

Hector and Iliad VI

Characterization through Conversations with Women

by

Erika Nicole Valdivieso

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This thesis is dedicated:

to my family

...a mi familia

...voor mijn familie

Acknowledgements

When I came to Michigan, I wanted to learn Greek in order to read Homer, and his influence on my imagination has been far-reaching. The *Iliad* has occupied my thoughts since high school, and the road to writing this thesis has been as twisted and long as would suit any Odysseus. However, before I can claim the epithet of “long-suffering,” I should acknowledge those who have been long suffering of my attempts to write this thesis. My family, friends, and my professors have all endured my countless attempts to discuss Hector with them, and I am grateful for their patience, their support, and their time. Special thanks are due to my advisor, Professor Ruth Scodel, who allowed me to develop my own thoughts about the *Iliad*. I would also like to thank Professor Richard Janko, whose enthusiastic support gave me the confidence to foray into Homeric scholarship in the first place.

Abstract

Essentially, the *Iliad* is about the war between the Achaeans and the Trojans over one woman, but neither side is characterized as completely good or completely bad. In fact, Hector, the Trojan leader, is a more sympathetic character than the great Achilles, the best of the Achaeans. Homer characterizes Hector through the speeches he shares with three women in *Iliad* VI: Hecuba, Helen, and Andromache. By examining these three conversations with the women of his family, which humanize Hector, a realistic tension between private and public life emerges as central to Hector's personality. Hector, more than any other hero, is meant to represent the thematic conflict between public and private duty, which can only be appreciated in the context of *Iliad* VI. If Hector does indeed have this thematic function, then the narrator uses private conversations to identify Hector as the most realistic hero because he has both familial and political responsibilities; thus the death of Hector represents the death of the mortal hero, of the family man-warrior overcome by the very principles he struggles to uphold. Furthermore, this tension can only be developed through the private conversations held within Troy; for Hector, at least, heroic characterization depends equally upon private and public speech acts.

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Introduction

Why Hector?

Homer's *Iliad* is the tale of the ninth year of the Trojan War, narrating events in both the Trojan city and the Achaean camp. The work is grand in its scope and remains character driven; for this reason we still discuss Achilles, Odysseus, Hector, and Paris as if they were real people. My interest in Homeric studies began when I read the *Iliad*; the vividness of the men and women within the story was surprising, especially in light of the work's age. As further study of Homeric scholarship showed, the individuality of the characters was more astounding in light of the traditional aspects of oral composition, which some scholars posited would limit the originality of the epic and the creativity of the poet. Tradition could limit the ability to create vivid characters and instead could lead to stereotypical types acting within proscribed roles. Thus my interest in characterization was born. If there was something unique about Homeric characterization, then this would explain why Homeric characters rise above the context of the Geometric period and operate under individual motivations and desires that we still can recognize and discuss today.

My interest in characterization led to research in Homeric conversation. Speech acts are important in the epic since heroes use speech to demonstrate their skill with words and to project a public identity among the other heroes. Understandably, scholarship has focused on the public arenas of speech, the battlefield and war councils, in which the heroes often participate. Yet I wondered about the private conversations of the heroes; what is the purpose of including these moments in a story about the decidedly public action of war? Could heroic attitudes in private complicate the public persona that these warriors strive to maintain? In other words, being a

hero is a public action, and there are a limited number of ways to fulfill one's heroic duty. Yet in private conversation, might not the heroes reveal their own agendas, their own struggles in fulfilling their social roles?

Although any one of the heroes could be studied for this sort of tension between public and private life, my attention turned to Hector. In comparison with Achilles, Hector seems a bit ordinary, but he is still a great warrior and a thoroughly decent man. His speeches indicate that he fights from a sense of shame and public duty; he is the consummate leader. Yet there is one moment in the *Iliad* when Hector is removed from the public arena of battle, when he goes into Troy in Book VI; this is the moment when Hector becomes a great hero. Note the paradox in this situation; only once Hector is outside of the public realm of battle does he engage an audience; his glory is as much based on his personality at home as it is upon his feats and speeches in public. In Troy he engages in three private conversations with three women of his family: his mother, his sister-in-law, and his wife. These conversations with women are also unique; no other hero engages in such a meaningful exchange with mortal women. Through these three conversations, Hector's struggle between his private and public duty emerges clearly, and in the process he becomes a character with whom the audience can sympathize.

By examining these three conversations, one for each chapter, we will examine what they reveal about Hector's character, about the relation between his private life and his public life. At the same time, these conversations should also tell us something about Homeric characterization; these moments are included for a reason, and we should try to think about why a war hero is sent into his city to converse with the women of his family. Women, unlike the heroes, have almost no public speech acts, aside from lamentation. Therefore, it is unusual for them to play a role in characterizing a hero since they cannot engage in the public speech acts that heroes engage in

regularly. Our analysis will also cover what the unheroic can contribute to our understanding of the heroic persona, and for no character is this more important than for Hector.

The characters of Homer's *Iliad*, both male and female, continue to capture the imagination of modern readers. In particular, Hector engages the reader because he is more sympathetic than the rest of the heroes. Yet based on the story, the audience is pre-disposed to dislike the Trojans; after all, the war began because Paris, a Trojan, stole the wife of Menelaus, an Achaean. Achilles is the best of the Achaeans, and the epic emphasizes the importance of his wrath: "Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος" *Sing to me goddess of the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus* (I.1). Though the wrath of Achilles is initially directed against Agamemnon, Achilles works out that anger and brings it to completion after he murders Hector. Thus Achilles and Hector exist in relation to one another, each representing the best of the Achaeans and the best of the Trojans, respectively. Achilles, by right of his divine birth and extraordinary talent, deserves this title. Yet Hector fails to live up to the expectations of those around him, and his status as a hero would be in jeopardy,¹ were it not for Homer's skillful characterization. Through conversations with women, Homer makes Hector the quintessential mortal hero, who must negotiate the demands of his family, his city, and himself.

Theoretical Assumptions

Homer characterizes Hector through the speeches he shares with three women in *Iliad* VI: Hecuba, Helen, and Andromache. By examining these three conversations with the women

¹ Lattimore discusses this in the introduction to the *Iliad*: "Homer's Hector, who brags outrageously, who sometimes hangs back when the going is worst, who bolts from Achilles, is still the hero who forever captures the affection and admiration of the modern reader, far more strongly than his conqueror has ever done" (36-37).

of his family, which humanize Hector, a realistic tension between private and public life emerges as central to Hector's personality. Hector, more than any other hero, is meant to represent the thematic conflict between public and private duty, which can only be appreciated in the context of *Iliad* VI. The narrator uses private conversations to identify Hector as the most realistic hero because he has both familial and political responsibilities; thus the death of Hector represents the death of the mortal hero, of the family man-warrior overcome by the very principles he struggles to uphold. This tension can only be developed through the private conversations held within Troy; for Hector, heroic characterization depends equally upon private and public speech acts.

James Redfield defines heroism as “a definite social task,” and the heroes as “[a] definite social stratum.”² The heroes of the *Iliad* are warriors, often of divine ancestry, who distinguish themselves in battle and in council. These mortal heroes seek to attain *kleos*, glory, by which they will be remembered after death. Commonly, after a hero demonstrates his excellence in battle, he wins honor, *time*, both tangible and intangible. The tangible forms of *time* include women, fine garments, armor, animals, and precious metals. These physical forms of *time*, which quantify the amount of *kleos* a hero is entitled to, result in the intangible *time* offered by society. Achilles is the sort of hero who wins his *kleos* in battle, while wily Odysseus is the sort to win *kleos* through his speeches in council. The pursuit of *kleos*, especially in battle, links the heroes to death; they risk their life in combat in order to win more *kleos*, simultaneously putting in danger their own future *kleos*. In the *Iliad*, both Trojan and Achaean heroes fulfill their social role as warriors through combat. However, not all of the heroes are equally important to the plot; the most important of the heroes are distinctly characterized by Homer.

² Redfield (1975) 99.

Characterization is the method used to fill a story with individuals, called characters, who are an audience's points of reference in the progression of the plot. James Phelan, in his book *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative*, gives three components of characterization: the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic.³ The mimetic is best described as the imitation of real life, the qualities which make a character seem real: a name, certain habits, a physical description. For example, Odysseus' mimetic components include his marriage to Penelope, his rule of Ithaca, his oratorical skill. At the same time, we are aware that these characters are fictional, which hinges upon the extent to which the author develops their synthetic qualities. The synthetic component of characterization primarily serves the purposes of the plot at hand, in which the character is manipulated by the author in order to advance the story line. Odysseus' synthetic component is revealed when he falls asleep while his men open the bag of winds or eat the cattle of Helios; ordinarily, Odysseus would not do something like this, but the narrator makes him fall asleep in order that Odysseus might have more adventures before he reaches Ithaca. Finally, the thematic aspect of character is defined by Phelan as "representativeness."⁴ To continue our Odysseus example, the thematic aspect of his character could be the way in which he represents the hero returning from war, the father of an estranged son, the crafty trickster. These three characteristics, the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic, are not all developed fully.⁵ Furthermore, Phelan argues that the plot is moved forward by the conversion of dimensions, "any attribute a character may be said to possess when that

³ Phelan 2-3.

⁴ Phelan 3.

⁵ "Character too can be multichromatic, that it is a literary element composed of three components, the mimetic, synthetic, and synthetic, and that the mimetic and thematic components may be more or less developed, whereas the synthetic component, though always present, may be more or less fore-grounded." Phelan 12.

character is considered in isolation,”⁶ into functions, “a particular application of that attribute made by the test through its developing structure.”⁷ In summary, the components of characterization can be considered as dimensions of character, which the movement of the plot turns into functions. For Odysseus, this means that his craftiness, a dimension, becomes a function of the story when he escapes from the Cyclops or kills the suitors. Homer develops these three components of characterization primarily through speeches in the *Iliad*.

In modern literature, characters are developed through what they say about themselves, what others say about them, and what the author tells us about them. However, the omniscient Homeric narrator does not analyze a character’s thoughts. Thus, speeches between characters provide the only insight into a character’s reasoning and motivation. In her book, *Talking Trojan*, Hilary Mackie observes that speechmaking is an act of self-representation; “the *Iliad* is ultimately the product of an oral poetic tradition, and oral poetry is an institution that typically flourishes in traditional societies in which individual ‘style’ is a crucial factor in the construction of social identity.”⁸ In oral societies, the words a person chooses to say and the manner of their delivery have greater social implications than in a literate society. In his book, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the Iliad*, Richard Martin examines how Homeric characters use speech to construct their social identities in an oral society.

Martin examines heroic characterization through speeches, differentiating between μῦθοι, marked speech performances, and ἔπεα, unmarked utterances. He argues that, “the analysis of speech terms within Homer offers us an immediate entryway into notions of performance,

⁶ Phelan 9.

⁷ Phelan 9.

⁸ Mackie (1996) 4.

through those speeches in the poems which are called *muthoi*.”⁹ Martin distinguishes between the circumstances in which each kind of speech is used, saying that *epea* are the broader category of speeches, of which *muthoi*, public discourse, are a part: “There is good formulaic evidence for the association between *muthoi* and *agoreuein*, “speaking in public”...a study of the word *epos* shows a complete contrast: unlike *muthos*, it is associated with private and reciprocal speech such as that between husbands and wives, companions, or kin.”¹⁰ Using these definitions, Martin defines the genres of heroic performance, all of which are *muthoi*, as commands, boasts and insult contests, and recitation of remembered events.¹¹ Thus Martin focuses on public speech acts as the most important acts of self-presentation in the epic, and examines the characterization of the heroes through each of these three essential genres of *muthoi*.

While public speech acts characterize a hero in his public role, speeches made in private also have implications for a hero’s character. Self-projection of identity in public represents half of a person’s identity; the other half is a person’s behavior among their most intimate friends and family. Thus heroic characterization is open to the agency of private individuals who cannot project their own identity in the public councils or the field of battle. Homer gives us many private encounters between companions, kin, and spouses, and those instances of private discourse serve to round out the characterization of the heroes, challenging and refining the image they project in public with their private concerns and goals. Thus even those who have no military or public role can have a part in characterization through private speech. Only once the public speeches, which Martin calls *muthoi*, are compared with private discourse, once the inconsistencies and commonalities between public and private life are identified, can the

⁹ Martin (1989) 12.

¹⁰ Martin (1989) 37-38

¹¹ Martin (1989) 47.

character of a hero begin to emerge. For no hero is this interaction more important than for Hector, the prince of Troy. In the characterization of Hector, the conversations with women draw out his mimetic dimensions, making his thematic function, the tension between the private and public realm, come to the fore of the narrative.

Up until Book VI, Homer has indicated that Hector will be an important character, yet has not distinguished him from the crowd of heroes. Iris urges him by name to marshal the Trojans and their allies (II.802), and Hector arranges the truce and fight between Menelaus and Paris (III). He emerges as the leader of his people in these first three books, but his leadership is impersonal. In Book V.472-474, Sarpedon rebukes Hector, casting up his former bold statements in comparison with his current behavior:

Ἔκτορ πῆ δὴ τοι μένος οἴχεται ὁ πρὶν ἔχεσκες;

φῆς που ἄτερ λαῶν πόλιν ἐξέμεν ἠδ' ἐπικούρων

οἶος σὺν γαμβροῖσι κασιγνήτοισί τε σοῖσι.”

Hector, where goes your strength, which you had before?

Once you said that alone without the people and without companions

You could hold the city with your brothers and husbands of your sisters.

To his credit, though Hector made this boast, he promptly responds to Sarpedon's rebuke and enters the fray (V.493 and ff.). Hector is shown to have boasted in a society of boasters, and to be holding back when he is needed at the front lines. His performance in battle is less than expected; Hector is noticeably absent from the number of Trojans who face Diomedes during his *aristeia* in Book V. When a wounded Sarpedon later begs Hector for protection, Hector hastens from his side without reply: “Ὡς φάτο, τὸν δ' οὐ τι προσέφη κορυθαίολος Ἔκτωρ, / ἀλλὰ παρήϊξεν λελιημένος ὄφρα τάχιστα” *Thus he spoke, but shining helmeted Hector did not*

respond, / but being eager he rushed forward as quickly as possible (V.689-690). Instead of pausing to commiserate with his fallen ally, Hector rushes forward to make safe the whole Trojan line, which will give his companions enough time to drag Sarpedon to safety. This silence, especially since Sarpedon couches his request in a lament for his wife and child, (V.684-688) makes Hector seem emotionally distant from the needs of those around him, though he is in fact a responsible leader. This image is changed when Hector enters Troy in Book VI; for the first time, the audience sees Hector in his own city, with his family, in the private capacity of a son, brother, and a husband; he is distinguished from the rank of the heroes by his familial relations, simultaneously a mimetic and thematic dimension of his character.

Chapter 1: Hector and Andromache

Homer's characterization of Hector rests upon his interactions with the women of his family in VI. Through these private conversations, Hector emerges as a complicated hero who is more than a simple warrior. Instead, Hector represents the thematic hero torn between the private and the public realm, who must negotiate the heroic code to suit his own personality. Significantly, this detailed introduction to Hector's character comes within the walls of Troy, not in the heat of battle. Furthermore, the majority of his time within Troy is not spent consulting the elders or his father, but in conversations with women. *Iliad* VI shows Hector encountering three women in particular: his mother, Hecuba, his sister-in-law, Helen, and his wife, Andromache. Although all of these women help to shape our understanding of Hector, his interaction with his wife makes the most lasting impression. Their final meeting comes at the end of VI, as the climax to which all the other encounters have been leading up to. The conversation between Hector and Andromache sets up striking contrasts and consistencies with other parts of the epic. These contrasts and consistencies reveal Hector's inner struggle to negotiate his role as a hero, a struggle that increases his realism as a character.

The narrative setting of this meeting reveals many things about these two characters. Hector has entered Troy to ask the Trojan women to pray for deliverance from Diomedes' assault (VI.86-96). Thus Hector serves as a messenger between the Trojan army and the city, to advise the women on a course of action that is typically feminine. Yet the question has to be asked, why is the commander of the Trojan army, on whom the battle depends (VI.77-78), asked to leave the field of battle in the midst of one of the army's most critical moments? Here we have the synthetic aspect of Hector's character; there is no reason within his role as a hero to

enter Troy apart from the narrator's wish for the audience to observe Hector with his family.¹² Therefore, the narrator feels that Hector's characterization needs to include his private life and private relations. In other words, there is something unique about Hector that requires the narrator to manipulate the plot.

After achieving his original mission, Hector undertakes two self-appointed errands. The first, to visit Paris, fits within Hector's prerogative as a military commander and as a brother. Between lines 325 and 331, he convincingly argues that Paris must return to battle for the sake of the Trojan army; thus, the visit to Paris is justified from a military standpoint. However, Hector has no reason, within his role as a hero, to visit his wife. Similarly, the location of their meeting, the Scaian gate, is an unusual place for Andromache to be waiting. The anaphora of οὐτέ used in reply to Hector's anaphora of ἦ, (VI.376-389), emphasizes his inability to understand the cause of his wife's fears: she is in none of the places where he expects her to be. Her flight to the walls is characterized as the action of a madwoman (VI.388-389), but it is her anxiety for her husband that has pulled her out of her private realm and onto the walls of the city. Thus both husband and wife have reached the threshold between the city and the war, between their public and private duties, to have their last farewell.¹³ Though a few days pass between their farewell and Hector's death, the poet dramatizes this moment in the context of *Iliad* VI in order to emphasize the thematic struggle between these two worlds on the very spot where they intersect.

Hector's manner in private reveals inconsistencies with his behavior in other parts of the

¹² In *Homeric Researches* (1949), Kakridis observes that "for the last meeting of Hector and Andromache and their farewell, the poet found it necessary to improvise an excuse for Hector's coming into the town" (53). He argues that this scene is part of the Meleager motif, comparing Meleager and Cleopatra with Hector and Andromache.

¹³ Kakridis also states "it is worth noting how the poet manages to use this separation in order to rouse an expectation which lasts nearly throughout the *Iliad*. From Z onward we expect at any moment a scene which will tell of the hero's fall" (56).

epic. Most strikingly, Hector reveals to Andromache that he does not believe that Troy will escape destruction:

ἔσσεται ἡμαρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἱρὴ
καὶ Πριάμος καὶ λαὸς εὐμμελίω Πριάμοιο.

There will be a day when holy Ilios perishes

and Priam and the people of Priam of the strong ash spear (VI.448-449).

Furthermore, not only does he believe that Troy is doomed, but he also thinks that his father, his family, and all of the people he has known within the city will also suffer a terrible fate. This conviction would be a powerful motivation to defend Troy, driving Hector to seek more than he might be able to achieve. Thus Hector does not fight only for glory, but for his family; his motivation is as much heroic as it is protective. Yet in H, when Hector challenges the Achaeans to single combat, he holds forth two scenarios, in which Troy will either fall or the Achaeans will die next to their ships (VII.71-72). There is a dichotomy between what Hector feels that a hero should say before his people and his enemies, and what a hero may say in private. In addition, Hector only feels comfortable in showing his darkest fears to Andromache, not to any other member of his family. Hector's mood changes after he has left the battlefield, and he reflects upon the implications of the war only with his wife. Thus the public speeches of a hero do not always reflect his true thoughts, and the same is true of private speech taken in isolation; the comparison of these two discourses reveals the truest image of Hector. Thus to look at a character only through his public speeches is to look at half of an individual.

Another difference in the conversation with Andromache is the hierarchy of importance that Hector reveals to her. Unlike Sarpedon, who makes references to his wife and child in Book V, or Paris, who is continually mentioned in reference to Helen, Hector does not speak of

Andromache nor is her name mentioned with his by the narrator. Yet after he contemplates the destruction of Troy, Hector reveals his true priorities, in ascending order:

ἀλλ' οὐ μοι Τρώων τόσσον μέλει ἄλγος ὀπίσσω,
οὔτ' αὐτῆς Ἑκάβης οὔτε Πριάμοιο ἄνακτος
οὔτε κασιγνήτων, οἳ κεν πολέες τε καὶ ἐσθλοὶ
ἐν κονίησι πέσοιεν ὑπ' ἀνδράσι δυσμενέεσσιν,
ὅσσον σεῦ

*Yet the pain to come for the Trojans does not concern me so much,
Nor that of Hecabe herself nor of King Priam
Nor of my brothers, who many and great
Would fall in the dust at the hands of hating men,
As much as your pain (VI.450-454).*

Kakridis has called this the “ascending scale of affection,”¹⁴ a motif in which conjugal love is placed above all other relationships. While it is natural to assume that many heroes have such a valuation of their relationships, only Hector gives voice to his concern in the *Iliad*. Thus Hector’s thematic function as the hero of public and private duty is dramatized by the use of this motif. In the scenes outside of VI, Hector seems to be the consummate defender of the city, motivated by his sense of duty to his parents and his people. However, these lines reveal that Andromache’s future always worries him, that in the very process of risking his life to protect her, he knows that he is endangering her. Yet he places her higher in importance than any other people in Troy, including his family. Hector does not mention his son, Astyanax, because he

¹⁴Kakridis 1949 (19-20).

does not know what will happen to him after the fall of Troy. By contrast, Andromache's future is certain; she, like the other Trojan women, will be enslaved by the Achaeans.

Thus Hector knows that Andromache absolutely depends upon him, and for this reason she is highest in his thoughts. In these lines, Andromache is central to the reason why Hector fights, yet he never mentions her, even to his brothers, in his public role as a warrior. Even as he begs Achilles to return his body to Troy, he names his father, mother, and the Trojan people (XII.341-343), but not his wife. Hector only reveals the depth of his emotion when he is with Andromache. His public identity has nothing to do with being the husband of Andromache, but in his own mind, as he reveals in this speech, it is essential to how he sees himself. Significantly, the public warrior that Hector seeks to be must consciously separate himself from these private concerns. In order to fight, Hector divorces his public persona from his private relationships.

The final inconsistency with his public role is revealed in his response to Andromache's advice. Scholars, beginning with Aristarchus, have posited that this part of the text must be an interpolation, because it was improbable that Hector's wife should presume to give military advice to her own husband. Yet after her careful explanation of why Hector must remain alive, it would seem natural for her to counsel a defensive strategy, one which would conserve manpower and limit the army's action to the defense of Troy. Though she does say “ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἐλέαιρε καὶ αὐτοῦ μίμν' ἐπὶ πύργῳ” *but come now, pity me and remain here on the battlement* (VI.431), which would suggest that she is asking him to abandon the fighting, she then tells him to “λαὸν δὲ στῆσον παρ' ἐρινεόν” *station your people beside the fig tree* (VI.433), implying that he should continue to lead the army in its defense closer to the walls of the city. Thus she still recognizes the important role Hector has to play in the fighting, but she ultimately is asking him, both for herself and for the city, to make safety his highest priority. In this passage,

Andromache envisages a different kind of war, one in which the needs of the city and its inhabitants should dictate the actions of its heroes. Hector's response to his wife is to simply ignore her advice, glossing over with an easy "ἤ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει γύναι" *Truly, wife, all these things are my concern* (VI.441). The placement of the emphatic καὶ ἐμοὶ to balance γύναι at the end of this statement highlights a fundamental difference between Hector and Andromache; when it comes to issues of battle, he firmly implies, I am the only one who should be worrying about tactics. Thus he denies that Andromache has any authority to make these suggestions, reminding her with one word that she is both a woman and his wife.

Yet this gentle remonstrance is in stark contrast to Hector's reaction to advice or criticism elsewhere in the epic. Although he does listen to criticism when he believes he deserves it, Hector has no tolerance for incompetence or contradiction. He harshly criticizes the elders in XV.721, blaming their "κακότητι" for not allowing him to fight beside the Achaean ships. His abusive language is even stronger with Polydamas, a Trojan warrior who often opposes Hector's plans. Hector ridicules him in XII, alleging that the gods must have addled his brains (230-240). Again, in XVIII, when Polydamas urges a retreat into the city, Hector calls him a fool, "νήπιε" (295), and asserts his authority as a leader to prevent anyone from obeying him (295). As a warrior, Hector rarely takes advice well. In his response to Andromache, although he believes her to have even less authority than men like Polydamas to dictate the course of the war, he objects to her advice without harshly rebuking her. The standard lines of "ὑπόδρα ἰδῶν" *gazing darkly* (XVIII.286, XII.230), denoting stern disapproval, are absent from his response to Andromache. Hector does not feel the need to suppress disagreement with his own views in private. At the same time, either at home or at war, Hector rarely recognizes that anyone has the authority to question his judgment. Regardless of his gentleness to his wife, he still believes that

the war is none of her business, just as he believes that other warriors seldom have the right to contradict his decisions. Though part of his role as a leader of the Trojan forces, even Agamemnon and Priam take counsel before making decisions; stubbornness is one of Hector's mimetic dimensions that exists both in private life and in his role as a hero.

Yet for all these inconsistencies, Hector's conversation with Andromache reveals consistencies as well with his speeches in public. The most prevalent is his tendency to engage in "wishful thinking," in which he imagines what another will say or think at some point in the future. Significantly, the two instances of wishful thinking that occur in VI are balanced by a similar occurrence in XII, right before Achilles kills Hector. First, Hector imagines Andromache's plight after his death:

Ἔκτορος ἦδε γυνὴ ὃς ἀριστεύεσκε μάχεσθαι
 Τρώων ἵπποδάμων ὅτε Ἴλιον ἀμφεμάχοντο.
 ὥς ποτέ τις ἐρέει· σοὶ δ' αὖ νέον ἔσσεται ἄλγος
 χήτει τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἀμύνειν δούλιον ἦμαρ

*This is Hector's wife, who was the best to fight of the Trojans,
 Breakers of horses, when they fought around Ilion.*

Thus someday someone will speak; but for you it will be a new pang

Widowed of such a man to fend off the day of your bondage. (VI.460-463).

Here Hector imagines the grief of his wife and her loss, but only envisages what people will say of her in reference to himself. In the future, he supposes that she will still be known as the wife of Hector, which is why his name, Ἔκτορος, is mentioned even before the word for wife.

Furthermore, the noun γυνή is the only indication that this speech is about Andromache; for all

intents and purposes, this fictional third party will really be describing the greatness of Hector.¹⁵ Yet even for Andromache, he posits that her suffering will be the pain of losing a protector, not of her husband or the father of her child. Hector has been at war for so long that he cannot imagine his loved ones without reference to who he is on the battlefield or what his glory from battle will mean in the future. As Hilary Mackie notes, “Hector is confident that memory of him will persist into the future. The thought of *kleos* in the future cannot be extricated from the theme of death.”¹⁶ This claim is made abundantly clear in the scene before Hector’s death, in which fear of blame in the future motivates him to face Achilles (XII.106-110).

Yet in contrast to these visions of future *kleos* that are explicitly tied to his death, Hector has one other moment of wishful thinking, one in which Astyanax grows and becomes a hero himself. In this prayer to the gods, Hector imagines a rosy picture of the future:

καί ποτέ τις εἴποι πατρός γ' ὄδε πολλὸν ἀμείνων
 ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιόντα· φέροι δ' ἕναρα βροτόεντα
 κτείνας δῆϊον ἄνδρα, χαρεῖη δὲ φρένα μήτηρ.

And at some time let someone say that this one is much better than his father

Coming in from the battle; let him carry the gore covered spoils

After killing the enemy, and let his mother rejoice in her mind. (VI.479-481).

Notably, there is no mention if Hector has survived to delight over his son, though his glory is implied to be so great that it will be remembered by future generations. Most significantly, Hector wishes for Andromache to still be alive so that she can be glad that her son is fighting, which her previous speeches indicate would be uncharacteristic. This is the future that Hector

¹⁵ G.S. Kirk remarks in Volume II of the Cambridge Commentaries on the *Iliad* (1985), that although this behavior is typically heroic, it is also a statement of the facts; “she will be remembered mainly through himself” (222).

¹⁶ Mackie (1996) 100.

wishes for his son, and as a hero he can think of no better life. Yet Hector has dictated her response to Astyanax's accomplishments, implying the command that she will understand and appreciate this course of life; he does not understand her fear, and so he demands her compliance. Even as a father, Hector still thinks like a hero and structures his wife's future behavior as that of the mother of a hero. His behavior runs contrary to his desire to protect his family, wishing for his son also to take part in the dangers of heroic life and for his wife once again to be subject to the mental agony of watching a loved one fight for glory.¹⁷

The conflict between Hector's role as a husband and father and his role as a warrior is ultimately revealed in the construction of his response to Andromache:

Τὴν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἴκτωρ·
 ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει γύναι· ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰνῶς
 αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάδας ἑλκεσιπέπλους,
 αἶ κε κακὸς ὧς νόσφιν ἀλυσκάζω πολέμοιο·
 οὐδέ με θυμὸς ἄνωγεν, ἐπεὶ μάθον ἔμμεναι ἐσθλὸς
 αἰεὶ καὶ πρότοισι μετὰ Τρώεσσι μάχεσθαι

Then great Hector of the shining helmet replied to her: "Surely

All these affairs are my concern, lady; yet I would feel shame

Dreadfully before the Trojans and the Trojan women with trailing robes,

If like a coward I were to skulk afar from the fighting;

And the spirit does not bid me, since I have learned to be brave

And always to fight amidst the foremost of the Trojans. (VI.440-445)

¹⁷James Redfield summarized this statement in his book, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector*: "In the conversation between Hector and Andromache the poet dramatizes the pain of the warrior's role, of the man who, on behalf of his family, must leave his family, so that his very defense of them becomes a betrayal" (123).

Much has been said about the shame culture of the Homeric poems, but James Redfield has argued that Hector is a warrior, “not because he loves war, but because he is before all a hero of *aidos*.”¹⁸ Thus Hector is the warrior who fights from a sense of duty, because that is what is required of him. At the same time, he fights because of fear, “an emotion provoked by the perception of one's place in the social structure and of the obligations which accompany that place.”¹⁹ He has been conditioned by his culture to expect great deeds from himself, which leads to his preoccupation with *kleos* and, ultimately, his own death. Furthermore, he sees it as his duty to win glory for his father, Priam, as much as for himself (VI.446); he is a dutiful son, the antithesis of Paris, who recognizes that his actions will reflect upon his entire family. That same family is also the ruling family of Troy, which gives his participation in the war political significance. Finally, as a husband, Hector knows that he owes Andromache protection from the agonies of defeat, and as a father, he knows he owes his son the chance to live to be an adult. All of these obligations converge upon him in this instant, and this crisis reveals the difficulty of combining these roles under the monolithic title of “hero.”

Through Hector's interaction with Andromache, the inherent contradictions between his role as a defender of Troy and as a hero are revealed. The consistencies and inconsistencies that appear when Hector's persona in public is compared to his persona in private show that even this man, a great hero, has constructed an unique and individual identity, one which attempts to reconcile his duty to the ones he loves, to his city, and to his own glory. This contrasts with Adam Parry's thesis that “since men say the same things about the same things...speech and

¹⁸ Redfield (1975) 119.

¹⁹ Redfield (1975) 118.

reality need not be divided into two opposing realms of experience.”²⁰ Parry argues that Homeric language constrains the way people think, so that the heroes of the *Iliad* share a common view of the world, and they see no division between appearances and reality. Scholars have debated about the constraints of Homeric language, but most interestingly, Claus argued that the heroic code might have been formulated by society but the responses of the heroes were not predetermined.²¹ Thus the attention that is spent upon Hector, teasing out the details of his character in private, would suggest that, for Hector, heroic status is not the pursuit of glory that Diomedes and Sarpedon define as heroic. Hector’s negotiation of the role of a hero can only be seen when he reveals his inner self to the women of his family through private conversations. These interactions not only reveal his inner conflict, but also give him mimetic dimensions that humanize him from the larger than life hero of the Trojan camp.

The symbolic moment that divides Hector from his heroic persona occurs toward the end of his meeting with Andromache. Just after he concludes his wish to be dead before her enslavement (VI.464-465), Hector reaches out to his infant son:

ὣς εἰπὼν οὗ παιδὸς ὀρέξατο φαίδιμος Ἔκτωρ·
 ἅψ δ’ ὃ πάϊς πρὸς κόλπον ἐϋζώνοιο τιθήνης
 ἐκλίνθη ἰάχων πατρὸς φίλου ὄψιν ἀτυχθεῖς
 ταρβήσας χαλκόν τε ἰδὲ λόφον ἵππιοχαίτην,
 δεινὸν ἀπ’ ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας.
 ἐκ δ’ ἐγέλασσε πατῆρ τε φίλος καὶ πότνια μήτηρ·

²⁰ Parry (1989) 4.

²¹ “We must surely distinguish...between the Homeric value system itself and the responses of the heroes to it.” Claus (1974) 20.

αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς κόρυθ' εἴλετο φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ,
καὶ τὴν μὲν κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ παμφανόωσαν·

Thus speaking shining Hector stretched out for his son;

But the baby leaned toward the breast of the fair-girdled nurse

Crying, frightened at the sight of his dear father,

Fearing the bronze and plume of horse hair,

Seeing it nodding dreadfully from the peak of the helmet.

His dear father and lady mother laughed aloud;

Straight away shining Hector took the helmet from his head,

And set it gleaming upon the ground. (VI.466-473)

Hector's helmet, which is even part of his heroic epithet, is only removed when his son is afraid. Though his laughter and decision to remove the helmet are significant in their own right, it is more astonishing that this fearsome part of his armor remained firmly upon his head throughout Andromache's pleas and his attempts to comfort her. The helmet can be seen as the symbol of his heroic character, but even as he was speaking to his wife, Hector was attempting to be both husband and hero at the same time. Thus underlying this entire encounter is the thematic tension between these two aspects of his character. Yet even after he removes the helmet, Hector remains true to his heroic persona when he envisages a world in which Asytanax will be a great warrior, better even than his father. So, though the helmet lies upon the floor, it remains metaphysically upon his head; the heroic ideal is not as easy to remove as the armor itself.

Thus far, Hector's characterization through his interaction with Andromache has highlighted the consistencies and inconsistencies of his behavior in the public world of the epic. As a woman, Andromache has fewer opportunities to speak in the *Iliad*; it is difficult to compare

her speech at the Scaian gate with her later behavior, which is exclusively dedicated to mourning her husband. However, this speech does reveal two important aspects of Andromache's character, which in turn affect how we view Hector. Andromache is defined as the wife of Hector and the mother of Astyanax, dependent upon her relationship to various male characters for her role in society. Yet her specific relationships with her husband and her son both shape facets of Hector's character. Thus Andromache, though a noncombatant, has a role to play in characterizing her husband; the private speeches of women contribute to the portrayal of the inner life that the narrator contrasts with public life.

First, Andromache's past links her to Achilles, and therefore she links Achilles to Hector early in the story. In her first speech, she reveals that Achilles killed her father and her seven brothers (VI.414, 421-423). She also admits that Achilles was merciful and did not despoil her father's body, "σεβάσσατο γὰρ τό γε θυμῶ" *for he stood in awe of this in his heart* (VI.417), and took ransom in exchange for her mother (VI.427). Thus Andromache has experienced the devastation that he brings on the battlefield, but also the mercy he bestows upon the conquered. These deaths have also made her more dependent upon Hector, as she herself admits:

Ἕκτορ ἄτὰρ σύ μοι ἔσσι πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ

ἠδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης

But Hector you are my father and my lady mother

And my brother, and you are my blooming husband. (VI.429-430).

While Hector placed his wife at the apex of his affections, Andromache indicates that she has no other family beyond him. She makes no mention of her in-laws or of her son, but instead ties

herself to her husband exclusively.²² In doing so, Andromache's mimetic dimension, her past life, becomes a function of the plot, linking Hector and Achilles and foreshadowing the death of her own husband. Although her past would indicate that Achilles might pity the body of Hector, this expectation is not fulfilled. In her exclusive love for Hector, Andromache profoundly ties Achilles to Hector, so that even in Hector's private life, there is always a reminder of the public world of public speeches and heroes. Thus both private and public life are intertwined, each informing the other, so that the discourse of public and private life must also be taken together. The women of Troy have significance in the larger story about heroes, because they complement and challenge the projection of heroic identity in public.

Finally, as the mother of Astyanax, Andromache is tied, along with her son, to the future of Troy, which, in turn, depends upon Hector. Even the name "Astyanax" links Hector to the public realm in his private life:

τόν ῥ' Ἐκτωρ καλέεσκε Σκαμάνδριον, αὐτὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι

Ἄστυάνακτ'· οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἐκτωρ

Whom Hector called Scamandrios, but the others called him

Astyanax; for Hector alone defended Ilium (VI.402-403)

The literal meaning of Astyanax, "ruler of the city," reveals that Hector's son, and therefore Hector's wife, are defined in large part by Hector's role in Trojan public life. Though Hector may have a different name for his own son, even this is superseded by the expectations of other people, both for Hector and for his family. Thus Astyanax and Andromache are intimately

²² The single-minded devotion of Andromache, argued Kakridis, departed from the typical ascending scale of affection motif of the old Meleager stories (19-20). In contrast to Cleopatra, Andromache argues that Hector must not endanger himself because of her fear for him and for her son, which Kakridis called "the egotism of love" (60).

linked to the survival of Troy, and to meet them is both to confront the duties of private life and the expectations of the public realm.

The emotional encounter between Andromache and Hector dramatizes the thematic conflict between private and public interest, between public and private speech. Hector struggles to live a heroic life without compromising the duties of private life. The comparisons and contrasts between his behavior with Andromache and his behavior as a warrior show that Hector has fashioned his own definition of the role of a hero, attempting to reconcile different aspects of his own personality. Thus private conversation complicates the clear cut world of public speech, in which a hero aggressively asserts his definitive personality to other heroes. Instead, private conversations reveal the complexities of character which cannot be explored on the field of battle or public meetings. Andromache's relationship with her husband and with her son also complicates the divide between the public realm and the private realm. Just as public discourse can have an effect upon private life, private discourse also can have ramifications for public life. This realistic depiction of Hector as a man caught between two worlds heightens his mimetic dimensions; the more complicated his motives and priorities become, the more realistic he appears to the audience. This realism also contributes to developing his thematic function as the man torn between private and public concerns, placing him in direct opposition to Achilles, who operates within the social vacuum of the Achaean camp. His death acts as a subtle undermining of the heroic ethos of the *Iliad*, because it shows that the heroes are ultimately unable to carry out their protective functions; sooner or later they will all die and their loved ones, like the women of *Iliad* VI, will be defenseless.

Chapter 2: Hector and Helen

In Book VI, Hector meets with three women, but his encounter with Helen is the most complicated; while his wife and mother have definite claims upon his affection, Helen does not. As the wife of Paris, the brother most unlike Hector, there is no reason for Helen to be of special importance to him. Furthermore, Helen is actually married to Menelaus, and has left him for Paris; the kinship tie between Hector and Helen is tenuous, and, to the Achaeans, fictitious. Finally, Helen is the symbol of the war, a war which many Trojans oppose because it jeopardizes their lives and the happiness of their families. Yet, Hector's manner to Helen is gentle, especially when compared to his attitude toward Paris. In this meeting between Hector and Helen, Paris acts as a foil to his brother, contrasting Hector's behavior toward his own brother with that toward his "sister-in-law." Furthermore, the poet contrasts the relationship between Helen and Paris with the relationship between Hector and Andromache, differentiating the brothers and their wives from one another. By comparing these two marriages, Hector emerges as a hero caught between the private and public realm precisely because Paris does not evince the same sensitivity to the criticism of others as Hector does. The relationship of both of these men to Helen demonstrates Hector's gentleness to a social pariah and contrasts his conception of a marriage and a husband's duty with that of Paris.

The meeting between Helen and Hector takes place in a chamber of Paris' home. Hector will meet with three women in Troy, each in a different location of the city. Hecuba comes out to meet Hector as soon as he enters the palace, while Hector finds Helen nestled within her domestic realm. After searching for Andromache in his own house, Hector eventually meets his wife at the city walls, where the private and public realms intersect. Appropriately, in the middle

of his journey, Hector finds himself immersed in the world of women, in a room where women carry out the private domestic tasks of everyday life. Homer marks this transition into the domestic center of Troy with a description of Paris' house (VI.312-317), including the important detail that it occupies a place of prominence on the city's citadel, near the homes of Priam and of Hector. Thus Paris should, like his brother and father, be conscious of his public duty. The theme of martial duty and public service is reinforced by the attention paid to Hector's spear:

ἔγχος ἔχ' ἑνδεκάπηχου· πάροιθε δὲ λάμπετο δουρὸς
αἰχμὴ χαλκείη, περὶ δὲ χρύσεος θέε πόρκης.

*He held the eleven cubit long spear; the bronzed tip shined before
The shaft, and a golden hoop ran around it. (VI.319-320)*

Just as Hector's helmet emphasizes his public role when he holds Astyanax, so too does his spear lend him a martial air in the midst of the house. In fact, the spear is only mentioned again in Θ 493-495, in the Trojan assembly before the Achaean ships.²³ Furthermore, as Kirk has noted, the placement of the spear, immediately before Hector's rebuke of Paris, serves to "give him a special glow of authority as he confronts his unheroic brother."²⁴ Thus the spear, as a weapon, belongs to the public realm of war, counsel and public speech, yet Hector holds it as he addresses Paris in his own chamber within Troy. Like the helmet, the spear in this scene highlights the extent to which Hector brings his heroic mindset to bear on private life.

Like Hector, Paris is defined by his armor. But while his brother is holding his weapon, Paris is described as "ἔποντα" *being busied over* (VI.321) and "ἀφόωντα" *polishing* (VI.322) his armor; furthermore, that armor is described as "περικαλλέα" *very beautiful* (VI.321). These

²³ Kirk (1985) 201.

²⁴ Kirk (1985) 201.

emblems of the public realm are being cared for, but not used, so that the contrast between the brothers is brought to the fore; Hector takes his weapon, a tool of the public world, into the domestic realm, while Paris turns his weapon into an object of private life, to be cared for but not necessarily used. Unlike his brother, Paris does not continue to be a warrior in his private life, although he remains aesthetically connected to the world of heroic endeavor. The minutiae of the spear and of Paris' activities are all mimetic details that heighten the reality of the scene and also develop the thematic roles of each brother; Hector is the kind of hero who would carry a huge spear into someone's home,²⁵ and Paris is the kind of man who would take more delight in the appearance of his armor than in its function. The contrast between the brothers heightens the incongruity of Paris' behavior; despite his prominent position, signified by the location of his home and by his lineage, Paris is not controlled by the *aidos* that Hector fears. Even before any interaction takes place, the singer indicates that the thematic tension between private and public interest does not apply to Paris to the extent that it does Hector.

In contrast to her husband, Helen is actually engaged in the kind of work that fulfills her duty within the private realm. Like Andromache, Helen is responsible for the weaving, but the narrator tells us that her work is “περικλυτὰ” *glorious* (VI.324). Furthermore, she *orders* “κέλευε” (VI.324) the maids as they weave. Thus Helen emerges as the commander of this domestic scene, one in which her husband is out of place. Her work within the private realm is gaining the glory, *kleos*, which Paris ought to acquire in public life. Though Helen has a sense of the duties of the household, it would seem that Paris does not see that his public duty, his ability

²⁵ Spears were often left in special racks located near the door, as seen in *Odyssey* I.127-129, XVI.29-30. These are discussed at greater length in Combellack's article “Three Odyssean Problems” in the *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*.

to fight, would ensure her presence within his home. As one of the causes of the war, Helen can be seen as a *geras*, a physical manifestation of *time*, or honor; yet Paris remains in his home, undeserving of her, while Helen conforms to the expected duties of women in the private realm. Like Hector, Helen has a sense of *aidos*, which the poet develops through contrast with Paris. For this reason, unlike Andromache, Helen must urge her husband to fight. While Andromache is moved by her anxiety to run to the walls, Helen composedly remains in her house, hard at work, ignoring her husband's idle presence. Helen understands the *aidos* that drives Hector because she understands her own private duty and her husband's public duty; this understanding, in the context of Paris' behavior, helps to develop Hector's thematic function of exploring the tension between private and public duty. Here is a woman who understands both private and public duty, and understands them better than her husband does; in Helen, Hector has a sister-in-law who can appreciate his motivation to fight, even though she may wish it were unnecessary.

Helen's presence and the setting of the conversation in Paris' home affect Hector's behavior. Though he does rebuke his brother in Z, the tone differs from his public rebuke in Γ. In public he strings together unflattering epithets: “Δύσπαρι εἶδος ἄριστε γυναιμανὲς ἠπεροπευτᾶ” *Ill-starred Paris, handsome, mad for women, deceiver* (III.39). Hector implies that, although the gods may have something to do with Helen's abduction, Paris is responsible for the conflict. In Hector's opinion, his brother's physical beauty was the enticement used to deceive Helen, and that this deception is characteristic because Paris has a reputation with women. However, in private Hector merely addresses Paris as “δαμόνι” *strange one* (VI.326); Paris already knows his brother's opinion of his behavior, and it is not necessary in private to go over his misconduct again. Thus Hector's words in III are spoken as much for the audience of Trojan allies as for Paris; as a leader he cannot show partiality, and as such must place the blame

where he sees fit. Yet as a brother, Hector does not drive the point home in private; as much as he blames his brother for the war, he does not see it necessary to shame him too greatly at home. Furthermore, Helen's presence means that Hector cannot call Paris insulting names as he did in public without embarrassing her.²⁶ As a female member of his family, Hector feels that Helen is owed respect; his restraint from lambasting Paris demonstrates an unwillingness to impugn her judgment in marrying a man devoid of shame. At the same time, the epithets used against Paris in public are sexually insulting, and would also shame Helen for her own sexual deviancy.

Hector's mild rebuke contrasts sharply with his chastising words in III. Within Troy, Hector frames his rebuke by speaking of the suffering of their fellow Trojans (VI.327-328) and then suggests a course of action: “ἀλλ’ ἄνα μὴ τάχα ἄστυ πυρὸς δηΐοιο θέρηται” *now rise lest the city soon be burned by hot fire* (VI.331). Yet on the field of battle, Hector goes so far as to wish for Paris' death:

αἶθ’ ὄφελες ἄγονός τ’ ἔμεναι ἄγαμός τ’ ἀπολέσθαι·

καί κε τὸ βουλοίμην, καί κεν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν

ἢ οὕτω λώβην τ’ ἔμεναι καὶ ὑπόψιον ἄλλων

You ought not to have been born or to have died wifeless;

Truly I would have wished it, as it would have been far better

Than thus to be a disgrace and viewed with suspicion by other men (III.41-43).

The main reason for this wish is not the loss of Trojan lives but the shame that Paris' conduct brings upon his family. Yet again, when Helen is present, Hector cannot wish that Paris had died

²⁶ The change in Hector's tone is noted in Kirk's commentary on the *Iliad*: “Here the rebuke, shameful enough in itself, will be less overtly violent...he seems anxious not to offend” (201, 203). Yet there has been no discussion of the role that Helen plays in this mellow version of Hector's opinion of Paris.

before he married, which would imply his own wish that Helen had never come to Troy and that he had never met her. It seems paradoxical that in private Hector reminds Paris about the suffering of his fellow Trojans, while in public Hector rebukes Paris for the shame he has brought upon himself and his family. Yet this is consistent with Hector's driving impulse of *aidos*, so that private and public actions are intertwined in his own understanding of the world. Paris' decision has brought dishonor upon his family but also upon the Trojan people as a whole, and for this reason Hector believes that it is Paris' duty to ward off the Achaeans.

Hector also believes that Paris is to blame for the war. Both of the rebukes include this sentiment, although Hector is more straightforward in VI: “σέο δ’ εἴνεκ’ αὐτή τε πτόλεμός τε / ἄστυ τόδ’ ἀμφιδέδηε” *For your sake has this war and this city been kindled* (328-329). Yet Hector assigns blame only to Paris, and not to Helen. His opinion goes against the elders of Troy, who judge Helen to be the cause of the war:

οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἔϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς

τοιῆδ’ ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν

It is no cause for wrath that the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans

Suffer pains for a long time for the sake of such a woman (III.156-157).

Though they do not abuse Helen, they believe that she is responsible for the fighting, and that her beauty was the cause of Paris' decision. By contrast, Hector gives Paris full responsibility for the war, as a man whose public duty should have prevented him from serving his private interests at the expense of Troy. Unlike Hector, Paris has followed his personal inclinations single-mindedly, and for this reason Hector blames him. At the same time, it means that Hector limits the women of his family to private life alone; since Helen is a woman she cannot be held responsible for actions that affect the public realm in the same way that Paris, a man, can be.

Thus Hector does not always agree with the judgment of the elders, but he does participate in the gendered cultural distinctions between private and public life. For this reason, when Andromache begs Hector to adopt a defensive strategy and offers him military advice, Hector feels justified in brushing her suggestions aside. The divide between private and public life enables Hector to function both as a military leader, understanding the cause of the war, and as a brother to Helen and Paris, excusing the former and mildly chastising the latter.

In response to this rebuke, Paris accepts his brother's judgment without attempting to justify his own actions. His only reason for withdrawing from the fray is that “ἔθελον δ' ἄχρει προτραπέσθαι” *I wanted to give myself up to grief* (VI.336). Such an excuse is hardly going to appease Hector, who only leaves the battle when he is urged to do so in order to save the Trojans. In fact, Hector has already mentioned what would be a more proper reason for Paris' delay, “χόλον” *wrath* (VI.326). The “wrath of Paris” has generated much discussion among scholars, who have posited explanations that range from textual corruption to formulaic constraints. Leslie Collins has taken the view that *kholos*, wrath, is the only acceptable explanation for a warrior's absence from battle, and that Paris' mention of grief separates himself from the heroic type:

The subtle contrast in this particular scene between the warrior whose *kholos* justifies and ennobles his withdrawal, and the lesser warrior who must apologetically abjure *kholos* in withdrawal is, we have suggested, generated by the Iliad's ethical hierarchy which has at its top the preeminent warrior with whom it identifies its positive ethical characteristics, such as *kholos*.²⁷

²⁷ Collins (1987) 228.

Once again, Paris' submission to his own private cares highlights his brother's habit of subsuming private interests to public duty; the contrast between their armor in the beginning of the scene reveals their different understandings of the war. Paris has chosen to place his own desire to grieve over the suffering and grief of the Trojans, while Hector unfailingly places Trojan interests before his own. Yet Hector has the grace to suppose that wrath is the cause of Paris' absence when Helen is in the room; his politeness stems from his reluctance to embarrass Helen. Paris, who ought to be troubled by the tension between his private and public duty, does not appreciate the difficulty of his own situation in the way that Helen and Hector do; this, in turn, draws attention to Hector's own role as the hero torn between private and public duty.

The poet further contrasts the two brothers through his portrayal of their wives. While Andromache begged Hector to adopt a defensive strategy, Helen must beg Paris to take the offensive. As Paris himself admits, Helen is the motivator for his appearance in battle;

νῦν δέ με παρειποῦσ' ἄλοχος μαλακοῖς ἐπέεσσιν

ὄρμησ' ἐς πόλεμον...

Just now my wife, winning me over with soft words,

Urged me on to war... (VI.337-338).

To be sure, the soft words mentioned do not coincide with Helen's spiteful comparison of Paris with Menelaus in III; Edwards points out that "in view of the way she usually speaks to, and about, Paris, the formulaic expression may hide a touch of sardonic humor."²⁸ Yet here Paris may be trying to make his marriage sound better to Hector's ears, so that the very union which

²⁸ Edwards (1987) 208.

the Trojans are defending may not appear to be a worthless cause. Just as Hector has softened his manner toward his brother, so too does Paris pretend with Helen that they enjoy a loving relationship because Hector is present. This layer of complexity highlights the ways in which private and public life interact and mold each other; Paris and Helen pretend to be a happy couple in order not to degrade the principle for which Hector fights. Contrary to Paris' description, he was the one seducing his wife after his failure in the duel; now, however, Helen must "seduce" her husband to be a warrior. The awkwardness of her position, like that of Andromache, stems from the fact that she has no other family to turn to in Troy. By leaving her husband, it is as if she, like Andromache, has experienced the death of her entire family. Yet unlike Andromache, Helen cannot depend on Paris to protect her, so she must manipulate him in order to protect herself. In the process, Helen reveals that the difference between Hector and Paris has consequences for the survival of their respective households; Hector's family depends upon his life, while Paris' depends upon Helen's presence. Thus when a hero does not fulfill his public function, his household is in as much danger as when he does fight; by showing Paris' negligence, the singer highlights the difficulty of Hector's position. Giving in to his own desires does not entail that Andromache and Astyanax will be safe; on the contrary, it means that they will be more vulnerable, subject to the contempt of their countrymen and of their enemies.

At this point Helen turns her "μύθοισι...μειλιχίοισι" *gentle words* (VI.343) upon her brother-in-law. As Paris has admitted that she was about to persuade him to pursue a course of action against his will, Helen attempts to persuade Hector to not be too angry either with Paris or with herself. Whereas her words to her husband were supposed to be μαλακός, *soft*, her words to Hector are μελιχίος, *honeyed* or *gentle*. She is, quite literally, "sweet-talking" Hector, whose silence after Paris' explanation (VI.342) denotes displeasure, if not anger, with his brother's

response. Like Nestor, Helen has developed the ability to diffuse tension between men, to use her beauty and her words as tools of persuasion. Thus she engages in a form of public speech within the most private setting of her own home. However, her words are not gentle, but harsh, especially when she says that she is, “κυνὸς κακομηχάνου ὀκρυοέσσης” *a horrible mischief-plotting bitch* (VI.344). This self-deprecation signals to Hector that she at least understands what her presence in Troy must mean for him and for all of the Trojans; she uses the bitterest opinion of others to describe herself. By this rhetorical strategy, she begins to assuage Hector’s anger, presenting a radical opinion that she knows he does not share; her words are gentle because of the effect they have upon her audience. She engages his pity at the very beginning of her speech, in spite of the fact that he has the most reason to be angry about the war and the personal loss it brings to him. Ironically, this is the same tactic that Paris uses when he acknowledges his brother’s rebuke: “Ἔκτορ ἐπεὶ με κατ’ αἴσαν ἐνείκεσας οὐδ’ ὑπὲρ αἴσαν” *Hector, you rebuked me fitly and not unduly* (VI.333). Yet unlike Paris, the rest of Helen’s speech expresses a sense of shame that she must be rebuked. Helen possesses both a stronger sense of *aidos* and a better ability than Paris to fashion persuasive speeches; her husband’s deficiencies have led her to take a greater part in the public realm than normal.

Effectively, Helen’s speech contains two wishes, which are reminiscent of Hector’s wishful thinking throughout the epic. This mimicry creates a commonality between these in-laws as she communicates to him in the way which he understands best. First, Helen wishes that she had died before any of these events could have taken place (VI.345-348). By imagining not one, but two possible deaths, she outperforms even Hector, who usually imagines one possibility for the future. Furthermore, her wish for an earlier death is a step above Hector’s own wish that Paris had died long ago (III.41-43); though she could not have heard Hector’s speech, she

acknowledges to him that she holds herself responsible as well, removing yet another possible cause for anger. Helen wishes for her own death and not that of a third party, and she elaborates on the mechanisms by which she could have died. Her wish that a “θύελλα” *hurricane* (VI.346)²⁹ had dashed her against the mountain or under the sea is a violent expression of an alternative doom; instead of being subject to the love which made her follow Paris, at great personal loss, she instead imagines the natural storm that would have destroyed her without the loss of her self-respect. The violence of this imagery serves both to exonerate Helen, who cannot be blamed, and implies that, despite her innocence, she still feels guilty; both of these meanings align her view of the war with her brother-in-law’s, and thus turn aside his anger.

In her second wish, Helen subtly flatters Hector by openly disparaging Paris. Her wish is for a better husband, and her description of a good man is a description of Hector:

ἀνδρὸς ἔπειτ’ ὤφελλον ἀμείνονος εἶναι ἄκοιτις,
 ὅς ἤδη νέμεσίν τε καὶ αἴσχεα πόλλ’ ἀνθρώπων.
 τούτῳ δ’ οὔτ’ ἄρ νῦν φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὔτ’ ἄρ’ ὀπίσσω
 ἔσσουνται· τῷ καί μιν ἐπαυρήσεσθαι οἴω.

Then I ought to have been the wife of a better man,

One who knew just indignation and the many reproaches of men.

Now as it appears this man’s wits are not steadfast nor hereafter

Will they be so; and I am sure he will feel the consequences (VI.350-353).

The better man, the sort whom she deserves, bears no resemblance to Paris. Her desire for a

²⁹ Nagy discusses the *thuellai* in his book *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*: “We see that the divine abduction of mortals by gusts of wind (*thuellai* or *harpuiai*) entails not only preservation but also sex and death” (194). In reference to Helen’s situation, the *thuella* can be seen as a reimagining of her affair with Paris, which was as destructive to the Trojans as the *thuella* is imagined to be for Helen.

husband who responded to the just reproaches of others is the opposite of Paris' behavior; when rebuked, Paris acknowledges responsibility and then forgets all about the incident. Hector, as we have already seen, responds to just reproach and admits that he acts out of fear of the opinions of other people; thus far, Helen's ideal husband is strikingly like Hector. Furthermore, by stating that Paris' mind is irresolute, she implies that a good husband should be strong and determined; the very acts of persuasion that she uses ought not, in her opinion, to work upon a truly good man. Thus she censures Paris and distances herself from him and from her own actions. As Leslie Collins put it, "She means, obviously, to put herself apart from Paris; for although she unquestionably had a part in the same evils as Paris, still Helen, in contrast to him, now sees them the way Hector... would."³⁰ In light of his meeting with Andromache, Hector appears resolute to the point of stubbornness; though he acknowledge his wife's pain, he holds resolutely to his heroic ideals. Helen wishes for a husband that paid more attention to public matters, so that she would not have to be involved in them herself. Furthermore, as one scholar has noted, "her affectionate relationship with Hector reveals that if Paris had been more like his brother, she might not have had so many regrets."³¹ Thus Helen's two wishes are tied together by this desire for a better husband than Paris, whom she disparagingly refers to as "τούτῳ" *this man* (VI.352).³² In doing so, Helen removes the need for Hector to pretend for her that Paris is a great husband, by showing yet again that their judgment is in perfect agreement.

Having set the standard of a good man, Helen then either contradicts herself or tests Hector by inviting him to rest beside her:

³⁰ Collins (1988) 47.

³¹ Suzuki (1989) 36.

³² "A decisive condemnation, from the initial derisive "this man here"...to the contemptuous definition of his mental and moral inadequacy." Kirk (1985) 206.

ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν εἴσελθε καὶ ἕζεο τῷδ' ἐπὶ δίφρῳ

δᾶερ, ἐπεὶ σε μάλιστα πόνος φρένας ἀμφιβέβηκεν

εἴνεκ' ἐμεῖο κυνὸς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔνεκ' ἄτης,

But come now, come in and sit down upon this chair,

Brother-in-law, since the labor has encompassed your heart the most

For the sake of shameless me and the reckless impulse of Paris (VI.354-6).

Here Helen repeats what Hector himself believes, that the consequences of her union have fallen on his shoulders. Yet her suggestion that Hector find repose within her own house runs contrary to Hector's nature; as the scene with Andromache reveals, Hector only partially separates himself from the demands of public life within his immediate family. By the strength of her appeal, one in which she again criticizes herself, the narrator reveals that even the most persuasive woman in the epic is hard pressed to sway Hector from his purpose. Though she may have succeeded in turning aside his anger, she cannot bring about any action that would be inconsistent with his character, especially an aspect rooted within his role as a warrior and as a husband. Helen's appeal reveals that Hector's dimensions both as a hero and as a member of his own family are fundamental to his thematic function, because not even she is able to affect these aspects of his nature. By contrast, his irascibility, as we have seen in discussing the Andromache scene, is not a permanent characteristic, as both Andromache and Helen are able to turn aside his anger; Andromache is able to accomplish this through her relationship with him, while Helen must resort to her persuasive words to ameliorate his temper.

Hector's response to Helen shows her success and also her failure; while his gentle response denotes that she has successfully calmed him, he nevertheless refuses to linger any longer in her household. His tone is firm, but softer than his original words to Paris:

Τὴν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἴκτωρ
 μή με κάθιζ' Ἑλένη φιλέουσά περ· οὐδέ με πείσεις·

Then tall Hector with glancing helm answered her:

Helen though you love me, do not make me sit down; you will not persuade me.

(VI.359-360).

Like his spear, the descriptive adjectives “μέγας κορυθαίολος” *tall with glancing helm* (VI.359) lend Hector a militaristic tone even within his brother’s home. The contrast between this epithet and the gentleness of his rebuff softens his public persona as he speaks with another woman who is dear to him. Helen is “φιλέουσά” *loving* (VI.360) toward her brother-in-law because of Hector’s unfailing gentleness toward her. In her lament after Hector’s death, Helen reveals that Hector was never harsh toward her (XXIV.767) and even rebuked those members of his family who mistreated her (XXIV.771-772). As discussed in the Andromache chapter, Hector has a keen sense of responsibility, and he not only absolves Helen but also holds his family to his own judgment. In public life, Hector takes it upon himself to judge other warriors; in his attitude toward Helen, we see a continuation of this authority to arbitrate transferred into his private life. Nevertheless, he refuses to sit down with her, and implies that she could never be successful and that he would never succumb to her. The fact that Helen cannot persuade him only enforces her earlier description of an ideal husband; Hector is that kind of man so dedicated to his public role that he cannot be persuaded by her words.

The first reason for his refusal is consistent with his role as a public hero; he is needed in the war:

ἤδη γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐπέσσεται ὄφρ' ἐπαμύνω

Τρώεσσ', οἳ μέγ' ἐμεῖο ποθὴν ἀπεόντος ἔχουσιν.

For already my heart is hastened in order that I may defend

The Trojans, who have great desire for me when I am away (VI.361-362)

He states that his separation from his fellow Trojan warriors bears upon his mind continually, even as he undertakes these visits to his family. Yet again the narrator's hand is shown in this synthetic dimension of Hector; his conversation with Helen is only a delay in his plausible errand to bring Paris back to the front. The additional information that the Trojans think of Hector as much as Hector thinks about them heightens this inconsistency. The thematic tension between private and public duty is brought to the fore through a synthetic dimension; Hector's protestations that he is needed by the Trojans is undercut by his lingering presence within Troy. Yet Hector's heroic status is in itself dependent upon the domestic identity of his family.³³ The exploration of the tension between duty and family can only occur within the private realm of Troy, in which Hector appears more heroic because of the unheroic status of his interlocutors.

After refusing Helen's invitation, Hector then urges her to send Paris after him into battle (VI.363-364). This is consistent with his behavior toward Andromache; after refusing her advice and pleas to remain in Troy, he asks her to return to the home and continue her weaving. Hector usually gives commands after saying something that could hurt or offend the woman to whom he is speaking. Furthermore, the kinds of tasks that he recommends are such that only that particular woman could accomplish it. As the mistress of his home, only Andromache has the authority to direct the weaving in Hector's home; as Paris' charming wife, only Helen can incite him to take action. Used to being a commander in public life, Hector continues to be a

³³ "The Trojans are defenders each of his own *oikos*- the source of a male's social identity, but also a feminine domain – as much as of the city as a whole." Mackie (1996) 81.

commander in his private life. Yet again, the line between public and private domain blurs for Hector, and in doing so shows his own struggle to distinguish between the duties he owes to each realm. This struggle appears again in the lines immediately following his command to Helen, in which he lays out his plan to visit his own house. The specific purpose of this visit, to see “οἰκῆας ἄλοχόν τε φίλην καὶ νήπιον υἷόν” *my household, my dear wife, and infant son* (VI.366), is a private wish, juxtaposed with the preceding lines about his concern for the Trojans. By choosing to see his home before leaving Troy, Hector shows that his family actually does hold the priority in his affections over the men he commands; his speech to Helen shows the true importance he places upon his private life.

Yet even after he establishes the importance of his immediate family, Hector goes on to tell Helen his fear that he will never return to the city:

οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' εἰ ἔτι σφιν ὑπότροπος ἴξομαι αὖτις,

ἢ ἤδη μ' ὑπὸ χερσὶ θεοὶ δαμόωσιν Ἀχαιῶν.

For I do not know if I still returning shall come to them again,

Or if the gods should overcome me at the hands of the Achaeans (VI.367-368).

In these lines, Hector gives a clear statement about his coming death, and he reveals it to his sister-in-law alone. Although he admits his fear of death to Andromache, here he plainly states that this may be the last time he will ever be in Troy. This attitude is inconsistent with Hector's bravado in public about the outcome of the war, but it is also strange that his immediate fear is told to Helen, and not his wife. Yet Andromache has shown that she does not understand her husband's need to attain glory, while Helen may. In reference to her own elopement with Paris, she mentions that they “ἄνθρωποισι πελώμεθ' αἰδίμοι ἐσσομένοισι” *may become famous in song to men hereafter* (VI.358). Due to Paris' actions, Helen has become a greater participant in

public life than usual for a woman, and this participation brings a greater understanding of the heroic desire for renown. Thus Hector can share the fear of his death without concern that this member of his family will try to dissuade him from his heroic duty. Even in this decision, Hector's relationship with Helen serves his thematic function; he can share his fear knowing that this woman will not attempt to wear down his commitment to public duty.

Through his conversations with Helen and with Paris, Hector demonstrates his personal beliefs about the role of a proper husband and his willingness to differ from societal consensus when he feels it is just. While Paris offers his own sorrow as a reason for his absence from battle, Hector's angry silence shows that this excuse is insufficient. Furthermore, as Helen's speech makes clear, she, like Hector, sees it as the duty of a husband to pay attention to the opinions of other men. Paris ought to be an enthusiastic participant in this war, which is fought in part for Helen, in order to fend off the rebuke and ill will of his fellow Trojans. Even though Helen is not his wife, Hector leads the Trojans against the Achaeans out of solidarity with his brother and also out of concern for his sister-in-law. Though a hero should be aware of society's rebuke, Hector thinks it possible for a hero to differ in opinion from that society. The best example is that he, unlike the rest of his family, does not blame Helen for the war; he has chosen to judge her situation for himself, and since he believes she is innocent, he willingly goes against the prejudice of the Trojans. In his relationship with Helen, Hector demonstrates his willingness to negotiate heroic duty; though a hero must have a sense of *aidos*, this does not entail that he must always follow the opinion of those around him. Instead, a hero may choose which societal judgments are proper and which are too severe. In doing so, Hector defines his own parameters of heroic action, especially when it comes to the judgment of his family by others. Hector does not forgive Paris, who has more responsibility as a warrior of the public realm, as readily as he

forgives Helen; as a member of his female relations, she is excused from the societal duties that Hector expects of his brother. It is precisely because Paris must be reminded about his contribution to the war that Hector emerges as the hero torn between private and public life; Paris and Helen together bring out Hector's conflict between his role as a war hero and his role as an arbiter of justice within his own family.

Chapter 3: Hector and Hecuba

After entering Troy, Hector first meets and converses with Hecuba, his mother. In this first encounter with a member of his family, Hector's words are terser than in his later conversations with Helen and Andromache. His conversation with Hecuba sets up a contrast for the rest of Z as he gradually softens with each conversation he has with a female family member. As the bottom rung in Kakridis' ascending scale of affection,³⁴ Hecuba is the appropriate starting point of Hector's journey within Troy. As he travels from his mother, to his sister-in-law, to his wife, Hector's stay within Troy mimics the ascent of this scale of affection, culminating in his interview with Andromache. The conversation with Hecuba reveals Hector's character as a son and her character as a mother. Hecuba is Priam's queen, and thus has a public function in the same way that her princely son has a public function. As a mother, Hecuba also has a unique claim of authority over Hector; she may not give him orders, but she holds a powerful position within the hierarchy of Priam's large immediate family. Unlike Hector, Hecuba thinks that there are times when private needs should overcome public demands; this is especially evident when she acts within her role as a nurturing mother. The narrator explores the relationship between a mother and her adult child in this conversation between Hecuba and Hector; Hector's commitment to heroic endeavor in the public realm of war and counsel supersedes the claim his mother has over his affections. In the process of becoming a warrior, Hector has reversed the former relationship with his mother; Hecuba once raised and protected her son as a child, but now Hector has become her defender. The interaction between these two characters dramatizes

³⁴ Kakridis (1949) 19-20.

the conflict between private and public duty shared by both Hecuba and Hector.

The transition from the battlefield to the interior of the city is marked by a lengthy passage describing the palace of Priam (VI.242-250). The attention to detail evidenced in the palace's layout and construction establishes a world of order and hierarchy which mimics the order of the public realm. The fifty chambers for the sons and their wives (VI.244) are balanced by the twelve chambers of the daughters and their husbands (VI.248). The symmetry and proportion of this arrangement establishes an architectural niche that corresponds to the social position of each of the children of Priam. Furthermore, all of these chambers are described as “πλησίον” *near, neighboring to* (VI.245, 249); the interconnection of the palace rooms indicates the mutual dependence of the royal family of Troy upon one another. The construction of the palace reflects a peaceful past, and Hector's return as a warrior shows the transition in time from the long history of the royal family to its present involvement in the Trojan War. In this world which still retains traces of domestic peace, Hecuba holds an important position as Priam's wife and the queen of Troy. Hector's return to Troy is a return to the domain of his father, but his entrance into the palace marks his transition into the domain of his mother. Thus the narrator marks the shift from public life into private life by a detailed description of the physical building that encloses the private life of Hector's family.

Our introduction to Hector's family begins with Hecuba's greeting of her son in the palace. The narrator says that “ἐνθά οἱ ἠπιόδωρος ἐναντίη ἦλυθε μήτηρ” *There his bountiful mother came opposite him* (VI.251), giving Hecuba the active role within this domestic realm. Even though Hector enters Troy and crosses over into the palace, Hecuba is described as the woman who found him, creating the expectation that she has equal authority as her son in this context. To emphasize her role as the matriarch within the palace, the narrator tells us that she is

“Λαοδίκην ἐσάγουσα” *leading Laodice* (VI.252). Hecuba is given another active participle that describes her authority over her daughter, yet again making the audience expect that she will also direct Hector’s actions. Thus even before any words are exchanged, the narrator has already told us that Hecuba is a powerful woman within her domestic sphere; as a mother, she is accustomed to being active in her nurturing and guidance, for daughters and sons alike. Purposefully left out of this description is any reference to Hector’s reaction to finding, or rather being found, by his mother, especially since he has long been an independent leader in the war outside of Hecuba’s influence. Thus the audience waits for the interaction between two characters who are strong leaders within their respective spheres of life.

Predictably, Hecuba is the first to speak, using the hand-and-word formula that occurs throughout the epic. As Martin noted in his book, *The Language of Heroes*, these formulae are used “whenever one speaker establishes contact with a listener for an emotional private conversation...these introduce motherly, comforting language...or words between intimates.”³⁵ The appearance of this formula in interactions between mothers and sons is partly limited by the setting of the war; the Achaeans are too far from home to meet with their mothers, and scenes of battle are not the typical haunts of mothers in epic. Yet of the Trojans, who fight before their city’s walls and therefore are in close proximity to their mothers, only Hector has such an interview with his mortal mother. The word mortal is critical, because Aeneas is often protected by Aphrodite, his divine mother. Most importantly, the only other intimate conversation between mother and son occurs between Achilles and his mother, the goddess Thetis.³⁶ While

³⁵ Martin (1989) 19.

³⁶ Laura Slatkin’s 1991 book, *The Power of Thetis*, gives an in-depth look at the way in which the *Iliad* gives a selective representation of Thetis’ mythology to emphasize her maternal role. This maternal role, in turn, only serves to highlight Achilles’ vulnerability; despite his goddess mother’s protection, he will still die.

Hecuba greets the son whom she is powerless to protect, Thetis seeks to comfort a son whom she ought to be able to defend, but cannot due to his mortal nature. Thus Thetis is still acting as Achilles' defender; as a mortal, he cannot protect her, an immortal, from war or pillage, but she can intercede for him. On the other hand, Hecuba must be defended by Hector because he has the social function of a hero and because she is a mortal woman. The mimetic dimension of having a mortal mother who transitions from protector to the protected enhances Hector's thematic function; his death will endanger the life of his mother, but Achilles' death cannot expose the immortal Thetis to the indignities of defeat. Furthermore, though the formula denotes the same maternal function for Hecuba and Thetis, their differing circumstances render Thetis undeniably more powerful than her son and Hecuba undeniably weaker than her son. By comparing these two type scenes, the meeting between mother and son, we clearly see that Thetis participates as a mother in the public life of her son, while Hecuba, because Hector defends her, is effectively relegated to her private sphere.

Ironically, though her son's heroic status emphasizes her role in the domestic realm, Hecuba's first words to Hector question his decisions as a public figure: "τέκνον τίπτε λιπῶν πόλεμον θρασὺν εἰλήλουθας;" *Child, why on earth have you left behind the bold battle and come here?* (VI.254). Her tone implies that it is uncharacteristic for Hector to leave the battle for any purpose. In doing so, Hecuba conveys that it is a natural part of her son's duty to be away from the city and to be devoted to his public tasks as a hero. At the same time, she retains some of her old authority over Hector by implying a right to question her son's decisions. Her acceptance of his public duty is also an acceptance of his adult duty to protect her and the world she represents. Hecuba's attitude toward her son's participation in the battle contrasts with Andromache's at the end of VI; Andromache never stops to ask her husband his purpose within

Troy, and immediately begins to ask him to stay. Instead, like Helen, Hecuba has a sense of *aidos* and the cultural necessity for Hector to endanger his life outside the city walls. However, this question includes an aspect of her personal relationship with her son: “In inviting him to speak she is, as his mother, anticipating a moment of togetherness, when he will share his experiences with her.”³⁷ Her involvement in public life stems from her role as queen, but as a mother she is involved in domestic concerns also; her conversation with Hector reveals contradictions that show that she is as conflicted as Hector is about the proper division between private and public character and values.

In seeking to answer her question, Hecuba posits her own explanation, one which mingles her own private and public concerns; as this explanation reveals her own inner conflict, it also develops Hector’s personal striving to balance these two divergent claims upon him. The fact that his mother, the first woman of Troy, entertains these doubts makes Hector’s uncertainties more realistic. First, Hecuba blames the oppressive onslaught of the Achaeans:

ἦ μάλα δὴ τεύρουσι δυσώνυμοι υἱὲς Ἀχαιῶν

μαρνάμενοι περὶ ἄστυ·

Surely indeed the ill-omened sons of the Achaeans

fighting around the city wear you out (VI.255-256).

As a mother, she is concerned that Hector is being overworked as a warrior, and that his own desire for rest naturally prompted him to withdraw from the front lines. This sounds suspiciously like Paris’ unheroic desire to give over to sorrow (VI.336), placing personal emotions over the public need, which Hector does not support. Yet Hecuba goes on to give an official reason for

³⁷ Minchin (2007) 182.

Hector to return: “ἐλθόντ’ ἐξ ἄκρης πόλιος Διὶ χεῖρας ἀνασχεῖν.” *You have arrived to hold up your hands to Zeus from the citadel of the city* (VI.257). This second reason falls within Hector’s public duty; Trojan men pray to Zeus for aid in battle just as the women pray to Athena for aid. By positing that this is his reason for returning, Hecuba gives her son a heroic duty to carry out, one that could equally well explain his departure. Yet in doing so Hecuba reveals that she does not see his motivations as purely private or purely public; they are combined in her thinking, and therefore she supposes that they are mixed in her son’s mind as well.

Without waiting for a response, Hecuba then assumes that she is correct and offers to help her son carry out this “mission.” Her assumption reveals a woman used to authority and action; she assumes that she understands both the private and public concerns of her children. This authority stems from her position as a matriarch within domestic life and as a public figure; due to both of these experiences, she makes reasonable conjectures about the motivations of her grown son. Furthermore, as his mother, she sees herself as someone who can help Hector achieve his task within the city:

ἀλλὰ μὲν ὄφρα κέ τοι μελιηδέα οἶνον ἐνείκω,

ὡς σπέισης Διὶ πατρὶ καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισι

Yet wait until I have brought honey-sweet wine to you,

In order that you may make a libation to father Zeus and to the other immortals

(VI.258-259).

Her imperative to her son, “μὲν” *wait* (VI.258) contrasts her position as a civilian and Hector’s role as a military commander; regardless of the fact that he is on official business, Hecuba still claims the right to direct his actions. To this end, she proposes to bring wine for Hector to use in his supposed mission to appease the gods. The wine, like Hecuba, has both a domestic and a

public function. Wine is the common beverage of the epic, but it is also used in religious ceremonies and the proper mixture of wine takes on political significance for public feasts. Thus the wine is something that a woman of the domestic sphere should be able to provide, but Hecuba goes a step further by proposing that the wine should be used for a libation. Though women also may make libations and participate in religious rites in the *Iliad*, the supplication to Zeus implied here is typically carried out by men. Notably, after asserting that the wine can be used for a public function, she adds that it can also be used to help Hector more directly: “ἔπειτα δὲ καὐτὸς ὀνήσεται αἶ κε πίησθα” *then if you should drink it you yourself would be benefitted* (VI.260). Hecuba argues that the wine can also benefit Hector personally, and through this benefit Hector will better fulfill his public role. In doing so, she speaks as a mother, within her domestic role. Elizabeth Minchin has shown that Hecuba uses directives frequently in her conversation with Hector, as she presumably used to do when he was young, because “she, after all, is his mother.”³⁸ In this way, Hecuba acts within her private and public role simultaneously, just as Hector tries to do in the epic; she too has struggled to come to terms with the role of being a queen and a mother, and her struggle makes her son’s efforts more understandable to the audience.

In order to support her last suggestion, Hecuba gives her son an adage that seems tailored to his own situation:

ἀνδρὶ δὲ κεκημῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει,

ὡς τύνη κέκηκας ἀμύνων σοῖσιν ἔτησι

For a wearied man, wine strengthens great might,

³⁸ Minchin (2007) 200.

As you have grown weary defending your kinsmen (VI.261-262).

As before, this saying contains a germ of public and private speech; while the first line applies to any situation, the second line applies to the task of carrying out the war. Thus she begins with a universal statement that the strength needed for public or domestic work is strengthened by wine. However, she amends the first line by adding the specific public circumstance in which Hector's strength has been weakened. In doing so, she seeks to persuade her son to follow her advice because it has been couched in this proverbial language. Kirk notes in his commentary on the *Iliad* that "this she cleverly relates to her son's special case by sound rather than logic, through the anaphora of κεκτη- and the continuing alliteration of μ's."³⁹ Although Kirk underestimates the logic within her speech, Hecuba's employment of those stylistic devices reflects a relatively sophisticated composition for private discourse. Indeed, this level of sophistication lends her private speech the aura of a public speech act, so that she speaks persuasively to her son in the language he is accustomed to following in counsels and on the battlefield.

Yet Hector is not persuaded by his mother's speech, and he firmly proves to her that her supposition is incorrect. In his reply, he first addresses the private matter of his own strength, answering that part of her concern which directly pertained to her role as a mother. While his tone is respectful, his words are final:

μή μοι οἶνον ἄειρε μελίφρονα πότνια μήτηρ,
μή μ' ἀπογυιώσης μένεος, ἀλκῆς τε λάθωμαι·

Revered mother, do not bear for me the honeyed wine,

Lest you should unnerve my strength, and I should forget my valor (VI. 264-265).

³⁹ Kirk (1985) 196.

The alliteration of μ's is also present here in Hector's speech, but is amplified in a way that overpowers his mother's earlier attempts. This device, added to the repeated μή, strengthens the negative tenor of Hector's response. Hecuba's original command of "μέν" *wait* (VI.258) is countered by the negative command "μή...ἄειρε" *do not bear* (VI.264); Hector balances his mother's foray into the public arena of war counsel with a firm assertion of his own authority, regardless of her familial relationship to him. Yet the harshness of his refusal is softened both by his respectful, if somewhat formal, use of "πότνια" *revered* (VI.264) and the two fear clauses in line 265; he fears both what she may bring about and what he may be responsible for. In doing so, Hector keeps clear the idea that his mother has authority within her domestic role and her public role. At the same time, he asserts his authority as a hero over her in both functions.

As a final touch, Hector then corrects her supposition of his errand by pointing out that it would be impossible for him to pray to Zeus with grimy hands:

χεροῖ δ' ἀνίπτοισιν Διὶ λείβειν αἶθοπα οἶνον

ἄζομαι· οὐδέ πη ἔστι κελαινεφεῖ Κρονίωνι

αἶματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον εὐχετάσθαι.

I shrink from pouring sparkling wine to Zeus with unwashed hands;

It is not possible for a man spattered with blood and gore

To pray to the son of Kronos shrouded in dark clouds (VI.266-268).

Having set aside the use of wine for his own strength, Hector gives sound reasons why the wine cannot be used in these circumstances for a public libation to Zeus. In doing so, Hector demonstrates his own understanding of religious protocol; at the same time, he implies that he will brook no attempt by his mother to clean him in order that he might accept the wine. Thus Hector rebuffs his mother's attempts to dictate the manner in which he will accomplish his task.

The hendiadys of “αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ” *blood and gore* (VI.268) emphasizes his specific function as a warrior, and the striking “πεπταλαγμένον” *splattered* (VI.268) informs us that Hector has been actively engaged in killing others, and that he bears the reminder of his recent activity into the peacefulness of his family’s palace. The contrast between himself and his mother is complete; within the elegant and pristine surrounding of the palace stands Hector, covered in grime, refusing all attempts to delay him or remove him from his heroic mindset. Though he will remove his helmet for Astyanax, here Hector refuses to wipe off the blood from his armor; in his first meeting within Troy, Hector seems determined to remain a hero and not to be tempted by his family members to indulge in the comforts of his private life. As with Andromache and Helen, Hector gently rebukes Hecuba for her attempt to advise him; he still stubbornly holds onto the authority to make his own decisions. Yet unlike these two women and his comrades, Hector explains to his mother why he will not follow her advice; this mark of respect indicates his recognition of his mother’s position and of his duty towards her, regardless of his function within public life.

True to form, after rebuffing a family member, Hector then directs them to a course of action that he thinks is necessary; he tells Andromache to weave, Helen to stir up Paris, and Hecuba to lead the supplication of Athena. Yet unlike the former two women, Hecuba receives detailed instructions about the manner in which she should carry out her business. The passage of instructions (VI.269-278) is a direct copy of what Helenus said to Hector from lines 87-97. Though this verbatim duplication is a common occurrence in Homeric narration, it also serves to strengthen Hector’s tendency to domineer everyone, including his mother. The concern, first voiced by Helenus, for “ἄστυ τε καὶ Τρώων ἀλόχους καὶ νήπια τέκνα” *the city and the wives of the Trojans and their infant children* (VI.276), reflects Hector’s own deepest concerns about

his family. Thus a hero's motivation to fight may be glory, but it is also tied to the protection of his family. Hector's directions are spoken to his mother out of his private and also his public concerns; he needs the women to pray to Athena in order to win a victory, but that victory will serve himself and will also protect the women he tries to defend.

After counseling his mother, Hector confides to her that he wants to find Paris. The interesting part about this task is that it is self-imposed. Helenus only asked Hector to play the role of messenger to Hecuba, but Hector takes it upon himself to bring Paris back to the battle. Just as the prayers to Athena are necessary for victory, so too is Paris' presence necessary for the war effort. Though he believes that Paris has a function to play in the present circumstances, Hector then engages in a wish for his brother's death:

εἰ κεῖνόν γε ἴδοιμι κατελθόντ' Ἄϊδος εἴσω
φαίην κε φρέν' ἀτέρπου οἴζυος ἐκλελαθέσθαι.

If only I might see that man descended into the house of Hades

I would say that my heart had forgotten its joyless affliction (VI.284-285).

The tone is harsher than anywhere else in the epic because it suggests that Paris' death would be better for Hector's own interests. Once he reaches Paris' house, he only rebukes his brother, and by the time he meets Andromache, he makes no mention of Paris. Yet with Hecuba, Hector frees his mind, revealing a gloomy opinion of his brother as the cause of great public and private suffering. Not only do we see that contact with his family gradually mellows Hector's anxieties, but also that his anger is only fully expressed to his mother. Hecuba's dual function, as his mother and as a queen, allows this kind of encounter to take place; Hector, as a hero, can express the bare facts to Hecuba because she understands the public pressures that have fallen upon him through Paris' folly.

In light of these pressures, Hecuba's attempts to aid her son are no longer sufficient; Hector's response to his mother denies her the ability to comment upon his decisions or to suggest a different course of action. In the process, Hector has demonstrated the natural reversal of the natural relationship between mother and son, that he has become her protector and is the one most responsible for her life. Hecuba's suggestions, stemming from her knowledge as a mother and as a queen, are an attempt to reestablish the former relationship, and are formed like a persuasive speech of counsel. Her son's masterful response, designed to answer and overpower her speech, relegates her firmly to her private sphere. In the process, Hector tries to be both a dutiful son and a glorious hero, demonstrating yet again his conflicted position between the public and private realm. Hecuba, acting as a mortal mother, increases Hector's mimetic dimensions. In fact, this meeting with his mother is a direct contrast to Achilles' conversations with his mother, Thetis. The contrast between these two heroes reveals that Hector's story is one of a normal hero, a man who can no longer be protected by his mortal mother.

Conclusion

When Hector leaves Troy at the end of Book VI, the audience has gained an insight into his character that could not have been found in war or in the Trojan camp. Each woman with whom he meets contributes to his characterization, challenging and complementing the image Hector has structured and maintained in public life. The unheroic female family members have made Hector appear to be an even greater hero than before; he is no longer a simple warrior, but acts from complex motivations and fears. The synthetic aspect of his character, the deviance into Troy, has developed his mimetic aspects, enhancing his realism. Hector, as we see him in Book Z, has a mother, a sister, and a wife who care deeply for him and whom he cares for in return. He does not act in a void, but in the midst of a community that extends beyond his comrades on the field to the walls of Troy. This added dimension makes Hector the character who represents the thematic tension between public and private life; he stands for the mortal hero who fights for himself as well as for his family and his city.

From each of the chapters, a few traits emerge as characteristic of Hector. First, he is stubborn to a fault. He rebuffs all three women when they try to detain him, and denies their ability to question his authority or his decisions. This agrees with his behavior elsewhere in the *Iliad*, when he often refuses the advice of other Trojans in battle. Second, Hector is always a commander. After turning down the women's offers, Hector gives them each a charge to fulfill. In an attempt to meliorate the harshness of his manner, he tries to appease them by distracting them with tasks that fall within their gendered responsibility; he denies their fitness to counsel him and then turns them to occupations for which he deems they are fit. Third, no matter the depth of his affection for each woman, he struggles to balance their needs and his public duty;

Hector tries to be warrior and family man simultaneously, as we see in the famous helmet scene with Andromache, the spear in Paris' house, and the grimy armor before his mother Hecuba.

Yet there are aspects of Hector's character that are unique to Book VI. For instance, we discover in his conversation with Andromache that, though his public persona is consciously separated from her, she is foremost in his thoughts. Thus Hector has constructed his own parameters of heroic action so that, while he appears to be driven only by public concerns, Andromache and Astyanax can remain central to his own understanding of his identity.

Although Hector is often described as the hero of *aidos*, we see in his attitude to Helen that there are instances where he is willing to go against the judgment of society. While the Trojans judge and blame Helen, Hector practically absolves her from guilt, and treats her with a kindness that is not extended to her husband, Hector's own brother, Paris. Here again, Hector has assumed the authority to judge social consensus and to modify it to his own judgment as a hero; although he often agrees with society, he does not feel obligated to agree with the opinions of other people. Finally, his interaction with his mother, Hecuba, powerfully demonstrates his own mortality; unlike Thetis, who can still protect her mortal son Achilles, Hecuba's weakness emphasizes the importance of Hector's strength and the fatal implications of his mortality.

In fact, mortality is at the crux of Homer's characterization of Hector. All of these minute details, the consistencies and inconsistencies between his public and private persona, reveal a very ordinary man. The more complex Hector's motivations, the more realistic he appears to the audience. The thematic tensions between public and private life opposes Hector to Achilles, who decidedly does not engage in an inner struggle over public and private life. Unlike the semi-divine Achilles, Hector fights for more than personal glory, with little assurance that he will attain either glory or the safety of his family. His death is foreshadowed throughout the

epic, and Book VI prepares us for the monumental significance of his death. Homer gives each of his minor heroes a short descriptive passage before they die, mentioning the wives they have left at home or the parents they will never return to. Book VI serves as a long plaintive description of everything that Hector stands to lose, and its memory overshadows Hector every time he enters the field of battle. When Hector finally does die at the hands of Achilles, he is not just another casualty of war. He is a victim of the heroic code, undermining the very ethos that he sought to represent in all aspects of his life.

Yet the epic does not end with the death of Hector, but with his funeral. Strangely enough, the very women who met him in Book VI are the women who perform the funeral lament. Heroic characterization, as we've seen through Book VI, also depends upon the unheroic; at the end of the *Iliad*, it is the unheroic who take on the task of commemorating and handing down the *kleos* of the fallen warrior. As they shaped Hector's character in life, so too do the women shape the remembrance of Hector after his death. The characterization of Hector, unlike the other heroes, depends upon unheroic interlocutors, people who do not partake in public speech acts except for funeral laments. Their presence in Book VI prepares us for the nature of their laments, which celebrate Hector the man as well as Hector the warrior. In the process, Homer has transformed the *Iliad* into one long lament, one ritual song in which all the heroes of the war are remembered and celebrated by all members of society. By characterizing Hector differently, by developing the tension between public and private life through private conversations, the poet transcends the mere narrative of a traditional story and delivers a powerful commentary on the nature of war and of humanity. The famous shield of Achilles depicts the city at peace and the city at war, emphasizing that human life centers around the conflict between domestic peace and public war; Hector is the character who bridges this gap.

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