Divine Achilles and his Raging Heart: Cannibalism in the *Iliad*.

Written by Lucca Crowe

Thesis Advisor: Angela Pitts.

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The story of the *Iliad* is one of identity. As Achilles struggles with whom to identify with, his divine mother or mortal father, he is consumed by an overwhelming rage that threatens to overpower him, dragging him down from both divinity and mortality into the very depths of monstrous savagery. This article examines the role that diet, particularly the act of cannibalism, plays in differentiating humans from gods and beasts. By examining Achilles identity struggle through the lens of cannibalism, this article sheds light on the broader ways Greek and Roman authors used cannibalism to express notions of otherness, situating civilized humans on the greater cosmic scale between gods and animals. Organizationally, this article is broken into three key sections: in the first section, this article addresses the ways diet is used to differentiate gods from humans, and the ways humans like Tantalus or Lycaon use cannibalism to challenge the distinctions between them; the second section of this article addresses the ways cannibalism was used to denote otherness, examining the ways historians like Herodotus or Thucydides described foreigners as cannibalistic and uncivilized, focusing on how all these biases and cultural anxieties are manifested in the story of Polyphemus; the final section of the article takes these established facets of literary cannibalism and applies them to Achilles and the other characters of the *Iliad*, examining how Achilles performs his divinity and how he grows progressively bestial. The article eventually concludes that Achilles' ultimate rejection of cannibalism signals his acceptance of humanity.

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"I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized help on this work."

Lucca Crowe

Introduction:

Alone on a dusty field before the walls of sacred Ilium, two warriors face off. Hector calls out to his opponent Achilles, urging him to make a pact, the surviving victor would treat his enemy's corpse with honor. After their fateful combat, Hector once more, with his dying breath, begged Achilles to honor his body after death. Achilles' reply would prove one of the most chilling utterances in all of western literature, not only underlining the core theme in Achilles' characterization throughout the *Iliad*, but also reverberating through history, informing the very nature of what the Greeks defined as human: μή με κύον γούνων γουνάζεο μὴ δὲ τοκήων: / αἳ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνήη / ὤμ᾽ ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷα ἔοργας, / ὡς οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὃς σῆς γε κύνας κεφαλῆς ἀπαλάλκοι… (Hom. *Il*. 22.345-48). "Implore me not, dog, by clasping knees nor by fathers. For would that my rage and heart might urge me to eat your butchered flesh raw, for what you have done, yet surly there is no man who shall ward the dogs from off your head" (Hom. *Il*. 22.345-48). Achilles' self-described desire that his rage might drive him to cannibalize Hector is shocking, both to the modern and ancient reader. The cannibalistic sentiment represents the climax of Achilles' rage, after which it slowly dims to the point that he can find himself dining with King Priam in Book 24.

The subject of cannibalism appears infrequently in classical literature, but usually signals a thematic, if not explicit, exploration of the distinctions separating human from god and beast, civilization from savagery, and Greek from foreigner. Cannibalism in Greek thought was a social taboo which affected gods, humans, monsters, and beasts differently. Throughout the *Iliad*, Achilles wrestles with his own identity and place in society, whether he is divine or mortal, and by whose social codes he ought to abide. This paper will seek to analyze the ways in which dietary practices, particularly those relating to cannibalism, serve to differentiate humans from

gods and beasts. It will look at the ways in which breaking these prohibitions against cannibalism can shift an individual's status in the cosmic order; gods becoming more human while humans either ascend to godhood or fall into bestial savagery, transforming into wolves or dogs. The paper will then analyze how the act of cannibalism was used by the Greeks not only to differentiate humans from gods, but to underline civilization from barbarism, Greek from non-Greek; how using stories like that of the cyclops Polyphemus, Greeks projected their fears of otherness and the abandonment of social codes onto foreign cultures, imagining barbarous cannibalistic savages eating good Greek soldiers and heroes. Finally, the paper examines the ways these themes are expressed in the character of Achilles in the *Iliad*; how he imitates the gods in diet but is likewise tempted into barbarous savagery by his unruly rage, his humanity pulled in both directions. Achilles' eventual admission, however begrudgingly, that he cannot bring himself to actually cannibalize Hector, therefore, signifies the realization of his own humanity, and with it mortality.

History of Scholarship:

Various scholars have tackled the rich themes of cannibalism in Homeric and greater classical literature. Authors like Segal (1974), Vidal-Naquet (1986), and Detienne (1981) take a structuralist approach to the classical literature surrounding cannibalism, analyzing the broader themes of Greek vs Other, Civilization vs Barbarism, Mortal vs Divine, and how dietary practices can be used to differentiate such divisions. Charles Segal (1974) in *The Raw and the Cooked in Greek Literature* studies the way the Greeks defined themselves and the 'other' by the

basis of dietary custom. He writes about how, in the Greek's world view, humanity was divided amongst eaters of bread and eaters of meat, civilization from savage barbarity. The further away from Greece one got, the more savage, animalistic, and monstrous the people and cultures became. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, (1986) in *The Black Hunter*, similarly, writes of the ways in which diet can differentiate savage from civilized, Greek from non-Greek. Particularly relevant to the discussion of Homeric cannibalism, Naquet focuses on the description of land in Book 9 of the *Odyssey*, drawing connections between the island of the cyclopes and the golden age of man described in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Marcel Detienne (1981) *Between Beasts and Gods*, writes about the subject of tyrant as power-hungry cannibal and its interpretations by various philosophers; as well as the social laws that define divinity, savagery, and humanity, how the tyrant broke them, and how other philosophies like those of the Orphics or Pythagoreans sought to transcend them. Like Naquet and Segal, Detienne also writes about the defining features of savagery in the eyes of the Greeks, that being the consumption of raw meat and ultimately cannibalism, writing about the direct parallels between how close a people were to Greece and the degree to which they were savage.

Later authors like Gibson (2022), Hook (1992), Carol Dougherty (1999), Braund and Gilbert (2003), and Neal (2006) would take a closer philological look into the literature surrounding Achilles and Cannibalism. Christopher Lawrence Gibson (2022) in his *Anthropology and Cannibalism in Ancient Literature,* provides a fascinating and expansive overview of the subjects ranging from the liminal space of monsters in the cosmic hierarchy, the use of ritual tools in cannibalistic acts, dogs as stand-ins for human cannibalism, and Achilles complicated threat of cannibalism, to the complicated reflection of cannibalistic rage in Queen Hecuba. Brian Steward Hook (1992) in *Tyranny and Cannibalism: The Thyestes Theme in Greek and Roman*

Literature, like Detienne, explored Plato's allegory of the tyrant as cannibal from the *Republic*, and how Plato used Thyestes as an inspiration for his allegory. The subject of Polyphemus and the cyclopes, a popular topic for cannibalism, is covered by Carol Dougherty (1999) in *The Double Vision of Euripides' Cyclops*, unlike Naquet, focusing on the way the Athenian tragedian played with what makes someone human, while poking fun at Athen's Sicilian misadventures. Susanna Braund, Morton, and Glenn's edited volume (2003), *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen*, covers the ways anger is portrayed in ancient sources; while the co-editors, Susanna Braund and Giles Gilbert's own essay *An ABC of Epic Ira: Anger, Beasts, and Cannibalism*, specifically looks at the ways that classical warrior heroes like Achilles and Tydeus were driven towards cannibalism by their own rage, and the ways Achilles diet may have influenced the way he conducted himself in war. Finally, authors like Tamara Neal (2006) in *Blood and Hunger in the Iliad*, examine the course of the *Iliad* through a far more focused lens. Neal breaks down the action of the *Iliad* day by day, analyzing the progressive dehumanization of the warriors and gods engaged in the conflict, and how it ultimately strips them of their humanity.

You Are What You Eat: Cannibalism and the Cosmic Order

To understand the nature of Achilles' cannibalistic identity struggle in Homer's *Iliad*, attention must first be turned towards Hesiod's *Works and Days*. As was stated above and will be expounded upon later, one of Achilles' core struggles in the *Iliad* relates to whether he belongs to the race of gods or men, and therefore which system of laws and taboos should govern him. To

understand this struggle, the differences between gods, humans, and beasts must first be clearly established. In Hesiod's 8th century didactic poem, *Works and Days*, the poet states: τόνδε γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων / ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηρσὶ καὶ οἰωνοῖς πετεηνοῖς / ἐσθέμεν ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶ μετ᾽ αὐτοῖς: / ἀνθρώποισι δ᾽ ἔδωκε δίκην, ἣ πολλὸν ἀρίστη / γίγνεται (Hes. *WD*.276-280). "For Cronion Zeus established this custom for humans, on the one hand for fish and wild beasts and winged carrion birds to eat each other, since there is no *dike* among them; but to humans he gave *dike*, which by far is the best." The word δίκε or '*dike*' can be translated in any number of ways, either custom, justice, or particularly law.[1] Humanity according to Hesiod, therefore, is defined as distinct from other forms of animals by the use of law, above all others the prohibition against cannibalism. Humanity is defined, in a sense, by its restraint, by its ability to control its baser impulses in order to maintain a social order. As Carol Dougherty (1999) writes "the repression of the cannibal appetite functions as the defining moment in the narrative of mankind's evolution from savage to civilized behavior." Should a human being, therefore, break from this civilizing law and consume his fellow man, he cannot fully be defined as human, and must therefore be classified as something entirely different.[2]

Having defined the nature of what separates human from beast, that being law and the prohibition against cannibalism, what defines the difference between human and god? Just as human and beast can be defined by their dietary habits, so to can gods. Once more, Hesiod provides the dietary relationship between human and god. In the *Theogony*, when Prometheus divides the sacrificial share between human and god, the gods' share is that of the burning bones and fat, while humanity is left to consume the real meat of sacrificial animals (Hes. *Theog*.538-57). As Detienne (1981) points out "men received the meat because to live they have to eat flesh, perishable flesh, such as they themselves are made of. The gods alone received the aromas,

perfumes, the irrefutable substances which constitute the superior foods reserved for the immortals."[3] The nature of burnt sacrifice as a divine consumable is confirmed outside the *Theogony* in lines from the *Iliad* like: οὐ γάρ μοί ποτε βωμὸς ἐδεύετο **δαιτὸς ἐΐσης** / λοιβῆς τε κνίσης τε: τὸ γὰρ λάχομεν γέρας ἡμεῖς (Hom. *Il*.4.48-9). Here Zeus describes how Priam never failed to leave "an equal feast, both libation and the smell of roasting fat," at Zeus's alter in Troy. The words δαιτὸς ἐΐσης are key, an 'equal feast,' not just an offering but a 'feast,' something consumable, and furthermore an equal equivalent to the meat which would have been eaten by Priam and his family after the sacrifice.

Gods are also seen in the *Iliad* to consume ambrosia and nectar, such as earlier in Book 4 when Hebe, the goddess of youth, is described as pouring nectar for the gods (Hom. *Il*. 4.1-5). Yet, ambrosia and nectar are not just the gods' version of human food, for like the apples of Idun in Norse myth, nectar and ambrosia are a divine consumable connected to internal youth. Notably, after the deaths of Patroclus and Hector, the dead warriors' bodies are anointed with ambrosia by the gods, temporarily preserving them from rot and bestowing a fraction of the characteristics that define the immortals' deathlessness (Hom. *Il*.19.38-9; Hom. *Il*. 23.184-7). In Pindar's *Olympian Ode 1*, the gods' gift of ambrosia and nectar made Tantalus immortal through its consumption (Pind. *Ol*. 1.59-64). Ambrosia and nectar, therefore, can be read to constitute less of an equivalent to human food, but rather an emblem of the gods as deathless, their main substance coming from the aromas, incense, and fine smelling smoke from burning fat and bones at human altars. Despite however, the variety of divine cuisine, aside from a few key exceptions, the gods are generally depicted in the *Iliad* as beings devoid of hunger or great need of nourishment. Scholar Tamara Neal in her 2006 *Blood and Hunger* explains this interesting facet of the gods' portrayal in the *Iliad* by arguing their lack of nutritional needs stem from their

identity as immortals: “it is illogical that they (the gods) should need to nourish and perpetuate what is already perpetual.”[4] Gods are defined, therefore, by the food which they can eat while humans are defined by that which they cannot eat, specifically eating the raw flesh of other humans. This distinction between gods and humans then leads to another salient question, as gods are not human, can they commit cannibalism?

The two primary perpetrators of divine cannibalism in Greek myth are Cronos and his son Zeus, both devouring their fellow immortals, but in a distinctly different manner than the cannibalism of humans. The nature of divine cannibalism distinguishes itself from mortal cannibalism in the sense that it remains deathless, if not reproductive, in nature. Early on in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Cronos swallows his infant children whole, one after another, until he is eventually tricked by Zeus into disgorging them (Hes. *Theog*.453-62; Hes. *Theog*.495-500). The Titan king’s cannibalism is notable on two fronts; the first of which is that while swallowing his children, thereby consuming them, he does not do so by means of chopping them up, either by ritual knives or gnashing teeth, but rather swallows them whole. The second notable point in Cronos’ cannibalism is despite devouring his own children, he does not in fact kill them, as they are later regurgitated completely whole and unharmed. Zeus similarly swallows his consort Metis whole, keeping her as a manifestation of prudence in his mind and in due time giving birth through his own head to the goddess Athena (Hes. *Theog*. 453-488; Hes. *Theog*.492-500; Hes. *Theog*.885-900). Cannibalism amongst the gods is therefore disparate from human cannibalism in that the victims, usually immortals themselves, are swallowed whole and may later be metaphorically reborn through regurgitation.[5]

Another key difference between divine and mortal cannibalism is the motivation behind it. Notably, neither Cronos nor Zeus’s acts of divine cannibalism are driven by any sense of raw

hunger, but rather by a fear of the loss of power. In Plato's *Republic*, famously, the philosopher used the allegory of cannibalism to describe the character of a tyrant; arguing that the tyrant, like the cannibal, is defined by his appetite and lack of self-restraint, hurting the general people for the sake of his own avarice, just as the tyrant might consume his own family for the sake of his own belly (Pl. Rep. 8.565d-566a). As scholar Brian S. Hook elucidates (1992), according to the reasoning of Plato, the tyrant hates limitations; because most tyrants cannot fight death, the inevitable end to their power, they instead turn their minds toward breaking any limitations imposed on them by law; immortal tyrants like Cronos or Zeus, however, can directly obstruct the end of their reigns by consuming the children that might one day overthrow them.[6] The nature of divine cannibalism, both its motivations and deathless nature, has led some scholars like Detienne to question if it really constitutes cannibalism at all. Regardless of such concerns, the way in which divine cannibalism manifests itself is distinct from that of humanity on three clearly definable fronts: the victims are swallowed whole rather than chewed or butchered, they do not necessarily die and can be harmlessly regurgitated later; and the motivation behind the act, rather than being driven by hunger; constitutes a desire to hold onto power.

As much as dietary customs are used to differentiate humans from gods and beasts, they can also be used to blur the lines between such divisions. As was noted above, according to Plato's *Republic*, the nature of the tyrant in society is that of the cannibal. Plato believed that the nature of tyranny was twofold: it could be expressed externally as a lawless political system, but also as an internal expression of unmitigated ego. Plato believed that in every soul there resides a tyrannical impulse, a desire to act out one's deepest wishes unrestrained by laws or social taboos (Pl. *Republic*. 9.571c-d). Plato says of the man who begins to act out these desires: οὔτε τινὸς φόνου δεινοῦ ἀφέξεται οὔτε **βρώματος** οὔτ᾽ ἔργου (Pl. *Republic*. 9.574e), "And he will refrain

not from any terrible murder nor food nor deed." The word βρώμα or 'broma' is at first glance unremarkable, a simple word that means food or meat; it becomes notable in this instance because of its stark contrast to what Plato usually uses to describe food, σίτος, a word that also means food but specifically grain based food. The use of βρώμα in Plato's description lends itself to a more carnivorous interpretation, the image of a man ignoring social taboos and eating forbidden meat. Earlier in Book 8 of the *Republic*, Plato describes how a ruler becomes a tyrant, turning on his own family or people, "with profane tongue and mouth tasting kindred blood," (Pl. *Republic*. 8.565e), and eventually to meet his ends either at the hands of his enemies or to become a tyrant, καὶ λύκῳ ἐξ ἀνθρώπου γενέσθαι "and turn from man to wolf" (Pl. *Republic*. 8.565d-566a). Plato's tyrant is, therefore, characterized by his appetite, his greed and avarice; he will never be fully satiated, driven purely by his ravenous belly and paying no heed to the laws and customs of the society in which he lives, he is transformed into a wolf.[7] Placing himself outside the rule of law, the tyrant finds himself in a liminal space, ruling over his countrymen like a god but savage as an animal, pursuing only his baser impulses, he has removed himself from the very δίκε which makes man what he is.[8]

As can be seen from the example of Plato's cannibal tyrant, the lines that separate human from god and beast are more trangressable than what might initially be assumed. As Detienne observes in his 1981 *Beasts and Gods*, in the 6th and 4th centuries in Greece, as a reaction to the stifling uniformity of Greek polis society, different philosophical/religious movements began to spring up, often using dietary experimentation to connect further with either the divine or savage.[9] The Pythagoreans believed animal sacrifice to be a form of murder, and in the furthest extent even cannibalism, leaving them to interpret most forms of Greek religion inherently polluting. The Pythagoreans, therefore, in a step beyond the Hesiodic prohibition against

cannibalism, practiced a vegetarian lifestyle, Pythagoras being credited as the founder of vegetarianism as a concept. The Orphics, likewise, swore off the sacrifice of animals, though for different reasons. They believed in a variant version of the Titonomachy, where the god Dionysus was cannibalized by the Titans, who were then burnt to ash by Zeus's thunderbolt. The Orphics believed that the ashes of the Titans had reformed to create human beings, and that every time humanity gave blood sacrifice to the gods, they were actually offending the gods by reenacting the cannibal sacrifice which had doomed their forefathers the Titans. Both the Pythagoreans and Orphics, though, through different reasoning, arrived at the conclusion that blood sacrifice was polluting and angered the gods, and in order to better connect with the divine, they must swear off blood sacrifice.

In contrast to the Pythagoreans and Orphics, the Cult of Dionysus took their relationship to meat in the opposite direction. Rejecting the normal religious customs and traditions of the polis, bacchants and maenads would rush through the mountains, catching animals and ripping them apart with their bare hands while still alive, before proceeding to eat the animal's raw flesh. Followers of Dionysus, the wild god, would grow closer to him while at once becoming more savage, blurring the lines between god, man, and beast, as they imitated wild animals hunting patterns. According to some written accounts, however, there was at least a mythological basis to the idea the Cult of Dionysus went further than just imitating wild animals by even committing actual acts of cannibalism. In Euripides' *Bacchae*, near the end of the play, Agave is seen bringing back the body of her son Pantheus, whom she ripped apart thinking him a wild animal; the unfortunate woman invites the chorus to join her in the θοίναϲ or 'feast' (Eur. *Bacch*. 1184-85). In other accounts, such as that of Aelian, a story is told of the daughters of Minyas, who refusing the worship of Dionysus, are driven mad by the god and eat one of their own children,

leading to an actual abandonment of such rituals by the Bacchants (Ael. *VA.* 3.42). In the case of Agave, however, it proves to be Dionysus himself who judges her and exiles her for cannibalizing her son in the *Bacchae* (Eur. *Bacch*. 1674). This curious relationship between cannibalism and the Cult of Dionysus continues in the Neoplatonist account from Porphyry's *De Abstinentia*, where a cannibalistic account is given concerning the Bassarai people of Thrace, who as Detienne (1981) puts it: "not content with offering sacrifices of bulls, the Bassarai of old engaged in the madness of human sacrifice, even to the point of eating the victims" (Porphryry. *De Abstinentia*. 2.8). The Bassarai are reported to have then eventually killed off the people who began the practice of cannibalism, refusing to partake in it anymore. Stories such as these reveal a fascinating conflict embedded in the heart of the Cult of Dionysus, that while the ultimate expression of the religion's connection with savagery is cannibalism, such acts are not sustainable and must thus be limited, often being chastised by the very god who started them.[10]

In all these instances, be they Pythagorean, Orphic, or Dionysian, the people of Greece tried through dietary experimentation to reach closer to the gods, to blur the lines through a genuine desire to connect with a sense of divinity, but what might happen if the process were reversed? Could food consumption, particularly that of human meat, be used to bring the gods down to a human level? These questions are addressed in two Greek myths, that of the feast of Lycaon, and the feast of Tantalus. Scholars like Gibson (2022) have argued that the stories of Lycaon and Tantalus, recorded in Pindar's *Olympian 1*, Lycophron's *Alexandra*, Plato's *Republic*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*, and Pausanias, constitute a form of theomachy or war with the gods.[11] In the same way that the consumption of human meat blurs the lines between human and beast, so too does anthropophagy lower the gods to a state closer to bestial savagery. In both stories, Tantalus and Lycaon both share a close connection to the gods,

actually forming a guest host relationship with Zeus Xenios as the gods honor the kings by dining with them (Pind. Ol. 1.36-64; Ov. *Met.* 1.205-243). This close relationship between human kings and gods, however, leads both Lycaon and Tantalus to question just how great a divide there is between them, seeking to test the gods' omnipotence by serving them human meat. Lycaon and Tantalus' decisions to feed the gods human flesh from their own children also serves as a form of mirroring or imitation of the gods, setting themselves on equal footing with characters like Cronos who consumed his own children (or Zeus who swallowed Metis while pregnant with Athena). In addition to the irreverent spirit of trying to trick the gods, Lycaon and Tantalus' actions also constitute a rebellion in the sense that they intentionally break the laws or δίκε put in place by Zeus in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[12] In both instances, the gods' retribution is quick and severe, having broken the laws that divide man from beast, Lycaon is transformed into a wolf while Tantalus is slain instantly. The after-effects of these two acts of theomachy were troubling to the Ancient Greeks in that the second of them, the feast of Tantalus, was essentially successful as the goddess Demeter consumed the shoulder of Tantalus' son Pelops and therefore perpetrated an act of anthropophagy.

Throughout Greco-Roman myth, Demeter stands as the only god to ever consume human flesh. This fact caused much anxiety amongst authors like Pindar, who wrote in his *Olympian Ode 1* that this was merely a false rumor and had not actually occurred, that Pelops had simply been taken to be the consort of Poseidon, and Tantalus' real crime was sharing the food of the gods with other mortals (Pind. *Ol*. 1.40-65). Pindar's refusal to imagine a world where the gods could not only consume meat, but actual human meat, reveals an underlying anxiety in Greek culture. Pindar's version of events, with Pelops' abduction by Poseidon, bears a marked resemblance to the story of Ganymede and introduces gluttony as the cause of Demeter's

anthropophagy before quickly dismissing the notion. The scholia attached to Pindar's *Olympian Ode 1* tend to disagree with the poet's explanation; Demeter's consumption of Pelops' shoulder is not imagined to be intentional but usually attributed to her ἄγνοια or 'ignorance' by scholia.[13] The story of Tantalus' feast is usually thought to be set during the events of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, where after the loss of her daughter Persephone, Demeter is distraught and filled with grief and rage, thus leading to her lapse in judgment in the eyes of various scholia (School. Pind. *Ol.* 1. 40a; School. Pind. *Ol.* 1. 40d; School. Pind. *Ol.* 1.38; School. Lycoph. *Alex*.152). This proposed narrative dating to the story could be used to explain one of the odder moments from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, where the grieving goddess attempts to adopt a human child, anointing the baby with ambrosia and purifying him in fire as an emotional substitution for her own lost Kore (Hom. *Hymn Dem*.231-49). Unlike other instances of goddesses attempting to purify their semi-mortal children, like Thetis does to Achilles, Demeter bears no relation to little Demophoon, the baby is a completely normal human child. The goddess' strange decision to try and deify a human baby, therefore, rings rather odd to an audience accustomed to thinking of the distinctions between human and god as stark; when greater context is given to the event, however, Demeter's mental and cosmological state is revealed to be in a state of limbo. Driven by her grief and rage at the loss of a loved one, Demeter is caused to err either through gluttony or ignorance, and through the act of consuming a human being she is polluted, granting a greater degree of leeway to the notion of a human transcending their mortal state and becoming divine.

Strangers in a Strange Land: Polyphemus and the Golden Age of Cannibals.

As much as diet can be used to differentiate human from god or beast, it can also be used to make other distinctions, principally human from monster, Greek from savage. It is hardly controversial to say that the Greeks prided themselves as being the most civilized people on earth. Greek historians and ethnographers often looked down on other cultures, and as a general rule, the further away a place was from Greece proper, the more outlandish, barbarous, and savage the descriptions became.[14] One of the easiest and most effective ways these Greek authors found to communicate a people's barbarity was through diet. Thucydides writes of the Eurytanes of Aetolia, no further afield than northern Greece: ἀγνωστότατοι δὲ γλῶσσαν καὶ ὠμοφάγοι εἰσίν, ὡς λέγονται, "who are the most unintelligible in respect to their language and who eat their meat raw, as it is said." (Thuc. 3.94.5). Outside of Greece, Herodotus writes of cannibal people called the Androphagoi (man-eaters) saying: ἀνδροφάγοι δὲ ἀγριώτατα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔχουσι ἤθεα, οὔτε δίκην νομίζοντες οὔτε νόμῳ οὐδενὶ χρεώμενοι: νομάδες δὲ εἰσι... ἀνδροφαγέουσι δὲ μοῦνοι τούτων. "The Androphagoi have the most savage customs of all humans, having no justice. They neither practice nor make use of any law. Nomads they are… alone of these people they eat human flesh." (Hdt. 4.106.1). Herodotus also writes of Scythian war customs, saying that: τὰ δ᾽ ἐς πόλεμον ἔχοντα ὧδέ σφι διακέαται: ἐπεὰν τὸν πρῶτον ἄνδρα καταβάλῃ ἀνὴρ Σκύθης, τοῦ αἵματος ἐμπίνει, ὅσους δ᾽ ἂν φονεύσῃ ἐν τῇ μάχῃ, τούτων τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποφέρει τῷ βασιλέι. ἀπενείκας μὲν γὰρ κεφαλὴν τῆς ληίης μεταλαμβάνει τὴν ἂν λάβωσι, μὴ ἐνείκας δὲ οὔ. (Hdt. 4.64.1). "As to war these are their customs. Whenever a Scythian man first fells a man, he drinks his blood, as many as he will kill in battle, these heads he carries to the king; having not brought a head he does not take away a part of the spoils."

Clearly a few distinguishable attributes stand out as markers of otherness: firstly, uncivilized cultures, in the minds of the Greeks, do not speak any intelligible language (ie. Greek); secondly, they eat raw meat, even human meat; and thirdly, they do not observe justice or have any form of law. The first of these attributes stands on its own, anyone who doesn't speak Greek is not Greek, though this subject will return later; the second and third attributes of otherness, however, demand greater investigation.

Herodotus and Thucydides' accusations of savagery lay mostly on the grounds of diet, principally on the consumption of raw uncooked food. To consume raw meat, in the eyes of the Greeks, was to eat like a wild animal, uncultured and uncivilized, but to eat another human being was another thing all-together. As has been noted above, according to Hesiod, it is humanity's refusal to commit cannibalism that separates it from the savage world of nature, and it is because humanity follows the rule of law, δικε, that it can hold itself above the mindless beasts of the wood. When humans like Lycaon try to play with the rules of cannibalism, consuming the flesh of their own kin, they are transformed either literally or figuratively into savage animals and thereby lose their humanity. When Greek authors like Thucydides or Herodotus imagine foreign people like the Eurytanes, Scythians, or Androphagoi eating raw meat or human flesh, they are not merely describing some strange cultural curiosities but genuinely asserting that these foreigners are subhuman, that they are animals. Modern historians today often struggle to verify whether these gruesome accounts from history actually hold any water; there is little archeological evidence from the actual people in question and Greek authors like Thucydides or Herodotus aren't always the most reliable, being heavily biased and inclined to sensationalize their work for entertainment. A more fruitful approach to the analysis of these stories comes from what they can tell us about the Greeks themselves, about how they saw the rest of the world as

opposed to them, and how their anxieties were reflected in the kinds of stories they told. Yet, while the historical accounts of authors like Herodotus or Thucydides are useful to this end, it is as scholar Jeffery Cohen argued in his 1996 *Monster Theory* that the anxieties of a culture are best expressed through their myths.[15]

Arguably the single greatest monstrous representation of the Greek's xenophobia in myth comes from Book 9 of Homer's *Odyssey*. In this chapter of the epic story, Odysseus and his men, tired from travel, land on a strange and beautiful island, a paradise where it is said that crops grow miraculously, unsown and unplowed, raised by the rains of Zeus (Hom. *Od*. 9.106-11). After years at war and at sea Odysseus and his men think their fates might finally have turned, until their paradise becomes nightmarish. Having been trapped by the giant one-eyed cyclops Polyphemus, Odysseus shares wine with their monstrous captor and attempts to form a guest-host relationship with the giant, referencing Zeus in his role as protector of strangers (Hom. *Od*. 9.267-271). Odysseus' attempt to establish a guest host relationship with the cyclops goes disastrously wrong when the one-eyed giant answers him, calling him a fool for trying to invoke the gods and adding that: οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν / οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν: / οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος πεφιδοίμην /οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ᾽ ἑτάρων, εἰ μὴ θυμός με κελεύοι (Hom. *Od.* 9.275-78). "For the Cyclopes care not for Aegis bearing Zeus, nor for the blessed gods, as we are by far the better. Nor would I to shun the wrath of Zeus spare neither you nor your comrades, lest my own heart did bid me."

After saying this the cyclops proceeds to eat two of Odysseus' men, starting a series of nightmarish events that only end when Odysseus and his surviving men drive a sharpened stake into the giant's eye. Once more the act of cannibalism is connected with a form of theomachy, in that it is a conscious rebellion against, and dismissal of, Zeus and his laws, with the cyclopes

questioning the power and authority of Zeus, estimating themselves not only equal but above the very gods on high.

To the audience of Homer's day, and to the Argives within the story, Polyphemus is the epitome of savage barbarousness.[16] One of the core values to Greek society was the notion of χενία or '*xenia*,' hospitality or the guest-host relationship. In a society before the widespread adoption of inns and hotels, travelers had to rely on a dense network of family friends who could host one another on travels; these family friendships could extend through the generations, leading to characters like Glaucus and Diomedes in the *Iliad* swearing off fighting and exchanging armor after realizing their grandfathers had hosted one another and that they were, therefore, family friends (Hom. *Il.* 6.121-236). The cyclops' refusal to abide by the custom of *xenia* is just one of a number of signals that he is not 'civilized.'

The cyclops, notably, can also be characterized as barbarous and uncivilized not only by his refusal to abide by the customs of *xenia*, but by his dietary habits. Aside from the obvious consumption of human flesh, the cyclops is also noted for other ingredients to his 'monstruous' pallet. Before Odysseus' first actual meeting with the giant, retelling the event later, he describes Polyphemus as living apart from others, having his heart set on 'lawlessness,' and pointedly that he was "not like bread eating men" (Hom. *Od*. 9.190-91). Odysseus also has a premonition that he will meet with "a savage man who knew neither of justice nor law" (Hom. *Od*. 9.213-5). Later, when Odysseus and his men enter the giant's cave, they find it full of cheese and milk, even considering stealing it before the giant gets home (Hom. *Od*. 9.219-27). These details all point to a cultural lifestyle far different than that of the primarily agrarian Greeks; due to the dominance of dairy based products like milk and cheese in the cyclops' diet, along with the notable lack of bread and wine, the cultural lifestyle of the cyclopes can thus be surmised to be

principally pastoralist. To the Greeks, pastoralism was a tradition attributed to the peoples of the north and east, people like the Scythians who ranged their flocks along the wide rolling planes of the Pontic-Caspian Step, people who Herodotus accused of drinking their enemy's blood. As noted by Pierre Vidal-Naquet in his (1986), although Odysseus looks for towers and fortifications in Euripides' *Cyclops*, "Homer's Odysseus looks for cultivated fields, for the sign of human labor."[17] The cyclopes' lack of agriculture, of farming and of the bread and wine that result, mark them as 'other' to the Greek audience, as a people less cultured than the Greeks and closer to the animals they must rely on entirely for survival.

Another pointed mark against Polyphemus is the way in which he devourers his meal. Although there is reference to fire in Odysseus' account of the isle, having seen with his men smoke rising from the island along with the sound of men's voices (Hom. *Od*. 9.166-7), no fire is ever used by the cyclops in his home. Furthermore, Polyphemus' savage consumption of Odysseus' men is made all the more insulting to the gods by his lack of sacrifice. The only time Greeks ever really ate meat was during a sacrifice, animals like cattle and other such livestock being a valuable commodity, but when the cyclops cuts up his meat reminiscent to how sacrifices were made, he neither cooked the meat nor gave any portion to the gods, like a mountain-bred lion, eating it all "entrails, flesh, and marrow filled bones," (Hom. *Od*. 9.291-3).[18] To the Greeks, therefore, the story of Odysseus' dreadful encounter with the man-eating Polyphemus reads as a classic tale of civilized Greek vs savage, with cannibalism once more marking the delineating factor between civilized humanity and monstrous savagery.

Yet Odysseus' adventure with the cannibalistic Polyphemus serves not only as tale of terrifying foreign cannibals who don't respect the gods or *xenia* but also shines a spotlight on how the Greeks imagined a society of cannibals might look like. As has been mentioned above,

when Odysseys first comes to the island of the Cyclopes, he describes how verdant and fertile the land is, how crops can grow without sowing or plowing; this description bears a marked resemblance to passages from Hesiod's *Works and Days* where, describing the ease with which men in the Golden Age "lived like gods" and that the

"grain giving earth brought forth unforced much fruit and without stint" (Hes. *WD*.117-118) καρπὸν δ᾽ ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα / αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον.;[19] The resemblance to Homer's isle of the cyclopes, whose' crops grow untilled and unsowed by the rains of Zeus is hard to ignore. One conclusion or interpretation that has been drawn by scholars is the notion that the cyclopes are living in a Golden Age of the cannibal king Cronos.[20] It was not till the reign of Zeus that Prometheus brought fire to mortals and divided the shares of sacrifice between them, this would explain Polyphemus' consumption of raw meat; likewise, his blasphemes self-estimation of the cyclopes' being equal if not better than the gods could reflect once more Hesiod's comment about the men of the golden age living 'like gods.' Most of all, as it is Zeus who gives humans law and orders that they not eat one another, a race of giant men living in the golden age of Cronos would have no need to care for Zeus or any of his laws against cannibalizing one's guests. This lens also helps to explain other unique facets of cyclopean life, as their culture is described by Odysseus "They have neither agora for councils nor customs; rather midst the peaks of high mountains they make their homes in hollowed out caverns, and each one declares the law of their children and wives, but care not for one another" (Hom. *Od*. 9.112-5). As Dougherty has pointed out (2001), the cyclopes are essentially a society of introverted antisocial individualists; they have no social taboos or expectations about how to interact with one another because their only tradition is to remain separate and independent.[21] As

a society, if indeed it can be called that, the cyclopes are characterized by their self-sufficiency, independence, and utilitarian isolationism.

When Odysseus first arrives at the island, he describes in wonder another isle not far off from that of the cyclopes, how it was full of pasture and animals, had good land for farming and its earth was rich, how it had a perfect harbor and would make a fine place for men to settle, but because the cyclopes have no ships they never ventured to it (Hom. *Od*. 9.116-141). Implicit in Odysseus' description is a wonder at why any people living so near to this bountifully rich island wouldn't colonize it. the Greek hero takes one look at the isle and immediately starts imagining how it might be farmed, the harvest it would bring, how good its harbor was, how ships could come from all around. What Odysseus fails to realize is the nature of the cyclopes' character as fundamentally isolationist in their self-sufficiency; they do not have ships for the same reason they do not travel to the nearby island, because they have no need of it, because they already live on an island of plenty and feel no need to reach for what they have no need for.[22] They cyclopes very physiology betray their utilitarian individualism, as they have but one singular eye because they are as a species made of individuals who do not interact with one another. Odysseus' attempt to form a guest-host relationship was thus doomed to fail in a society completely alien to the notion of social relationships. Without social codes or taboos to guide a cyclops through life, he is driven purely by the impulse of the moment; when he feels thirst he drinks, when he hungers he eats, when he likes the wine of Odysseus he drinks to excess and falls to a drunken sleep because, unlike the Greeks, he feels no shame in pursuing his baser instincts. It is this very nature that characterized Plato's tyrannical man. However, while Plato's tyrant ignored the laws and social taboos of his culture, the cyclops entirely devoid of such laws or taboos, leading him to blaspheme the gods or cannibalize strangers on a whim. Other behavior of the cyclops can

also be explained as part of his strange society. Polyphemus' failure to understand Odysseus' famous trick, "I am nobody," isn't necessarily a reflection of the giant's low intellect, but rather may be understood to express the monster's total unfamiliarity with the practice of speech itself, with the implicitly social act of lying. After Odysseus and his men stab Polyphemus' eye out and blind him, the other cyclopes come running, wondering what all the commotion is about; this is the first instance in the epic of cyclopes actually communicating with one another, and it is notable that they call the screaming giant 'Polyphemus,' or many voiced one, relating to the fact that this may well be the most any cyclops has ever spoken to one another.

Odysseus' encounter with the monstruous cyclops Polyphemus reflects one of cannibalism's roles in myth, not only as delineating human from god and beast, but also Greek from savage. The foreigner in the form of the one-eyed giant expresses Greek anxieties about non-Greek people who might not respect their customs of hospitality. The cyclops is characterized as savage in that he does not give due reverence to the gods, eats raw meat and is a pastoralist rather than agrarian, does not have a firm grasp of the Greek language, lacks a communal society, and above all else, commits acts of cannibalism. While stories like those of Lycaon or Tantalus reflect the Greeks worries about the dangers of individuals breaking social taboos, the cannibal cyclopes of Homer's Odyssey are a manifestation of all that the Greeks worried their society might become without forms of social order such as taboos against cannibalism.

Godlike Achilles and his Savage Heart: Bloodlust and the Dogs of War.

Homer's *Iliad* is a story about anger, about rage, about the divine fury of Achilles and how it spelled doom for so many Greeks fighting at Troy, their corpses left to be devoured by carrion dogs. The very first word of the epic is μῆνις, or rage, signaling the core subject of the poem; but the use of the word is also unusual and heralds another of the core conflicts in the *Iliad*, that of Achilles' identity struggle between man and god. The word μῆνις means more than just anger, it specifically can be read to mean a divine form of anger, distinct from the sort felt by mortal men; throughout the poem only three characters are described as feeling μῆνις, Apollo, Zeus, and Achilles (Hom. *Il*. 1.1; *Il*. 13.642; *Il.* 21.523; Il. 1.75).[23] While the use of divine wrath to describe the anger of gods like Zeus or Apollo makes sense, its use in relation to Achilles, at the very first line of the poem no less, signals the hero's identity as a man of two worlds. Achilles' genealogy as both the son of the immortal goddess Thetis and the mortal king Peleus sets him above the rest of the warriors at Troy, but it also sows the seeds of his conflict with them. If Achilles is a god like his mother, then what right does the mortal king Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks at Troy, have in ordering around and insulting him? Who is Agamemnon to bandy words and insults with a literal god on earth? Yet, if Achilles is mortal like his father, then his haughty feud with the king and subsequent refusal to fight is wildly irreverent and selfish, as it causes the deaths of countless other soldiers. The question then lingers, ultimately, is Achilles divine or mortal?

The first piece of evidence in favor of Achilles' divinity, aside from the nature of his rage, is the adjective used to describe him in the seventh line of the poem, where the conflict between

Agamemnon the king of men and δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς 'divine Achilles' is first established (Hom. *Il*. 1.7); Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, Achilles is also referred to as θεοῖς ἐπιείκελος or 'god-like/ resembling a god,' though other characters like Ajax are described similarly (Hom. *Il*. 24.486; *Il*. 9.622-3). The hero is also described with a pointedly celestial simile in book 22; after receiving armor fashioned by the very god of blacksmithing, Achilles dashes through the battlefield like a shooting star from heaven (Hom. Il. 22.25-29). Other characters throughout the *Iliad* esteem him as being above the normal man; Agamemnon values him above an entire army, as Zeus favors him (Hom. Il. 9.114-8), Ajax the Greater mentions that the Argives honored Achilles beyond all others (Hom. *Il*. 9.628-32), Zeus worries that Achilles could singlehandedly defeat the whole Trojan army (Hom. *Il.* 20.26-30), and when he finally enters battle Achilles is described as 'the peer of Ares,' the very god of war (Hom. *Il.* 20.44-6). In Book 21 Achilles battles the river Scamander after filling its banks with the corpses of so many dead Trojans, and while he is nearly killed by the river, only saved by the aid of Hera and Hephaestus, the fact that Achilles would willingly contest with an immortal as though they were equals reveals much about the kind of figures he identifies as his peers (Hom. Il. 21.233-9). Outside the *Iliad* itself, Achilles is seen displaying his miraculous speed by racing horsedrawn chariots by foot in Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* (Eur. *IA*.206-230). In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, a passage describes the way in which as a child Achilles' mother Thetis attempted to burn away his mortality in fire and anoint him in ambrosia, the food of the gods, to make him immortal; the passage bears a marked resemblance to the story of Demeter and Demophoon in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, even including the point at which the baby's parent screams in horror at their child in fire and the mothering goddess throws the child down and storms off in anger (AP. Rhod. *Argon*. 4.865-84).[24] A variant version of the same story is included in Statius' unfinished Latin poem *Achilleid,*

where the baby Achilles is dipped in the River Styx rather than fire in order to burn away his mortality (Stat. *Ach*. 1.127-35). Within the *Iliad* itself, Achilles also acts in accordance with the dietary customs of gods rather than humans, refusing to take food or drink after the death Patroclus, rather thirsting only to join battle (Hom. *Il.* 19.209-14). This act of fasting could be, as it has customarily been, read solely as an expression of grief and loss following the death of Patroclus; the act, however, also rings of divine mimicry when compared to other myths about the sons of goddesses refusing to eat. In the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the young god steals the cows of his brother Apollo and makes a sacrifice of them to the gods, and although he feels hunger for the rich meat of the sacrifice he chooses not to eat, practicing the dietary restrictions that characterize divinity (Hom. *Hymn Herm*.120-34).[25] Likewise, when Achilles refuses to partake in mortal food, he is not only expressing grief and rage at the death of Patroclus, but also asserting his own divinity, that he like Hermes follows the dietary customs of gods rather than humans. Achilles' assertion of divinity through fasting is rewarded in the text when, fearing for his strength, Zeus sends Athena down to fill his belly with Ambrosia and Nectar, the food reserved only for gods (Hom. *Il*. 19.347-8; 19.352-354).

Achilles also displays his divinity in the way he is appeased by others, or more so how he demands others appease him. As has been noted by Rabel (1990),[26] the structure of the *Iliad* and its ring composition draws many direct parallels between Apollo and Achilles. Both are sons of goddesses and are angered by Agamemnon in the first book of the *Iliad*, but while Agamemnon takes good care to give sacrifice and proper reverence to Apollo, he fails to give the same respect to Achilles, whom he sees as a vassal. Achilles' and Apollo's response to Agamemnon's disrespect is opposite in their execution but identical in their ideology and effect. When Agamemnon disrespects Apollo's priest, Apollo brings plague to the camp of the Achaeans,

while Achilles chooses to remove himself from the fight against the Trojans (Hom. *Il.* 1.43-52; Hom. Il. 1.338-44). In both instances, the result is the overwhelming loss of Achaean life, as men either die of plague or at the hands of Trojans, lacking the military support of Achilles and his Myrmidons. By abstaining from the fight, Achilles takes on the role of a wrathful god, having removed his divine favor and patronage from the Greeks, he forces them to approach him in the manner of suppliants to a god, bringing gifts to his tent/temple, and begging for him to return his favor upon them.[27] Achilles eventual return to the fight is instigated only after the anger he feels towards Agamemnon is superseded by a newfound bloodlust for Hector. This to, however, associates him with the gods, who display frightening degrees of wrath and bloodlust.

Throughout the ebbs and flows of Homer's *Iliad,* the gods of Olympus frequently take part in the war at Troy, each god or goddess having their own favored heroes and side in the conflict, but this divine preoccupation has a negative effect on them and their sense of divinity. Often taking on the guise of mortal characters, the gods try to influence the warriors and events of the story (Hom. Il. 20.75-102; Il. 20.309-39; Il. 22.224-47), but through their attempt to interact with human war, so intrinsically characterized by death, the immortal gods themselves become tainted by it. Consumed by rage and hate, deities like Hera rebel against the commands or laws of Zeus in order to help the Greeks in book 14 of the *Iliad*, seducing Zeus as a distraction while other gods meddle in the war, driving back the Trojans from the Argive camp. As has been noted above, in Hesiod's *Works and Days* it is the law of Zeus, his prohibition against cannibalism, which separates human from beast, it is thus ultimately Zeus's will which holds the cosmic order in balance with clear delineations between man, god, and lawless wild animals. When Zeus' law is questioned, as in the case of Tantalus and Lycaon, the act of cannibalistic theomachy is seen as an attack on Zeus's cosmic order, blurring the lines between mortal and

immortal. When the gods question this new law of Zeus against interacting with the war at Troy, they take on the guise of mortal heroes and act as though they were humans in the narrative, accidently becoming more human in the process. Through their investment in the war and rebellion against the will of Zeus, the gods enact a similar form of theomachy to that of Tantalus and Lycaon, seeking to transgress the boundaries between human and god, but in the opposite direction, shifting from god to human.

In Book 4 of the *Iliad*, Zeus insultingly inquiries about Hera's wild hatred for the Trojans, asking if her gall/bile would be healed by eating raw Priam and the children of Troy (Hom. *Il*. 4.34-6).[28] The question is shocking as it implies that the very queen of the gods, the gods who are so characterized by their lack of hunger, would not only feel the need to ingest meat, but human meat. The insult is an attack on Hera's very identity as one of the deathless immortals, but it also presents her rage as in illness which threatens to transform her into something other than god. Ares, likewise, is described as feeling hunger for human blood in Book 5 when Diomedes tells Pandarus and Aeneas that one of them will "falling to glut with blood Ares, the shield-bearing warrior" (Hom. *Il.* 5.287-89).[29] Gods like Ares and Hera are thus implied to have grown an appetite for human flesh and blood through their involvement in human war. The most striking moment in the gods' entanglement with humanity comes when the mortal hero Diomedes actually strikes and draws blood from the goddess Aphrodite (Hom. *Il*. 5.327-43). This moment is shocking in that it is the only instance in all of Classical myth where a human being is able to harm a god, showing in physical form the degree to which the gods have sunk; the gods have become so invested in the conflict, so enamored with the fates of mortals, that they not only take on the forms of mortals as illusion, but actually fight in person and as themselves in the human combat, suffering the due consequences of partaking in war like any other human. Yet, if

even gods can be transformed by the forces of hate and rage implicit in war, then what might become of regular mortals trapped in its horrors?

While gods who engage in the *Iliad*'s bloody warfare become progressively less divine and more human, the mortal warriors who fight become more bestial, being compared to blood eating animals through repeated epic simile. Neal (2006) tracks the course of Homer's epic not as traditionally divided books, but by counting in-narrative time and the ways in which the story progresses day by day. Neal notices in the descriptions of epic simile a progression through the latter half of the epic in instances where blood becomes a consumable through simile, arguing that it represents a progressive brutalization of warriors as they are exposed to war.[30] Up until Book 11, day 3, Argive soldiers routinely take their meal before heading off to battle, but starting at this point, regular meals become less common and are replaced by similes of wild animals hunting pray and gorging themselves on blood and viscera. Neal writes that "displacement of normative social rituals such as meal taking compound the increasingly bestial aspects of warrior behavior."[31] The first of these epic similes is found in Book 11 when Agamemnon is seen driving the Trojans in flight, scattering them across the field as he is allegorized to a lion killing and eating its pray (Hom. *Il.* 11.172-6); this is the first time in the *Iliad* that blood is described as a consumable. The next instance of carnivorous simile comes in Book 16, as Achilles marshals his men and readies them for war under the command of Patroclus. The Myrmidons rush toward battle and are described as being "like raw-flesh-eating wolves, in whose hearts is tireless furry'[32] and whose jaws "run red with blood" after killing a mountain stag, drinking spring water as they belch up clotted blood, their bellies full of gore (Hom. *Il.* 16.156-62). The description of the wolf-like Myrmidons is graphic in its detail and will play a later role in the epic when Achilles threatens Hector in Book 22. Later in Book 17, Menelaus is in turn described as a flesh-

eating lion and a blood sucking gadfly (Hom. *Il.* 17.61-69; 17.569-74), but after this point, the men begin once more taking their meals and there are no more similes of blood eating; the only exception to this rule is Achilles, who as noted above refused to take mortal food like his comrades, desiring only battle and being nourished by the food of the gods. It is Achilles, above all other warriors at Troy, who is most associated with the savagery of war and who is most affected by the bloodlust of battle against the Trojans.

At the same time in the *Iliad* as Achilles questions his own divinity, he also must grapple with his own savage nature. In Book 16 of the *Iliad*, when speaking to his men, Achilles makes reference to insults against him which insinuated his mother raised him on bile (Hom. *Il.* 16.203). This notion that what Achilles ate as a child effected how he acted in war would come back in Statius's *Achilleid* when the hero gives a seventy-line speech about the way he was raised by the centaur Chiron. During this speech Achilles describes the kind of food he was reared on, "I am said in the time of both my tender and crawling years, when the Thessalian elder in his hard mountain received me, to have devoured no customary foods nor from nourishing breast satisfied my hunger, but to have torn the dense viscera of lions and the marrow of a half-dead she-wolf" (Stat. *Ach*. 2.96-100).[33] Reference to Achilles' childhood diet also appears in Pseudo-Apollodorus's *Bibliotheca,* where the poet describes how Chiron fed the baby hero on the innards and marrow of savage beasts like lions, bears, and wild boar, naming him Achilles "because he had not put his lips to the breast," that is to say Pseudo-Apollodorus creates an etymology of ἀ + χείλη for Achilles (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.13.6).[34] Yet the image of child Achilles being fed wild animals by Chiron can be traced as far back as a 7th century Attic neck-amphora which portrays Chiron bringing three live cubs to the infant Achilles (*Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, Berlin, vol. I, plate v = LIMC "Achilles" plate 21). Braund and Giles point to this

early exposure of savagery to Achilles as a form of sympathetic magic, that through the early consumption of wild animals like wolves and lions, little Achilles took on some of their characteristics, becoming fearless, wild, and pitiless in battle.[35]

As much as this animalistic battlefield ferocity helps Achilles, it also serves to isolate him from his peers. Once more, as Hesiod described, it was humanity's adherence to Zeus's law which differentiated them from beasts; but Achilles, raised in the spirit of wild animals, is seen throughout the *Iliad* to often buck or even ignore authority figures like Agamemnon or the customary rules of war practiced by other heroes. In the heat of his rage Achilles intentionally separates himself from the rest of the Achaeans, symbolically setting himself apart from their society and civilization; he breaks multiple Greek customs like refusing to fight, rejecting suppliants, showing no mercy, mutilating Hector's corpse, and even enacting human sacrifice, (Hom. Il. 1.338-44; Il. 9.645-59; Il. 21.64-119; Il. 22.395-404; Il. 23.173-7).[36] This savage nature of the hero is expressed throughout the poem with his connections to wild animals like wolves and dogs: Achilles' most famous epithet in the *Iliad*, first introduced in Book 1, is πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς or 'swift footed Achilles' (Hom. *Il.* 1.58), while just eight lines before this the dogs of the Achaeans are described as κύνας ἀργούς or 'swift hounds' (Hom. *Il.* 1.50); later in Book 16 when Achilles' Myrmidons rush to battle, they are described as being like bloodthirsty wolves (Hom. *Il.* 5.287-89); and when Achilles himself races through the battlefield in Book 22, he is likened to Sirius, the dog star: λαμπρότατος μὲν ὅ γ᾽ ἐστί, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται, / καί τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν. "Brightest of all is he, but an evil sign, and brings much fever to wretched mortals" (Hom. Il. 22.30-31).[37] There are multiple layers to Achilles connection to the figure of the hound or wolf; most simply it serves as an expression of his speed and animalistic ferocity, but it also foreshadows his potential for cannibalism. Later Greek

authors like Plato would choose the wolf as example of what the uncontrolled tyrannical soul might become when it stops listening to social taboos and gives in to its worst impulses, shrinking not from heinous acts like cannibalism. When cannibal kings like Lycaon try to test the boundaries between human and god they are punished by turning into wolves; and in the *Iliad* itself, dogs are often described in terms of necrophagy, eating the corpses of dead warriors.[38] The very first reference to dogs in line 4 of the *Iliad* describes them eating heroes' corpses specifically as a result of Achilles' divine rage (Hom. *Il.* 1.4). Achilles' subtle but consistent association with wolves and hounds, therefore, serves as foreshadowing for what might happen if he should let his rage consume him entirely, giving into his baser impulses and forgetting the laws and δίκε of Zeus, losing his humanity in the same way gods like Hera nearly lose their divinity.

The climax of Achilles' flirtation with the savage spirit within him comes in Book 22 during his final confrontation with Hector. When Hector urges the two warriors make a pact to respect one another's corpse, Achilles answers him saying "Ἕκτορ μή μοι ἄλαστε συνημοσύνας ἀγόρευε: / ὡς οὐκ ἔστι λέουσι καὶ ἀνδράσιν ὅρκια πιστά, / οὐδὲ λύκοι τε καὶ ἄρνες ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν, / ἀλλὰ κακὰ φρονέουσι διαμπερὲς ἀλλήλοισιν, / ὣς οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἐμὲ καὶ σὲ φιλήμεναι, οὐδέ τι νῶϊν / ὅρκια ἔσσονται… (Hom. Il. 22.261-6). "Hector speak not, accursed, of covenants unto me: for between lions and men there are no trust-worthy oaths, nor are there united hearts between wolves and sheep, but rather they think wickedly against one another continually, thus it is impossible for you and I to be friends, nor for my part will there be oaths between us…" Unlike other instances in the *Iliad* where Achilles or other warriors are allegorized to bloodthirsty animals by the poem, here Achilles actively describes and associates himself with the wild.[39] Once more he is a wolf, he is a lion, and communication between him

and Hector is rendered impossible due to the wide gulf between them; simply put Achilles and Hector are not equals, either because Achilles is divine, or because he is an animal who doesn't abide by the same laws and injunctions that characterize Hector's civilized humanity. This reply also underlines Achilles and the Argives' role in the *Iliad*, they are the destroyers of civilization, wild wolves and lions who pray upon Trojan sheep; and Achilles, the semi-divine son of a goddess, raised on the blood and guts of wild animals, consumed by an all-encompassing rage which drives him to ignore the social customs differentiating human from beast, is the purest expression of this sentiment. Yet by the end of this scene, Achilles will have reached the peak of his rage and come to terms with his own identity, the conflict within him between humanity, divinity, and savagery finally put to rest.

After their fateful contest, Achilles stands victorious as Hector begs him one last time to honor his corpse and give it back to his family, imploring his killer "let me not by dogs be devoured near the ships of the Achaeans" (Hom. *Il.* 22.339). Achilles' reply is frightening in its brutality "Implore me not, dog, by clasping knees nor by fathers. For would that my rage and heart might urge me to eat your butchered flesh raw, for what you have done, yet surly there is no man who shall ward the dogs from your head" (Hom. *Il*. 22.345-48). Achilles toys with the thought of eating Hector, with cutting the meat off his bones and eating him raw, but notably, he only wishes his μένος καὶ θυμὸς would bid him do it. The distinction between Achilles wishing to eat Hector, and wishing his rage would drive him to it, is important; for as much as Achilles loathes Hector, fantasizes about eating him, he cannot actually imagine cannibalizing Hector in the literal sense, so he projects the act first onto the abstract idea of rage and heart, and then further onto dogs.[40] It is this point at which Achilles realizes he cannot actually cannibalize Hector, that the consumption of human flesh is the role of animals like dogs and not humans like

Achilles, so he projects his desires onto them in a more socially acceptable manner. By realizing the full breadth of where his rage will carry him and the point where he can go no further, Achilles acknowledges his own humanity by abiding by the dietary restrictions set out in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Achilles cannot bring himself to consume another human being, no matter how much he may wish his anger would drive him to it, and he is thus confirmed as human.

As scholar Rawson notes (1984) that because Achilles cannot actually bring himself to cannibalize Hector, he projects the act onto dogs, committing a sort of vicarious cannibalization through them. By projecting onto dogs, Achilles turns the act of eating Hector into anthropophagy rather than cannibalism; Rawson points out, however, that this act of projected anthropophagy is complicated when Achilles also calls Hector a dog, turning the notions of dogs eats dog right back into cannibalism. While Rawson misses this, the matter of Hector's cannibalistic consumption is further complicated by the fact Achilles has so often been equated with dogs himself, rendering Achilles' threat into a form of fictional cannibalism, where Achilles the wolf can act out his darkest urges by eating Hector the dog.

Achilles' mental gymnastics over cannibalizing Hector reflect a greater anxiety over the role of vengeful anger among warriors in broader Indo-European myth. In the Hindu Epic Mahabharata, for example, the demigod hero Bhima takes vengeance on his cousin Dushasana by drinking his blood during the Battle of Kurukshetra (Vyasa. *Mahabharata*. 83.28). While later the epic is quick to explain Bhima only made a farse of drinking Dushasana's blood and did not actually let it pass his lips, the descriptions of Bhima's superhuman strength and ability to see in the dark seem to suggest a demonic stint to his identity, underlining the transformative and frightening nature of warrior cannibalism.[41] In the lost Cyclic epic *Thebais* and later Roman

copy *Thebaid*, during a war against Thebes, the two heroes Tydeus and Melannipus mortally wound one another on the field of battle. Tydeus requests the head of slain Melannipus be brought to him so he may gaze upon it as he dies, but at the last moment before death, Tydeus cracks open his foe's head and gulps down his brains; Athena, polluted by the sight, must flee back to Olympus to cleanse her eyes of the miasma (Stat. *Theb*. 8.757-66). Tydeus is introduced in the *Thebaid* as possessing 'immodicum irae'[42] (Stat. *Theb*. 1.41), like Plato's tyrant his baser instinct, his rage, drives him to commit the highest crime of cannibalism, polluting even a goddess for seeing it, and is routinely described by scholia as "the one who gulped down the brains of Melannipus, like a beast"[43] (School. Hom. *Il*. 5.126). Throughout Greek and wider myth, cannibalism is viewed with anxiety. Figures who perpetrate it or come close to doing so are portrayed as not entirely human, beings who ride a fine line between human and beast/monster. By relegating his cannibalistic impulses to fancy, unlike Tydeus, Achilles is able to return and be reintegrated into Greek society, revered as the greatest of heroes.

Following the death of Hector and Achilles' projection of his cannibalistic desires onto dogs, while still full of anger, the hero's wrath slowly abates as he begins to reintegrate into society. In Book 23, Achilles finally takes mortal food, though he still refuses to cleanse himself of the blood and filth of battle until he has seen to Patroclus' funeral (Hom. *Il.* 23.35-53). Having previously taken war captives, Achilles ritualistically slaughters twelve Trojans princes before burning all along with Patroclus in a holocaustic sacrifice (Hom. *Il*. 23.173-7). The episode has proven troubling to both modern scholars and ancient thinkers alike, Plato flatly denied that the event had even happened.[44] While not the first time the Achaeans had enacted human sacrifice, this instance is the only time in the works of Homer where such deeds are committed. Various theories have been postulated as to what exactly the event was; either being a sacrifice to the

spirit of Patroclus in the vain of so many later cults to dead heroes or chthonic gods, or perhaps that the twelve princes were meant to serve Patroclus in the afterlife, or even that the act wasn't a sacrifice at all but a hate filled revenge killing on the part of Achilles. Regardless of the exactitudes of its nature, Achilles' ritualistic killing of the twelve Trojan princes in Book 23 represents another step in his identification as human. Battlefield vengeance occurs frequently in the *Iliad*, Achilles' killing of Hector on account of Patroclus standing as the best example, it is driven by passion and anger and is set in the heat of the moment; but Achilles' killing of the twelve Trojan princes is different. He has them gagged and bound, led to the pyre of Patroclus as he systematically slits their throats before an audience of Argives. His actions are premeditated and orchestrated, they are not merely acts of emotion but a performance of such, they are ritual.[45] Rituals of grief and mourning, as much as they are directed towards the dead, are also enacted by and for the benefit of the living. They are a performance of grief and rage and loss which can be shared communally. Achilles ritualistic performance of his grief and rage indicate his acceptance and desire to become once more a member of Achaean society, looking to them for community and consolation, and by the end of Book 23 he is proudly hosting funeral games in the honor of Patroclus.

Yet Achilles is not the only character in the *Iliad* to express a desire to enact cannibalism, for as much as Achilles wishes to eat Hector for what he did to Patroclus, so too does Hecuba desire to take vengeance on Achilles for the death of her son.[46] In Book 24, as her husband is readying to depart to the Argive camp, seeking ransom for the body of their son, Hecuba expresses her hatred of Achilles wishing that she might "I wish, clinging to it, I could eat his mid-liver. Then would there be deeds that could be recompense for my son" τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἦπαρ ἔχοιμι / ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα: τότ᾽ ἄντιτα ἔργα γένοιτο / παιδὸς ἐμοῦ, (Hom. *Il*. 24.212-4). While

some scholars have supposed Hecuba's wish but a poetic mirroring of Achilles, a Trojan for a Greek, there is a notable distinction between the two character's wishes. While Achilles distances himself from the desire, wishing only that his rage would drive him to it, Hecuba is far more direct and deliberate about her wording; nothing is driving her to eat Achilles, she wants to do it as vengeance for her son. Hecuba also calls Achilles a "raw eater and untrustworthy man" (Hom. *Il.* 24.207), a remarkable comment in that Achilles does not actually ever consume raw meat, nor does he actually show the same degree of hunger for it that Hecuba herself does.[47] Ultimately, the driving fire behind cannibalistic characters like Tydeus, Achilles, and Hecuba, is rage; but whereas Achilles can let go of his rage and acknowledge the lengths that he is not willing to go, Hecuba cannot. In later renditions of the story, first recorded by Euripides in his *Hecuba*, following the fall of Troy and the loss of both her dual identities as queen and mother, her children having all been either slain or taken, Hecuba takes out her frustrated vengeance on the Thracian king Polymestor, killing his children and blinding him (Eur. *Hec*.1035-55). The newly blinded king gives Hecuba a prophecy, telling her that she will find her death jumping from the mast of a ship into the sea, having been transformed into a dog (Eur. *Hec*. 1261-73). Hecuba's transformation could be read as literal were it not for the fact that she 'climbs the mast' herself, suggesting a more figurative transformation, a madness or sickness brought on by hate, the sort of rage that turns man into beast, god into mortal. Why then is Hecuba transformed by her rage while Achilles is able to let it go? Because Achilles is Greek, and while Greeks may dream of such savageries, only foreigners like Homer's Polyphemus, Herodotus's Androphagoi, or Hecuba queen of Troy would actually have the gall to enact them.[48]

Conclusion:

The laws regarding cannibalism were considered by the Greeks foundational in establishing the distinctions between members of the cosmic order of gods, humans, and beasts. It is humanity's defining feature that they abstain from eating one another, while animals do not. Gods in contrast can consume one another, yet as they are deathless, the nature of their consumption is radically different from that of human cannibalism. The motivation behind divine cannibalism is driven by a need to hold onto power rather than simple hunger, as the gods are defined by their lack of hunger. Plato's allegory of the tyrant uses cannibalism as an example of how a tyrannical soul is ruled by his impulses, his belly, to commit terrible acts. It is when man loses his self-control and no longer cares for social taboos like those against cannibalism that he enters a liminal space, neither fully man nor fully beast. Religions and philosophies like those of the Pythagoreans or Dionysians experimented with dietary restrictions as a way to connect further with either the divine or savage. In myth, humans commit acts of theomachy by attempting to test the omnipotence of gods, consuming their own children to both mimic divine cannibalism and lower the gods status, putting them on equal footing. When acts such as these are committed, the gods' retribution is swift, either killing the perpetrators immediately or as in the case of Lycaon, turning them into wolves or dogs as they have broken the distinction between human and beast. When goddesses like Demeter or Thetis attempt to raise a human child into divinity, they do so both by burning away his mortality, but also by feeding him the food of the gods.

As much as diet can delineate human from god or beast, it also serves to differentiate Greek from savage foreigner. Historians like Herodotus or Thucydides describe acts of cannibalism perpetrated by peoples progressively further and further away from the center of the civilized world, Greece. As a manifestation of Greek cultural anxiety over uncivilized foreigners, the cyclopes of Homer's *Odyssey* display all the traits Greeks feared in strangers; they do not respect laws of hospitality, they are pastoralist rather than agrarian, they feel no shame about over drinking, and they care not for the laws of the gods, primarily the laws against cannibalism. The cyclopes are anti-social and irreverent of the gods, their island and culture is an expression of what the Greeks feared life would be without social structures and taboos, where every man was out for himself and cared little for anyone else. The cyclopes' individualism and social isolation reflects the Greek's anxiety that when individuals like Lycaon or Achilles start questioning the laws that govern society, it might lead to a gradual collapse of civilization as a whole, with Greece becoming barbarous, blasphemes, and bestial, just as Polyphemus of the cyclopes.

The *Iliad* is a story about rage, about the divine rage felt by Achilles and the effects it threatens to have on society. Throughout the epic Achilles struggles between his identity as either human or divine, while flirting with the notion of falling completely into savagery. His rage is that of a god, he is the child of a goddess, he conducts himself like a god and is nourished by the food of the immortals; Yet the fiery rage that burns inside him threatens to tear down his very humanity, as it does the very gods. Gods like Hera throughout the *Iliad* strain against Zeus's commands, becoming so invested in the outcome of the war that they not only take on the guise of mortals in order to influence its outcome, but even take part in the fighting themselves. Through their polluting contact with war and its connection to death, the gods are themselves

tainted, blurring the lines between human and divine to such a point that Diomedes is able to strike Aphrodite. Just as the gods are polluted by the fury of war, becoming more human, the mortal warriors of the battlefield become progressively more bestial. Through repeated simile, heroes like Agamemnon, Menelaus, and the Myrmidons are equated to bloodthirsty and savage animals like lions, wolves, and gadflies. Yet no other hero at Troy is so affected by the horrors of war than Achilles. Being raised as a baby on the meat and innards of wild beasts, Achilles takes on some of their traits, becoming fearsome and savage in war, but also prone to social isolation and breaking the rules that govern civilized warfare, threatening to upend his identity as either god or man. The climax of Achilles' flirtation with savagery comes when he expresses his desire that his rage might drive him onto cannibalism, yet realizing that it cannot, he projects his feelings onto dogs, imagining vicarious cannibalism through them. After this point Achilles' rage slowly fades as he reintegrates into society, enacting ritualistic performances of his grief and rage in a communal setting. Hecuba in contrast is the only other character in the *Iliad* who expresses a direct wish to cannibalize Achilles, but unlike the Greek hero, she is not able to let go of her anger, and is therefore doomed to be transformed by it; the distinction between the two, Achilles and Hecuba, is that Achilles is Greek and therefore more civilized, while Hecuba is foreign and therefore more prone to acts of savagery like cannibalism.

Ultimately, Achilles' identity struggle with his humanity, divinity, and savagery in Homer's *Iliad* represents an early exploration in what it means to be human, what it means to be Greek. Tested by the forces of war and the rage it inspires, both humans and gods are threatened with transformation. While Achilles strives to follow the laws of gods rather than mortals it is his savagery that better defines him. Achilles is driven throughout the epic to enact greater and greater acts of barbarousness until finally he is confronted with the line he cannot bring himself

to cross, cannibalism. To consume Hector raw would be to reject Achilles' humanity, to commit an act of theomachy, to break the very foundational first law of civilization and plunge headlong into the darkest depths of deprived savagery, from whence no hero can ever return. By recognizing that he cannot complete this final step into savagery, Achilles acknowledges his own humanity, abiding by the laws that set man apart from beast; yet by doing so, by abiding by the rules of man, Achilles also must reject his aspirations toward divinity, accepting his paternal rather than maternal lineage and coming to terms with his own impending death. Near the beginning of the poem godlike Achilles speaks with his mother and through her his wishes are brought to Zeus, beginning the events of the story; yet by the end of the poem as Achilles sits with the old king Priam it is not of his divine mother that he thinks, but rather of his own aged mortal father Peleus. It is appropriate therefore, that while the *Iliad* starts with a reference to Achilles' divine wrath, the hero's actual introduction is as Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος, Pelean Achilles, a son of man.

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[1] Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary, s.v. "δίκε," ed. James Morwood & John Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 86

[2] See Carol Dougherty (1999) *The Double Vision of Euripides' Cyclops: An Ethnographic Odyssey on the Satyr Stage* for more on cannibalism as the defining distinction between man and beast. Dougherty focuses on the central debate at the heart of Euripides' *Cyclops*, whether the cyclops is in fact a human or monster, and therefore whether his acts of Anthropophagy actually count as cannibalism. Here the theme of cannibalism is used to question the comparative merit and 'savagery' of 'civilized' Greeks like Odysseus (a stand in for Athenian sophists and the Scillian Expedition) when compared to savages like Polyphemus, p. 318

[3] See Marcel Detienne (1981) *Between Beasts and Gods*, where the scholar notes the defining dietary distinction between humans and gods as laid out in the story of Prometheus' deception of Zeus and the first sacrifice. Because humans are corporeal and made of perishable flesh, they must maintain themselves by consuming that which they are made of, while the deathless uranic gods take only smoke and scents because they themselves are imperishable, p. 217

[4] See Tamara Neal (2006) *Blood and Hunger in the Iliad*, p. 27

[5] See Gibson (2022) *Anthropophagy and Cannibalism in Ancient Literature*, for more on the divine cannibalism of Cronos and Zeus, p. 56-57

[6] See Hook (1992) *Tyranny and Cannibalism: The Thyestes Them in Greek and Roman Literature*, p. 22-25

[7] Hook (1992) writes at length about Plato's allegory of the Tyrant as Cannibal, detailing the use of βρώμα as opposed to σίτος and the tyrant cannibals' inevitable transformation into a wolf, p. 11-18

[8] Detienne (1981) *Between Beasts and Gods*, p. 220-222

[9] See Detienne (1981) for more on the development of new philosophical/religious movements in the 4th and 6th centuries. He focusses on the ideologies of the Pythagoreans, Orphics, and Dionysians, but also comments upon the Cynics, p. 222-25

[10] See Detienne (1981) for a greater analysis of the Bassari people, Porphyry's *De Abstinentia*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, and the relationship between the Cult of Dionysus and Cannibalism, p. 224-225

[11] See Gibson (2022) for more on the role of cannibalism and anthropophagy as a form of theomachy, though he does not call it that, and the ways in which Tantalus and Lycaon's cannibalistic feasts sought to transgress the divisions between gods and humans, p. 56-62

[12] See Gibson (2022) for more on the ways Tantalus and Lycaon's feasts represent a questioning of the gods' omnipotence and their attempts to bridge the gap between mortal and immortal, p. 89

[13] See Gibson (2022) for more on the scholia surrounding Pindar's *Olympian 1* and Demeter's Anthropophagy, as well as the scholia surrounding Lycophron's *Alexandra*, p. 73-78.

[14] See Detienne (1981) on the ways Greek authors give more outlandish and savage descriptions of the peoples further away from Greece, p. 220

[15] Cohen (1996) *Monster Theory*, p. xiii-ix.

[16] As noted by Hook (1992), the Laestrygonian Giants of Book 10 in the *Odyssey* share many of the same thematic features as the Cyclopes, that being their cannibalization of guests (Hom. *Od*. 10.80-132). Yet they receive less attention than the Cyclopes, and owing to their use of an Agora and leader Antiphates, their identity as civilized or savage is left unclear, p. 26

[17] See Pierre Vidal-Naquet's (1986) *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World,* For greater detail on the ways in which civilization and 'reality' are characterized in the *Odyssey*, as separate from the wonderful and frightful world of gods and monsters, p. 18-20.

[18] τοὺς δὲ διὰ μελεϊστὶ ταμὼν ὠπλίσσατο δόρπον:
ἤσθιε δ᾽ ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, οὐδ᾽ ἀπέλειπεν,
ἔγκατά τε σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα μυελόεντα. (Hom. *Od*. 9.291-3).

[19] …καὶ χεῖρας ὁμοῖοι
τέρποντ᾽ ἐν θαλίῃσι κακῶν ἔκτοσθεν ἁπάντων:
θνῇσκον δ᾽ ὥσθ᾽ ὕπνῳ δεδμημένοι: ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα
τοῖσιν ἔην: καρπὸν δ᾽ ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα
αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον: οἳ δ᾽ ἐθελημοὶ
ἤσυχοι ἔργ᾽ ἐνέμοντο σὺν ἐσθλοῖσιν πολέεσσιν.
ἀφνειοὶ μήλοισι, φίλοι μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν. (Hes. *WD*.114-120).

[20] See Carol Dougherty (1999) for more on Cyclopes and Cronos' Golden Age of Cannibalism (p. 317-18). Dougherty in tern draws from Naquet (1986) and his *The Black Hunter*, p. 15-17

[21] Mark Dougherty (2001) 2 Food for Thought: Achilles and the Cyclops, p. 17-19

[22] Mark Dougherty (2001), p. 18.

[23] Rabel (1990) *Apollo as Model for Achilles*, comments on μηνίς use as specifically a divine form of rage (p 431), drawing in turn from Watkins (1977) "A propos de ΜΗΝΙΣ," *Bull. Soc. Ling. de Paris* 72 (1977), p. 187-109

[24] Another version of Thetis' attempt to divinize baby Achilles through fire and ambrosia is recounted in Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*: ὡς δὲ ἐγέννησε Θέτις ἐκ Πηλέως βρέφος, ἀθάνατον θέλουσα ποιῆσαι τοῦτο, κρύφα Πηλέως εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἐγκρύβουσα τῆς νυκτὸς ἔφθειρεν ὃ ἦν αὐτῷ θνητὸν πατρῷον, μεθ᾽ ἡμέραν δὲ ἔχριεν ἀμβροσίᾳ. Πηλεὺς δὲ ἐπιτηρήσας καὶ σπαίροντα τὸν παῖδα ἰδὼν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐβόησε: καὶ Θέτις κωλυθεῖσα τὴν προαίρεσιν τελειῶσαι, νήπιον τὸν παῖδα ἀπολιποῦσα πρὸς Νηρηίδας ᾤχετο. (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.13.6).

[25] See Gibson (2022) for more on the specific oddities of Hermes' sacrifice to the gods, which appears to be the only point in classical myth where a god gives sacrifice to other gods, p. 51-52

[26] Rabel (1990), p. 431-433

[27] Another haunting similarity between Apollo and Achilles is the manner in which their rage is appeased. As noted by Rabel (1990), Odysseus' embassy to appease Apollo in Book 1 is later echoed in Achilles' appeasement by Priam in Book 24 (p. 432-38). Apollo is appeased by a sacrifice, a shared meal between humans and the god, along with the return of a child to their parent; Achilles is likewise appeased by a shared meal between he and Priam, the conflict ending with the return of a child to their parent (this time Hector's corpse to Priam). However, Rabel overlooks a small yet fundamental distinction between the shared meal between Odysseus and Apollo, and Achilles and Priam, one is religious while the other is secular. In the ancient world, because of the high value of livestock, the only time people often ate meat was during a sacrifice. In Book 22 of the *Iliad*, when Achilles expresses his desire that he might have the strength to cannibalize Hector, he specifies that Hector's meat would be ἀποταμνόμενον 'butchered' when he ate it (Hom. *Il*. 22.447). When Hecuba expresses her desire to eat Achilles' liver, she makes no mention of cutting it up before consumption (Hom. *Il.* 24.211-14). Having killed Hector, Achilles then drags his corpse back to the camp of the Achaeans and proceeds to hold what can arguably be termed a human sacrifice at the funeral of Patroclus (Hom. *Il*. 23.173-7). Achilles' threat to eat Hector's butchered meat can, therefore, be read as a threat of ritual human sacrifice at the altar of Achilles rage and Patroclus' ghost, a twisted inversion of Odysseus' sacrifice to Apollo in Book 1.

[28] See Neal (2006) for a larger discussion on Zeus's cannibalistic insult to Hera, where Neal notes the undertones of sickness or illness, how the all-consuming rage of Hera against the Trojans is like a disease that can only be cured with human meat and blood, Footnote on p. 28

[29] See Neal (2006) again for how Ares sets himself apart from other gods by his active role in the battle, not just striking from afar like Apollo but actually engaging in hand-to-hand combat, portrayed as bloodthirsty, p. 29-30

[30] Neal (2006) speaks about the ways regular communal meal taking amongst soldiers in the *Iliad* is progressively replaced by descriptions of blood consumption, p. 26 & 32-33

[31] Neal (2006), p. 26

[32] Note the word "ἄσπετοσ" in τοῖσίν τε περὶ φρεσὶν ἄσπετος ἀλκή (Hom. *Il.* 16.157) can be translated as either 'tireless' or 'unspeakable.' While above it has been translated as 'tireless,' in order to denote the energy and ceaseless rage felt by the Myrmidons at the thought of finally joining battle, it can also be translated as 'unspeakable;' suggesting the unspeakable actions Achilles' wolf-like soldiers might do when filled with the ferocity of 'raw-meat-eating' wild animals. As there is no way to fully know how the poet originally intended the word to be read, both translations are equally valid.

[33] 'dicor et in teneris et adhuc reptantibus annis,
Thessalus ut rigido senior me monte recepit,
non ullos ex more cibos hausisse nec almis
uberibus satiasse famem, sed spissa leonum
viscera semianimisque lupae traxisse medullas. (St. *Ach*. 2.96-100).
See Braund and Gilbert's *ABC's of Ancient Ira* from Braund, Morton, and Glenn's (2003) *Ancient Anger* for more on Achilles' early carnivorous diet in Statius' Achilleid, p. 251-52

[34] κομίζει δὲ τὸν παῖδα πρὸς Χείρωνα Πηλεύς. ὁ δὲ λαβὼν αὐτὸν ἔτρεφε σπλάγχνοις λεόντων καὶ συῶν ἀγρίων καὶ ἄρκτων μυελοῖς, καὶ ὠνόμασεν Ἀχιλλέα （πρότερον δὲ ἦν ὄνομα αὐτῷ Λιγύρων） ὅτι τὰ χείλη μαστοῖς οὐ προσήνεγκε. (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.13.6).
See also Braund and Gilbert's *ABC's of Ancient Ira: Perspectives from Homer to Galen, p.* 252

[35] See Braund and Gilbert, pages (p. 251 & 278) on artistic depictions of baby Achilles eating animals and the sympathetic magic used to arouse both animalistic fearlessness and ferocity. Braund and Gilbert in turn draw on

James' Frazer's (1922) *The Golden Bough* for their arguments of sympathetic magic through Achilles' carnivorousness.

[36] Mark Dougherty (2001), p. 11

[37] The entirety of Achilles' description as rushing like a star is:
τὸν δ᾽ ὃ γέρων Πρίαμος πρῶτος ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι
παμφαίνονθ᾽ ὥς τ᾽ ἀστέρ᾽ ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο,
ὅς ῥά τ᾽ ὀπώρης εἶσιν, ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ αὐγαὶ
φαίνονται πολλοῖσι μετ᾽ ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ,
ὅν τε κύν᾽ Ὠρίωνος ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσι.
30λαμπρότατος μὲν ὅ γ᾽ ἐστί, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται,
καί τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν: (Hom. Il. 22.25-31).

[38] See Franco (2014) *Shameless: The Canine and the Feminine in Ancient Greece* for more on dogs' role as eaters of corpses in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, p. 57-74

[39] See Neal (2006) for more on Achilles' own self-description as animalistic and bestial, p. 32-33

[40] See Mark Dougherty (2001) for more on how Achilles cannot actually bring himself to consider cannibalizing Hector, separating himself from the desire. Dougherty actually argues that Achilles' refusal to break the ultimate taboo is his greatest failing, that the *Iliad* as a story is fundamentally conservative in its themes, p. 12
For more on Achilles' vicarious cannibalism through dogs see Rawson (1984) *Native and the Proscribed Act*. Here Rawson argues that Achilles externalizes his hatred for Hector and his cannibalistic wish onto dogs, calling Hector a dog and therefore creating a metaphorical cannibalistic dream, where Achilles can watch the dog Hector be cannibalized by Achilles' hounds, all the while not actually committing the act himself, p. 79-80
What Rawson misses is Achilles own association with dogs throughout the epic, which subsequently allows Achilles to play the role of dog eating Hector in his mind's eye.

[41] See Menon (2016) *Ogres, Ogresses and Outcasts* for more on Bhima as an inhuman semi-divine demonic character in the Mahabharata, p. 18
See Vaida (1905) *The Mahabharata: A Criticism* for more on the ways irreligious actions like the Pandava's sharing a wife or Bhima drinking his cousin's blood were walked back or explained away by later edits to the epic, p. 34

[42] See Braund and Gilbert (2003) for more on the story of Tydeus in the *Thebaid*, p. 265, 275-7, 278

[43] Trans. Gibson (2022) p 131
See Gibson for more on the Scholia regarding Tydeus and the *Thebaid,* p. 131

[44] See Houghes (1991) *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece* for more on Plato and modern scholars' reaction to Achilles' human sacrifice in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, p. 49-56

[45] See Houghes (1991) for more on Achilles' sacrifice as communal performance of grief and rage, p. 55

[46] Rawson (1984) noted in *Narrative and the Proscribed Act: Homer, Euripides and the Literature of Cannibalism* the cyclical pattern of cannibalistic vengeance in the *Iliad* (p. 79-80), how Hector wants Patroclus' corpse to be eaten by carrion animals (Hom. *Il*. 16.836; 17.125-27; and 18.179), then Achilles wishes for Hector to be eaten by dogs, and Hecuba finally wishing to eat Achilles herself for what he did to Hector.
Hook (1992), writing about the house of Atreus and the myth of Thestes, notes the cyclical nature of violence in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (P33). When Clytemnestra kills her husband in the *Agamemnon*, she calls the murder a "votive gift to Zeus beneath the earth, the savior of the dead" (Aes. *Ag*. 1386-87. Trans. Hook). The murderous queen later invokes the "thrice-glutted daimon of this race" (Aes. *Ag*. 1476-77. Trans. Hook), counting Agamemnon as third in a sequence of deaths including Thystes' sons and her own daughter Iphiginia, hoping that her final murder will satiate whatever evil god or spirit might have cursed her family (Orestes later gives a similar list, but includes only the male

sons of Thyestes, Agamemnon, and Aegisthus). When viewed together, these two stories of cyclical vengeance suggest a link in Greek thought between the notions of cyclical vengeance and bloodthirsty rage.

[47] Rawson (1984) notes Hecuba's use of the word '*omestes*' (Hom. *Il*. 24.207) to describe Achilles is unusual. According to Rawson, Lattimore and other translations translate the word as '*savage*' rather than the more precise '*raw-eating*.' This is the only instance in the *Iliad* where the word is used to describe a human being, as it is usually applied to birds of pray, dogs, and fish (Hom. Il. 11.453-4; 22.67; 24.82), p 80

[48] Rawson (1984) writes of the differences between Achilles' and Hecuba's dual desires to enact cannibalism, arguing that while the act itself is unimaginable for a Greek like Achilles, it could be imagined by a Barbarian like Hecuba (p. 81). As is noted in Euripides' *Hecuba*, the queen is ultimately doomed to transform into a dog, perhaps because of her cannibalistic tendencies. What Rawson misses is the added dimension of Hecuba's place in society after the fall of Troy. The line between human and animal is defined by society, by social rules and taboos against cannibalism, and the cyclopes are savage because they are without real society to regulate their behavior. While Hecuba's inevitable fall into savagery can in part be attributed to her foreignness, it can also be attributed to her loss of social standing. At the beginning of the Trojan War, Hecuba is defined by her two social roles as Queen and Mother, but after the utter ruin of her city and the deaths of her children, she no longer has either of her social roles, leaving her with nothing to keep her without a social identity and therefore more prone to fall out of civilization.