the poem's Panhellenic orientation". See: Janko 1992, p. 108, *Il.* 13.478-80; Marks 2010, p. 316, n. 37.

[47] Cf. Janko 1992, *Il.* 521-5.

[48] This formula is repeated in relation to Athena in book 21: "ὣς ἄρα φωνήσασα πάλιν τρέπεν ὄσσε φαεινώ" "This said, Athēnē turned her keen gaze from Arēs" (*Il.* 21.415).

> turned his bright eyes at all (πάμπαν ἔτι τρέπεν ὄσσε
>
> φαεινώ), never expecting (οὐ) that any of the immortals
>
> would go to help of either the Danaäns or the Trojans." – *Il.* 13.1-9.

There are four indications in this extract denoting Zeus' lack of perception and knowledge of what is occurring in Troy while he looks elsewhere: first, the translator's choice of "abandoned" suggests his total absence from the fighting; two others appear in the narrator's repetition of Zeus' eyes being focused elsewhere, with emphasis on "away" and "no longer…at all" to reinforce the extent of Zeus' lack of attention; lastly Zeus' oblivious state in relation to the events occurring in Troy in his absence, and his naivety about the intentions of other gods, are expressed through "never expecting". This lack of attention thus provides Poseidon with an opportunity to influence the fighting without Zeus' knowledge: "but it was no blind watch (ἀλαοσκοπιὴν) that the lordly Earth-Shaker kept" (*Il.* 13.10). The narrator draws attention to Zeus' lack of perception again, contrasting Poseidon's vigilance to Zeus' by comparing Zeus' limited perception of the events to blindness (ἀλαοσκοπιὴν).[49] Zeus' distraction, followed by Hera's seductive deception in book 14, which resulted in Zeus falling asleep, ensured that Zeus' gaze was not focused on the events of the war. Zeus would only notice Poseidon's actions upon waking in book 15. By repeatedly highlighting Zeus' lack of attention on the battle, the narrator draws the audience's attention to his

[49] Poseidon is not exempt from a limited perception in Homer, as in the *Odyssey* he is unaware that Calypso has released Odysseus, until he notices his raft (*Od.* 5.282–90).

limited perception, allowing for Poseidon to become involved in the fighting without his knowledge.

It is clear that the gods, while they possess an extended perception of the mortal and immortal world through their enhanced sight, are incapable of perceiving all things simultaneously, so must select where to focus their attention, thereby sacrificing their awareness of other matters. In particular, Zeus does not remain consistently vigilant throughout the poem, resulting in divine disobedience occurring behind his back. While divine attention presents itself as an indirect limitation, as a consequence of the gods' desires, their inability to see beyond their periphery and past certain obstructions is more significant, resulting in the gods missing important events, such as Askalaphos' death and important changes in the tide of the war, which would impact their ability to maintain fate effectively.

The hierarchy amongst the gods

The gods are part of a hierarchical system: Zeus sits at the top of this chain, followed by the other Olympians and then the remaining gods.[50] While Zeus is undeniably the leading figure, a fact affirmed by his epithet "Father Zeus" (*Il.* 1.503, 2.371; *Od.* 4.341), and by Hephaestus in book 1, who views Zeus to be "by far the strongest" of the gods (*Il.* 1.580-1),[51] there are other gods who are willing or are at least capable of opposing him. It is known that Zeus' power is not absolute, and therefore can never achieve total control over divine autonomy, based on the history of his role alone: his grandfather

[50] Allan 2006, p. 8
[51] Another example includes *Od.* 20.112.

Ouranos was overthrown by his father Kronos, whereby Kronos too was overthrown by Zeus himself.[52] The rest of the gods too possess the power to topple Zeus from his position; Apollo and Poseidon previously attempted to overthrow his rule once (*Il*.435-57), and Zeus refrained from courting Thetis on the grounds of a prophecy by an oracle of Themis, which dictated that Thetis' child would surpass its own father (Ap. Rh. *Argo*. 4.800-802). Achilles also notes that Thetis claimed she once defended Zeus against a plot to throw him in chains, orchestrated by Athene, Hera and Poseidon (*Il*. 1.396-400), a revolt considered by many scholars to have been an invention by Homer.[53] While this invention equips Thetis with the means to petition Zeus for the fulfilment of her son's request as a gesture of reciprocation, it also portrays him to be more vulnerable in his authoritative role.

So, the question remains: how is Zeus able to maintain his position of power, and command respect from the other gods with regards to this limitation? The gods often voice their own disapproval of his choices and actions, as displayed after his speech in book 4, where Athene and Hera "muttered" (ἐπέμυξαν) to each other, sharing their own opinions of disagreement (*Il*. 4.20). McCall too recognises his difficult task of maintaining this position of power through Zeus' speeches in the *Iliad*, where he repeatedly defends himself against their challenges to his will.[54] Most often, we see Zeus combatting these accusations with threats of force, Homer often presenting Zeus' character as "an angry punisher of rebellious subjects divine and

[52] Gantz 1996, for Ouranos, see: pp. 10-11; for Kronos, see: pp. 44-47.
[53] Kullmann 1960, p. 15 n.2; Willcock 1964, pp. 141-54; 1977, pp. 41-53; Kirk 1985 ad loc; Yasumura 2011, p. 10.
[54] McCall 2013, pp. 5, 20-21.

human";[55] in book 8, he threatens that if any god intervened in the fighting, he would stop them by force, claiming that he is "the strongest of all gods" (*Il.* 8.17) and warns that if Hera and Athene continued to intervene, they would be struck by his thunderbolts in their chariots (*Il.* 8.452-6). This threat of harm as a means of control continues in book 15, when he threatens Hera to not challenge his authority by reminding her of a past punishment she endured, to which she "shuddered in fear" at the memory (*Il.* 15.16-34). Zeus is capable of harming the gods as he has before, perhaps even possessing the ability to kill them. Zeus must exercise force to control them when necessary.

Clearly it would be difficult for the gods to defeat Zeus, as Hera expresses in her address to the council of gods in book 15 (*Il.* 15.104-108), however, the gods can attempt to take advantage of him instead. Zeus in the *Iliad* is a key component in the proceedings of mortal affairs as its leading overseer, he is often the key to its change; so, when a god wishes to influence the battle in a substantial way, the gods might try to convince him or elude him with trickery to succeed in creating the changes they desire.[56] Both are achieved in the *Iliad*: first, in book 1 by Thetis, resulting in the promise that he will "grant victory to the Trojans for such time until the Achaians recompense [Thetis'] son and raise him in honour among them" (*Il.*1.509-10), and again in book 14, where Hera managed to seduce Zeus in order for him to abandon his watch over the events (*Il.* 14.357-360).

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[55] McCall 2013, p. 32. Considine compares Zeus' anger towards the gods with his anger towards mortals, suggesting that their treatment is similar : "the anger of Zeus against the other gods, when they disobey him, is closely analogous to that of a god against a recalcitrant mortal", see: Considine 1966, p. 20.

[56] Dowden 2005, p. 87.

Despite these apparent successful attempts to temporarily alter the course of events, Zeus' responses in these occasions might suggest his awareness of their attempts to influence his plan. While Thetis asks Zeus for the restoration of her son's honour, she seems unaware that this will end in Achilles' death, which she and her son, at least for Achilles before the death of Patroklos, wanted to avoid.[57] Zeus, however, is aware that Achilles will die as a result of his desire to repair his honour, so allows her request to be fulfilled as it serves his own interests. In the case of Hera's deception, at first, Zeus seems surprised, but offers a cutting remark by comparing her to a list of his previous lovers (*Il.* 14.315-28), praise that can barely be understood as such. It is this evidence that convinces Marks that Zeus is aware of her attempt, accepting it, but not without humiliating her in the process by stinging her pride with jealousy.[58] Considering this possible awareness of the deception and, therefore, the decision to allow it to play out, it would suggest that Zeus knows he will be able to reverse what will be altered, which he does so in book 15 when turning the tide of battle in favour of the Trojans by sending Iris to dismiss Poseidon, and Apollo to reinvigorate Hektor to strike fear in the Greeks and instigate their retreat to the ships (*Il.* 15.158-299).

While Zeus tries to command order over the gods to maintain this coherent system of hierarchy to prevent chaos, often the gods will attempt to find loopholes to direct the course of events in their own favour to avoid the limitations placed upon them by Zeus. While some attempts were successful, they are often in vain, as these changes are quickly reverted back once Zeus

[57] Marks 2016, p. 66.
[58] Marks 2016, pp. 66-7.

returns to his position of surveillance. Hermes' statement in the *Odyssey* perfectly encapsulates this: "none can sway or check the will of Zeus," applying to both the gods and men alike (*Od.* 5.103). Zeus must remain vigilant in order to spot any attempts to oppose his will and must pose as a constant threat to the other Olympians who wish to challenge him.

Conclusion

This chapter assessed the effectiveness of the gods as enforcers of fate, setting the stage for chapter 4's deeper analysis of divine intervention with an overview, before addressing their limitations of being susceptible to harm, perhaps even death, and potentially relying on ambrosia and nectar to maintain their immortality. They are also limited by their vision, highlighting their difficulty of maintaining constant attention, their incapability of seeing past certain obstructions, and their inability look in more than one direction at a time, suggesting that they could miss an opportunity to prevent an alteration to fate. Lastly, the gods frequently contest Zeus' commands to attain their personal goals, so he must control them by threats of force and ensure that a gods wishes aligns with his will and fate.

Having discussed at length the key features of the gods presented in Homer's epics that will be relevant for the analysis of their role as enforcers of fate in chapter 4, the focus of this research now shifts to the presentation of moira in Homer in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2 : MOIRA

To fully understand the usage of moira in Homer, there are two, necessary variables which will be addressed in this chapter: one, by the other ways in which the poet expresses the idea of fate, namely the verbs *meiromai* and *mello*, and the nouns *moros*, *morsimos*, *aisa*, and *potmos*, and examining the patterns in which they appear in; two, in the form moira takes, either as an abstract force, a personification, and multiple personification. By exploring Homer's moira and then its limitations in this chapter, a foundation is set for chapter 4, which discusses the collaboration between the gods and moira so that they overcome each other's limitations and ensure that fated events occur. To help distinguish which of the three interpretations I am referring to, I shall write them as such: the abstract force as "*moira*," the singular personification as "Moira" and the collective personification of the three goddesses as "the Moirai"; when referring to them all as a general collective, I shall use the word "moira".

The abstract force: *moira*

Despite occasionally appearing in miscellaneous examples to denote a part of a whole, a portion of land, a share in booty, or simply a "part" in something,[59] *moira* (μοῖρα) appears most often in Homer as "fate," relating to death and doom, one's measure of life, and cosmic order.[60] As a noun, *moira* can be

[59] *Il.* 9.318; 10.252; 15.195; 16.68. *Od.* 4.97.
[60] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: μοῖρα.

interpreted as a force or power that might control the events within the lives of individuals, and as something relating to specific events that will occur, that are often negative in nature, such as the loss of success or even life.

In the *Iliad*, there are five instances depicting an impersonal form of moira.[61] Four concern the fate of an individual, three of which are fates that are yet to occur: Helenos informs Hektor that his death is not due yet (*Il.* 7.52), while Sarpedon's (*Il.* 16.433-4) and Achilles' (*Il.* 23.80-1) fates of death are declared. The remaining instance is speculative: Ares wonders if he is fated "to be struck by the bolt of Zeus" when he considers avenging his fallen son (*Il.* 15.117). The fifth example concerns the fate of a group, as when the Achaians risk their lives fighting to reclaim the body of Patroklos, one unnamed Achaian proclaims, "My friends, even though it may prove our [fate] (μοῖρα) to be slaughtered beside this man,[62] once and for all, let no one give up the battle!" (*Il.* 17.420-2). While interpretable as an enigmatic power that is potentially responsible for the men's death in the conflict, it's mention can also present itself as a logical suggestion of the fight's outcome: that they may die. Alternatively, it could be a common saying with no deeper meaning intended behind the character's words.[63] Homer's presentation of *moira* therefore invites multiple interpretations: as an abstract force, a logical conclusion, or simply a saying. This flexibility allows *moira* the freedom to be perceived in multiple ways, as the Achaian speaking does not provide an explanation of his statement that would clarify its interpretation. These five

[61] *Il.* 7.52; 15.117; 16.434; 17.420-2; 23.80-1.
[62] While Green's translation uses "destiny," it is more appropriate for this discussion to use the word "fate" as opposed to its synonym.
[63] Dietrich 1965, p. 200-1.

cases indicate that when moira is presented as an abstract force in the *Iliad*, it is in connection with the fate of death or doom that befalls an individual or a group.[64]

Having explained the ways in which *moira*, the abstract presentation of fate, appears and is interpreted in Homer's epics, it must be differentiated from similar terms.

Moira's alternatives

The possibility of other terms being used as an alternative to the word *moira* in Homer must be considered. The terms of particular interest which will be examined are the verbs *meiromai* (μείρομαι) and mello (μέλλω), and the nouns *moros* (μόρος), *morismos* (μόρσιμος), *aisa* (αἶσα), and *potmos* (πότμος), taking particular note in how they are distinguishable from one another in their meaning and application.[65]

The verb *meiromai* (μείρομαι) is cognate with the noun moira, sharing the meaning "to receive one's portion" or "due". It is mentioned in relation to death in Homer twice, once in the *Iliad* where Achilles believes that he will die fighting the river god (*Il.* 21.281) and once in the *Odyssey* when Achilles' ghost comments on the death of Agamemnon (*Od.* 24.34).[66] In addition to the

[64] Another five instances of the impersonal force moira appear in the *Odyssey* in relation to the fates of an individual, but are instead connected to the theme of *nostos*; as my focus concerns moira in relation to death, I will not discuss the examples here, but will list them: *Od.* 4.475; 5.41, 114, 345; 9.532.

[65] The word τύχη, meaning "luck" and "fortune" is not used in Homer, see: Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: τύχη. Despite this, in translation it stands in for moira in the context of a lack of luck or fortune leading to death or doom, as seen when Andromache declares her father δύσμορος which derives from *moros*, yet is translated as "luckless" (*Il.* 22.481). See: Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: δύσ-μορος.

[66] *Il.* 21.281. *Od.* 24.34. As a later distinction of fate, *heimarmene* (εἱμαρμένη) does not appear in Homer, contrary to a statement made by Eidinow: "Among the other words for

clear link to the fate of death for Achilles and Agamemnon in these cases, *moira*, *moros* and *morismos* all likely originated from the verb *meireo* (to take one's portion), which would further clarify their close connection and similarities to *moira*.[67]

In book 12, *mello* (μέλλω) is mentioned alongside *moira* in the context of the Asios' destined fate of death:

> "fool that he was, not destined (ἔμελλε) to escape
>
> the foul death-spirits, or, exulting in horses and chariot,
>
> to ever return from the ships, ever get back safely to windy
>
> Ilion, since too soon his accursed fate (μοῖρα) was to
>
> enfold him through the spear of Idomeneus, Deukaliōn's
>
> son. – *Il*. 12.113-7.

Mello means "to be destined"; in the same way as the English term means "destiny," which in some contexts acts as *moira*'s direct synonym to mean "fate," *mello* is as an alternative to *moira*, standing in its place or alongside it in relation to a destined fate of death, occurring four times this way in the *Iliad*.[68]

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fate occurring first in Homer's epics, we find… *heimarmene*". Despite this, her speculation of an etymological link between *heimarmene* and *meireo*, is plausible. See: Eidinow 2011, pp. 41-2; Liddell et al. s.v: μείρομαι.

[67] *Meiromai* is the passive form of the verb *meireo*. See: Eidinow 2011, p. 42. Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: μείρομαι.

[68] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: μέλλω. *Il*. 2.36; 12.113; 15.612; 22.356. There is another case of μέλλω appearing in the *Odyssey* in relation to a destiny of fated death not set to occur, when Athene warns Odysseus about the suitors : "I would have died (ἔμελλον) like Agamemnon in my own house, if you had not explained exactly how things stand" (*Od*. 13.385).

There are six examples of *moros* (μόρος), meaning "fate," "destiny," "death," and "doom," linking to *moira* through death and doom in Homer,[69] two of which are as follows: "I just wish I could conceal him, far away from grievous death, when his dread fate (μόρος) comes on him" (*Il.* 18.464-5), with which Hephaestus responds to Thetis' request for him to forge Achilles' armour, and "So Aegisthus overstepped… although he knew that it would doom (μόρον) them all" when Zeus comments on human accountability for a portion of their own ills (*Od.* 1.36). Green and Wilson choose to translate *moros* as "fate" on both occasions. When considering the translator's choice and the context of *moros* appearing in a similar context to which *moira* might, this being death and doom, it is appropriate to consider *moros* as an alternative to moira in Homer.

As for *morsimos* (μόρσιμος), meaning "appointed by fate," "destined," "fordoomed to die" or indicating a "day of doom", there are three examples from the epics.[70] On one occasion, when confronted by Achilles, Apollo states: "You'll never kill me, it is not in my destiny (μόρσιμός) to die" (*Il.* 22.13). Green translates *morsimos* as "destiny" here, but two sentences previously, he also translates *moira* as "destiny" when stating Hektor's position: "But Hektōr's fatal destiny (μοῖρα) constrained him to remain where he was, outside Ilion and the Skaian Gates." (*Il.* 22.5-6). Both examples are separate, despite their proximity. However, it is worth recognising that as "destiny" acts as a direct synonym for "fate" in English, translators may use "destiny" in the context of a destiny of fated death or doom. Apollo's destiny

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[69] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: μόρος. *Il.* 18.465; 19.421; 20.30; 21.133. *Od.* 1.34; 9.61.
[70] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: μόρσιμός. *Il.* 15.613; 22.13. *Od.* 10.175.

not to die and Hektor's destiny to die feature two different words, *moira* and *morsimos*, indicating that *morsimos* can be utilised as an alternative word for moira to refer to the destiny of fated death.

Aisa (αἶσα), meaning "one's lot," "destiny," or "ill luck," is used when Hektor reassures his wife about his remaining life "No man shall send me to Hades before my fated day (αἶσα) – though that day (μοῖρα), I must tell you, no man has ever escaped" (*Il.* 6.487).[71] Again, the fated day in question is expressed with both *aisa* and *moira*, indicating that *aisa* is an alternative to *moira* when discussing the fate of an individual or group, in addition to the translator's choice of "fated" to express *aisa*.

Potmos (πότμος), meaning an "evil destiny" most often associated with death, appears when Helenos' reassures Hektor that he will not die yet: "it's not yet your time (μοῖρα) to die, to meet your allotted fate (πότμον)" (*Il.* 7.52).[72] The same argument presented with *aisa* can be applied here also, with Hektor's fated time to die being referred to both with *potmos* and *moira*, in addition to the translation choice of "fate" for *potmos*. *Potmos* also seems to derive from *pipto* (to jump/fall), which has been interpreted to refer to either the distribution of fate, or even the falling of the body in death as allocated by fate, further suggesting its link to *moira*.[73].

While these alternative words still function just as *moira* does to reflect the same concept of fate, they are each often used in specific contexts in the epics

[71] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: αἶσα. Examples of *aisa* in Homer are as follows: *Il.* 5.209; 6.333, 487; 9.608; 10.445; 17.321; 20.127. Od. 5.40, 113; 7.197; 11.61; 13.306; 14.359; 19.84.
[72] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: πότμος. Examples of *potmos* in Homer are as follows: *Il.* 2.359; 4.170, 396; 6.412; 7.52; 11.263; 20.337. Od. 2.250; 4.562; 11.197; 19.550.
[73] Eidinow 2011, pp. 42-3.

and overlap each other in purpose, hence why it is important to reflect upon their usage. As I have addressed these extra terms, I will highlight their usage in extracts from Homer with the Greek used in parentheses.

Personification

To understand *moira*'s deified counterparts, Moira and the Moirai, it is important to understand personification in the anthropomorphic sense, that grants something non-human, in this example an abstract noun, humanlike qualities.

The capitalisation of proper nouns in the English language can indicate to us if abstract nouns are intended to be personified. We can therefore apply this to the abstract noun *moira* which would become "Moira" once personified. However, in classical Greek, there was no distinction between upper and lower case letters, meaning that identifying personified nouns through capitalisation is not possible.[74] Rather, the context must be examined to infer whether the subject is indeed being referred to as an abstract noun or as a personification. To complicate matters further, "light personification," a term Stafford uses in her discussion of the topic, touches on the literary issue that authors may make it unclear whether a noun is being defined as abstract noun or as a physical manifestation.[75] In Homeric epic, the poet leaves the interpretation of fate in a rather loose state, using the noun in contexts that suggests it could be either interpreted as an abstract noun or a personification,

[74] Stafford 2000, p. 4.
[75] Stafford 2000, p. 9.

thus inviting this debate and leaving us wondering which, if any, is the correct interpretation to follow.

Moira is personified as female, as in Indo-European languages, nouns are given gendered endings to fit into a masculine, feminine or neuter category, and nouns indicating abstract ideas have a tendency to be feminine and, as a result, are usually personified as female.[76] The complication thus arises in English translation when attempting to determine whether an abstract idea is personified or not, due to abstract nouns already receiving a gendered distinction, despite not always being personified, and when we consider the pronouns "he/him" and "she/her," we are invited to think of a person, whereas the impersonal pronoun "it" suggests a "thing" instead.[77] This applies to *moira*, which fits into the feminine category, with its personifications Moira and the Moirai also appearing as feminine, one using the singular form, the other the plural; it would be less likely to find the plural *moirai* in the abstract sense. Deciding whether mentions of moira in Homer are in the abstract or the personified sense must be determined through context, and by observing certain verbs or adjectives in conjunction with moira that are typically applied to gods.

Moira can be referred to in an abstract way when discussing it as an invisible, intangible and theoretical force, and it is from these abstract ideas that personifications can spawn.[78] Stafford recognises concepts as being

[76] For more detail concerning the imbalance of female to male personifications in ancient Greek religion and reasons as to why this might have been the case, see: Stafford 2000, p. 27-35.
[77] Wales 1996, p. 173-5.
[78] I will explore personification and moira's personifications shortly.

understood in the mind, like *themis* (justice).[79] Moira can be viewed as a personification, since while it means fate in its more generalised sense, it can be elevated to the level of a goddess or, as will be discussed in the following section, a collection of goddesses. There have been a variety of speculations as to why certain concepts were deified in ancient Greek religion. According to Shapiro, it was common for the Greeks, who believed in the existence of divine and supernatural entities impacting the world around them, to elevate concepts to the position of gods.[80] Smith further suggests that the Greeks viewed concepts as possessing a spirit, as did gods.[81] In Hesiod's *Works and Days*, Eris, the personification of "strife," is described vividly as born of the personification of night:

> I see there is not only one Strife-brood on earth, there are two. One would be commended when perceived, the other is reprehensible, and their tempers are distinct. The one promotes ugly fighting and conflict, the brute…But the elder born of gloomy Night, and the son of Kronos, the high-seated one who dwells in heaven, set her in the earth's roots, much better for men…this Strife is good for mortals.
>
> – Hes. *WD*. 11-24.

[79] Stafford 2000, p. 2.
[80] This is a long-standing and uncontroversial view of Greek religion and culture. Shapiro 1993, pp. 12-4.
[81] Smith 1997, p. 187. Stafford agrees with the interpretation that personifications possess spirits as do gods, see: Stafford 2000, p. 26.

This would suggest that Eris possesses a spirit, due to being born and living. Smith and this example proposes how, by considering these abstractions as able to possess a spirit, this might have aided in their personification. In addition, Eris is presented as two beings, one "good" and one "bad" , which proves that abstract ideas can spawn as a multiple personification when deified.[82] We might then consider the position of moira in Homer as being elevated from an abstract idea to goddess or goddesses. With this in mind, the deification of order (Themis), for example, was a natural development;[83] while sailors might pray to Poseidon to ensure safe sea-travel, and farmers to Demeter for a profitable harvest, those who wished for order might have had Themis as a figure to pray to in the hopes of maintaining it. When applied to Moira, its deification was perhaps for similar reasons, allowing it to be considered a personification.

The singular personification: Moira

This singular, female personification appears frequently in Homer.[84] She assists in the death of Diōrēs: "Fate there now ensnared Amarynkeus's son Diōrēs" whereby he is finished off by Peirōs (*Il.* 4.517). She is mentioned again by Hecuba when speaking with Priam about Hektor: "All-mastering

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[82] For more on Eris in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, see: Gagarin 1990.
[83] For an examination of the deification and cult worship of Themis, see: Stafford 1998, p. 66-91.
[84] Examples of the singular personification of moira in Homer are as follows: *Il.* 5.83, 613, 628; 6.488; 12.116; 13.602; 16.334, 849; 18.119; 19.410; 20.477; 21.82; 24.209. *Od.* 2.100; 3.238; 17.326; 19.145; 24.135. Nilsson speculated that moira was not personified before Homer, see: Nilsson 1949, p. 284. Dietrich does consider Nilsson's speculation as a likely possibility, but also grants merit to Pötscher's suggestion that a personal Moira may have existed in addition to the more impersonal moira, see: Pötscher 1960, p. 26. It is difficult to make a judgement as to the treatment of moira prior to Homer, however, due to the lack of evidence that would clarify its treatment in popular belief, whether personal, impersonal or both.

Fate (Μοῖρα) surely spun a thread at his birth,[85] when I myself bore him" (*Il.* 24.209). We even see her mentioned by Achilles' horse Xanthos, after it had been granted the power by Hera to speak, informing Achilles of his impending fate:

> But your day of destruction is near: and it is not we who
>
> will be to blame, but a great god and strong Fate (Μοῖρα).
>
> – *Il.* 19.409-410

Again, light personification is used here, as in these cases, moira can be interpreted as either an abstract force or a personification.

A sensible approach to examining Moira as a personification might be to compare her to different personifications in Homer, by the way they interact with the other gods, the way in which they manifest their physical forms, and present individual personalities. Themis is a personification of the abstraction Order, appearing in book 15 in her interaction with Hera:

> The rest she ignored, but accepted the cup from
>
> fair-cheeked Themis, for she was the first to run up
>
> and greet her, speaking with winged words, and saying:
>
> "Hērē, why have you come here? You look quite
>
> distraught – Kronos' son, your own husband, must have
>
> scared you badly." Then the white-armed goddess Hērē

[85] Again, Green chooses to translate Moira as "destiny," but for the purposes of this research, "fate" is more appropriate.

> answered her thus: "Themis, goddess, don't ask me –
>
> you yourself know how arrogant and unbending his temper
>
> is!" – *Il.* 15.87-94

Hera visibly sees Themis approaching her, who she directly interacts with, and responds to after hearing Themis' question, indicating that the personification Themis possesses a physical form. Her appearance is described with the epithet "fair-cheeked", she is addressed as θεὰ (goddess), and expresses empathy towards Hera, all resulting in Themis being presented as a "personalised deity" in Homer.[86] Through being visible and interacting with other gods, possessing a physical form and through presenting her personality and as a female character in the *Iliad*, Themis differs from Moira.

Again, the Dream in book 2 (*Il.* 2.5-36), is directly interacted with by Zeus, confirming it to be tangible, as seen in the use of προσηύδα meaning to "address it". Zeus also dictates the Dream's actions, by sending him to give Agamemnon a false dream. The Dream shortly after alters its form to appear like Nestor, confirming it to possess a physical form, if only temporary. While not presented as a personalised character, the Dream is a tangible and interactable personified deity, unlike Moira.

Even when personified, Moira never directly interacts with mortals or other gods, she is never described as possessing a physical form, and is never presented with a personality, which would indicate her characteristics and behaviour, in Homer. We cannot confirm Zeus' control over moira either, as

[86] Stafford 2000, p. 46.

there are times in which their powers overlap or supersede one another. Despite fitting the description of a personification, Moira cannot be compared to other personifications found in the epics, so should be treated separately due to its complexity as an intangible, cosmic force. For this reason, Moira is too different from the presentations of other personifications to be analysed in the same way.

The multiple personification: The Moirai

In all of Homer, there is only one clear use of the plural, Moirai, when Apollo criticises Achilles for refusing to return the body of Hektor:

> "I suppose before now a man has lost one yet more dear to him – a brother from the same womb, or a son: yet he weeps and laments and then is done, since the Fates (Μοῖραι) have put an enduring heart in humankind." – *Il*. 24.46-50.[87]

Dietrich suggests that the Moirai here seem to possess another "unknown office… [which] prescribed certain limits to human grief," as indicated by the Moirai's responsibility to "put an enduring heart in humankind" for mortals to be able to endure sorrow.[88] There is a connection between a mortal's fixed death and the inevitable grief that will follow, so the Moirai in this way, though indirectly, still hold true to their original office as a force allocating

[87] I will shortly discuss the case of the κλῶθές or "the heavy ones" in book 7 of the *Odyssey* and its potential link to the Moirai (*Od*. 7.198). Due to the guaranteed mention of the Moirai in book 24 of the *Iliad*, Duffy's suggestion that moira is not presented in Homer as a goddess or collection of goddesses is consequently wrong. See: Duffy 1947, p. 482.
[88] Dietrich 1965, p. 205.

the lots of men. The Moirai are presented here as impersonal, despite being a collective personification, due to the three goddesses' lack of displayed individuality. They do make a more substantial appearance in Hesiod's *Theogony*, where they are presented with two, different origin stories and the goddesses are named: Clotho (the spinner), Lachesis (the allocator of lots) and Atropos (the one who cannot be turned):

> "Also she [Night] bore the Destinies and ruthless avenging Fates,
> Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos, who give men at their birth
> both evil and good to have, and they pursue the transgressions
> of men and of gods: and these goddesses never cease from their
> dread anger until they punish the sinner with a sore penalty."
>
> – Hes. *Theo*. 217-222.

> "Second he [Zeus] married sleek Themis, who bore… the
> Fates, to whom Zeus the resourceful gave the most privilege,
> Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who give mortal men both
> good and ill."
>
> – Hes. *Theo*. 901-906.

The Moirai are more developed here, with names and two origins alongside their roles. In one origin, they are presented as the daughters of Night, who predated the Olympians, presenting them as chthonic, whereas in the other, the Moirai are the children of Zeus and Themis. Dietrich believes this origin

to be the result of "theological thought," made apparent by linking Zeus and Themis' roles as arbiters of justice to the Moirai's sphere of cosmic order.[89]

Κλῶθές in *Odyssey* 7

I believe there is potentially another mention of an earlier version of the Moirai in Homer's *Odyssey*. In book 7, Alcinous considers the aftermath of Odysseus' return home, saying that it will be decided "by Fate (αἶσα) and the heavy ones (κλῶθές), the Spinners (νήσαντο)" (*Od.* 7.198). The question is thus raised: who are "the heavy ones"? The naming of the κλῶθές undoubtedly shares similarities to Κλωθώ or Clotho, one of the Moirai who is first named in Hesiod's *Theogony* (Hes. *Theo.* 219).[90] Furthermore, as the κλῶθές appear to be a multiple personification derived from of the verb "spin,"[91] and as the Moirai were depicted as spinners of men's fate of death from birth,[92] particularly Κλωθώ, who spins the thread of mortal life, it is not a far-fetched theory to suggest that "the heavy ones", described as "the Spinners", are the Moirai. Therefore, the κλῶθές' similarity to Κλωθώ and the sharing of the spinning motif with the Moirai would suggest that they are an earlier version of the Moirai. This is supported by Gantz, who suggests that by Fate and the heavy ones being presented "jointly in this same role; these latter are surely the Moirai under a descriptive epithet" as spinners, especially considering that the personified κλῶθές do not appear anywhere else.[93] Dietrich also agrees that it is unlikely that the κλῶθές were separate

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[89] Dietrich 1965, p. 59.
[90] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: Κλωθώ.
[91] Heubeck et al. 1990, l. 197,198.
[92] I will shortly be discussing the link between spinning and moira, see: 50-2.
[93] Gantz 1993, p. 7.

from the Moirai.[94] However, due to its singular instance in association with Fate, this example cannot be entirely cleared as a second instance of the Moirai appearing in Homer, but is an important case to recognise and consider.

Limitations

Moira does not physically appear in Homer, and is depicted as being physically absent, while fixing the fates of mortals and key events. Moira's lack of direct involvement is noticeable, but it is debatable to regard this as a limitation or not. As expressed in the previous section, the Olympians, who are much more physically involved in the affairs of mortals, are at risk of being harmed, as in the case of Aphrodite and Ares. Moira therefore enjoys the benefits of being involved in the conflict from afar, without being at risk of harm.

However, the distance from the action spawns its own limitation, as despite moira's responsibility of setting specific outcomes to occur, moira is unable to physically enforce its will by itself. To avoid this limitation, moira relies on the gods as enforcers of fate to ensure that these set events occur, but this in turn creates more problems. The gods are not omnipotent or omniscient; they cannot know how the mortal characters will act, nor do they have total power to control them. Mortal decisions therefore acts as a barrier for the gods as enforcers to overcome.[95] Athene is sent by Hera to deter the Achaians

[94] Dietrich 1965, p. 291-2.

[95] Gaskin paraphrases in his article the content of Snell's thesis, which concerned the concept of the agent in Homer with regards to mortal choice: "choices are made for them [mortals] rather than by them; in some cases the instigators of action are gods, in other

from leaving Troy by the ships: "Then for the Argives a homecoming beyond their destiny would have come about, had not Hērē thus addressed Athēnē" (*Il.* 2.155-6), implying that mortal decisions, if not directed by divine enforcers, has the potential to overthrow fate. Athene urges Odysseus to call them back and relies on his persuasive ability to "use gentle words to turn the men back one by one" (*Il.* 2.180). Kirk rightly recognises that Odysseus only heeds half of Athene's words,[96] indicating that he values his own judgement over Athene's to be more likely to succeed. Athene's reliance on a mortal, whether it is Odysseus or not (as he is known to be skilled in rhetoric), implies an uncertainty as to whether her attempts to redirect the course of events will work. This highlights not only the gods' limitation of the control of mortal choices, but also a limitation of moira, due to relying on these imperfect enforcers to control mortal decisions, where there is an implied chance that the gods may not succeed.

The image of spinning fate

Fate is presented as being spun on three occasions in Homer (*Il.* 20.127; 24.209) (*Od.*7.196).[97] On two occasions, *aisa* is depicted as spinning the fates of both Achilles and Odysseus: "though later he'll [Achilles] suffer whatever Fate (αἶσα) spun (ἐπένησε) for him at his birth, when his mother bore him." (*Il.* 20.127-8), and "Once there, he must endure whatever was spun out

cases they are forces acting internally on the agent and over [such as Moira] which he has no control". See: Gaskin 1990, p. 1; Snell 1982.

[96] Cf. Kirk 1985, ad loc. 2.180.

[97] For an article solely discussing the spinning of fate in Homer, see: Dietrich 1962.

(νήσαντο) when he was born by Fate (αἶσα) and the heavy ones, the Spinners." (*Od.* 7.196-8).[98]

As previously discussed, *aisa* is used interchangeably in Homer to mean fate, hence the translator's choice to translate *aisa* as "Fate" on both occasions.[99]

In the third example, Hecuba discusses the nature of Hektor's fate: "All-mastering Destiny (Μοῖρα) surely spun (ἐπένησε) a thread at his birth" (*Od.* 24.209-10).

The poet applies moira on this occasion and is indicated by Hecuba as the force responsible for dispensing Hektor's fate. In all three examples, the fate of death for an individual is spun at birth. Again, all three utilise the verb νέω meaning to "spin", which would indicate a formulaic consistency: that the fate of men is often depicted as being spun. Despite this, the other gods are seen to be active in the method of controlling fate by weaving, which Zeus does once (*Od.* 4.208), as does a daemon (*Od.* 16.64) and so do the other gods six more times compared to the three instances where fate is spun for men,[100] indicating that the motif of weaving the fates of individuals is not exclusive to moira. On a numerical basis alone, moira does not stand out as uniquely associated with the spinning of fate for man in Homeric epic. This is not to say that the gods are responsible for the plan of an individual's life from birth to death as this is the responsibility of moira; they instead are responsible for specific events within their life.[101]

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[98] I have previously discussed "the heavy ones". See: p. 48-9.
[99] Dietrich 1962, p. 87.
[100] *Il.* 24.525. *Od.* 1.17; 3.208; 8.579; 11.139; 20.196. Dietrich 1962, pp. 292-3.
[101] Nilsson 1949, p. 170.

In short, moira has little control over what occurs between a mortal's birth and death besides certain key events that are preordained to happen and cannot even lay claim to its associated trope of weaving out the fate of mortals, with this being a shared trait amongst the gods in Homer.

Conclusion

Moira's connection to *moros*, *morisimos*, *meireo*, *aisa* and *potmos* is clear, resulting in these terms occasionally appearing where moira might in relation to fate and/or death in the *Iliad*. Also in this chapter, moira's different interpretations have been recognised and explored, these being as an abstract noun and as a personification, whether in its singular form Moira or its plural form the Moirai. In doing so, it is clear that in the Homeric epics, all three of moira's forms are used, though its plural form only once, and that its personifications continued to develop after Homer, as seen in Hesiod and in evidence of their presence in Greek popular belief though cult worship. Moira is limited by its reliance on the gods as imperfect enforcers of fate and is not solely connected to the motif of spinning in Homer.

CHAPTER 3: ZEUS' WILL AND THE POET

After forming a clearer understanding of the behaviour and limitations of the gods and moira, including the way that Homer utilises them in the epics, it is important to examine Zeus, particularly his will, and the role of the poet. The first section considers the will of Zeus separately to understand its parameters – in what it encompasses, when it begins, and where it ends – and how it differs from moira, before taking into account the wider link between the poet's and Zeus' plans. The second section examines the narratological connection, similarities, and differences between Zeus βουλή and the poet, to consider how the poet might utilise Zeus and moira as devices to control the plot and test the boundaries of the narrative tradition of the Trojan War myth. [102]

What is Zeus' βουλή?

As βουλή can be translated as either "plan" or "will," it is important to explore the different connotations of these definitions in English. In the context of Zeus' βουλή, "plan" would imply a goal or a method for achieving an end, in this case, the events that Zeus dictates must occur; "will" expresses itself as a decision that Zeus declares with the implication that it must be abided by; however, this word brings its own complications in differentiating between Zeus' wants and duties, a problem that will be explored later in chapter 4 with

[102] As specified in the plan set out in the introduction, chapter 4 part A will analyse key examples that depict fate and the gods together in the *Iliad* in order, considering the poet's intentions and the possible effects upon the audience, having built the foundation for this discussion with the content of the first, three chapters.

the cases of Sarpedon and Hektor.[103] With this in mind, both apply to Zeus' βουλή, as it is his will to see his plan come to fruition.

Due to its importance to the plot of the *Iliad*, we are introduced to the concept of Zeus' βουλή in the proem (*Il.* 1.5). Despite the poet highlighting the importance of Zeus' βουλή by identifying it as early as the proem, the poet still laces the concept in mystery by denying it clear parameters. Zeus guards the privacy of his βουλή from his wife in book 1 (*Il.* 1.545-50). He keeps this promise of disclosing his plans to her first, informing her in book 8 of certain events due to come (*Il.* 8. 470-6), and again in book 15 with a fuller account of the future events, including the death of his son Sarpedon and Achilles' anger towards Hektor (*Il.* 15.53-71).

It is unclear if the goals of Zeus' βουλή had been set in book 1 and 2, but by book 15, he relays to Hera the majority of the coming events in the plot. It is left unclear whether Zeus withheld information about his βουλή or relayed the plan only once it had been devised, and we cannot be sure that what he tells Hera is the plan in full, as the details of his plan might not have been disclosed. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish which events in the *Iliad* are ascribed to Zeus' βουλή.[104] As a result, scholars have debated what Zeus' plan encompasses, some arguing that it stops at ensuring compensation for Achilles in his promise to Thetis, some suggesting that its goal is to ensure the fall of Troy, while others stretch to the *Cypria* and Zeus' goal in the lost

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[103] See, pp. .

[104] I will return to this point later, as Zeus displays inaccuracies in his prediction. First, Achilles does not "send out" Patroklos and secondly, he does not mention some of the key events such as the negotiations over Hektor's body, though he may have withheld the information and decided not to mention them to Hera. Drawing on Wilson's article that draws a comparison between the poet and Zeus, he might have withheld this information to fuel the narrative with suspense. See: Taplin 1992, p. 143; Wilson 2007.

epic to lessen the burden of man on the earth by ensuring that the fall of Troy occurs, which brings an end to the era of heroes.[105]

In book 15, Zeus' confirms that his βουλή includes fulfilling his promise to Thetis (*Il.* 15.72-7). Those who believe that Zeus' βουλή only extends to his promise to Thetis in book 1 include Scodel, who notes that Zeus plan matches closely with the will of Achilles,[106] while Wilson believes that aside from the plan of Zeus, there is another plan already taking place and working in the background, potentially governed by another cosmic power, due to Zeus' uncertainty as to what it entails.[107] We might speculate that this cosmic power could be responsible for dictating the fall of Troy, while the fate of the Trojans and Achaians until Achilles' honour is avenged is the responsibility of Zeus in this theory.

Morrison recognises the possibility of the βουλή incorporating a Greek defeat and avenging Achilles, but he suggests that perhaps from the grand nature of the phrase, this plan would also incorporate the fall of Troy: "Given certain pronouncements,[108] the will of Zeus may extend all the way to the sack of Troy. This grand phrase certainly suggests an overall governance of events".[109] I disagree with him on the basis that his argument assumes that avenging Achilles is to win the war, when in reality, the avenging of Achilles takes place in his revenge against Hektor: when he returns to the fighting and has an *aristeia* (*Il.* 19.67-75), in which he slaughters many Trojans (*Il.* 20.

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[105] Cf. Kirk 1985, 1.5. I will shortly be discussing in detail various scholars' opinions on the matter, including: Scodel 1982; Morrison 1997; Wilson 2007; Green 2015.
[106] Wilson 2007, p. 153; Scodel 1982, p. 47.
[107] Wilson 2007, pp. 153-4.
[108] Cf. 15.61–77.
[109] Morrison 1997, p. 277.

380-418, 455-503), fights with a river god (*Il*. 21. 233-382) and avenges Patroklos by killing Hektor (*Il*. 22. 273-366). After reclaiming his *kleos*, his destiny is sealed, so will die in the events that would take place beyond the *Iliad*. At the point of Hektor's death, Achilles has been avenged, not after the fall of Troy which Morrison considers. While I understand his point of the Trojan War encompassing the events of the *Iliad* and Zeus' responsibility to govern the war, in addition to the grandiosity of the phrase "the will/plan of Zeus," this evidence to support his argument is weak without a clarifying quotation that can confirm this.

It is important to distinguish Homer's depiction of Zeus' βουλή from the depiction of Zeus' βουλή in the *Cypria*.[110] In the *Cypria*, Zeus' plan is clearly set: that to relieve the earth of the burden of man, the mortal population would be depleted through the Trojan War, concluding the age of heroes. Zeus' plan in Homer's epics is not as clearly defined, and his aloof nature maintains an uncertainty surrounding his goals. At first, the *Cypria*'s depiction of Zeus' βουλή might not appear to be relevant to Zeus' in the *Iliad*, as it is a post-Homeric poem of the epic cycle, that relays the events preceding the *Iliad*, in addition to not sharing the same description of Zeus' βουλή as Homer's.[111] However, both are linked by drawing from the preexisting Trojan War myth that came before Homer, and while the *Iliad* is dated prior to the *Cypria*, Homer's audience were likely aware of the events relayed in the *Cypria* from this preexisting myth.[112] The myth of Thetis' child surpassing their father,

[110] Herodotus serves as our first extant source suggesting that Homer was not the author of the *Cypria* (Her *Hist*. 2.117). For more concerning the authorship, dating and other information about the *Cypria*, see: Davies 1989, pp. 93-94; 2001, pp. 33-52; 2019.
[111] The *Cypria* is estimated to have been composed between 650-500BC. Burkert 1992, p. 103; Davies 2001, pp. 3-5.
[112] Scodel 2009, p. 64.

for example, was alluded to in the *Iliad*, but told in the *Cypria*; in this same way, it is possible that the greater βουλή described more expansively in the *Cypria* might have been alluded to in the *Iliad* as it existed as a part of the preexisting Trojan War myth.

We know that many will die in the war as expressed in the *Iliad*'s proem (*Il.* 1.3-5), but it would be a stretch to suggest that Zeus' greater plan to lessen the population through the Trojan War is alluded to here, as it could simply state that many were to die in the war. If, however, the greater plan is indeed being referenced in the proem, it would align with Wilson's mention of another, greater βουλή at work. Perhaps Homer trusted his audience's awareness of the events prior to those in the *Iliad*, so might not have deemed it necessary to explain everything to them, including Zeus' greater plan.[113] Scodel notes that Homer's audience were not expected to know every myth surrounding the *Iliad*, only the key ones necessary to understand it, informing the audience of those myths when needed unless they were common knowledge,[114] so Zeus' greater plan might not have been deemed necessary to mention.

Despite this, Homer's Zeus never explicitly hints at this greater plan in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, implying that either the greater plan was a later development, that Homer deviated from the myth that inspired Zeus' βουλή in the *Cypria*, or that this particular plan was not part of the tradition at the

[113] In Green's translation notes, he expresses his belief that Zeus' plan also includes the reduction of the population through the war. Green 2015, p. 16. Kirk briefly draws attention to the plan of Zeus in the *Iliad* in conjunction with the *Cypria*, when noting Aristarchus' dismissal that Zeus' plan in the *Iliad* could be the same as in the *Cypria*. See: Kirk 1985, p. 53.

[114] Scodel 2009, pp. 64, 90, 112, 122, 126-7.

time of the *Iliad*'s composition. Due to the lack of any reference to this greater βουλή in Homer, and the uncertainty surrounding the pre-existing knowledge of the Homeric audience, we cannot conclude that Zeus' βουλή in the *Iliad* shares the same motives as Zeus' βουλή in the *Cypria*.

Another aspect that remains unclear concerns when the plan is achieved, where it begins and where it ends. Returning to the mention of Zeus' βουλή in the proem, the verb ἐτελείετο indicates that his plan is yet to be entirely "fulfilled," "accomplished," "executed" or "performed". This differs from Lattimore's translation "and the will of Zeus was accomplished,"[115] which implies its completion, ignoring the imperfect verb, which indicates that Zeus' plan, despite having begun, has not been completed yet. As for the plan's commencement, the catalogue of ships in book 2, where Zeus spurs Agamemnon into action to prepare for battle might be interpreted as the beginnings of Zeus' plan (*Il.* 2.11-14).[116] Other scholars believe it to begin in book 8 when he brings the gods together to divulge his plan to them, as they regard his plan to be "the wholesale slaughter of the Greeks".[117] Redfield believed there to be an inaccuracy within the proem, namely that Zeus' βουλή had already begun despite Zeus not taking action till book 8 implied through ἐξ οὗ ("from the time when") with ἐτελείετο.[118] I disagree, as Zeus' plan could still progress without a need for him to intervene immediately. When it concludes, however, is a mystery, based on the

[115] Lattimore 1951.
[116] Lynn-George 1988, p. 268.
[117] Wilson 2007, p. 159; Satterfield 2011, p. 15.
[118] Redfield 1979, p. 106; Satterfield 2011, p. 15.

argument presented previously: as we cannot be entirely sure what Zeus' plan entailed to begin with, we cannot specify its end.

Zeus' will also works closely in conjunction with the poet's interests in ensuring that the poem itself paints an enjoyable tale, as Morrison outlines, noting that Zeus' promise to Thetis was technically fulfilled in book 8, but the events leading up to then were not "sufficient to make a poem".[119] In this way, the authority of Zeus' βουλή can reflect the authority of the poet, a subject I will discuss later in this chapter.

The similarities and differences in moira and Zeus' nature and power

Zeus' βουλή and moira share a purpose of ensuring that fated events occur, which may lead to interpreting them to be the same. I agree with Slattery that Zeus' βουλή and moira are two different forces, which often work together with one another to ensure the destinies of certain individuals are met and predetermined events are allowed to take place, which I will now demonstrate.[120]

The differences between Zeus' and moira's proximity and presence to the events and characters in Homer's epics must be considered first. Zeus acts aloof in comparison to other gods, such as Athene or Apollo, with regards to how directly he is involved in mortal affairs, setting him apart from them in his behaviour. Even Hera expresses so, stating that: "He [Zeus] sits apart,

[119] Morrison 1997, p. 161.
[120] Slattery 2013, p. 4-5.

quite indifferent, not caring at all" (*Il.* 15.106-7),[121] a statement about his physical position supported in book 1, when Thetis approaches him: "Kronos's loud-thundering son she found apart from the rest, perched on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus" (*Il.* 1.498-9).[122] Zeus does visit the mortal plane, but only twice, and only on Mount Ida at monumental moments, such as the *kerostasia* of the Achaian and Trojan armies in book 8, and to provide a sign for Diomedes signalling that his moment of *aristeia* had drawn to a close (*Il.* 8.68-72; *Il.* 8.139-71). Ida is a unique space as both gods and mortals are able to access the mountain, unlike Mount Olympus, which is reserved for the gods alone. Zeus visits Ida the most of the gods, physically separating himself from them by choosing to spend around a third of the poem's duration there, with other gods tending to be invited by Zeus;[123] he maintains his distance from mortals through the mountain's height and its lack of accessibility for humans. Zeus' aloof nature is connected to his responsibility as a keeper of divine order, as while he must govern the other gods, he must play the role for himself and therefore at times suppress his own wants in favour of setting an example.

While Zeus and moira share similarities in their distance from the gods and direct intervention in the mortal realm, unlike Zeus, moira is never depicted as physically manifesting in any of its forms to other gods and mortals in the

[121] Though Zeus does consider becoming directly involved by rescuing his son Sarpedon from death, he allows him to die (*Il.* 16.431-505). I will discuss the Sarpedon episode in more depth in chapter 4.
[122] Pucci 2018, pp. 9-10.
[123] In book 8, Zeus briefly stays on Mt Ida (*Il.* 8.47-437). He later travels to Mt Ida in book 11 (*Il.* 11.181-4). The exact moment of his return to Olympus is not clear, but by book 20, he has rejoined the gods on Olympus (*Il.* 20.4-6). This would place Zeus on mount Ida for around one third of the poem. For a more detailed discussion of Zeus' time spent on Mt Ida, see: Mackie 2014.

Iliad or *Odyssey*; we are only told that it is present in some way as its influence reaches and affects the other characters. Therefore, while Zeus separates himself from the mortal characters, and often does so with the gods through his aloof behaviour, moira separates itself from both mortal and divine characters by never manifesting and interacting directly with them, indicating that Zeus and moira are not the same.

A second difference lies in the goal of Zeus' βουλή, this being, at the very least, to fulfil his promise to Thetis by restoring Achilles' honour. This is not relevant to moira, which only concerns itself with the fall of Troy and the fixed deaths of mortals. Consequently, Zeus' βουλή and moira are different, as Zeus plans to achieve something with his βουλή that is not directly linked to moira and fixed events.

With this in mind, I agree with certain scholars who believe that fate as a power is beyond the gods while the will of Zeus can act as its substitute.[124] Both work together to ensure that what is fated to occur happens; however, they are not to be viewed as identical to each other in purpose and form.

The poet

When discussing the plan of Zeus, it is important to consider the plan of the poet. The following section will be split into two parts: the first aims to reach an understanding of the differences between Zeus and the poet in their ability to control matters in the *Iliad*, and a comparison of their goals in the plot of

[124] Slattery 2013, p. 1-2.

the epic; the second examines the methods with which the poet achieves his goals.

First, it is important to distinguish the *Iliad*'s poet from the narrator. While the audience experience the poem through the narrator's eyes, the narrator is fictional like the characters, and is a creation by the poet as a vessel to tell the poet's story. The poet on the other hand is real. Morrison suggests that the "narrator acts as a delegate created by the poet and presents the story, guides the audience, and prepare the audience for later scenes".[125] The narrator therefore acts as a mouthpiece for the poet to present the story, controlling where the narrator looks and, thus the audience too. It is the poet who controls what information his audience receives through the narrator.

The similarities and differences between Zeus, the poet, and their plans

Zeus and the poet share similarities and differences in their control and presentation in the epics. While Zeus enforces the occurrence of certain fated events by directing the gods to influence mortal decisions and actions to do so, the external force of the poet controls the actions and influences the audience's perception of both gods and mortals alike through his narration. Zeus' broad perception across the mortal plane from Olympus and mount Ida allows him to shift his view to a different scene, as demonstrated in his gaze switching to focus on other nations in book 13 (*Il.* 13.1-9); similarly, the poet enjoys a panoramic view of the events through the narrator, shifting his view

[125] Morrison 1992, p. 12.

from Zeus to Poseidon in this moment (*Il.* 13.1-16).[126] However, as indicated by the omniscient narrator, the poet has an elevated awareness of the events and possesses the ability to transcend time and space to obtain a complete account of matters on both the mortal and immortal planes.[127] Unlike Zeus, who in the previous example from book 13 is only able to perceive time in a linear way and may only view from one perspective with his full attention at a time, the poet can switch readily between perspectives to capture their simultaneous occurrence, as done when presenting simultaneous events in a consecutive way.[128] The poet does so in book 1, switching his perspective from Achilles' conversation with Thetis on the Trojan shore, to Odysseus in Chrysē:

> This said, she took herself off, and left him there, enraged
>
> at heart on account of the fine-clad woman they'd taken from
>
> him by force, against his will. Meanwhile Odysseus made
>
> landfall at Chrysē, conveying the oxen for a holy sacrifice.
>
> – *Il.* 1.428-32.

Both scenes occur simultaneously as indicated by the rapid transition and ἀτάρ, which Green translates as "meanwhile," displaying the poet's ability to consider multiple perspectives that occur at the same time.

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[126] Graziosi 2013, pp. 25, 30-1. The poet cannot achieve this on his own and must rely on the Muse for this ability. See: Graziosi 2013, p. 11-4.
[127] This is not to say that the audience is also granted this vision, as they only receive the information that is relayed to them.
[128] Graziosi 2013, pp. 13-4.

Zeus also has an awareness that specific events will occur, as seen in his discussion with his wife (*Il.* 15.68-71). However, it is difficult to determine whether he is being elusive and does indeed possess the temporal knowledge of when it will occur or not; alternatively, the poet is the one to decide the duration of time between the events occurring in the plot of the poem, though he is bound by the poetic tradition, in which certain events occur in a certain order, for example, Hektor must die before Achilles.

It is clear that the poet and Zeus overlap considerably, so it is important to examine how this extends to their plans. Both the poet and Zeus want Achilles to return to the fighting and kill Hektor, in order to seal his fate and the fall of Troy, but for different reasons: for Zeus, it is so that these fated events happen, in accordance with his plan (*Il.* 15.68-71); for the poet, it assures the poem's conformity to the traditional narrative of the Trojan war myth. Zeus has a separate aim to ensure compliance from the gods to maintain his position as the king of the gods, as seen in book 8 when demanding the gods follow his instructions (*Il.* 8.7-9). However, this does not necessarily align with the poet, who also has an additional goal, that being to entertain his audience by providing them a story that is familiar to them, but in a way that is new and unpredictable. By having the gods disobey Zeus and attempt to change certain circumstances to favour their own interests, the poet creates an unpredictable story that threatens to alter the tradition, creating a more interesting experience for his audience, and a difficult one for Zeus.

Moira, Zeus' will and the gods as narrative tools for the poet

Homer uses moira and the gods to employ narrative techniques that affect the way the plot unfolds and is responded to by the audience, from creating suspense through laying out the foundational events yet to come and playing on the uncertain remaining duration of a character's life doomed to end, to casting doubt on the certainty of those events. In this section, I will explore the poet's use of the gods in moira in relation to the narrative devices of time, unreal conditions, the creation and dissolving of conflict, and misdirection, for the purpose of providing a poem that conforms to the traditional Trojan War narrative, whilst still being unpredictable enough for the audience to occasionally doubt that the plot will follow its traditional path.

Time

In book 15, Zeus unveils to Hera some of the key events of the Trojan war that are yet to occur in the narrative, including the deaths of Patroklos, Sarpedon, and Hektor (*Il.* 15.55-71). This information is not given to the audience as a reminder of the traditional elements found in the Trojan War narrative and its chronology, due to the poet's presumption that they are aware of these core moments already.[129] Rather, the chronological listing of these events encourages the audience to question the length of time between those events and the duration of time until the next.[130] This builds the audience's anticipation for the plot to unfold, despite knowing the direction of the narrative. To use this device effectively, the poet takes advantage of

[129] Morrison 1992, p. 6.
[130] Wong 2002, p. 1.

the overlap between his own plan and Zeus', using Zeus as a mouthpiece to declare some of the key events to Hera in this moment, without giving away their precise timing to build suspense. Zeus' aloof nature also provides a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the events in detail, as he keeps the finer points of his plan confidential from not only the gods, but also the audience. This is demonstrated in the lack of clarity defining the goals and parameters of his βουλή, and his secrecy towards his wife about these matters (*Il.* 15.545-50). In this way, the poet applies the tension concerning the timing of events when he wishes, adding another layer of suspense in waiting for Zeus to disclose the events that will fulfil his βουλή, this being synonymous with the events that will fulfil the plot of the *Iliad*.

Zeus is not the only god to foreshadow future events in the Trojan war narrative, and these events do not necessarily have to occur within the bounds of the *Iliad* itself. In book 18, Thetis pre-emptively mourns the death of her son, Achilles, even though he is still alive at that moment and will not die in the poem, giving the audience the impression that he may die before the end (*Il.* 18.50-64). Shortly after, she addresses him:

> "Oh, my child, what you say now means that you're
>
> doomed to an early death, since your own fate awaits
>
> you very soon (αὐτίκα) after Hektōr's" – *Il.* 18.94-6.

The duration of time until Achilles' death after Hektor's is also obscure with the use of αὐτίκα, which can mean "forthwith," "at once," "in a moment," or even "immediately," capturing the ambiguity of the time until his death after Hektor, be it minutes, hours or even days. Thetis' pre-emptive mourning and

implication that Achilles will die shortly after Hektor would give a first-time audience, one that is familiar with the Trojan war narrative, the impression that Achilles will die within the poem, only to be surprised that the *Iliad* concludes with the ransoming of Hektor's corpse. Kirk rightly acknowledges the unusual conclusion, suggesting that an ending falling after the death of Hektor, the funeral of Patroklos or after Achilles' death might be expected more by the audience.[131] By the poet creating an unpredictable narrative as in this example with Thetis, the audience finds it harder to anticipate what the poet is planning for the remainder of the epic, allowing for the poet's audience to experience suspense and surprise through a lack of clarity in the timing of these events. He achieves this using the gods, as seen with Thetis, where her actions and words would lead the audience to believe that the end of the poem will include the death of Achilles.

Homer sometimes encourages his audience to view fate in connection with death as a portion of time, so utilises fate in a similar way to build suspense for the audience in anticipating a character meeting their eventual doom.[132] As mortal death is inescapable, as stated by Athene in the *Odyssey*, it is only a matter of time before it occurs (*Od.* 3.236-8). We see this in the case of Asius, where the narrator tells us that he is not destined to survive, and that he will die by the hands of Idomeneus' spear:

[131] Richardson and Kirk 1993, p. 272. Morrison also notes that a clear resolution is not presented with regards to Hektor's corpse either, as Achilles is still adamant that he will not return it, leaving the audience to wonder whether he will be returned for burial or not, see Morrison 1992, p. 5.
[132] While I will be discussing *Il.* 13.110-7 in depth, there are other instances where the poet links fate with a duration of time until death and doom, such as *Il.* 8.252-6, "are we two no longer to care for these dying Danaäns, even at their last moment? They're about to fulfil their wretched destiny," and *Il.* 21.45-8, "For eleven days he took pleasure… but on the twelfth day [Achilles] would dispatch him to Hādēs' realm".

> but Asios. Hyrtakos's son, that leader of men, refused to
> abandon his horses along with their driver, his henchman,
> and set out to drive with them against the swift ships– fool
> that he was, not destined to escape the foul death-spirits, or,
> exulting in horses and chariot, to ever return from the ships,
> ever get back safely to windy Ilion, since too soon (πρόσθεν) his
> accursed fate (μοῖρα δυσώνυμος)was to enfold him through
> the spear of Idomeneus Deukaliōn's noble son - *Il.* 12.110-7.

Notably, Dietrich proposes that δυσώνυμος is used here as an epithet to describe moira as a goddess.[133] However, Wong's interpretation highlights the poet's use of μοῖρα in this context as a "share" or "portion" of death allotted to Asius,[134] emphasising the time that he has left. This interpretation is supported by the use of πρόσθεν meaning "before" or, as translated by Green in this passage, "too soon," again referring to its contextual link to time. The audience is told that Asius will die and how, but not when. This invisible timer of death cannot be seen by the audience, so they cannot gauge the duration of time until his death; only the poet can, building an anticipation for the moment that he does indeed fall, this occurring later in the following book (*Il.* 13.387).

In another case, Xanthos, Achilles' horse, predicts Achilles' death: "But your day of death is near (ἐγγύθεν), though we shall not be its cause, but rather a

[133] Dietrich 1965, p. 195, n. 3.
[134] Wong 2002, pp. 11-2.

great god and all-mastering Fate (Μοῖρα) (*Il.* 19.409-10). The poet utilises adverbs of time and place, such as ἐγγύθεν, meaning "approaching" or in Green's translation "near," to encourage the audience to view the fate of death with a duration of time until its fulfilment, evoking a sense of proximity to death with regards to Achilles' time left.

Through using certain adverbs attributed to time, these including "before," "soon," and "near" in a temporal context, Homer may use moira as a narrative device to indicate a portion of time till the allotted death of an individual is delivered, allowing the building of suspense till the moment is ultimately revealed later in the course of the plot.

Unreal conditions

Another narrative technique employed by the poet is the inclusion of unreal conditions, which indicate alternate directions that the plot could have taken, if certain circumstances were not met.[135] In each example, the poet deliberately threatens to jeopardise the plot by opposing the force of fate within the story and testing the bounds of the poetic tradition, yet he never crosses the line, providing solutions to avoid these scenarios happening.[136] Lang notes that of affirmative or negative protases, the latter are primarily used by the poet to contemplate these alternative directions to the traditional narrative,[137] often employing the gods as agents to prevent these situations where the plot could derail itself. These unreal conditions featuring negative

[135] For a detailed discussion on unreal conditions in Homer, see: Lang 2005.
[136] Van Den Berg 2017, pp. 142-5.
[137] I will shortly be discussing the numerical statistics surrounding unreal conditions with negative protases in the *Iliad*.

protases follow the formula of an apodosis (a consequence) followed by a protasis (preventative measure). Lang recognises three types of negative protases: type A as "something contrary to fact would have happened, had not someone acted to prevent it," which occurs eleven times in the *Iliad*;[138] type B as "something destined to happen later, but contrary to present fact would have happened now, had not someone acted to prevent it," appearing twelve times;[139] and type C as "an action or passion would have continued, had not someone put a stop to it," occurring twelve times in the epic.[140]

In an example of type A from book 3 of the *Iliad*, the possibility of a victorious Menelaus killing Paris is contemplated by the poet (*Il.* 3.373-6). The scenario of Menelaus killing Paris is problematic because he is not fated to kill him, so is not fated to win "glory past measure" for doing so. To ensure that Menelaus does not successfully defeat Paris, the poet utilises a god to prevent this from occurring, namely Aphrodite, who allows Paris a chance to escape Menelaus' grasp. However, this act is not enough, and Menelaus attempts another attack, this time with his spear, so the poet resorts to a major form of divine intervention, a rescue, by which Paris is whisked away by the goddess and deposited in his bedchamber, safe from harm (*Il.* 3.377-82).

For type B, a moment in book 8 could have rendered the Trojans trapped inside Troy, while the city is on the brink of being breached by the Achaians (*Il.* 8.130-4). After Zeus demands that the gods not intervene in the fighting

[138] Type A: 2.155-6; 3.373-6; 5.311-7, 388-90; 7.104-6; 8.90-6; 11.750-2; 14.258-9; 17.612-7; 18.165-7; 20.290-2. For a quantitative analysis of the different types of unreal conditions appearing in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see: Lang 2005, p. 9.

[139] Type B: 6.73-5; 8.130-3, 217-9; 11.310-2, 504-6; 12.290-3; 13.723-5; 16.698-701; 17.70-81; 18.454-6; 21.544-9;22.202-4.

[140] Type C: 5.679-81; 7.273-5; 15.121-4; 17.530-6; 18.397-9; 21.211-3; 23.154-5, 382-3, 490-1, 540-2, 733-4; 24.713-5.

(*Il.* 8.5-16), and after the *keres* of the Achaians and Trojans are weighed (*Il.* 8.69-75), he sends the warning thunderbolt as a sign for Diomedes to refrain from continuing the fight with Hektor, preventing a situation which would have led to the Achaians pushing the battle up to the walls of Troy, penning them inside and potentially leading to Troy's premature fall.

Unlike type A and B, type C is less frequently associated with the gods, only occurring in association with them four times in the *Iliad*.[141] In an example of type C, Hephaestus retells the aftermath of his fall from Olympus and his recovery: "I'd have suffered agonies had Eurynomē and Thetis not welcomed me warmly" (*Il.* 18.397-8). While arguably not as influential in altering the plot of the *Iliad*, it is possible that if Hephaestus had not aided, then he might not have fulfilled Thetis' request to forge Achilles' armour, which might have affected Achilles' fight with Hektor.

Another important type of unreal condition is further explored by Wong, this being a conditional protasis, which considers a scenario similar to that found in the use of a negative protasis, where the poet explores other potential scenarios that divert from the traditional narrative. What differentiates itself from a negative protasis is that a certain condition must be met in order for it to occur. We see this in an example from book 20 of Zeus' concern that Achilles will storm Troy: "and now, when his heart's so enraged by his comrade's death I fear he may override fate, and storm their ramparts too" (*Il.* 20.29-30). This example does not follow the typical formulaic style of other unreal conditions found in Homer by not featuring a clear protasis; however,

[141] *Il.* 15.121-4; 18.397-9; 21.211-3; 23.382-3.

it features ὑπέρμορον, meaning "beyond fate," and considers a scenario that conflicts with the traditional events of the narrative. This scenario is problematic because Achilles does not survive to see Troy fall. Despite this, the likelihood of this scenario occurring is further supported by the use of the word δείδω "I fear," and the contextual gathering of the gods in an assembly to discuss the major shift in the battle and Achilles' anger, both to emphasise that Zeus' concern is real. This musters even more weight when we consider the overlap of Zeus' thoughts and observations with the poets; Van Den Berg notes similarities in the way that Zeus ponders his next steps in governing the events of the Trojan War, as the poet might ponder his next steps in formulating the plot.[142] Considering this, Zeus' fear that Achilles may override fate to storm the ramparts may be the poet's too, in that Troy's premature fall with Achilles as a witness, much less a participant, would too significantly alter certain events within the traditional narrative. In this case, as an unreal condition with a conditional protasis, while not directly stated, the condition that the gods do not involve themselves must be met for this to happen. To avoid this, the poet ensures there is always a preventative measure in place that will allow the plot to remain on course and avoid these alternative circumstances from ever occurring, this measure often appearing in the form of the gods as agents of fate. Zeus states that he fears it is possible for Achilles to storm Troy, but the success of Achilles' assault would only be possible if no god intervened to prevent him from doing so; considering that the gods have a responsibility to uphold fate, the gods will intervene to stop him. Thus, this scenario is categorised as an unreal condition and does not happen. It is

[142] Van Den Berg, B. 2022, p. 164.

also through the poet's clever use of this unreal condition with a conditional protasis that he is able to express not only the magnitude of Achilles' power, but also his impact on the narrative through this transgressive threat against fate, shaking not only the gods, but even the poet too, with their combined fear leading the audience to wonder if the events synonymous with the traditional plot might happen differently as it unfolds.

The creation and dissolving of conflict by the gods

As the Homeric gods each possess their own individual goals, such as Ares' desire to avenge his fallen son (*Il*. 15.113-20), Thetis' wish for Achilles to live (*Il*. 18.52-64), and Poseidon's desire for Aeneias to survive to fulfil his destiny to outlast the Trojan War (*Il*. 20.285-308), conflicting interests naturally arise. Due to their powers far surpassing the abilities of mortals, the threat of the gods acting against fate is significantly more serious, due to the difficulty of preventing a god from doing so. This occurs when Ares wishes to avenge his son in book 15, who is dissuaded from defying Zeus and potentially altering fate by Athene (*Il*. 15.113-42). The poet inserts this conflict to build tension and, with the audience's knowledge of Ares as a rash aggressor as the embodiment of war,[143] they would likely wonder whether he would succeed and then question what would happen if he did. It is the poet's responsibility to ensure that the plot follows the traditional narrative, so employs Athene to distribute wise advice to guide Ares, in order to avoid angering Zeus.

[143] The depiction of Ares in the *Iliad* is predominantly negative. See: Hornblower et al. s.v: Ares.

It would seem from this example that Zeus is responsible for preventing the gods from disobeying, even indirectly, but then the question of who or what controls Zeus follows. An answer might be his duty to uphold justice and order amongst the immortals in combination with the guidance of gods such as Athene and Hera, or perhaps on certain occasions it is moira. However, on an external level, the poet is ultimately responsible for ensuring that Zeus does not give in to his own personal interests. Van Den Berg rightly notes that occasionally we see the poet's mindset through his characters, particularly through Zeus' mind and Athene's intelligence,[144] these aspects clashing when contemplating Hektor's demise. In this scenario, Zeus considers saving Hektor, whom he is fond of; however, Athene strongly suggests that he should not, but should allow him to die as fated (*Il.* 22.166-85). I agree with Van Den Berg, as through Zeus and Athene's interaction, we may consider the dilemma of the poet, deciding what he should do with a character that he is partial to, who is also destined to die according to the narrative tradition. One aspect of the poet, being represented by Zeus' mind, does not wish for him to die, because he loves the character (*Il.* 22.183);[145] however, the logic derived from the traditional narrative of the Trojan war story, represented by Athene, demands that he dies. The poet knows the only option is the logical one, which might explain Zeus' lighter remark towards Athene expressing his lack of seriousness,[146] as the poet understands his duty

[144] Van Den Berg 2017, p. 133-9.
[145] Φίλον meaning "beloved" has varying translations in this context. In Green's translation, he decides that Zeus states Hektor to be "a well-loved man," indicating that Hektor is loved by many, while Richardson notes its pairing with ἄνδρα instead results in the translation "a man I love," which focuses more heavily on Zeus' emotions towards Hektor, thus changing the impact of the statement rather drastically. See: Richardson 1993, ad loc.
[146] A similar instance of this scenario between Zeus and Athene occurs elsewhere (*Il.* 8.38-40).

to ensure Hektor dies to fulfil the plot; the poet allows his character to die, resulting in Zeus' casual response and allowing Hektor to die.

In addition to presenting the immortal characters as separate individuals with different goals and attitudes, the poet deliberately adds complications to the plot through their conflicting interests, leading the audience to contemplate the possibility of significant alterations to the events of the poem. However, the poet is responsible for creating and preventing these alternate outcomes from occurring in a believable manner, building suspense and ultimately satisfaction when the traditional events are fulfilled in accordance with their original expectations. Ultimately, the poet's skilful utilisation of the gods as both instruments of conflict that threaten to derail the plot, and instruments responsible for keeping it on track, allows for the audience to enjoy the narrative as an unpredictable ride, despite ultimately knowing the outcome.

Misdirection

Another method by which the poet uses the gods and fate to his advantage to toy with the audience is misdirection. Morrison explores this narrative device, recognising three different types of misdirection:[147] false anticipation, in which an event is foreshadowed to occur with the implication that it will happen sooner, only for it to be delayed in some way; the second, epic suspense, where a considerable lack of authoritative guidance, whether by the gods or the narrator, is given to the audience; lastly thematic misdirection,

[147] He tackles each type individually in the chapters 4, 5 and 6. See: Morrison 1992.

when the gods or the narrator fail to provide accurate information with regards to future events.

An example of false anticipation occurs when Achilles returns to the fighting, as the audience is expecting at this point in the plot a confrontation between Achilles and Hektor, with their knowledge that Hektor's death is soon to follow based on their awareness of the Trojan War narrative. When they meet in battle in book 20, the audience expects that this is the moment in which they will fight and Hektor will die; however, their duel is postponed, with Apollo rescuing Hektor from an early demise (*Il.* 20.419-54). The audience's frustration at its postponement is mirrored by Achilles' frantic stabbing at the mist that conceals his opponent and bars him from the duel. Apollo is used by the poet to delay their confrontation through supernatural means, in the form of a rescue to prolong the suspenseful atmosphere surrounding their impending fight, further heightened by Achilles' promise that it will resume (*Il.* 20.452-3). Considering the singer's intention to seek more opportunities to perform to earn a living from their performances, the audience's suspense and curiosity to reach the moment in the plot where they do face one another, resulting in the death of Hektor, would also encourage them to attend the following performance,[148] in the hopes of achieving satisfaction.[149] The rapid and unexpected deployment of the gods and the threat of Hektor perishing sooner than fate intends is therefore a way for the poet to build the audience's excitement and anticipation of the climax of Achilles and Hektor's duel, with

[148] While it is possible to recite the *Iliad* in one sitting, Kirk estimated that it would take around twenty hours, without including breaks, and that it would be unlikely that the audience would watch a performance of that length. He suggests that multiple performances, perhaps six to ten sessions, of around one to three hours in length would be more likely. See: Kirk 1985, p. 12.

[149] Morrison 1992, pp. 109-11.

the false anticipation simultaneously disappointing and drawing in his audience, encouraging them to stay to reach the desired conclusion they seek.

The duel between Menelaus and Paris presents a case of epic suspense (*Il.* 3.67-383). Should either win, it would threaten the traditional narrative: Menelaus is to survive the war, whilst Paris will live on to kill Achilles with the aid of Apollo; either one of their deaths would lead to the conclusion of the war. While the audience may suspect that the poet will somehow secure the *Iliad*'s plot to follow an expected set of events, without any confirming word from either the narrator or the gods indicating that the plot will follow the traditional events in the Trojan War narrative, the audience may find themselves uncertain about the outcome of the duel. This is particularly so when considering that their concerns are not resolved quickly, as this episode is hundreds of lines long. The threat of derailment is suddenly lifted by Aphrodite, who breaks this tension in her rescue of Paris. By holding back the narrator and the gods from providing any commentary on the outcome of the duel, the poet successfully builds the audience's suspense, encouraging them to doubt their own knowledge of the traditional narrative, considering the possibility of Paris or Menelaus' death, if only for a moment.

As for thematic misdirection, the audience is left uncertain as to the extent of Hektor's destruction in relation to the Achaian ships through a statement by Zeus: that Hektor will only be stopped by Achilles (*Il.* 8.475- 76).[150] In addition to Achilles' declaration that he will not fight until his own ships are threatened (*Il.* 9.650-55; 16.60-63), it is implied in combination with Zeus'

[150] Interestingly, Zeus is also wrong about fighting over Patroklos' body by the ships. Instead, the fighting over the body takes place on the main battlefield throughout book 17.

prediction that many of the Greek ships will be burned. The burning of the ships is problematic for the traditional narrative of the Trojan War, as it conflicts with the theme of *nostos* that follows after the events of the *Iliad*, which requires that the Achaians have ships that they use to return home.[151] Because Zeus' predictions are often accurate, such as his foretelling of the deaths of Sarpedon, Patroklos, and Hektor (*Il.* 15.65-9), the audience relies on his words which, in this case, throws into doubt their assumptions about the ships, as they cannot be sure how far Hektor's devastation will go. In the end, only Protiselaus' ship was burned (*Il.* 15.716-45), and Achilles intervened far sooner than he had stated, encouraging Patroklos to act in his place (*Il.* 16.122-9). By having the gods provide misleading statements about the events, the poet ensures his audience cannot be sure how certain matters will transpire, such as the extent of Hektor's attack upon, and destruction of, the ships, resulting in their faith that the plot will conform to the traditional narrative being temporarily shaken.

Morrison proposes that by threatening to deviate from the traditional narrative, the poet destabilises the audience's confidence in their predictions of the *Iliad*'s plot. What results is the audience's realisation that they are not in the privileged position of knowledge that they first believed themselves to be as spectators, that the narrator had awarded them a degree of insight akin

[151] Morrison counters the possible argument that the lost ships could be rebuilt after the success of the war, suggesting that the loss of the ships would imply "the loss of much of their military force", see: Morrison 1992, p. 76. If not that, then I would suspect that the Greek morale would reach an all-time low, with the prospect that they would have lost their only means of escape, and consequently might affect their performance in battle. This is convincing when we consider the repeated, fearful musings of the mortal characters at the prospect of being unable to escape, dying at Troy away from their homeland (*Il.* 9.244-6; 13.225-7; 14.69-70; 15.504-5, 699-700).

to the gods through the foreshadowing of certain events.[152] Instead, they find themselves in these moments relating their awareness of the upcoming events to that of the mortal characters, because they are uncertain of how it might happen and occasionally questioning their own knowledge of the traditional narrative in wondering whether it will even happen at all. In this way, the poet grants himself more freedom in a tradition that demands that he does not deviate from its narrative too extensively, allowing him to explore different outcomes and provide a more suspenseful poem for his audience that they cannot as easily predict.

Conclusion

This chapter's primary focus was Zeus' will, its comparison to the poet's plan, and the techniques employed by the poet to create tension through fate and its maintenance by the gods. It was determined that Zeus' plan includes his promise to Thetis and that it likely began in book 2 with the catalogue of ships. As we cannot be certain of what Zeus' plan entails, and since the only reference to its completion is in the imperfect tense, we cannot truly know when it is fulfilled. Through a comparison of moira and Zeus, both were recognised to have been set apart from the gods, but had different goals: Zeus to carry out his promise to Thetis; moira, the fulfilment of the fall of Troy and certain deaths. The following section distinguished the poet from the narrator, and considering the similarities between the poet and Zeus, leading to the final section of this chapter that addressed the different narrative techniques used by the poet, including misleading the audience

[152] Morrison 1992, p. 8.

with time, unreal conditions, the creation and dissolving of conflict by the gods, and misdirection, which contribute to the delivery of a suspenseful story to a knowledgeable audience. The examination of the relationship between the gods, moira, Zeus and the poet has prepared for the final chapter, in which all are considered together in a chronological assessment of the moments in which the gods intervene to act as fate's enforcers in the *Iliad*.

CHAPTER 4: A CASE-BY-CASE ANALYSIS OF THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN THE GODS AND FATE IN THE *ILIAD*

This chapter explores the moments in which the gods influence the events of the *Iliad* to control fate, following the order of the text, highlighting the moments in which they work together, and others where they clash and overcome their differing interests. It is accompanied by a discussion of the poet's intentions and the effects the poet's choices may have on the way the gods and fate must adapt to control scenarios which challenge their abilities. The first section examines moments between books 1 to 5, such as Apollo's plague in book 1, the Achaian attempt to depart on the ships in book 2, Paris' rescue in book 3, and Athene's role in Diomedes' aristeia in addition to Aeneias' rescue in book 5. The second section considers three key moments: the death of Sarpedon in book 16, the death of Hektor in book 22, and Zeus' jars of ills and blessings in book 24. Lastly, the themes of *kerostasia* and Achilles' fate have been isolated to be explored separately, due to their spread across multiple books and complexity.

Part A

Books 1-5: Restarting the conflict

Apollo's approach to avenging Chryses in the beginning of book 1 is an indicator of the role of the gods in the *Iliad* as agents of fate. Due to Agamemnon's refusal to return the priest's daughter, Apollo sends a plague

to punish the Achaian army (*Il.* 8-12, 44-53), with Chryses requesting for Apollo to use his "arrows to make the Danaäns pay" (*Il.* 1.42). This would have been most easily achieved by killing the key members of the Achaian army, particularly Agamemnon, the one responsible for refusing to return her. Furthermore, the words χολωθεὶς (*Il.* 1.9) and χωόμενος (*Il.* 1.44, 47) are both variations of "anger" that are used to describe Apollo, further expressed by the image of his "arrows rattling loud on his shoulders as in his rage he strode on his way" (*Il.* 1.46-7), all indicating that Apollo's anger is likely to manifest as a heavy punishment befalling the Greek army, most likely Agamemnon.

However, Apollo's approach is comparatively gentle, killing the mules first, then dogs, and lastly men; none are named, and no key figures of the story are said to be affected. The gradual increase in the severity of the plague might indicate that Apollo was giving Agamemnon time to change his mind before the impact of the plague became too significant.[153] I believe that Apollo controlled his anger and diluted his plague for the sake of adhering to moira and the fixed bounds of fate, as certain key characters were not destined from birth to die at that moment, so could not be allowed to die as a result of the plague. Agamemnon is destined to survive the war and die upon his return home, as stated in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 4.520-6), so Apollo could not take revenge upon him directly by killing him.

Hera's following intervention, in which she plants the idea of holding an assembly to discover the reason behind the plague in Achilles' mind (*Il.* 1.53-

[153] Kirk suggests another reason as to why Apollo targeted the mules and dogs first, this being to emulate a realistic progression of a plague, referencing an example from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, which documents the animals affected, including dogs, Thuc. *Pel War.* 2.50. See: Kirk 1985, cf: *Il.* 1.50.

6), is to prevent the consequences of the plague from worsening further, in which key individuals would begin to become affected and potentially die. In doing so, Hera prevents the premature deaths of the key mortal characters through influencing Achilles to act, while Apollo does also in restraining his anger and desire to avenge his priest, and ensuring that those not destined to die as a result of the plague survive its effects. The survival of the key mortal figures taking part in the Achaian side of the war may be an indication of Apollo's respect for fate,[154] working with moira to ensure that those with fixed fates die when they are intended and not earlier. Around a hundred lines later, Athene also steps forward to convince Achilles not to kill Agamemnon (*Il.* 1.188-221), once again acting as fate's enforcer to prevent Agamemnon's premature death.

When considering the perspective of the author, an event is required to trigger the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, which the plague and the return of Chryseis invites, that would result in Achilles' absence from the fighting. By allowing the premature deaths of key characters, the narrative of the Trojan War that the poet has built his story upon may be too significantly changed from the traditional plot to be accepted by his audience, so those premature deaths must be avoided. The plague challenges the author's requirements for the story, resulting in the poet's decision to reduce Apollo's impact on the Achaian camp, preventing him from taking his

[154] Another instance of Apollo respecting fate despite his wishes includes his abandonment of Hektor before his death (*Il.* 22.213), which will be examined later in this chapter, see: pp. 96-7.

revenge and killing Agamemnon and potentially other key characters, but allowing for the plague's effects to be influential enough to progress the plot.

The Achaians' attempt to leave for home in book 2 displays the gods ensuring that what is fated to occur happens as intended. After misinterpreting the aim of the speech made by Agamemnon that intended to motivate the Achaians to fight, the army instead collectively headed toward the ships to depart from Troy, an act followed by the phrase: "Then for the Argives a homecoming beyond their destiny (ὑπέρμορα) would have come about, had not Hērē thus addressed Athēnē" (*Il.* 2. 154-6). The phrase "beyond their destiny" highlights a clash between fate and the choices of mortals, as the narrator's words suggest that mortals can override fate through their decisions and actions. Many, including key figures like Patroklos, are fated to die at Troy, but if the Achaians return home, those fated to die in the war will not meet their destined end that was prescribed to them at birth by moira. As previously mentioned, moira's power is limited by not being able to intervene or alter mortal decisions, so moira must rely on the gods to prevent fate from being overridden. If the gods are to intervene on behalf of moira, then they must also overcome the unpredictability of mortal decisions, as demonstrated by Hera's surprise at the unfolding events with ὢ πόποι, translated by Green as "good heavens!" (*Il.* 2.157).

The Achaians' redirection to remain at Troy was successful, with Athene intervening as directed by Hera to persuade Odysseus to turn them back,

avoiding the premature conclusion of the war and the survival of mortals destined to die at Troy.

This episode's effect upon the audience is significant, as they are expecting a story surrounding the Trojan War, only to discover that, as early as book 2, the Greeks are heading towards the ships to abandon the conflict. Thus, through the use of an unreal condition, the poet invites his audience to receive the poem with fresh eyes, the possibility of mortal decisions derailing fate leaving them not knowing if the poem will copy the events of the traditional myth.

As briefly mentioned in chapter 3, Aphrodite's intervention in book 3 prevents the premature death of Paris and conclusion to the war, which would have severely impacted the fated events. The gods are unusually absent for the majority of the book, resulting in the audience's concern that the war will conclude shortly after the story had begun, having not yet reached the key moments in the narrative, such as the deaths of Patroklos and Hektor. In the last moment when it seems that Paris would surely die, Aphrodite rescues him (*Il.* 3.380-2), highlighting for the audience that without the gods, fate could be frequently overturned, leading to an alternative fate that would challenge the traditional Trojan War myth. The rescue itself is no effort for her, as demonstrated by ῥεῖα or "easily"; however, if Aphrodite was not watching the duel, she may have missed her opportunity, due to the limits of divine perception. To ensure that the gods can effectively fulfil fate by ensuring the fixed points set by moira occur, they must supervise mortal actions and

intervene when necessary. The poet's decision to use the gods with their limited perception as moira's agents to monitor and control fate creates suspense, as the audience must rely on their intervention in cases like these to provide them a story that conforms to the traditional Trojan war myth.

Book 5 features many occasions on which the gods intervene, with three rescues (one of which, this being Aphrodite's, is not successful),[155] and four instances where a god has prevented a mortal receiving a potentially fatal wound by removing the threat or healing the individual.[156] The rescues and preventions of harm would indicate times in which the gods would have had to step in to prevent a premature death from occurring. This occurs most clearly in the case of Aeneias, who is destined to outlast the war (*Il.* 20.302-8), but is struck by Diomedes and is almost finished off (*Il.* 5.302-10), yet he survives, because his mother Aphrodite arrives to rescue him:

> "Now indeed Aeneias, that lord of men, would have perished (ἀπόλλυμι), if not for the quick sharp eye of Zeus' daughter Aphrodītē …about her dear son she flung her white arms, and before him spread a bright fold of her robe to hide him and act as a wall against the missiles" – *Il.* 5.311-6.

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[155] *Il.* 5.9-24; 311-8; 443-6.

[156] *Il.* 5.95-143; 311-8; 436-7; 662. Athene also assists Diomedes during his *aristeia*, but this contributes little to the discussion of the gods working with moira due to its lack of connection with fate.

As in the similar case of Ares in the bronze jar, ἀπόλλυμι appears in a past, closed, conditional sentence, indicating that if Aphrodite had not stepped in to protect her son, Diomedes would have killed Aeneias, another case featuring a mortal action with the potential to overpower fate. One of Aphrodite's divine limitations, a vulnerability to injury, prevents her from completing Aeneias' rescue, as Diomedes injures her hand. Apollo then takes over in protecting Aeneias, completing the rescue, and bringing him to Pergamon (*Il.* 5.436-46).

The preservation of Aeneias' life is clearly of some importance to the gods, arising again in book 20 with his rescue by Poseidon, who takes note of Apollo's lack of assistance:

> "Alas, I feel grief for Aeneias, the great-hearted,
>
> who too soon vanquished by Pēleus' son will go down
>
> to the realm of Hādēs… and Apollo won't even save
>
> him from wretched death!... Come then, let's snatch
>
> him away from death ourselves, for the son of Kronos
>
> may well be wrathful, should Achilles slaughter Aeneias
>
> here, who's destined (μόριμον) to survive that his race
>
> may not perish unseen for lack of seed" – *Il.* 20.292-303.

It would seem that Achilles is capable of overpowering fate in this moment through his choices and actions, with the potential of cutting short Aeneias'

life despite his fate to survive the war.[157] Apollo should have been responsible for protecting Aeneias from death, rather than the Greek-supporting Poseidon, but Poseidon intervenes because it is his divine duty to preserve fate, which takes priority over his own personal interests. He recognises the importance of working with moira to maintain fixed events and knows that, as Zeus works alongside moira, Zeus would also be angered that the gods had not prevented it. However, there is always the possibility that moira had already dictated that Poseidon would choose to save Aeneias; if this is the case, Hera's choice is an illusion and by rescuing him, Poseidon is unknowingly securing Aeneias' future destiny as fated. Maintaining the survival of key individuals not yet fated to die is a continuous challenge for the gods and moira to overcome, as seen with Aeneias' rescues in book 5 and 20.

Book 16: Sarpedon and Zeus

This following section considers the death of Sarpedon in conjunction with fate and Zeus' decision to either rescue or abandon him, before he is killed by Patroklos, having prevented his son's premature death twice before in book 5 and 12.[158] In the example from book 5, Zeus protects Sarpedon from receiving a fatal wound:

> "while his own [Tlepolemos'] long spear struck home

[157] I will discuss Achilles' relationship with fate more closely later, see pp. 110-7.
[158] *Il.* 5.660-2; 12.400-3.

> on Sarpēdōn’s left thigh, and the zestful point drove
>
> in forcefully, scraping the bone, but Sarpēdōn’s father
>
> Zeus still (ἔτι) warded off (ἄμυνεν) death (λοιγός) from
>
> him.” – *Il.* 5.660-2.

It is suggested that this attack would have been fatal, emphasised by the wound’s depth that reached bone, and ἄμυνεν to describe Zeus’ action of preventing death. However, the temporary nature of Zeus’ act to prevent Sarepdon’s death is alluded to by ἔτι, meaning “yet” or “still,” suggesting Zeus’ acts to protect his son will be in vain, as he is destined to die in time.

Zeus protects Sarepdon from death again in book 12:

> “But Aias and Teukros now assailed him at once:
>
> the latter with an arrow to the bright baldric that held
>
> his protective shield in place over his torso; but Zeus
>
> warded off from his son the death-spirits, to stop him
>
> being killed at the ships’ sterns.” – *Il.* 12.400-3.

While λοιγός is used in the first example to mean “ruin,” “havoc,” or a death by war, κῆρας (*keres*) is used in the second to refer to the goddesses of death and doom, which aim to bring death to Sarpedon. Zeus possesses the power to deter the *keres*, depicting him as working with moira to ensure that Sarpedon does not die early on these occasions before his fated time.

Despite his efforts to protect his son from death on these two occasions, Zeus knows when and how his son will die, and that it is inevitable, as

demonstrated by his prophecy of the coming events to his wife: "Patroklos will kill many other young men, including my noble son Sarpēdōn (*Il.* 15.66-7).

The poet's reasoning for keeping Sarpedon alive until book 16 is explained by Hainsworth and Kirk: "Sarpedon is preserved now because the poet needs him later, or as he puts it in book 16 (433-8), it was Sarpedon's fate to die at the hands of Patroklos and not by the ships".[159] Through teasing the death of Sarpedon through a series of close encounters, the poet builds the audience's suspense in anticipating his death. The tradition demands a certain formula of deaths that take place in a specific order: Patroklos must kill Sarpedon, and Hektor must kill Patroklos. The poet recognised his audience's varying awareness and understanding of the Trojan War narrative and its characters,[160] so utilised their preconceived knowledge of the general direction of the story when retelling the plot, foreshadowing events such as the death of Sarpedon, as the plot of the epic is already destined to follow a somewhat set course.[161] The gods therefore must conform to the fixed points in the poet's loose plan as imposed by the expectations of the poet's original audience.[162] Despite the similarities in their influence, the poet and moira are homologous but not the same. While they both influence the events of the epic's ending with a similar result, they perform in different ways to dictate what is set to occur in the poem. The key difference between them is that the

[159] Cf. Hainsworth and Kirk 1993, pp. 359-60, l. 402-3.
[160] Scodel 2009, pp. 18-9.
[161] Morrison 1997, p. 278.
[162] "For those [the audience] inside the tradition, what matters is that they are able to feel that the performance is traditional, that it repeats crucial elements of performances of the past," meaning that the audience expects from the poet a degree of conformity to the traditional elements of the story from which they are familiar with. Scodel 2009, pp. 31-2.

gods are unable to change the poet's plan and the myths that inspired the plot, but the gods believe that they are capable of bypassing events fixed by moira, which will be discussed shortly. The poet's plan dictates that Sarpedon must die as he does in myth, which no god in the epic could challenge, even Zeus. Yet still, when Sarpedon's death is moments away, Zeus questions whether he should intervene to save him:

> Woe is me, that it's fate for Sarpēdōn, my best-loved mortal, to be laid low (δαμῆναι) by Patroklos, the son of Menoitios! My heart is divided two ways as I debate (ὁρμαίνοντι) the matter- Shall I snatch him up while he lives still, and then set him down, far from this grievous warfare, in Lycia's rich terrain, or shall I let him be vanquished by Patroklos, Menoitios's son? – *Il.* 16. 433-8.

With the use of δαμῆναι meaning "to be laid low," Zeus further suggests that Sarpedon's death is certain to take place. Dietrich makes a statement concerning the gods' ability to rescue mortals from death: "indeed the gods are powerless to avert death common to all mortals, even from a favourite, when destructive Moira, consisting in long lamented death, should seize him".[163] He supports his statement with a comment Athene makes to Telemachus in the *Odyssey*: "A god can easily save anyone, at will, no matter what the distance… but death is universal. Even gods cannot protect the

[163] Dietrich 1965, p. 214.

people they love , when fate (μοῖρ᾽) and cruel death catch up with them" (*Od.* 3.230-8); this indicates that the Homeric gods have the power to rescue mortals, but cannot rescue mortals from the fate of death. When considering the evidence of Sarpedon's death with his father Zeus allowing him to die, Dietrich's statement appears to be true: regardless of how powerful a god may be, their favourite mortal's death is unavoidable, due to moira. However, the act of Zeus deliberating whether he should intervene as exemplified by ὁρμαίνοντι, "I debate," would suggest that Zeus thinks that he is capable of rescuing his son from his fated death, despite the mortal fates which are fixed by moira.

Hera, however, is quick to interject:

> "Most dread son of Kronos, what's this that you're telling
>
> me? Here's a man, a mortal, his fate long since determined
>
> (πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ): Are you minded to free such
>
> a one from sorrowful death? Then do it; but we other
>
> gods will not approve. One other thing I will tell you,
>
> and you should take it to heart: If you send back Sarpēdōn
>
> alive to his own abode, think of this: that hereafter some
>
> other god may be minded to send his own dear son away
>
> from the grind of battle – for fighting round Priam's great
>
> city there now are many sons of immortals, in whom you'll
>
> cause serious resentment." – *Il.* 16. 440-9.

Hera rightly recognises that if Zeus rescues his son, it would be hypocritical of him to prevent another god from saving their own. Janko suggests her words draws particular attention to the possibility of Thetis rescuing Achilles from death,[164] which would significantly interfere with moira and the fixed events set to take place during the Trojan War.

On the poet's level, it would complicate matters if he allowed the gods of the *Iliad* to rescue whoever they wished from death, because the survival of certain individuals does not conform to the traditional myth of the Trojan War. Therefore, the poet must place the constraint of fate upon the gods to ensure that he follows the traditional events of the narrative.

We might then consider how this scenario differs to other rescues that are allowed to take place, such as Paris' by Aphrodite (*Il.* 3.380-2), and Aeneias' by Apollo (*Il.* 5. 443-6) and Poseidon (*Il.* 20. 321-5). What sets Sarpedon's case apart from Paris' and Aeneias' is that both Paris and Aeneias are not destined to die at those moments; Paris would be killed by Philoctetes around the time of the fall of Troy, while Aeneias has an unspecified destiny which will outlast the Trojan War (*Il.* 20.300-8), so both must survive these encounters, just as Sarpedon had to survive his encounters in book 5 and 12.[165]

[164] Cf. Janko 1992, 16.431-61.

[165] Our earliest known mention of Paris' fate was in the lost epic the *Little Iliad*, dated between the 8th and 7th century BC, according to Proclus' summary of the epic. See: Gantz 1993, p. 637. It is later stated in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* in 409 BC (Soph. *Phil.* 1425-6). Marks explains this with the example of the duel between Menelaus and Paris, indicating that neither would die in their fight to the death both play "a significant role in the events after the end of the *Iliad*". See: Marks 2010, p. 302.

Returning to Hera's response to Zeus' wish to save his son, Hera also comments on Poseidon's wish to save Aeneias from death in book 20, again acting as an advisor for Poseidon as to whether he should:

> "Earth-Shaker, you must decide yourself concerning Aeneias
>
> whether to rescue him, or let him be vanquished, brave enough
>
> though he is, by Achilles, Pēleus' son. The two of us have
>
> sworn a number of oaths in the presence of all the immortals.
>
> Pallas Athēnē and I, that we'll never ward off from the
>
> Trojans their day of evil not even when all of Troy is
>
> ablaze with devouring fire" – *Il.* 20.310-7.

I disagree with Smith's interpretation that suggests Hera clearly consents to Poseidon's plea;[166] rather, she presents Poseidon with the potential outcomes that would result from what Poseidon decides and allows him to choose what he deems himself to be the right outcome, indicating that Poseidon is responsible for the consequences of his decision. The only condition she requests is that he does not attempt to alter the conclusion of the war, this being the destruction of Troy. Poseidon, and Zeus both have a choice as to whether they should let the mortals in question live or die, but Hera's responses to each are quite different. She is accepting of either of Poseidon's decisions, but seems to be strongly against saving Sarpedon in Zeus' case based on the poet's choice of language to represent her view, her disbelief at

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[166] "Hera consents to this intervention, and Poseidon proceeds at once to the rescue". See: Smith 1981, p. 19.

the prospect of saving Sarpedon from death projected through her leading, rhetorical question, and her guilt-enforcing remark concerning the discontent that would preside amongst the gods and the consequences that may follow. This is because Sarpedon's death has been πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴσῃ (long since determined), so should not be altered, not due to some world-shattering consequence of breaking cosmic law; instead, the threat stems from the chaos that will ensue amongst the gods if Zeus sets the example that he could save a mortal fated to die: then any god should be able to do so in any circumstance.[167] For the poet, such deviations to the plot could cause the poem to veer away from the traditional Trojan war myth too drastically for the audience to accept, so the poet cannot allow the gods to rescue whoever they wish. Wilson puts it well: "when Zeus must reluctantly allow the deaths of Sarpedon and Hektor, we have a metaphor for the poet acknowledging his allegiance to a tradition, a tradition to which he must, in crucial specifics, adhere, in order to maintain his own credibility," as while Zeus must ultimately conform to the poet, the poet must conform to the tradition.[168]

Lastly, I partially agree with Janko's opinion that Zeus "must yield to a higher power,"[169] as in this situation, Zeus must yield to the power of moira; however, he implies that moira is a more powerful force than Zeus when he labels moira as a "higher power," drawing attention to the inconclusive debate over which is more powerful. To rephrase his words and capture the more relevant message, Zeus must yield to moira on this occasion and forfeit his own personal desire to save his son from the fate of death, in order to ensure

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[167] Morrison 1997, pp. 286-7; Allan 2006, p. 8; Slattery 2013, p. 6. .
[168] Wilson 2007, p. 152.
[169] Cf. Janko 1992, 16.431-61.

what is fated to occur happens, conforming to the poet's plan for the epic in following the traditional narrative of the Trojan War.

Through these examples, the gods are clearly limited by fate with regards to the mortals that they wish to rescue on the battlefield. They too are limited by the confines of order to maintain an equality amongst the gods, so that no god should go unpunished for taking advantage of their divine power to save a mortal destined to die, this rule extending even to Zeus, who must conform to order and fate to set an example.

Book 22: Hektor's Fate

Just as with Zeus and Sarpedon, Apollo's favouring of Hektor continues throughout the *Iliad*, but fate's prioritisation results in the god stepping back and the mortal's lack of protection from death. Apollo empowers Hektor during the Trojan attack of the Achaian camp (*Il.* 15.220-80), fatally weakens Patroklos for Hektor to land the final blow (*Il.* 16.791-806), and rescues Hektor from Achilles' attack (*Il.* 20.441-53). But despite this and being by his side in their duel in book 22 (*Il.* 22.202-4), the moment that Zeus' scales indicate Hektor's loss, Apollo immediately leaves Hektor's side: "Hektōr's fated day sank, pointing down to Hādēs, and Phoibos Apollo left him" (*Il.* 22.213).

Richardson comments on Apollo's desertion of Hektor, stating that "the gods avoid contact with death where possible".[170] His phrasing "where possible" would suggest that the gods would only involve themselves with death when

[170] Cf. Richardson and Kirk 1993, 22.213.

it was unavoidable, however, this is not the case, as Ares actively involved himself with death when he killed many Achaians with a spear alongside Hektor disguised as a mortal, when it was not necessary for him to do so (*Il*. 5.590-605, 699-710). Furthermore, the evidence Richardson uses to suggest that the Homeric gods avoid death is from Euripides' *Hippolytus* (428 BC), a play performed centuries after Homer; thus, the play's presentation of Artemis is not comparable to the gods of the *Iliad* due to this time difference.

It is understandable for gods to avoid the deaths of their favourites for the sake of grief, as with Zeus who only indirectly addressed his son's death, with Apollo relieving Sarpedon of pain in his dying moments (*Il*. 16.524-529), while remaining on Ida to shower blood from the sky (*Il*. 16.458-60) and darkening it (*Il*. 16.567-8). Apollo's seemingly apathetic desertion is explained by Burks, who reasons that Apollo's motivation to preserve fate and adhere to Zeus' commands is stronger than his attachment to Hektor, resulting in his guiltless exit. I also agree with Burks interpretation that Apollo obediently follows Zeus' orders as a son obeying his father's will.[171] When Zeus gave the unspoken order that Hektor is to die as fixed by moira at his birth, Apollo does not intervene to prevent it.

Apollo still manages to display his support for Hektor after the mortal's death, through the preservation of his corpse in book 23 (*Il*. 23.188-91), fighting for the return of the body for burial (*Il*. 24.32-54), and after the events of the war by assisting Paris to kill Achilles (*Il*. 22.359-60), but he does not attempt to prevent Hektor's preordained death, thus enabling the fated event to transpire.

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[171] Burks 2020, p. 45.

Book 24: Zeus' Jars

In book 24, Achilles discusses the nature of good and bad fortune with Priam, declaring that the gods are responsible for the impacts upon mortal life: "that's how the gods spun life's thread for unhappy mortals to live amid sorrow, while they themselves are uncaring" (*Il.* 24.525-6). As clarified in chapter 2, the spinning motif is not solely attributed to moira,[172] who is not mentioned in this passage. The lack of reference to moira can be explained, as Achilles refers to the contents of mortal life, not its end. Moira is responsible for imposing a mortal's fate of death at birth, as opposed to the fortune derived from events within a mortal's life, which is suggested here. It would indicate again that the gods are not responsible for dispensing fate to mortals, in the form of their deaths, as moira is, but are responsible for the content of their lives. Slattery puts it well: "The immortals determine the physical traits and potential of each person, giving each one the qualities needed to fulfil fate".[173] This becomes even clearer as Achilles continues, mentioning two jars that Zeus uses to dispense fortunes to mortals:

> There are two great jars, sunk down in the floor of Zeus'
>
> abode, full of gifts he hands out, one of ills, the other
>
> of blessings; and the man who gets a mixed handout
>
> from thundering Zeus will sometimes encounter trouble,
>
> and sometimes good luck; whereas he who gets only ills

[172] See: pp. 50-2.
[173] Slattery 2013, p. 7.

> Zeus renders an outcast, driven by evil hunger to wander
>
> across the face of the sacred earth, with respect from neither
>
> gods nor mortals" *Il*. 24.527-33.[174]

Zeus' jars can be interpreted as purely allegorical or as a physical feature of Zeus' abode. Unsurprisingly, the myth of Pandora's jar, as retold in both Hesiod's *Theogony* (Hes. *Theo*. 550-613) and *Works and Days* (Hes. *WD*. 59-104), may have inspired Homer's depiction of Zeus' jars.[175] We may speculate that Pandora's jar was also from Zeus, sending her and the vessel to be "an affliction for mankind" (Hes. *Theo*. 572). This is further supported by Homer and Hesiod's use of the same word to describe the vessels: πίθος (Hes. WD. 94) (*Il*. 24.527). As Pandora's jar of ills, which was likely delivered by the Hesiodic Zeus, shares similarities to the Homeric Zeus' jar of ills, this suggests that Homer's Zeus in the *Iliad* does indeed possess jars of good and evil. This would contribute to his image as an enforcer of fate, responsible for distributing ills and blessings to guide mortals to their fixed points of death set by moira.

Lastly, Richardson rightly connects Achilles' statement that the gods, particularly Zeus, are responsible for mortal ills, to Zeus' comment at the beginning of the *Odyssey*: "This is absurd, that mortals blame the gods! They

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[174] It was debated in antiquity whether there were three jars in total, two of evil and one of good, or two jars, one of evil and one of good. It is only possible for it to have been the latter, as ἕτερος is most often used when referring to one of two things, in this case, jars. See: Richardson and Kirk 1993, 525-6.

[175] Leaf 2010, p. 574, n. 527.

say we cause their suffering, but they themselves increase (ὑπὲρ μόρον... ἔχουσιν) it by folly" (*Od.* 1. 36-43).[176]

As emphasised by ὑπὲρ, which is translated by Wilson as "increase," Zeus does not deny the gods' responsibility for being a cause for human suffering. Zeus here accepts his and the other gods' roles as agents controlling mortal life but argues that mortal folly contributes to its sum, a statement consistent with mortal choice and the requirement for divine intervention to redirect events.[177]

Part B

This final section will consider two complex topics that cannot be limited to the discussion of an example from a single book, this being the motif of *kerostasia*, and the theme of Achilles' fate in the *Iliad*.

The examination of moments of *kerostasia* considers the degree to which Zeus participates, considering whether moira is involved and, if so, to what extent. I reflect upon the interpretation of moments of *kerostasia* as metaphorical, before addressing two other instances in which scales belonging to Zeus are mentioned, concluding with a comparison of moments of *kerostasia* with *psychostasia* from Egyptian myth, and the significance of the *keres*' weight that sits in the pans of the scale.

The analysis of Achilles' fate revolves around the possibility of the character possessing more than one destiny by considering his agency and the responses

[176] Richardson and Kirk 1993, 24.527-33.
[177] Cf. Heubeck et al. 1990, 1.32-3.

of the gods to his actions. The examination of the poet's use of his character to destabilise the audience, contributes to building a comprehensive understanding of his role in the epic to threaten the gods, fate and, more broadly, the plot itself.

Kerostasia

Kerostasia is the weighing of an individual's death, occurring twice in the *Iliad*:

> then Zeus, the father, held up his golden scale (τάλαντα)
>
> and on it set two dooms (δύο κῆρε) of grief-laden death,
>
> for horse-breaker Trojans and bronze corsleted Achaians.
>
> By the middle he grasped and raised it: the Achaians'
>
> fated day (αἴσιμον ἦμαρ) sank (ῥέπε), and their fates
>
> (κῆρες) all settled on the provident earth, while those
>
> of the Trojans were raised to the wide sky. – *Il.* 8.68-74.

> then Zeus, the Father, held up his golden balance (τάλαντα)
>
> and on it set two dooms (δύο κῆρε) of grief-laden death, one
>
> for Achilles, the other for horse-taming Hektōr. By the
>
> middle he grasped and raised it: Hektōr's fated day (αἴσιμον
>
> ἦμαρ) sank (ῥέπε), pointing down to Hādēs, and Phoibos

Apollo left him. – *Il.* 22.209-13.

In both instances, the scales are held by Zeus on Mount Ida: once concerning the fates of the Greeks and Trojans in the war in book 8, and again in the climactic fight between Achilles and Hektor in book 22.[178] The scales operate with the *ker* meaning "death" or "doom,"[179] of the one favoured on the rising side and the other tipping down. This latter action described as sinking (ῥέπε) results in the death and doom of those not favoured,[180] mimicking the action of sinking into the underworld, as most clearly displayed in the second example of Achilles and Hektor's fight: "Hektōr's fated day sank, pointing down to Hādēs" (*Il.* 22.212-3). However, it is uncertain what force is responsible for deciding which side of the scales tips in the first place.

One possibility is that it could potentially be Zeus, as he is a confirmed participant in each *kerostasia* in the *Iliad* as the bearer of the scales. He is partly responsible for the outcome by dispensing it in the first place, by presenting each *ker* to be weighed against each other. However, we cannot be sure that he is the one responsible for causing the scales to tip, only for presenting the scales; even if he was responsible for causing the scales to tip, this would be connected to his duty as the king of the gods and as an enforcer of fate, and not necessarily what he personally desires to happen. Despite seeming to know of Hektor's fate and against his wishes to take pity on him, his responsibility as a force of order prevents him from controlling what he wants to happen on a personal level. Morrison supports this interpretation,

[178] Morrison 1997, p. 274.
[179] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: Κήρ.
[180] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: Ῥέπω.

suggesting that "while Zeus' actions in some sense follow from his inclinations, they appear to have little if any connection with a larger purpose conveyed by the phrase 'the will of Zeus'".[181] This is not to say that Zeus would not be able to influence the scales himself, as he has already suggested through his consideration of saving his son Sarpedon and Hektor that he possesses the ability to do, as Griffin agrees: "The question whether he [Zeus] does or does not have the power to over-rule *aisa*, allotted fate, is not the point: apparently he has, but he admits that it would be wrong to use it.".[182] Therefore, Zeus is the one responsible for operating the scales, while another external force, perhaps moira, is at play and is responsible for tipping them.

I believe that the force responsible for the tipping of the scales is moira, for several reasons.[183] Most notably, *aisa* is present in both examples, a word that has been previously highlighted as an alternative to moira, indicating moira's connection to both cases of *kerostasia*. In addition, moira is heavily associated with death and the gods associated with it, and the result of each *kerostasia* is death either of an individual, such as Hektor, or on a larger scale, as with the Achaians and Trojans. Moira is summoned to decide which mortals will die, because it is moira's sphere of influence to fix the deaths of mortals at their birth and so is the deciding factor in confirming which side of the scales will rise and which side will fall. This is supported by Morrison, who recognises that while "the setting out of the scales is an action by the gods [Zeus]…the effect is to determine the future of heroes fighting on the

[181] Morrison 1997, p. 291.
[182] Griffin 1990, p. 363.
[183] Slattery too shares my belief. See: Slattery 2013, p. 5.

field of battle," which is typically associated with moira.[184] Furthermore, moira often operates in conjunction with the will of Zeus. We know that Zeus' personal bias means that he wants Hektor to live, so the aspect of Zeus responsible for deciding to bring out the scales is most likely his will displayed by this duty. It makes sense, given the fact that Zeus' will shares strong similarities in function to moira, that they work together, as they are responsible for the fate of mortals and the events of the Trojan War. The scales are also used by Homer, whether intentionally or not, as a way to absolve Zeus of the blame for which way the scales tip. Wong importantly identifies: "Although Zeus knows the outcome, the scales detract blame from him. Thus, the scales are a device by which responsibility is apparently transferred from Zeus onto fate".[185] This further supports my belief that while Zeus wields the scales before him, the force that tips the scales is not himself, but moira, the one responsible for deciding the deaths of mortals, which are the subject of both *kerostasia* moments in the *Iliad*, removing the blame from himself.

Lastly, Slattery provides another reason to prove that moira is responsible for tipping the scales, pointing out that "The highest god would not have consulted his scales if he himself determined fate; therefore, destiny is decided by a power other than Zeus".[186]

While I understand Slattery's logic, I agree with some scholars that suggest that these moments of *kerostasia* are quasi-metaphorical, in that the scales are

[184] Morrison 1997, p. 293.
[185] Wong 2002, p. 2.
[186] Slattery 2013, p.5.

not a decision-making device, as the decision has already been made.[187] Dietrich, however, takes this argument one step further, suggesting that the scales are not necessary to the plot, that they have nothing to do with fate and rather serve as a literary device to shift the focus from the divine to the mortal level:

> The scales in Book 22 and 8 are not a part of a concept of fate guided by the gods or an impersonal power - they have nothing to do with fate; but since the result of the weighing and the duel in Book 22 could be anticipated before either actually occurred, the *kerostasia* serves no real useful purpose at all beyond momentarily shifting the scene of action from the human level to that of the gods and of dramatically introducing one of the vital parts of the story of the *Iliad*: the death of Hector. It is quite wrong, therefore, to discover in this image of weighing a deeper significance than the context will bear.[188]

I disagree with him, as the moments of *kerostasia* still present Zeus and moira as operating together to dictate the fates of mortals, so are useful to characterise their dynamic in a more concise manner, and so it should not be

[187] Cf. Willcock 1976, p. 86-7 *Il.* 8.69-70; “The scales are an indication of what will happen, an artistic means of creating tension, not a real decision-making device”, see: Edwards 1987, p. 294.
[188] Dietrich 1964, p. 99.

disregarded as merely a literary device to switch between the scenes of the gods and mortals.

There are two other occasions on which Zeus is mentioned in conjunction with a set of scales, so it is important to distinguish whether these examples mention the same scales as the ones mentioned in the instances of *kerostasia*. The first occurs in book 16, when Zeus is deciding on what action should be taken following the death of Sarpedon. Zeus puts it in Hektor's mind to fear a potential shift in favour of the Achaians and therefore to react accordingly:

> "In Hektōr first he [Zeus] aroused craven panic: Hektōr
>
> boarded his chariot, turned to flight, and called upon
>
> the rest of the Trojans to flee, having seen Zeus's sacred
>
> scales (τάλαντα) in action" (*Il.* 16. 658).

Not only would the context suggest that the scales here match those used in the moments of *kerostasia* as the scales to decide the fates, particularly the deaths of mortals, the same word τάλαντα used to denote the scales is utilised in the instances of *kerostasia* also.[189] It is therefore likely that the scales mentioned in book 16 are the same scales used in book 8 and 22. While the scales are attributed to Zeus, this does not mean that he is the force tipping the scales, but may refer to the one often present in these cases.

Matters become more complex with another mention of Zeus in connection with a set of scales in book 19, when Odysseus gives advice to Achilles:

[189] Liddell et al. 1940, s.v: τᾰλαντ-άω.

> Mankind very soon gets surfeited with its crop of fighting, the stalks of which the bronze spreads in plenty on the ground; but the harvest is all too small, since the scales (τάλαντα) are tipped by Zeus, who is for mankind the steward of warfare. – *Il.* 19. 221-4.

Interestingly, stating that the scales are tipped by Zeus, implies that he is not only the one wielding the scales in each *kerostasia*, but also the force responsible for tipping them, again supported by the use of τάλαντα. However, Odysseus, despite being wise, cannot claim to fully understand the gods and their functions as a mortal man, so may be incorrect in his judgement. Therefore, we cannot place our faith in what Odysseus says. Secondly, Kirk suggests that it would fit with a formula used for Zeus that already exists: "unless now friendship's being set between the two sides by Zeus, long since the dispenser of warfare to mortals" (*Il.* 4.84),[190] which repeats the phrase "ὅς τ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται". The context of the formulaic phrase from book 4 would more closely refer to Zeus and his role in guiding the events punctuating mortal lives, such as war in these cases, not specifically death (though death is indeed a by-product of war). Even if fated death was intended in the example from book 19, the use of τάμιας meaning "dispenser" indicates that Zeus is dispensing something that already exists and is prepared, acting as a vessel to channel what is fated to occur. Therefore, if this example is indeed another instance of *kerostasia*, as in book

[190] Cf. Kirk 1991, ad loc. 19.221-4.

16, then again, Zeus is not necessarily the force tipping the scales, rather, he is responsible for holding them and allowing for fate to declare which side rises and falls as the force responsible for tipping them.

Examining different examples of weighing scenarios across different myths and cultures is another method to attempt to understand the functionality of, and the forces at work in, a *kerostasia*. The Egyptian *psychostasia* or weighing of the souls mentioned in the *Book of the Dead* may come to mind, where a deceased individual's heart was weighed against a feather or an eye before judges in addition to the gods Osiris, Anubis, Maat and Horus.[191] Dietrich pointed out their many differences: firstly, a *psychostasia*, taking place in a court in which the one on trial is found to be innocent or guilty, has a moral overtone, in comparison to a *kerostasia*, in which the two *ker* of either an individual or group are weighed against one another to decide a victor and bring doom and death to the other; secondly, the *psychostasia* takes place after death and not before as in a *kerostasia*; thirdly the *ker* that are weighed are not souls like in the *psychostasia*, but souls that have been possessed by *ker* and have transformed into *ker* as a result.[192] Clearly, they are too different to suggest the Egyptian *psychostasia* could be the sole inspiration for the *kerostasia* found in the *Iliad*; however, the connection between death and the weighing aspect may suggest that there may have been a degree of Egyptian influence.

[191] This chapter (125) of the *Book of the Dead* was written between the 16th-15th Century BC. See: Erman 1909, p. 101. For a more detailed summary of the events of the Egyptian *psychostasia*, see: Nótári 2005, p. 257.
[192] Dietrich 1964, p. 111-2, 114-25.

This comparison leads us to the interesting consideration of the weight of the *ker* and what exactly is being measured here. We are explicitly told in the *psychostasia* that the requirement to pass the weighing of the soul is for the heart to be "lighter than justice",[193] but we are not told in the *Iliad* whether the *ker* physically weigh anything or what is being measured. Adkins believes that "the scales are something distinct from Zeus; the weight of the *keres* is independent of Zeus, for otherwise there would be no point in weighing them: and so there apparently exists a power over which Zeus has no control, and to which he bows".[194] What he questions is the reason of weighing the *keres*, considering that they may possess a weight and are not a part of Zeus. He suggests that a greater power, possibly moira, can influence their weight, allowing for them to tip.

We might now consider another interpretation: that the weight of the *keres* is not being weighed at all. The instrument is symbolic of Zeus' function as an enforcer and example of order and balance, hence why they are attributed to him as "his" scales (*Il*. 8.69; 16.658; 22.209). Moira, which I believe is the force tipping the scales, utilises the scales not for its originally intended function, this being to weigh something against another with the weight difference causing their tipping. Instead, due to the poet remaining consistent in presenting moira's manifestation as an intangible force that does not appear in the *Iliad*, moira does not physically appear and give a decision, instead using the scales to indicate whether one or the other should die, as we might give a thumbs up or down in approval or disapproval. Vermeule shares my

[193] Nótári 2005, p. 257.
[194] Adkins 1960, p. 17.

view, stating that a *kerostasia* is not necessarily "a judgement, but an external affirmation of destiny,"[195] indicating that Zeus is the wielder of the scales and moira is the force tipping them, while considering the possibility that the *keres* are not being weighed at all, and that the device of the scales is simply used by moira to indicate the decision met, as we would say "let this one live" and "let that one die".

In short, Zeus is the one responsible for operating the scales, while moira is the force responsible for tipping them. The *psychostasia* from Egyptian myth cannot be compared to the examples of *kerostasia* in Homer, as they are too different from one another. The weighing of the *keres* is quasi-metaphorical, as their weight might not be being compared to each other at all, symbolic of the death or deaths already fixed; if they are being weighed, their weight may be influenced by moira to reflect what moira decided at the mortals' births.

Achilles' Fate

The ways in which the poet presents Achilles and his fate can help to inform us about the nature of fate, and the roles that the gods play to enforce fate in the poem. There are many occasions throughout the poem in which the poet presents Achilles' fate as a singular, fixed event. Achilles declares himself to be "short-lived" in book 1 (*Il*. 1. 352), while Thetis laments the short length of Achilles' life and that it will be his fate to die (*Il*. 1.410-18). This is supported by the outline of Zeus' plan, indicating that Patroklos' death will spur Achilles into battle to kill Hektor, an act that precedes his fated death (*Il*.

[195] Vermeule 1981, p. 76.

15.64-9). Apollo also confirms that Achilles will not take part in the fall of Troy as “it is not fated that” he should (*Il.* 16.707-9), implying that Achilles will die before it happens. After Patroklos’ death and Achilles’ decision to kill Hektor, Thetis reminds him that by doing so, Achilles will die shortly after (*Il.* 18.94-6). Xanthos, Achilles’ horse, warns him that while he will safely return from the battle on this occasion, his fated “day of death” is close (*Il.* 19.403-23). Again, more is divulged when, moments from death, Hektor tells Achilles that he will be killed by Paris and Apollo in front of the gates (*Il.* 22.358-60). Patroklos’ ghost reminds Achilles that his death is drawing near (*Il.* 23.80-1), and when mourning Patroklos, Achilles accepts that he will never be able to return home and will die at Troy (*Il.* 23.140-53). Lastly, Thetis’ continuous mourning reinforces the certainty that Achilles will meet his fate and die (*Il.* 24.84-6, 91, 104-5, 131-2). These examples would suggest that Achilles’ only possible fate is to die at Troy, and we might additionally consider moira’s role in fixing the point of death for mortals at their birth. As Achilles is mortal, he too would have had his fate fixed in time and, as with Sarpedon and Hektor. While gods may prevent possible situations that would lead them to experiencing an earlier death than intended, they cannot prevent their death at their allotted time.

However, due to the choices and actions of mortals, it is possible for Achilles to override fate and change his destiny, hence why Achilles claims to possess two destinies in book 9 (*Il.* 9.410-6). What stands in his way is the force of the gods who can prevent a different outcome. When considering Achilles’ second destiny in book 9, Erbse would suggest that Achilles never had a second option, because he must only have one *ker*, this being a “destructive

force" that afflicts an individual.[196] I disagree, as there is no reason why Achilles should only possess one *ker*, since there are many ways that a mortal can die (*Il.* 12.326–27). Achilles in theory could have multiple *keres* assigned to him, allowing for him to possess multiple destinies, despite being allotted a singular fixed one, as the gods will prevent these alternative destinies from happening.

By having Achilles declare that his life is short in book 1, drawing attention to his two potential destinies in book 9, having Achilles reassure Xanthos that he does not need to be informed about his death as he knows that it is his "fate to perish here" at Troy in book 19 (*Il.* 19.420-2), and by making Achilles himself assert the certainty of his own death (*Il.* 23.140-53), the poet depicts Achilles as self-aware concerning his own fate.

By contrast, Hektor is not informed by the gods about his own fate, so appears oblivious to his, as seen in his comment to Andromache: that "no man shall send me to Hādēs before my fated day" (*Il.* 6.487), which he does not realise will arrive soon, and his ill-placed confidence that he might be able to defeat Achilles when addressing the dying Patroklos (*Il.* 16.859-61). Based on his optimism, Hektor does not realise either the proximity of his death, how fixed his death is, or the degree of involvement of the gods to ensure that what is fated takes place.

Achilles differs from Hektor in his access to divine knowledge through his goddess mother, Thetis. She divulged to him that he possesses two alternative destinies: one, to leave Troy and live out a long yet uneventful life, or two, to

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[196] Erbse 1986, p. 282.

die at Troy and achieve a *kleos* that will be remembered over many ages (*Il*. 9.410-6). She also informs him again in book 18 that his fate will be sealed at Troy should he kill Hektor (*Il*. 18.94-6).

Hektor is never told by a god when he is destined to die, and tragically realises moments before his death that he has been tricked and abandoned by the gods (*Il*. 22. 297-304). Athene's intervention to trick Hektor and the absence of divine protection from Zeus and Apollo provide a situation suitable for Achilles to kill Hektor and seal his fate, which Hektor only comes to realise in his moment of clarity before death. Meanwhile, Achilles was aware of his options in addition to when and how those options would expire, knowing that his death would be sealed by choosing to remain at Troy and choosing to kill Hektor. Wong notes that the narrator leads us to acknowledge Achilles' agency, as the narrator makes it clear that it was Achilles' decision to obey Athene and not attack Agamemnon in book 1 (*Il*. 1.206-18), and while some Achaians did not choose to go to Troy, such as Adrastus and Amphius, as "the spirits of black death were urging them forward" (*Il*. 2.828-34), the narrator does not specify this for Achilles, suggesting that it was his decision to go.[197]

Despite possessing the knowledge of what actions to take to avoid his death at Troy, I believe Achilles would have chosen to stay and die regardless, because he could not face the shame of leaving the war with his honour sabotaged by Agamemnon in book 1. Achilles needed to compensate for the loss, demanding from Zeus through Thetis to have his honour repaid to him.

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[197] Wong 2002, p. 8.

After the embassy in book 9, Achilles has not prepared his ship. He has made his choice to die, because he values reclaiming his honour more highly than his life. By leaving, he would abandon the prospect of eternal glory to be seen as a coward, a fate that Achilles could never accept as a hero.[198] It is as Slattery suggests here:

> "The gods allow apparent free will by providing dual, alternate fates to certain characters. Achilles' destiny is one of two separate paths, and, unlike most mortals, he lives his life fully conscious of his fate and the diverging roads before him. Though it leads to his early death, Achilles chooses to act in accordance with his fated glory when he re-enters the war… He has considered returning home, but honour and vengeance win out."[199]

Therefore, the gods allow Achilles to possess multiple options for his destiny, because there would only be one logical option for Achilles to choose in the end to regain his honour and avenge Patroklos: the option leading to his death.

Achilles as a narrative tool

As a poet, Homer must bring something new and exciting to his audience, but with such a fixed tradition, this poses a challenge, as the audience knows exactly what to expect and when. One way to challenge this knowledgeable

[198] Ferguson 1989, p. 17; Nagy 2013, pp. 26, 29-31; Gernler 2015, p. 12.
[199] Slattery 2013, p. 8.

audience is by presenting the myth from an unfamiliar angle with an unfamiliar central figure, with an unexpected driving plot. This is achieved when applying the theory that Achilles may not have played such a large role in the narrative of the earlier tradition of the Trojan War myth prior to the *Iliad*. This theory is supported by three pieces of evidence: In the first, West and Sammons consider the unusual phrasing, organisation, and geographical detail of Achilles' placement in the catalogue of ships, believing that this evidence may indicate his later addition to the tradition; [200] secondly, Sammons suggests that a quarrel between Menelaus and Agamemnon was replaced by Homer with Achilles and Agamemnon's quarrel in book 1;[201] Finally, A number of neoanalysts, whose arguments were collated by Willcock, propose that the revenge plot from the lost epic Aethiopis, where Achilles kills Memnon for killing Antilochus, could have been repurposed in the revenge plot of the *Iliad*, where Achilles kills Hektor for killing Patroklos.[202] Considering then the possibility that Achilles did not play a significant role in the Trojan War narrative before the *Iliad*, the *Iliad*'s plot to resolve his anger, in addition to the unusual time frame of a few weeks in the final year of the war, this would provide all of the above. Because of this unfamiliarity, the audience's confidence in what will happen is destabilised. It is in this way that the poet cultivates the perfect environment in which he can threaten to transgress the bounds of the tradition while delivering a fresh contribution to the Trojan War narrative.

[200] Sammons 2010; West 2011.
[201] Sammons 2014.
[202] Willcock 1997.

The conclusion to the war cannot come into view while Achilles postpones his fate by sitting out of the fighting, continuing in a perpetual stalemate until he chooses his fate: to die at Troy or go home, halting not only Hektor's death and his own, but also the fall of Troy. The audience is at the mercy of Achilles, only being able to rely on the gods to intervene to maintain fate as intended. Then in book 15, Zeus reveals to Hera and the audience how this will be fixed: Patroklos' death will spur Achilles on to fight, whereby he will kill Hektor. The audience trusts Zeus' words due to his high authority, and are reassured that the plot will remain on track as they can expect.

But Achilles' anger, the theme that drives the poem from the proem itself, continues to complicate matters for the gods and moira, as their original problem to spur Achilles to fight is flipped in book 20, where Zeus holds an assembly at the beginning of the book, voicing his concerns (*Il*. 20.26-30).

The poet restores his audience's nervousness with the possibility that the traditional narrative could be broken by instilling that Zeus, a figure responsible for upholding fate and controlling the rest of the gods, is afraid of what a mortal man, Achilles, can achieve. If Zeus is fearful of the possibility of Achilles transgressing the bounds of fate and, from a broader perspective, warping the traditional narrative, then the audience should fear it too.

The audience watch as the gods scramble to intervene, preventing Aeneias from being killed (*Il*. 20.289-342) and Hektor being killed sooner than fated (*Il*. 20.438-54). If the gods had not been able to stop him, he may have been able to also storm Troy. Madrigal explains what the potential result of Achilles not being controlled in book 20 would mean for the tradition:

> "Achilles is not supposed to take Troy by force – he is not supposed to take Troy at all. His arc begins and ends within the bounds of the war; as a latecomer to the storyline, he cannot play any part in the sack of the city itself according to the constraints of tradition. But Achilles threatens to, for a brilliant, blinding moment; he moves so quickly, so viciously, that he threatens to upset the entire balance, not just for the audience, who has not external control over the story beyond those set by their own expectations, but for the gods themselves."[203]

The poet centres the plot of the *Iliad* around Achilles, who may not previously have been a key figure in the tradition, in order to consider alternative outcomes of the war, such as the death of Aeneias or an earlier fall of the city, only to quickly brush aside the possibility with a well-timed intervention by the gods. Because the audience can only rely on other character's responses towards his actions, particularly that of the gods, they consider, if only for a moment, that it could truly be possible for Achilles to overwhelm fate and transgress the bounds of the tradition.

[203] Madrigal 2022, p. 38.

Conclusion

As evident by part A, throughout the *Iliad*, the gods can intervene in the war when and how they wish, as long as it conforms to the demands of Zeus and the dictates of moira. This includes inspiring the mortal characters through suggestion as to what course of action they should take, preventing fatal wounds, and even rescuing them from danger. Mortals destined to die at a fixed point may die sooner than intended, so it is a god’s responsibility to ensure that this does not happen. However, if Zeus prevents the gods from intervening in the fighting, as he does in book 8, the gods must obey or risk facing punishment. In addition to this, the gods must ensure that mortals die at their destined moment, even if their death does not align with the god’s interests, as in the case of Zeus and Sarpedon.

The examination of the moments of *kerostasia* in Part B suggests that moira is the force tipping Zeus’ scales, due to moira's frequent association with Zeus' will, and the fact that death resulted from both instances, a responsibility attributed to moira. While sharing similarities, the *psychostasia* from Egyptian myth is fundamentally too different from moments of *kerostasia*, with the *psychostasia* emphasising a moral overtone, differing from the *kerostasia*'s association with death. I also hypothesised that the weight of the *keres*, if they are indeed being weighed, might be subject to moira's influence, potentially causing the scales to tip. The second section examining Achilles’ fate suggested that its complexity provides the poet with many opportunities that make the audience temporarily doubt their faith in the fulfilment of the traditional Trojan War narrative, whether it be halting the progression of the war or, escalating its conclusion faster than intended, from almost managing

to kill characters not yet to be killed, to almost killing a character destined to outlast the fall of Troy. He too is an unusual case, with a knowledge of his fate that far exceeds that of other mortal characters, such as Hektor. It is the gods' responsibility to catch the moments in which fate could be averted and step in where necessary, handling Achilles' case with special care, and ultimately, Zeus must devise a plan that encourages Achilles to follow the one that will seal the key points of fate: Hektor's death, Achilles' death, followed by the fall of Troy.

CONCLUSION

Returning to the statements made in the introduction, I addressed in this research the complex relationship between fate and mortal choice in the *Iliad*, and the role of the gods in ensuring that the fixed events occurred as fated.

In chapter 1, I assessed the effectiveness of the gods' role as fate's enforcers, with a brief overview of the different types of divine intervention that prepared for chapter 4's deeper analysis of the subject, before addressing their limitations that would impact their ability to maintain fate. These included being susceptible to harm, perhaps even death, and potentially relying on ambrosia and nectar to maintain their immortality. The divine gaze also served to be a significant limitation, since even if they were able to maintain their attention at all times, Homer's gods are unable to look past certain obstructions like the golden clouds, and can only look in one direction at a time, so could miss crucial moments in which they may prevent an alteration to fate. Lastly, due to their conflicting interests, the gods often complicate Zeus' role as the king of the gods, by attempting to deceive him and take advantage of his limited perception to attain their personal goals. However, regardless of whether they are successful or not, Zeus is able to ensure that the changes he did not agree to revert back and that those he agrees to aligns with his will and fate. As Zeus does not have complete control over the other gods, he is also susceptible to being overthrown, so he must remain vigilant and threaten the gods into submission time and time again.

The role of chapter 2 was to understand moira as it appeared in Homer's epics. The appearances of *moira* are presented in a flexible manner, being interpretable as an abstract force, a logical conclusion, or merely an expression. Moira is commonly linked with death and doom, and is responsible for setting predetermined events but not the specific methods through which the circumstances unfold. I also took into account the alternate words used that occasionally took its place, such as the verbs *meiromai*, *mello,* and the nouns *moros*, *morsimos*, *aisa*, and *potmos*. An essential explanation of personification was then given before considering the singular and multiple personifications of moira, considering the examples in which they appear and in what context. Despite recognising the typical hallmarks attributed to the personification of a concept like Themis, the singular personification, Moira cannot fit to this framework, as she never is described as possessing a physical form, her personality is never expressed and she is never seen directly interacting with either mortals or gods. Even when pluralised, the Moirai remain impersonal in Homer, and are only explored further with regards to their individual characteristics in Hesiod. The case of the κλῶθές in book 7, before addressing moira's limitation of relying on the gods as imperfect enforcers to maintain fate, because if they are not able to successfully control mortal choice, it could alter fate. I lastly clarified that the "spinning fate" motif in Homer is not solely attributed to moira, but is also utilised in relation to the gods' control over mortal lives.

Chapter 3 opened with an examination of the bounds of Zeus' plan, what it consists of, when it begins and where it ends. The elusive nature of his will contributes to the difficulty in providing answers to these questions: what we

can be certain of is that his plan encompasses his promise to Thetis, but whether it extends further to the completion of the war, or perhaps even relieving the earth of the burden of man, can only be speculative. As we cannot be certain of what it includes, we cannot be certain about its conclusion; however, it is suggested that Zeus' plan could have begun in book 2 with the catalogue of ships, after his meeting with Thetis in book 1. Next, I differentiated the personal wants of Zeus from his will, and compared the forces of moira and Zeus, stating that they are similarly set apart from the gods physically, with Zeus spending a third of the poem on Mount Ida, and moira being physically absent entirely, but that both had different goals: Zeus to carry out his promise to Thetis, moira, the fulfilment of the fall of Troy and the deaths of certain individuals.

The following section distinguished the poet from the narrator, before considering the similarities between the poet and Zeus. While Zeus monitors and maintains the course of fate through the gods, the poet guides the plot and shapes how the audience perceive the gods and mortals through the narration; Zeus' gaze is limited, while the poet can witness everything with the ability to consider simultaneous scenes in a consecutive manner; Zeus displays an awareness of specific events and in what order they will appear, but the poet decides the duration between each, though he cannot alter the order of events to conform to the traditional narrative of the Trojan War myth; both Zeus and the poet want Achilles to return to the fighting; for Zeus, this is to fulfil his plan, for the poet, it is to conform to the traditional narrative. However, while Zeus' goals also include maintaining control over the gods, the poet may utilise the gods' conflict as entertainment for his audience.

The final section of this chapter considered the different narrative techniques that the poet employs to deliver a suspenseful story to his knowledgeable audience, using the flexibility of mortal choice to threaten fate, resulting in tension and doubt that Zeus and the other gods will be able to rescue the derailing plot. The poet's focus on time in relation to fate encourages the audience to consider the length of time until a fated event occurs, resulting in a building suspense, despite them knowing what was going to happen. He uses unreal conditions to hint at alternate avenues the plot could have taken, suggesting that something different would have happened, had something not prevented it from doing so, creating a "near miss" situation that allows the poet to test the boundaries of the poetic tradition, and allow the audience to briefly consider the "what if". The poet also uses the gods to create tension through their conflicting interests that may threaten to derail the plot, then resolving that tension through the persuasion of another god to prevent the situation from happening. Mortals are easier to control, so to the audience, a rogue god has more of a chance to destabilise the plot, creating tension. Lastly, the various forms of misdirection mislead the audience into anticipating delayed events, remove the guidance of a god or the narrator from the audience to leave them momentarily in the dark, or provide inaccurate information to the audience from the gods or the narrator about the future events.

These three chapters provided a foundation for chapter 4 to analyse individual cases in the order in which they appear in the *Iliad* of the gods acting in accordance with fate, controlling the events to ensure that what is fated to occur does indeed happen.

Apollo controlled his vengeful plague in book 1 to prevent key figures like Agamemnon from facing an early death, as this would go against his fate to outlast the war and die after his return home, with the poet using the plague to test the bounds of the tradition and provide a reason for instigating Achilles' absence from the fighting and thus the progression of the plot.

The case of the Achaians' attempt to leave Troy in book 2 also exemplified the gods' role in preventing mortal choice from derailing the course of fate, with Athene's successful attempt to persuade Odysseus to convince them all to stay. The poet used an unreal condition to suggest that they would leave Troy early into the story before key moments in the narrative were met, developing the audience's uncertainty as to how this would be prevented. This happens again in book 3 where poet creates tension through misdirection, temporarily removing the gods and narrator as guides for the future events, and allowing Paris to come close to dying. This would have concluded the war with Troy's survival, but Aphrodite rescues him before it could happen.

In book 5, mortals are protected by gods from premature deaths seven times, particularly in the case of Aeneias, to ensure that his destiny to outlast the war is met, resulting in the injury of two gods for the sake of enforcing fate. Sarpedon's death in book 16 highlighted how important it was to Zeus to maintain fate and order amongst the gods, as he was willing to sacrifice his son and allow him to die as he was fated to, despite his ability to override fate. Apollo also values fate higher than his favourites, as despite supporting Hektor multiple times in the past, allowed him to die at his fated moment, abandoning him immediately at the confirmation of Zeus' scales. The poet

ensures that there is a reason preventing the gods from rescuing whoever they wish, as then mortals would not die as intended in the Trojan myth.

Zeus' jars in book 24 indicate that he is able to impact the lives of mortals by distributing ills and blessings to them, but that these do not include their deaths. Instead, he acts as fate's enforcer to deliver them to the circumstance that facilitates it, in the case of Achilles, this includes ensuring that he remains at Troy and that he kills Hektor, the conditions necessary to seal his fate.

I then considered the moments of *kerostasia*, suggesting that the force tipping Zeus' scales is moira, because moira is often mentioned in conjunction with the will of Zeus, and death was the result of both instances, which moira is responsible for fixing. I also considered comparing the moments of *kerostasia* to *psychostasia* in Egyptian myth, as both feature scales being used by gods. However, they are too different, with the *psychostasia* possessing a moral overtone contrasted with the *kerostasia*'s aim to bring death and doom. I also suspect that the weight of the *keres*, if they are being weighed at all, are influenced by moira, which would allow the pans to tip.

Lastly, Achilles' complex fate provides the poet various opportunities to momentarily challenge the audience's confidence in the fulfilment of the Trojan War myth. This includes disrupting the war's progress, hastening its conclusion, attempting to kill characters prematurely, and nearly harming those destined to survive Troy's fall. Unlike other mortal characters, Achilles possesses exceptional awareness of his fate, enhanced by the knowledge of his mother, who attempts to subtly influence events through Zeus. Zeus must carefully handle Achilles' case, ultimately devising a plan to ensure that the

key events unfold as they should, with the other gods bearing the responsibility of identifying pivotal moments to intervene.

The main aims of this research were to recognise the limitations of the gods and moira, and to understand how these limitations might impact their ability to ensure that fated events happened, while considering how they might work together to solve these limitations. Divine limitations included injury and the extent of their immortality, the extent of their vision and attention, and their conflicting interests and challenges to Zeus' authority. Moira too is limited by its reliance on the gods to maintain fate as imperfect enforcers. On the occasion a god is wounded, or their immortality is threatened, moira would not allow them to meet the conditions necessary for them to die, as moira does not concern itself with the length of god's life, only cutting short the lives of mortals. Alternatively, the gods may manage their immortality and injuries with the use of ambrosia, nectar and by spending time on the immortal plane of Olympus. The gods' limited vision creates the possibility that they might be unaware of a moment in which a fated event is being contested and not act to preserve fate for this reason; however, as there are many gods who are collectively responsible for upholding fate, they work together to ensure that if one god does not act, another will in their place. The gods repeated contests to Zeus' authority are prevented by Zeus with threats of force. When those are unsuccessful, and the gods manage to impact the events in a way that does not conform to Zeus' plan, he restores his plan to follow its intended course. Zeus supervises the gods, dispensing tasks for the gods to complete that contribute to the fulfilment of his plan that works in accordance with fate. He sets an example for the gods by not altering what is fated, even allowing the

death of his son to occur, so that no other god would follow suit and rescue their own, which would result in chaos unfolding amongst the gods. A simple solution cannot be provided to solve moira's limitation of relying on imperfect enforcers, the gods, to assist in maintaining the course of fate cannot be solved; however, the sheer number of gods tasked with enforcing fixed events deems the possibility of fated events being altered as unlikely.

My second aim was to understand how the poet utilised fate and the gods to test the limits of the Trojan War narrative, as fixed by the traditional Trojan War myth, to present a fresh and unpredictable poem to a knowledgeable audience. He achieves this through harnessing a number of techniques that aim to build tension through suspense, and mislead the audience: by linking time with fate, using unreal conditions, utilising the gods to create tension through generating and dissolving conflict, and through misdirection. By doing so, the poet threatens to significantly alter the plot, by seeming to allow different outcomes to key events or the fates of characters, changes that would not conform to the tradition, only to retract these alternative outcomes moments later. Consequentially, the audience cannot predict with confidence the direction that the poet will take, despite knowing the general plot of the *Iliad* through the Trojan War myth.

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