# THE CONCEPT OF AMEKHANIA IN HOMER AND ARCHAIC GREEK POETS BEFORE PINDAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the meaning of *amekhania* in early Greek literature. In a contextual analysis of the word and its cognates in the poetry of Homer, Hesiod, Archilochos, Alkaios, Sappho, Theognis and Simonides it will be seen that *amekhania* is symptomatic of a general reaction to life itself. The word signifies an awareness, accutely felt by the poets of the Archaic Age, of human helplessness before the might of the gods and nature, in the various circumstances of love and politics, and in terms of passion and thought which are divorced more and more from the world of events.

Other words, such as *apalamos*, *oligepeleon* and *akrasia*, express what is essentially a physical condition. But *amekhania*, throughout this period always refers to emotional and spiritual feelings. The contrasts that are to be made in the outlook and style of each poet impute to *amekhania* the growth of its range of meaning. The word follows the course that many Greek religious and philosophical concepts have taken.

One finds a development from the concrete, immediate usage as found in Homer to a more general awareness which is reflected in the passionate and often personal lyric poetry. Amekhania comes to signify a concept of universal dimension and plays an increasingly important role in the shaping of later thought.

## RESUME

La visée de cette thèse sera d'examiner le sens du mot 'amekhania' tel qu'on le trouve dans la littérature grecque de l'âge archaique. Une analyse contextuelle chez Homère, Hésiode, Archiloque, Alcée, Sapho, Théognis et Simonide révèlera que 'amekhania' est symptomatique d'une réaction à la vie-même. Pour les poètes de cette époque le mot veut signifier la vive conscience d'une faiblesse face à la nature et les dieux. Ces forces extérieures qui se mêlent aux évènements amoureux et politiques mettront en évidence cette même conscience passionnée et spirituelle qui peu à peu se détachera des actualités du monde.

D'autres mots tels que 'apalamos', 'oligépeleôn', et 'akrasia' veulent surtout dire une impuissance physique tandis que 'amekhania' se rapporte tout au long de cette période à une sensibilité de l'esprit et des émotions. Ainsi, les perspectives et les styles différents des poètes imputeront au mot 'amekhania' une signification étendue.

Le mot connaîtra une évolution conceptuelle semblable à d'autres formes religieuses et philosophiques de l'âme grecque. Il sera démontré que l'emploi du mot chez Homère part de l'immédiat et du concret et qu'il s'achemine vers une prise de conscience plutôt généralisante et exprimée dans une poésie lyrique passionnée et très souvent personnelle. Finalement 'amekhania' réussira à signifier un concept de portée universelle qui jouera un rôle important de plus en plus déterminant au développement éventuel de la pensée chez les Grecs.

# INTRODUCTION

Ameknania is a word best described as symptomatic of an awareness of doubt, fear, of the inability to act or extricate oneself from a given situation. When we translate it as 'helplessness' we must bear in mind the wide range of interpretation that the word opens up. The difficulty in translating from any language is that one is always forced to choose one meaning over another. One is forced to select the most suitable and hopefully the least complicated meaning. One must therefore explore all the contexts of a word and learn to think as much as possible in the language which is to be examined.

In Homer amekhania is found only once, however, its meaning is expressed by its cognate adjective amekhanos. Amekhanos has two possible interpretations. It has a passive meaning that might be translated as 'against whom nothing may be done'. If we divide the word into its basic components we find that amekhanos is simply the alpha-negative of mekhane, which translates

as 'device' or 'means'. Obviously anyone who comes into contact with a person described by the passive sense of amkèhanos will be affected by him.

The active sense of amekhanos means helpless, literally 'without means'. To be 'helpless' implies religious or philosophical possibilities, or simply a physical condition. The difficulty here is to determine the dimension of the word and this may only be done by considering each context and placing it within the currents of early Greek thought.

Of course, no word can be defined without including a small measure of all its various nuances. Amekhanos in the active sense is indicative in Homer of the emotional experiences which later poets emphasize. When Eurykleia, the old nurse, tells a disguised Odysseus that she is 'helpless', she is not refering to her physical condition, but to a state of mind. Her outburst of tears reveals the passions expressed by amekhanos in this context (cf. Od. 19.363).

In the only context of the substantive amekhania, in the Polyphemos episode of the Odyssey, we

see that it retains the immediacy and concreteness of cognate phrases in the Iliad (cf. Od. 9, 295). Amekhania is a passing feeling a horror that 'grips' Odysseus' heart. The scene is one of the most vivid and intense in Homer. Yet it is still inspired by a very specific situation.

This is to be expected, as Homer's notions of the power of the organs of perception and sensation do not separate passion from action. His conception of thymos, noos and phrenes depend to a great extent on analogy with the physical organs of the body. Amekhania for Homer is a specific phenomenon, as abstract ideas are not yet divorced from external realities.

As economic and social uncertainties eroded the security of the Homeric society, the early Archaic Age saw the expansion of commerce and colonization, the rise of the middle-classes and drastic political changes. Hesiod's world witnessed the demise of age-old monarchies at the hands of aristocratic oligarchs. During this period values which approximate a Protestant work-ethic created a way of looking at life which must have seemed quite foreign to the landed gentry.

Out of this milieu Hesiod's individual voice expresses the new ethic in no uncertain terms (Erga. 308-09): ἐξ ἔργων δ' ἄνδρες πολύμηλοί τ' ἀφνειοί τε· καὶ ἐργαζόμενοι πολὺ φίλτεροι ἀθανάτοισιν. Work is for Hesiod the mekhane to ward off personal disaster. Labour in the field produces abundance, which becomes Hesiod's arete. Amekhania is defined by conditions of hunger, disease, rough weather, in general, by physical hardship. Life is seen, to a great extent, as a struggle to preserve oneself against amekhania. The word thus expresses a more general range in Hesiod.

In Hesiod we find a personal reation to life itself and not merely to specific occasions. Amekhania signifies an individual struggle and acquires universal dimensions. No longer bound up with a given circumstance, amekhania is to be equated with a general and mythical reality. It becomes personified and takes its place with the other, perhaps more familiar characters such as Penia, Limos, Nemesis, Aidos and Dike.

Amekhania in lyric poetry takes on a religious and philosophical significance. When we consider the

intense emotional and individual reactions of the lyric poets to war, revolution, to peace and love, we note that they are frequently not inspired directly by the world of pure events. This is not to suggest that pure thought and passion have been severed from action, but that the lyric poets have largely replaced traditional epic themes with individual personae.

Amekhania represents an awareness of human vulnerability before the gods, before nature; later it is seen more and more to stem from causes within man. The powers of love and hate also assume an elemental force which easily overpowers men. The poems of Sappho and Archilochos are like windows which allow us to peer into their souls and witness the struggles of their passionate impulses.

In Theognis we find the phrase peirat'amekhanias, the limits of helplessness (cf. 139-40, 1078). Theognis states that peirat'amekhanias hold man from realizing his desires, from reaching his full potential. This limitation keeps man from knowing and understanding the visible reality of his world and what is to come.

All of the lyric poets express a sense of anguish at the very conditions which govern their lives. In stark contrast is the power of the gods, who begin to be equated with an almost abstract agency of fate. As thought and action become increasingly separate the gods lose their familiarity. We do not find the intimate relationship of Odysseus and Athene. Fr. 1 (L-P) of Sappho is one of the few occasions where personal intervention is described and here Aphrodite lacks the immediacy of Homer's gods. Her epiphany is shrouded in enchantment.

For Theognis and Alkaios amekhania also represents a condition of widespread social and political upheaval that characterizes the period. They frequently associate amekhania with penia. In one instance it is the sister of penia, in another it is the mother. In this regard it reminds us of Hesiod's use of the word. Yet, even though these poets are what we might call more 'politicized' than the other poets, they do not often refer to specific events. Poverty is a universal condition of life. Amekhania is translated into universal terms as well, intensified by the turbulence of the times. So although it suggests potential material prostration similar

to Hesiod, it has become more abstract a concept.

Amekhania in the later lyric poets, such as Simonides, is felt to stem from man's ephemeral nature. As the world of events yields to passion and thought, more emphasis is placed upon the inner world of man. Simonides reveals that inherent weaknesses in men prevent them from attaining traditional arete. Simonides says that he will settle for a 'decent fellow', one who does not do too much evil.

However, man bends toward evil during bad times and toward good also, if the situation allows. His inner nature is swayed by the force of circumstance. Simonides uses the phrase amekhanos symphora to suggest a universal situation: whoever amekhanos symphora attacks, this man must be kakos. Amekhanos symphora, which is synonymous to amekhania does not simply imply 'unavoidable misfortune', but a spiritual flaw within man. It is a force or passion over which the subject has no control.

Simonides expresses amekhania in largely external terms because the vocabulary of inner

responsibility, to borrow a phrase from Walter Donlan, has not yet been developed. In fr. 4D we see an attempt to articulate a view of the interior landscape. Here amekhania suggests denial of personal fulfilment because of the ephemeral heart within man.

Amekhania is one of the few words in early Greek literature to express feelings of helplessness. In the Archaic period there are other words which indicate, or are more or less synonymous with, amekhanos: apalamnos, analkis, oligepeleon, etc. Yet they all describe physical situations, whereas amekhanos expresses a passionate quality, so that even though dependent upon a given event, amekhanos is symptomatic of intense emotions. In Homer amekhania contains the seed of the universal concept into which it later develops. The passions it suggests from the first, expand in the lyric poets as actions give way to pure thought.

By noting each context of amekhania and its cognates in Homer, Hesiod and a selection of lyric poets the meaning of the word will be seen to express a universal dimension. Like many other words in Greek

literature amekhania first indicates a concrete reality, a spirited and fleeting moment in the course of events. Words such as harmonia, arete, agathos, etc., are also initially bound up in specific and immediate circumstances.

Subsequent poets begin to perceive man more in terms of his mind and spirit and thus these words are able to assume a universality. In the lyric poets amekhania expresses an abstract entity, having grown out of the temporary, halting moments of panic, dread, frustration that we find in Homer. The development of the concept of amekhania will be revealed when we turn to the context in each author.

## HOMER

Amekhania in Homer is symptomatic for the most part of specific instances in which people find themselves unable to take decisive actions in the face of immediate dangers. Little spiritual or philosophical qualities accrue to such moments. The swift unfolding of events, especially in the Iliad, curtails the time for reflection. Most passages which digress into wistful observations on the human condition are brief. Anger, joy, sorrow and laughter can only be passing sensations which take their place in the story. In the later poets the word takes on a much broader, more universal aspect.

Homer's basic fabric is a momentum in the action which often threatens to spill over uncontrollably. In many situations, fleeting instances somehow are caught up in the acceleration of events from which men sometimes find themselves at a loss to extricate themselves. What otherwise might amekhania indicate

but crises bound up with physical action?

In Hesiod the word, although still involved in action, signifies a concept which is expanded to religious proportions. Amekhania is still clothed in specific and concrete details but becomes a permanent condition of life. The lyric poets no longer associate amekhania with specific occurrences but with a state of mind, an awareness of insecurity in face of the gods, in face of nature and other widespread obstacles.

In the Odyssey the quick pace of the narrative is relaxed. The realizations of Telemakhos, Eurykleia and Penelope of their vulnerability, or powerlessness or lack of resource, become more than a backwards glance. Penelope's awareness of her situation grows more despairing in Odyssey 18 and 19. The sense of amekhania, although the word is not used here, begins to express a state of mind; its conditions are prolonged over a period of time. Yet even so, Homer never denies her the chance of a new trick, a new device to ward off the suitors.

Penelope's resilience and intelligence save her from helplessness; to be without device, without mekhos, is what defines the basic meaning of amekhania. Mekhos is a way of achieving one's wishes or remedying a state of affairs. Nestor, for instance, reviles Agamemnon, Iliad 2. 342 for not having a mekhos to get the Greek war-effort going favourably again. This passage gives the kind of situation amekhania describes in the Iliad. It expresses what we might refer colloquially to as being stymied.

Amekhania in Homer thus expresses a state or condition in which no mekhos can be found. The noun amekhania does not occur in the Iliad, but we find the adjective form, amekhanos. Amekhanos has two different usages, a passive meaning, "against which nothing can be done (mekhanesasthai)," and the less common active meaning, "without means (mekhane)." The scholiast Aristonicus, referring to Iliad 15. 14, observes that, "...the passage signifies both the inability of discovering a means and against whom nothing is to be done."[1] Eustatius refers to Eurykleia (Od. 19. 363) when he describes

the active meaning of amekhanos as a, "...simple, untroubled, direct, unskilled and naive woman[2]."

The battle scenes in the Iliad, where moments of amekhania occur, rise and fall like waves on a shore. At every occasion there is a swelling of action, a welter of men and horses in a frenzied clash. Tensions rise to a breaking point and then quickly recede. We will see this rhythm of fighting reach out for one hero after another. In Iliad 15, for instance, the fighting rises to a crisis when the Greeks are marooned by their ships, unable to fend off the Trojans. While Achilles and Patroklos are deciding the fate of the war Ajax fights for his life, aboard a ship. As the fight reaches its climax his strength wears away and he cannot hold out against Hector and Zeus. His destruction seems imminent. Ajax himself becomes aware of it and finally tells his companions that all is lost (cf. Il. 15. 733 ff.). The crisis quickly passes, however, with the appearance of Patroklos, who wards off amekhania. Favourable action is immediately taken. Amid the chaos of battle circumstances are swiftly reordered. There is no regard for the emotional impact that such crises will have.

When there is no resource, no way out, the result is destruction, which of course precludes amekhania. For it is a conditional part of any situation, part of an action which possesses and is enlivened by a natural, elemental power. Thus the moments of doubt or despair or futility are defined by this resilient, almost mysterious atmosphere which is often enhanced by similes. The most important simile for present purposes occurs in Iliad, 15. 381-383:

> οἱ δ'ὥς τε μέγα κῦμα θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο
> νηὸς ὑπὲρ τοίχων καταβήσεται, ὁππότ' ἐπείγῃ
> ἴς ἀνέμου· ἡ γάρ τε μάλιστά γε κύματ' ὀφέλλει·

As battle-tensions mount, the Trojans put forward their greatest drive against the Greeks. Homer compares them here to the swelling of the waves as they press against Greek ships. This is the typical sort of action which gives amekhania in Homer its fleeting and concrete nature.

It seems perhaps that amekhania could be confused with every scene of battle. Yet Homer has a specific word for the general din of battle. At Iliad,

11, 538-539 we find:

ἐν δὲ κυδοιμὸν
ἧκε κακὸν Δαναοῖσι, μίνυνθα δὲ χάζετο δουρός.

The word kudoimon refers to the intensity of fighting, the uproar, the confusion, but it does not refer to a frenzied crescendo that seems about to slide beyond control of men and, at times, of gods.

The phrase amekhana erga, which we find at Iliad 8. 130 and 11. 310 expresses just this sort of scene:

Ἔνθα κε λοιγὸς ἔην καὶ ἀμήχανα ἔργα γένοντο

This spectacle of creaking chariot-wheels, clashing swords, neighing horses and screaming warriors comes alive in our imagination and we can feel the battle disintegrate into chaotic violence.[3] Even the semblence of military order is about to slide away. Only in Iliad 8.80-84 is a warrior trapped in his chariot and rescued at the last moment from destruction. Only here is the flight of a hero as great as Odysseus, who ignores a plea to stay and help.[4] As Bernard Fenik notes, "Such a call

to resist in common enough by itself, but elsewhere never goes unheeded."[5] Homer draws up a scene of particular violence.

There is a sense of ineluctable doom that seems to grip the accelerated grimace of battle and just as tension is about to snap, just as amekhana erga are about to explode, Zeus intervenes and drops a thunderbolt. This phrase is a conditional, the protasis being a negative condition. There would have been overwhelming chaos had not Zeus saved the day.

The same line is repeated in similar circumstances in Iliad , ll. 310, during the aristeia of Agememnon. Again there is a swift build up of action, as particularly savage deeds are committed. Homer takes pains to convey the brutality. Nowhere else do we find such grim stories as the slaughter of Peisander and Hippolokhos; and again, on the Trojan side, when tables have turned, the battlefield is filled with atrocities committed by Hector. These details lead to a climax at 310 where amekhana erga again rise up like waves driven by whistling gales of wind. Again a situation would have

been irretrievable unless something else happened. This 'something else' in Iliad 8. is Zeus's thunderbolt and in 11 the intervention of Diomedes and Odysseus. There is a point, as the conditional indicates, that is not reached; but, if reached, would produce disaster without remedy. Homer brings the action of battle to the brink. But amekhana erga are prevented from taking an upper hand, for it would mean that one side would quite destroy the other - something unimaginable from the point of view of the story.

The action of the Iliad does not really allow the active sense of amekhanos to apply to its characters. The action permits only a conditional situation. These two passages represent a familiar structure. Hestor's danger was expressed by action potentially destructive (cf. Il. 8. 90-91).[6]

We begin to understand the expression of this idea, this unconsciously felt sensation of amekhania if we allow Homer's vivid rendering to fill our imagination. For such feelings do not depend on a uniform set of characteristics. The preponderance of similes give the action a vitality. The simile in Iliad 2.

469 ff., comparing armies to nations of swarming wasps, lends a quickened lustre to scenes and Homer places these moments of weakness, incapacity or panic within an unceasing spiral of actions.

The fighting scenes provide us with an example of the Homeric expression of human weakness. Ironically, however, we must guard against drawing more evidence from these brief, boldly conceived scenes. We must not lament too deeply the 'tragedy' of Achilles. The awareness of a wider sense of human helplessness is only touched upon in Homer. If there is a wider moral to the story, Homer only hints at it.[7]

One must be hesitant to generalize the roles of men, gods and fate. Achilles's greatest source of grief is not the knowledge of being inextricably bound up by a harsh fate, but simply the loss of his best friend. As Hermann Fränkel observes, "Man in the Iliad remains always himself; he is not shattered by the hardest blows... he reacts to situations sharply; and the mood that he then takes on passes with the situation without leaving a trace... Homer's people have an

elemental vitality."[8]

Grief does not come to Achilles from this ineluctable fate. As he moans over the stinging loss of face he suffered from Agamemnon, he is aware that if he is to expect a short life, Zeus might at least have given him honour. The dilemma in which he finds himself, which renders him ineffectual in the war is bearable; that is, Achilles's perception of his own helplessness is not what causes his heart to break.[9] The cause of his sorrow is the knowledge of being trapped by fate and the loss of Patroklos.

Yet, as Fränkel suggests, Achilles, even though he is caught up by a harsh fate, remains basically unchanged. He is a warrior and when he has had enough grief over Patroklos he returns to the battle with resolve. He is resilient in the face of his situation. There is no fatalism in his character and we would be wrong to refer here to a human condition. If Achilles is aware of human frailties his reflections and comments come and go quickly.

The response of Thetis is similar (cf. Il.

1. 414 ff.). Realizing immediately the ramifications of these events she breaks into tears inspired by the futility of the situation. Her divine perception grasps the hopelessness of Achilles's life. But her despair is short-lived, for she quickly dashes up to Olympos with a plan. The mekhos, to ask that Zeus redirect the fortunes of Troy temporarily, shapes the subsequent unfolding of events.

Later, in Iliad 18 she hears the anguished cry of Achilles, who has learned of the death of Patroklos, and laments again; this time there is more pathos for her mourning, as she realizes that this blow is the worst. Achilles' life seems barren and joyless and even a goddess cannot alter it (cf. Il. 18. 62). Again we witness the effect of the chain of events pressing forward gathering up all who stand before it.

These perceptions and knowledge of personal fate never stop a hero from acting, never dampen his enthusiasm for life. Amekhania in the Iliad is rooted always in the specific and concrete. On the other hand, one must not deny that Homer refers to

ideas larger than the sum of actions. Hector realizes the futility of his encounter with Achilles; like Patroklos before him he is stripped of any resource and his fate is sealed (Il. 22, 5-6):

> Ἕκτορα δ'αὐτοῦ μεῖναι ὁλοιὴ μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν
> Ἰλίου προπάροιθε πυλάων τε Σκαιάων.

It is apparent that moments described by amekhania are caused or ended by the gods. Yet the meaning of the word expresses an awareness of a physical, specific condition and we would do better to turn from what in Homer remains a vague indication of religious thought to the events which take place in this world.[10] We have seen in the battlefield certain circumstances where men lose control of their actions and any means of preserving themselves from death. These scenes may be distinguished from the ordinary din of war, where events seem to follow at least a semblance of order. But, in the passages we have examined, violence is accelerated, chaos looms, and men are threatened by the very momentum of fighting. Such times occur when sheer anarchy is about to be unloosed. The phrase amekhana erga, which is synonymous

to amekhania, describes such instances.

There are few scenes in the Iliad where amekhania is symptomatic of an individual in a specific situation. The scene that comes to mind is a passage in Iliad 5; although amekhania does not occur in this passage, the same concrete and immediate details suggest it.

Diomedes meets Hector who is born along the field by Ares and Enyo. Diomedes's initial response is an outburst of fear (596):

τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ῥίγησε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης·

Homer heightens the action with a simile, charging both the hero's emotion and its cause with a vitality of nature. In this brief encounter Homer expresses the uncontrollable power of Hector's charge through the surging river which rages to the sea. Faced with Hector, whose might is enhanced by Ares and Enyo, Diomedes is at a loss. For an instant he can think of nothing to do. Finally as his wits gather he takes the only possible action and runs away.

The word apalamnos is clearly an important indication of Diomedes' situation[11]. The lowest level of meaning is 'without hands', therefore helpless to strive; commentators frequently translate it as 'shiftless', but obviously the pejorative meaning will not fit here. Diomedes is simply incapacitated, the course of events has been interrupted and he is prevented from pressing his attack. Such expressions of doubt, fear, frustration interrupt the action with the realization, "Oh god, what can I do?" Homer does not describe religious or philosophical reflections running through Diomedes's mind. The scene is simple and immediate with little interest in emotion other than its physical manifestations. For Diomedes this is a moment in battle when the odds have been unevenly stacked against him. Panic grips him for an instant, but quickly he gathers his wits and takes action. Such emotions are short-lived in the Iliad and thus amekhania expresses concrete and short-lived situations.

The other contexts of the word amekhanos are concerned with individuals. It appears in the Iliad only in a passive sense, yet it is obvious that if someone is impossible to deal with, whoever comes into contact

with that person will somehow be affected. By looking at each passage and trying to impute a reciprocal meaning into the word we will be able to expand somewhat the feelings and situations which would suggest amekhania.

Amekhanos describes a request that Hera makes to Sleep at Iliad 14. She decides to divert Zeus's attention from the battle in order to improve the situation of the Greeks. Sleep is to exercise his powers over Zeus, but when Hera broaches the subject to him he replies (Iliad. 14. 262):

νῦν αὖ τοῦτό μ' ἄνωγας ἀμήχανον ἄλλο τελέσσαι.

Why is the request amekhanos? Sleep tells us that the last time he tried something similar Zeus almost threw him out of Olympos. The deed's impossibility stems from the consequences that it will have. The story reminds us of Hephaestos in Iliad 1. The raging power of Zeus, his elemental fury, restrains Sleep from acting upon the invitation. The dire results that Sleep relates give lustre to amekhanos. The request is called amekhanos because it would lead to Sleep's being defenseless, stripped of

a mekhos by the anger of Zeus.

This double effect of the word helps us to glean the sense of amekhania, if only because the context again reminds us that it conveys a very specific situation and a fleeting passage of time. But even the wrath of Zeus cannot frighten Sleep enough to pass up Hera's offer. Again amekhanos is not associated with an abstract idea or with uniform circumstance. It occurs in a specific situation and its significance embodies the concrete and immediate. The potential eruption of Zeus' power, his uncontrollable strength does not prevent the soft-spoken Sleep from accepting Hera's bribe of the shimmering, lovely Pasithea, one of the Graces. Once again Homer contrasts the awsome, overwhelming forces that inhabit his imagination with vivacious beauty.

The same potential threat of Zeus' power affects Hera in the following book. We might draw similar conclusions from Zeus' description of her as amekhane Hera (Book 15. 14). We may only read, and with Hera, tremble at the power of Zeus. Perhaps his choice of this adjective contains a certain degree of irony.[12] Were his

vaunted power to explode upon her, she would instantly be overwhelmed by it and might then be considered without a means of escaping Zeus' wrath.

Amekhanos is applied to Nestor (Book 10. 167)[13] and Hector (Book 13. 726) in much the same manner.[14] We might suggest that by giving Hector the consuming, ungovernable powers of fire (cf. 687-88) the expression of the adjective is enhanced and given a meaning with a much more direct appeal. The same adjective is applied more effectively to Achilles (Book 16. 29):

σὺ δ'ἀμήχανος ἔπλευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ.

Patroklos, choked with emotion speaks these words to Achilles. At the close of Book 15 the storm of battle has wrought great havoc upon the Greek armies. They are pinned against their ships, unable to do anything. Their strength is gone and it seems their destruction is close at hand.

At lines 21-22 Patroklos replies to Achilles

with a deprecation of his wrath:

> ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ, Πηλῆος υἱέ, μέγα φέρτατ' Ἀχαιῶν,
> μὴ νεμέσα· τοῖον γὰρ ἄχος βεβίηκεν Ἀχαιούς.

He clearly associates its effect with the unshielded state of the Greeks. Because his wrath has been unbending Achilles is held to be responsible for their destruction. Patroklos elaborates the perils of the Greeks. In this context, perhaps better than any previous, we may witness the two-fold meaning of amekhanos, the passive and active, expressed simultaneously in the word. This part of Patroklos's speech ends with the observation (28-29):

> τοὺς μέν τ' ἰητροὶ πολυφάρμακοι ἀμφιπένονται,
> ἕλκε' ἀκειόμενοι·

The healers are busy trying to cure the wounded, to ease the sorrows of the situation, but Achilles' pride keeps him from reversing the direction of the war. Patroklos is quite clear on this and tells Achilles outright that he is pitiless and unbending. The most effective expression

of Achilles's character, one that gives the adjective amekhanos its real force is at lines 33-35. Here Patroklos compares Achilles's character to the raw elements, to the sea and rugged shoreline:

> νηλεές, οὐκ ἄρα σοί γε πατὴρ ἦν ἱππότα Πηλεύς,
> οὐδὲ Θέτις μήτηρ· γλαυκὴ δέ σε τίκτε θάλασσα
> πέτραι τ' ἠλίβατοι, ὅτι τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηνής.

The final context of amekhanos occurs in Book 19. 273, where it is applied to Agamemnon by Achilles in the scene of reconciliation. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this context is that both heroes associate amekhanos with ate which had been planted in Agamemnon's mind by the gods. Agamemnon, in fact, defends himself by pointing out that he was not the first to suffer temporary blindness. Perhaps, as events again move toward a final conclusion, Homer means to place in this scene a reminder of the power of the gods over all human endeavour. For ate stirs unyielding passions in Agamemnon which result in insult to Achilles. The cause, however, was not a personal agent, "...it is ascribed not to physiological or psychological causes, but to an external 'daemonic agency'."[16]

Agamemnon demands to be acquitted of the blame (cf. 86-89).

Later at Iliad 19. 270 Agamemnon repeats the cause of his blindness:

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ μεγάλας ἄτας ἀνδρεσσι διδοῖσθα·

The ate inspired by Zeus sharpened the stern, unbending part of Agamemnon's character and Achilles realizes that neither the ate nor the effect on character should be considered as a personal affront (cf. 271-74). Unfortunately for the Greek armies, however, it had a very destructive effect. We notice that the passage is described as a conditional with Zeus the subject of a protasis beginning with alla (272). This reminds us once more that such forces as erode human security, which threaten to destroy its very existence, are externalized in Homer.[17] For instance, the imagery of the wind is never far from Homer's thoughts and even in this passage if we look at his choice of words we find orine - "Atreides raised in billows - stirs, agitates- the spirit in my breast," says Achilles.

Diamperes -right through, like the wind Agamemnon blows right through the spirit of Achilles, ripping into that deep, unfathomable reserve of pride which took such a heavy toll of Greek warriors. "He took the girl against my will and I could do nothing with him." If we turn back to the first moment of anger in Iliad I, the first argument between Agamemnon and Achilles we realize that, when confronted by such an unyielding opponent Achilles is, in fact, overwhelmed for an instant; his first response is frustration as rage causes him to hesitate. This moment captures the essential meaning in the Iliad of amekhania.

To discover such moments in the Odyssey we must close our eyes to the clash of bronze, the screams of warriors, the clouds of dust billowing out from under foot, and awake, like Odysseus, into a world translucent in the morning light. The pace of the action has relaxed. Metaphorically expressed in the Iliad by the swell of the sea and the rushing of the winds (Il. 16. 305. ff., etc.), in the Odyssey it is embodied in the comparison of the flight of Hermes (Od. 5.51-53) to a sea-mew skimming over the crests of waves, soaking its wing tips in the sea.

Amekhania is altered in this world by a way of life best described by Alkinoos, Odyssey 8. 247 ff. He tells Odysseus that while the Phaiakians excell in sports they especially enjoy feastings, listening to the lyre, dancing, wearing clean clothes, bathing and love-making. The Phaiakians, however, are also aware that a destructive fate hangs over their island. There had been a prophecy that a jealous Poseidon would put an end to their revelry. Yet the merry-making goes on, the spirit never dampened, rather, it is never dampened for long.

When we observe the man of many tricks, the polumekhanos Odysseus we see the same quick wit, the same resource, the same penetrating perception as he displays in the Iliad. Those fleeting instances of doubt, hesitation, frustration, rage, which together are symptomatic of amekhania are present in the Odyssey. There are, however, differences in the dimension of these feelings which arise from the different setting. We witness the growing up of Telemakhos, the despair of Penelope, we see the increasing anarchy take over the palace on Ithaka. The action of the Odyssey has a different tenor from the Iliad - perhaps an obvious statement, but one of significance. For the dimension

of amekhania grows vaster than those moments found in the Iliad.

Odysseus remains ever true to character and ever in possession of a mekhos. But when we look at Telemakhos in Book I or at the old nurse, Eurykleia, we find a prolonged awareness of futility, of the inability to act over a wider and more complicated sphere of interests. In Odyssey 18 and 19 this awareness is felt most acutely by Penelope. All these feelings have begun to destroy her as one trick after another proves useless and when Odysseus finally arrives he finds her at the end of her tether. Odysseus the polumekhanos becomes Penelope's mekhos.[18] The ultimate resolution, therefore, to such feelings of helpnessness is not tlemosune, or sophrosune or time. But, for Homer, this passionate and complete reunion of man and woman suggests that the best remedy to moments of unknowing (no matter what their dimension) is to live life to the fullest.[19] The force that drives both Odysseus and Penelope ever on through their moments of doubt and hesitation is the desire to live again with each other. This force is what gives a structure to the Odyssey and within it we will trace those disruptive

times when amèkhania holds the heart.

The most terrifying moment for Odysseus is his encounter with Polyphemos. The scene is established with frightening imagery that foreshadows the single instance of agonizing panic. Polyphemos is portrayed as the most savage of the Cyclops. He dwells apart from the rest and is of a lawless disposition (Od. 9. 188-189):

οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους
πωλεῖτ', ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἑὼν ἀθεμίστια ἤδη

Homer compares his stature to a lofty, wooded mountain that stands out among the forest (cf. 190-192). As Odysseus and his companions come upon his cave, the men immediately sense the danger that lurks in the place and they urge Odysseus to leave (cf. 228-229).

When Polyphemos returns his sheer size almost takes their breath away and Homer takes time to describe the huge boulder the giant roles over the mouth of his cave (cf. 240-243). Thus the scene is set. All the details conjure the heavy odour of the cyclops,

the deep, savage voice and the clumsy gesture. The power overwhelms us and we sympathize with the puny men trapped inside the cave.

Terrified by Polyphemos Odysseus quotes the authority of Zeus (cf. 266-271) but the pitiless heart brooks neither fear, nor respect of themis or Zeus. (Od. 9. 275-276):

> οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν
> οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν

The fear of the gods, he says, will not make him hesitate to devour Odysseus's companions. At this point, where the contrast between the uncontrolled barbarism of the cyclops and the trapped men is most pronounced,[20] amekhania makes its first appearance in the vocabulary of Greek literature.

At line 288 phrases are short and words harsh as Odysseus retells his story to Alkinoos. His breathing quickens with the excitement (cf. 288-290):

> ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἀναΐξας ἑτάροις ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἴαλλε,
> σὺν δὲ δύω μάρψας ὥς τε σκύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ
> κόπτ'· ἐκ δ' ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥεέ, δεῦε δὲ γαῖαν.

In almost every phrase the conjunction de interrupts the flow of words. We can hear Odysseus's voice rising as he describes the height of the horror; the desperate supplication to Zeus is blurred by the disgusting deed and for an instance terror fills the mind (295):

σχέτλια ἔργ' ὀρόωντες, ἀμηχανίη δ' ἔχε θυμόν.

Yet immediately Odysseus's wits return, a plan comes to mind as the grip of helplessness is loosened.

For the remainder of the time he spends in the cave of Polyphemos, even though he witnesses another sordid dinner, never does amekhania catch hold of Odysseus. Once the mekhos has fired his imagination, when resolve takes over from despair, as it always does in Homer, physical surroundings lose their grim atmosphere; the great doorway is still jammed shut and the men are still held inside, powerless to act,

but this has little effect on Odysseus once the unfolding of a plan moves him. He is now full of admiration for his own beguiling words (cf. 364), refers with consumate pride to his own great-hearted spirit (cf. 299) and savours the devising of his clever strategems.

This story contrasts values - barbarism and the civilized Greek - and we see how the situation is still quickly dispatched by the polumekhanos man. Such values are not actually named but arise from the descriptions of simple and concrete aspects of both characters. Likewise with amekhania, for if it were more than a fleeting feeling arising out of a specific situation, one might expect a sustained note of despair. Amekhania here names no spiritual or religious frustration; it is simply the inability to act. Odysseus's witnessing the wretched death of his men temporarily blots out his cunning. Homer does not separate the concrete realities which amekhania expresses here from what was later expressed in abstract terms.

The same, temporary awareness is found in many

other scenes which are not quite as elaborately presented as the Cyclops episode. In Odyssey 10 Odysseus and his companions, having received the bag of winds from Aiolos, sail on homeward. They come close enough to Ithaka to actually see the hearth-fires blazing. But the men foolishly let the winds blow out of the bag as Odysseus lay asleep. When he awakes and realizes what has been done there is an instant when, sickened by this stupidity, Odysseus ponders whether or not to throw himself into the sea. He chooses to endure the calamity. Here again he is gripped by despair with no solution but to endure.

Similarly, at the beginning of Odyssey 20 Odysseus has bedded down for the night in his palace. The coming and going of maids with the suitors enrages him yet there is nothing that he can do. He rages impotently as his heart barks like a bitch for her puppies (cf. Od. 20. 14 ff.).

The verb that Homer uses here -hulaktei - means to howl.[21] For a moment sputtering rage blurs reason and is about to explode in Odysseus. The

realization of being without anything to do causes his heart to howl. This passage reveals a different kind of situation than the previous. Here Odysseus's emotions are described. This is more than a fleeting moment in battle as the turmoil that causes the heart to howl is emotional, separated from a simple course of events. Odysseus is not part of any action, but a witness. Nor does his usual resolve come immediately. The scene does not instantly reorder the flow of the action as happened in the Cyclops episode. The scene in this way points ahead, in its emotional appeal, to the lyric poets.

Odysseus must deal with a much more complicated situation and his awareness of the inability to alter it is prolonged. Thus a basic difference between the Iliad and the Odyssey, a relaxing of the action, lends a temporal and emotional dimension to the moments which suggest amekhania. Odysseus cannot simply dash back into the action with confidence. He must wait, as this circumstance demands far subtler plans. The polumekhanos Odysseus must sustain his cunning.[22] Restraint becomes more important than action and Odysseus must look forward

rather than react openly to a given moment. So, he restrains his heart (Od. 20. 18-21):

> τέτλαθι δή, κραδίη καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης.
> ἤματι τῷ ὅτε μοι μένος ἄσχετος ἤσθιε Κύκλωψ
> ἰφθίμους ἑτάρους· σὺ δ' ἐτόλμας, ὄφρα σε μῆτις
> ἐξάγαγ' ἐξ ἄντροιο ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι.

Athene appears to Odysseus to ease his suffering. Her epiphany brings encouragement (cf. 33 ff.) and finally, sleep (cf. 54 ff.). Homeric man is not normally confused and his plans are usually formed quickly. In this situation, however, the events in Ithaka are drawn out and Odysseus is faced with a great challenge to his cunning. He has a mekhos certainly, but its scope is far more complicated and far wider than, for instance, his tricks with Polyphemos. The same is true of amekhania which in the Odyssey begins to suggest a state of mind.

There is in the Odyssey a keener interest in the working of human intelligence, for the polymekhanos

Odysseus embodies the active intelligence which fends off amekhania. The portrayal of passion seems an obvious part of this 'close-up' of a single man, as opposed to a panorama of battle scenes which comprise so much of the Iliad. Despite these growing differences and a new emphasis on the inner life, we must remember that Homer does not keep will and action separated for long. Odysseus's situation is prolonged but it is not permanent; it is not a general condition of life. The address to his soul is not a religious outpouring of doubt or a generalization on the state of things, but simply a clarification of a single situation and his awareness of personal helplessness is dispelled.

In Telemakhos we find another indication of Homer's concern with individual character. When we first meet Telemakhos he appears a very insecure adolescent but when we leave him he is in control of events which lead to the final victory over the suitors. In Odyssey 2 he reveals emotions which suggest amekhania. In fact, at the assembly he speaks of his powerlessness to stop the suitors ravaging the cattle, loitering in the palace, drinking the wine and providing a husband for

Penelope. Again, we note that amekhania, although not used here, is symptomatic of frustrations that arises not so much out of physical impuissance as an inability to cope with a more general situation. Telemakhos moans (Od. 2. 58-61):

> οὐ γὰρ ἔπ' ἀνήρ,
> οἷος Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔσκεν, ἀρὴν ἀπὸ οἴκου ἀμῦναι.
> ἡμεῖς δ' οὔ νύ τι τοῖοι ἀμυνέμεν· ἦ καὶ ἔπειτα
> λευγαλέοι τ' ἐσόμεσθα καὶ οὐ δεδαηκότες ἀλκήν.

His speech ends with an emotional outburst as he dashes the royal scepter to the ground. In a 'storm-blast' of tears he helplessly bears the taunting of Antinoos. Yet in this moment of weakness, that becomes a watershed of Telemakhos's development, Zeus responds with an augury in the form of two eagles. Homer reorders the momentum of events; where instances of frustration, hesitation, fear, etc., cloud the mind or break up the flow of things, human resolution eventually leads men on. Telemakhos's despair is ended by the augury as he announces his intention of outfitting a ship to sail in search of news about his father. The passage reminds

us that even though amekhania may be felt over a much broader range, and indeed, may be seen more as a state of mind, it is not totally divorced from physical action. It is still bound up with events which govern the life of men.

In Odyssey 19 we find also that the situation which suggests amekhania, in regard to Eurykleia, stems from a condition which is the result of many actions. Eurykleia indicates as much at line 363 where she tells Odysseus despairingly of her own helplessness:

Ὦ μοι ἐγὼ σέο, τέκνον, ἀμήχανος·

Eurykleia has been summoned to wash the 'stranger's feet (cf. Od. 19. 357 ff.) by Penelope, who is reminded of the features of Odysseus. Her observations arouse in the old nurse a longing for the absent Odysseus. Her thoughts immediately stray to him. The difficulty of this passage does not stem from the address to an absent person, for at 371 Eurykleia redirects her words to the disguised Odysseus. The irony is evident, but we wonder why Eurykleia utters this emotional awareness

of her condition. Amekhanos, used actively here, does not describe a physical state; it obviously does not stem from Odysseus's simple, physical absence, that is, Eurykleia is not saying, "I can't help you because you're not here to be helped."

At line 355 we note that Penelope describes Eurykleia as oligepeleousa -'she will wash your feet, although she is weak'. Yet Eurykleia seems, despite her age, to be still vigorous in mind and body.[23] So much she reveals to Odysseus later (cf. Od. 19. 492 ff.). The reason for her tearful outburst becomes evident from details which describe the condition of the palace.

Homer indicates that the suitors have wrought a great deal of damage to the place. Their greed has been inflicted upon the household and they have stirred up confusion beyond control of the remaining servants faithful to Odysseus. The insolence of the maid angers Odysseus and almost caused him to act at a time that would have been disastrous. One assumes that the growing anarchy of the household, the dissension among the serving class (vide, Od. 19. 66 ff., in regard to Melantho)

weighs heavily upon the faithful old Eurykleia and causes her awareness of futility and frustration, so that when she is reminded so vividly of her lord, who must symbolize to her all that is good and orderly, she bursts into tears and laments this pitiable state of mind.

Homer creates a growing momentum that produces this awareness of amekhania, for, as the suitors come closer and closer to the achievement of their purpose, order in the palace is increasingly abandoned; Eurykleia is bound to declare her frustration when all clear social demarcation begins to break down. This growing confusion, therefore, created by Odysseus's absence, is responsible for her misery. The importance of social order can be seen the moment Eurykleia recognizes her lord, for she spontaneously, after twenty years' absence, drops to the suppliant position.

Although we are exploring a state of mind at this point, it does not ultimately detract from Homer's portrayal of human buoyancy. Even though a destructive situation continues, each character possesses what seems to be a limitless reserve of energy to take

action, to try to redirect the course of events so that life might again be lived peacefully and enjoyed to its fullest. The vision adds a lustre to amekhania as we recognize a complex of feelings which are not inspired by the immediacy of a single circumstance. Odysseus's return finally puts an end to destructive elements. Thus although amekhania is not yet a permanent outlook, its dimension has been vastly expanded and it has become indicative of a greater emotional intensity than found in the Iliad.

The situation in the palace has etched a profounder sense of despair on Penelope. In Odyssey 18 and 19 there are many passages which convey a growing awareness of futility, of the inability to push back the tide of events. The intensity of Penelope's resignation has even affected her physically (cf. Od. 19. 124 ff.). Her longing for Odysseus has almost worn her out and she is driven to tears at the mention of his name. The bard's song in Book I causes her to cry and when Odysseus disguised talks of himself she cannot contain her emotions (cf. Od. 19. 204, 249, etc.).

The most poignant testimony to Penelope's

emotional state is the simile of the nightingale that she relates to Odysseus (Od. 19. 518 ff.). Stanford remarks that at line 521 troposa refers to, "...the many turns and trills in the nightingale's very complex song."[24]

ἠ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυμηχέα φωνήν.

The shrill warbling note heightens the description of Penelope's confused mind.

She seems certain of nothing, for when she tells Odysseus about a most transparent dream (cf. 535, ff.) she cannot make more out of it than to conclude (560-61):

Ξεῖν', ἦ τοι μὲν ὄνειροι ἀμήχανοι ἀκριτόμυθοι
γίγνοντ', οὐδέ τι πάντα τελείεται ἀνθρώποισι.

Surely the use of the adjective amekhanos reveals a blurring of active and passive meanings in the word. Her thoughts have become clouded and the old sense of determination is about to collapse. The passages above portray a pervasive awareness of her helplessness, for the dream's message is anything but baffling.

Her failure, or reticence, to interpret it comes from the emotions which seem to prevent her at this time.

Penelope's deliverance, ironically, is close at hand. At this tense moment in the action Odysseus is about to restore order and banish those symptoms of amekhania. The conversation ends here with her suggestion of the contest of the bow. Homer leads us to the final outcome with this trick. Odysseus's cunning has led him far toward the accomplishment of his final triumph (by which we understand the desire to live peaceably and to seize the delights that life has to offer) and it is appropriate that Penelope's last trick is that which provides the occasion of his victory.

In the Odyssey we find the occasions of amekhania much more expansive, much more complicated, more open to reflection than in the Iliad. The events of the story allow characters time to contemplate the meaning of events; and they react as we expect Homer's people to react: with passion and resilience. This is one aspect common to both poems.

To sum up the appearance and development of amekhania, it is always found as a moment of doubt, an instant of hesitation where action is impossible. The circumstance is rooted in the specific and concrete world and not a world of abstract thought. It develops in the Odyssey suggestive of a state of mind. Still determined by a particular situation the scope of emotion is extended far beyond fleeting moments. Amekhania in the Odyssey is separated much more than in the Iliad from action, becoming increasingly connected with individual character, with the personal situation of Odysseus, Penelope and Telemakhos. In the Iliad we saw how amekhana erga describes a turn of events, but in the Odyssey amekhania relates more to the mind and to passions.

The unity of Homer's vision remains consistent throughout all of these developments. To understand the symptoms of amekhania we must grasp that even though it means a submission to divine power or an admission of human frailty, Homeric man lives in a radiantly fresh world, where the dimension of such feelings must necessarily be brief, for his characters survive the bleakest of times only to bounce back into a world of calm grace.

## HESIOD

The rambling and often lacunose style of Hesiod makes a discussion of *amekhania* in strictly poetic terms quite difficult. For the same reason we must resist the temptation to place it into a systematic and comprehensive explanation of the universe. The *Theogony* and the *Erga* are almost patchworks of digressions,[25] yet the form they take is, like most poetry, determined by their purpose and this seems to be to display the fruits of a passionate curiosity for the conditions which govern the lives of men and gods.

Hesiod's imagination is peopled with a host of daemons, half-human spirits, sinister and sometimes threatening monsters.[26] He felt also an appreciation of nature, of the rejuvenation of spring and of the beauty of winter's calm. The creative forces he held to be present at the beginning of the universe still rage and swirl in his world, still govern the course of events and breathe life into nature.

Hesiod's poetic vision encompasses the electric charge and radiant air of the original creation so that all of the generations of the sky and earth conceived in that moment of explosive energy in his poetry live on in their own right.

We can better understand the meaning of amekhania in Hesiod when we realize that his purpose first of all was to impart this vision of the universe. He dwells upon themes and imagery which are chosen as examples.[27] Yet at the same time many such passages seem to stray from their didactic purposes and blossom into some of the most lyrical moments. This combination of didacticism and lyricism is similar in spirit to the first Ioninan physikoi. There also is the curiosity to search, to explain, combined with a lyrical freshness, a sometimes mystical celebration of life.[28] The description in the Erga of winter (cf. lines 504-558) or in the Theogony of the creation and accountrements of the first woman (576 ff.) show Hesiod as a poet as well as a teacher.

If we are to give any form to his sprawling poems it would be based upon a dualism which runs throughout

them, which allows Hesiod to understand and explain the world and serves to unite his vision. If Hesiod is compared to Homer we notice how amekhania has been affected by this dualism. For Homer the word expresses the panic of a fleeting moment in battle, or a moment of crisis during an adventure in some distant land. It is a short-lived awareness of being at a loss to take action, to extricate oneself from a calamitous situation. Except for the growing despair of Penelope throughout Odyssey 18 and 19, amekhania is quickly dispatched by simple, swift resolve. Situations which produce these instances of helplessness, quite specific and concrete, are usually transformed into moments of triumph. But for Hesiod amekhania has come to express a permanent, widespread condition of life, a condition which has grown out of his search for an order in a world which inspired a vision of permanent struggle, a war of opposites, between good and evil;[29] it has conditioned not only the marked differences between man and gods, but between the gods who live in the sky and those who dwell in the earth. Thus amekhania, though still retaining a vibrant sense of immediacy and concreteness, begins to acquire very different dimensions, growing

out of these polarities.

Amekhania is presented in the Erga (cf. line 496) as a potential condition of man's fate. It will overtake the incompetent or lazy while the diligent and industrious will keep it away. Hesiod tells his brother Perses at line 496 that if he idles away his time in winter amekhania will catch him.[30] For winter is also harsh and forbidding and can, if he is unprepared, cut short his very existence. It will bring poverty to the man who does not shore a defence against its bite.

Hesiod says that winter might cause helplessness. He uses a subjunctive to introduce the possibility (Erga, 496):

μή σε κακοῦ χειμῶνος ἀμηχανίη καταμάρψῃ

But if a man work diligently and follow the advice he gives to his brother (cf. 383-617), he will come into prosperous times. Prosperity for the peasant farmer is the opposite of amekhania. Prosperity is equated with success in the field, with ergon, for the peasant has

only two choices: to eat or to starve (Erga, 363):

ὃς δ'ἐπ' ἐοὐτι φέρει,δ' δ' ἀλέξεται αἴθοπα λιμόν·

In other words, he has ergon or amekhania. To eat means to flourish and he may flourish only by working hard (308):

ἐξ ἔργων δ' ἄνδρες πολύμηλοι τ' ἀφνειοί τε·

It seems too that this situation was intensified by the considerable economic and political upheaveals of the late eight century B.C.[31]

Amekhania, then, grows out of what Pietro Pucci refers to as a matrix of opposites[32] and it follows that Hesiod means to contrast back-breaking work in the field with the enjoyment of prosperity and leisure. His imagination is alive with such contrasts. Immediately after the poem Hesiod divides eris into two types, one responsible for disruption and strife and the other for a productive competition (cf. Erga, 11 ff.). There is also a duality in the characters of Prometheus, the quick - witted forethinker and Epimetheus

the slow-witted brother whose perception follows fact (cf. 83 ff.). Hesiod divides the myth of the Five Ages of Man (cf. 109 ff.) and contrasts dike and hybris, taking up most of the first part of the Erga (213 ff.). The Theogony too follows similar lines. For there are continual contrasts between the etherial gods and the underworld spirits, between human and animal and between beauty and deceit. These shall be discussed presently.

Hesiod is not content to tell Perses that man must suffer but he must explain why and how this came to be. Inherent in his explanation is this dualism whose terms are in constant struggle. Amekhania develops as a concept within this framework. It embraces the worlds of men and gods, both of which are haunted by constantly clashing forces which somehow threaten uncontrollable outbursts. They form part of Hesiod's conception of a universal condition of man and of gods.

If we look at the contexts of the adjective amekhanos in Hesiod we see that it describes and increases our dread of those hypokhthonioimakares culled out of his imagination. In the human world they animate

nature and oblige man to toil so as not to be overcome by it. Man is locked into a struggle to survive in the face of hardships, especially as Greece was certainly never known to be a fertile land. In the divine world Hesiod envisages mysterious and ebullient daemons, such as Typhoeus, who threaten the order of Zeus. Thus in both worlds there is a necessity of controlling those elements which impede and sometimes threaten to engulf the peaceful flow of things.

We described a pulsating rhythm of energies which from time to time swells up and recedes throughout the Iliad. Such moments are described by Homer as amekhana erga - various points in the narrative where events seem about to slide out of control. In Hesiod we find similar instances, yet they stem from a struggle of opposing forces; there is violence not of battle but of nature or from creatures like Typhoeus. Yet for Hesiod, these moments have become a permanent condition. His poetic voice contrasts with the Homeric hero who never ponders for long his moments of vulnerability, deciding quickly upon a course of action and forgetting doubts or anxiety.

If a condition of struggle is permanent, if amekhania and ergon seem to balance each other, we would expect Hesiod to explain how this situation first arose. He spends much time, in fact, explaining how man first became involved in it. The creation of woman first drew man away from the state of innocence (cf. 90 ff.).[33] The first context of amekhanos is the story of Pandora in the Erga.

She is described as an amekhanos dolos at line 83, created so that men would find her irresistible (cf. 54 ff.). Zeus has ordered the gods to make a cunning combination of beauty and deceit (cf. 61-63) specifically as an evil to pay back Prometheus for his trickery. With her creation the gods hid from man the means of making a livelihood (Erga, 42):

Κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν·

Zeus concealed Pandora's destructive powers within a beautiful and enticing form and had Hermes make her clever and deceitful (Erga, 67-68):

ἐν δὲ θέμεν κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπιῴλοπον ἦθος
Ἑρμείην ἤνωγε, διάκτορον Ἀργεϊφόντην.

In this way her kuneos noos and epiklepon ethos would be sure to catch men unaware. Aphrodite brings the contrast of beauty and deceit into sharper relief (Erga, 65-66):

καὶ χάριν ἀμφιχέαι κεφαλῇ χρυσέην Ἀφροδίτην
καὶ πόθον ἀργαλέον καὶ γυιοβόρους μελεδώνας·

One finds the same sort of contrast in certain fantastic creatures that Odysseus meets in his wanderings, such as the Sirens or Circe.

In the Erga and the Theogony there is an association of woman with spring. The Hours crown Pandora with a garland of spring flowers (Erga, 74-75):

ἀμφὶ δὲ τὴν γε
Ὧραι καλλίκομοι στέφον ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν·

This image suggests the resurgence of life which liberates our hearts from the heaviness of winter and from the drudgery of work. But, when, as Shakespeare says, "...the red blood reigns in the winter's pale," men must not submit to its vitality. Its voluptuous mystery may overwhelm us. For Hesiod spring is not a time for revelry. It is, rather, a time to plow. The Pleiades betoken hard work (cf. 383-384). Spring is the time to round up the slaves and send them off into the fields (cf. 458). Spring is a challenge to work and its association with Pandora may be considered an expression of amekhanos. For spring is irresistible to man, a force by which he must not be swayed. He must work to avoid the plight of dependence upon others for help (cf. 478).

Thus the tillage of the earth is arduous labour and the means of survival, a paradox which is said to have come from Pandora, who was instructed in craft by Athene (cf. 63-64). Pandora has robbed man of the leisure he once enjoyed in the Golden Age and provided him with tekhne. Ironically, she has placed man into this confrontation with nature and

provides the means to deal with it. The skills she introduces, however, will never free man; they simply preserve him in the struggle. In this situation amekhania should be seen as one of the threatening forces that occupies a place in Hesiod's world along with penia, hybris, eris, etc.

When we look at how Pandora affects man's existence we see the active sense of amekhanos expressed. A thing against which there is no remedy, obviously implies that the person so affected is helpless. We noticed the dangerous mixture of beauty and deceit in Pandora. Man has no remedy for all the miseries she released from the jar (cf. Erga, 95, ff.). In this passage we see that misfortune is not caused by a god in a specific situation. The evils that Pandora unlocks from the jar afflict man of their own accord and are, consequently, a permanent aspect of life.

Worst of these muria lugra are diseases. They are described as automatoi (cf. 102-104) as they seem to respond to forces within themselves. They creep about by day and haunt men by night. Man

cannot discover their cause nor diagnose their effects as they are hidden by Zeus, who took away their voice (cf. Erga, 104).[34] These afflictions are a much more dangerous threat than the plague which ravaged the camp of the Greeks in Iliad I.[35] Although the image of Apollo conjures a fearsome picture, striding down from Olympos, quiver rattling on his shoulder, nevertheless Homer's plague has a known cause. Its remedy too has been discovered and the moment of destruction and panic soon passes. Hesiod's diseases are baffling as men cannot understand them nor find a remedy. Thus, although they are not described as such, we see how they become the agencies of amekhanija. Pandora has brought about these various conditions from which men cannot escape.[36]

In the Theogony Hesiod again presents the creation of woman (cf. Theogony, 570, ff.). The passage is inspired by the same myth and its moral seems to be identical to the Pandora episode. Woman is irresistible to men. Zeus has Athene provide her with lovely clothing and a seductive veil (cf. 573). A garland of flowers is strewn around her head

(Theogony, 576):

ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ στεφάνους, νεοθηλέος ἄνθεα ποίης

The word neotheleos suggests the potency of vernal growth. A golden crown, symbol of the erotic love of Aphrodite is set upon her head (cf. 578-580). Here is another echo of spring and Zeus himself has taken an interest in its making. It is decorated with strange creatures from the land and sea, enhancing woman's association with nature. This woman is, like Pandora, a melange of springtime vivacity and cunning deception (cf. Theogony, 585):

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεῦξε καλὸν κακὸν ἀντ' ἀγαθοῖο,

She too is dangerous for men, as they see only the beauty at first and afterwards, like Epimetheus, discover the evils that she causes. The passive sense of amekhanos is expressed here (Theogony, 589) in much the same way as in the previous passage. Hesiod implies as much at Theogony, 590-593, although the word itself is not used:

Ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων,

τῆς γὰρ ὀλώιόν ἐστι γένος καὶ φῦλα γυναικῶν,
πῆμα μέγ' αἰ θνητοῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσι ναιετάουσιν
οὐλομένης πενίης οὐ σύμφοροι, ἀλλὰ κόροιο.

Again Hesiod describes a cause-and-effect situation. The cause is a combination of opposites - woman - which places man in a constant struggle to maintain himself amidst the frequently disruptive and often overwhelming forces of nature. The situation is parallel with that of Zeus in so far as there is a necessity of continually battling threatening powers, such as the Titans or various monsters, best typified by Typhoeus. Thus for man amekhania is ousted by toil and prosperity while for the gods, by the ascendancy of Zeus.

Hesiod's divine landscape is just as vibrant and imaginative as the human and almost equally full of fears and anxieties. Theological observations are common in Hesiod but in the Theogony they are virtually submerged in the genealogies of the gods, in the delight of spinning out the rich-sounding names, in the creation of an entire world inhabited by

creatures which recall the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. We find both the brilliant sun-dazzle of Olympos and the dank recesses within the earth. Amid this varied landscape Hesiod continues his explanation of the present condition of the gods. The same struggle between opposite powers persists in the loose structure of his poetry; there is the same thread of thought uniting his visions of both worlds. We sense the same tension rising and falling, threatening and withdrawing, locked always in a contest for supremacy.

In the Theogony this condition is caused largely by the conflicts between Zeus and the older, and often more frightening, generations of deities and daemons. They are portrayed usually in the paradoxical manner of Pandora. They haunt the world of the gods just as evil strife and injustice haunt the human world. Several are described as amekhanos and although they do not come into direct contact with men, they arouse terror in our imagination with their destructive potency locked up in the earth.

Theogony 295 describes Echidna as amekhanos. She is one of Hesiod's most imaginative creations, a

primeval monster, constrained only by her dwelling deep underground. This passage comes in the second generation of nature spirits, ending with the descendents of Pontos. Hesiod portrays all of Echidna's children in paradoxical terms. At Theogony 270, for instance, we find grey-haired Graiai. They are described, however, as fair cheeked. Fresh beauty and hoary old age both shape their being. In the passage describing the Gorgons Hesiod tells us that they live beyond the Ocean in a land of darkness (Theogony, 274-275). Yet Medusa lies with Poseidon in a grove which must have been familiar to Sappho (cf. 279):

ἐν μαλακῷ λειμῶνι καὶ ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν.

These creatures reflect the same combination of positive and negative qualities found in Pandora, her counterpart in the Theogony, Echidna and in many scenes found throughout Hesiod's poetry. They embody both beauty and a power sometimes dangerous to men and which from time to time ushersin moments of utter frustration, when men become aware of the futility of their own actions.

Hesiod's imagination has given Echidna concrete embodiments of potential, explosive forces; she is more than a two-dimensional symbol. She is conjured up vividly in our minds by specific details. In this aspect Hesiod follows Homer, yet his scope is wider as he deals more strictly with cosmic themes.[37] He retains much of Homer's appreciation of detail and immediacy of situation. Hesiod tells us that Echidna resembles neither man or god (cf. Theogony 296). She is part nymph and part serpent - a union of womanly beauty and reptilian repugnance (298-300):

ἥμισυ μὲν νύμφην ἐλικώπιδα καλλιπάρῃον,
ἥμισυ δ' αὖτε πέλωρον ὄφιν δεινόν τε μέγαν τε

She has the darting eyes of a snake yet her cheeks are fair and ruddy. Echidna devours raw flesh and lives in a 'darksome hole' deep within the earth. Her power is hidden out of sight, which is, perhaps, why she seems even more threatening to us. She lives away from the company of men and gods and reminds us of Polyphemos, who preferred to live, like Spenser's Errour, alone, "...in desert darkness to dwell."

This peloron amekhanon was placed in her dark

hole by Zeus. She could not co-exist with the Olympian order in the sky. For she and, indeed, all of the older generations of spirits pose a danger to the generation of Olympians; this is why Hesiod's imagination is fired to describe them in such frightening details and why amekhanos is so apt in describing Echidna. This subterranean generation has become subservient to the new despotism of Zeus. But its powers, even though pent up in the earth with Echidna or Kerberos serve, as we shall discover, to explain various natural forces that exist in the human world, such as the winds of Typhoeus which knit the divine and human worlds in Hesiod's vision of the cosmos into a unity; and they are always ready to rise up explosively to engulf the present order.

Hesiod describes another monster, Kerberos in much the same way as Echidna. He is her child by Typhoeus. Amekhanos is also used to describe him (Theogony, 310):

δεύτερον αὖτις ἔτικτεν ἀμήχανον, οὔ τι φατεῖον

Hesiod portrays him as a lawless and overbearing creature

who eats raw flesh, speaks with a voice like the bray of a trumpet, has fifty heads and lives shamelessly in the pride of his strength (cf. Theogony, 310-312). Such characteristics imbue amekhanos with a fuller meaning, for they imaginatively express the passive sense of the word. They give lustre to the usual translations, 'irresistible' 'overbearing', 'unmanageable', etc. But we must ask how might those who meet Kerberos be in turn made helpless. Echidna's power, as we saw, is held back in the bowels of the earth. Yet if we turn to Theogony 767 we find that Kerberos is a guardian of Hades.

He is, like Pandora, a particularly cunning snare for men. Kerberos is a good watch-dog because of the way he traps people (cf. Theogony 770-774). First he lures them into the house of Hades by fawning sweetly like a little puppy. But Kerberos is anaides (cf. 312) and neleies (cf. 770). He devours all who try to escape. There is obviously no help for any who are trapped by him and he too is a constant, threatening power, a constant source of danger to man and a permanent part of Hesiod's cosmology. The effect of Kerberos ineluctably governs at least this aspect of

life. Hesiod's imagination tries to embrace causes for the human condition in poetic and mythic terms, as the Kerberos episode illustrates. His search in itself alters the dimension of amekhania. Those moments which amekhania describes, though the word might not be used, are connected with ceaseless contests with monsters like Kerberos, on one hand, or with the bitter chills of winter.

Such a contest occurs between Zeus, who for Hesiod has come to represent a balanced order,[38] and the lawless, over-reaching Typhoeus. This passage begins with the defeat of the Titans and the establishment of Olympian order (cf. 820 ff.). Typhoeus is the last challenger to Zeus's dominion. He is the personification of the elemental forces imprisoned in a particular place in the earth. Hesiod has made him the most terrifying creature he can imagine. His parents are Gaia and Tartaros and he is the perfect opposite of Zeus.

Typhoeus's strength is immense (cf. 823-824). In appearance he is an exaggeration of Echidna and Kerberos and is even more ferocious. He is snake-like (824-825)

and his eyes flicker menacingly like a serpent, but with more intensity (826-827):

ἐκ δέ οἱ ὄσσων
θεσπεσίης κεφαλῆσιν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι πῦρ ἀμάρυσσεν.

His voice is an exaggeration of Kerberos's, a symbol of the mysterious, inhuman powers of the underworld (Theogony, 829-835):

φωναὶ δ' ἐν πάσῃσιν ἔσαν δεινῆς κεφαλῆσι
παντοίην ὄπ' ἰεῖσαι ἀθέσφατον· ἄλλοτε μὲν γὰρ
φθέγγονθ' ὥστε θεοῖσι συνιέμεν, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
ταύρου ἐριβρύχεω, μένος ἀσχέτου, ὄσσαν ἀγαύρου,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε λέοντος ἀναιδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντος,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ σκυλάκεσσιν ἐοικότα, θαύματ' ἀκοῦσαι
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ ῥοίζεσχ', ὑπὸ δ' ἤχεεν οὔρεα μακρά.

The voice somehow distills the power itself which erupts upon Zeus.

This volcanic power threatens to overwhelm men and gods (Theogony, 836):

καί νύ κεν ἔπλετο ἔργον ἀμήχανον ἤματι κείνῳ

For a moment Typhoeus almost wreaks havoc and causes the course of events to slip out of control. The phrase at line 836 reminds us of Iliad 8. 130 and 11. 310:

Ἔνθα κε λοιγὸς ἔην καὶ ἀμήχανα ἔργα γένοντο

We are aware of the same explosive power, whether it is the swelling and receding tides of battle or the daemonic fury of Typhoeus. Hesiod characteristically conveys this scene with human touches. For the struggle between Typhoeus has all the irresistible energy, the immediacy and drama of a battle between two Homeric heroes. Yet we notice several significant differences between this scene and those in the Iliad. Homer portrays isolated moments where actions are about to turn into anarchy, where men are about to be overwhelmed, rendered powerless to act. The scope is specific and concrete. It is a moment which will pass. In Hesiod, however, this battle has a wider impact. It refers to a cosmic event and thus its ramifications are much broader.

The stage on which this contest takes place is the very earth and heaven. The blows of Zeus shake the

entire world (Theogony, 839-841):

> σκληρὸν δ' ἐβρόντησε καὶ ὄβριμον, ἀμφὶ δὲ γαῖα
> ἀμερδαλέον κονάβησε καὶ οὐρανὸς εὐρὺς ὕπερθε
> πόντος τ' Ὠκεανοῦ τε ῥοαὶ καὶ τάρταρα γαίης.

Hesiod's description of the scene ranges from Olympos itself to the depths of the sea and to Hades. The battle is typical of Hesiod in that its displays his love of the specific but also the wide reach of his imagination. In fact we find many instances of Hesiod clothing in specific and concrete terms a character who is at the same time placed within a universal context. The result, as we see in this passage, is a most imaginative spectacle. The various moments of helplessness that we have noticed in his work are also portrayed in this manner. Hesiod draws up a scene which is meant to have a universal significance in order to teach a moral lesson, such as the story of Pandora, the Five Ages of Man, or the fable of the hawk and the nightingale; yet he breathes life into each example so that they take on a validity of their own and they become valid as a

resilient poetic vision more than a just didactic exercise.

This passage ends with a graphic display of Zeus's power. He leaps down from the sky to defeat Typhoeus and hurls the maimed wreck into Tartaros. Zeus overcomes Typhoeus but man still is still harangued by vestiges of his powers. For he produces winds which (Theogony, 873):

αἳ δή τοι πίπτουσαι ἐς ἠεροειδέα πόντον

Like the biting cold of winter they are impossible to deal with (874):

πῆμα μέγα θνητοῖσι, κακὴ θυίουσιν ἀέλλη.

Sailors often find themselves without help to fend off the blasts of Typhoeus (876-877):

κακοῦ δ' οὐ γίγνεται ἀλκὴ,
ἀνδράσιν, οἳ κείνῃσι συνάντωνται κατὰ πόντον·

While even for men on land Typhoeus's breath is known to wreak hazards (878-880):

αἵ δ' αὖ καὶ κατὰ γαῖαν ἀπείριτον ἀνθεμόεσσαν
ἔργ' ἐρατὰ φθείρουσι χαμαιγενέων ἀνθρώπων
πιμπλεῖσαι κόνιός τε καὶ ἀργαλέου κολοσυρτοῦ.

The banished generation of underground spirits explains the hazardous side of nature which periodically surges up to disrupt the peaceful rhythm of the peasant's life. Hesiod tries to understand the truth of this condition as the result of conflicting phenomena. His imagination is not confined to the human world to the exclusion of the divine; like Homer he deals with both. But his individual purpose is to teach. His imagery affords us many clues to understand his aims.

A wider significance of amekhania can be understood when we consider that the myths Hesiod selects to explain hardship point to divine responsibility. We note that Hesiod identifies the gods with human suffering (cf. Erga, 42). Homer also makes observations of the human condition, yet they are brief and only punctuate the swift action of the narrative. Hesiod, however, dwells upon such themes and in this way his individual voice speaks. Amekhania in his poems is symptomatic of many of the same thoughts and passions expressed by certain

of the lyric poets.[39] The Erga, especially, is full of passionate verve and declarations which are religious in flavour. They illustrate Hesiod's concern with the present life.

The Erga begins with a 'fanfare' to the power of Zeus. Man is defenseless and naked before his might, unable to control his own destiny. Homer suggests as much occasionally (cf. Iliad 24. 525 ff.), but Hesiod frequently describes the state of man and gods. His passionate interest in the human condition is found throughout the Erga (cf. 5 ff., 43 ff., 49 ff., 105 ff., 180 ff., 303 ff., etc.). Yet although this almost religious strain is part of Hesiod's thought, we must not be hasty to fix an abstract or philosophical connotation to amekhania. As we have noted, the word still expresses a very concrete sense and abstract conceptions are rather incoherent. What we do find, however, is that the awareness of helpnessness, as suggested by amekhania and its adjective, has become a permanent and universal part of life.

## THE LYRIC POETS

In Homer and Hesiod actions are given poetic form, whether they are concrete and immediate or symbolic of a wider meaning. For both poets amekhania is symptomatic of feelings caused by objective events. Feelings of doubt, fear, frustration, etc. arise as men suddenly find themselves overwhelmed in a particular situation. Homer presents several instances where action is about to erupt into chaos. We have noted that such moments are brief. Homeric characters retain their resilient nature despite the harshest of mishaps.

> Homer's princes bestride their world boldly; they fear the gods only as they fear their human overlord; nor are they oppressed by the future even when, like Achilles, they know it holds an approaching doom.[40]

Hesiod, on the other hand, imparts mythic significance to action and in his vision of the universe amekhania suggests a permanent condition that governs human life.

In the poetry of Archilochos, Sappho, Alkaios, Theognis and Simonides, the sense of amekhania expands, as the world of thought and passion seems to oust more and more the narration of events.[41] The boundaries between the passive and active meanings of amekhanos thus become blurred to make room for a more general awareness of individual life exposed to the elements and to the might of the gods.[42]

Following a discussion of the lyric outlook in a general sense, a contextual analysis will reveal, in all five poets, a common voice that passionately unites such disparate elements as religion, nature, love and politics. For within this unity amekhania is transformed into a universal concept.

This becomes evident with the growing appreciation of the inner nature of Man and the concern with individual thymos, which we translate as personality. Pfeiffer describes Archilochos' thymos as, "..,sein Ganzes Selbst, das er seinem Gehalt nach eben nur als Wille, als Affekt fassen kann."[43] Although many of the lyric poets are influenced by Homeric diction and, at times, seem to have various

passages of Homer or Hesiod in mind,[44] several incontrovertible differences emerge. Lyric poetry is in fact distinguished by two important features, the most obvious, perhaps, being that each poem is, to paraphrase Walt Whitman, a song of the Self.[45] For this reason the epic narrative is replaced and, instead of relating events, the lyric poets voice their personal reactions to life. It follows that, more often than not, they substitute the Self for mythical or heroic material.[46]

Thus in order to perceive the changing symptoms of amekhania, it must be considered in personal terms. However, by weakening traditional material and beliefs, the lyric poets courageously place themselves in a permanent situation of having to rely on their individual strength. They reveal little concern with religious ideas. Such concepts as dike or hybris are not a a major factor in their poetry. All of the five poets speak in a resilient and animated voice, yet their moving away from tradition has meant that the lyric personality is continuously confounded by suffering, as it does not have traditional beliefs to which it can appeal. Its perceptions have, in fact, led to what E.R. Dodds eloquently describes as a basic quality of lyric poetry.

> When we turn from Homer to the fragmentary literature of the Archaic Age...one of the first things that strikes us is the deepened awareness of human insecurity and human helplessness (amechania), which has its religious correlates in the feeling of divine hostility - not in the sense that Deity is thought of as evil, but in the sense that an overmastering Power and Wisdom forever holds Man down, keeps him from rising above his station.[47]

When Archilochos addresses his thymos in fr. 11c (Budé) he speaks directly to it:

> Θυμέ, θύμ' ἀμηχάνοισι κήδεσιν κυκώμενε,
> ἀνάδυ, δυσμενῶν δ' ἀλέξυ προσβαλὼν ἐναντίον
> στέρνον ἐνδόκοισιν, ἐχθρῶν πλησίον καταστα θεὶς
> ἀσφαλέως. καὶ μήτε νικῶν ἀμφάδὴν ἀγάλλεο
> μήτε νικηθεὶς ἐν οἴκῳ καταπεσὼν ὀδύρεο·
> ἀλλὰ χαρτοῖσίν τε χαῖρε καὶ κακαῖσιν ἀσχάλα
> μὴ λίην· γίγνωσκε δ' οἷος ῥυσμὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔχει.

Amekhana kedea in line 1 may be considered synonymous with amekhania. They reside permanently within the realm of Archilochos' experience. But the response is a proud

puffing up of the chest. Archilochos defiantly takes his stand against hardships by guarding against extremes. He advises that the best behaviour is not to rejoice too much nor to submit to grief. This course must not be construed as a meek resignation to life, but as the deliberated reaction of the cunning intelligence. It reminds us of Odysseus, at Odyssey 20. 18 ff., restraining himself, holding himself back of an awareness that his action would at the time be fruitless.

There is an awareness, however, in this fragment, that the uncontrollable sufferings of line 1 are part of a condition of life. They are connected with it through rhysmos. Robert Renehan maintains that the root of the word is eru- or ru- which means 'to hold'.[48] Jaeger warns, "...we must not be mislead...into thinking that Archilochos' 'rhythm' is a flux...although the modern idea of rhythm is something that flows."[49]

Thus for Archilochos rhysmos implies divine establishment of ineluctable control over all things. In Aeschylus' Prometheus Vinctus, Prometheus, chained in adamantine cries out, "I am bound here in this 'rhythm'," P.V. 241. In Archilochos the sense of amekhania fills

out the dimension of rhysmos, in concrete terms (cf. fr: 79D) or as a metaphysical insight into man's relationship with the gods (cf. fr. 123).

In fr. 123 Archilochos seems to view the gods as a general agency identifiable with Fate. No longer intervening directly in human affairs, they are contrasted with men, whose lives they randomly control. Archilochos addresses this power in a way that recalls the proem of the Erga (fr. 123):

> Τοῖς θεοῖς τιθεῖο πάντα· πολλάκις μὲν ἐκ κακῶν
> ἄνδρας ὀρθοῦσιν μελαίνῃ κειμένους ἐπὶ χθονί,
> πολλάκις δ' ἀνατρέπουσι καὶ μαλ' εὖ βεβηκότας·
> ὑπτίους κλίνους'· ἔπειτα πολλὰ γίγνεται κακά,
> καὶ βίου χρήμῃ πλανᾶται καὶ νόου παρήορος.

This fragment also reveals the extent to which Archilochos' attitude is rooted in tykhe. The gods expose man to chance, favouring neither the good or bad.[50] The awareness of tykhe as a factor of life generalizes an emotional sense of precariousness in which amekhania is no longer connected with specific events but suggested

by the knowledge of irremediable conditions that touch all men do.

Theognis joins the word amekhania with peirata and suggests a vaguely defined limit to actions (139-140):

> οὐδέ τῳ ἀνθρώπων παραγίγεται ὅσσα θέλῃσιν·
> ἴσχει γὰρ χαλεπῆς πείρατ' ἀμηχανίης.

As Ann Bergren remarks, "...the phrase is grounded in the concrete usages of peirata in Homeric poetry as 'bond' and as 'boundaries' between one land or world and another."[51] Theognis typifies Archaic thought when he sets boundaries between the worlds of men and gods. Elsewhere he contrasts their differences by telling us that men do silly things and have no knowledge, while the gods are able to foresee and accomplish their desires (133-142).

Such contrasts are common to lyric poetry and often emphasize the lack of foresight, of planning, and the impossibility of maintaining one's prosperity.[52] We

find the contrast condensed by Theognis in lines 1075-1078:

> Πρήγματος ἀπρήκτου χαλεπώτατόν ἐστι τελευτὴν
> γνῶναι ὅπως μέλλει τοῦτο θεὸς τελέσαι·
> ὄρφνη γὰρ τέταται, πρὸ δὲ τοῦ μέλλοντος ἔσεσθαι
> οὐ ξυνετὰ θητοῖς πείρατ' ἀμηχανίης.

Human ignorance cannot but lead to the establishment of boundaries between man and gods.

Although lyric poetry reveals a marked awareness of the differences between human and divine, the differences between the objective and subjective have become blurred. The poets look for the causes of suffering not from the concrete world but from the inner landscape.[53] This becomes clear when we look at Odysseus' reflections upon the instability of the mind (Od. 18. 130-131):

> οὐδὲν ἀκιδνότερον γαῖα τρέφει ἀνθρώποιο,
> πάντων ὅσσα τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει τε καὶ ἕρπει.

He refers to tlemosune (134-135) as a way of coping with suffering (138-140) and the passage foreshadows lyric

poetry. Yet we must bear in mind that Odysseus' lamenting stems from a specific circumstances. For the lyric poets such sentiments are separated from a single course of events. Hence feelings of insecurity and instability[54] assume an almost religious intensity as they are increasingly felt to imply a universal condition. Simonides reflects upon the impossibility of man directing his own will. Fr. 8D borrows a single mythological motif to lend poetic force to a genralization:

> πάντα γὰρ μίαν ἰκνεῖται δασπλῆτα Χάρυβδιν,
> αἱ μεγάλαι τ' ἀρεταὶ καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος.

With the lyric poets emotions themselves are exploited by events; the heart is ephemeral, subject to uncontrollable passions.[55] It is a chink in the armour which becomes symptomatic of amekhania. Archilochos first moves away from the epic tradition and in the major themes of lyric poetry his individual voice first becomes the arena where all passions have their play.

In Sappho this tendency is even more intensely

displayed, as love's conflicting desires suggest her vulnerability before the gods. Even when her poems depend on concrete imagery, she imbues it with a mysterious, electrically charged atmosphere.[56] Simonides also perceives the fluctuation of the mind, but mentions it in more abstract terms. In fr. 4D the phrase amekhanos symphora expresses the susceptibility of the mind to the force of circumstance.[57]

For Sappho the circumstance is love. She perhaps, more than any other of the poets, reflects the lyrical mood. She looks directly at the power of her own emotions and reacts passiontely, with a boundless reserve of strength. Though the gods set out limits, she never tires of drawing from her poetry a celebration of love. Her awareness of overmastering passions or divine power only add lustre to her persona. She accepts more and more a framework in which men live and die. Human life is held to be a concrete necessity.[58]

Archilochos too deals with love in several poems. Love, as well as death, unstrings the limbs (fr. 249). The poet is overcome - damnatai - with desire and he lies prostrate as love twists itself beneath his heart

(fr. 245). Archilochos looks forward to Sappho when he evokes a physical force; he imparts to love a natural, elemental power that is potent enough to overwhelm him.

Archilochos foreshadows Sappho especially with details such as a thick mist covering his eyes and having his wits stolen (fr. 245). Sappho expands upon the physical descriptions so that we detect an awareness that the mind cannot master the passions of love.

For Sappho Eros assumes an enchanted quality.[59] He has the elemental powers of the mind. He shakes and whirls her. He is irresistible. Sappho's portrayal of him heightens the sensuousness we see in Archilochos by infusing it with natural powers (fr. 130. Page):

Ἔρος δηὖτε μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει
γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον' ὄρπετον

Fr. 47 compares love to the raging wind as it rips across a wooded mountain:

Ἔρος δ' ἐτίναξέ μοι
φρένας ὡς ἄνεμος κὰτ ὄρος δρύσιν ἐμπέσων

Amekhania is suggestive of such passions which grip the body and mind, which shake ~~the entire~~ spirit. In fr. 266 Archilochos is held by desire. He feels the force of pothos so strongly that it turns into bitter pains and he lies dustenos - unable to move, pierced through to the bones. Like Sappho he connects this overwhelming power with the arbitrary will of the gods (fr. 266).

Thus the power of love is implied to be a condition of life. Sappho conveys this in fr. 130 and elsewhere by the word deute - "again I cannot resist." Love blows over her time and time again with the only recourse to beg the gods to spare her from suffering. In fr. 1 she seeks escape from the endless rounds of success and failure to which her passions have exposed her. Sappho cannot extricate herself from this situation for she is easily swayed by Aphrodite (fr. 1.2-4):

λίσσομαί σε,

μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θῦμον·

Aphrodite's epiphany heightens the contrast between gods and men.[60] It gives to Sappho's vision of love an uncontrollable power in which her spirit seems malleable. The supplication implies a state of mind that is symptomatic of amekhania. This does not mean that for Sappho love is not something of much beauty and tenderness. In fact, her awareness of her impulses becomes an act of affirmation. The supplication becomes an affirmation of life itself, as her poetic voice becomes a projection of a universal state of mind.

In fr. A10[B] of Alkaios we also hear the voice of a woman grieved by some sort of hardship. The poem is not well preserved but the tattered fragment suggests an anguished cry. We are left with truncated words such as, "the bellow of the deer grows... in a frightened heart...angered...infatuation." But even these few words impart a lyricism and we imagine the possible struggle that Sappho describes and in the same way passion assumes a universal dimension.

Aphrodite's reply (fr. 1) to Sappho reminds us of the condition expressed by the word rhysmos

(Arch. fr. 118. Budé). Sappho has again begged to be released from love and the goddess indicates the rhythm in which she is caught (21-24):

> καί γὰρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει·
> αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλα δώσει·
> αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
> κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα.

The balanced phrases and careful attention to alliterative effects indicate the pattern that passion and impulse, success and failure in love seem to take.

There is much irony in this poem, for we know that Sappho cannot be released from love's overmastering passions. Fr. 48 suggests that relief is only temporarily quenched by gratification:

> ἦλθες... ἔγω δέ σ' ἐμαιόμαν,
> ὃν δ' ἔψυξας ἔμαν φρένα καιομέναν πόθωι

For Sappho love is likened to fire that burns in her hea now and then it might be put out but it is always rekindled.

Fr. 31 contains the most intense effect of love. Responding to the beauty of a friend, her desire swells to the point where her whole being is overcome. The object of Sappho's desire is both physically and spiritually appealing, a woman whose voice and gay laughter evoke her longings. The frustration that Sappho reflects, however, is not simply physical. Her desires imply more than lust; this is implied by the deftness and lightness of her description (3-5):

– καὶ πλάσιον ἆδυ φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει
καὶ γελαίσας ἰμερόεν, –

Amekhania here, although the word is not used, is expressed through the anguish which springs from a denial of a deep sense of fulfilment. Otherwise we might expect Sappho to say, "Ah, well, better luck next time," or something to this effect. What she does say is that everything must be endured (fr. 31. 17):

ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ καὶ πένητά ...

Sappho's poetry draws us closer to her private world and at the same time reveals an awareness of a universal situation in which emotional struggles replace objective events. Amekhania is suggested not by actions, but by a general state of mind.

When we turn from considerations of love to nature we notice it too is seen as a power often beyond our control. Archilochos' reaction to an eclipse (fr. 82. Budé) can only be one of resignation. In fact he twice warns us not to be surprised at anything. Nothing can be known and nothing can inspire wonder. Archilochos' reaction arises from the denial of order in his life, of being held back by divine order. His feelings are intensified in the last three lines by the surrealistic treatment of nature.

Archilochos frequently portrays the Olympian deities as menacing natural forces.[61] There is no trace of the traditional mythical associations. The gods are denuded of Homeric familiarity. Archilochos connects them with rhysmos and conceives them as part of a universal scheme.[62] They are connected with what he calls anekesta kaka (fr. 82) - the incurable

sufferings that must be endured.

As F. Will remarks, in reference to fr. 82, "...we are to expect a universe in which the appointed natures of creatures may be changed...[63]" If the gods are able to invert nature so effortless, the vulnerability of Man is evident. Archilochos uses the word nomos at line 7. One meaning on a basic level is 'feeding place', 'pasture'. At an early date it also meant 'law', 'principle of order'. Nomos in this context means pasture, but also refers to the essential features of the animals.

The braying beasts that swim in the roaring waves and the dolphins that munch grass in a green meadow (7-9) suggest to Archilochos the absurdity of his own life. He distorts the concrete imagery of nature and conveys his awe of divine power. The might of Zeus is so great that it may at random destroy the natural order.

The nature-imagery in Alkaios' "Ship of State" poem (fr. Z2. Page) contrasts a storm at sea with a buffeted ship. There is a counterpoint between the seething waves and the uncertain man whose ship is worn down by the battering it receives. The sea pours

over the deck, sails are torn, the wind-ropes go slack and the rudder breaks. Alkaios indicates that man is unable to cope with the violence of the sea.

The poem thus invokes the power of nature. We feel the elemental vitality of the sea in much the same way Sappho feels the force of Eros blowing like a wind over the tops of trees. Here the wind snatches up the waves and hurls them against the desolate ship. Alkaios lends the lustre of nature even to his political subjects.

Specific political fortunes cause him to react to and comprehend passionately the whole of life. But he transforms politics, as Sappho transforms love, into universal themes in which human emotions emerge. Thus the first line of this poem speaks starkly and directly of the poet's uncertainty:

ἀσσυννέτημμι τῶν ἀμέμων στάσιν ·

Alkaios' poetry is also full of concrete imagery rather than general or abstract statements. His partisan hatreds, however, and his rare lyrical

moments transcend the particulars of time and place. His reflections and conclusions embrace the sentiments expressed by Archilochos or Simonides. His poetic voice unifies the various themes of lyric poetry in a common attitude in which amekhania is often suggested. The attitude arises from the passionate reaction to life itself and not to specific events.

Archilochos' fr. 79D presents the image of a former friend sprawled face down on a beach. It recalls Archilochos' fr. 123, which is a metaphysical description meant to express the precariousness of man's relationship with the gods. But in the badly preserved Strasbourg Papyrus Archilochos describes the scene concretely.

The poem blurs his denied lust for revenge on this friend with the steady rhythm of the sea. Even though the poem reproduces the basic details of place, it has been stripped to a simple clarity. Waves pound the shore, seaweed and surf rise and fall. The ceaseless slap of the waves- ek de tou rhothou - frame the sputtering rage, the unsatisfied desires for revenge upon the fellow. Yet pathos is aroused for the poet whose enraged voice seems muffled by the steady sound of the sea. Archilochos mingles concrete details with his passions. As Schopenhauer

observes, "...the affection of the will imparts its own hue to the preceived environment and vice versa." The poet links his state of mind with nature which, sympathetically in his imagination seems to leap to his aid by choking the former friend.[64]

The object of Archilochos' anger would be helpless on the beach. The word akrasia (10) suggests physical prostration. If it were translated into abstract terms it would express an essential aspect of the poet's feeling of amekhania. For Archilochos' will is expressed without a sense of time or of dike in a universal significance. "Genuine song is the expression of the whole of this mingled and divided state of mind."[65] And amekhania is indicated by this state of mind.

Nature-imagery yields in Theognis to direct treatment. He makes extremely personal and often specific references to political uncertainties. Political and social upheavals cause Theognis to speak of the shortcomings of the human condition and the power of the gods and his reactions embrace all of life. He shares the lyric voice common to the other lyric poets

even though his subject matter is different.

As the confrontation with the external world, the world of objective events begins to fade in the poetic imagination, Archilochos and Sappho begin to celebrate the spirit and all of its struggles. For Theognis and Alkaios the world has kindled intense personal hatred of political rivals.[66] Yet rarely are there descriptions of events in their poetry. No less than Simonides they explore the interior realm of passion and thought.

Many of the political fragments retain a vivacity, a richness of detail that transcends the petty political aspects pertinent to a specific party or place. Limitations, whether by passion or politics do not smother the lyric voice. When lyric poets make the substitution of Self for the narration of events, not only do they introduce many hardships and pain, but also give to their world a colouring a causality, and a velocity quite different from those of the world of the epic poet. Thus what becomes more important, even in the poetry of a class-conscious poet like Theognis, is not the march of events itself, but

the passionate reaction voiced in his poems.

Considerations of the turbulent milieu in which Alkaios and Theognis composed must obviously shed light upon their use of the word amekhania. Both poets were directly affected by contemporary economic unrest. The importance of wealth becomes a major theme in their poetry. Prosperity is thought to ward off amekhania, which is frequently referred to as the mother, or sister of penia. The two are connected in much the same way as in Hesiod (Erga. 496). Alkaios therefore praises the bourgeois value, 'money makes the man', in fr. Z37.

The middle-class ascended to power largely at the expense of the noble-class as well as the commoners.[67] The peasants were often held down by debt as economic trends favoured currency-trading over the traditional barter methods. Alkaios is accutely aware of bitter conditions which must have seemed widespread and rather permanent. He translates the hardships of this period into universal terms and at the same time speaks with compassion. Amekhania is personified as the sister of Poverty (fr. Z41):

ἀργάλεον Πενία κάκον ἄσχετον, ἃ μέγαν
δάμναι λᾶον Ἀμαχανίαι σὺν ἀδελφίαι

Alkaios, like Theognis, casts specific phenomena into general moulds. Amekhania, in this fragment and similarly in many of Theognis' elegies, expresses a universal condition. Hesiod also refers to limos (Erga, 299), Dike (Erga, 217, etc.), Aidos, Nemesis (Erga, 200) as characters who have become an integral part of his dramatis personae.

In Hesiod amekhania suggests a physical condition, bound up with climate, toil and good farming methods, as much as with the gods. Yet for Alkaios the word has become expressive of an abstract concept, inspired by a general awareness of hardship; a condition which certainly must have seemed beyond one's personal control. Amekhania expresses the wide-spread miseries which constantly oppose prosperity and which prevent men, in more than just a specific instance, from maintaining themselves consistently either in a material or spiritual sense.

The lyric voice displays its intensity in the

themes of love, nature, politics, registers always a deeply emotional response and transforms the specific into the general. Thus the feeling of being overwhelmed by the power of love or overawed by nature or undone by political rivals shares a common mood in which the symptoms of _amekhania_ deal not with the occasion of each individual circumstance, but with life itself. The lyric poets reveal a growing interest in the mind. In the later poets, Theognis and Simonides, the physical world yields even more to the world of thought. Archilochos and Sappho often begin with concrete imagery. There is a direct appeal to the external world which is transformed through personal experience into universal dimensions.

We noticed how sensuously Archilochos presents a scene of physical prostration. If we look at the same motif in Theognis we find the emphasis is on metaphysical presentation. The same direct approach is found in Archilochos as we also noted (cf. 123, _Budé_), yet the poems of Theognis are uniformly sparse in concrete detail. He describes prostration in line 619-620 and 1114a-1114b, but his words in both poems lack concreteness, with the single

exception of the verb kulindomai, which suggests a physical buffeting. In other poems keimenos and keitai (631-632, 645-646) have been separated from action. In both cases the phrase is, 'to lie in amekhania'. Clearly we are dealing with a state of mind. The phrase might recall akrasia - the man who lies helplessly on a beach (Arch. fr. 79D)- but here it has been lifted out of any specific framework.

Amekhania is transformed into an abstract concept, with a universal effect on the life of man. Theognis does not explain or even modify it with an adjective. It therefore is no longer dependent on a given situation. Theognis does modify the word in 631-632 when he says that if the head is not stronger than the heart a man will permanently be held down: keitai amekhanias (632). Theognis seeks a cause for this state not in events but within the human mind, which is flawed somehow and cannot control the heart nor withstand the battering it receives from life. Theognis concludes elsewhere that the only recourse left to man is to endure his shame, to bear the hardships and adversity of life.

Theognis and Simonides move into a more

reflective mode, divorced from specific themes, but considerate, more generally, of the inner life of man. In his poem to Zeus, for instance, Theognis (373-392) describes the vacillation of the mind. He begins by contrasting the human with the divine (373-376):

> Ζεῦ φίλε θαυμάζω σε· σὺ γὰρ πάντεσσιν ἀνάσσεις
> τιμὴν αὐτὸς ἔχων καὶ μεγάλην δύναμιν,
> ἀνθρώπων δ' εὖ οἶσθα νόον καὶ θυμὸν ἑκάστου,
> σὸν δὲ κράτος πάντων ἔσθ' ὑπατον, βασιλεῦ.

The mind wavers toward sophrosune or hybris according to the situation. The mind cannot establish its own balance (379-380):

> ἦν τ ἐπὶ σωφροσύνην τρεφθῇ νόος, ἦν τε πρὸς
> ὕβριν
> ἀνθρώπων ἀδίκοις ἔργμασι πειθομένων;

Simonides also describes how men are swayed back and forth from good to bad, depending only upon chance (cf. fr. 4D). The gods have established for man no certainty (381-382):

> οὐδέ τι κεκριμένον πρὸς δαίμονός ἐστι βροτοῖσιν,
> οὐδ' ὁδὸν ἥν τις ἰὼν ἀθανάτοισιν ἄδοι.

Therefore even for the man who wants to do good there is no guaranty that he won't be blown off track (383-387):

ἔμπης δ' ὄλβον ἔχουσιν ἀπήμονα·τοὶ δ' ἀπὸ δειλῶν
ἔργων ἴσχοντες θυμὸν ὅμως πενίην
μητέρ' ἀμηχανίης ἔλαβον, τὰ δίκαια φιλεῦντες,
ἥτ' ἀνδρὸς παράγει θυμὸν ἐς ἀμπλακίην,
βλάπτους' ἐν στήθεσσι φρένας κρατερῆς ὑπ ἀνάγκης.

The poem indicates that amekhania arises from the denial of any permanent fulfilment or security. The same is true of Sappho to whom love specifically suggests endless pains and causes her to conclude that life itself denies her development as everything must be endured. But for Theognis the presentation of passions has been stripped of specificality. Amekhania is the mother of penia, a concept that refers to a universal condition of suffering. Theognis speaks in this poem of enduring shame (388) and the mind's yielding to need (389) which exposes it to deceit. The effect of penia is to exploit human impulses, to prevent the will from achieving its goals, to expose man to amekhania.

Each poet refers to endurance as a means

of coping with this condition and it becomes a somewhat boisterous attempt to keep amekhania at a distance. Archilochos, for instance responds to the deaths of friends at sea (fr. 1) by telling his companion, Pericles, that the gods have ordained the remedy of endurance (5-7):

> ἀλλὰ θεοὶ γὰρ ἀνηκέστοισι κακοῖσιν,
> ὦ φίλ', ἐπὶ κρατερὴν τλημοσύνην ἔθεσαν
> φάρμακον·

Theognis separates the theme from external causes and in several poems advises us to put up with what the gods contrive. Tlemosune grows out of an awareness of this uncontrollable fact of life and Theognis states this quite simply (591-592):

> τολμᾶν χρὴ τὰ διδοῦσι θεοὶ θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν,
> ῥηϊδίως δὲ φέρειν ἀμφοτέρων τὸ λάχος

The gods may send us anything and all we can do is submissively accept (441-446):

> Οὐδεὶς γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶ πανόλβιος· ἀλλ'ὁ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
> τολμᾷ ἔχων τὸ κακὸν κούκ ἐπίδηλος ὅμως·
> δειλὸς δ' οὔτ' ἀγαθοῖσιν ἐπίσταται οὔτε κακοῖσιν

θυμὸν ἔχων μίμνειν. ἀθάνατων δὲ δόσεις
παντοῖαι θνητοῖσιν ἐπέρχοντ'· ἀλλ' ἐπιτολμᾶν
χρὴ δῶρ' ἀθάνατων οἷα διδοῦσιν ἔχειν.

The lyric voice boldly addresses this condition which has been arranged by the gods. When Odysseus addresses his thymos in Odyssey, 20.18 ff., he also tells it to endure. Yet his feelings of helplessness are caused by individual circumstances which are accompanied by passing moments of despair. But Athene has ordained his triumph and guides him at the behest of Zeus. Homeric characters do not separate meaning from actions and places. The frustration that Odysseus must face is limited by events which are objectively perceived. Only the suitors stand in his way and prevent him from fulfilling his desires and taking what he feels is his due. For the lyric poets, whose thoughts and passions have been divorced to a large extent from action, aspirations are prohibited by direct confrontations with nature and the gods, which have become subjective, as external and internal boundaries are disgarded.

Simonides largely replaces the idea of tlemosune with a new concept of human possibilities.[68] He is, like

the other poets, keenly aware of the differences between man and gods - the attainment of excellence is reserved for the gods (cf. fr. 4D. 10) - but he is the first lyric poet to suggest that within certain perceivable limits men may be able to live and be satisfied with a place in a community. Freed from the world of tradition, it seems natural that an imaginative and resilient mind will produce a modus vivendi to replace older ways of thought.

The lyric poets develop a deep awareness of amekhania. They think of it as a universal and pervasive part of their lives. Simonides reacts to life in the same way as many of the other poets, he displays the passionate search for life's meaning, observes the contrast between man and gods, but in fr. 4D he displays an interest in moral possibilities which might somehow change things. Indeed, Wilamowitz suggests that Simonides is laying down a new morality which has substituted the individual conscience for traditional values.[69] This would seem only natural as the world of pure events becomes more and more subjective and hence open increasingly to interpretation.

Simonides echos Theognis (cf. Theog. 383-387)

when he says that men will be good or bad, according to their fortunes (fr. 4D. 10-14):

= ἄνδρα δ'
οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὅν ἀμάχανος συμφορὰ καθέλῃ.
πράξας γὰρ εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς
κ ἀπὶ πλεῖστον ἄριστοι τοὺς θεοὶ φίλωσιν.

The phrase ámekhanos symphora is also synonymous to amekhania.[70] It suggests a universal situation which is beyond control, an effect that cannot be withstood and that has the power to mould and remould human nature. For Homer or Hesiod we would interpret the phrase as an external occurence with which one is unable to deal. But Simonides refers to an impulse or passion which makes men susceptible to fortune.[71] The other poets have all described, in various terms, an impasse in which they cannot cope, whether the force of love, nature or politics, or a general awareness, unqualified by concrete details, where amekhania is present. But Simonides does not specify cause or situation.

What he suggests in fact, implies, if not a new

morality, is an acceptance of a general condition, not so much with reference to tlemosune, but to what he calls the hygies aner (fr. 4D.25). Far from a dry, abstract concept, Simonides speaks with the same vitriolic tone we appreciate in Archilochos or Theognis. Simonides suggests something beyond tlemosune for he praises the hygies aner (19-21):

πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἑκὼν ὅστις ἔρδῃ
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν·

In this way he tempers the lyric perception of amekhania with a new definition of human possibilities.

Simonides creates, from the lyric mood, an ideal that is within human possibilities. He has not proposed that man is a moral animal, but simply observes that if men are prevented from aspiring to what has become a divine state of being, he might accept a way of living within a feasible scope.[72]

In fr. 4D. 1-3 and again at 7-12 Simonides says that it is hard to be good (agathos and esthlos are used).

He refers to the perfection of mind and body and considers it as being 'fashioned without fault' and consequently, beyond human capabilities. The participle tetugmenos suggests more than physical qualities. As Donlan notes, it refers to an innate quality.[73] Man could aspire to it if he could foresee the course of things from day to day. But he cannot. Simonides accepts this condition and expresses what appears to be the seed of Greek civic consciousness.

Simonides was the first to suggest that excellence is beyond the range of man. For Hesiod prosperity allows men to achieve arete. Indeed, agathos and esthlos had always been terms used of men and not gods. But Simonides, and Theognis, hold that man changes according to circumstances. This perception creates a wider gulf between men and gods than is found in Homer. However, Simonides reacts with a new outlook, which, as Donlan notes, is "...consonant with the theme of universality which is marked in the rest of the poem."[74]

At line 12 we find the word apalamnos, which as Simonides implies, is caused by amekhanoi symphorai. It translated here as 'shiftless'.[75] Simonides' new man,

however, can extricate himself by accepting more relaxed standards - since excellence is unattainable, it is sufficient not to do too much evil - and by taking his place in the civic state (cf. 24). It is the effect of amekhania, the intensity of its presence, which has caused Simonides to follow this path, and of course, it could only be felt to this degree by an imaginative mind in which objective events no longer engulf the world of thought, where the mind is spread out over a limitless, universal stage. Yet in this poem Simonides varies the mood of the lyric voice as he reacts to confrontations between men and gods by suggesting different aspirations.

The fragment P.Oxy. 2434 broadens our understanding of the phrase amekhanos symphora by virtually listing the passions and impulses it exploits. The adjectives that modify each one enhance the powers they hold over men. Kerdos, for instance, is amakhetos, Aphrodite is treacherous, her 'sting' is megasthenes, and philonikiai are luxuriant. It has been noted that Homeric characters, even after a moment of crisis, or faced with the knowledge of their individual fate, remain unchanged, yet as Simonides and Theognis imply, there

are moments in life where such impulses are exploited so much that men are thrown off course, or altered by various circumstances. Uncontrollable desires prevent men from rising above the state that Simonides describes as hygies. We might call such a man a 'good egg' or a 'decent chap' but he is denied the nobler arete. He cannot become tetugmenos. An overmastering power keeps man from attaining what has become reserved for the gods. Amekhanos symphora indicate this irrevocable state which has expanded in the imagination of the lyric poets.

Where Sappho presents the physical powers of love, the denied passions that overwhelm her, Simonides names them outright. The concreteness of Sappho, or Archilochos, have disappeared in these poems of Simonides. They suggest quite abstractly that certain weaknesses deny men the satisfaction of complete self-realization. Like Sappho, Simonides perceives that the symptoms of amekhania stem from within Man himself. Less was blamed on the gods. Homer, in fact, looks forward to this in the Odyssey 1, where Zeus denies the blame that men place upon him for their own blindness (32 ff.).

Earlier in the lyric tradition Archilochos

disperses his grief by standing firm against amekhana kedea. His passionate, sometimes truculent voice dominates his conflicts with nature, his indignities, his fears of the gods or fortune. He reacts to his world with an affirmation of life. For Archilochos the sufferings that life inevitably brings are defiantly met. The same might be said for all five poets. Amekhania, as it assumes universal proportions never discourages men from living, never silences the poet's voice. On the contrary, the intensity of passion is preserved in each poet and as boundaries between the objective and subjective worlds fade the poetic imagination accomodates more and more the world of pure thought. The word amekhania assumes its place in a spirited and vigorous vision of life. Amekhania is perceived as a universal reality during the Archaic period but it does not, in the lyric poets, arouse the need to explain the ways of men to gods.

## NOTES

1. Eustatius. Eustathii Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem. 4 vols. vol. 3. p. 248.

2. ibid., vol. 2. p. 192.

3. cf. B. Fenik's Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad. p. 222. Fenik connects the climax in the fighting with divine will: "At line 130 the familiar Trojan panic and imminent Greek victory are suddenly introduced and the critical situation is averted only by the direct intervention of Zeus."

4. ibid., p. 219.

5. ibid., p. 221.

6. ibid., p. 221.

7. E.R. Dodds supports this in The Greeks and the Irrational, p. 40: "Homeric society does not seem to be haunted by the oppressive atmosphere in which Aeschylus' characters move... People in the Odyssey attribute many events in their lives, both mental and physical, to the agency of anonymous daemons; we get the impression, however, that they do not always mean it very seriously."

8. Fränkel, Hermann. Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy. p. 76.

9. W.C. Greene, in Moira, p. 20, notes: "Homeric characters face the evils of life with a manly endurance." Greene continues, that both Achilles (Il. 24. 518-33) and

Odysseus (Od. 18. 130-42) display their summations of resignation, but they do not show any signs of despair. cf. A.W.H. Adkins' Merit and Responsibility. p. 16 ff., and H. Lloyd-Jones' The Justice of Zeus, p. 19 ff.

10. Griffin, J. Homer on Life and Death. p. 41 ff. cf. L. Versenyi. Man's Measure. p. 11 ff.

11. The word is compared in the scholia to apeiros, translating as 'unexperienced' or 'ignorant'. Diomedes, in other words, is untried standing in battle against Ares and Enyo. cf. also Eustatius, p. 54 (Index).

12. Scholia maintain that the word in this context signifies 'against whom nothing can be contrived' (mekhanesasthai). Although it is compared to the context of Il. 10. 167, one notes the obvious double entendre of the word here. For Hera is called amekhane by Zeus who ironically uses the word in both its passive and active senses.

13. Aristonicus suggests (cf. Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem) that in this instance amekhanos signifies both 'invincible' (aniketos) and 'against whom no contrivance might be found'.

14. The word in the passage is thought by the scholia to mean 'unconquerable' or 'not to be persuaded' (aparamuthetos). It implies that those who wish to pursuade Hector will be rendered helpless.

15. Aristonicus interprets this passage 'against whom there is nothing to be done'. He states that Achilles himself is incapable of doing anything. Amekhanos is compared to aprosmekhanetos.

16. Dodds, E.R. op. cit. p. 5. cf., also the very different approaches to this question in Lloyd-Jones, op.cit. p. 10 ff., and in B. Snell's The Discovery of the Mind, p. 20 ff.

17. cf. Dodds, op.cit. p. 41: "...those irrational impulses which arise in man against his will to tempt him...are not truly part of the self...they are endowed with a life and energy of their own, and so can force a man, as it were, from the outside..." cf. Lloyd-Jones, op.cit. p. 23 ff.

18. For a general discussion of the relationship of Odysseus and Penelope in terms of their respective metis see M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society, p. 18 ff.

19. This is not strictly a romantic notion, for as Adkins points out 'living' for Odysseus revolves around a fairly well defined social unit, of which he is the head. p. 15: "...apart from his own limits and psychological functions, he has tools, weapons, possessions and portions of land; and he has his wife, children, servants and other dependents." cf. also the standard work on Homeric society by M.I. Finley, The World of Odysseus.

20. Both M.I. Finley, op.cit., and A.W.H. Adkins, Merit and Responsibility, discuss at lengths the system of values in the Odyssey in which men have an appointed place both in social and religious contexts. cf. Adkins, p. 21. ff., and Finley. p. 45. ff. For further discussion, cf. also Adkins, Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece. p. 22. ff.

21. Gilbert P. Rose notes, "We have here, not surprisingly, the only instance in the Homeric corpus of either nylakteo or halao used metaphorically." cf. Roses's "Odysseus' Barking Heart." TAPhA 109 (1979), p. 216.

22. Detienne, M., and Vernand, J.-P., op.cit., p. 26.

23. The epic present participle oligepeleon is approximately synonymous to the passive amekhanos. It occurs rarely

in Homer, although in later literature it is quite common. Schol. Herod. (Il. 15. 245) equate it with another epic present participle, oligodraneon. In Homer both words express physical impotence, cf. Od. 19. 356. Il. 15.246,22.337, 16.843. These words do not appear, as does amekhania, as substantives in Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Pindar, etc. Amekhania and its cognates contain an emotional dimension which is simply not found in these words.

24. Stanford, W.B. ed. Odyssey. vol. 2. p. 336.

25. Various debates have centred around this aspect of Hesiod's style, the most interesting, perhaps, being that concerning the so-called inclusion of the "winter scene" in the Erga, 493-560. G. Evelyn-White, claiming the support of Lehr, Goettling, Schoemann, Fick, Paley, etc., rejects the passage in his article, "Hesiod's Description of Winter." Classical Review (1916): 209-13. The following year A.J. Carnoy's "Hesiod's Description of Winter (Works and Days, 493-560)." Classical Philology (1917): 227-236, presented a sound counter-argument. More recently cf. the commentary of M.L. West. The debate alone tends to support the "patchwork" description, yet W. Jaeger holds that the Theogony represents a, "...rational system, deliberately built up by logical inquiry..." Paideia. vol. 1. p. 151. cf. also V. Tejera's Modes of Greek Thought. p, 59 ff.

26. The actual words that Hesiod uses are hypokhthonoi makares, Erga, 141. His vocabulary in this area is by no means fixed theological terminology.

27. cf. A.W.H. Adkins, Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece. p. 24 ff. L. Versenyi, Man's Measure. p. 44 ff, P. Pucci, Hesiod and the Language of Poetry. p. 82 ff, W.C. Greene, Moira. p. 30 ff.

28. W.C. Greene,op.cit. p. 28, remarks "The Theogony seeks to explain how the existing order of divinities came to be; the Works and Days, finding toil and injustice in the world, seeks to account for their genesis, and then to show how to make the best of a weary world."

29. Jaeger, W. op.cit. p. 65.

30. A.W.H. Adkins, in Moral Values, p.308, interprets this advice as follows:" When Hesiod urges his brother to refrain from chattering around the fire at the blacksmiths and to spend winter wisely by work, he is offering his own solution as a means of advice. Work became for Hesiod the means, the mekhane, of acquiring his time." Work, in other words, is a way of fending off amekhania in the winter, for time would represent for Hesiod the getting of bounty.

31. cf. discussions by A.H.W. Adkins, Moral Values, p. 35 ff., and the brief but informative discussion by O. Murray in Early Greece, p. 40 ff.

32. Pucci, P. op.cit. p. 102.

33. ibid. p. 33.

34. ibid. p. 102.

35. ibid. pp.102-03.

36. Solmsen, F. Hesiod and Aeschylus. p. 88 ff.

37. Solmsen, op.cit. p. 85 ff., quite rightly stresses the intrinsic nature of action and of resulting evils in Hesiod. Hesiod imputes to his fables a universality and it is within such a framework we must view amekhania.

38. H. Lloyd-Jones puts this point succinctly when he observes, "Zeus' justice, Hesiod says, demands that a man shall earn his living by honest work and not by trickery (op.cit. p. 32)."

39. L. Versenyi stresses the individuality of Hesiod. Like the lyric poets Hesiod, "...confronts us in the first person." Amekhania is generalized not by a passionate confrontation directly with life itself, as happens subsequently, but certainly through an emotional inquiry into the causes of the evils of the present life. It is precisely the emotional zeal that we find in Hesiod which looks ahead to the lyric generation of poets. cf. Versenyi, op.cit. p. 43.

40. Dodds, E.R., op.cit., p. 29.

41. Snell, op.cit. p. 16, virtually marks this development as a stage in the 'discovery': "Later, with the dawn of the Lyric Age, people began to suspect that animate man had within him a spiritual or intellectual portion... the distinction between body and soul represents a 'discovery."

42. For L. Versenyi, op.cit. p. 82 the changes in thought made this 'blurring' possible. cf. also H. Fränkel's classic article, "Man's "Ephemeros" Nature According to Pindar and Others." TAPhA 77 (1946). p. 133.

43. Pfeiffer, R. "Gottheit und Individuum in der früh-griechschen Lyrik.". Philologus 84 (1929), p. 139.

44. Lasserre, F., and Bonnard, A. ed., Archiloque, Fragments. p. xxxiv.

45. ibid. p. xxxi.

46. ibid. p. xxxi.

47. Dodds, E.R. op.cit. p. 29.

48. Renehan, R. "The Derivation of rhythmos." Classical Philology 58 (1963) p. 361.

49. Jaeger, W. op.cit. p. 125.

50. ibid. p. 124. cf. also W.C. Greene, op.cit. p. 34..

51. Bergren, Ann L. The Etymology and Usage of Peirar. p. 141.

52. Pfeiffer, op.cit. p. 146, states this theme rather starkly: "Es ist von den frühen Ioniern immer wieder betont worden, dass bei den Menschen kein Wissen sei: noos ouk en anthropoisin - das ouden eidotes ist fast stereotyp." cf. Snell, op.cit. p. 47 ff. L. Woodbury, in his article, "Simonides on arete." TAPhA 84 (1953), p. 151 ff, discusses the ephemeral nature inherent in man noting that for Simonides it is the fate of man to be moulded that for Simonides it is the fate of man to be moulded by the gods.

53. Snell, op.cit. p. 49, states that any separating of this kind is not to be found in Homer, but that Archilochos was the first to break down the epic tradition, "...his treatment is divest of all epic grandeur...he savours it as the strong stuff of life."

54. Pffeifer, op.cit. p. 139.

55. Fränkel, in his article, "Man's "Ephemeros" Nature..." p. 136 remarks, "...throughout the archaic period, down to Pindar, the idea of the passive and pliable self was a major element in the general feeling of human helplessness (amekhania)."

56. Segal, Charles P. "Eros and Incantation: Sappho and Oral Poetry." Arethusa 7.2 (1974), p. 139 ff.

57. Walter Donlan's superb, "Simonides, fr. 4D and P. Oxy. 2434." TAPhA 100 (1969), p. 83 ff, is the only substantial treatment of this very important phrase: "Amechanos symphora means not an unavoidable misfortune, i.e., an accident of fate, but a natural defect of human nature." When we realize this, says Donlan, "...then the emphatic language, the contrast between human/divine, and the universal quality of the statement are natural and simple."

58. cf. Vernesyi, L. op.cit. p. 80. ff.

59. Segal, Charles, P. op.cit. p. 140. Segal notes that the, "...power of love is a god, as power often is for the ancient Greeks..."

60. Segal, op.cit. p. 149, discusses the incantatory, hypnotic effect of Aphrodite's language which enhances this contrast.

61. Lasserre, F., and Bonnard, A. op.cit. p. xxxii.

62. Jaeger, W. op.cit. p. 126.

63. Will, F. Archilochos. p. 52.

64. F. Will, op.cit. p. 54, refers to the personification of nature in the fragment, "...the natural world existed for the Greek poet as a genesis of human feelings."

65. Schopenhauer, A., The World as Will and Idea, as quoted by Nietzsche in the Birth of Tragedy, trans. by W. Kaufmann, p. 51.

66. Adkins, A.W.H., Moral Values. p. 21 ff.

67. ibid. p. 22.

68. Donlan, op.cit. p.81,states that, "Simonides was making a conscious attempt to redefine, in moral terms, the common notions of the 'good' and 'bad' man, and consequently, that he was an important innovator in the formulation of higher ethical thought."

69. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U. Sappho und Simonides. p. 174.

70. Donlan, op.ci. p. 85,notes, "Amechanos symphoros in this poem can therefore indicate the condition of man who is seized by passions beyond his control."

71. ibid. p. 82.

72. Woodbury, op.cit. p. 159, suggests that the purpose of Simonides in this poem is to, "...affirm the suffering of a more practicable ideal than the perfect arete of tradition." cf. Donlan, op.cit. p. 88.

73. Donlan, Walter, op.cit. p. 80.

74. ibid. p. 90.

75. Woodbury, L. op.cit. p. 161. n. 68: "The meaning of apalamnos varies...It may mean 'helpless', as here, where it recalls the amekhanos of line 9..." Woodbury is correct in his suspicion of Wilamowitz's implications of a moral sense to the word. However, one doubts as well that it is synonymous to amekhanos. The context and the simple etymology

of the word combine to indicate a more casual translation. The literal 'without hands' might here be construed as 'lazy'. Lloyd-Jones, op.cit. 38, translates the word as 'incompetent'. Page, cf. Sappho and Alcaeus p. 315, n., interprets it as 'shiftless' and sensibly observes, "...a number of words in Greek draw no sharp distinction between 'folly' and 'wickedness', hence apalamos here (Alkaios' fr. Z37) draws little between 'shiftless' and 'helpless'..."

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