EDITED BY LAWRENCE A. TRITLE AND JASON W. WARREN



THE MANY FACES OF WAR



Wars never end, exactly, but play on again and again in the lives and faces of the men, women, and children who experience them. The authors of this collection of essays show powerfully and poignantly war's realities and the toll taken on the human condition.

Joseph L. Galloway, co-author of *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young* and *We Are Soldiers Still*

An exhaustive interdisciplinary look at combat trauma, from revisionist readings of the ancients to contemporary mediums of graphic novels and tattoo artistry, from a mental health worker's exposition of the biology of brain trauma to critical reviews of war fiction from both Western soldiers and Iraqi civilian perspectives, *The Many Faces of War* is indispensable to anyone interested in the moral and psychological injuries that war fathers.

Commander Michael Flynn, USN, United States Naval Academy

This remarkable collection of essays assembles the most humane representation of the nature and immense tragedy of soldiering that I have ever read. *The Many Faces of War* crisscrosses centuries, geographies and disparate disciplines such as medicine, psychology, the arts and technology, while remaining true to the central narrative of the modern warriors who serve and suffer from our global capacity to destroy one another.

Virginia Aksan, McMaster University, author of *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged*

Vivid contemporary personal stories, poetry and illustrations join discussions of the neuroscience of trauma. Scholarly essays on the psychological and social dimensions of combat in other historical periods bring readers a compelling conversation about the relation between the lived experience of armed conflict and enduring human nature. Each contributor brings something different to the exploration of the animating theme of the volume and together they form an absorbing read of value to scholars and general readers alike.

S. Sara Monoson, Northwestern University, author of *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy*

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TRITLE AND WARREN

THE MANY FACES OF WAR

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EDITED BY LAWRENCE A. TRITLE AND JASON W. WARREN

THE MANY FACES OF WAR

The faces of war are many, encompassing women, children, and men, soldiers and civilians. Their stories appear in history, literature, and art, from earliest times to events reported in today's newspapers. The essays comprising this volume explore the human face of war from multiple perspectives—psychology, literature, history, and law—and through the eyes of many societies and cultures—American and Iraqi, English and French, Roman and Jew. What emerges is a mosaic of war's Many Faces that reveal the human condition and its response to the most challenging of life's many experiences—the violence of War.

Lawrence A. Tritle is Professor Emeritus of History at Loyola Marymount University, and the author and editor of numerous studies in the history of war and violence. His most recent publication is *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World* (New York, 2013).

Jason W. Warren is Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army, now stationed at Ft. Meade, Maryland, and the author and editor of several studies in early American history. His most recent publication is *Drawdown. The American Way of Postwar* (New York, 2016).

The Many Faces of War offers chapters on the ancient and contemporary worlds, and includes the vantage point of the participant, the civilian, the soldier, the scholar, and the observer. Creativity abounds, and so does an accompanying broad emotional range in which the writers engage the readers in painful first-person accounts that are poignant and heart-breaking. This book inclusively takes into account narratives that relate to gender, race, and culture. War offers little romance in this volume.

John M. Belohlavek, University of South Florida, author of *Patriots, Prostitutes, and Spies: Women and the Mexican-American War*

COVER ILLUSTRATIONS

Top Row (Left to Right): *Achilles in triumph over the body of Hector*, British Museum Images; *St. Ignatius of Loyola, the armed saint*, internet posting; *Manny Babbitt, from Khe Sanh, 1968, to California's Death Row, 1999*, from the Photo Archive of L.A. Tritle

Bottom Row (Left to Right): *Shawnee Warrior, armed with weapons old and new, 1750*, water color by Don Troiani, provided by Bridgeman Images; *young witnesses to the face of war, Vietnamese children, 1970*, and *August Hammann, 1914, missing in action on the Western Front, 1918*, from the Photo Archive of L.A. Tritle

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For the Healers

Your mind is troubled
And your spirits are down,
Life's a maze of problems
That completely surround.
You feel lost in a jungle,
You don't know just where,
And you cannot see
That anyone cares.

It's so dark in the forest
And you feel so alone,
There's an emptiness inside
That you've never known.
But you are not abandoned,
One other is there
Someone who sees,
Someone who cares.

And if you look out beyond
The shadowy trees,
There's a glimmer of light
That you then can see,
A beacon to guide you,
One that's constant and fair,
Kept glowing by that same
Someone who cares.

Lost in life's forest
On a soul's dark night,
Every man has need
For a true guiding light;
And none need feel lonely
Or drift to despair,
If he follow the glow
Of that someone who cares.

"Someone Cares"
Marilyn Brown

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and

Jason W. Warren

4

FACES AND ATTACHMENT IN HOMER AND LATER WAR WRITING*

Thomas Palaima

> Only a human being has a face, all other animals have a snout or a beak.
>
> Pliny, *Natural History* 11.138

◊◊◊

> In all animals no part of the body provides more clues about their inner feelings, and most especially in human beings, than the eyes. The eyes give us information about self-restraint, mercy, compassion, hatred, love, sorrow, and joy. The eyes, too, have many different looks: fierce, piercing, sparkling, weighed down, leering, askance, downcast, or fawning. Our inner psyches truly live in our eyes.
>
> Pliny, *Natural History* 11.145

* This paper had its genesis at the "Many Faces of War" conference organized by Larry Tritle at Loyola Marymount University October 3–5, 2013. The ideas herein were improved by critical discussion after a presentation within the classics colloquium series of the Department of Classics, University of Texas at Austin, November 15, 2013 and in my regular TC 357 honors seminar on the human response to experiences of war and violence and in a graduate seminar on the same topic. My thanks to Margaret Clark, Kyle Saunders, Colin Yarbrough, Chuck Oughton, Roberta Stevens, Leon Golden, Larry Tritle, Erwin Cook, Ricardo Ainslie, Stephen Sonnenberg, James H. Dee and Deborah Beck for their insights and guidance. They are not responsible for what I have made here of their learned opinions, advice and references.

On all the officers' faces there is a harassed look that I have never seen before, and which in England, never will be seen— out of jails. The men are just as Bairnsfather [a soldier cartoonist] has them—expressionless lumps. We feel the weight of them hanging on us. I have found not a few of the old Fleetwood Musketry party here. They seemed glad to see me, as far as the set doggedness of their features would admit.

Poet Wilfred Owen, letter to his mother Susan Owen, January 4, 1917, describing the miserable "unthinkably dirty and squalid" conditions in the Mud (*sic*) of France. Harold Owen and John Bell, eds. *Wilfred Owen. Collected Letters* (London, New York, Toronto, 1967, p. 422).

◊◊◊

Does any one know where the love of God goes
When the waves turn the minutes to hours?
The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay
If they'd put fifteen more miles behind her.
They might have split up or they might have capsized;
May have broke deep and took water.
And all that remains is the faces and the names
Of the wives and the sons and the daughters.

Gordon Lightfoot, "Wreck of The Edmund Fitzgerald," his song about the bulk freighter Edmund Fitzgerald that sank on November 10, 1975 in Lake Superior with all 29 crew and officers and its cargo of 26,116 tons of taconite pellets consigned to Detroit. Recorded December 1975. Released August 1976.

◊◊◊

The absence of mirrors was, of course, intentional. You get into the habit of seeing your face each morning. Whether you look well or ill, young or maybe just a trifle older, helps shape your day. Without that reflection, you begin to lose a little of your sense of identity. It's amazing how much you miss a simple thing like a mirror.

Francis Gary Powers, *Operation Overflight*: *The U-2 Spy Pilot Tells His Story for the First Time* (New York, 1970, p. 122).

◊◊◊

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

Wilfred Owen, describing the victim of a gas attack in his poem "Dulce Et Decorum Est" written between October 8, 1917 and March 1918. Cecil Day Lewis, ed. *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen* (New York, 1965, p. 55).

◊◊◊

But the thing that scared me most was when my enemy came close
And I saw that his face looked just like mine
Oh! Lord! Just like mine!

Bob Dylan, "John Brown Went Off to War" first performed October 15, 1962; copyright © 1963, 1968 by Warner Bros. Inc.; renewed 1991, 1996 by Special Rider Music.

◊◊◊

We have tired faces and avoid each other's eyes.

Erich Maria Remarque, preface to *All Quiet on the Western Front* (original German edition 1928; New York 1999, p. 104), describing the effects of constant artillery fire on the soldiers in the German trenches.

◊◊◊

This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war.

—Remarque, epigraph, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

◊◊◊

As human beings, our identities reside in and are recognized by others chiefly through our faces. According to Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE) we are unique among animals in this regard and in the degree to which our facial expressions—Pliny concentrates on the forehead and our eyes—reveal how we are feeling and our psychological disposition towards our own thoughts. At any moment our feelings and thoughts are written all over our faces.

This is true in general, but it is particularly significant in understanding how human beings react to traumatic events. I have given a small sample in the quotations above:

1. sincerely dutiful military officers carrying the responsibilities for the lives of their worn-down, expressionless, emotion-drained men in the muddy, chaotic and fruitless slaughterhouse of trench warfare;
2. the terrified, pain-wracked face of a soldier who did not succeed in "fitting the clumsy helmets [gas masks] just in time" and who was now "guttering, choking and drowning" as his bloody "froth-corrupted lungs" gargled his dying breaths in and out;
3. the living legacy that sailors on a sunken freighter bequeath to history as evidence of their own now extinguished identities: the traces of their faces in the faces of their sons and daughters;
4. how, as a prisoner of war in the modern period, being deprived of a mirror to see who you are day to day, your very sense of self, your sense of who you are, erodes;
5. how soldiers are affected when they see close up for the first time the faces of the demonized and otherified enemy soldiers and realize that they are young human beings just like themselves;
6. how continuous shelling can wear out the spirits of the soldiers, give them worn and haggard facial expressions and traumatize their individual psyches to the point that they draw in on themselves and avoid eye contact with even their closest brothers in arms;
7. what it means to stand face to face with death in combat, whether you survive or die.

Faces play a key role in our socialization and the development of our abilities to interact and bond with other human beings. Understandably, the severing of attachment, or the straining of conditions and behaviors that underlie and reinforce human connectedness, is itself traumatic for

individuals who have well-developed capacities for relating to others. In the literature that surrounds theories of attachment and the effects of loss in childhood pioneered by John Bowlby (1969) we learn that "infants are early masters of detecting emotions"; "babies have an intrinsic appetite for faces"; "babies a few days old already can detect emotional expressions"; "mothers use universal signals of emotion to teach babies about the world" and "babies continuously monitor their mothers' facial expressions." In our early infancy, then, we essentially start becoming experts in analyzing and decoding human facial expressions. We are creatures for whom human connectedness and facial recognition are of paramount importance.

Figure 4.1. World War ii combat artist Kerr Eby, "War is Hell (Shell Shock)," captures the face of wartime horror. James Jones notes "in WW i they called it shell shock. Then they called it combat fatigue. You had to grab them quickly" (Jones 1975: 118). Photo Credit: Courtesy of United States Navy Art Collection (#88-159-D1), Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.

As might be expected, then, in our earliest texts, the epics of Homer, faces are key. Two related words are used in Homer and later Greek to refer to "face" and "forehead." They are *prosōpon* and *metōpon* respectively (compare Pliny for these terms as the carriers of human expression). *Prosōpon* literally means "what is opposite to the eyes or the sight (of the other)" (Beekes 2010: 2, 1240). The *prosōpon* or face is obviously the most

important such "thing seen" by the eyes of other human beings in the physical and social world the Greeks inhabited. After all, our faces are right in front of other people when we meet face to face, eye to eye.

The word *prosōpon* even stands hypostatically in a culturally personified way for the individual whose face is thus seen. Ludolf Malten (1961: 1–4) in studying the range of compound forms relating to the idea of "face" or "visage" in Greek and secondarily in other Indo-European languages, remarks on how the related idea of "head" can be used to stand for individual persons in German compound words meaning head count, head tax, and clear-headed. The *metōpon* or forehead stands for the "space situated between, among and ultimately above the eyes" (Beekes 2010: 940; Meier-Brügger, 1993: 174). In Homeric combat scenes, it is mainly used as the area that receives mortal wounds and might originally have referred to animal skulls in general. It is not used to signify who we are as individual human beings.

Given these basic facts, we might expect that those who write about war in a serious way, i.e., who try to communicate the true realities of the experience of war to others, would pay attention to faces and attachment in meaningful ways. Here I will take up some interesting examples of faces and facelessness, attachment and dis-attachment in selected ancient and modern war literature. Looking at writing about war from this perspective produces some interesting and a few surprising results. This will also quite understandably spill over into observations about how the act of seeing in and of itself and the act of knowing are related in accounts of war.

First, however, let us ask what we are looking at in this process and even why. What are those telling true war stories, which we will define here as those accounts that try to capture the multifaceted and virtually incommunicable realities of warfare, doing or wanting to do? One fundamental thing they are doing is looking at and inviting us to look at what many or most normal, average, socioeconomically advantaged human beings in highly developed societies do not want to look at.

A prime example of this looking away is ironically John Keegan. A lecturer in military history at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for twenty-six years, Keegan never served as a soldier due to the accidents of when he was born and the lasting effects of serious childhood illness. In his masterwork *The Face of Battle* (1976), he wants to put a face on something that he has long taught, as it has always mainly been taught, impersonally and theoretically, using the kinds of distancing mechanisms and even some of the reality-eradicating metaphorical language that Paul Fussell so

neatly glossed in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975: 22). Units get moved. Advances get pushed back. Objectives get met, or not. An attack is called an engagement or specifically the Great Push. Losses are taken or absorbed. Troops engage. They do not savagely butcher each other with mechanized weapons in the Senseless Massacre for so meaningless an end result as one such push in the Battle of the Somme. As described by war historian Sir Basil Liddell Hart (1930: 326–7) with an understatedly savage irony, the soldiers at the Somme suffered and died for "the ultimate gain, after six weeks, of a tiny tongue of ground just over a mile deep."

Keegan (1976: 31–2) cites an example from the official history of World War I that strips war almost entirely of its human elements and consequences for human beings. This kind of realization brings him to admit (p.15) "I have not been in a battle; not near one, nor heard one from afar, nor seen the aftermath." Keegan classifies battles into three categories that are likely to affect the soldiers' experiences of war, using as criteria mainly the distance at which they wreak violence upon their adversaries and vice versa and the level of force applied. Choosing as examples Agincourt (hand weapon), Waterloo (single-missile weapon) and the Somme (multi-missile weapon), he writes (p. 78): "[M]y purpose [is] to demonstrate, as exactly as possible, what the warfare…was (and is) like, and to suggest how and why the men who have had (and do have) to face these weapons control their fears, staunch their wounds, go to their deaths. It is a personal attempt to catch a glimpse of the face of battle." We might say that even here by referring to "what the warfare was like" and to the metaphorical abstraction "face of battle" and not writing about the "faces of soldiers", Keegan is still shying away from looking at certain realities, as most non-veterans do.

The ancient Greeks understood that truly knowing was based on truly seeing. In Greek the simple completed past tense of the verbal root **wid-* ("see," cf. our English word "video") meaning "I saw" is *eidon*. The same root changed to an o-grade in the perfect tense *oida* means literally "I saw in the past and still see as a lasting result," i.e., "I know." Seeing and holding on to what you have seen is knowing.

George Santayana gets at this in his famous statement in *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* (1922) where he re-envisions the day of armistice ending World War I, November 11, 1918. He is in Oxford and hears and sees "in a coffee-house frequented at that hour, some wounded officers from the hospital at Somerville" singing "instinctively the old grumbling, good-natured, sentimental song ["Tipperary"], which they used to sing when they

first joined." They are celebrating surviving the Great War. He observes what he himself has seen and what some wounded soldiers will never see (p. 103): "I have seen in some of you the smile that makes light of pain, the sturdy humility that accepts mutilation and faces disability without repining or shame; armless and legless men are still God's creatures, and even if you cannot see the sun, you can bask in it, and there is joy on earth perhaps the deepest and most primitive joy even in that." And he also writes his famous observation about what soldiers coming out of war may see (p. 102): "Yet the poor fellows think they are safe! They think that the war is over! Only the dead have *seen* the end of war." [Italics mine.]

The Greeks conceived of the afterlife, a bleak existence where the bat-like souls of human beings twitter on and on, as located in the realm of the god Hades, whose very name we use for the locus. In Greek, however, the souls of the dead fluttered bat-like *eis Aidāo* "into [scil. the house] of Hades." The Greeks in historical times folk-etymologized the word Hades as **ņ-wid-ās* "the unseen one," taking the initial *a-* as a negating prefix (see our Greek-derived words like "asymptomatic" and "amorphous"). This was a fitting name, they thought, for the lord of the dark underworld who "disappears" human lives. But in fact the god's name is correctly now reconstructed with the initial *a-* as a copulative rather than a privative alpha coming from the root meaning "with" as **sņ-wid-ās* = the place of "seeing with," i.e., the "re-seeing place." We may compare Russian *do-svidanija* "until re-seeing" and Spanish *hasta la vista*.

This kind of meeting again of the dead of war in the netherworld has an ironic resonance in the final scene of Stanley Kubrick's classic satirical war film *Dr. Strangelove*, which uses Vera Lynn's signature World War II song "We'll Meet Again" as the soundtrack while mushroom clouds from exploding atomic bombs destroy our world. The only place any human beings will be meeting again face to face after these catastrophic detonations will be the hereafter.

In writing about war, there are two options available. People who know things that others do not know and who want those ignorant others to know the same things try to make them see the things that they have seen. Or those same knowing people may despair of so doing and speak only to others who have seen and know.

The acts of seeing and knowing, of working at getting others to see and know, of looking into the mirror that brings self-realization if we really do look and seek to know, of recognizing faces, even our own faces, and of being variously attached or disattached from others, all play out

in Vietnam veteran Yusef Komunyakaa's poetic masterpiece "Facing It" (1988: 63). I italicize in the poem the lines that explicitly make use of these themes in a way that the title proclaims.

> *My black face fades*,
> hiding inside the black granite.
> I said I wouldn't,
> dammit: No tears.
> I'm stone. I'm flesh.
> *My clouded reflection eyes me*
> like a bird of prey, the profile of night
> slanted against morning. I turn
> this way–the stone lets me go.
> I turn that way–I'm inside
> the Vietnam Veterans Memorial
> again, depending on the light
> to make a difference.
> I go down the 58,022 names,
> half-expecting to find
> my own in letters like smoke.
> I touch the name Andrew Johnson;
> *I see the booby trap's white flash*.
> Names shimmer on a woman's blouse
> but when she walks away
> the names stay on the wall.
> Brushstrokes flash, a red bird's
> wings cutting across my stare.
> The sky. A plane in the sky.
> A white vet's image floats
> closer to me, *then his pale eyes*
> *look through mine*. I'm a window.
> He's lost his right arm
> inside the stone. *In the black mirror*
> a woman's trying to erase names:
> No, she's brushing a boy's hair.

The expression in the title "Facing It" is not used in the unthinking way we now use it. We have stripped it of its metaphorical implications, and use it as a mere place filler for "dealing actively with" something. The narrator, however, sees his face in the black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a face that is racially "black" and imaged upon polished black stone. He is in the moment literally "facing it," that is, he has en-faced, placed a face upon, the monument.

His seeing brings a recognition and a knowing: this is who I am and that is who I am and was. The mirrored reflection fades with changes in natural light —"depending on the light"—and other background elements, coming and going, the business of the everyday lives of the living. And it suggests the ephemerality of life, what Wilfred Owen calls "chance's strange arithmetic" that left Komunyakaa's narrator alive and physically whole and left the men commemorated by names on the memorial dead, or what Bruce Springsteen calls "all gone," except for, as Gordon Lightfoot sings in part, their names.

But Komunyakaa's narrator can imagine his mirrored face literally embedded and imprisoned within a kind of tombstone as having its own persona and looking out face to face with his living self—in the true Greek sense of *prosōpon* "what is opposite to the eyes or the sight (of the other)." His reflected likeness is a figure of the dead. It is rightly there psychologically along with the 58,000-plus names carved into the granite that stand for those fellow soldiers who are truly dead. He even imagines then that his own name will now be there, too, to signify both how his face is embedded in the stone and the sympathetic and real deadness he feels because of the experienced losses of the war. Why them and not me? Why not me, too?

The face of a white veteran is likewise soon imaged in the stone, truly pale compared to his black face. But the "pale eyes" of this white veteran's face are the pathways, as we have seen in Pliny, to human emotions and they peer through his own eyes, prying out some of his own long-repressed feelings.

The poem ends by reminding us that Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial does work like a mirror into the souls of the visitors. The gestures of the reflected human beings take place both in the real space of the real world and the entombed space that memorializes the dead. A mother's gesture of brushing the hair of a boy, perhaps the son or toddler grandson of a dead soldier, can bring about a kind of panic when the narrator thinks that she is thereby erasing the name, and with it the memory, of a fallen brother in arms. But the felt effects of her gesture

symbolically convey how the day-of-day lives of the living cause the ghosts of the dead to fade away.

Even though faces are so significant to the ancient Greeks (and Romans) as indicators of our humanity, there are some real puzzles to think about, especially in contrast with the keen, almost heart-rending attention Komunyakaa pays to them. *Prosōpon* as the face of a person occurs in the Homeric epics in contexts connected with key human emotions like weeping, mourning, and concealing (often to hide emotions). Yet, for example, it is true, as Mark Griffith (1985: 309–19) has pointed out, that we do not know what the Roman hero Aeneas looks like. He is an important character in Homer, but his face is not described in the *Iliad*. He is the main character and gives his name to the title of Vergil's epic, the *Aeneid* (cf. Odysseus and Homer's *Odyssey*). But Vergil never describes his facial features. And although there are references to the *prosōpon* of the hero figures in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and descriptions of physical attributes like height, bulk, strength, litheness, quickness, length and color and texture of hair, it is also true that nowhere does Homer do what Wilfred Owen writes to his mother (April 1918) that he strives to do in the poem he is writing: "This afternoon I was retouching a 'photographic representation' of an officer dying of wounds." He is referring to the handwritten draft of the poem "A Terre" that he sends her.

Griffith (1985: 310) catalogues all the ways that Odysseus's physical self is described meaningfully in different key passages of the *Odyssey*, but none of these descriptions enables us to see his face. Even several lengthy descriptions of restorative bathing (*Odyssey* 6.224–237 and 23.153–164) speak only to his back and broad shoulders, his height and the color and texture of his hair. Furthermore, the passage from Book 23 is the famous recognition scene where Penelope, trying to ascertain if this stranger, who just now, with the help of her son Telemachus, has killed all the suitors and hanged the unfaithful maidservants, is truly her long-wandering husband. *She* would be looking searchingly at the color and expression in his eyes, the different ways his forehead would set, his nose, lips, teeth and the shapes of his mouth as he smiles or speaks with firm determination. We get no trace of that in Homer.

Simply put, there is nothing in Homer comparable to our modern focus on faces in accounts of war. We live in an age when everyone has become, as Michael Jackson sang it and Gary Powers reminds us, a "man in the mirror." No passages in Homer contain the kind of close-up examination and description of the face of an individual enemy dead or dying that we

find in Tim O'Brien's short story "The Man I Killed" (in *The Things They Carried*, 1990: 124–30) or in the passage in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929: 214–25), where his hero, Paul Bäumer, in a frightened automatic response indoctrinated into him in basic training, bayonets in the dark of night a French soldier who accidentally stumbles into the same shell hole with him while desperately seeking protection in No Man's Land. When day begins to break, Paul has to look at the dying man. He tries feebly to bandage the mortal wounds he has caused and looks closely at the man who is dying from his actions. In both O'Brien and Remarque, close observation of the enemy soldier's face leads to strong feelings of shared humanity and guilt. Bäumer eventually searches through the wallet of his enemy and discovers: "I have killed the printer, Gérard Duval."

Remarque has Bäumer, once the Frenchman has died, reckon that if he had run two yards to the left, he would still be alive. Then he says,

> I prop the dead man up again so that he lies comfortably, although he feels nothing any more. I close his eyes. They are brown, his hair is black and a bit curly at the sides.
>
> The mouth is full and soft beneath his moustache; the nose is slightly arched, the skin brownish; it is now not so pale as it was before, when he was still alive. For a moment the face seems almost healthy;—then it collapses suddenly into the strange face of the dead that I have so often seen, strange faces, all alike.

And the entire novel ends somberly with a simple statement of how Paul Bäumer died on a day where nothing out of the ordinary took place on the western front. Yet Paul's facial expression delivers the promise in Santayana's classic statement: "He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come." He has finally seen an end to war.

O'Brien begins his account of the effects of a close-up killing on his soldier narrator with an eight-line detailed and sympathetic description of the face of the enemy he has killed. It is unparalleled in accounts of war with which I am familiar, even beyond Remarque's classic passage. His word portrait reads almost like the report of an autopsy done on a family member by a family member:

> His jaw was in his throat, his upper lip and teeth were gone, his one eye was shut, his other eye was a star-shaped hole, his

> eyebrows were thin and arched like a woman's, his nose was undamaged, there was a slight tear at the lobe of one ear, his clean black hair was swept upward into a cowlick at the rear of the skull, his forehead was lightly freckled, his fingernails were clean, the skin at his left cheek was peeled back in three ragged strips, his right cheek was smooth and hairless, there was a butterfly on his chin, his neck was open to the spinal cord and the blood there was thick and shiny and it was this wound that had killed him. He lay face-up in the center of the trail, a slim, dead, almost dainty young man.

It is puzzling to discover the absence of this kind of detailed description of facial features in the Homeric poems, not only because of the importance of the concept of *prosōpon*, but also because the epics contain the prototypes for western literature of what is, speaking less than strictly, a kind of *ekphrasis* (description), if one considers the human face during or after the death throes of the dying or dead person to be the work of art of the soldier who does or did the killing. Passages like the description of the "Shield of Achilles" in *Iliad* Book 18 are ekphrastic landmarks and give us an understanding of what the oral poets could achieve in such asides. There is no artistic technical reason why faces are not described in Homer as Remarque and O'Brien describe them. The oral songster poets could have described faces in detail. They chose not to. Why?

One could say that with regard to faces, songsters within the epic tradition were employing an economy of description and were controlled by the pragmatic principles of the eristic culture in which they lived and performed. For the ancient Greeks, as clearly conveyed in their two other main extant national epics, Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, human life was predicated upon power, the response to power, and attempts to restrain and harness power. Human relationships, including such fundamental and culture-defining principles as *philia* "friendship" and *xenia* "guest friendship" were pragmatically defined in terms of reciprocity. Both kinds of relationship were based on what individuals did with, for and to one another and the obligations any such actions entailed going forward. Simply put, there wasn't much time or incentive in such a society for sympathetic feelings about the man you killed.

The key test cases are the two scenes in the *Iliad* that convey the deepest human emotion over the loss in battle of a dearly beloved human being. Here I would say we have what Tim O'Brien calls "heating up the story" so that the emotional intensity and the concomitant opportunity

for the readers or listeners to grasp underlying realities are at the maximum. These are occasions, like the Penelope–Odysseus episode in *Odyssey* Book 23, discussed above, where we might expect a detailed description of the human face. I am referring here to (1) Achilles' grief over the loss of Patroclus in *Iliad* Book 18 and (2) in Book 24 the Trojan king Priam's grief over the loss of his noble son Hector, whose very name identifies his role as leader of the Trojan forces and literally the "holder" and "protector" of Troy. Poetic treatment of what these two great hero figures do with their soul-rending sorrow might include how their grief is portrayed on their faces. Here we will focus on Achilles' grief.

The key passage is *Iliad* book 18, lines 22–24, where Achilles, the most successful and most honorable field commander and the greatest fighter among the Greek forces at Troy, receives the news that his closest associate, second-in-command, and dearest brother in arms, Patroclus, has been killed by Hector and that his corpse may now be dragged back to the walls of Troy and ritually beheaded.

Figure 4.2. An Athenian black-figured amphora of the Priam Painter (British Museum, #1899,0721.3). Achilles drags Hector's corpse around Patroclus' white tomb mound, with Patroclus' armed soul above. in the center is the winged messenger-goddess, who has come to stop Achilles' mistreatment of the corpse, upon which Achilles gazes. Photo Credit: ©Trustees of the British Museum.

Achilles' grief is intensified, aka "heated up," by the fact that he had withdrawn himself and his Myrmidon troops from battle in a kind of Post Traumatic Stress response to the public dishonor he suffered because of his characteristic efforts to do the right thing. The commander-in-chief of the united Greek expedition, Agamemnon, had brought a plague upon the Greek soldiers through his abominably—again aka "heated up"—impious conduct toward a priest of Apollo. Everyone knew his misconduct was the cause of the plague that brought on the deaths of mules, horses and men, yet no one, even among the highest-ranking commanders of the various contingents, would step forward and try to rectify matters.

Achilles takes this on as he has taken on sustaining the expedition in twenty-three successful sieges of neighboring cities allied with Troy in the nine years the Greek forces have been away at Troy. He goes about doing so with admirably proper diplomatic finesse. He calls a general council. He calls for an interpretation of the will of the gods in this matter from the expedition's main holy man and seer Calchas. He identifies the problem without emphasizing blame and makes a more than reasonable proposal about how to set matters right in terms that will cause Agamemnon no serious loss of "face" or public honor. In response, Agamemnon becomes lividly angry and targets Achilles. None of the other commanders among the Greek contingents steps forward publicly to support Achilles even though they and all their soldiers know he is in the right.

Achilles' sense of public humiliation and truly universal abandonment, what Jonathan Shay (1994: 3–22) calls his sense of betrayal of what is right, is therefore not trivial or petulant, as it is sometimes represented. He is dishonored. He is unsupported. He was doing the right thing. He was acting honorably and ethically and with political wisdom, as he always had.

As is well known, Achilles refuses to fight or to let his soldiers fight, despite the personal appeals and official offer of more than adequate compensation by an embassy of three key figures, Phoenix (representing Achilles' attached upbringing and education as a noble leader of soldiers), Ajax (as a true and honorable brother-in-arms) and Odysseus (as the epitome of shrewd thinking and a winning use of words and persuasion). Eventually, with the Trojans threatening to burn the Greek ships, which would have meant total disaster for the Greek forces, Achilles relents and permits Patroclus to go forth into battle as his surrogate and body double, wearing Achilles' armor. His guilt and grief then at having his closest

fellow soldier die in his stead is extreme. Homer describes his reaction as follows (*Iliad* 18.22–24):

> A black cloud of aching grief covered Achilles.
> Scooping up soot-dark dust in both hands
> He poured it down over his head and befouled his "attractive" face.

By begriming and befouling his face, Achilles is symbolically meting out punishment to his very soul. The word used to describe Achilles' *prosōpon* here is *kharien*. This adjectival form consists of the word for a key concept in Greek social interaction, *kharis*, with what is called a material suffix, specifying that the thing modified is made of the material to which the suffix is appended. In this case Achilles is said to have a "face composed of *kharis*." This form tells us that his face shows and incites in others feelings of *kharis*. And *kharis* is the strongly favorable feeling one person has toward another who has done well by him, done him some perceptible good. At this key moment of Achilles' most abject sorrow and strongest impulse toward self-degradation and self-annihilation, Homer reminds us through this significant modifier who Achilles has been to all the soldiers in the Greek expedition, to his own men and even to the dead Patroclus, a source of *kharis*.

In the larger sweep of the *Iliad*, it is also possible to see in the absence of facial descriptions the depersonalization and dehumanization that the long and brutalizing campaign brings about. In the *Iliad* I think it is no accident that the two main sympathetic characters, Hector and Achilles, both have strong maternal attachments. Soldiers in the Greek contingents have been away from their extended families, their mothers and wives, for nine years. The only Greek fighter who has any contact with his mother is Achilles, whose divine sea nymph mother Thetis responds sympathetically whenever he is in need, comforts him as a good, loving mother, and uses her divine connections to get him what he wants and needs. At the beginning of the *Iliad*, Thetis uses the money in her *kharis* account with Zeus to persuade Zeus to work out the punishment of Agamemnon and the Greek soldiery for the dishonor done actively to Achilles by the Greek commander-in-chief and tolerated by the other leaders. After the death of Patroclus she again comforts her son and then commissions from the smith god Hephaestus the magnificent new set of armor with its scenes of cities in times of peace and war.

Hector, too, has a close and properly attached relationship with his mother, Hecuba, wife of Priam and queen of Troy. We see her strong maternal affection for Hector in Book 6, when Hector comes back inside the walls of Troy to request that the women make supplication to the goddess Athena. We see it in Book 22 where from the ramparts of Troy she exposes to Hector her aged maternal breasts with which she suckled Hector as a baby in pleading with him to come inside the walls and not face the murderously rampaging Achilles in the open field. Later in Book 22 Hecuba raises among the women of Troy the lamentation for her slain son. We see her maternal affection finally in Book 24, when Hector's body has been recovered and brought back to Troy. She laments again, in proper public ritual fashion, for the dearest of her sons.

Keep in mind that the Greek adjective for "feminine" (*thēlus*), like the Latin word for woman (*fēmina*), derives from the Indo-European root *$*d^{h}eh_{1}$- meaning "suck" and "suckle," marking women as those who feed and sustain infants. Thus Hecuba's gesture from the walls in Book 22 was deeply maternal. These opposing hero figures, then, are both men with strong attachments to their sympathetic and supportive nurturers. Understandably they themselves show, within reason and accounting for the force of circumstances, the utmost concern as commanders for the well-being of their men.

One last point regarding faces concerning Hector. He is the holder and protector of the city of Troy and behaves piously towards the gods. In Book 6 when he reenters Troy, his mother Hecuba offers him some wine to restore his spirits. He piously declines because his hands are unwashed of the blood of battle and his whole body, including his face, is spattered with the gore and filth of combat. Later, in the poignant scene where his wife Andromache catches up with him, holding in her arms their young son Astyanax, the boy recoils from him and cries at the sight of the creature before him whose face is hidden by a great bronze helmet. It is only when Hector takes off his helmet and the child can see his face that he is calmed by his attached recognition of his father in a domestic guise as opposed to his fierce aspect as a faceless armed warrior.

The shield that Hephaestus makes for Achilles at the request of Thetis to replace the shield lost when Hector and the Trojans stripped Patroclus' corpse of Achilles' armor is remarkable for what I would call its facial detachment. In many ways, I think it is the embodiment of what we might call a "god's eye view" of mere mortals produced by a god, Hephaestus, who is severely disattached from his maternal figure

Hera and likely, therefore, impeded in his ability to relate to faces and facial expressions.

In Book 18.393–409, Thetis goes to where Hephaestus and his wife Kharis live. Hephaestus is busy making mechanized tripod-cauldrons. Kharis greets Thetis. Hephaestus' first words upon hearing who is visiting stress his own detachment from his mother. He tells of his deep sorrow at his treatment by his mother and his deep gratitude to Thetis and her sister Eurynome, both daughters of Oceanus, for rescuing him after he had been stricken with pain, having been cast out and down from the dwelling place of the gods by his own mother Hera. Hera wanted to hide from the view of the gods Hephaestus' leg deformity. Hephaestus is thus detached from his mother and beholden to Thetis. He declares that he is under necessity to repay Thetis for saving his life.

Much of the account of the aetiology of Hephaestus' extreme disattachment from his divine mother is so extraneous to the story line that it has to have been thought extremely important by the singer poets who composed and sang it. One reason is that they are stressing the psychological impairment that Hephaestus suffers and the stark contrast between how Thetis relates to Achilles and how Hera relates to Hephaestus in regards to attachment.

The shield of Achilles, as we have already mentioned, is arguably the quintessential *ekphrasis* in classical literature and has been praised for its view of the different aspects of humanity in a peaceful society. Hephaestus, along with mechanical golden girl attendants of his own manufacture, moves to satisfy Thetis's request (18.410–427). He listens to Thetis' sad story (18.428–461) of the woes that her mothering of a son by a mortal have caused her and she tells a sympathetic version of Achilles's great sorrows and his need for armor. Note she does not specify to Hephaestus what theme or themes the scenes on the armor should have, if any.

Hephaestus replies (18.462–467) that he cannot manufacture armor that will hide Achilles away from his horrible destiny, but that he will make armor that will amaze many men. Reconstructions of the shield are difficult, but Hephaestus begins with the large-scale *kosmos*: earth, sky, sea, sun, moon, stars. He then proceeds to represent the famous two cities. We will underscore what I would call the anonymous and depersonalized qualities of these cities by looking at what he has carved in: (1) the city at peace where there is a marriage procession-festival and two men in dispute over murder-restitution; and (2) the city under siege with dear wives, very young children and old men on the walls.

Only the gods who lead out the men in ambush, Ares and Pallas Athena, are of large and personally identifiable scale. The human beings are generically described, unlike human beings in the many *paradeigmata* or *ekphraseis*, namely, parable-like mythical tales, that are told throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by figures who wish to give advice to others. These are not particular and true human cities in human memory. They have no relevance at all to Achilles' life or any of Achilles' exploits, even his twenty-three successful raids (Book 9) performed to sustain the war effort. Who then is the shield for? What could be gained by carrying such a device into battle? How would adversaries read and react to seeing the scenes on Achilles' shield?

This really must be what we humans look like when the gods—especially a god whose abilities to pick up social cues from the facial expressions of others are almost non-existent—pay the slightest attention to what is going on in the mortal realm. We are like ants to the gods on Olympus. Hephaestus sees and depicts wrangles by opposing clans over what kind of compensation should be made for a murder as one key hallmark of the civilized city. The marriage festival and dances must look suitably ant-like and delightful from a far-off divine perspective. Siege and ambush are the other mortal pastimes that the maternally lamed god of the hearth places on the shield. The whole then presents humanity in a dehumanized way.

In modern times, in 1952, not too long after the horrors of World War II and already adequately into the horrors of new kinds of totalitarianism and threats of technological self-destruction as the Cold War heated up, W. H. Auden wrote his own version of the Homeric *ekphrasis*, his magnificent poem "The Shield of Achilles" (1955). The poem almost incinerates our hopes for humanity as it concentrates on the featurelessness of the faces of those who carry within them no humanity and the inability of such human beings to develop the kind of community-generating sympathies that make us human. The human beings here have no Hector to protect them and no noble, unbroken Achilles to act as a good shepherd for them.

Auden picks up on Hephaestus's disattachment and how it eradicated his ability to see and represent good in the world or to believe that such things as the deliberations over blood price could be resolved with promises that would be kept and restitution that would bring a settled and lasting peace. And Hephaestus, whose mother had shown him no maternal affection, of course, could not conjure up a world where the weeping of one human being would inspire sympathetic weeping in

another. The facelessness of totalitarian brutality permeates the poem as Thetis looks and looks again for some reason that her son should want to live a longer time in the mortal world.[1] I italicize in the poem the key references to looking, faces, featurelessness and expressionlessness.

> *She looked over his shoulder*
> For vines and olive trees,
> Marble well-governed cities
> And ships upon untamed seas,
> But there on the shining metal
> His hands had put instead
> An artificial wilderness
> And a sky like lead.
>
> A plain *without a feature*, bare and brown,
> No blade of grass, no sign of neighborhood,
> Nothing to eat and nowhere to sit down,
> Yet, congregated on its blankness, stood
> *An unintelligible multitude,*
> *A million eyes, a million boots in line,*
> *Without expression, waiting for a sign.*
>
> Out of the air a voice *without a face*
> Proved by statistics that some cause was just
> In tones as dry and level as the place:
> No one was cheered and nothing was discussed;
> Column by column in a cloud of dust
> They marched away enduring a belief
> Whose logic brought them, somewhere else, to grief.

1 Auden believed that our essential humanity resided in 'individual historicity' (Mendelson 2008: xvi-xvii): "Another name for individual historicity was the human face, the visible sign of uniqueness that was never exactly the same from one moment to the next, but was always a sign for the same individual person. In 1950 Auden wrote a poem, 'Numbers and Faces', about the madness of those who prefer the statistical, anonymous world of numbers to the personal world of faces. … Auden's poem 'The Shield of Achilles' in 1952 portrayed a modern world of statistical impersonality shaped by the same worldview that shaped the fated cruelties of the *Iliad*."

She looked over his shoulder
For ritual pieties,
White flower-garlanded heifers,
Libation and sacrifice,
But there on the shining metal
Where the altar should have been,
She saw by his flickering forge-light
Quite another scene.

Barbed wire enclosed an arbitrary spot
Where bored officials lounged (one cracked a joke)
And sentries sweated for the day was hot:
A crowd of ordinary decent folk
Watched from without and neither moved nor spoke
As three pale figures were led forth and bound To
three posts driven upright in the ground.

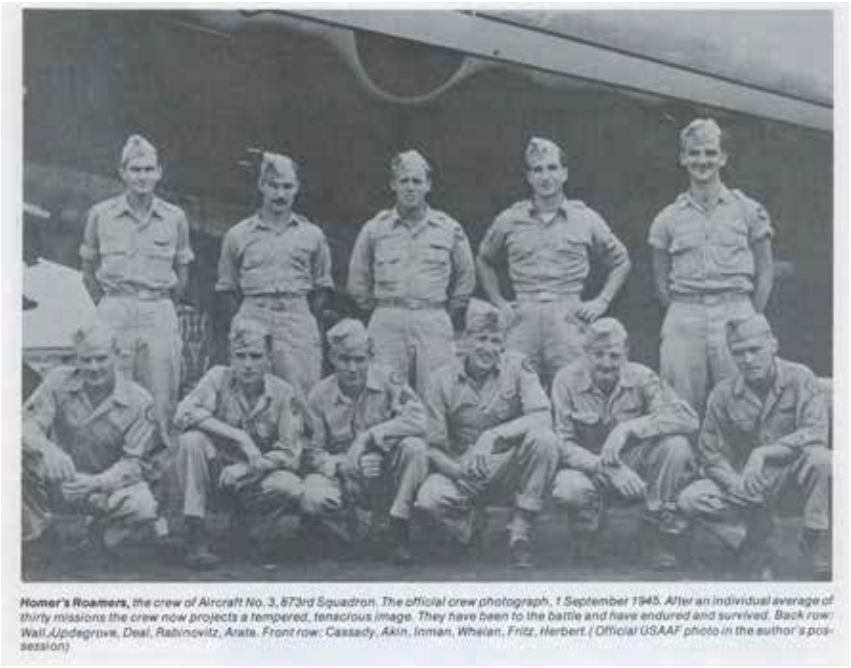
The mass and majesty of this world, all
That carries weight and always weighs the same
Lay in the hands of others; they were small
And could not hope for help and no help came:
What their foes like to do was done, their shame
Was all the worst could wish; they lost their pride
And died as men before their bodies died.

She looked over his shoulder
For athletes at their games,
Men and women in a dance
Moving their sweet limbs
Quick, quick, to music,
But there on the shining shield
His hands had set no dancing-floor
But a weed-choked field.

A ragged urchin, aimless and alone,
Loitered about that vacancy; a bird

Flew up to safety from his well-aimed stone:
That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third,
Were axioms to him, who'd never heard
Of any world where promises were kept,
Or one could weep because another wept.

The thin-lipped armorer,
Hephaestos, hobbled away,
Thetis of the shining breasts
Cried out in dismay
At what the god had wrought
To please her son, the strong
Iron-hearted man-slaying Achilles
Who would not live long.



Homer's Roamers, *the crew of Aircraft No. 3, 873rd Squadron. The official crew photograph, 1 September 1945. After an individual average of thirty missions the crew now projects a tempered, tenacious image. They have been to the battle and have endured and survived. Back row: Wall, Updegrove, Deal, Rabinovitz, Arata. Front row: Cassady, Akin, Inman, Whelan, Fritz, Herbert. (Official USAAF photo in the author's possession)*

Figure 4.3. A B-29 flight crew, the Pacific, 1945. American flyers suffered some of the heaviest casualties among American forces in both Europe and the Pacific, with 88,000 dying in combat and combat related accidents. Photo Credit: From the Estate of Kevin B. Herbert.

I will close with another modern work that is modeled on Homer's *Iliad* and suffused with its spirit, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. Heller acknowledged that he was held captive by the *Iliad* in his childhood years and that he had Achilles in mind as a model for Yossarian as he wrote his novel. Here are relevant excerpts of a published interview (Reilly and Heller 1998: 518–19):

> **Interviewer:** You've said there are connections [between *Catch-22* and Homer's *Iliad*].
>
> **Heller:** *Catch-22* was not an imitation of the *Iliad*—for example, there is so much fantasy and humor in my novel. But I was very conscious of Homer's epic when writing the novel, and at one point, late in the book, I directly compare Yossarian to Achilles. Just as the *Iliad* is ending, there's that magnificent scene when Achilles meets with Priam and his sympathy and emotions finally come pouring out. The ending of *Catch-22* shows Yossarian going through a similar experience.
>
> **Interviewer:** Were you thinking of Homer's ending when you wrote the conclusion to *Catch-22*?
>
> **Heller:** Very much so. The *Iliad* was one of the first books I read and enjoyed as a child. The first version I read was a children's version, and it came "complete" with the horse and the fall of Troy. I recall that the first time I read the real *Iliad* I was shocked; I thought I had stumbled upon a corrupt edition. But the more I thought about "Homer's ending," the more I admired it.
>
> There is another echo of the *Iliad* insofar as the hierarchy of power is concerned. At the beginning Homer makes it clear Achilles isn't interested in acquiring another concubine; he wants Agamemnon to return the priest's daughter. When Agamemnon returns the girl and then steals Briseis, Achilles finds himself powerless. He broods in his tent until Patroclus is killed and then he finally takes action. Yossarian is faced with a similar problem. He is powerless until, after Nately's death, he is driven to break the chain.

What is extraordinary is how Achilles-like Yossarian is in his capacities for human sympathy and awareness of the nature of others. Also like Achilles, he long remains committed to withdrawing from the fighting after—here, too, like Achilles—the social contract of what is right is broken well into his time of dedicated service to the war effort.

The key difference between Heller's hero and Homer's is what we have already sketched out as a fundamental difference between Achilles and modern mirror-age soldiers like Owen, Komunyakaa, Remarque's Paul Bäumer and O'Brien's narrator in "The Man I Killed." Like Achilles and Hector, Owen is so attached to his mother that in a period when women were extremely sheltered from the grim realities of life and especially of warfare, he wrote her honest descriptions of being knee deep in hell and enclosed in one letter a first draft of "Dulce Et Decorum Est."

Yossarian is keenly attuned to the facial features of the human beings with whom he interacts. In much of the narration in *Catch*-22 (1996) Heller does not tell us what people look like as they are doing what they are doing. However, when Yossarian looks at or interacts with others, the motives, character traits, feelings and moral, or immoral, dispositions that underlie their words, deeds, hopes and plans are revealed through close descriptions of what is written in the peculiar features of their faces and facial expressions. Here are a few examples of key characters, again with italicization of particularly relevant parts of passages:

1. Milo Minderbinder, the mess officer who becomes obsessed with capitalist profiteering from the war and exploits everybody and everything he can (p. 73): "Yossarian turned slowly to gaze at Milo with probing distrust. *He saw a simple, sincere face that was incapable of subtlety or guile, an honest frank face with disunited large eyes, rusty hair, black eyebrows and an unfortunate reddish-brown mustache. Milo had a long, thin nose with sniffing, damp nostrils heading sharply off to the right, always pointing away from where the rest of him was looking. It was the face of a man of hardened integrity who could no more violate the moral virtues on which his virtue rested than he could transform himself into a despicable toad.* One of these moral principles was that it was never a sin to charge as much as traffic would bear."

2. Aarfy (Captain Aardvark), arguably the most terrifyingly amoral human being, on a personal level, in *Catch-22.* Discussing the narrow square, cold tunnel of a crawl way that separated the bombardier's compartment in the plexiglass nose of the B-25 from the nearest escape hatch (p. 160): "*Yossarian continued staring in tormented fascination at Aarfy's spherical countenance beaming at him so serenely and vacantly* through the drifting whorls of white paper bits *and concluded that he was a raving lunatic….*"

During a flak attack (p. 298) "Yossarian flipped his eyes open in alarm and saw the totally unexpected bulging black puffs of

flak crashing down in towards them from high up and *Aarfy's complacent melon-round, tiny-eyed face gazing out at the approaching cannon bursts with affable bemusement.*"

After Aarfy has raped and killed Michaela (pp. 427–28) the "plain maid" in the officers' apartment, "a happy, simple-minded hard-working girl who could not read and was barely able to write her name. *Her straight hair was the color of retting straw. She has sallow skin and myopic eyes….*" "[Yossarian] found Aarfy pacing about uneasily *with a pompous, slightly uncomfortable smile.*"

3. Orr, the bomber pilot and tent mate of Yossarian who eventually inspires Yossarian to take moral action (p. 239): "*Orr was one of the homeliest freaks Yossarian had ever encountered, and one of the most attractive. He had a raw bulgy face, with hazel eyes squeezing from their sockets like matching brown halves of marbles and thick, wavy particolored hair….*"

(p. 161): " 'That bastard!' he began. '*That goddam stunted, red-faced, big-cheeked, curly-headed, buck-toothed rat bastard son of a bitch!*' '*That dirty goddam midget-assed, apple-cheeked, goggle- eyed, undersized, buck-toothed, grinning, crazy sonofabitchinbastard*!' Yossarian sputtered.

4. Chaplain A.T. Tappman (p. 21): "*The chaplain flushed again and gazed down at his hands. He was a slight man of about thirty-two with tan hair and brown diffident eyes. His face was narrow and rather pale. An innocent nest of pimple pricks lays in the basin of each cheek*. Yossarian wanted to help him."

Auden understood how deeply the blacksmith god Hephaestus was impaired by his mother Hera's violence toward him and detachment from him and how that impairment would blind the god to most traces of what was good and human in mortals. And Auden used this understanding to have Hephaestus exterminate any redeeming traces of humanity in the totalitarian and dehumanized actions he depicted on his post-blitz, post-holocaust, post-incendiary-bombing, post-atomic-bombing shield. Heller meanwhile absorbed from his lifelong fascination with the *Iliad* a sense of deep human understanding and gave his modern Achilles a capacity to "see" and therefore to "know" the *prosōpon* of each of the characters with whom he interacted. Thereby Yossarian can find humanity even in the most miserable and inhuman settings and even when those around him with power and some form of free will are behaving with disregard for the

needs of other human beings along a whole spectrum from self-centered disregard and narcissistic greed to monstrously sociopathic and banal evil.

Auden and Heller each in his own way were heating up in their true war stories what Homeric war literature has bequeathed to us: an awareness, as classicist A.E. Housman put it, that "the world has still / Much good, but much less good than ill" and that we can read in the faces of others how they respond to the realities of the lives we are living.

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