



"Looking Darkly" (Upodraidwn): Reflections on Status and Decorum in Homer

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“LOOKING DARKLY” (ΥΠΟΔΡΑ ΙΔΩΝ): REFLECTIONS ON STATUS AND DECORUM IN HOMER*

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In *Iliad* 1.135–39, Agamemnon repeats his intention to compensate himself, by force if need be, for the god-decreed loss of Chryseis. His determination to mulct his charges, even those who have served him as well as Aias, Odysseus, and Achilles, does not become the benevolent “shepherd of the host” he ought to be. Achilles responds with his longest speech of their interchange (1.149–171).

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς·
“ὦ μοι, ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένε, κερδαλέον φρον. . .”

Then looking darkly at him Achilles of the swift feet spoke:
“O wrapped in shamelessness, with your mind forever on profit. . .”
(1.148–49)¹

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¹ Greek citations are from the OCT editions of the *Iliad*, ed. D. B. Monro and T. W. Allen (Oxford 1920³) and the *Odyssey*, ed. T. W. Allen (Oxford 1917–19²). Translations are from Richmond Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago 1951) and *The Odyssey of Homer* (New York 1965).

Lattimore quite consistently translates ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν by “look(ing) darkly.” Other translators have “glower,” “glare” (A. Cook); “frown,” “scowl,” “regard with frowning brows,” “glare under brows,” “frown and eye under brows” (R. Fitzgerald); “grimly frowning,” “eye grimly,” “with a grim glance,” “with scowling face,” “with a grim scowl” (W. Shewring). Pope, when he chooses to render the phrase, sometimes catches exactly the right nuance with his varied and more expansive versions: “frowning stern” (*Iliad* 1.193 = 1.148), “With Indignation sparkling in his Eyes/ He views the Wretch, and sternly thus replies” (2.304–5 = 2.245), “Hektor with Disdain return’d:/ (Fierce as he spoke, his Eyes with Fury burn’d)” (12.267–68 = 12.230), “with fixt Resentment ey’d” (17.187 = 17.169), “fix’d with stern Disdain” (18.333 = 18.284).

In particular, he sees his commander's greedy-mindedness² as a glaring breach of form, since the Achaians have enlisted to retrieve Menelaos' wife and thereby to win honor for the Atreidai (1.158–60), as well as to gain a fair share of booty for themselves. Now Agamemnon has the gall to threaten to deprive one of them of his rightful prize. Later (1.225), Achilles indignantly calls him "drunken,"³ implying that only a man of diminished capacities could so ignore his social responsibilities. Agamemnon's words lack sobriety. But here Achilles goes on to assert that he has been inadequately remunerated for his services all along⁴ and that he will withhold those services rather than endure dishonor while Agamemnon accumulates wealth at his men's expense (1.170–71). Shortly thereafter, bloodshed is narrowly averted by the intervention of Athene.

Here in the middle of this fateful altercation between Achilles and Agamemnon is the first appearance of the *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* formula. It is used of a man whose intense feelings of indignation and resentment burst forth in words and almost in violent actions of momentous consequence for the Greek forces. Achilles feels that he is being wronged, treated indecorously by one who should have spoken and behaved better. By the decision he announces here, Agamemnon has invalidated the social compact upon which orderly relations among men in the heroic community are predicated,⁵ and Achilles is alerting him to his indecorum. He does this by his words, of course, but also by his facial expression.

I believe that Homer attributes the gesture denoted by *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* to his characters according to a quite distinctive pattern of environment and connotation and that, as a result, the formula comes in the course of

² Although Walter Leaf and M. A. Bayfield, edd., *The Iliad of Homer*, vol. 1 (London 1895) ad loc., say of *κερδαλεόφρων* "rather 'crafty' than greedy," Lattimore's "mind forever on profit" is confirmed by Achilles' use of the term *φιλοκτεανώτατε* shortly before (1.122); cf. R. J. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* (London 1924; rpt. Norman, Okla. 1963) s.v. *κερδαλεόφρων*: "Cunning of heart, wily . . . or here perh. rather, greedy, self-seeking." W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme* (Oxford 1963²; rpt. Ann Arbor 1968) 249 note 21, well observes that "*κέρδος* is another of Homer's ethically ambiguous terms. It varies in meaning from 'good counsels, plans' to 'artful, self-seeking devices,' hence 'gains, profits.'"

³ Plato, *Republic* 389E, includes *Il.* 1.225 among the *νεανιεύματα ἰδιωτῶν εἰς ἄρχοντας* to be expurgated from the poets as conducive to lapses of *σωφροσύνη* in his just society. This is to overlook the larger context, for Achilles is no neophyte lacking experience in the forms of well-ordered social interaction; rather he seeks to remind Agamemnon of just such forms.

⁴ One gathers that Achilles has felt a long-standing resentment over this issue; see E. T. Owen, *The Story of the Iliad* (Toronto 1946; rpt. Ann Arbor 1966) 7, and Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 52–53.

⁵ Cf. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley 1971) 26: "Agamemnon has neglected an obligation implicit in his whole relation to the partners in the expedition, that he will respect the *timē* of his subordinates"; see also C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) 184.

the epic to arouse definite expectations. My intention is to examine every instance of the formula,⁶ with special attention to the *Iliad*, in order to expose this pattern.⁷

At the outset we may say, on the basis of *Iliad* 1.148, that *ὑπόδρα*

⁶ The formula *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* occurs in speech-introduction verses twenty-six times in the Homeric poems. (Elsewhere only in *h.Bacch.* 48, Dionysos to pirates who mistreat him, and *Scutum* 445, Athene to Ares—both instances consistent with my findings about Homeric usage. A related adverb, *ὑποδράξ*, appears in Callimachus and Nicander.) The following pattern accounts for twenty of the twenty-six occurrences:

$\left. \begin{array}{l} τὸν \\ τὴν \\ τοὺς \end{array} \right\}$	$\delta' \alpha\rho' \text{ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς \\ πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς \\ κρατερὸς Διομήδης \\ νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς \\ κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ \end{array} \right.$
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The six others are as follows:

$\left. \begin{array}{l} καί μιν \\ \text{"Ἑκτορ"} \end{array} \right\} \text{ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν χαλεπῶ ἠνίπαπε μύθο}$
καί μιν ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν ἔπεια πτερόεντα προσηύδα (2X)
δεινὰ δ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν Ἑρην πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν
**Η, καὶ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσεφώνεεν Ἑκτορα δῖον*

The phrase is metrically interchangeable with such others as:

$\left. \begin{array}{l} τὸν δὲ χολωσαμένη \\ τὸν δὲ μέγ' ὀχθήσας \\ τὸν καὶ νεικείων \\ τοῖς δὲ δολοφρονέων \end{array} \right\} \text{ προσέφη (μετέφη) . . .}$

Cf. Mark Edwards, "Homeric Speech Introductions," *HSCP* 74 (1970) 7–8. It may well be that these other options for the metrical slot are also selected according to some consistent pattern; I have isolated *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* because it falls into the category of meaningful, mutually understood statements between individuals. Like the others, it reveals something about the speaker's mental state, but unlike them it also describes an act of communication, an identifiable and significant gesture.

⁷ There is much relevant material, which I will try to bring to bear, in the findings of modern students of nonverbal communication. There is an extensive scholarly literature in the field; two good introductory books are Michael Argyle, *Bodily Communication* (London 1975) and Robert G. Harper et al., *Nonverbal Communication: The State of the Art* (New York 1978), both with comprehensive bibliographies. Especially valuable and thought-provoking for the student of Homer is the work of Erving Goffman: see particularly his essays "On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction," *Psychiatry* 18 (1955) 213–31 and "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956) 473–502, both reprinted in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (Garden City, N.Y. 1967) 5–45 and 47–95.

In classical scholarship, studies of gesture have mostly been devoted to inventory and classification and have concentrated on art: see e.g. Gerhard Neumann, *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin 1965) and the bibliography in *Der kleine Pauly* 2.707–8, s.v. "Gebärden." Still useful as a compendium of source citations is Karl Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer* (Leipzig 1890). A promising recent development is the discussion of gesture in Greek tragedy in such works as Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Berkeley 1978) and Donald Mastronarde, *Contact and Discontinuity: Some Conventions of Speech and Action on the Greek Tragic Stage*, U. Cal. Pub. Class. Stud. 21 (Berkeley 1979).

ἰδών conveys anger on the part of a speaker who takes umbrage at what he judges to be rude or inconsiderate words spoken by the addressee. A clearly understood set of procedural rules governs human relations on all levels of society in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Homer's people expect that their claims to position will be respected; disappointment of those expectations calls forth verbal and sometimes nonverbal chastisement. We will see that dark looks signal irritation and resentment and are meant to stop short an offender against social decorum.⁸

* * *

Of the twelve times in the *Iliad* that the formula ὑπόδρα ἰδών is not used of Achilles, it prefaces a speech by a superior to a subordinate (or overmatched opponent) eight times. Of such usages, the Thersites incident is perhaps most marked in its features.

As has often been observed, Thersites, in *Iliad* 2.225–42, says nearly what Achilles had during his tirade in Book 1—but Thersites is not Achilles. To address the commander of the Greek army as he does, whether or not he speaks the truth, is undiplomatic and intolerable because of the disparity in standing between the two men. As his physical appearance is repugnant (2.216–19), so his words are “ugly” as well. Homer calls him “unmeasured in speech” (2.212); his words are “out of order” (2.213, 214), in large part because they emanate from a cheeky subordinate.⁹ Outraged, Odysseus deals with him swiftly and firmly: not

⁸ On expressive eyebrows in Homer and elsewhere, see W. B. Stanford, ed., *The Odyssey of Homer* (London 1959²) at 9.468. The actual facial expression signified by ὑπόδρα ἰδών is quite unmistakable: “looking (out) from beneath (scil. beetling or knit) brows.” Etymologically, the adverb ὑπόδρα appears to originate from ὑπό + δρακ and to be related to ὑποδέρκομαι—see Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2 (Heidelberg 1973) s.v. ὑπόδρα: “von unten her blickend, mit einem Blick von unten”; and Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: Histoire des mots* (Paris 1968–80) s.v. Cf. ὑποβλέπω—Eustathius 59.2 glosses ὑπόδρα by ὑποβλεπτικῶς.

On the distinctiveness of this positioning of the brows as a universally recognized sign of anger, see the chapter on “Facial Expression” in Argyle (above, note 7) 211–28 with pls. 10 and 11 and fig. 11.1. In regard to the general perception of lowered brows as a “social dominance gesture” that may have a phylogenetic basis, see the findings in Caroline F. Keating et al., “Facial Gestures which Influence the Perception of Status,” *Sociometry* 40 (1977) 374–78.

⁹ Thersites has long been seen in modern criticism as “the first democratic agitator in our literature” (J. T. Sheppard’s phrase in *The Pattern of the Iliad* [London 1922] 30), but see the strictures of A. Feldman, “The Apotheosis of Thersites,” *CJ* 42 (1947) 219–21. Eddie R. Lowry, Jr. proposes an interesting redefinition of the epithet αἰσχιστος (*Il.* 2.216) in *Thersites: A Study in Comic-Shame*, diss. Harvard 1980 (summary in *HSCP* 85 [1981] 309–11). See, in general, the provocative discussion of Thersites as “blame poet” in Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore 1979) 259–64.

condescending to answer Thersites' criticisms,¹⁰ he looks darkly and tells him that, though he is clear-voiced, his words are ill-judged because he, meanest of men, has had the effrontery to argue with his betters (2.245–49). Odysseus then bludgeons him with the scepter, to the delight and applause of those present. The tactless upstart has been put properly in his place. Awake to the larger matter at issue in the encounter, Odysseus has aggressively insisted on his (and Agamemnon's) dominant status in the social hierarchy.¹¹ He does this by his words, his actions, and his bearing, including his facial expression.¹²

It will not be surprising then to find other senior officers looking darkly while disciplining subordinates who have spoken out of turn or discourteously. Thus, when during Agamemnon's *epipoleis* Sthenelos bridles at the commander's taunting of Diomedes and speaks up for his lord,¹³ Diomedes does not appreciate his retainer's pluck and, looking

¹⁰ Cf. H. D. Rankin, "Thersites the Malcontent," *SO* 47 (1972) 44: "Only within a strictly aristocratic and military context can Odysseus' treatment of Thersites be held to be excusable, let alone just. . . . His silence is that of a βασιλεύς who does not deign to reply in detail to a commoner. . . ."

¹¹ Because of his disguise in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is the target of considerable unprovoked insolence from low-bred persons. In Book 18, the public beggar Iros, like Thersites aping Achilles, insults Odysseus in language very like that used by Antinoös in Book 17. (Cf. esp. 18.10–12 and 17.478–80; on other similarities, see Daniel B. Levine, "*Odyssey* 18: Iros as Paradigm for the Suitors," *CJ* 77 [1982] 200–204.) As he had with Thersites, so here Odysseus uses the dark look (18.14) and settles matters with a hard knock, again to the delight of onlookers (18.99–100). But he indulges his pent-up frustration only so far as to maim the beggar, since he fears to tip his hand by killing him outright (18.90–94). The sense here is of anger barely controlled.

Somewhat later, Melantho's impudence demands of Odysseus almost superhuman acts of self-repression. First, she berates him for a boldness of speech among his betters which she, like Eurymachos after her, puts down to drink, stupidity, or overconfidence (18.331–33). Odysseus trains the dark look on her and threatens her in alarmingly concise and graphic terms (18.337–39), calling her "dog"—the same word Achilles uses in reviling and looking darkly at Hektor in the *Iliad* (20.449, 22.345; cf. 1.225). The women sense deadly sincerity in the man's manner and words and are properly flustered (18.340–42). By incongruously adopting a facial expression used mostly by superiors in dealing with inferiors, Odysseus risks a certain disruption in his staging of the beggar's character (see Griffin [above, note 4] 29).

In *Odyssey* 19.65 ff., Melantho complains of the beggar's remaining in the house; one can well imagine that, after their earlier run-in, she is rather unnerved by his presence. Odysseus looks darkly (19.70), rehearses the code of *xenia* (19.73–77), and warns that the day of reckoning may be near (19.81–88). Penelope continues the dressing-down, calling her a "shameless dog" (19.82: *κύν ἄδελός*). All this anticipates the bad end to which the faithless serving women come in Book 22.

¹² Cf. Keating et al. (above, note 8) 376–77: "For each of the 12 models who varied brow position, greater proportions of observers judged the model as dominant when the model displayed lowered brows rather than raised brows. . . . Observers were quite reliably influenced by brow position . . . when making attributions of social status."

¹³ Sthenelos, though no mere lackey (his father, Kapaneus, like Diomedes' father, Tydeus, had been one of the Seven), is obviously beneath Diomedes in station. See, in this

darkly, reprimands him (4.411–18). He does so because Sthenelos has failed to recognize that Agamemnon is simply exercising a perquisite of the supreme commander,¹⁴ that of igniting the spirit of his warriors by casting aspersions which, outside the confines of this highly artificial, pre-combat ritual, would be inexcusable (see 4.412–14 in particular). Context is everything: naively supposing Agamemnon's derision to be in earnest, Sthenelos has reacted improperly, if stoutheartedly, and his immediate superior promptly disabuses him, thus sparing Agamemnon the distastefulness of having to reprove this outspokenly loyal squire. As in the case of Thersites, the words of Sthenelos are not in themselves objectionable but are uncalled for in the present situation. Sthenelos must be apprised of certain ceremonial routines of interaction that supersede those operative in ordinary circumstances.

During his *aristeia* in Book 5, Diomedes must scold this same *ἐραῖρος* for defeatist remarks. The bravado of Sthenelos' rejoinder to Agamemnon in Book 4 has vanished in the face of the onslaught of two seemingly formidable Trojan opponents—Aineias and Pandaros. Sthenelos counsels flight and Diomedes, of course, looks darkly and rejects the advice (5.251–58); the latter, in the full flush of his success, is already thinking of the horses of Aineias, which will be his after he has disposed of their present owner (5.259–73). Diomedes has special reason to scowl at Sthenelos here, just because of the latter's previous declarations of his valor. He prefers to discredit Agamemnon's disparagements by actions and not by empty words. Talk is cheap: Sthenelos' present lack of resolve is the more unseemly for his earlier blustering indiscipline.

On the Trojan side, Hektor too must contend with what he considers to be defeatist or, at any rate, discouraging sentiments in a fellow-warrior. Poulydamas is perhaps more a *secundus inter pares* (see 11.56 ff.) than an actual subordinate to Hektor—"status-inferior" may be a more correct designation; in any event, his cautionary advice is, certainly to Hektor's thinking, unheroic and is dismissed as such.¹⁵ Poulydamas' unfavorable interpretation of the bird sign that occurs as the Trojans are about to breach the Achaian wall in Book 12 draws a dark look and a stinging retort from Hektor (12.230–50). At this moment of imminent and supreme triumph, he will not tolerate hesitation or pessimism. Poulydamas' concern for the

regard, Moses Finley's discussion of retainership in *The World of Odysseus* (New York 1978²) 103–4.

¹⁴ Although, as we see in *Il.* 9.32 ff., the words do hit home and are remembered.

¹⁵ Cf. Malcolm M. Willcock, *A Companion to the Iliad* (Chicago 1976) at 11.57–60: "Poulydamas . . . is in a sense Hektor's double, whose main function in the *Iliad* is to give Hektor good but unheroic advice"; see also James M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago 1975) 143: "he functions as Hector's *alter ego*, the voice in his ear of warning or restraint"; and pp. 143–53 on the relation between the two characters in general.

omen, though genuine and prudent, seems cowardly to Hektor, who rejects out of hand the unsatisfactory reading of the sign. In a justly famous line, he declares:

εἰς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.

One bird sign is best: to fight in defence of our country. (12.243)

He concludes by chiding Poulydamas in a fashion reminiscent of Agamemnon’s marshaling in Book 4 (12.244–50). The line between caution and cowardice is thin and sometimes, as to Hektor here, quite imperceptible.

Hektor does not try to refute Poulydamas’ interpretation of the omen by offering one of his own, other than the blanket statement in 12.243. As with Thersites, a man has spoken an unpleasant truth and wounded certain sensibilities in the process. Poulydamas (whose seercraft is subsequently vindicated) is, quite literally, browbeaten by his superior. Hektor in *Iliad* 12, like Odysseus in Book 2, reacts as he does partly from indignation that Poulydamas could say such a thing at such a time, partly from the frustration of being unable to offer a reasoned rebuttal. Both men seek to restore propriety by means of intimidation.

Poulydamas’ role as ill-endured brake on Hektor’s *χάρμη* is made still clearer in *Iliad* 18. After Achilleus has shown himself at the ditch and screamed his war-cry, the sensible and circumspect Poulydamas comes forward to advise withdrawal inside the walls of the city (18.254–83). Homer prefaces this speech with a comment on the difference in character between the two Trojans:

“Εκτορι δ’ ἦεν ἑταῖρος, ἱῆ δ’ ἐν νυκτὶ γένοντο,
ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἄρ’ μύθοισιν, ὁ δ’ ἔγχει πολλὸν ἐνίκα.

He was companion to Hektor, and born on the same night with him,
but he was better in words, the other with the spear far better.

(18.251–52)

Hektor, the man of action, will not brook Poulydamas’ counsel of retreat. Looking darkly at him (18.284), he affirms his determination to have it out with the Achaians; he for his part has had enough of being pent up in the city (18.305–9). This is, to be sure, a fatal error, as Homer makes explicit,¹⁶ but it is a sentiment that wins the applause of the other Trojans because it is heroic.

Somewhat different from the exchanges between Hektor and Poulydamas is that between Hektor and Glaukos in *Iliad* 17. Each man has occasion to look darkly at the other. The formula *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* in 17.141 introduces the speech in which Glaukos complains of Hektor’s not having

¹⁶ *Il.* 18.310–13; on which, see Redfield (above, note 15) 150–53.

either retrieved the body of Sarpedon or captured the body of Patroklos, which might have been traded for that of the Lykian champion (17.142–68). Glaukos, like Achilles in Book 1, feels slighted and for much the same reason (note that 9.316–17 = 17.147–48): though they have no grievance against the Achaians, the Lykians have nonetheless fought in the foremost ranks. Now they are being denied the due recognition entailed in proper burial of the most illustrious of their war dead. (The Trojans, of course, know nothing of the special handling Zeus has secured for Sarpedon's corpse.) Glaukos, therefore, again like Achilles, threatens to leave and concludes by doubting Hektor's abilities as a fighter in general.

Glaukos here looks darkly out of frustration at his inability to honor the request of his dying lord (16.492–501) and vexation at Hektor's ineffectual efforts to help him to do so. Thus, though a status-inferior, he adopts a facial expression of superior disapproval of an infraction of the tacit arrangements of the Lykian–Trojan alliance. Momentarily *déclassé*, Hektor has lost his usual eminence within the heroic society. The Lykians are in fact owed the effort, however great and perilous, to secure for them the commendation of burial of their dead with honors.

Hektor, in answering Glaukos' charges, looks darkly (17.169) because an inferior has addressed him in a disrespectful manner, but also because Glaukos has, like Thersites and Poulydamas, spoken a home-truth and seized a real, if temporary, advantage in status. Hektor, normally the paragon of heroic decorum, has defaulted in the matter of Sarpedon. His obligation to satisfy the Lykians is urgent because of the loss of face he will otherwise suffer and perhaps because of political considerations as well.¹⁷ In honor bound to make good here, Hektor does his level best: the subsequent fighting over the fallen body of Patroklos is as fierce as any in the *Iliad* and ends only with the war-cry of Achilles and nightfall in Book 18. That Hektor appreciates the justice of Glaukos' claims is further indicated by the brevity and relative mildness of his reply in lines 170–82; he is reduced to saying "wait and see, I have not yet given up."

In Dolon in Book 10 we have a different case: an enemy (rather than *ἑταῖρος*) far inferior in stature to the two Greeks into whose hands he haplessly falls. Like Thersites, he is ugly (10.316), and his motives for undertaking the night expedition are base: personal gain in the form of the horses and chariot of Achilles, promised by Hektor. In short, Dolon is *κερδαλέοφρων*. His conduct, once he is caught, is thoroughly craven,

¹⁷ If the Lykians withdraw, the whole city of Troy will be imperiled; cf. Redfield (above, note 15) 153: "We understand why the poet puts such weight on Sarpedon's complaint to Hector in Book Five (Il. 472–92) and Glaucus' complaint in Book Seventeen (Il. 142–68). Hector's greatest strategic problem, like Agamemnon's, is that of keeping his allies in the field."

and Diomedes deals with him accordingly. Looking darkly (10.446) at this pusillanimous skulk, he coolly explains to Dolon the expediency of killing him and forthwith beheads him (10.447–57).¹⁸ In a near parody of standard battlefield practice, Diomedes and Odysseus strip their man of his “armor,” his skin cap and his wolf pelt, his spear and bow,¹⁹ and dedicate this paltry panoply to Athene. By his unsoldierliness, Dolon forfeits any claim to decent treatment. The contempt conveyed by Diomedes’ daunting facial aspect is enacted in the following decapitation, a seemly end for an unseemly man.²⁰ Ὑπόδρα ἰδών is here succeeded by an act of hideous violence rather than by mere words or the cuff on the ear dispensed to Thersites.

The only god in either epic who looks darkly is Zeus himself:

Τὸν δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς·
 “μη τί μοι, ἄλλοπρόσαλλε, παρεζόμενος μινύριξε.
 ἔχθιστος δέ μοι ἔσσι θεῶν οἱ” Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν.”

Then looking at him darkly Zeus who gathers the clouds spoke to him:

“Do not sit beside me and whine, you double-faced liar.

To me you are the most hateful of all gods who hold Olympos.”

(5.888–90)

¹⁸ Friedrich Eichhorn, *Die Dolonie* (Garmisch-Partenkirchen 1973) 14: “Hat Dolon gehofft, durch seine Enthüllungen den Tod von sich abzuwenden, so beschwört er ihn durch sie gerade herauf. Schon des Diomedes finsterer Blick (X.446: ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν) lässt uns nichts Gutes für ihn ahnen. Liegt doch darin die ganze Verachtung, die Diomedes gegen Dolon wegen seines überheblichen Verlangens nach Achills Rossen und wegen des erbärmlichen Verrates an den Seinen empfindet.”

¹⁹ In the *Iliad*, preeminently the weapon of lesser men. G. S. Kirk, “War and the Warrior in the Homeric Poems,” in Jean-Pierre Vernant, ed., *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1968) 113 = *Homer and the Oral Tradition* (Cambridge 1976) 63, sees “one effect of cultural stratification in the text of Homer” in the fact that “named archers are few and for the most part outsiders in one sense or another—Pandarus and Paris among the Trojans, the bastard Teukros among the Achaeans”; cf. W. B. Stanford (above, note 2) 71. Nor in the *Iliad* is Odysseus any exception: the great weapon of the *Odyssey* is left in Ithaca, and the bow he carries in *Iliad* 10 belongs to Meriones (10.260).

²⁰ Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (Oxford 1934⁴) 128–29, includes decapitation among the “shameful deeds” that had been carefully expurgated by Homer: the heroes only threaten “to cut off one another’s heads,” though they “sometimes in hot blood actually do so (e.g. Λ 147, Ν 202 ff.).” This overlooks Dolon here in *Il.* 10 and Leodes in *Od.* 22.320 ff.: both are killed *in cold blood* and, significantly, both are riveted with the dark look. See further Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979) 236 note 30 with fig. 24 on p. 107.

In *Odyssey* 22.320, Odysseus looks darkly before beheading his “enemy,” wheedling Leodes, who tries to shirk responsibility for his actions by blaming others (the suitors, 22.314 ff.), just as Dolon had blamed Hektor (*Il.* 10.391 ff.). These two miscreants also have in common an indecent incongruity between their own merit and that of the prizes they covet. They are guilty of impropriety in their aspirations and in their apologies.

There is something intensely irksome in the sight of the ruffian Ares who, having had his face bloodied for him, cannot abide by the outcome of a fair fight. Wounded and whimpering, Ares has cried foul to Zeus, maligning his father's favorite, Athene (5.872–87). The chief irritant in the situation, the thing that draws Zeus' withering facial and verbal expression of disapprobation, is the lack of decorum. If Ares is going to play the bully, he had better be prepared to accept the consequences with a good grace and not embarrass himself or Zeus.

In *Iliad* 15, after Zeus awakens from his artificially induced sleep, the god looks darkly at Hera, rebukes her for interfering with his plans, and forcefully reminds her that she is inferior to him (15.13–33). Her behavior in the *Δὺς ἀπάτη* has been presumptuous in the extreme; Zeus recalls to her the "punishment of Hera" after an earlier domestic unhappiness. Need he repeat that brutal act of physical domination?²¹ Duly frightened, Hera quickly offers an (evasive) explanation and the awkward moment passes (15.34–47), as Zeus' scowl is replaced by a smile. However, the potential gravity of the situation has been intimated by the *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* formula, as we remember previous instances when the phrase presaged violence, actual or barely suppressed. Such earlier uses now begin to lend an incremental effect to the formula's suggestive force.

In two Iliadic instances, both involving Odysseus and Agamemnon, we find an individual looking darkly at a man admittedly his superior. The first is during the *epipoleis* in Book 4. Agamemnon rebukes Menes-theus and Odysseus (4.338–48), anticipating the famous speech of Sarpedon in Book 12: these men enjoy the sumptuous feasts of princes; now, by the dictates of *noblesse oblige*, they should fight among the foremost. But Agamemnon artlessly attributes Odysseus' apparent lack of enthusiasm to caginess, even employing that incendiary word *κερδαλεόφρων*.²²

καὶ σὺ, κακοῖσι δόλοισι κεκασμένε, κερδαλεόφρων.

you with your mind forever on profit and your ways of treachery.

(4.339)

As we have seen, the charge of greed or, more broadly, of self-interest is most offensive to the heroic mentality. Odysseus, unlike Diomedes earlier, shows his displeasure at the insult by word and by gesture:

²¹ Cf. Aeschylus, *Eum.* 824–29, where Athene plays the trump card of superior force in her negotiations with the Furies.

²² Stanford (above, note 2) 18: "It was a peculiarly indiscreet and intemperate outburst on Agamemnon's part, especially after Odysseus' valuable service to the Greek cause in handling the crisis caused by Agamemnon's own folly in Book Two." Agamemnon's behavior has recently been diagnosed as symptomatic of an anxiety neurosis: Jennifer T. Roberts, "Portrait of a Neurosis: Agamemnon in Book IV of the *Iliad*," *CO* 59 (1981–82) 35.

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς·
 “Ἄτρεΐδῃ, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων;
 πῶς δὴ φῆς. . .”

Then looking at him darkly resourceful Odysseus spoke to him:
 “What is this word that broke through the fence of your teeth,
 Atreides?
 How can you say. . .” (4.349–51)

Agamemnon laughs—nervously, I think—and takes back what he has said. He realizes that he has unworthily caused a severe hurt to Odysseus’ self-esteem, even granting the license that prevails in the present context of specialized raillery.²³ He has temporarily ceded an effective moral advantage to Odysseus, who presses that advantage in his speech and bearing. Agamemnon has been exposed to the same dark look once before and will not have forgotten the strength of feeling it betokens.

ἀλλ' ἴθι, ταῦτα δ' ὀπισθεν ἀρεσσόμεθ', εἴ τι κακὸν νῦν
 εἴρηται, τὰ δὲ πάντα θεοὶ μεταμῶνια θεῖεν.

Come now, I will make it good hereafter, if anything evil
 has been said; let the gods make all this come to nothing. (4.362–63)

Odysseus’ menacing countenance has reinforced his words in eliciting such a deferential retraction.²⁴

In *Iliad* 14, after the Achaian wall has been pierced and things are going very badly (before Hera and Poseidon intervene), Agamemnon suggests flight (14.65–81). Odysseus, whose fighting spirit had been doubted by Agamemnon in Book 4, now scolds his commander for his demoralizing sentiments;²⁵ once already, in Book 2, Odysseus has had to

²³ See above, p. 6.

²⁴ In *Odyssey* 8, Euryalos too will choose to eat his ill-considered words. After Odysseus declines an invitation to participate in his hosts’ contests, this blunt young Phaiakian twits him with the unwelcome observation that he looks not like an athlete but like a merchant, “grasping for profits” (8.159–64). Odysseus looks darkly (8.165) and pronounces Euryalos’ words “not well spoken,” lacking in grace, and “out of order.” The imputation of concern for profit is, as seen in the *Iliad*, especially insulting. (Interestingly, as M. M. Austin and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece: An Introduction*, trans. and rev. M. M. Austin [Berkeley 1977] 44, well remark, though “the Phaeacians were maritime people *par excellence* . . . , they rejected commerce, and it was precisely in Phaeacia that Odysseus suffered the supreme insult of being accused of being a trader, mindful of his wares and his profit. . . .”) Thus spurred to action, Odysseus shows his athletic prowess with a record-shattering discus throw. Alkinoös thereupon apologizes for Euryalos’ gaffe; later, the young man himself expresses the hope that his ill-advised taunt will not have been taken to heart (8.408–9). The dark look and decisive action in the face of reckless inhospitality that we see in this episode will be replicated with terrific savagery at Ithaca.

²⁵ Cf. I. M. Hohendahl-Zoetelief, *Manners in the Homeric Epic*, Mnem. Suppl. 63 (Leiden 1980) 43: “Odysseus swears at him (οὐλόμενε!), blames him repeatedly, declares his contempt and tops all this off with the sarcastic—if not downright cynical—ὄρχαμε λαῶν.”

undo the harmful effect on the army of a premature offer of discharge by Agamemnon.

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς·
 “Ἀτρείδη, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων·
 οὐλόμεν', αἶθ' ὥφελλες ἀικελίου στρατοῦ ἄλλου
 σημαίνειν, μηδ' ἄμμιν ἀνασσεμέν. . .”

Then looking darkly at him spoke resourceful Odysseus:
 “Son of Atreus, what sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier?²⁶
 Ruinous! I wish you directed some other unworthy
 army, and were not lord over us. . .” (14.82–85)

The disparity between Agamemnon's disgraceful suggestion and the nobility of his army exasperates Odysseus. He puts into words the feeling communicated by his dark look:

νῦν δέ σευ ὠνοσάμην πάγχυ φρένας, οἶον ἔειπες.

Now I utterly despise your heart for the thing you have spoken.²⁷
 (14.95)

Odysseus is often subjected to unwarranted denigration in the *Odyssey*, by faithless serving folk and particularly by the suitors. Antinoös and Eurymachos are the most harsh in their treatment of him. In *Odyssey* 17.445 ff., Antinoös, reluctant even to admit the beggar into the house, looks darkly (17.459), abuses him for speaking (to his mind) impolitely, and hits him with a footstool. Even his fellow suitors recoil at so flagrant a violation of *xenia* (17.481–87). Antinoös ignores their protests because he is confident that he is dealing with a man vastly his inferior, a man who may thus be ill-used with impunity. So also, in *Odyssey* 18, Eurymachos scoffs at what he believes to be the beggar's unwillingness to work for his daily bread. Odysseus answers that he can work (and fight)²⁸ with the best, that Eurymachos is insolent, and that things would be different were Odysseus there (18.384–86). Eurymachos looks darkly (18.388) and reproaches the beggar for his brazenness, guessing that wine or imbecility or his sorry victory over Iros (earlier in Book 18) has emboldened him to speak as he does (18.389–93). He then has recourse to the footstool, but his aim is bad and a cupbearer is sent

²⁶ This long formula appears only twice in the *Iliad* (six times in the *Odyssey*)—here at 14.83 and earlier at 4.350. In both places, Odysseus is the speaker and has looked darkly in the immediately preceding verse, angered by Agamemnon's omission to observe the restraints that ensure orderly social intercourse.

²⁷ The same line occurs in Hektor's response to Glaukos in 17.173, again, just after the *ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν* formula (17.169)—see above, p. 8.

²⁸ This rather odd additional assertion of his *fighting* ability is reminiscent of the tense moment during the *epipoleis* in *Il.* 4 and, of course, adumbrates the bloody denouement of *Od.* 22.

sprawling. The other suitors again regret the crude behavior (18.401–4), but do not reprove Eurymachos as they had Antinoös; one gathers they now support the measures taken to put this impertinent boor in his place.

The irony of the situation is great in both cases. Odysseus, in reality the master of the house, the person of highest social standing, is subjected to shocking acts of indecorum by inferiors who put themselves beyond the pale by their transgressions of the guest–host code, which prescribes the observance of deference obligations to the stranger regardless of his apparent social standing (as the suitors well know: see 17.483–87 and 20.324). This contributes to the atmosphere of the social world-upside-down at Ithaca.

Thus, when Odysseus does finally act to redress the balance, he looks darkly no less than three times in some three hundred lines: 22.34, 60, 320.²⁹ But now the powerful impulses outwardly portended by his aspect are detonated, since he need no longer check himself from retaliating or adopting for all to see the demeanor of the master. His dark looks are, however, accompanied by missiles more lethal than footstools.

In *Odyssey* 22.27–30, Odysseus is denounced by the suitors for the slaying of Antinoös, whom they call “far the best” of the youth of Ithaca; that is, they are indignant not only at the killing itself, but also at the disparity of station between their comrade and the wretch who has caused his death. In triumph, Odysseus looks darkly (22.34) and addresses his enemies (as Achilles addresses Hektor in *Iliad* 22) as dogs (22.35). He will show them who is “far the best” in Ithaca. The spectacular reversal of status at the beginning of Book 22 is signified by Odysseus’ stripping off his rags, by his seizing a superior position in the room “atop the great threshold,” and here by his open use of the gesture of lowered brows.

After the suitors have begun to realize that this is in fact Odysseus, Eurymachos spinelessly shunts off responsibility onto dead Antinoös (praised only twenty lines before) and, inconsequently, proposes compensation (22.48–59). Odysseus again looks darkly (22.60), knowing that all the suitors are culpable; the offer of restitution only depreciates his righteous indignation. The price of his lacerated sensibilities will be exacted in full. The assumption in these scenes of dark looks by the man truly best of the Achaians in Ithaca is one more sign that the insufferable perversion of order, rank, and merit in the house of Odysseus is finally being rectified.

At the climax of the *Iliad*, too, we find use of the *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* formula concentrated on the central character of the epic. But there are telling discontinuities between these usages and the thirteen others that

²⁹ On this instance of the formula, see above, note 20.

have preceded in the poem—aberrancies that mark out Achilles as a special case.

The final four instances of “looking darkly” in the *Iliad* occur during Achilles’ confrontations with Hektor and with Priam. In *Iliad* 20, after killing Polydoros, Achilles first sees Hektor on the battlefield.

ἦ Η, καὶ ὑπὸδρα ἰδὼν προσεφώνεεν Ἑκτορα δῖον
“ἄσσον ἔθ’, ὥς κεν θᾶσσον ὀλέθρον πείραθ’ ἵκηται.”

He spoke, and looking darkly at brilliant Hektor spoke to him:
“Come nearer, so that sooner you may reach your appointed
destruction.”

(20.428–29)

Hektor is saved by Apollo this time (20.443–44), but the expression on Achilles’ face imparts a sense that its recipient is moving in a strong field of undischarged electricity and recalls the passage in *Iliad* 1 where Agamemnon nearly paid with his life for an offense that in retrospect seems trivial compared to the Trojan’s killing of Patroklos.

With Hektor, as with Agamemnon in Book 1, Achilles presumes his own immediate moral dominance, irrespective of permanent status, over one who has in his judgment behaved badly. But there is a critical incongruence between the two cases. For Agamemnon had in fact breached decorum; Achilles had been victimized by a man who should have shown him more consideration. Such conduct is unacceptable not just to Achilles, but to the heroic society as a whole. The same is not true of Hektor, whose only “offense” is to have killed his enemy on the battlefield. There was nothing objectively indecorous in that: it was “by the book.” But Achilles exerts sufficient force of will to effect a suspension of the values of his society and to impose his own subjective ethical viewpoint on those around him. He looks darkly at Hektor just as if the latter had committed some act of indecorum. Achilles’ deeming it so makes it so, and we feel a certain wrench as he simply presupposes his superiority to Hektor, who is, after all, something more than his status-equal.

In Book 22, when just before their duel Hektor appeals to Achilles to abide by certain (unexceptionable) ground rules regarding disposition of the loser’s corpse (22.254–59), the latter takes offense at the very notion. Hektor, the hero far the best of the Trojans, is given no more quarter than feckless Dolon. Patroklos’ death has evoked in Achilles a need for vengeance that far exceeds any such prearranged limitations. Even to suggest otherwise is an affront to Achilles in his present state of mind. It constitutes a failure by Hektor to appreciate the enormity of his “offense,” and this too is taken as a slight and is met by the significant dark look (22.260). Later, when Hektor has been defeated and entreats his enemy to grant his body honorable treatment, Achilles will have

none of it. Looking darkly (22.344), he again calls Hektor “dog” (22.345; cf. 20.449), and wishes he could bring himself to break through the bounds of heroic conduct beyond mere defilement to the dismemberment and eating of his enemy’s body.³⁰ That is, he is carried by his lust for revenge quite outside the usual constraints on heroic behavior. Achilles here and in his later mutilation of Hektor’s body shows his disdain for propriety and decorum and yet adopts the accusatory expression normally directed against just such disdain.

The final occurrence of the *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* formula in the *Iliad* is subtly appropriate to its context. In Book 24, Priam, in the course of his conversation with Achilles, expresses his impatience to ransom and behold the body of his beloved son (24.553–58). Looking darkly, Achilles cautions the old man not to stir his still unquelled anger (24.560–70). As so often with the *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* formula, this is a matter of annoyance at some unsuitable statement or act; but in what way unsuitable? Surely an offer of ransom is proper, even mandatory here, but it unfortunately also insinuates that material considerations can deflect Achilles—Achilles, who would not have exchanged Patroklos for the lives of all the Achaians and all the Trojans together (cf. 16.97–100). Priam, by assuming that mere possessions might have weight with him in such exceptional circumstances, unwittingly belittles the gravity of Achilles’ feelings and hints that he is *κερδαλέοφρων*. Achilles asserts that he has made up his own mind to return the corpse, actuated (at last) by concern for the will of the gods in the matter (24.560–67). Priam must not cheapen the act by reducing it to merely another instance of ransom,³¹ nor tempt Achilles to commit another outrage against the gods (24.569–70).

The extraordinary inversion of status obtaining during the interview in Book 24 is emphasized by several acts of nonverbal communication: Priam, the king himself, clasps the knees and kisses the hands³² of the man who has committed the most frightful injuries against him. Priam if anyone is entitled to look darkly, according to the pattern of usage established in earlier episodes where the formula appears. But it is the Achaian warrior who adopts this gesture of accusation and supremacy.

³⁰ See Vermeule (above, note 20) 94.

³¹ To be sure, Achilles will accept the ransom, but only as a formality. His own personal gain is not a concern, and he will sacrifice a proper share to dead Patroklos to ensure that this is understood. (Agamemnon in Book 9 had made a mistake similar to Priam’s here—see esp. Achilles’ response to his offer in 9.378 ff.) Plato, *Republic* 390E, misinterprets the scene in Book 24, or perhaps only anticipates possible misinterpretation, in citing it as proof that Achilles was *φιλοχρήματος*. Achilles certainly does not make ransom a condition of the release of Hektor’s body.

³² As Sittl (above, note 7) 166 points out, this gesture is typically, though not invariably, made by slaves in Homer (e.g. *Od* 16.16: Eumaios; 22.500: serving women; 24:398: Dolios).

Such is the authority conferred by the awesome martial prowess and by the wrath of Achilleus.

* * *

In both Homeric epics, to look darkly is to employ a nonverbal cue fraught with judgmental significance. The speaker, whatever his message, transmits by his facial demeanor that an infraction of propriety has occurred; he deplores the willful traducing of rules of conduct governing relations between superordinates and inferiors. In most instances, these rules are asymmetrical but equally binding in both directions: on the one hand, an individual may look darkly to reassert his own superiority and his entitlement to deference in the comportment of the addressee (*Iliad* 2.245; 4.411 [Diomedes on Agamemnon's behalf]; 5.251, 888; 10.446; 12.230; 15.13; 17.169; 18.284; *Odyssey* 8.165; 18.14, 337; 19.70; 22.34, 60, 320). On the other hand, superiors also owe definite obligations of civility and decorum to their inferiors, and failure to have regard for these may properly occasion angry remonstrances and even a temporary inversion of status (*Iliad* 1.148; 4.349; 14.82; 17.141).

In addition to these rather straightforward cases, the formula *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* is also exceptionally used to good ironic effect in scenes where an individual, erroneously thinking himself to be superior, looks darkly and thereby commits the very offense he intends to castigate—unseemly behavior vis-à-vis a superior (*Odyssey* 17.459; 18.388).

Finally, Homer uses the formula in recounting interactions in which one party—Achilleus—idiosyncratically arrogates precedence to himself with no regard for permanent social standing (*Iliad* 20.428; 22.260, 344; 24.559). This anomaly in the pattern of usage heightens our awareness of the extravagance of Achilleus' emotions and actions.

In all instances, the facial gesture *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* charges the speech it introduces with a decidedly minatory fervency and excitement: a threshold has been reached and such inflammable materials as wounded pride, righteous indignation, frustration, shame, and shock are nearing the combustion point.