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Homer's Odyssey

Edited by

LILLIAN E. DOHERTY

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OXFORD
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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
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Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

First published 2009

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Homer's Odyssey / edited by Lillian E. Doherty.
p. cm.
ISBN 978-0-19-923333-5 ISBN 978-0-19-923332-8
1. Homer. Odyssey. 2. Epic poetry, Greek—History and criticism. I. Doherty, Lillian Eileen, 1952–
PA4037.A5H798 2008
883'.01—dc22 2008035847

Typeset by SPI Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India
Printed in Great Britain
on acid-free paper by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

ISBN 978-0-19-923332-8 (Hbk.)
ISBN 978-0-19-923333-5 (Pbk.)

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Preface

In keeping with the mandate of the Oxford Readings series, this collection represents a selection of articles, originally published in scholarly journals, that have stood the test of time and proved influential in the field of Homeric studies. They are not meant to represent the cutting edge of the field but (some of) its more established wisdom. Only one of these articles—Boitani's on the classical tradition—was originally published in the twenty-first century, and it too was written in the twentieth.

It is impossible, within the scope of a volume such as this, to give anything like a comprehensive view of the field. I have chosen pieces that represent a range of positions, including some that are mutually contradictory and some that are still controversial. My hope is to provide students with a selection of clear and well-written essays that can stand as models of scholarly argumentation while giving a kind of cross-section of *Odyssey* studies as they developed in the later twentieth century. In my introduction I have tried to give a more thorough, while scarcely complete, survey of the issues that emerged in that period and of the various approaches that were used. Since many of the most influential studies were published as stand-alone volumes, my introduction can also be seen as a guide to further reading and as an annotated version of the selected bibliography that concludes the collection.

Because I am an American, trained in the US (although several of my teachers were British), my selection is skewed toward the American side of Homeric studies. I have tried to compensate for this, but it seems unavoidable to the extent that my interests and predilections have been shaped by my own history as a scholar. Perhaps it is not a bad thing that my volume should complement in this respect Douglas Cairns's volume of *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad* (2001).[1]

I have deliberately included a higher proportion of articles by women than is common in collections of this kind. My intent is to demonstrate the importance of women's contributions to the understanding of the

[1] Inevitably, the purviews of our volumes overlap, and Cairns's includes several papers I might well have included; the two collections can profitably be read in tandem.

Odyssey, a poem that itself gives prominence to female characters—and that, as I argue in the paper of my own that appears here, seems to anticipate the presence of women in its audience.

An omission that calls for explanation is that of the French structuralists. Their work is of obvious importance and is cited repeatedly in the essays reprinted here. But they are well represented in another widely available volume intended for students (Seth L. Schein, ed., *Reading the Odyssey*, Princeton, 1996). I thought it better to avoid duplication in what is already a small selection from the rich European tradition of *Odyssey* studies. The offerings translated from German, also relatively few, may be supplemented by Schein and by an Oxford collection published in 1997 (*Homer: German Scholarship in Translation*, trans. G. M. Wright and P. V. Jones).

My translations are enclosed in brackets; others are by the authors of the papers. Addenda by the authors are enclosed in brackets and identified by their initials.

I would like to thank the contributors for their willingness to participate in this publication and for their prompt responses to my queries. In addition, my thanks are due to my husband, Harvey Luksenburg, for moral support and help with re-keying; to Dorothy McCarthy and Hilary O'Shea of Oxford University Press for their frequent help and encouragement; to Erwin Cook and Douglas Cairnes for valuable comments on a draft of the introduction; to Seth Schein and Christiane Silliau for encouragement and helpful suggestions; to Eva Stehle and Joseph Scholten for help with translations from German and Dutch; and to Monica Tsuneishi for invaluable help with proofreading.

Lillian E. Doherty

Contents

Abbreviations

A&A	*Antike und Abendland*
ad [loc.]	*ad [locum]*, Latin for 'at [the place]'—a way of referring to a passage by line number in a text or commentary
Aesch.	Aeschylus; *Ag.* = *Agamemnon*; *Cho.* = *Choephoroi* [*Libation Bearers*]; *Eum.* = *Eumenides*; *Hik.* or *Supp.* = *Suppliant Women*; *Pers.* = *Persians*; *Sept[em]* = *Seven against Thebes*
AJAH	*American Journal of Ancient History*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
Anaxag.	Anaxagoras
Anc. Soc.	*Ancient Society*
Annales ESC	*Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*
Antiph.	Antiphon
Antisth.	Antisthenes
Apoll. Rh.	Apollonius Rhodius [Apollonius of Rhodes], *Argonautica*
Ar., Aristoph.	Aristophanes; *Pax* [*Peace*], *Vesp.* [*Wasps*]
Arist.	Aristotle; *Poet.* = *Poetics*
ARW	*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*
Ath.	Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* [*Philosophers at Dinner*]
CA	*Classical Antiquity*
chorizontes	'separators': ancient scholars who believed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were the work of two different poets
CB	*Classical Bulletin*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
Comp. Lit.	*Comparative Literature*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CW	*Classical World*
Dial. D.	*Dialogi Deorum* [*Dialogues of the Gods*] (Lucian)

Dio Chr.	Dio Chrysostom; *Or.* = *Orations*
Diss.	dissertation
DK (or D.-K.)	Hermann Diels and W. Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (standard edition of the fragments of the Presocratic philosophers)
Epict.	Epictetus
Eur.	Euripides; *Alc.* = *Alcestis*; *El.* = *Electra*; *Hec.* = *Hecuba*; *Her.* = *Heracles*; *Hcld.* = *Heracleidai*; *Hipp.* = *Hippolytus*; *I.A.* = *Iphigeneia at Aulis*; *Med.* = *Medea*; *Or.* = *Orestes*; *Supp[lices]* = *Suppliant Women*
FGrHist.	Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (standard edition of the fragments of the Greek historians, in three volumes)
fr., frr.	fragment, fragments
G&R	*Greece & Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
h.Ap., *h.Dem.*, *h.Merc.*	The Homeric Hymns to Apollo, Demeter, and Hermes, respectively
Hdt.	Herodotus
Heraclitus, *qu.Hom.*	*Quaestiones Homericae* [Homeric questions]
[Heracl.] *Alleg. Hom.*	*Allegoriae in Homeri fabulis* [allegories in the tales of Homer], attributed to Heraclitus, but not by him (hence the brackets)
Hes.	Hesiod; *Th[eog].* = *Theogony*; *Op.* = *Works and Days* [Latin *Opera et dies*]
Hor.	Horace; *Ars* = *Ars poetica* [*The Art of Poetry*]
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
inc. auct.	incerti auctoris, used to refer to the work 'of an unknown author'
init.	*ad initium* [at the beginning]
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JIES	*Journal of Indo-European Studies*
Juv.	Juvenal
LP	E. Lobel and D. Page, eds., *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, the standard edition of Sappho and Alcaeus

LSJ	Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, the standard lexicon of classical Greek
Lucian, VH	*Vera Historia* [*A True Story*]
M. Aur.	Marcus Aurelius
Max. Tyr.	Maximus of Tyre; *Or.* = *Orations*
Men.	Menander; *Dysc.* = *Dyscolus* ['the grouch']
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
Mnem.	*Mnemosyne*
M.-W.	R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, eds., *Fragmenta Hesiodea*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967. This is the standard edition of the fragments attributed to Hesiod, chiefly the *Catalogue of Women*.
NGG	*Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*
Ov.	Ovid; *Met.* = *Metamorphoses*
Paus.	Pausanias
PCPhS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
Pl.	Plato; *Hipp. Min.* = *Hippias Minor*; *Prt.* = *Protagoras; Rep.* = *Republic*
PLLS	*Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar*
Plut.	Plutarch; *aud. poet.* = *de audiendis poetis* ['How to read the poets'], [Plut.] = attributed to Plutarch but not by him; *de vita et poesi Homeri* ['on the life and poetry of Homer']
PP	*La Parola del passato*
Ps. (prefixed to the name of an author)	Pseudo- (i.e. modern scholars have contested the attribution of the work to this author)
P.-W.	*Pauly-Wissowa* (= RE below)
Pyth.	Pythian ode(s), Pindar
RE [suppl.]	*Paulys Real-encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, et al. A multi-volume encyclopedia of ancient Greek and Roman antiquity, originally in German; an updated English version (*Brill's New Pauly*) has been coming out, beginning in 1996.
REG	*Revue des études grecques*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*

RhM, Rh. Mus.	*Rheinisches Museum*
RML	*Rendiconti Morali Lincei*
Schol.	scholiast(s), ancient commentators on the classical texts, whose views are sometimes summarized in marginal notes (scholia, plural of scholium) to the surviving manuscripts. Letters after 'schol.' refer to different groups of scholia, identified by their putative sources or the manuscript(s) in which they appear.
Sen.	Seneca; *Const. sap.* = *De constantia sapientis* [on the constancy of the wise man]; *Ep.* = *Epistulae morales* [philosophical letters]; *Tranq.* = *De tranquillitate animi* [on tranquillity of mind]
Soph.	Sophocles; *O.C.* = *Oedipus at Colonus; O.T.* = *Oedipus Tyrannos* [*Oedipus the King*]
s.v./s.vv.	*sub voce/ sub vocibus*, Latin for 'under the word(s)', i.e. in a lexicon or thesaurus
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
Ter.	Terence; *Ad.* = *Adelphoe* [*Brothers*]
Virg.	Virgil; *Aen.* = *Aeneid*
VS = DK (see above)	
YCS	*Yale Classical Studies*
ZSRG	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*

Introduction

Lillian E. Doherty

COMPOSITION

Although we know more today than we did a century ago about the tradition of composition in performance that produced the Homeric epics, we know no more about Homer himself—if indeed there was a single poet by that name. Some students are confused or disappointed to learn that the famous Homeric Question, or more properly Questions[1] (who was Homer? were there two or more of him? did he compose in writing, and if so, when and where?) are still without clear answers. While outlining some of the controversies that remain, I will focus on the gains we have made in the hope of persuading such students that this is in fact an exciting time to be a Homerist.

In the course of the twentieth century, most prominently in the work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord,[2] it was established that the diction of the Homeric epics, as well as that of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns, was especially designed for composition in performance. The repeated phrases and epithets we refer to as formulaic, which are such a striking feature of Homeric style, turned out to be not merely ornamental but highly functional, meant to assist the bard in composing fluently as he

[1] As in the formulation of G. Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin, 1996).

[2] See M. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse* (Oxford, 1971); A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960; the second edition, in 2000, includes a CD of some of Parry and Lord's recordings of bards). Another excellent account of the technique of composition in performance is that of G. Miller, *Improvisation, Typology, Culture, and 'the New Orthodoxy': How Oral Is Homer?* (Lanham, Md., 1982). J. M. Foley surveys antecedents to Parry's theories in the introduction to *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord* (Columbus, Ohio, 1981).

performed for a live audience. To establish this, Homerists have relied on two avenues of research: internal analysis of the Greek epics and comparative data from living oral traditions in other cultures. Parry and Lord used both. Through internal analysis, Parry showed that the set of epithets for a given hero has both 'extension' and 'economy'. 'Extension' means that for major characters such as Achilles and Odysseus, there are noun–epithet combinations that can complete a verse after each of its principal pauses, such as the main caesura (a word break at mid-line). 'Economy' means that in most cases there is just *one* epithet or noun–epithet combination for each such location; that is, once the poet had decided to name the hero in a particular segment of the line, he had an epithet ready to hand. On a larger scale, typical scenes, or the broader category of 'themes',[3] could be adapted to specific stories and strung together to create a complete song.

The best explanation for the existence of such a system is that it enabled relatively rapid composition, which would be an advantage only for a bard who re-composed each time he sang. By recording and comparing live performances in what was then Yugoslavia in the 1930s, Parry and Lord showed that the bards (*guslari*) trained in the South Slavic tradition, who were illiterate, did not repeat their songs verbatim but recomposed them each time using a stock of formulas and themes. Although it is now almost universally accepted that the Homeric epics display these characteristics of oral composition, there has been a long struggle to understand the implications of this finding.

The initial reaction of Homerists, which has persisted in some quarters, was that the system as described by Parry and Lord seemed too mechanical to account for the subtlety and excellence of Homeric verse.[4] A whole series of scholars, within and outside the field of Classics, have responded by studying comparative material from living oral traditions around the world, refining in the process our sense of what is distinctive about 'oral composition' and what it can achieve. Ruth Finnegan's pioneering book *Oral Poetry* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1977) revealed the amazing diversity of oral traditions and demonstrated that they are not incompatible with the use of

[3] Lord defines themes as 'groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song' (1960, 68).

[4] See e.g. D. Shive, *Naming Achilles* (New York, 1987).

writing.[5] John Miles Foley,[6] among others, has approached the Homeric text with the insights of performance theory, derived from the 'ethnography of speaking'. Rather than emphasize the merely 'utilitarian' aspect of the oral technique, Foley argues, we need to consider the layers of meaning that formulas and themes acquire by being framed for their audiences by the traditional performance context. Repetition of formulas in this special context hardly impoverishes their meaning but evokes by a kind of shorthand the full resonance of the tradition that lies behind them. Foley emphasizes not just the competence of the poet but that of the traditional audience, whose experienced members know how to listen for significant variation.

Performance theory and related insights from sociolinguistics have been put to use by Homerists examining the epic text at the level of the word, the line, and the entire poem—indeed, the entire tradition, understood as the pool of epic themes available to the traditional poet. Since much of this work focuses on the *Iliad*, it is not represented in the present collection, but it is important for our reading of the *Odyssey* as well. In *The Language of Heroes*, for example, Richard P. Martin undertakes an ethnography of Homeric performance by analysing the heroes' own speeches in light of the terms used to describe those speeches, chiefly *muthos* and *epos*.[7] His finding that *muthos* designates 'a speech-act indicating authority, performed at length, usually in public'[8] has been widely accepted. Egbert Bakker has argued that we need to approach oral poetry not as 'a kind of poetry that is different from ours' but as 'a special kind of *speech*'.[9] His innovative and highly interesting

[5] Finnegan's was the first work in this area (after Lord's) to attract significant attention from Homerists; although the fields are still far apart, there is growing recognition that study of living oral cultures can illuminate the study of Homer. See e.g. R. Scodel, *Listening to Homer* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 1–20; M. Beissinger, J. Tylus, and S. Wofford, *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1999). A folksong tradition from modern Greece has been used by J. Kakridis to shed light on the *Odyssey*: 'The Recognition of Odysseus', in *Homer Revisited* (Lund, 1971), 151–63.

[6] See especially *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington, 1991) and *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington, 1995). See also R. Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Wayland Heights, Ill., 1977).

[7] R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the Iliad* (Ithaca and London, 1989).

[8] Ibid. 12.

[9] E. J. Bakker, 'Discourse and Performance: Involvement, Visualization and "Presence" in Homeric Poetry', *CA* 12 (1993), 1–29. See also *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca, 1997).

work on Homeric syntax demonstrates how the metrical segments of the line reflect the natural processes of speech production and reception, so that they can easily be grasped by a listening audience. The omnipresence of particles in the Homeric text, formerly explained as due to metrical convenience, can be seen as a natural component of the bard's strategy for keeping open the contact with his audience and invoking their consent to his version of the tradition. Like Foley, Bakker argues that what the bard does in performance is to *make present* to the audience the heroic past he invokes.

What, then, of the composition of the individual epics? On this question the earlier twentieth century saw a contest between groups of scholars referred to as Analysts and Unitarians. The former sought to 'analyse' the texts we have, that is, to take each of them apart, identifying interpolated passages belonging to different stages of composition in an effort to disclose a pristine 'urtext' (original text) that lay at its core. The Unitarians, by contrast, sought to defend the existing *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as aesthetically satisfying and thus presumably unitary compositions. The widespread acknowledgement, by mid-century, that the epics represented a tradition of composition in performance put the Analyst–Unitarian debate on an entirely new footing. A school of 'Neoanalysis' developed in which the existing epics were seen to appropriate and adapt prominent themes from the cyclic epics. 'Oralists', meanwhile, have proposed ways in which the *Odyssey* could have been built up out of sequences of 'themes', which facilitated large-scale composition without the aid of writing. Bruce Louden and Erwin Cook have identified a repeated sequence of themes involving the hero's confrontation with a powerful female figure (Arete, Circe, Penelope) and a group of rebellious young men (the young Phaeacians, his crew, and the suitors).[10]

On the larger level of the oral tradition as a whole, interesting work has been done on the relationships between the two extant epics and on their place in the Trojan cycle.[11] This work is best discussed in

[10] B. Louden, *The Odyssey: Structure, Narration, and Meaning* (Baltimore and London, 1999); E. Cook, *Abstracts of the One Hundred Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association* (1991), 1.

[11] W. Burkert and M. L. West have gone still further and examined in detail the debt that Greek tradition seems to owe the Near East. See W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford, 1997). Cf. more recently Erwin Cook, 'Near Eastern Sources for the Palace of Alkinoos', *AJA* 108 (2004), 43–77.

relation to the issue of when and how the epics were recorded in writing.

TRANSMISSION

Compared to normal performances in most oral traditions, and to the performances described in the *Odyssey* itself–those of the bards Phemius and Demodocus–the epics as we have inherited them are of a surprising length; in fact, Homerists sometimes refer to them as 'monumental'. 'Canonical' fixed texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have come down to us in hundreds of manuscripts. Thus the most vexing unresolved question raised by the research on oral composition is that of when and how such a tradition gave rise to the epics as we know them.

One partial answer, now widely accepted, is that the monumental epics were dictated by a bard[12] who was a master of the craft of composition in performance. This solution, famously suggested by Albert Lord,[13] is put forward in the present volume by Minna Skafte Jensen, who sets it in the context of findings from other oral traditions around the world. But even if this solution is accepted, there are residual problems. When did the dictation take place? If at an early date (e.g. the eighth century BCE, favoured by many Homerists), how was the text then transmitted intact to later generations? The technology of writing in the eighth and even the seventh centuries would have been relatively undeveloped and the number of literate persons very small. Was the text then kept as a private reference by a guild of performers, perhaps the Homeridai, who claimed descent from Homer?[14] But why would bards trained in the oral tradition wish to change their mode of performance so radically, from continual re-composition to verbatim repetition of a fixed text? It has been argued that the new technology itself suggested to a master poet the possibility of preserving intact his own exceptional achievement by dictating the *Iliad*.[15] The audience's preference for this version would have led other bards to

[12] Or two bards, if the epics are attributed to different composers.

[13] Lord 2000 (above, n. 2), 149.

[14] See e.g. R. Scodel (above, n. 5), 58.

[15] B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge, 1991). Cf. also H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge, 1952).

adopt it.[16] The same poet, or a younger poet seeking to emulate the author of the *Iliad*, would then have dictated the *Odyssey*. Richard Janko, who accepts a version of the dictation theory, has sought to establish the priority of the canonical text of the *Iliad*, and the relative dating of the rest of the early hexameter corpus (including the Hesiodic poems and some of the Homeric Hymns), by using statistical analyses of diction and metrical habits.[17] His chronology is relative rather than absolute, however. Some scholars (including two represented in the present volume[18]) think it possible that the Homeric text was first fixed in writing during the rule of the Athenian tyrant Pisistratus (540s to 527 BCE), who decreed that a single model text be used as the basis for performances at the Panathenaic festival.

There are two main alternatives to the dictation theory. One, proposed by Gregory Nagy, is that there was no text until very late and that the epics 'crystallized' within the oral tradition in the form of sequences of themes, remaining fluid at the level of the line so that a degree of re-composition continued to take place until quite late.[19] The second alternative is that Homer himself was literate and that he used writing to compose the monumental poems.[20] These alternatives, in turn, lead to different understandings of two further relationships: that between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, on the one hand, and on the other, that between the two monumental epics and the poems of the so-called epic cycle.

The two monumental epics do not overlap in their contents; that is, neither retells at length an episode related in the other. Since the events narrated in the *Odyssey* are chronologically later than those of the *Iliad*, the former has traditionally been seen as a sequel to the latter.[21] Supporters of this thesis point out that there are also structural

[16] J. M. Redfield, 'The Making of the *Odyssey*', in Anthony Yu, ed., *Parnassus Revisited* (Chicago, 1973), 141–52. J. Burgess, by contrast, has recently argued for a relative *lack* of influence of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on the other cyclic epics: *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore and London, 2001).

[17] R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns* (Cambridge, 1982).

[18] Jensen and Cook.

[19] G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, 1979; rev. edn. 1999); *Homeric Questions* (Austin, 1996).

[20] See e.g. H. Eisenberger, *Studien zur Odyssee* (Wiesbaden, 1973); Uvo Hölscher, *Die Odyssee. Epos zwischen Märchen und Roman* (Munich, 1988).

[21] See R. B. Rutherford, 'From the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*', in D. Cairns, ed., *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford, 2001), esp. 120–3 (with refs. to earlier scholarship). Cf. Redfield (above, n. 16).

similarities between the two epics. Each begins near the end of the heroic enterprise it relates (the Trojan War in the *Iliad*, the return of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*) and focuses on a period of a few weeks that are made to encompass the larger enterprise and to determine its outcome. In each there is a violent climax motivated by revenge, in which the hero demonstrates his physical prowess, followed by a dénouement in which he demonstrates his qualities of thought and feeling in a meeting with one other character: an enemy in the *Iliad*, a wife in the *Odyssey*. The *Odyssey* adds a second such meeting, with the hero's father, perhaps to echo more fully the issues raised by the ending of the *Iliad* and to contrast its hero's success with the tragic fate of Achilles. The Nekuiai, or Underworld episodes, of the *Odyssey* also draw explicit comparisons between the achievements of the two heroes.[22] The *Iliad* compares the two in a more subtle fashion, by juxtaposing the blunt speaking and the intransigence of Achilles with the diplomacy and pragmatism of Odysseus.[23] Nagy, seconded by Pietro Pucci, believes that the two epics evolved simultaneously within the tradition, each avoiding except by allusion the themes 'belonging' to the other.[24] The fixity of the monumental epics is in Nagy's view a product of their widespread diffusion within the Hellenic world.[25]

The contrasting view that the *Odyssey* followed and emulated the *Iliad* is more widely held, especially in Britain and in Europe where Nagy's theory is less influential. The view of the *Odyssey* as a sequel is defended in the present volume by Walter Burkert, who argues that the song of Ares and Aphrodite in *Odyssey* 8 can be seen as alluding to or re-working the scene of Hephaestus' intervention in *Iliad* 1.571–600. Erwin Cook has sought (in his paper reprinted here and in a longer study[26]) to combine Pucci's view of the epics as shaped by mutual opposition with the view that the *Odyssey* text reached fixity later than that of the *Iliad*. Cook shows how a thematic opposition between *mētis*

[22] *Odyssey* 11.1–333 and 380–640; 24.1–204. The 'Second Nekuia' and indeed all of Book 24 has been suspected (beginning in antiquity) of being a later addition to the *Odyssey*, but as part of the canonical text it is usually included in literary interpretations.

[23] *Iliad* 9.225–431 and 19.146–233.

[24] P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polytropos* (Ithaca, 1987).

[25] Nagy (above, n. 1). Ken Dowden has noted that 'fixity' in poetic composition is possible without recourse to writing: 'Homer's Sense of Text', *JHS* 116 (1996), 47–61.

[26] *The Odyssey in Athens* (Ithaca, 1995).

('cunning intelligence') and *biē* ('violent might') structures not only the rivalry between the heroes of the two epics, Odysseus and Achilles, but the struggles within the *Odyssey* between Odysseus' dual identities as trickster and warrior.

Except for the monumental epics, the poems of the Trojan Cycle do not survive; we do have a summary of their contents in the *Chrestomathia* of Proclus (fifth century CE). Although most Homerists would agree that the basic materials of the cycle—the myths about the Trojan War—were established before the composition of the great epics, some argue that the content and even the texts of individual works such as the *Aethiopis* were also fixed, while others hold that these shorter epics were composed after the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to 'fill in' the events they omitted. The approach known as Neoanalysis—so called to evoke the older Analysts while signalling a break with them—is especially concerned with the relationships among the epics of the Cycle, including that between the two monumental epics. This approach, pioneered by the Greek scholar Johannes Kakridis and developed primarily in Germany, is compatible with and sometimes openly embraces oral theory while continuing to apply aesthetic criteria derived from the tradition of literary interpretation of the epics; some Neoanalysts assume that writing was used in the composition of the versions we have. Perhaps the most widely accepted thesis of the Neoanalysts is Wolfgang Kullmann's view that the *Aethiopis* was the model for a number of key episodes in the *Iliad*.[27] A Neoanalytic approach to the *Odyssey* is taken by Knut Usener, who argues that some of its 'untypical' passages are meant to evoke and 'correct' the *Iliad*.[28] Georg Danek goes furthest in seeking to harmonize the Neoanalytic approach with that of the oralists.[29] He adapts the literary concept of 'quotation' (*Zitat*) to an oral tradition in which multiple versions of a given myth are in circulation simultaneously. Another recent contribution to this debate is that of Jonathan Burgess, who argues that Proclus described the cyclic epics only in their latest phase and that we need to postulate fuller and

[27] W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* (Wiesbaden, 1960).

[28] K. Usener, *Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis der Odyssee zur Ilias* (Tübingen, 1990).

[29] G. Danek, *Epos und Zitat: Studien zu den Quellen der Odyssee*, Wiener Studien 22 (Vienna, 1998). Much of this book takes the form of a running commentary on the *Odyssey*. The 3-vol. commentary on the *Odyssey* published by Oxford from 1988 to 1992 under the general editorship of Alfred Heubeck also takes a Neoanalytic view on many textual questions. (See selected bibliography for full information on this commentary.)

more independent versions of these epics in the formative stages of the tradition.[30]

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

The differences of opinion I have outlined on the dating of the Homeric epics are also reflected in studies of their social dimension. Does the society portrayed in the epics reflect a specific historical configuration—as Moses Finley argued in his influential study *The World of Odysseus*[31]—or is it a composite, even a pure fiction, that never existed in reality? Likewise, should the norms of behaviour observed or transgressed in the poems be understood as proceeding from a specific historical and sociocultural context, or are they idealizations? It has long been observed, as Richard Rutherford states in his paper in this volume, that there is already a difference between the 'philosophy' of the *Odyssey* and that of the *Iliad*. It is certainly possible to make moral sense of the epic as Rutherford does, by purely internal study of the value judgements expressed by its characters and, less overtly, by its narrator. Even studies such as his, however, stand in implicit relation to historically specific forms of ethical thought. Thus we must consider two layers of sociocultural filtering: that of the original poet and that of the critic. Nor should we assume that social norms are uncontested in either case. As James Redfield has put it, 'life is interesting and drama is possible because culture presents us, not with a coherent set of instructions, but with a structured problematic, a set of dilemmas and hard choices'.[32] I have deliberately juxtaposed Redfield's paper with that of Peter Rose to show how different ideological stances, even when left implicit, can produce very different readings of the epic's social dimension. Redfield's argument about the economics of the *Odyssey* reflects a normative liberal capitalist position while Rose views the class conflicts in the poem through Marxist lenses. Both have very interesting things to say. Yet while both assume that the epic was composed in the late eighth century BCE and reflects the realities of Greek society in that period, they emphasize very different aspects of that historical reality and give

[30] Burgess (above, n. 16). Another useful discussion of these issues, with bibliography, is Dowden (above, n. 25).

[31] New York, 1954; rev. edn. 1978.

[32] This volume pp. 265–6.

different accounts of what the epic is saying. While for Redfield the *Odyssey* reflects the entrepreneurial spirit that fuelled Greek colonization, Rose focuses on the epic's sympathetic portrayal of those at the lower end of the social spectrum.

In a balanced assessment of the state of the evidence, Ian Morris has recently reaffirmed the consensus of an eighth-century date while adding two important cautions.[33] First, we need to consider the role(s) that the epics may have played in the ideological struggles of their own time, that is, the era in which they reached their canonical form. Morris thinks, for example, that the dictation of the epics may have taken place under the patronage of aristocrats who had a strong interest in promulgating the idealized vision of heroic excellence that they convey. Yet, at the same time, we must acknowledge that 'Homer does not speak with one voice':[34] he portrays differences of opinion among his characters on core values, including the legitimacy of kingship and the qualities that undergird that legitimacy. Responding to Morris, Ruth Scodel offers a nuanced account of the 'mystification' by which the epics 'provided a durable and shared past' capable of appealing to different classes and of weathering many changes in social and political organization.[35]

I have already mentioned the use that Homerists have made of the 'ethnography of speaking'; but this by no means exhausts the role that anthropology has played in the interpretation of the *Odyssey*. This may appear paradoxical, since field studies or 'participant observation',

[33] I. Morris, 'The Use and Abuse of Homer', in D. Cairns, ed., *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford, 2001), 57–91. Among other recent contributions to the debate, Kurt Raaflaub argues that the epics reflect an 'archaizing' vision built on 8th-century realities: 'A Historian's Headache: How to Read "Homeric Society"?', in *Archaic Greece*, ed. N. Fisher and H. van Wees (London, 1998), 169–93. J. P. Crielaard gives extensive evidence suggesting that a 7th-century date is more likely: 'Homer, History and Archaeology. Some Remarks on the Date of the Homeric World', in Crielaard, ed., *Homeric Questions* (Amsterdam, 1995).

[34] Morris, 'Use and Abuse of Homer', 86.

[35] Scodel (above, n. 5), 180. A further contribution to the analysis of class difference in the *Odyssey* is that of William G. Thalmann, *The Swineherd and the Bow* (Ithaca, 1998). Other recent book-length studies of institutions and values that relate the *Odyssey* to the particulars of social history include those of Richard Seaford (*Reciprocity and Ritual*, Oxford, 1994), Christoph Ulf (*Die homerische Gesellschaft*, Munich, 1990), and Carol Dougherty (*The Raft of Odysseus*, New York, 2001). In the present overview I have not sought to include archaeological studies, although these obviously have much light to shed on the social context of the epics; an accessible overview (arguing for a 7th-century Homer) is that of J. P. Crielaard. See also J. B. Carter and S. Morris, *The Ages of Homer* (Austin, 1995).

central to modern anthropology, are impossible for ancient societies. Yet anthropological models developed through fieldwork in modern Greece and other Mediterranean cultures (even some outside the Mediterranean sphere) have proven to throw considerable light on patterns of behaviour in the Homeric poems. Peter Walcot, in the present volume, uses comparative material from three modern studies to illuminate the use Odysseus makes of 'the art of lying'. In this social-anthropological perspective, the hero's lies—even to Penelope and Laertes—should be seen not as reprehensible acts of deception but as culturally acceptable acts of self-defence, and even of 'teasing'. The practice of dissembling to protect family honour, inculcated from childhood in the peasant society of Greek villages, can also help us make sense of the cautious exchanges between Odysseus and Penelope in Books 19 and 23. In a virtuoso reading of Book 19, John Winkler has argued that we should see not only Odysseus but Penelope as adopting a strategy of self-protection by concealing her sense that the 'beggar' is actually her husband.[36] (An alternative account of her behaviour is given in this volume by Chris Emlyn-Jones and Sheila Murnaghan.) Like Winkler, Norman Austin argues (this volume) that concealment is part of the poet's strategy as well as the hero's. Already in the first line of the proem, the hero's identity is conveyed through his ambiguous epithet *polutropos* rather than with his name and patronymic as in the first line of the *Iliad*. Austin's argument is primarily literary, but it draws on the anthropological insight that knowledge of a name gives the knower power over the individual who bears that name.[37]

Although feminist approaches are of many kinds and have been combined with the more specifically literary methods I describe below, the insights on which they rest are ultimately social; hence I am including them here. They have developed over the past thirty years as an

[36] J. J. Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', in *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York and London, 1990), 129–61.

[37] A more broadly anthropological approach to Homer, though not focused on the *Odyssey*, is seen in J. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Chicago, 1975). S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London, Henley, and Boston, 1978) is another groundbreaking work that sought to bridge the two fields, in part by bringing to the attention of Anglophone classicists the work of older Continental scholars trained in both Classics and sociology. Structuralist approaches are discussed below, in the context of more recent literary theory.

outgrowth of the women's movement that in the 1970s and 1980s opened so many new avenues to women's activity. It is no coincidence that most (though by no means all) of the feminist work in Classics has been done by women, who entered the field in growing numbers during this time. At its most basic, the feminist approach can be described as attention to the presence and perspectives of women and to their representation in various media. This can be a difficult task when, as in the case of ancient Greek society, the great majority of those who produced the media were men; yet that it *can* be done, and to the benefit of scholarship as a whole, is no longer in doubt.[38] The *Odyssey* has attracted much attention from feminist scholars, both because it has a large number of prominent female characters and because, as an early and influential work, it helped to establish a precedent for the representation of women in the Greek tradition. One of the first collections of essays in Classics to take an avowedly feminist stance (in 1984) included the piece by Helene Foley reprinted here, along with an essay by Marylin Arthur [Katz] on 'Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude toward Women', featuring a lengthy discussion of the *Odyssey*.[39] Foley's paper shows how attention to the roles of women can cast light on the workings of the gender system as a whole. The difference that a feminist viewpoint can make to an argument is likewise detectable in the juxtaposition of two other pieces included here, those of Chris Emlyn-Jones and Sheila Murnaghan. Precisely because they agree that Penelope is an admirable, fully-drawn figure and that she is not to be seen as recognizing Odysseus before Book 23, it becomes clear that Emlyn-Jones's argument is 'about' the narrative structure of the epic and the characterization of Penelope, while Murnaghan's is 'about' what this means for the gendered balance of power in the poem—and for the stakes of reading it as a woman.[40]

[38] Feminists are often attacked as partisan, but can the overwhelmingly masculine viewpoints of the Greek sources and of traditional scholarship fairly be described as objective?

[39] Somewhat paradoxically, the volume was edited by two (feminist) men: J. Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan, *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* (Albany, 1984). Helene Foley also edited another early collection, *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York, London, and Paris, 1981), which included an article by Arthur on 'The Divided World of *Iliad* VI'.

[40] A recent feminist contribution to the study of Penelope that takes her weaving activity as paradigmatic for the poetics of the *Odyssey* as a whole is Barbara Clayton, *A Penelopean Poetics: Reweaving the Feminine in Homer's Odyssey* (Lanham, Md., 2004).

LITERARY APPROACHES

Among classical texts, the *Odyssey* was one of the first to be chosen for study by scholars interested in modern literary criticism and theory.[41] I believe this is largely because of its reflexive dimension—the self-awareness of its hero and its poet—and the complexity of its narrative structure. Even before the work of Parry and Lord, the so-called Unitarians, Homerists who believed that the monumental epics were conceived as unified wholes, used literary approaches to rebut the Analysts' assertion that the canonical texts were a patchwork, made up of pieces of earlier poems and riddled with interpolations.[42] As the oral-composition hypothesis was being tested and assimilated, literary methods were used, either to assert the literacy of Homer (as in Herbert Eisenberger's *Studien zur Odyssee*) or to defend the poetic quality of the epics as oral compositions. Cedric Whitman's *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* is an influential example for the *Iliad*; Norman Austin's *Archery at the Dark of the Moon* takes a similar view of the *Odyssey*.[43] Adolf Köhnken's study, in the present volume, of the digression involving Odysseus' scar is a comparable attempt to defend the coherence and subtlety of Homeric narrative against the charge that it has no 'depth'. The papers of Emlyn-Jones and Rutherford reprinted here can also be seen as examples of this kind of literary approach, based on close reading of the epic as a unitary composition.

In the late twentieth century, the *Odyssey* began to be studied from the new perspectives offered by narratology, audience-oriented criticism, structuralism, and 'post-structuralism'. Scholars trained in the British tradition tend to be more sceptical of these approaches than those trained in the US.[44] Because I see value in them, and because

[41] An eloquent brief for the relevance of theory to the classics is the first chapter of John Peradotto's *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* (Princeton, 1990).

[42] See e.g. J. A. Scott, *The Unity of Homer* (Berkeley, 1921). S. E. Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley, 1938; repr. Lanham, Md., 2003), argues that a single poet composed both epics.

[43] C. H. Whitman (Cambridge, Mass., 1958); N. Austin (Berkeley, 1975). A version of this approach is taken by Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980).

[44] As an American editing a volume in a British series, I have tried to strike a balance between these two perspectives.

they represent an important development in the wider field of literary criticism, I have included examples of them here.

The technique known as narratology was originally developed by the French critic Gérard Genette for the analysis of novels;[45] it was first adapted to the study of Homer by Irene de Jong, whose work is represented in the present volume.[46] The core insight of the approach is that a text can be read as an act of narration, addressed by one or more narrators to one or more listeners or 'narratees'. Narrators are also 'focalizers', that is, they report events from a particular point of view, but there can be focalizers who do not narrate directly: their perspective can be 'embedded' in the narration of others. The *Odyssey* lends itself beautifully to this approach because of its wealth of narrators and internal audiences. Longinus already observed (9.11–13) that much of the *Odyssey* consisted of 'telling stories'. The hero himself tells so many of these, and at such length, that his focalization dominates and overlaps with that of the primary narrator. This dominance in turn affects the degree to which other characters are given voice and narrative authority.[47] In the present volume, my paper and that of Irene de Jong use narratological approaches; de Jong has also produced a full narratological commentary on the *Odyssey*.[48]

Audience-oriented criticism, called 'reception theory' by some of its practitioners, complements narratology in focusing on the interpretive role of the audience, be they listeners or readers. Since we have no reliable account of the original historical audience, such critics focus on the imaginary audiences projected by the epics themselves. One such account of the Homeric audience is that of Ruth Scodel.[49] She argues that the author of the monumental epics, in order to reach the widest possible audience, had in a sense to create that audience by deploying a 'rhetoric of inclusion', implying that everyone knows the background to the stories he tells, even as he is editing and reshaping

[45] G. Genette, 'Discours du récit', in *Figures III* (Paris, 1972). Trans. J. E. Lewin as *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, 1981).

[46] I. J. F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam, 1987); cf. S. Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville, 1990).

[47] L. Doherty, *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey* (Ann Arbor, 1995), ch. 5.

[48] I. J. F. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey* (Cambridge, 2001).

[49] Scodel (above, n. 5). On the different forms of audience, see Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca, 1987).

this material. As Scodel puts it, 'The poet unifies the audience by never admitting that it is not unified already' (p. 92). Nancy Felson-Rubin has used an audience-oriented approach to characterization in the *Odyssey*, primarily that of Penelope and Telemachus.[50] Using the metaphor of courtship, she shows how the poet woos his audience, much as Odysseus woos Penelope and the other women he meets. My own work also incorporates this approach; I have used the term 'implied audience' to describe a construct based on the epic's *internal* audiences—those consisting of characters in the epic. While actual (historical) audiences must always be distinguished from any such construct, I believe that the former can be swayed, sometimes unconsciously, to identify with implied audiences.[51]

Structuralism, an outgrowth of linguistics and anthropology,[52] was used to striking effect by a group of French classicists in the 1970s and 1980s.[53] Through the analysis of myths and texts they sought to elucidate the normative structures of thought that prevailed in archaic and classical Greece.[54] Although its adherents produced no full-length study of the *Odyssey*, they helped to set the epic in the wider context of archaic thought and religion.[55] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, for example, used a structuralist analysis of sacrifice to illuminate the contrasts between the 'real' world of Ithaca and Pylos and the unreal societies visited by Odysseus.[56] François Hartog offered a 'poetic anthropology' of the

[50] Nancy Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope: From Courtship to Poetics* (Princeton, 1994).

[51] Doherty (this volume, and n. 47 above). Scodel (n. 5) makes good use of comparative material on oral performance in a variety of living cultures in her reconstruction of a hypothetical audience for the epic.

[52] The linguistic model was that of Ferdinand de Saussure; the earliest anthropological application was that of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who studied South American Indian myths (*Mythologiques* I–IV, Paris, 1964–71, trans. in 4 vols. beginning with *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. J. and D. Weightman, New York, 1969).

[53] The omission of French scholars from the present volume is largely due to their prominence in the collection edited by Seth Schein, *Reading the Odyssey* (Berkeley, 1996). See my preface.

[54] In this respect, it logically belongs with the social approaches discussed above; its offspring, deconstruction and discourse analysis, have moved in different directions, with the former remaining largely literary and the latter more socially engaged.

[55] See e.g. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Les Ruses de l'intelligence: la mètis des grecs* (Paris, 1974), trans. Janet Lloyd as *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (1978, repr. Chicago, 1991).

[56] Vidal-Naquet, 'Land and Sacrifice in the *Odyssey*', trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak, in S. L. Schein (above, n. 53), 33–53.

figure of the traveller in Greek thought from Homer to Apollonius of Tyana.[57] Out of structuralism grew a number of approaches that can be classified as '*post*-structuralist' (although they are not always referred to as such). The first of these, known as deconstruction, was greeted with suspicion by classicists and never widely practised by them, but it produced at least three very interesting readings of the *Odyssey*: those of John Peradotto, Pietro Pucci, and Marylin [Arthur] Katz.[58] The core insight of this approach is that a 'sign', which consists of the conjunction of a 'signifier' and a 'signified', is inherently unstable in its relation to other signs, so that meaning is deferred rather than fixed. Peradotto, for example, studies the 'epexegetic play' on words in the *Odyssey*, focusing in particular on the hero's epithet *polytropos*, 'of many turns', and his use of Outis, Noman, as an alternative name. Paradoxically for a culture that placed such value on *kleos* (immortal fame), in the case of Odysseus 'the autonomous power of the self, as well as its safety from peril, is associated not with the name and its heroic assertion, but with its denial or absence, with anonymity, in effect'.[59] This anonymity is seen as essential to the hero's aptitude for assuming a multitude of roles; in Peradotto's view he becomes 'the narrative agent par excellence . . . capable of becoming *any* character'.[60] Katz, focusing on the figure of Penelope, argues that the 'indeterminacy' of the text likewise precludes certainty about her motives. Mark Buchan, starting from related theoretical premisses, has recently produced an interesting reading against the grain, examining the *Odyssey* as an investigation of human strategies for coping with the experiences of lack, trauma, and desire.[61] In the present volume, the post-structuralist approach is represented by Ann Bergren's study of the collapse of polarities in the language of *Odyssey* 4.

[57] F. Hartog, *Mémoire d'Ulysse* (Paris, 1996), trans. J. Lloyd, *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece* (Chicago, 2001).

[58] John Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* (Princeton, 1990); Pietro Pucci, *Odysseus Polytropos* (Ithaca, 1987); Marylin Arthur Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the Odyssey* (Princeton, 1991). These books are not purely deconstructive but employ other interpretive models as well, notably Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the tension between 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal' forces in ideology.

[59] Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice*, 152. [60] Ibid. 155.

[61] M. Buchan, *The Limits of Heroism: Homer and the Ethics of Reading* (Ann Arbor, 2004).

The *Odyssey* has played a prominent role in the classical tradition, starting with the ancients themselves and continuing to the present day. It thus seems fitting to conclude the volume with a contribution on this subject. Boitani's survey of the 'Ulysses' figure in twentieth-century literature shows how evocative the hero's wanderings have been for an era of cultural conflict, dislocation, and migration. The geographic range of the authors represented is evidence that even in a time when 'Western' culture is rejected or ignored in many quarters, there is still widespread admiration for one of its foundational works.

1

In What Sense Can the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Be Considered Oral Texts?

Minna Skafte Jensen

Praise of the elegant overall composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and discussion of how it was achieved has been a central theme for Homeric scholarship during the last half century. This view of their composition goes back to Aristotle, who in his *Poetics* praised the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* for their unity, which made them differ from other epic poems such as the *Kypria* and the *Little Iliad*.[1] In more recent times, J. Th. Kakridis revived this observation as a main point in his so-called 'Neo-Analysis'. In his epoch-making *Homeric Researches* he argued that what set off the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from the poems of the *Epic Cycle* was their 'dramatic' structure in contrast to the 'chronographic' way in which the other epics proceeded.[2] The present paper proposes that this dramatic quality may be directly connected with the way in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed and recorded in writing.

Whatever opinion one has about the way of composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the writing of these very long texts remains a problem that must be accounted for, a problem all the more insistent the earlier you consider the recording to have taken place. How was such an achievement possible in archaic Greece? Four volumes of printed Oxford text! The task must have required an ample supply of writing materials as well as expert skill in the art of writing. As soon as we

[1] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459 a–b.

[2] J. Th. Kakridis, Ὁμηρικὲς ἔρευνες, Athens, 1944; *Homeric Researches*, Lund, 1949, especially pp. 91–5.

begin to consider these questions it becomes clear how complicated they are. The poems have come down to us in a careful and orderly form, consistent in orthography and with very few metrical and other errors. This may of course be due to the activity of scribes long after the time of the original writing, but that can hardly have been where the clear and consistent form was achieved. At least it seems to me that unless the first, original exemplar was already carefully made, it becomes even more difficult to understand how the transmitted *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with their generally acknowledged qualities found their final form. Since no direct evidence is available, we have to rely upon analogy, carefully collecting as broad and detailed a comparative material as possible, and keeping a critical eye on what is comparable at all. This is what I try to do here.

My point of departure is that since Milman Parry demonstrated the style of the two poems to be oral, it is more probable than not that they were actually orally composed.[3] They have been transmitted to us in written form and must therefore in some way have been recorded in writing. When A. B. Lord considered various ways in which an oral text could achieve written form, he established a system of three possibilities: through mechanical recording, writing from dictation, or the author's own handwriting. Mechanical recording is, of course, out of the question in Homer's case. Lord considered the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to be what he called 'oral dictated texts'.[4] I follow him in this opinion and want to add an argument that I do not think he ever used: The normal procedure for larger scale writing in antiquity was by means of dictation. Authors usually belonged to strata of the population who had easy access to slave labour and kept trained scribes. Cicero's Tiro is the best known example. Plato has people call for a slave when they want to read something. The process is usually not commented upon, but treated as a well-known fact; sometimes, however, an author may mention that he has written something in his own hand, precisely because that was unusual; St. Paul does this at the end of some of his epistles.[5]

[3] M. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, edited by A. Parry (1928–35), Oxford, 1971.

[4] A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, pp. 148–53.

[5] Plato, *Theaetetus* 143 b–c; Paulus, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* 16.21, *Epistle to the Colossians* 4.18, *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians* 3.17, *Epistle to Philemon* 19.

That makes me interested in studying the process of dictation as it is known from more recent times. The modern world abounds in oral texts neatly published in written, even printed form. Our concern here will be mainly with epic texts. (I cannot here discuss the problems of definition that exist when you want to establish epic as a genre, independent of differences in time, culture, aesthetics etc. For the present purpose I simply accept texts that different editors have considered to belong to the epic genre.)

This is an area where the Parry–Lord theory has been very influential. The way editors have approached the oral texts they are dealing with has changed considerably during the last decades. Previously it was normal to make quite heavy editorial revisions, even to the point where various versions were combined in order to establish the 'best' text. This was a completely sensible thing to do for scholars whose basic opinion was that existing versions were more or less badly remembered copies of a long lost original. Singers were almost always considered to belong to a tradition in decay, and what they performed was 'sung into pieces'. Out of these the editor had to restore a first, ideal version.

In Scandinavia this can be exemplified from ballad editions. In Denmark the monumental *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* was begun in 1847 and finished in 1976, and over this long period the editorial principles changed more than once.[6] In Sweden, however, where a comparable all-inclusive edition is only now being made, each version is paid full respect, and in this marvellous edition it is easy to observe the variability of the single ballad types, to the point where it becomes difficult to ascertain whether versions should properly be considered to belong to one and the same type at all.[7]

Where epic texts were concerned, the procedure of mixing various versions was even more attractive, since the editor felt obliged to publish a text of national importance in the best possible form, meant to stimulate the readers' feelings for their common past. But even where less ideologically important texts were concerned, editors normally felt free to make all kinds of silent corrections in order to preserve a coherent text.

[6] S. Grundtvig, A. Olrik, H. Grüner-Nielsen, K.-I. Hildeman, E. Dal, I. Piø, T. Knudsen, S. Nielsen, and N. Schiørring (eds.), *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, 1–12, Copenhagen, 1847–1976.

[7] B. R. Jonsson, M. Jersild, and S.-B. Jansson (eds.), *Sveriges Medeltida Ballader*, 1– , Stockholm, 1983– .

Parry and Lord's insistence on the constant fluctuation of the oral text has as its logical consequence that every single performance must be assessed as a self-contained unity. In recent years, quite a few books have been published in which oral epics are printed in the versions of individual singers.[8]

Editions such as these are not only conditioned by Parry and Lord's theory, they also confirm it. It has become abundantly clear that singers are not alike, that each gives his (or her) songs in an individual form, and that this tends to be rounded and fit into the setting in which it is performed. Gordon Innes has studied various versions of the same song, by the same singer on various occasions, and by different singers. He concludes that the big changes occur when a song is learned by one singer from another. On the other hand: once a singer has found a personal form of a song, he or she sticks to it, even though it may always be varied according to circumstances. Christiane Seydou's edition of the epic of Silâmaka and Poullôri bears this out.[9]

[8] D. P. Biebuyck and K. Mateene (eds.), *The Mwindo Epic from the Banyanga, Congo Republic*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969; C. Seydou (ed.), *Silâmaka & Poullôri, Récit épique Peul raconté par Tinguidji*, édité par C. Seydou, Paris, 1972; G. Innes (ed.), *Sunjata: Three Mandinka Versions*, London, 1974; G. Innes (ed.), *Kaabu and Fuladu: Historical Narratives of the Gambian Mandinka*, London, 1976; C. Seydou (ed.), *La geste de Ham-Bodedio ou Hama le Rouge*, traduite et éditée par C. Seydou, Paris, 1976; D. P. Biebuyck (ed.), *Hero and Chief: Epic Literature from the Banyanga, Zaire Republic*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1978; Brenda E. F. Beck (ed.), *The Three Twins: The Telling of a South Indian Folk Epic*, Bloomington, Ind., 1982; G. H. Roghair (ed.), *The Epic of Palnadu: A Study and Translation of Palnati Virula Katha, a Telugu Oral Tradition from Andhra Pradesh*, India and New York, 1982; S. J. Nekljudov and Z. Tömörceren (eds.), *Mongolische Erzählungen über Geser: neue Aufzeichnungen, aus dem Russischen übersetzt von Jörg Bäcker*, Wiesbaden, 1985; L. Saada (ed.), *La geste hilalienne: Version de Bou Thadi (Tunisie)*, recueillie, établie et traduite de l'arabe par L. Saada, récitation de Mohammed Hsini, Paris, 1985; J. W. Johnson (ed.), *The Epic of Son-Jara: A West African Tradition*. Analytical Study and Translation by J. W. Johnson, text by Fa-Diki Sisòkò, Bloomington, Ind., 1986; S. Slyomovics (ed.), *The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1987; D. P. Conrad (ed.), *A State of Intrigue: The Epic of Bamana Segu According to Tayiru Banbera*, Oxford, 1990; John D. Smith (ed.), *The Epic of Pabuji: A Study, Transcription and Translation*, Cambridge, 1991. A comprehensive study of the Siri epic as presented by the singer Gopala Naika in Belthangadi Taluk in south Karnataka is being done by a team of Indian and Finnish scholars; the project was described by Chinnapa Gowda, Anneli and Lauri Honko and Viveka Rai at a conference in Mysore, January 1995.

[9] G. Innes, 'Stability and change in griots' narrations', *African Language Studies* 14, 1973, pp. 105–18, and op. cit. (note 8); Seydou 1972 (note 8). For discussions of stability and change cf. E. M. Ghil, 'A Romanian singer of tales: Vasile Tetin', *Oral Tradition* 1, 1986, pp. 607–35; John D. Smith, 'Worlds apart: Orality, literacy, and the

The singers' background and position in society as well as such factors as their knowledge of the tradition, general competence, rhetorical skill, moral views, etc. all influence the songs, and scholars have become careful to give biographies of their informants, from the very brief sketches that Innes gives of his Gambian singers to the full portrait drawn by Susan Slyomovics of her Egyptian oral poet. But they are still far too reticent where their own role is concerned. (Slyomovics is an exception, and so is Steven Caton in an interesting publication of fieldwork in North Yemen.)[10] Especially it would be important to be informed about what exactly the scholar asked for when the recording was prepared. Innes mentions in a couple of cases that he asked the singers to give a version 'as full as possible', and when we are informed at all, this is most often what we are told.[11] I suspect that what lurks behind this is still the wish to understand the enormous length of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. A further reason may be that since epic is among other things defined as a long narrative, scholars are eager to elicit long versions. But the other ways in which the scholars influence the texts, simply through the singers' wish to please them, and their guesses at what this special audience wants, are rarely mentioned.

What exactly took place when the recording was made? Considering the importance that the audience is claimed to have for an oral text, it is of interest to be told who else was present besides the scholar. Again, Slyomovics is much more informative than the average. She tells in some detail of her activities long before the performance she recorded took place, what singers she attended, how she decided upon following one over a longer period, and how she and her poet prepared for the recording and invited the audience. She explicitly states that she did not ask for anything special, since her declared aim was to record a performance in its normal setting, live so to speak. Innes says that some of his tape-recordings were made for occasions he himself arranged, but for an audience similar to those the singers normally had.

Rajasthani Folk-Mahabharata', *Oral Tradition* 5, 1990, pp. 3–19; Chukwuma Azuonye, 'Oral literary criticism and the performance of the Igbo epic', *Oral Tradition* 9, 1994, pp. 136–61 and S. Slyomovics, 'Performing *A Thousand and One Nights* in Egypt', *Oral Tradition* 9, 1994, pp. 390–419.

[10] Slyomovics, op. cit. (note 8); S. C. Caton, *'Peaks of Yemen I Summon': Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford, 1990.

[11] Innes 1974 (note 8), pp. 37, 142.

Biebuyck asked the Nyanga poet Candi Rureke to dictate to him in special sessions.[12] It is my impression that such private sessions are much more common than 'true' performances. That was, for instance, what Parry and Lord themselves most often chose. With my interests I also want to hear over how many sessions the recording was made, and how the breaks are represented in the published text. Again, these are items that are hardly ever commented upon.

When a first recording has been made, whether mechanically or in writing, normally a longish period, often of several years, passes before the edition is published. Again, little is told of what has happened in the meantime. But Biebuyck mentions that he and his co-editor have had to establish an orthography for the singer's language, and Slyomovics describes in some detail how she went through her tapes and asked the singer and members of the audience to help her understand obscure passages.

In general we must reckon with at least the following phases: normal performance—recording session during which a first fixed version is made—interpretation and editorial work (correction of blunders, cancelling of meaningless passages, etc.)—making of a fair copy.

Some scholars emphasize that singers always try to give their song a rounded form, one that the audience will feel to be harmonious. If for some reason the song has to be cut short, they do not stop in the middle of events but prefer to abbreviate their story and bring it to some kind of acceptable end. Biebuyck stresses this aspect in his survey of African oral epic, and Gene Roghair goes into some detail on this point in his edition of the epic of Palnadu in Southeast India.[13]

This Indian tradition treats events that took place during the twelfth century. The heroes of the epic are celebrated in an annual festival that lasts several days, and among the regular activities are epic recitals. These have their fixed places in the programme, and for each session a specific episode is prescribed, independent of who is to perform. The order of the episodes is not determined by any kind of narrative chronology. Besides these formal events, epic may be performed at all kinds of private gatherings.

[12] Slyomovics, Innes, Biebuyck, op. cit. (note 8).

[13] D. P. Biebuyck, 'The epic as a genre in Congo oral literature', *African Folklore*, edited by R. M. Dorson, Bloomington and London, 1972, p. 266; Roghair, op. cit. (note 8), p. viii.

The tradition has been given authoritative expression in a comprehensive edition. It is based on collections from the nineteenth century, and was first published in 1911, with several later reprints.[14] Here the narrative is arranged so that the various episodes are told in the order in which they take place. Nevertheless, the oral performance always takes form as single episodes without any attempt at establishing a chronologically orderly form. Roghair much preferred the oral performance: 'The printed text might occasionally have developed a single episode more effectively, but the oral versions more than compensated for this in the vigour, immediacy, and completeness of the whole epic... Though the basic stories are always the same, the... singers have their individual strengths in creatively reworking them in their respective performances.'[15]

In an article from 1993, Samten G. Karmay discusses these same problems in relation to the Tibetan Gesar epic, but his results are difficult for me to apply, since he declares that in this tradition there has for a long time been interaction between written texts and oral performance. According to Karmay the bards maintain that the various episodes they sing all have their proper place in a storyline in which the hero's life is the leading thread—at such and such an age Gesar achieved this and that. In this way the existence of a correct chronological order is generally agreed upon. Even so it emerges clearly from Karmay's paper that what the bards perform is episodic, and that although they accept that a correct order exists there is no agreement on the details of this order.[16]

Through such works an overall pattern is gradually emerging: oral epic performance is episodic and presumably also dramatic, in Kakridis' sense of the word. As yet the material is limited; but it can at least be stated that this is what is normal, even for performances that last several hours. The chronographic narratives, on the contrary, are written compositions, such as the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, composed by Elias Lönnrot on the basis of oral epic songs he collected in the poorest districts of his country. It is well known that he was inspired by the

[14] By Akkiraju Umakantam, cf. Roghair, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 7–9.
[15] Roghair, op. cit. (note 8), p. viii.
[16] Samten G. Karmay, 'The theoretical basis of the Tibetan epic, with a reference to a "chronological order" of the various episodes in the Gesar epic', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 56, 1993, pp. 234–46.

theories of his day about how the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had come into being.

In ancient Greece, oral Homeric performance also seems to have been dramatic, if we allow ourselves to infer from performance scenes in the *Odyssey* to the real world of its author. In Book 8 the singer of the Phaeacians performs three songs, each consisting of a single episode: how Achilles and Odysseus quarrelled, how Hephaistos caught Ares and Aphrodite in adultery, and how Odysseus brought about the fall of Troy by the stratagem of the Wooden Horse.

Provided that that was also the normal procedure of the poet of our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, what happened to his songs, when he changed from his normal audience to one consisting of scribes? The overwhelming length of the two poems as we know them suggests that the singer consciously tried to give full versions. I imagine that what the patron asked for was two specific songs, only as long as possible. This would account for the dramatic structure of the two poems: the singer stuck to his normal version but expanded it with all possible means.

What was produced during these sessions must have been a draft copy, presumably on waxed tablets. But the poems would require quite a few tablets! It seems probable, therefore, that the draft was transferred to a fair copy in papyrus in a continuous process, perhaps so that each day's output was edited overnight.

How long a passage did they manage per day? I submit: a book. That would account not only for the division into books, but also for the fact that each book is a rounded whole. Of course I am well aware that scholars have, on the contrary, found some of the divisions between books to be awkward. But I recommend that we look at them in a way analogous to how we look at the passage from one hexameter to the next. Parry descried the 'adding style' by drawing attention to the feeling of completeness that the poet normally conveys at the end of each hexameter line. Often, then, it turns out that the sense was not complete after all, since the following verse takes up the thread from the preceding one in what he called 'unperiodic enjambement'.[17] It seems to me that the division into books is similar: a book is either a rounded

[17] M. Parry, 'The distinctive character of enjambement in Homeric verse' (1929), op. cit. (note 3), pp. 251–65.

whole, as for instance Book 1 of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or it at first appears to be so, and only when we read further on do we realize that the story had not been brought up to an incision the way we thought. Such, for instance, is the transition between Books 5 and 6 of the *Iliad*. This special way of dividing up the story, in a linear fashion so to speak, is understandable if we regard it as a direct result of the necessary breaks made during the dictation. Like epic singers in our day, the poet took care to bring his story to a natural pause at the end of each session. Next morning, I imagine the scribe reading the last lines aloud to him, thus prompting him to continue his work; and the singer took up his theme without further ado.

I thus depart from the conventional wisdom that the division into books was effectuated only by Alexandrian scholars. I find support for my view in Stephanie West, who has questioned the general opinion that the Ptolemaic papyri argue for the Alexandrian hypothesis.[18] I have also decided to disregard the only explicit source from antiquity, Plutarch's *Life of Homer*, as unreliable on this point.[19]

It will have become apparent that the process as I envisage it must have taken place in a milieu where the supply not only of writing materials but also of expert scribes was copious. That is actually one of my reasons for resorting to the idea of the Pisistratids as responsible for the recording into writing of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[20]

A process like the one I have described makes the famous dramatic structure develop organically from the recording. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not of course oral poems in the sense of a performance. But they come as close to a real performance as is possible, given the writing facilities of the day. The poems of the *Epic Cycle*, however, seem to me to have been composed in writing right from the start, by poets interested in sorting out the stories and presenting the chain of events in an orderly fashion. Such an idea would meet the demands of a reading public, interested in being taught all the facts of the Trojan war and more tolerant than an average aural audience of texts that were not immediately entertaining.

[18] S. West (ed.), *The Ptolemaic Papyri of Homer*, Cologne and Opladen, 1967, pp. 18–24.

[19] Plutarch, *Vita Homeri* 2.4.

[20] M. Skafte Jensen, *The Homeric Question and the Oral-Formulaic Theory*, Copenhagen, 1980. In pp. 87–9 of this book I already vent the ideas further developed here; since then, added new material (cf. note 8) has confirmed my views.

Thus my conclusion is the opposite of what seems to be the almost invariable common opinion among Homeric scholars these days: that the elegant structure of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* presupposes written composition. To my mind, the origin of the written *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is not really understandable in any other way than as a rhapsode's dictation to scribes. Written composition in early Greece must have been far too laborious a process to enable a writing poet to remain in control of an overall plot of such a long text. But a trained rhapsode, well-versed in his traditional songs and in total command of his own familiar way of reciting them, aided by expert scribes and thus in a position to manage the writing in a span of time that was after all countable in months rather than years, is a model that might make the miracle of our written *Iliad* and *Odyssey* understandable.[21]

Gene Roghair's characterization of his Indian singers' performance—vigour, immediacy and completeness, the well-rounded whole typical of oral texts—fits our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* remarkably well. If I am right, what we have in them is one (or two?) individual poet's personal version of two episodes from the Trojan war. We have little means of knowing how representative they are of the tradition in general.

POSTSCRIPT

Since the original publication of this paper, I have developed my ideas further in various studies, especially 'Dividing Homer: When and how were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* divided into songs?', *Symbolae Osloenses* 74, 1999, 5–35 and 73–91. Research in the epic cycle has been intensified. With his study *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, Jonathan Burgess has changed our understanding of these poems, and it has become less certain whether their structure was as a matter of fact 'chronographic'. This does not, however, affect my argumentation about the 'episodic' technique of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and its possible connection with a process of dictation.

[21] I have discussed the opinions of B. B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet*, Cambridge 1991, in 'A. B. Lord's concept of transitional texts in relation to the Homeric epics', *Acta* from the above-mentioned conference in Mysore (note 8), eds. Jawaharlal Handoo and Lauri Honko.

As for fieldwork in oral epic, including impressive new editions from many parts of the world, much has happened since 1995. The development may currently be followed in the periodicals *Oral Tradition* and *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. A volume of papers focused on the process of registration and editing was published by Lauri Honko: *Textualization of Oral Epics*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000. Fieldwork studies of special relevance to the question of how singer and scribe may have co-operated in the recording of Homeric epic are the following: Dwight Fletcher Reynolds, *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995; Karl Reichl, *Singing the Past: Turkic and Medieval Heroic Poetry*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000, and, also by Reichl, *Das usbekische Heldenepos Alpomish: Einführung, Text, Übersetzung*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001. Reynolds is extraordinary in having enrolled as an apprentice of an Egyptian epic bard, and in his book he is therefore able to analyse the processes of composition and recording from inside, so to speak. Reichl's studies of Turkic epic traditions are based on both archives and his own recordings, and his use of fieldwork experience in the analysis of European medieval literature is methodologically relevant for Homeric studies.

Most sensational, however, is Lauri Honko's publication in two volumes of an epic from Karnataka in India and the accompanying theoretical monograph (cf. n. 8 of my *Metis*-paper): *The Siri Epic as Performed by Gopala Naika*, edited by Lauri Honko in collaboration with Chinnapa Gowda, Anneli Honko, and Viveka Rai, I–II, and Lauri Honko, *Textualising the Siri Epic*, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1998. Here classicists who wish to understand the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in a comparative framework are given ample material, including detailed information on the process of recording as well as the years of editorial work that passed between the performance in December 1990 and the eventual publication of the epic in 1998 (*Textualising*, pp. 276–321 and 581–94). Furthermore, the singer's ability to perform coherent versions of his epics under widely varying conditions is unusually well documented (esp. *Textualising*, pp. 30 and 337–88).

2

The Song of Ares and Aphrodite: On the Relationship between the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*

Walter Burkert
Translated by G. M. Wright and P. V. Jones

On the issue of the 'Homeric question', since we still have one opinion against another, one hypothesis against its counterpart, without the slightest hope of reaching an agreement, it might seem pointless to want to add a new little stone to the mountain of literature. In spite of the common desire which should unite Unitarians and Analysts—interpretation of individual parts with a correct view of the whole—we have still got no further than missing each other's point. It is evident that in these controversies one fundamental uncertainty emerges again and again, i.e. which categories of understanding, which criteria, are appropriate for the subject matter; and the reason for this in turn is the complete isolation in which Homeric epic, at least the *Iliad*, presents itself to us. We know nothing about its poet and we ultimately know the world in which it originated only through its own testimony. Consequently, we can obtain those criteria and categories which are the basis of any interpretation only from the poem itself, or bring them in from outside without any proper legitimization. The greatest care must be taken to avoid the accusation of a circular argument or a *petitio principii* [begging of the question].

Originally published as W. Burkert, *Rh. Mus.* 103 (1960), 130–44, reproduced by kind permission of Sauerländer's Verlag, Frankfurt.

And yet we are faced with this basic difficulty to its full extent only as far as the *Iliad* is concerned. Perhaps people overlook at times that we are in a far better position concerning the *Odyssey*. For even though we cannot talk of an undisputed *communis opinio* [common opinion] about the relationship between the two epics, there is still a clear majority of research which from very different starting points came to the conclusion that the *Odyssey* as it presents itself to us originated later than the *Iliad*, and even more: that it presupposes the *Iliad* as its model and can be understood only in this kind of relationship. Even Unitarians and Analysts can meet at this juncture, although one group will talk about the poet of the *Odyssey* and the others about the editor, and in many individual pieces of research this principle has shown its fruitfulness.[1] Its significance, even if you want to allow it only as a

[1] The unity of authorship of both epics has been defended again and again. So, in addition to Franz Dornseiff (*Die archaische Mythenerzählung* (Berlin, 1933), esp. 44; cf. also *Gnomon* 29 (1957), 586 ff.), recently e.g. A. Severyns (*Homère* (Brussels, 1944–8), esp. iii.159 ff.) and L. A. Post (*From Homer to Menander* (Berkeley, 1951), esp. fn. 2, p. 273). Even Analysts approached this point of view: Peter von der Mühll, after separating the great original poet A from the later editor B, in his parallel analysis of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, is inclined to identify these in both epics (*Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (Basel, 1952), esp. 348–90); Wolfgang Schadewaldt distinguishes two layers in the *Odyssey* and attributes the older poem to the *Iliad* poet Homer (*Taschenbuch für junge Menschen*, ed. Peter Suhrkamp (Berlin, 1946), 177 ff.). In contrast to this it was Ernst Bickel especially (*Homer. Die Lösung der Homerischen Frage* (Bonn, 1949), 97 ff.; 103 ff.) who elaborated the point of view of the *chorizontes* [ancient scholars who considered the two epics to be the work of different poets]. All the theses mentioned here include rather than exclude the later origin of the *Odyssey* (e.g. Post, *Homer to Menander*, 12: 'The *Odyssey* is not only a sequel but a complement to the *Iliad*'). That the *Odyssey* as a whole was composed before the *Iliad* has as far as I know been put forward recently only by Giovanni Patroni (*Commenti mediterranei all'Odissea di Omero* (Milan, 1950), esp. 146 ff.), but no one has taken up this idea. In his framework of radical analysis Benedetto Marzullo (*Il problema Omerico* (Florence, 1952), esp. 269 ff., 387 ff., cf. *Atene e Roma* NS 3 (1956), 141 ff.) tries to prove dependence of individual passages in the *Iliad* on passages in the *Odyssey*—but in complete contrast for the religious uses of the *Odyssey* he assumes influences from the *Iliad* (179 ff.). Keeping all this in mind I think that interpretations which from the point of view of the *chorizontes* contrast the originality of both epics have had convincing results. (Older material in Wilhelm Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur I*, i (Munich, 1929), 124 ff.; Felix Jacoby, 'Die geistige Physiognomie der Odyssee', *Antike* 9 (1933), 159–94; Walter Nestle, 'Odyssee-Interpretationen', *Hermes* 77 (1942), 46–77; 113–39; for differences in the concept of the soul Bickel, *Homer*, 108 ff.; Karl Reinhardt, 'Die Abenteuer der Odyssee', *Von Werken und Formen* (Godesberg, 1948), 52 ff.; *Tradition und Geist im homerischen Epos*, Studium Generale 4 (1951), 334–9; Hermann Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (Lancaster, 1951), 120 ff.; Alfred Heubeck, *Der Odysseedichter und die Ilias* (Erlangen, 1954); Walter Marg, *Das erste Lied des Demodokos*, Navicula Chiloniensis (Festschrift Jacoby) (Leiden, 1956), 16–29; with analytic interpretation for the *Odyssey* Ernst Howald, *Der Dichter der Ilias* (Zurich, 1946), 166 ff.). Denys Page's opinion (*The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford, 1955), 149 ff.), according to which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* originated without any connections and even in different districts, is admittedly based on commendable collations of linguistic material but to my mind untenable in its radicalism.

working hypothesis, is obvious: for in this way we have for the *Odyssey* what we miss for the *Iliad*, i.e. certain and appropriate material for comparison; we have the opportunity to put together similar things, to separate the typical from the extraordinary, the new from the traditional, in short, to grasp exactly the originality of the *Odyssey*. Much has already been gained by this method but for the interpretation of individual items more will need to be done. By using this method of comparison and juxtaposition, this essay will try to come closer to a passage of the *Odyssey* which is as well known as it is contested: the song of Ares and Aphrodite.

Certainly this method has its problems too. The question as to which demonstrable connections were intended and desired by the poet, and which ones conversely have been artificially 'worked up' and 'adjusted' by the comparison, often remains unanswered. Nevertheless, interpretation does not require the poet's thoughts as a psycho-biographical fact, but the objective spiritual structure of the work; and here the right viewpoint stands the test in the very fact that from it, individual items connect to a meaningful picture in the most perfect way. It would certainly be self-deception if we wanted to begin our work totally 'without any presuppositions'. Everybody proceeds from a first view of the whole which then may be verified or also modified in individual details. And so in this essay too the Unitarian cause will not and cannot be concealed; but the attempt will be made as far as possible to leave aside the 'question of authorship' and to grasp only the demonstrable as precisely as possible.

From the outside, the song of Demodocus too is impossible to approach in a conclusive way. Older scholarship agreed that such a 'divine-burlesque' could only be a late corruption of an originally pious tale[2] and the analysis of Homer's work met this halfway by actually

[2] Wilhelm Nestle, 'Anfänge einer Götterburleske bei Homer', *Njbb* (1905) = *Griechische Studien* (Stuttgart, 1948), 1–31; likewise in principle, in spite of many differences Karl Bielohlawek, 'Komische Motive in der homerischen Gestaltung des griechischen Göttermythus', *ARW* 28 (1930), 106–24, 186–211.

eliminating the song as an interpolation[3] or at least attributing it to the last editor.[4] It has since become clear that wrong and inappropriate postulates are being applied to the epic here. Farce about the gods seems as a form to be very old;[5] interpretation must try to work out individually for each case whether it is naïve-grotesque myth in the framework of matter-of-fact religious structures, or conscious poetic play taken to extremes, or subversive mockery.

Looking for earlier stages or sources of our song does not help us to reach really firm ground either. The connection between Ares and Aphrodite is obviously firmly rooted in cult and myth,[6] but this is very dubious for the marriage of Aphrodite and Hephaestus.[7] Wilamowitz

[3] Friedrich Blass, *Die Interpolationen in der Odyssee* (Halle, 1904), 269 ff.; Georg Finsler, *Homer II*^{2} (Leipzig, 1918), 315; Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* (Berlin, 1927), 25. Conversely according to Wolfgang Schadewaldt (*Homer, Die Odyssee* (Hamburg, 1958), 330) the very song of Demodocus 266–369 is by 'A' and the framework by 'B'.

[4] Eduard Schwartz, *Die Odyssee* (Munich, 1924), 25; Peter von der Mühll, 'Odyssee', *RE Suppl.* VII, 717 f.; Friedrich Focke, *Die Odyssee* (Stuttgart, 1943), 147 ff.

[5] Paul Friedländer, 'Lachende Götter', *Antike* 10 (1934), 209–26; esp. Karl Reinhardt, 'Das Parisurteil': *Von Werken und Formen* (Godesberg, 1948), 20 f. with note; the Hittite myths already contain burlesque elements according to Margarete Riemschneider, *Die Welt der Hethiter* (Stuttgart, 1954), 116 ff.

[6] The most detailed investigation: Karl Tümpel, 'Ares und Aphrodite', *Jahrbuch für class. Philologie*, Suppl. 11 (1880), 639–754; Preller-Robert, *Griechische Mythologie I*^{4} (Berlin, 1894), 176; 339 f.; Dümmler, 'Aphrodite' *RE* I, 2747 f. That the *Iliad* (5.357 ff., 21.416 ff.) alludes to the connection is disputed too harshly by Wilamowitz (*Der Glaube der Hellenen I* (Berlin, 1931), 323). Hesiod (*Theog.* 933 ff.) knows about their marriage. In the circle of the twelve gods the two belong together (Weinreich, 'Zwölfgötter' *RML VI*, 764 ff., esp. 830 ff.). Poets without any embarrassment call Ares Aphrodite's husband (Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.87 f.; Aeschylus, *Hik.* 664 ff., *Sept.* 105, 140); the fine arts connect the two (François-Vase; Cypselus chest *Paus.* 5.18.5). Common cult at Thebes is certain. Between Argos and Mantineia stood a double temple for both deities: the images of the gods were allegedly donations by Polyneices, so apparently ancient (*Paus.* 2.25.1). If Harmonia wife of Cadmus appears as daughter of Ares and Aphrodite, this seems like transparent allegory (cf. Plut. *Pelopidas* 19, the affinity with Empedocles is stated by Heraclitus *qu. Hom.* 69 and Scholion *Od.* 8.267, Eustathius *Od.* 8.367) but myth has at all times contained a speculative element in addition to its pictorial one; already Babylonian myths know personifications of abstract conceptions (H. G. Güterbock, *Kumarbi* (Istanbul, 1946), 114 f.); cf. Deubner, 'Personification' *RML*. For the whole problem also Marie Delcourt, *Héphaistos* (Paris, 1957), 76 ff.

[7] Dümmler *RE* I, 2747 f. thought of cult connection on Lemnos; main support is *Apoll. Rh.* 1.859 ff. w. Schol.; Demodocus' song would then be a play with the intersection of Lemnian and Theban cult legend. Evidence against this is the old Cabeiri cult on Lemnos. If Acusilaus (*FGrHist.* 2 F 20) and Pherecydes (*FGrHist.* 3 F 48) mention 'Kabeiro' as the mother of the Lemnian Cabeiri, the sons of Hephaestus, this does

reconstructed as the source of Demodocus' song a hymn about Hera being chained by Hephaestus and Hephaestus being led back to Olympus by Dionysus.[8] The priority of this divine legend, which is well attested in archaic times, is very likely, but many details remain doubtful, especially since a vase fragment was found on Lemnos which seems to be nothing less than an illustration of our Demodocus song from the seventh century.[9]

indeed look like a genealogical construction (Jacoby in comm.) but this construction could only fill an empty space and could not replace Aphrodite. Cf. Bengt Hemberg, *Die Kabiren* (Uppsala, 1950), 160 ff.—*Iliad* (18.382 f.) and Hesiod (*Theog.* 945 f.) mention as Hephaestus' wife one Charis—is she a substitute for Aphrodite or the other way round? The discrepancy, an argument of the ancient *chorizontes*, is dissolved by the A scholium to *Il.* 21.416 into a succession (one after the other) while Lucian, *Dial. D.* 15 blesses the god with Charis on Lemnos and Aphrodite on Olympus at the same time. Cf. Malten, 'Hephaistos' *RE* VIII, 354 f.

[8] Wilamowitz, 'Hephaistos', *NGG* (1895), 217 ff. = *Kleine Schriften V*, ii (Berlin, 1937), 5–30; the pictorial material in Frank Brommer, 'Die Rückführung des Hephaistos', *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 52 (1937), 198–219. Agreeing with Wilamowitz e.g. Malten *RE* VIII, 346; Bielohlawek (above n. 2) 196 ff.; opposition now in Walter Marg, *Homer über die Dichtung* (Münster, 1957), 43 n. 55.

[9] That the *Iliad* (18.395 ff.) presupposes and does not mention the leading back (thus Wolfgang Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter in der Ilias* (Berlin, 1956), 12) cannot be excluded but cannot be proved either. The oldest palpable evidence is Alcaeus 9 D = 349, 381, inc. auct. 8 Lobel-Page; Bruno Snell has stated (*Festschrift Ernst Kapp* (Hamburg, 1958), 15–17) that this is not a hymn about Hephaestus but Dionysus. Wilamowitz's arguments for its priority are (*Kleine Schriften V*, ii. 12 f.): (1) Only the Hymn explains the connection of Aphrodite and Hephaestus which is presupposed in *Odyssey* 8. (2) In contrast to the Hymn the invention of *Odyssey* 8 is totally ignored by the fine arts. Against this it can be argued that (i) we hardly have sufficient idea of how much impromptu work a singer in Homeric times could present his audience with (the dissolution of the marriage suggested in *Od.* 8.318 could be understood as a retraction of the invention); above all: that Aphrodite is the prize for Hera's release has solely been concluded from the representation of the François-Vase; the retelling (Ps. Libanius, *Prog.* 7) does not mention Aphrodite at all. So in this respect it cannot be decided what Book 8 owes to the Hymn. (ii) The leading back of Hephaestus invited representation as an example of a Dionysian thiasus [band of worshippers] with the content of the story quite unimportant here (Brommer, 'Die Rückführung des Hephaistos'). But this very fact of being firmly rooted in the Dionysus cult suggests that the legend is very old, it can be regarded as a downright *aition* [origin-story] of the Dionysian *kōmoi* [bands of revelers] (reference by Professor Reinhold Merkelbach), whereas the song of Demodocus is completely independent of the cult. In this cultic context Wilamowitz's (*Kleine Schriften V*, ii 24) reference to the remarkable phenomenon of the chained gods-images is attractive (cf. Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I*^{2} (Munich, 1955), 82 f.); nevertheless the Greeks themselves used to tell each other different *aitia* for this, cf. *Paus.* 3.15.11; 7 for the chained Aphrodite Morpho and for the chained Enyalius in Sparta; *Ath.* 15.672 c about the Hera statue of Samos which had willows

However, if we confront the Demodocus song not with hypothetical predecessors but with our extant *Iliad*, an abundance of surprising connections emerges. The whole song culminates in the verse ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνῶρτο γέλως μακάρεσσι θεοῖσι ['unquenchable laughter arose among the blessed gods'] (326)—a verse which has become so well known and even proverbial that because of that we might almost forget that it has its unique, fixed, and unrepeatable place in the *Iliad* (1.599). In fact there is no other scene in the *Iliad* in which all the gods come together for such untroubled laughter. The linguistic formulation too is not quite usual; the metaphor ἄσβεστος γέλως ['unquenchable laughter'] seems to need to be explained by the *Odyssey* scholia.[10] So this is not a formulaic verse which could be used as often as desired.

Conclusions could not be drawn from one single borrowing of a verse; but the connections continue straightaway: the verse following the gods' laughter ὡς ἴδον Ἥφαιστον διὰ δώματα ποιπνύοντα ['when they saw Hephaestus bustling through the hall'] (1.600) reappears in *Od.* 8.285 f.

> οὐδ' ἀλαὸς σκοπιὴν εἶχε χρυσήνιος Ἄρης,
> ὡς ἴδεν Ἥφαιστον κλυτοτέχνην νόσφι κιόντα.
>
> [Nor was Ares of the golden reins blind at his watch
> when he saw Hephaestus famed for craft going far off.]

When looked at closely the two verses do not quite fit together in the *Odyssey*, because literally it says 'Ares was not blind' 'when he saw . . .'. Certainly 8.285 is a formulaic verse which occurs several times;[11]

wound around it. In 1939 a vase fragment from the Hephaestus sanctuary of Hephaestia on Lemnos was published (M. A. Della Seta, *Arch. Eph.* 1937 (pub. 1939), 649 ff.; thoroughly interpreted by Charles Picard, *Rev. Arch.* 20 (1942–3), 96–124), which shows a naked goddess—Aphrodite—and opposite her a man with greaves, both in a squatting position and obviously chained. Since the finding place establishes the connection with Hephaestus there is hardly any doubt that this is an illustration of Demodocus' song, dedicated to the god whose *technē* [craft] won; therefore sculpture has not ignored the song completely after all. Conjectures about cultic background in Picard 103 ff., Delcourt 81 ff. Whereas Della Seta dated the vase as early as the 8th cent. Picard suggested the last third of the 7th without excluding the early 6th. The fact that the truly sensational find hardly seems to have caused a stir may be due to the War. [The date of the Lemnian vase—beginning of the 6th century—is taken to be certain by now; the subject remains enigmatic, see J. Heurgon CRAI 1988, 19 f.—W.B.]

[10] It only occurs in *Od.* 20.346 apart from here.

[11] *Il.* 10.515, 13.10, 14.135; Hes. *Theog.* 466.

ἀλαοσκοπιή, as the manuscripts usually write,[12] has practically fused into one word with the meaning of 'careless' or 'fruitless' watch, but it is remarkable that the catachrestic conjunction with ὡς ἴδε is found again only in the Dolon episode (*Il.* 10.515 f.) in contrast to the other examples in the *Iliad* and in Hesiod.

Further: here as there Hephaestus is at the centre of the laughter which arises half at his initiative and half at his cost; and although the island of Lemnos is mentioned in many other places[13] the *Sinties* are mentioned only in these two.[14] All this seems to be more than mere coincidence.

Coincidence is excluded completely as soon as the two scenes from *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are juxtaposed in their context: in their whole structure they appear related and connected with each other. In the divine scene of *Iliad* 1, Zeus has first answered Hera's jealously insistent questions evasively, then with coarse threats. The consequence is the offended silence of his wife (569) and the discontent of all the other gods. Then Hephaestus begins to speak, in a mediating and appeasing tone. He reminds the gods of their superiority and gets the feast going again; all the tensions dissolve in 'Homeric' laughter, the shadows which had fallen on the gods' existence because of human fate disappear. Serene and cloudless the gods' day ends. A similar arc of tension stretches through *Odyssey* 8: Euryalus has offended Odysseus, he has replied angrily, and embarrassing silence (234) ends the *agon* [athletic contest]. Then Alcinous finds the right word, he gives his guest his due honour and at the same time demonstrates the true superiority of the Phaeacians. Odysseus admires the dance and singing (265); the song of Demodocus in which the gods laugh so vigorously delights him too (367 f.); and when at the end he praises Demodocus in well-chosen words (382 ff.) there is joy again in the whole company.[15]

[12] The scholia seem to presuppose word-separation. ΑΛΑΟΣΣΚΟΠΙΗΝ is written by several papyri and Venetus A, but Allen keeps in his *Iliad* edition the Vulgate ἀλαοσκοπιήν.

[13] *Il.* 2.722, 7.467, 8.230, 14.230, 21.40, 46, 58, 79, 24.753.

[14] *Il.* 1.594, *Od.* 8.294. A Thracian tribe according to Hellanicus *FGrHist.* 4 F 71.

[15] Already the meaningful gradation θαύμαζε—τέρπετο 'praise' is evidence against the assumption of a subsequent, disturbing insertion of the song. The main argument of the analysis is the assertion that the song interrupts the dance performances without a motive (above nn. 3–4, esp. Blass, Focke, furthermore Margarete Riemschneider, *Homer*

The fundamental difference between the two scenes—there the serene action of the gods juxtaposed with the other pole of the one comprehensive reality, tragic human affairs, here a poem within a poem for the mere exhilaration of the fictitious (and real) listeners—will have to be discussed later. But the similarity is impossible to overlook: in both cases laughter conquers ill-feeling, in both cases it is caused by Hephaestus, the skilful cripple; and if in addition to this there are individual linguistic and factual correspondences, the finding is confirmed: the 'Homeric' laughter has not been taken over thoughtlessly; *Iliad* 1 is present in the *Odyssey* scene.

But this by no means exhausts the connections with the *Iliad*. In terms of riskiness of topic, of offensiveness to ancient and modern critics,[16] there is only one scene of the *Iliad* comparable: the *Διὸς ἀπάτη* [*Dios apatē*, Hera's deception of Zeus in Book 14]. And again detailed connections can be found. Certainly the fact that the verse *δεῦρο, φίλη, λέκτρονδε, τραπείομεν εὐνηθέντε* ['Come, my dear, to bed, let us turn to lovemaking'] occurs here as well as there (*Il.* 14.314 = *Od.* 8.292, but also *Il.* 3.441) is caused by the content. Another verse repetition is more remarkable: *οὐκ ἔστ' οὐδὲ ἔοικε τεὸν ἔπος ἀρνήσασθαι* ['it is not possible or seemly to deny your request']. With these words Hephaestus finally complies with Poseidon's request (*Od.* 8.358). The same words are spoken by Aphrodite to Hera (*Il.* 14.212), only there they mean immediate concession, as is 'becoming' for the wife of Zeus (213), whereas in the

(Leipzig, 1950), 47). This is contradicted by the following consideration: after the detailed announcement 250 ff. the round dance cannot be dealt with in the few verses 262–4, but how can music and dance be described in detail in epic language if not by reporting the dancing song? Cf. Wilhelm Mattes, *Odysseus bei den Phäaken* (Würtzburg, 1958), 97, 2; cf. also Dornseiff, *Die archaische Mythenerzählung*, 44 ff.; how far we need to presuppose mimetic dance remains doubtful, Delcourt 80 mentions the Cordax.—By the way, is purely instrumental music, which would come in if we deleted the song, not much more striking and 'offensive' for Homeric time?—We cannot argue with the unique form *ἥλιος* 271 when we consider the character of Homeric artistic language; an equally unique contraction, e.g. *Il.* 18.475 *τιμῆντα*, instead of *τιμήεντα*; cf. Pierre Chantraine, *Grammaire Homérique*, i[2] (Paris, 1948), 47.

[16] Already Xenophanes, VS 21 B 11, 3 = 12, 2: *μοιχεύειν καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν* ['engaging in adultery and deceiving one another']; Plato, *Rep.* 390b–c, *Ath.* 3.122c censures both scenes together. The song of Demodocus was deleted (scholium to Aristoph. *Pax* 778) or purified by removing the most offensive bit (scholium to *Od.* 8.333) or interpreted allegorically (Heraclitus *qu. Hom.* 39; 69 = scholium to *Od.* 8.346; *Ath.* 12.511b–c.

Odyssey the verse somewhat abruptly and surprisingly concludes longer negotiations.[17]

The following is even more important: Hera, having achieved the object of her plan, prudishly delays with the words (*Il.* 14.333 ff.):

> *πῶς κ' ἔοι, εἴ τις νῶϊ θεῶν αἰειγενετάων*
> *εὕδοντ' ἀθρήσειε, θεοῖσι δὲ πᾶσι μετελθὼν*
> *πεφράδοι*
>
> [How would it be, if some one of the gods who live forever
> should see us sleeping, and going among them
> should tell all the gods?]

and Zeus calms her (342 ff.)

> *... μήτε θεῶν τό γε δείδιθι μήτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν*
> *ὄψεσθαι· τοίόν τοι ἐγὼ νέφος ἀμφικαλύψω*
> *χρύσεον· οὐδ' ἂν νῶϊ διαδράκοι Ἠέλιός περ ...*
>
> [Don't fear that any one of gods or men will see,
> such is the golden cloud with which I will cover [us];
> not even Helios could spy us through it ...]

In *Od.* 8 Helios sees the two first (270) and then Hephaestus in a loud voice calls *πᾶσι θεοῖσι*, 'to all the gods' (305). This is more than similarity simply conditioned by the situation: the whole embarrassing and comical situation of Demodocus' song is contained potentially in the *Dios apatē*; what is only suggested here is there elaborated in detail.

Again connections of language and content come together: this *Iliad* scene too is behind the song of Ares and Aphrodite.

And a third episode is reflected there: the battle of the gods. The fact that in *Iliad* 20–1 and in *Od.* 8 the same gods appear, Poseidon, Hermes, and Apollo, may not be considered remarkable since they are the most important Olympians. But already the verses describing their appearance are almost identical:

[17] Walter Diehl, *Die wörtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Ilias und Odyssee* (diss. Greifswald, 1938), 72. Attempt at a legal interpretation of the passage in *Od.* 8: Adalbert Erler, 'Die Bürgschaft Poseidons im 8. Gesang der Odyssee', *ZSRG romanische Abteilung* 65 (1947), 312–19.

Od. 8.322 f.: ἦλθε Ποσειδάων γαιήοχος, ἦλθ' ἐριούνης Ἑρμείας

[There came Poseidon the earth-shaker, there came the helper Hermes]

Il. 20.34 f.: ἦδὲ Ποσειδάων γαιήοχος ἠδ' ἐριούνης Ἑρμείας

[and Poseidon the earth-shaker and the helper Hermes]

—the strange epithet ἐριούνης ['the helper'] occurs only in these two places in epic—and the anaphora compared with the simple conjunction of the *Iliad* should probably be understood as a conscious further development. Even more clearly than in *Iliad* 5 (355 ff.), Ares and Aphrodite in Book 21 are close friends. The goddess wants to lead him, injured, out of battle and at the end they both lie on the ground next to each other (*Il.* 21.416 ff.). The whole presumably reflects the (to be presupposed) myths about the connection of Ares and Aphrodite (above n. 6). But it is the unmistakable similarity in the whole way the gods behave, in their characterization, which is most important: Poseidon, of a deliberate and slow nature, is felt to belong to the older generation; he knows what is becoming for his age (*Il.* 21.439 f.); and so he is the only one who cannot laugh with the others in *Od.* 8 but feels obliged to end the matter with a light touch. Because of his *aidōs* [respect, sense of shame] Apollo cannot start any scuffles with Poseidon in *Il.* 21 (468 f.); Hephaestus does not want to accept Poseidon's bail because he cannot seriously make his superior liable (*Od.* 8.350 ff.). On the other hand, Hephaestus knows that it is 'not becoming' (358) to reject his words. But especially Hermes: in his answer to Apollo (*Od.* 8.339 ff.) he rejects convention and custom with the same unembarrassed and flippant gesture with which he breaks the rules of the gods' battle in refusing to fight Leto (*Il.* 21.498 ff.)—'boast anyway of having defeated me'. The happy, cunning god of shepherds and thieves, as the Hymn describes him, appears here sublimated in a very subtle way—typical of Homer—from κερδαλεόφρων ['clever for gain'] to εἴρων ['feigning modesty'], who by resigning his own dignity in smiling self-detraction unmasks appearances and in this very way proves his independence. Precisely this subtlety is common to both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Again the comparison has led from the linguistic to the factual: the gods' individuality in Demodocus' song has been formed under *Iliadic* influence.

To sum up: clear connections with three gods' scenes from the *Iliad* have emerged: inextinguishable laughter around Hephaestus as in Book 1; risky situations as in Book 14; gods' conversations and gods' characterizations as in Book 21. The parallels became evident each time in individual formulation, in borrowed verses and formulas as well as quite particularly in the contents as a whole, in the disposition and function of persons and scenes. Not all these cases can be coincidental and nobody will postulate for all of them—though for individual cases this would be conceivable—a hypothetical common source to explain the correspondence. Demodocus' song does presuppose the *Iliad*.

But then Demodocus' song does not remind us of any randomly chosen scenes from the *Iliad* but of those three divine scenes which by their extent and content decisively coin the image of the *Iliadic* gods as ῥεῖα ζώοντες ['living easily']; from this results the decisive perspective for the understanding of Demodocus' song.

For the world of the *Iliad* the contrast between the serene life of the gods and deadly serious human fate is constitutive;[18] it was possible to call this coexistence virtually 'the inner necessary form of the *Iliad*'.[19] The 'sublime unseriousness' (Reinhardt) of the gods is the counterworld to that of human suffering, the ironic mirroring[20] of human tragedy. The three gods' scenes mentioned must be seen in the context of the poetical work. Among humans, harmless events entangle themselves into an inextricable knot of guilt and fate. From Olympus, after a short disagreement, the inextinguishable laughter of the easy-living gods answers back. On earth, battle rages, demanding victim after victim. At that precise moment, the world-ruler Zeus, whose decree is to be fulfilled, succumbs to his wife's cunning. Achilles rages terribly, and the final battle with Hector looms. The battle of the gods with each other becomes a game, which results in tears at the most, and Zeus is amused by it. Later theology regarded the gods' laughter as diminishing

[18] Cf. esp. Karl Reinhardt, 'Das Parisurteil' (above n. 5), 22 f.

[19] U. Hölscher, *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee* (Berlin, 1939), 48 ff.

[20] 'Irony' not in a Socratic sense but in the more general sense of having a 'double bottom', of the two elements cancelling each other, as has been shown especially by Karl Reinhardt, 'Das Parisurteil', 22 f.

their dignity; in reality it is rather an expression of a dreadful, uncanny superiority, of a truly divine freedom and security, far removed from all calculating human reason.

The divine scenes of the *Iliad* in which this takes shape are united in sharply concentrated focus in Demodocus' song; and yet something completely different has emerged. It is true that one could find here, too, some ironic reflection. Ancient commentators (Ath. 5.192 d–e) already draw a parallel between the content of Demodocus' song and the theme of the *Odyssey* as a whole. In both there is the question of marital faithfulness, and again what causes only laughter on Olympus becomes deadly serious on earth. But whereas in the *Iliad* image is set against image in an unforgettable way, in the *Odyssey* at best only analysis can discover a connection.

For indeed that serene world of the gods as a contrast to human reality has in general been abandoned in the *Odyssey*. The nature of the gods has changed.[21] Right at the beginning Zeus programmatically says

> ὦ πόποι, οἷον δή νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται (*Od.* 1.32)
> [Oh, you see how mortals blame us gods . . .]

He feels that he has been forced onto the defensive. But in the *Iliad* no one answers when, for instance, Menelaus calls

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, οὔ τις σεῖο θεῶν ὀλοώτερος ἄλλος (*Il.* 3.365)
> [Father Zeus, there is no god more destructive than you.]

At the end of the *Odyssey* we find the confirmation

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ ῥα ἔτ' ἐστὲ θεοὶ κατὰ μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον (*Od.* 24.351)
> [Father Zeus, truly then there are still gods on tall Olympus.]

—the fact that there are 'still' any gods left at all has to become clear to man through his experience of life, through the victory of justice in the world. Zeus, as far as he is there at all, has the task of watching over morals and justice. And so his involvement with earthly matters is quite different from that in the *Iliad*. The many-coloured life of the

[21] More recent literature about the religious differences of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Alfred Heubeck, *Gymnasium* 62 (1955), 130 n. 42. Most outstanding but already a little over-refined is Werner Jaeger's formulation that the Zeus of the *Odyssey* is the 'philosophically purified world conscience' (*Paideia* I[3] (Berlin, 1954), 85 f.).

gods in the *Iliad*, an expression of that infinite freedom, must atrophy under the burden of ethical responsibilities. Divine assemblies are rare and they have as their topic only human circumstances, the restoration of justice. Compared with Zeus and Athena, who are connected by the same desire, the other gods stand well in the background. It is only in Demodocus' song that they are given individual life. When faced with this view of the world the gods' laughter must grow silent—with the one exception of Demodocus' song.

From this perspective Demodocus' song could be regarded as an alien element in the *Odyssey* after all, and yet it is linked through a variety of relationships with the whole scene and indeed with the entire poem. It has become clear already (above n. 15) that it cannot simply be removed from the context of *Odyssey* 8. Ancient and modern commentators[22] have often emphasized how, with its light nature, it has been fitted into the playfully serene world of the Phaeacians. But more important still is the special emphasis which dominates the story and incorporates it completely into that framework which, with Jacoby, could be called the 'spiritual physiognomy of the *Odyssey*'.

At the centre there is no frivolity but the victory of *technē*, of cleverness over nature. So we can observe everywhere in the *Odyssey* how deliberation and even calculation take the place of spontaneous feeling and action. It is not only Odysseus who is completely moulded by this. When after twenty years' waiting his return home is announced, he by no means seizes the opportunity immediately (*Od.* 5.171 ff.): when he finally knows that he is at home he quickly contrives a story full of lies (13.253 ff.). But when Telemachus rejects inappropriate presents (4.601 ff.), and Penelope remains suspicious right up to the end (23.166 ff.), this is the result of a basic attitude similar to that of Hephaestus who, instead of resisting openly, lures the wrongdoers into a trap, in indirect revenge. The victory of deliberation over simple spontaneous acting or living is the discovery of the *Odyssey* as compared with the *Iliad*. The values of the world of the nobility diverge in this way: as Odysseus knows how to distinguish outward appearance from spiritual qualities (*Od.* 8.167 ff.), so Aphrodite is καλή [beautiful], but also οὐκ ἐχέθυμος

[22] *Ath.* 12.511b–c; Heraclitus, *qu. Hom.* 69; scholium to *Od.* 8.267, 272; Eustathius to *Od.* 8.267, 335.

[unable to control herself].[23] The taste for material goods corresponds to the advance of calculation: the fine seems to be the most important thing for Hephaestus.[24] So Demodocus' song, in spite of its special status, turns out on a spiritual level to belong fully to the *Odyssey*.

Yet even if the most moralistic sentiment of the *Odyssey* is found just here—*οὐκ ἀρετᾷ κακὰ ἔργα* ['bad deeds do not prosper'] (329)—there is still enough danger. It has been emphasized, no doubt correctly, to what extent offensive elements have been repressed,[25] in contrast for instance to Lucian (*Dial. D.* 17): Ares and Aphrodite do not seem to be taken completely seriously in the *Iliad* either; besides, Ares has reached his goal anyway and Aphrodite is as it were in her element. But at least in the dialogue between Poseidon and Hephaestus no remnant of divinity can be discovered;[26] anthropomorphization cannot go further than this. Even if we are extremely conservative in judging what original religious feelings could and could not tolerate, Demodocus' song makes an unbridgeable contrast with the conception of the gods in *Odyssey* Book 1 as well as with the sublimity of the gods of the *Iliad*.

And yet everything fits together: for the tale of Ares and Aphrodite is not as the world of the gods is in the *Iliad*, the other side of the one reality. Nor is the poet speaking in his own name. It is significant that it is Demodocus of all people who recites the song among the easy-living Phaeacians. It is not 'Homer' who is the speaker here, but *Δημόδοκος τῇ ἰδίᾳ μυθοποιίᾳ* ['Demodocus with his own myth-making'], as the scholium (to *Od.* 8.267) rightly says. As the fairy-tale-like adventures of Odysseus have receded into the distance through the artifice of the first-person singular narrative,[27] so also the song of Ares and Aphrodite has been put in quotation marks, so to speak, and thus rendered harmless. One little detail is striking, especially in comparison with the *Iliad*. In the *Iliad* it is a matter of course that while Zeus, e.g. during the fight of

[23] *ἐχέθυμος Od.* 8.320 is *ἅπαξ λεγόμενον* [occurs only once]—a new word for a new view. Comparable formations are *ἐχεπευκής* or *ἐχέφρων*, but with a different meaning of the first element.

[24] Cf. Jacoby, op. cit. 180 ff. on the role of 'possession' in the *Odyssey*.

[25] Esp. Walter F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands* (Frankfurt, 1956[4]), 239 ff.; Friedländer (above n. 5).

[26] It is significant that Otto (above, n. 25) passes over this conversation. Aristarchus' reading *εὐθύνομι* ['call you to account'] instead of *δέομι* ['bind you'], v. 352, mitigates the most outrageous part, the god's detention for debt.

[27] Jacoby, op. cit. 166 f., Heubeck, *Der Odysseedichter und die Ilias*, 97 f.

the gods, watches and enjoys it (*Il.* 21.388 ff.), in our song his name is mentioned only in Hephaestus' exclamation (306), and in what follows he seems to have been forgotten. In reality, I suppose that he has been consciously excluded.[28] And thus *Odyssey* Books 1 and 8 correspond: in Book 1 the poet wrestles with the question of divine justice, whose representative is called Zeus; in Book 8, in a non-committal, even precarious game, this name is missing. Zeus in the *Odyssey* has been raised so far above the other gods that he cannot be drawn into such a situation.

The whole problem of *Odyssey* 'analysis' has so far been intentionally omitted, because it is impossible to make a decisive statement from such a narrow base. As a result, it can be said in summary that Demodocus' song on the one hand is firmly rooted in the total structure of our *Odyssey*, and on the other that it condenses the most important divine scenes of the *Iliad* at the same time as it transforms them.

If we dare to end by interpreting this finding further, we can come up only with a conjecture, but one which may seem plausible: the *Odyssey* poet, who created his work according to whatever models after the pattern of the *Iliad* but with a new ethico-religious attitude, saw that in his model there remained a vacuum in his own far-too-serious image of the world and its gods. So he undertook the task of uniting the whole Olympic serenity of the *Iliad* in one image. That thus—if you come this far you might as well go all the way—the most precarious of all divine scenes resulted is characteristic rather than astonishing. The *Odyssey* poet has already reached the point at which uninhibitedness about the myths of the gods has been lost; under the influence of ethical reflection, there occurs a split into a 'purer' conception of god on the one hand, and a religiously irrelevant or even risky fiction on the other. The poet of the *Odyssey* took over the laughing gods from the *Iliad*, but with much cushioning and distancing he separates the 'divine burlesque' from his actual religious concern, which crystallizes around the figure of Zeus.

[28] Apollodorus wonders why Zeus or Phobos and Deimos do not plead for Ares instead of Poseidon who is not as close to him: scholium *Od.* 8.344 *Ἀπολλόδωρος ζητεῖ, διά τί τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν οὐδεὶς ἦν . . .* [Apollodorus asks why there was no other of the gods . . .]. Dindorf conjectures *ἀπῆν* without reason.

3

Odysseus' Scar: An Essay on Homeric Epic Narrative Technique

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Translated by Michael Lesley

In the first chapter of *Mimesis*,[1] E. Auerbach, inspired by an exchange of letters between Goethe and Schiller of April 1797 concerning the 'retarding element' in epic as opposed to 'tragic' suspense,[2] offers an interpretation of the retarding digression on Odysseus' scar in Book 19 of the *Odyssey*. Although his theses concern issues essential for the understanding of epic narrative, their reception has been remarkably ambivalent. In the main field of Homer research, where the battle between Analysts and Unitarians does not yet seem to be entirely fought out, despite the appeals from the 'oral poetry' camp, they are discussed only occasionally.[3] Among those Homer specialists on the other hand who focus more on the possibilities of oral poetry or on typology and technique of Homeric narrative, as well as among scholars

Slightly revised paper given at the 14th conference of the Mommsen-Gesellschaft in Augsburg, 9 June 1976. [The German original was first published in *A&A* 22 (1976) 101–14, and reprinted with addenda in J. Latacz (ed.), *Homer. Die Dichtung und ihre Deutung* (WdF 136) Darmstadt, 1991, 491–514, and in my collected papers, *'Darstellungsziele und Erzählstrategien*, ed. A. Bettenworth, Berlin, 2006, 49–64, chs. 7–11 with notes.]

[1] *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*, 1st edn. 1946, 2nd edn. 1967, 5–27. [Page references and quotations are from the English translation by Willard R. Trask, Princeton UP, 1968.]

[2] Goethe to Schiller, 19 and 22 Apr. 1797, and Schiller to Goethe, 21 Apr. 1797 (cf. also Schiller's letters of 25 Apr. and 5 May, and Goethe's of 28 Apr.).

[3] Cf. e.g. Friedhelm Müller, *Darstellung und poetische Funktion der Gegenstände in der Odyssee*, Diss. Marburg 1968, 31 ff.; H. Eisenberger, *Studien zur Odyssee*, 1973, 266 with n. 32.

outside the closed circle of Homeric philologists, Auerbach's theses seem sometimes to have achieved an almost canonical status. J. B. Hainsworth, for example, writes in his overview of Homer research that, 'in an excellent essay', Auerbach worked out the contrast 'between the pregnant, allusive style of Old Testament storytelling and the direct, explicit manner of Homer ... whose characters play their rôles in a continuous foreground'.[4] He showed that 'ambiguity, suspense, multi-layered meaning are not present in Homer to tempt the interpreter'. In the recently published collection of essays, *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry*,[5] J. Bramble claims with regard to the compositional methods of Apollonius Rhodius: 'There is no centre of gravity, no foreground; we have hardly progressed from the step-by-step one-dimensional style of continuous narration in Homer described by Auerbach.'[6] In both cases Auerbach's view that Homer knows no background and that what he tells at any one time is the only and actual present, filling the

[4] 'Homer', *Greece and Rome*, New Survey in the Classics 3, 1969, 32. Auerbach's comparison of Homeric narrative style with the Old Testament account of the Abraham/Isaac story (Gen. 22: *Mimesis* 7 ff.) is misleading, as the two texts follow two very different purposes: one is a narrative designed to entertain, the other a religious account. The enigmatic vagueness of time and place in the biblical text (*from where* does God address Abraham? *where* does he send him, and *how* does the trip there go?—all of which are mysteriously dark) as well as Abraham's silent obedience, characteristics which are according to Auerbach 'multi-layered', 'full of tension', and having 'background', and which he plays off against the presumed 'plainness', 'continuous foreground', and 'lack in tension' of the Homeric narrative (*Mimesis* 11 ff.) are due to the religious dimension. Believers should be obedient to God and trust his leadership, without asking 'why', 'how', 'from where', and 'to where'. This is why the Abraham/Isaac story, in this sense paradigmatic, so conspicuously fails to explain and clarify these elements of the story. Homer's text, on the other hand, lacks a comparable 'cultic function' or 'intention'; for Homer it is precisely the clarity and realism of his portrayal which are of primary importance. The two texts are therefore incomparable in terms of their modes of portrayal; it is precisely *not* a question of 'equally ... epic texts' (*Mimesis* 11). Strangely, this conclusion also follows from Auerbach's own statements: he writes (*Mimesis* 14 f.) of the 'religious intent' of the 'biblical narrator' whose activity 'did not have the goal of realism ... but of truth' and he rightly points out that the biblical 'stories ... are precisely *not* narrated reality. Doctrine and promises are incarnate in them.' How then, after admitting this, can he continue to speak of two equally epic 'styles' for the 'portrayal of actuality', 'two styles [which], in their opposition, represent basic types' (*Mimesis* 23)? The Abraham/Isaac story is not at all a narrative text.

[5] T. Woodman and D. West, eds., Cambridge, 1974.

[6] J. Bramble, 'Cui non dictus Hylas puer? (Prop. I, 20)', ibid. 86. Bramble's view of Apollonius' 'method of composition' has been superseded at least since the commentaries of F. Vian (*Apollonios de Rhodes, Argonautiques Chant III*, 1961, 12); cf. also my own *Theokrit und Apollonios Rhodios*, 1965, esp. 122–4.

scene and awareness completely, is taken as both entirely self-evident and correct. Is Auerbach's position, which is developed from his interpretation of the scar digression in Book 19 of the *Odyssey*, really so self-evident?

The digression is part of the foot-washing scene, placed between the first and second conversations of the as-yet-unrecognized Odysseus, disguised as an unknown beggar, with Penelope. Auerbach gives relatively little of the context of the scene. I will recapitulate the parts of the plot which are important to understanding the motivation of the foot washing. In Penelope's first conversation with the apparent stranger she feels strongly attracted to him because of the familiarity with Odysseus that he reveals (as she says herself in 19.253–4; cf. 350 ff.). To honour him as a guest, she orders her servant girls to wash his feet (19.317). Odysseus at first declines altogether to have his feet washed (343), then declines to be washed by just anyone of Penelope's servants, and finally agrees to have his feet washed, but only by an old woman who has had as much life experience as he himself (346–8). This move from categorical rejection to qualified acceptance shows that it cannot simply be stated, as it usually is, that Odysseus asked for 'the service of an old woman'.[7] The narrator carefully sets the stage for the almost impolite manner, in which half consent is only slowly and reluctantly forthcoming, by describing the poor treatment given the unrecognized Odysseus earlier by Melantho and other of Penelope's young servants (this explanation for his attitude is explicitly added later on, in lines 372–5).[8] At the stranger's statement that he would have his feet washed only by an old woman, if at all, Penelope makes her decision, choosing Eurycleia, Odysseus' old nurse. Why did she choose Eurycleia in particular, the woman most

[7] So e.g. A. Lesky, R. E. Homeros, 1967, offprint 127 ('Odysseus expressly and formally requests an old woman to serve him'); for similar views elsewhere in modern scholarship cf. e.g. U. Hölscher, *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee*, 1939, 72; R. Merkelbach, *Untersuchungen zur Odyssee*, 1951, 2nd edn. 1969, 3 f.; D. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey*, 1955, 126 f. Page's question (loc. cit. 127) to the poet, 'You cause Odysseus to make much ado about obtaining the services of his old nurse. You say, his purpose was *not* to bring about his recognition by means of the scar: kindly tell us what other conceivable purpose Odysseus could have had?' is posed incorrectly. It should read 'why did Odysseus not flatly refuse Penelope's offer?' Answer: 'because such a refusal would have been a serious offence by the guest against the courtesy offered by the hostess.' Cf. also A. Thornton, *People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey*, 1970, 101 with n. 57.

[8] Cf. already C. Rothe, *Die Odyssee als Dichtung*, 1914, 150 f., and Eisenberger, *Studien* (above, n. 3), 264 f.

likely to recognize Odysseus, as noted already by the scholiasts?[9] Here too we must make a careful distinction. It is not correct to claim, as many students of Homer do, that *Odysseus wanted* to be washed by Eurycleia.[10] The narrator does not give the choice to Odysseus but to Penelope, and makes it clear that old Eurycleia was actually barely able to perform such a service (356 'although she barely has any strength left', ὀλιγηπελέουσά περ ἔμπης); the narrator stresses that she would not have been up for consideration. Moreover, Odysseus is not portrayed as being as careless as is usually assumed.[11] The narrator sets up the situation in such a way that Odysseus has before him not Eurycleia but Eurynome, who is standing next to Penelope. Eurynome is also old and has already served him not long before at Penelope's behest.[12] On the other hand Eurycleia 'sits' somewhere inconspicuous, as Penelope has first to ask her to rise (357 'so rise now, prudent Eurycleia', ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἀνστᾶσα, περίφρων Εὐρύκλεια, ...). Penelope's choice of Eurycleia is attributed by the narrator to the fact that Penelope's thoughts are completely revolving around Odysseus especially after her recent conversation with the apparent stranger.[13] The words of the apparent stranger about an old woman with great life experience therefore bring into her mind the old woman to whom Odysseus is closest, Eurycleia (Penelope's own words make this clear: 354–5 'I *have* an old woman, the nurse of this

[9] Schol. M V on *Od.* 19.345 (Aristonicus) ἀθετοῦνται οἱ τρεῖς, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι αἱρεῖται τὴν δυναμένην ἐπιγνῶναι ... ('The three verses, i.e. 346–8, are athetized [ἀθετοῦνται] first because he picks the exact one who can recognize him ...'). Cf. H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee*, 1972, 75 ff., cf. 94 ff.

[10] Since B. Niese, *Die Entwicklung der homerischen Poesie*, 1882, 157 ff.; also recently, in spite of Rothe (above, n. 8) 151, e.g. also Merkelbach (above, n. 7), 3: ('by the old one he, i.e. Odysseus, means Eurycleia, who is, of course, present ...'), and H. Vester, 'Das 19. Buch der Odyssee', *Gymnasium* 75 (1968), 425 ('Touched by emotion Odysseus forgets the role he is playing and therefore wants to have his feet washed by Eurycleia ...'), although incidentally Vester makes it clear that neither the conversation between Odysseus and Penelope nor the foot washing was meant to lead to recognition.

[11] Cf. e.g. W. Büchner, 'Die Niptra in der Odyssee', *RhM* 80, 1931, 133; Vester (cf. previous note); Eisenberger, *Studien*, 264 f. ('It does not occur to Odysseus that Eurycleia might recognize him by his scar if Penelope would give her the task of washing his feet': but in the conception underlying our scene, the thought of the scar could only occur to Odysseus *after* Eurycleia was called in to wash his feet, which was unforeseeable to him.)

[12] *Od.* 19. 96 ff.; for her age, cf. 18.185, 17.499 (Eisenberger, *Studien* 264); see also 23.153 f. where *Eurynome* 'washes' Odysseus.

[13] Cf. e.g. 19.354 κεῖνος (cf. 18.181): in her thoughts 'he' is quite naturally 'Odysseus'.

poor man, of Odysseus, who will wash your feet').[14] The narrator, who wants recognition of Odysseus to come about through Eurycleia, motivates the course of events leading up to it in an entirely plausible way: the unknown Odysseus will only have an *old woman* wash his feet for good reasons; Penelope's thoughts are always on *Odysseus*, *ergo* she picks the *old woman* who is closest to *Odysseus*, Eurycleia. For her part, Eurycleia expressly welcomes Penelope's choice, above all because the appearance and unfortunate position of the apparent stranger remind her strongly of her missing lord. At her words the concealed Odysseus becomes aware of the danger, and while she makes preparations for the foot washing he 'quickly' (389 *αἶψα*) backs away from the hearth fire into the darkness, as he has realized 'immediately after her words' (390 *αὐτίκα*) that she could recognize him by his scar and give him away. But his precautionary measure comes too late; Eurycleia approaches to wash her as yet unrecognized master and 'immediately' recognizes the scar (392–3 *αὐτίκα δ'ἔγνω | οὐλήν*).[15] The listener waits eagerly to hear how she is able to recognize it despite the darkness and how she will react. Instead of fulfilling these expectations, however, the narrator inserts the story of the origin of the scar, spanning 72 lines (393 ff., introduced by a relative clause), to which Auerbach and many others have taken exception.[16] Only in 467 does the main plot pick up again,

[14] *ἔστι δέ μοι γρηῢς ... | ἥ κεῖνον δύστηνον ἐὺ τρέφεν ἠδ' ἀτίταλλε*: this means she picks Eurycleia *because* she is thinking of Odysseus.

[15] On 19.386 ff. M. Erren in his paper '*Αὐτίκα* "immediately" as signal of the beginning action in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*', *Poetica* 3 (1970), 49 f. (only referring to the second of the two *αὐτίκα*) states: 'One might think that this recognition scene is of foremost importance for the action which follows, but this is just not the case in the *Odyssey* ... Nothing happens because of the recognition other than that a bowl of warm water is spilled. People's thoughts and speeches, hopes and fears are too small in the *Odyssey* to become that important ...'. But is the value of a scene in epic poetry to be measured only in terms of what 'emerges' from it in the foreground? Erren leaves out of account the central function of the scar and its history for the subsequent recognition plot, as well as the significance of the scar narrative for the characterization of Odysseus and Eurycleia. Moreover Erren passes over all narrative aspects which give the recognition scene its special character (cf. e.g. the 'paradox of misunderstanding': Hölscher, *Form der Odyssee*, 64 f., or the narrative device of the 'almost': Odysseus is 'almost' recognized many times: cf. most recently Eisenberger, *Studien*, 267). The peculiar tension of the narrative is the effect of the narrator's time and again exposing his Odysseus, who does not want to be found out, to perpetual danger in his own house of giving himself away or of being recognized despite his disguise.

[16] Auerbach takes the Homeric narrative style, as he infers it from the scar digression, to be indisputably 'antiquated' and unsatisfactory compared to the biblical 'narrative'

returning precisely to the point where it left off before the digression: 'this scar the old woman recognized (*γνῶ ῥ'*)'. Only now is the reason given ('she recognized it by touch'),[17] after which Eurycleia's reaction is portrayed, and the recognition scene is finally led to its goal at an almost 'meteoric' tempo. Eurycleia touches and recognizes the scar on Odysseus' leg, she lets his foot drop, it falls into the bowl, upending it. In her joy and pain she can hardly utter 'you are Odysseus'. She wants to alert Penelope—but Penelope's thoughts are elsewhere. Odysseus seizes his old nurse by the throat and warns and threatens her, and she immediately promises to stay silent. She then brings fresh water in place of that which was spilled and washes and anoints her master. Odysseus moves back his chair closer to the fire to warm himself and wraps the scar in his rags (line 507, 'he wrapped the scar with his rags' *οὐλὴν δὲ κατὰ ῥακέεσσι κάλυψεν*, brings the interlude to an emphatic close).[18]

Why is the plot broken up precisely between Eurycleia's discovery and reaction by the leisurely-told history of the scar, which seems to stand in stark contrast to the tempo of the surrounding main plot? Can we really conclude from this strange retardation, as Auerbach does, that in the regular flow of the epic poem Homer did not differentiate between foreground and background? Auerbach believes the digression of the scar is without perspective and background for three reasons:[19] (1) because it sets off in the wrong place, (2) because it is so massive that the listener loses sight of the main plot, and (3) because all parts are narrated in the same manner without differentiation, i.e. without the more important material 'put in the foreground' and the unimportant 'obscured'.

(cf. e.g. *Mimesis* 7; 12–13; 21–3). Also cf. frequent earlier attempts to deny that ll. 395–466 were part of the 'original' *Odyssey* (e.g. A. Kirchhoff, *Die homerische Odyssee*, 1879, 523 f.; P. V. d. Mühll, *Odyssee*, 3rd edn. 1962, apparatus to 19.395; *contra*, cf. e.g. already W. Arend, *Die typischen Scenen bei Homer*, 1933, 19 n. 3; also F. Focke, *Die Odyssee*, 1943, 331 f. and even Merkelbach, *Untersuchungen*, 5 n 1.

[17] 467 f. *τὴν γρηῢς καταπρηνέσσι λαβοῦσα | γνῶ ῥ' ἐπιμασσαμένη* ('this the old woman recognized by touch as she grasped it with the palms of her hands'): the 'palms of the hands' (*χείρεσσι καταπρηνέσσι*) and the 'touch' (*ἐπιμασσαμένη*) occur here first, supplementing and explaining lines 392 f.

[18] Odysseus' manœuvre with the chair (388 f. 'away from the fire' before the digression and 506 'towards the fire' after the digression) shows that the narrator always has the setting of the scene before his mind's eye.

[19] *Mimesis* 7, cf. 4 f., 11 f., 22.

Let us consider the digression taken by itself, which encompasses lines 393–466. Its cue and entrance is the scar recognized by Eurycleia, 'the scar that a boar with white tusk inflicted on Odysseus when he was at Parnassus to see Autolycus and his sons; his grandfather Autolycus, who excelled among men in thievery and shifty oaths'.

There are four themes or motifs emphasized here which characterize the development of the following narrative: (1) the scar, (2) the boar, (3) Odysseus' visit to Autolycus and his sons at Parnassus, and (4) Autolycus, his grandfather. After the story has been retraced back to Autolycus, it starts again in chronological order: (1) *Autolycus* comes to Ithaca immediately after the birth of his grandson, and gives to him the name Odysseus *at the request of the nurse Eurycleia*. Odysseus is to be called 'the angry one' because Autolycus came to Ithaca angry at many people. Afterwards Autolycus invites the parents to send his grandson to Parnassus when he has grown up, where Autolycus will give him rich gifts (395–412). (2) The now-grown Odysseus takes up the invitation and goes *up to Parnassus* to Autolycus and his sons, who receive him kindly, and on the first day feast him richly (413–27). (3) On the morning of the second day Odysseus goes hunting with Autolycus' sons. They arrive at an almost inaccessible thicket in the woods where *a powerful boar* resides (428–43). (4) The boar, roused from its hiding place by the noise of the hunters and hunting hounds, begins to fight. Odysseus attacks, but the boar anticipates him, inflicting *a deep flesh wound* above his knee; nevertheless, Odysseus is able to kill him. The wound on his knee is bandaged by Autolycus' sons, who then take him back to Autolycus' house (444–58). Thus far the scar narrative itself. The digression closes with Odysseus' return to Ithaca laden with gifts. In answer to his parents' questions, he recounts his experiences in order (462–6): here again at the end of the digression, just as at the beginning, all four main motifs of the scar narrative are summarized: (1) the scar, (2) the boar, (3) the hunt on Parnassus, and (4) Autolycus' sons. Thus the events surrounding the origin of the scar are recounted three times, in the summaries at the beginning and end, and in detail in the middle.

What is the function of this conspicuous insistence on the main elements of the narrative? Many scholars have correctly pointed out the ring-form and 'regressive' structure of the digression, by which the Homeric narrator here as elsewhere seamlessly moves from the main plot

into the digression and from the digression back into the main plot.[20] As concerns Auerbach's views, though, we are more interested in seeing if the digression has a life of its own independent of the main plot, so that it lacks any perspectival relation to the overall context.

By 'perspective' Auerbach means 'the creation of foreground and background' or 'the emphasis on the present of the narrative before the past'.[21] In Lessing's phrasing[22] the term 'perspective', which, as is well known, was taken from painting and applied to poetry,[23] requires 'a single viewpoint, a certain natural field of vision'. In modern literary theory this is commonly called a superior viewpoint, a 'point of view' from which the narrator puts the things he is narrating into specific spatial or temporal relations to one another, achieving the effect of space. Is this space-effect, i.e. differentiation between foreground and background from a fixed narrative point of view, not achieved and not even intended in the version of the scar narrative as it stands, as Auerbach claims? 'A perspectival insertion into the main action' would have been possible, according to Auerbach, 'if the entire story of the scar had been presented as a recollection which awakens in Odysseus' mind at this particular moment'.[24] To achieve this one would only have needed to insert it two lines earlier, 'where the motifs "Odysseus"

[20] However, the term 'ring composition' (cf. W. A. A. van Otterlo, *Untersuchungen über Begriff, Anwendung und Entstehung der griechischen Ringkomposition*, Mededeelingen Nederlandsche Akademie, NS 7.3 (1944), 131–76, esp. 133, and more recently Erbse (above, n. 9), 75 n. 7 and 183 n. 45 for further references; further see A. Heubeck, *Der Odyssee-Dichter und die Ilias*, 1954, 16 f. and J. Haig Gaisser, 'A Structural Analysis of the Digressions in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*', HSCP 73 (1969), 3 ff.), does not cover the organization of the elements of the digression precisely enough. On the term 'regression' cf. T. Krischer, *Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik*, Zetemata 56 (1971), 136 ff. Comparable is the structure of mythical narrative in Pindar (cf. e.g. J. Duchemin, *Pindare, Pythiques*, 1967, 97 on Pythian 4: 'tout s'ordonne selon les lois de la composition régressive, chère à Pindare' ('everything is governed by the rules of regressive composition so dear to Pindar'). Pindar adopts and varies the Homeric technique of digression.

[21] *Mimesis* 7: 'Such [a] subjectivistic-perspectivistic procedure, creating a foreground and background, resulting in the present lying open to the depths of the past . . . '.

[22] *Laokoon oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, 1766, ch. 19: 'The mere observance of the optical experience that a thing in the distance seems smaller than up close is far from giving a painting perspective. Perspective requires a single viewpoint, a certain natural field of vision . . . '. (I am referring here only to Lessing's definition, not his claims about the lack of perspective in ancient paintings or in the Homeric description of Achilles' shield.)

[23] Cf. e.g. W. Kayser, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk*, 14th edn., 1969, esp. 211 ff.

[24] *Mimesis* 7.

and "recollection" were already at hand'. Auerbach is referring here to lines 390–1: 'then suddenly Odysseus feared that the nurse could recognize the scar when she touched it and his whole plan might be disclosed.'[25] Thus Auerbach thinks the story of the scar could have been inserted here in perspective as a recollection of Odysseus, expressed in indirect speech. According to Auerbach the beginning of the narrative might have looked something like '*Suddenly it occurred to Odysseus* that she could recognize the scar which a boar had once given him' (then the digression would have followed as Odysseus' recollection), and at the end it would have said: 'this scar, he feared, she might recognize. Meanwhile Eurycleia came closer, intending to wash him, touched and recognized the scar . . . and called out: you are Odysseus.' However this method, 'creating a foreground and background, resulting in the present lying open to the depths of the past', is, in Auerbach's view, 'entirely foreign to the Homeric style'.[26]

Is this claim true? Is the narrative as we have it actually without perspective, and is Auerbach's proposal of Odysseus recollecting at all feasible for the Homeric narrator in an oral performance situation? The latter can probably be answered outright in the negative. If one compares Auerbach's suggestion with the text as it stands, one substantial difference becomes apparent right away. In Auerbach's alternative version the scar is explained before it has its effect, i.e. before it really becomes important for the plot. Would this not distract from the actual climax, the recognition, 'undermine' it and divide the attention of the listener to the detriment of suspense by elaborating a second fixed point in the plot ('Odysseus' fear and memory')? Is, moreover, the presentation from the limited perspective of Odysseus, as recommended by Auerbach, really in the interest of the overall plot? Odysseus' scar is first mentioned here, then plays a significant role three further times as an identifying feature: 21.217 ff., when Odysseus reveals himself to Eumaios and Philoitios; 23.73 ff., when Eurycleia refers to the foot washing and tells Penelope about the scar; and 23.331 ff., when, in answer to his father Laertes' request for proof of his identity, Odysseus shows him his scar and

[25] *Αὐτίκα γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν ὀΐσατο, μή ἑ λαβοῦσα | οὐλὴν ἀμφράσσαιτο καὶ ἀμφαδὰ ἔργα γένοιτο* ('for immediately', i.e. directly after, and because of, Eurycleia's comment about his similarity to 'Odysseus', 378–81, 'he feared that, touching him, she might recognize the scar and the truth would come to light').

[26] *Mimesis*, loc. cit.

reminds him of its origin. In each of these three references 'the boar' is also mentioned, and in two of them (with Eumaios and Philoitios as well as with Laertes) 'Autolycus and his sons' and 'Parnassus' are also referred to, in other words all four main elements of the digression. In every instance these basic elements are repeated in such a way that only the listener who is familiar with the story of the scar can make sense of it. Thus the scar narrative in Book 19 is vital for a basic understanding of the recognition plot.

The narrator introduces the scar where it is first significant for the plot, as is usually done in introducing momentous plot elements in the epic.[27] In response the audience can ask a series of questions that the narrator must consider: why was the scar so conspicuous, and why did old Eurycleia remember it? What sort of scar was it, and when did Odysseus get it? The answer to these questions must needs be somewhat extensive in itself but a detailed introduction of the scar is also desirable compositionally so that the audience can get a clear idea of it and remember it later. The narrator therefore faces a problem: given the aforementioned conditions, which call for a longer clarifying digression, how does one nevertheless keep the audience from losing track of the main plot? The solution is apparent from the method and timing of the interruption as well as from the form of the inserted narrative.

First, the narrator interrupts the narrative at its most critical point: *after* the recognition, but *before* its effect. The interruption at exactly this peak of tension (whose function Auerbach does not examine),[28] ensures that the audience keeps the starting point clearly in mind. Furthermore, the scar also remains the focus of interest throughout the digression, not for its own sake, but because it is linked to an unforgettable episode in Odysseus' life, which in turn is significant both for himself and for

[27] Cf. e.g. the bow (*Od.* 21.1 ff., 11 ff.), Odysseus' bed (23.177 ff., 188 ff.) or, particularly striking, Odysseus' parting instructions to Penelope (18.257 ff., cf. 175 f.).

[28] Already W. J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey*, 1930, 74 n. 8, states correctly that the long digression was inserted 'for the purpose of tension, just at this point', although he dodges the question of its function in the sentence: 'it is idle to quarrel with the poet for exercising his rights and inserting it just here'. Friedh. Müller, *Darstellung* 34 f., also stresses (against Auerbach) the significance of the timing of the interruption ('the scar is actually relevant exactly at this point and not two verses earlier'), but he is incorrect both in his assumption that the point is 'the realization of the crisis, the question: recognition or non-recognition?' (accepted by Eisenberger, *Studien*, 266 n. 32, but at the time of the interruption the scar is already recognized) and also in his view that the story of the scar is told from Eurycleia's perspective: on this see note 48.

his career. The narrator, by presenting the hunting trip to Parnassus as having already been arranged at Odysseus' birth and namegiving, gives the digression a dimension extending beyond the scar.[29] The battle with the boar is clearly described as the first great achievement in the life of the recently matured Odysseus. The scar that he brings back from it is an impressive badge of honour and a memorial of the brilliantly won battle. Autolycus and his sons make as much ado about the scar as Odysseus' parents do when he returns to Ithaca from his expedition (ll. 45–56). Apparently the wound was *the* topic of conversation in his family and an unforgettable event for everyone involved, that is, besides the parents, above all for Eurycleia the nurse and for old trusted servants of the family like the herdsmen Eumaios and Philoitios; not, however, for Penelope, who has no memories of her own connected with the scar.[30] The fullness with which the circumstances surrounding Odysseus' first *aristeia* [demonstration of prowess] are recounted, including the festive reception at Autolycus' home, the detailed description of the hunting scene, and the forceful image of the boar, evidently all serve to highlight the event and anchor it both in the memory of those involved and in that of the audience. The narrator prepares for the decisive event long beforehand; the summaries already mentioned at the beginning and the end of the digression, which lay down the importance and order of the plot elements to be depicted in detail in the centre part of the digression, serve to orient the audience (ll. 393–4 and 464–6). The scar is the overriding subject everywhere, at the beginning

[29] Here, too, the question of function is important: why does the narrator stretch the digression so far back (to Odysseus' birth) from its actual occasion? Clearly Odysseus' birth and naming are a matter of significance for his story, as is the role that he has Autolycus and Eurycleia play in it.

[30] Thus in *Od.* 23.81 ff. the narrator allows her to react incredulously and evasively to Eurycleia's report of having discovered the scar (contrast her reaction to Odysseus' exposing the uniqueness of the marriage bed, 23.205 ff.: only Penelope and Odysseus share the story of the origin and the secret of the bed). As an identifying mark the scar cannot be separated from the story connected with it, of which only the old members and confidants of the family (Eurycleia, Eumaios, Philoitios, Laertes) have direct knowledge. The scar is therefore an 'unmistakable sign' (σῆμα ἀριφραδές) only for them: the memory shared by all of them is the basis of the recognition. This does not hold for Penelope, though, and thus the analytical claim that the foot-washing scene 'originally' led to recognition between Odysseus and Penelope (see e.g. Merkelbach, *Untersuchungen*, 2–6) is entirely improbable. Eisenberger incorrectly states (*Studien*, 267; similarly already C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*, 1958, 302 f.) that the scar was 'only introduced for the recognition by subordinates' (Laertes?).

(393), middle (449–58), and end (464 ff.) of the inserted narrative. The listener, having heard the scar story narrated in such a way (i.e. in Homer's manner, observed already by Lessing, of replacing a description of a visible object by an account of its coming into being),[31] knows why the old nurse must immediately have recognized this exceptional scar, rooted unforgettably as it was in the family tradition. The listener, too, will keep the scar and its history in mind throughout the rest of the recognition story. It is out of the question, therefore, that the scar was introduced only for its own sake and in such a way as to make the audience lose track of the situation in the main plot which surrounds it, as Auerbach believes.[32]

Furthermore the nurse Eurycleia herself connects the main plot with the story inserted in it, as she is conspicuously linked to Odysseus both inside and outside the digression. It was she who presented Autolycus with his newborn grandson and called on him to give the baby a name. Auerbach writes, 'When the young Eurycleia (401 ff.) sets the infant Odysseus on his grandfather Autolycus' knees... the aged Eurycleia, who a few lines earlier had touched the wanderer's foot, has entirely vanished from the stage and from the reader's mind.'[33] Here Auerbach ignores the fact that in the main plot, before and after the digression, both Penelope and Odysseus clearly refer to the connection between Eurycleia's past and present functions: Penelope in 353 ff. introduces Eurycleia as the one who 'raised the unlucky Odysseus after she took him in her arms at his birth'.[34] She stresses *exactly* the function Eurycleia plays inside the digression. The audience would therefore hardly forget about old Eurycleia when they hear about young Eurycleia

[31] Cf. *Laokoon*, ch. 16 on *Iliad* 2.101 ff. (Agamemnon's sceptre): 'in place of a depiction, he (Homer) gives us the story of the scepter... Thus I finally know the scepter better than the painter could show it to my eyes, or a second Vulcan deliver it into my hands.' Cf. e.g. Odysseus' bow, *Od.* 21.11 ff., or the silver mixing bowl in *Iliad* 23.740 ff. (whose beauty and cost are made plain through its story); cf. Friedh. Müller, *Darstellung* 154 ff.; see also P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza*, 1912, 1 f. (although Lessing is right rather than Herder).

[32] *Mimesis* 5 f.; also Eisenberger, *Studien*, 266 n. 32, who states that the digression reduces 'the tension arising in 392 f.'.

[33] *Mimesis* 5.

[34] 19.354 f., ἣ κεῖνον δύστηνον ἐϋ τρέφεν ἠδ' ἀτίταλλε | δεξαμένη χείρεσσ', ὅτε μιν πρῶτον τέκε μήτηρ ('... who carefully tended my unlucky husband, reared him, took him into her arms the day his mother bore him'; cf. 363, Eurycleia's address τέκνον 'my child' to the seemingly absent Odysseus).

in the framework of the scar digression. Odysseus himself brings up the same intimate relationship when he appeals to Eurycleia after the digression (482–3 'you yourself nourished me at your breast').[35] Thus a fundamental and intentional effect of our text comes from the contrast between the nurse then and now and the young and old Odysseus. The prominence of the nurse Eurycleia in the digression, which would be strange if taken in isolation (she, not the mother or father, is the one who gives Autolycus his grandson and asks him to give him a name),[36] can only be understood as reflecting Eurycleia's significance for the main plot. This is supported by a comparison to the parallel recognition between Odysseus and his father Laertes (24.327 ff.). In that recognition scene the scar serves the same purpose and the trip to Parnassus is mentioned, but because the scene is with Laertes, the role of the parents is naturally emphasized much more, and the nurse Eurycleia does not appear. 'You yourself', Odysseus says to his father, 'you and mother sent me to my grandfather Autolycus so that I might receive the promised gifts.'[37] In the scar digression in Book 19, however, the parents are given a low-key role and the nurse is clearly highlighted, as she is the main character in the pivotal recognition scene with Odysseus.

Finally, the same co-ordination of digression and main narrative can be seen in the portrayal of Odysseus' grandfather Autolycus. Autolycus the master thief[38] is characterized at the beginning of the scar

[35] 482 f., *σὺ δέ μ' ἔτρεφες αὐτὴ | τῷ σῷ ἐπὶ μαζῷ* ('you fed me yourself, at your own breast'), cf. 474, Eurycleia's address to Odysseus: *φίλον τέκος* 'my dear child').

[36] The oddity of singling out Eurycleia is made even more striking in that although the narrator gives her the role of handing little Odysseus to Autolycus and requesting his naming, he emphasizes that Autolycus addresses his answer to the parents alone (406). Thus instead of the parents, who would have been the more natural addressees, Eurycleia is given pride of place for the special purposes of this scene.

[37] *Od.* 24. 333–5 *σὺ δέ με προΐεις καὶ πότνια μήτηρ | ἐς πατέρ' Αὐτόλυκον μητρὸς φίλον, ὄφρ' ἂν ἑλοίμην | δῶρα, τὰ δεῦρο μολόν μοι ὑπέσχετο καὶ κατένευσεν* ('for you and my honoured mother had sent me to Autolycus, mother's father, so that I would receive the gifts that he promised me and consented to when he came here': to understand what 'Autolycus in Ithaca' and the 'promised gifts' are, one needs to be familiar with the scar narrative in Book 19); cf. also Friedh. Müller, *Darstellung*, 33.

[38] Cf. *Iliad* 10.267 (thief); Hesiod fr. 64–7 M.-W. (thief and artful deceptionist). The Homeric narrator clearly interprets Autolycus' famous *κλεπτοσύνη* in Book 19 of the *Odyssey* not as 'thievery' but as 'disguise' and 'deception', bringing it closer to the qualities that are characteristic of *Odysseus* in our *Odyssey*. On *κλεπτοσύνῃ θ' ὅρκῳ τε* ('with deceptive oath') cf. Odysseus' promise at 14.151 ff. to Eumaios, 19.302 ff. to Penelope, and 20.229 ff. to Philoitios: each time it involves a 'sneaky', deceptive oath, as Odysseus does not swear as who he really is.

digression just as Odysseus characterizes himself elsewhere (19.395–6 'Autolycus... who excelled at deception and oaths': *Αὐτόλυκος... ὃς ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο | κλεπτοσύνῃ θ' ὅρκῳ τε*, cf. Odysseus' self portrait 9.19–20 'I am Odysseus, who is renowned for all sorts of cunning deceptions among men': *εἶμ' Ὀδυσσεύς... ὃς πᾶσι δόλοισιν | ἀνθρώποισι μέλω*).[39] In and of itself, perhaps, this agreement would not be very remarkable, but it is striking in connection with Autolycus' naming of Odysseus (407–9): 'because I', says Autolycus, 'have come here to Ithaca angry (*ὀδυσσάμενος*) at many men and women, my grandson here should be called "Odysseus" (the "angry one" or "man of anger").' This namegiving if taken out of context is quite strange and difficult to understand;[40] Autolycus' anger seems far-fetched and is not motivated anywhere. All the more meaningful is, however, the etymology 'Odysseus': *ὀδυσσάμενος* for Odysseus himself and the situation that *he* finds himself in *now*.[41] It is Odysseus, not Autolycus,

[39] Cf. 13.291 ff. (Athena to Odysseus) *κερδαλέος κ' εἴη καὶ ἐπίκλοπος, ὅς σε παρέλθοι | ἐν πάντεσσι δόλοισι... οὐκ ἄρ' ἔμελλες |... λήξειν ἀπατάων | μύθων τε κλοπίων, οἵ τοι πεδόθεν φίλοι εἰσίν...* ('he must be a sly fox and a master of disguise to surpass you in the variety of cunning deceptions... So you were not about to... stop your dissembling and your deceptive tale-telling that are dear to you from the bottom of your heart'); in a similar vein cf. also 3.121 f. (Nestor about Odysseus:) *μάλα πολλὸν ἐνίκα δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς | παντοίοισι δόλοισι* ('Odysseus was by far the best at all sorts of deception').

[40] K. Marót's interpretation of the Autolycus figure in our digression ('Autolykos' in *Minoica und Homer*, ed. V. Georgiev and J. Irmscher, 1961, 24–30, esp. 27 f.; cf. Eisenberger, *Studien*, 266 n. 32) is methodologically questionable, as he does not consider the context, and it is linguistically untenable, as he takes *ὀδυσσάμενος* to be a passive (loc. cit. 28 with n. 4; similarly e.g. P. Philippson and D. N. Maronitis; see following note): outside our section, the verb *ὀδύσσομαι* 'I am angry' appears eight times in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (four of these are in the *Iliad*), and each time a personal object of the anger is given or implied; the middle does not have a passive meaning in any of these cases (seven times aorist, once perfect). Moreover, all four parallels to 19.407 in the *Odyssey* refer to Odysseus (1.62, 5.340, 5.423, 19.275, each time of gods: Zeus, Poseidon, Helios, who 'are angry' at Odysseus, each time in direct speech: by Athena to Zeus; by Ino-Leucothea to Odysseus; by Odysseus to himself and to Penelope). The *Odyssey* poet clearly restricted the use of the verb *ὀδυσσάμενος* to the etymological connection with 'Odysseus': as in the four parallels, *ὀδυσσάμενος* in 19.407 also is only pertinent for Odysseus (and not for Autolycus). In the name 'Odysseus' ('Man of anger') the narrator 'etymologically' sees either the 'anger' of the gods against his hero, or (19.407–9) the 'anger' of his hero against others; cf. also R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 1968, 4.

[41] Therefore one cannot simply regard the figure of Autolycus as a mythical model for the figure of Odysseus, and then differentiate between a pre-Odyssean ('Autolycan') and an Odyssean Odysseus in our *Odyssey* (as recently done by D. N. Maronitis, *Ἀναζητήση καὶ νόστος τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα* II', *Hellenika* 22 (1969), 3–64 and 305–7, esp. 19–27 following

who returns to Ithaca angry at many men and women (and he expresses this anger at the suitors and unfaithful maids freely, in his statement to Eurycleia immediately following the digression, at 488 f.).[42] Autolycus, the grandfather, is clearly portrayed as a 'doppelgänger' to Odysseus in view of the main narrative, and Odysseus' situation in the main narrative is projected back onto his grandfather Autolycus. In the scar digression Autolycus serves suggestively to foreshadow the approaching revenge plot in the main narrative. His assimilation to Odysseus is a special form of a Homeric practice, illustrated recently by M. M. Willcock[43] and B. K. Braswell in reference to the *Iliad*,[44] of adjusting paradigmatic mythical figures more or less forcibly to the requirements of a specific plot.

The digression's 'chronicling narrative' has thus always to be seen as the background for the main narrative's 'scenic exposition', deepening and elucidating it.[45] Their relationship to one another in the text shows that the narrator carefully distinguishes between foreground and background from a fixed and superior viewpoint, i.e. he is telling his story in perspective in Auerbach's sense of the word.[46] The sense

Marót's explanation of ὀδυσσάμενος; cf. P. Philippson, 'Die vorhomerische und die homerische Gestalt des Odysseus', *MH* 3 (1946), 8–22, esp. 13). On the contrary the narrator, in inverse fashion, made Autolycus like Odysseus to meet the demands of the plot.

[42] The narrator allows the disguised Odysseus to be insulted again and again not only by the suitors, but also by some of the servant girls. Consequently his anger is directed not only towards 'men' (19.488 'the suitors' cf. 408 *ἀνδράσιν*) but also towards 'women' (490 *δμῳὰς ... γυναῖκας*, cf. 408 *γυναιξίν*).

[43] 'Mythological Paradeigma in the *Iliad*', *CQ* 14 (1964), 141–54 (referring to the 'Niobe' and 'Meleager' stories, among others: cf. 142: 'The Niobe story shows that, in order to produce his parallel in the paradeigma, the author of the *Iliad* is prepared to *invent the significant details of the myth*' [emphasis Willcock's]).

[44] 'Mythological Innovation in the *Iliad*', *CQ* 21, 1971, 16–26 (invention of mythical details with a compensatory effect, e.g. Thetis' help for Zeus, *Il.* 1.394 ff.: cf. p. 23: 'It would be possible to find many instances of details in myths that have been invented to fit the occasion ... ').

[45] The terms 'berichtende Erzählung' ('panoramatisch')/'chronicling narrative' ('panoramic') and 'szenische Darstellung' ('mimetisch')/'scenic portrayal' ('mimetic') to differentiate the two 'typical narrative situations' are taken from F. K. Stanzel, *Typische Formen des Romans*, 7th edn., 1974, 11 f.

[46] The attention to perspective, i.e. the differentiation between foreground and background from a fixed point, should not be denied the narrator here (and elsewhere in the *Odyssey*). The particular clarity and detail required in an oral narrative setting does not mean that the narrator knows no perspective or that he neglected them at his pleasure. The *Odyssey* poet's portrayal of the hero's first-person narratives to the Phaiakians (books

of space achieved by the scar narrative does not rely on the limited perspective of one of the characters in the action;[47] rather, the digression is told from the perspective of the 'omniscient' narrator and intended as information for the audience.[48] Considering its layout and cast it is only understandable as part of the main narrative, which the narrator does not lose track of any more than the audience does. 'A digression that will increase suspense by retarding the action,' says Auerbach, 'must be constructed so that it will not fill the present entirely, will not put the crisis, whose resolution is being awaited, entirely out of the reader's mind, and thereby destroy the mood of suspense; the crisis and the suspense ... must remain vibrant in the background.'[49] In contrast to what Auerbach believes, the Homeric narrator has done everything here to fulfil these requirements, as can be seen when one considers the function of the individual plot elements and takes into account the special situation of oral narration, in contrast to the epic as read.

What Auerbach based his views on, and carefully described, is the effect produced by the scar narrative *in and of itself* in the mind of the modern *reader*. This is most likely why his theses about Homeric epic style, as exemplified by the scar digression, could seem entirely plausible at first glance. However, if one pays attention to the context

9–12), for example, show that he was entirely aware of the meaning of 'point of view'. The restricted narrative perspective inherent in the account of the acting character is clearly taken into account: the first-person narrator Odysseus, looking back on his own experiences, narrates only what he himself lived through or heard from others (this last point, when not clear on its own, is expressly stated: cf. esp. *Od.* 12.389 f.): see W. Suerbaum, 'Die Ich-Erzählungen des Odysseus', *Poetica* 2, 1968, 150–77, esp. 154 ff. (on the 'limitation of perspective') and 159 f. on *Od.* 12.389 f. (the two verses 'show already that the poet of the *Odyssey* was well aware of the restrictions which the narrowed perspective of a first-person narrative imposed on his hero Odysseus'). In this case, too, the overall situation (Odysseus narrating, Phaiakians listening) remains ever present in the background. In particular the narrator achieves this by interrupting Odysseus' Apologue in the middle, and bringing back the situation at the beginning in the minds of his audience by inserting the scene (11.333–84) about the reaction of Alkinoos and the Phaiakians. Here, too, foreground and background from the standpoint of the narrator are carefully differentiated.

[47] That is, of Odysseus or Eurycleia (for the latter see H. Sauter, *Die Beschreibungen Homers*, Diss. Tübingen 1954, 43 ff.; Whitman, *Homer* 119; Friedh. Müller, *Darstellung*, 34).

[48] Odysseus and Eurycleia each lived only a part of what is recounted in the digression, but for his purposes the narrator requires the memory of both of them *taken together*.

[49] *Mimesis* 4.

of the digression, by which it actually gets its meaning, and if one takes into account the unique requirements of oral epic, with its vital need to attend to the listeners' ability to follow the development of the plot and remember its significant details, Auerbach's theses lose much of their plausibility. His views, influenced by the discussion between Goethe and Schiller on epic and drama, fail to do justice to the Homeric epic because they do not consider it in the light of its unique conditions.

ADDENDUM 1990

W. Suerbaum (letter of 14 Sept. 1978) felt my article needed a comment on Aristotle, *Poetics* 8, 1451 a26 (in which Aristotle views 'the story of the scar as precisely *not* an integral part of the *Odyssey*') and on 'the more general topic of the episodic'. On the problem of the 'episode' and the 'episodic', see my paper 'Terminologische Probleme in der Poetik des Aristoteles' (*Hermes* 118 (1990), 129–49, esp. 136 ff.; 147 f. [see now my 'Darstellungsziele' (2006), 530–51, cf. 526 f. with notes 3 and 4]). In *Poetics* 8, however, Aristotle stresses that a coherent plot is not achieved simply through unity of character (in the sense that all parts of the plot concern one and the same person). Homer obviously knew this, Aristotle says ('either because of his competence as an artist or by instinct') and thus in the *Odyssey* he avoided a sequence of scenes like (1) 'Odysseus' wounding at Parnassus', (2) 'Odysseus' feigned madness during the mustering of the Greek host against Troy', 'which do not follow one another either by necessity or probability' (*Ὀδύσσειαν γὰρ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἅπαντα ὅσα αὐτῷ συνέβη, οἷον πληγῆναι μὲν ἐν τῷ Παρνασσῷ, μανῆναι δὲ προσποιήσασθαι ἐν τῷ ἀγερμῷ, ὧν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενομένου ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἰκὸς θάτερον γενέσθαι...*). The objection raised frequently that the first of the two scenes mentioned does in fact appear in our *Odyssey*, namely at 19.392 ff. (e.g. B. G. F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*, 1957, 298 f.; D. W. Lucas, *Aristotle: Poetics*, 1968, 112 f. on this section: 'odd', although the latter notes, p. 117, that 'what Aristotle says is' that 'these incidents... have no relation to each other', see below), does not take into consideration the arrangement of the *οἷον*-colon by the particles *μέν* and *δέ* (*πληγῆναι μὲν... μανῆναι δέ...*), nor the justifying relative clause attached to it (*ὧν οὐδέν...* cf. *Poet.* 9, 1451b 34 f.): the two scenes cited should be seen not each by itself, but in their (illogical) arrangement together: the *combination* of the 'wounding at Parnassus' with the 'feigned madness' does not result in a coherent plot and Homer therefore avoided it. Homer did not simply report all the events in the mythical biographies of his heroes (cf. 1451a 17 f. *ἐξ ὧν ἐνίων οὐδέν ἐστιν ἕν*) and put them one after another, as did the authors of the Heracles or Theseus epics, but always selected and presented the mythical facts in such a way that they formed a unified plot structure (cf. 1451a 28 f. *μία πρᾶξις*). Thus, we may add, the scar narrative is incorporated as a 'retrospection' related to the plot in the foot-washing scene of Book 19 (cf. *Poet.* 16, 1454b 26 ff.), while the story of the feigned madness is left out altogether. From the eighth chapter of the *Poetics* one cannot infer that Aristotle 'did not consider the wounding on Parnassus part of the structure' (of the *Odyssey*) 'as defined in ch. 17', i.e. 1455b 15–23 (Lucas, *Aristotle: Poetics* 117 to 51a 26; on this see *Hermes* 118, 137 ff.). [On Aristotle see now also K. Nickau, 'Einiges oder Eines', *RhM* 146, 2003, 138–59.]

his heroic identity, although he is repeatedly presented with situations in which doing so would cause him to complete the Iliadic scenario of an early death, but without the compensating *kleos*. If his experiences in the enchanted realm and the explicit advice of Teiresias and Kirke teach a lesson of wholesale renunciation, then Odysseus has failed to learn it. In short, despite the fact that in this poem, failure belongs exclusively to the heroic side of his character, and although his willingness and ability to suppress his heroic identity ensures his success against overwhelming odds, Odysseus lays claim to that identity the moment he is able. Heroism has been reformulated, but the hero is not 'reformed': even as moral agent, the Odysseus that returns from the enchanted world remains ambiguous, at once necessary and dangerous to his *laos*.[47]

[47] The foregoing constitutes a nucleus of a forthcoming book. I have read drafts of it at a seminar sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage (March 7, 1998), Bryn Mawr College (October 3, 1997), and the annual meeting of the American Philological Association (December 1996), in addition to a conference at Baylor University (October 1996). I would like to thank the audiences, in particular Marcel Detienne, Ann Kuttner, Joseph Russo, and Jonathan Shay for their questions and observations. I would also like to thank Greg Nagy for a series of helpful e-mail exchanges on various issues raised in this paper, and to my colleagues at the University of Texas, Derek Collins, Michael Gagarin, and Andrew Riggsby, for their written comments on the final draft.

7

Odysseus and the Art of Lying

Peter Walcot

In the second half of the *Odyssey* the hero of the poem tells his celebrated series of lying stories, to the disguised Athene, to Eumaeus, to Antinous, to Penelope, and, last and most surprising of all since the suitors are now dead, to his father Laertes. There is a basic similarity to all of these fictions, but there are differences as well, each story being shaped by the circumstances in which it was told and by the person to whom it was addressed.[1] You must not relate the same story if you happen to be cast ashore after a shipwreck and meet a beautiful young princess, and if you are simply deposited asleep on land and encounter what seems to be a fellow male, and Odysseus does not, for in the former situation he just begins what promises to be an elaborate lie, referring to a journey to Delos at the head of a throng, a journey destined to bring him tribulations (*Od.* 6.162–5), and then resumes a succession of fulsome compliments. Odysseus senses that young princesses are more likely to respond to supplication reinforced by an earnest wish for their future happiness as married women, and so his lie is abandoned, leaving only a vague impression that this bedraggled stranger is more important than his present appearance may suggest. It is part of my purpose to identify

[1] On reoccurring themes in Homer see especially Fenik, 1974, who claims that the poet 'achieves, on the one hand, a close thematic co-ordination between all the major parts of his narrative by means of these repetitions—certain interests and emotions dominate—but at least as important as this seems to be his fascination with the almost unlimited possibilities for variation in the favourite situations and his desire to exploit their strong emotional content at every turn' (p. 42). See also Nagler, 1974, particularly chapters 3 and 4 and his comment: 'a type scene is not essentially a fixed sequence . . . not even a fixed pattern for the progressive selection of fixed or variable elements . . . but an inherited preverbal Gestalt for the spontaneous generation of a "family" of meaningful details' (pp. 81–2).

and examine these similarities and differences; I wish also to consider the stories in order to see what they tell us about the value system of Greek society, since the *Odyssey* retained its appeal over the centuries and such an appeal implies that Homer's story conformed with later as much as with contemporary values. It is easy for the modern student of the Homeric poems to brand Odysseus an unscrupulous liar, and many have felt the hero's deceit of the aged Laertes to be as distasteful as it is undoubtedly gratuitous, and sympathy is, therefore, expressed with the opinion of those ancients who would have brought the *Odyssey* to its conclusion with Book 23.[2] But first we ought, however, to ask how the Greeks in general regarded the practice of lying—was it the subject of the disapproval with which we deplore it today? Did the Greeks of antiquity not merely tolerate but even commend the liar, considering an ability to lie convincingly a talent necessary to success, necessary perhaps to survival, in a world dominated by hostile forces? An affirmative answer to my question is suggested by Homer's place in Greek education, especially when we note the emphasis on utility associated with the poets' claim to be thought educators (e.g. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1031–6).

In the *Hippias Minor* Plato presents us with a picture of Hippias, who assesses the relative claims of Achilles in the *Iliad* and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* to be rated the better man. According to the sophist, Achilles was the bravest of those going to Troy and Odysseus the most 'versatile' (364c), and to Hippias versatility meant ability to deceive and that ability was the result of trickiness and intelligence (365b-e). If Achilles deceives it is not deliberate, whereas Odysseus does so purposely and by design (370a ff.). If Socrates throws his opponent into confusion, we enjoy the spectacle, being inclined to condemn Hippias himself as a sophist and to remember Sophocles' treatment of Odysseus in the *Philoctetes* and the contrast exploited in that play between Odysseus and Achilles' son Neoptolemus. But in case we make too much of one play, we should also recall the opening of another tragedy by Sophocles, the *Electra*, when Orestes does more than instruct the *paidagogos* [slave who took care of him as a child] to announce his own death, for he wants his servant to add an oath as well (verses 47–8), and perjury is more

[2] As it is, for example, by Solmsen in Kirkwood, 1975, pp. 13 ff. Cf. Fenik, 1974, pp. 47–53, 78–80, and 148–9.

heinous a crime than deception. And one lie told by Odysseus we are all prepared to excuse, the lie he tells Alcinous when the Phaeacian king finds fault with his daughter for failing to escort Odysseus all the way back to the palace (*Od.* 7.298–307; cf. 6.259 ff.). Odysseus is as much a peacemaker here as he is in yet another play by Sophocles, the *Ajax* (cf. Stanford, 1954, pp. 8 ff. and 102 ff.).

But perhaps we will be on firmer ground if we turn from philosopher and dramatist to an actual fifth-century Greek who surely, beyond all others, appears to match Homer's Odysseus in character and in achievements. I refer to Themistocles, who in the first half of the fifth century seems to have been wildly successful in deceiving everybody: his fellow Athenians, the Spartans and the Persians. The details of his career and its remarkable vicissitudes stand in no need of description here.[3] What is relevant is the Greek evaluation of a politician so consummate that he ended his life a dependent of the Persian monarchy whose hopes of territorial expansion into Europe he had thwarted. One episode in the life of Themistocles forcibly underlines the parallel between the epic hero and the real man, the story of how the fleeing Themistocles secured the protection of Admetus, king of the Molossians. The king was no friend, but Themistocles took advantage of his absence from home to become the queen's suppliant. At her instruction he took up the royal child and sat down at the hearth. This gave Themistocles the chance of speaking to Admetus on his return and thus dissuading him from refusing his protection. Although like the situation that Odysseus encountered on his arrival at the Phaeacian palace to such an extent as to arouse our suspicions, the tradition is reported by Thucydides (1.136–7), and the historian also offers us a contemporary assessment of Themistocles' abilities.

> Indeed, Themistocles was a man who showed an unmistakable natural genius; in this respect he was quite exceptional, and beyond all others deserves our admiration. Without studying a subject in advance or deliberating over it later, but using simply the intelligence that was his by nature, he had the power to reach the right conclusion in matters that have to be settled on the spur of the moment and do not admit of long discussion, and in estimating what was likely to happen, his forecasts of the future were always more reliable than

[3] All the evidence relating to Themistocles and the ancient assessment of his life and character has been collected by Podlecki, 1975.

those of others . . . He was particularly remarkable at looking into the future and seeing there the hidden possibilities for good or evil. To sum him up in a few words, it may be said that through force of genius and by rapidity of action this man was supreme at doing precisely the right thing at precisely the right moment. (Thucydides, 1.138, 3, Warner, trans.)

The fact that Themistocles wins so warm a eulogy from Thucydides suggests that his epic counterpart would also have been enthusiastically applauded by the historian with his regard for intuitive action in an emergency.

Today we appreciate that the Greeks were not unqualified paragons. In fact the author of a recent book speaks of them in the following words:

The Greeks were obsessively concerned with the admiration and approval of their peers. This fostered a character which was vain, boastful, ambitious, envious and vindictive. Above all the arousal of envy and the obtaining of revenge were esteemed most highly. (Littman, 1974, p. 18)

But already, a century before, in a book which passed through seven editions, the last of which was reprinted as late as 1907, J.P. Mahaffy had reacted against the tendency to idealize antiquity and to see there only what was praiseworthy and beautiful.[4] Whatever its sales for more than thirty years, this book would seem not to have had the impact which it warranted, perhaps because Mahaffy admitted no compromise. Thus, speaking of the really leading figures in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, with the exception of Achilles, Mahaffy, having already stated that 'to deceive an enemy is meritorious, to deceive a stranger innocent, to deceive even a friend perfectly unobjectionable, if any object is to be gained', remarks (p. 27) that they 'do not hesitate at all manner of lying'; discussing the Greeks of the lyric age, he avers (p. 124) 'that dishonesty was not an occasional symptom in the worst epochs of Greek history, but a feature congenital in the nation and indelible—waxing and waning, no doubt, but always at a tolerably high level'; again, referring to 'the meanness and lying of the Greeks in Herodotus', Mahaffy singles out their relations with the Persians, and, though he does not specify Themistocles by

[4] Mahaffy, 1890. The first edition of this book appeared in 1874, the second in 1875, the third in 1877, the fourth in 1879, the fifth in 1883, the sixth in 1888, and the seventh in 1890, the last mentioned being reprinted on four occasions between 1894 and 1907. My own references are to the seventh edition.

name, he is presumably alluding to the Athenian statesman among others when he says that:

. . . all through the reign of the Achaemenid dynasty, the Greeks, and Greeks of all cities, were going up to Susa on all manner of pretexts, promising the great king all manner of easy conquests, begging for restoration to their homes, asking for money, and paying him with perpetual ingratitude.

(Mahaffy, 1890, pp. 157–8)

Mahaffy's insight into the workings of the Greek mind is quite startling, and he reveals an appreciation of the way in which politics were conducted among the Greeks, the accuracy of which we are only now beginning to acknowledge. Thus elsewhere in *Social Life* he writes:

The Greek parties in his (i.e. Thucydides') day were very unlike the great constitutional parties of our House of Commons, and should be rather called factions and cabals. They were of small compass, occupied, for the most part, in the struggles of small societies, where all the members were personally known as friends, and all the opponents personally hated as enemies. Thus the bitterness, the rancour of faction, was intensified to a degree hardly known among us. (Mahaffy, 1890, pp. 178–9)

It has been very recently that we have come to appreciate the significance of a concept such as *philia* [friendship] in the political life of Athens.[5]

But is there a particular reason to explain why Mahaffy achieved so penetrating an appraisal of the Greeks? Was it simply because 'any thoughtful man who has lived in Ireland comes to understand Greek political hate with peculiar clearness' (p. 100)? In the preface to the seventh edition of *Social Life* Mahaffy explains how he sought out the material for his book 'not in previous commentators, but in the Greek books themselves, which I re-read one by one specially, with particular attention to the social points they contained' (p. viii). This scholar, then, went back to the actual evidence surviving from antiquity, and was not content merely to follow the opinions of others. But there is another factor as well—Mahaffy realized that there were similarities in the basic values of ancient and contemporary Greeks, and his knowledge of the latter, acquired on two visits to Greece, the first in 1875 and the second in 1877, helped him to understand the former. And so, having stated in his preface that he preferred what the Greeks themselves

[5] See now Connor, 1971, especially ch. 2.

said to the interpretations of scholars, he adds: 'This was the method which led me to draw a picture of the Greeks from their ancient books corresponding in many points to the Greeks of today, nor do I know of any attempt to dispute the accuracy of my statements.' The first visit to Greece resulted in the publication of *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, originally issued in 1876 and published in a seventh edition as late as 1913. The second, revised and enlarged, edition of 1878 has Mahaffy comparing ancient and nineteenth-century Greeks in their craving for local independence, in the position of women in society, in their jealousy and reluctance to see one of their own set above them, and in the role of bribery in politics (Mahaffy, 1878, pp. 53–4, 208–9, 237, 230–1, 231–2). Mahaffy's observations have been shown to be sound, but what he did not understand was why such parallels could be drawn, for his argument that an explanation was to be found in racial continuity is untenable. To find a convincing answer, one must turn to the work of social anthropologists of the twentieth century and their analysis of the moral values of what is termed peasant society, a segment of mankind impatient of definition but essentially small-scale, self-sufficient producers occupying a rural environment and organized on the basis of individual families. Certain fundamental values are characteristic of peasant societies, however widely spaced in time and place those societies may have been or are.[6] In order better to appreciate the Greek attitude to deceit and lying we may consider the function of lying in other peasant societies, and, if we have to select a particular group of peasants, there is much to be said for following Mahaffy's lead and looking at the various peasant communities of modern Greece which have recently been studied in the field by social anthropologists, and here three studies are outstanding, that of a village in Boeotia by Ernestine Friedl (1962), that of Sarakatsan shepherds of north-west Greece by J. K. Campbell (1964), and that of another village, this time one in Euboea, by Juliet du Boulay (1974).

Vasilika is a village in Boeotia very near the foot of Mount Parnassus, which at the time it was studied (1955–6) had a population of 216. Ninety miles from Athens and fifteen miles from the provincial capital

[6] The classic study of peasant society remains Redfield, 1956. A most useful collection is offered by Shanin, 1971, in which see especially Sutti Ortiz, pp. 322 ff. Two series of particular relevance are *Oxford Monographs on Social Anthropology*, which includes the book by du Boulay (1974), and the *Pavilion Series*, one of whose titles is Loizos, 1975.

of Levadhia, and with other villages considerably nearer and a local railway station only a mile away, Vasilika is by no means isolated, but traditional attitudes persist. Life is thought to be a struggle against nature and a struggle against other human beings. The world is hostile and one must be on one's guard: the person from outside the village, whether he lives two or many thousands of miles away is a stranger, and strangers, almost by definition, are thieves and the charge is no empty convention but a serious accusation. It is commonplace to lie deliberately to children in an effort to get them to do something, and, while the child may become confused, never knowing whether an adult is telling the truth or deceiving him, he also learns what the villagers regard as a crucial lesson, not to trust anybody, however close and dear, completely. To lie does not constitute the moral crime which it has become in the sophisticated culture of Western Europe and North America, and one lies to other villagers and to those outside the village as much as to children. 'Each man and woman expects to develop skills both in the art of guilefulness and in the art of detecting the guilefulness in others', and 'older children who have learned to turn the tables on their parents and try to deceive them are admired even as they are scolded' (Friedl, 1962, p. 80). To tell lies, then, is a way of life and does not convey moral stigma, and, since conversational skill is highly treasured and people talk at each other rather than to each other, an elaborately contrived lie wins approval. The agonistic quality of life affects conversation: one person will try to secure information from another, and that other villager will attempt to reveal as little as possible in his reply, and the questioner, having established what he wished to learn, will claim a prior knowledge of the fact. But, although those outside the village community are denounced as thieves, there is a genuine pride in being Greek, and to be Greek is to possess certain qualities, including cleverness and guile (Friedl, 1962, pp. 105–6). Here Odysseus is quoted as an example, and a preference for the *Odyssey* rather than for the *Iliad* is also maintained, for another attribute of Greeks is love of adventure and this is better illustrated by the former epic. As has been noted on the basis of an analysis of narrative material collected from rural Greece, 'the value of cleverness is praised, of sharp bargaining, lying and repudiation of obligations of payment.'[7]

[7] Blum, 1970, p. 221; the third section of the book, 'Survivals and Parallels' (pp. 263 ff.), contains much of relevance to this paper.

Among the Sarakatsan shepherds the same hostility and lack of trust is displayed on every side, and there is a consequent recourse to lies: 'It is a virtue generally', Campbell writes, 'to cheat, deceive, and lie to non-kinsmen'. Again we see considerable prestige attached to what is not far short of low cunning, and it is reported that 'men lie as a matter of habit and principle to deny other people information', though 'cleverness and cunning are legitimate and praiseworthy where their object is the protection or advancement of family interests, but not beyond these limits, or for their own sake', and perjury is not to be practised. Secrecy has progressed to the point of being an obsession, so much so that one housewife will not tell another what she is cooking for the evening meal (Campbell, 1964, pp. 316, 283, 324, 192; see also pp. 210, 294).

> Two shepherds leading mules meet on a path and pause for ten minutes to deny each other the simple pleasure of knowing where each has come from, what he is carrying, and where he is going. The questions are as pertinent as the answers are evasive. Children are drilled into these attitudes from their early years. (Campbell, 1964, p. 192)

Supporting evidence is provided by du Boulay, whose work in Ambéli was carried out ten or more years later. Life in this Euboean village, cut off as it is from the wider world, has similarly persisted along the traditional lines, and 'in normal life', du Boulay tells us, 'lying is not something which disturbs the villager's conscience'; in fact lying is elsewhere said to rank as an institution, 'a talent indispensable to village life, and one which is almost universally possessed'. The expression 'You can't live without lies' is claimed to be universally current in the village. Lies are not only a means of concealment but also serve to trick another into yielding information (du Boulay, 1974, pp. 78, 172, 191). But in case we are too swift to rush to condemn the villagers, we ought to note, as Mahaffy himself noted a century ago, that everybody assumes the worst of everybody else—du Boulay quotes what happens with a young girl: if she goes out and talks to people, she is thought loose in her behaviour, but if she stays within the confines of the house, she can still be accused of laziness or ill-health.[8] And there is something else to be remembered especially now as we turn to the lying stories told by Odysseus: 'Truth for him (i.e. the villager of Ambéli) has many

[8] Compare du Boulay, 1974, p. 195 and Mahaffy, 1913, pp. 223–4.

manifestations, and a lie on one level may legitimately be accepted as a way of revealing truth on a higher level. It is, if one may put it like this, the appearance (which may be contingently false) revealing the reality (which is essentially true)' (du Boulay, 1974, p. 193).[9]

Equipped with the knowledge supplied by social anthropologists whose work has been centred in contemporary Greek communities, we realize that Odysseus in the *Odyssey* does nothing unusual or outrageous in relating a whole series of lying tales. What is significant is the skill with which he concocts his lies, and this is a measure of his ability and not of his moral failings. Odysseus *must* lie and he scarcely expects his lies to be accepted at their face value. Yet what he says, irrespective of its truth or falsehood, conveys to his audience an impression which is fraught with meaning. Consider the first of these fictions. In the thirteenth book of the poem, Odysseus arrives back in Ithaca; he is brought there over the seas by the Phaeacians, but falls asleep on ship (*Od.* 13.79–80 and 92), and is left, still fast asleep, on shore (*Od.* 13.116–19). The Phaeacians also leave with Odysseus the treasures presented to him in Scheria (*Od.* 13.10 ff., 120–4, 135–8). Waking up, Odysseus fails to recognize his location, for Athene has covered everything familiar in mist (*Od.* 13.187 ff.). Odysseus' lamentations are cut short by the need to check his treasures and then by the appearance of Athene in the disguise of a most impressive young herdsman (*Od.* 13.217 ff.). Odysseus proceeds to supplicate the new arrival, begging protection for his treasures and himself, and to ask what land he has reached. Athene reveals that it is Ithaca and Odysseus, suppressing his joy, goes straight into the first of his lying tales (*Od.* 13.250 ff.). The story that he tells has to fulfil a number of purposes: it has to explain not only his own presence in Ithaca but also that of the accompanying treasures; it has as well to make it clear that Odysseus is no man with whom the herdsman may trifle but is fully worthy of support and assistance; the story he tells must present him to his audience in a favourable light. There can be no doubt as to the success of his elaborate lie, for Athene, having heard the story, reverts to her normal appearance and lavishes praise on her protégé, calling him the moral equivalent of herself in deceit and subtleties (*Od.* 13.287 ff.).

[9] One thinks at once of the Platonic myth and the Republic with its *gennaion pseudos* [noble lie] (414b).

Odysseus claimed to have fled from his home in the island of Crete with the possessions he had with him after killing Orsilochus, son of Idomeneus (*Od.* 13.256–60). He sought escape from the relatives of his victim by boarding a Phoenician ship, whose crew, driven off course, had landed in Ithaca to recover and subsequently departed, leaving the sleeping Odysseus and his possessions behind them (*Od.* 13.271–86). The story is simple but still begins to collapse towards its end: it requires Odysseus to remain asleep, though the Phoenicians, for all the exhaustion which made them forget food (*Od.* 13.279–80), re-embark but only after unshipping Odysseus' goods. Why should they have left Odysseus behind with all his treasures intact? Unscrupulous enough not to convey the hero to his stipulated destination of Pylos or Elis, they did not attempt to trick Odysseus initially (*Od.* 13.277) and went to the bother of leaving treasures as well as passenger in Ithaca. Remarkable Phoenicians these. 'Good' Phoenicians are the exception and, therefore, less tractable material to accommodate in a lie. But the credulity of a modern listener would already have been excited and strained, for the name Orsilochus, 'Ambush-arouser', is conventional for a warrior (cf. *Il.* 5.542 and 549; 8.274), but it fits the details of Odysseus' story altogether too neatly (cf. *lokhēsamenos* [setting an ambush] in *Od.* 13.268) and even ironically since Orsilochus is the victim and not the instigator of the stratagem. A parallel is offered by a story told in the *Iliad* about Tydeus, the father of Diomedes, in order to urge the son on to fight (*Il.* 4.370 ff.): Tydeus was part of the first expedition against Thebes, and was sent forward to the city as ambassador; arriving there, he participated in athletic contests and won every one easily, aided as he was by Athene; in their fury the Cadmeans laid an ambush against him on his return under the leadership of Maeon, son Haemon, and Polyphontes, son of Autophonus (*Il.* 4.394–5). The name of the second commander ['slayer of many'] is very obviously contrived to fit the circumstances of an ambush in which Tydeus slaughtered forty-nine of his fifty opponents, leaving just Maeon to return to Thebes. The flight of a homicide is a standard explanation to account for the arrival of a stranger and we may compare, for example, Theoclymenus later in the *Odyssey* (15.223 ff.); and Crete is an island remote enough to figure in a lie, being cited by the Aetolian, himself a fleeing homicide, who once deceived the swineherd Eumaeus, saying it was the place where he saw Odysseus repairing his ships on his homeward voyage (*Od.* 14.379 ff.).

Especially troublesome to the moral susceptibilities of a modern reader are the details of what happened to the stranger in Crete, and this difficulty is made very apparent by a further comparison with the story of the ambush laid against Tydeus. His was the result of injured pride on the part of the Cadmeans, who had been worsted in every contest by Tydeus, and so they retaliated with an ambush and an ambush in which the odds were grossly unfair, fifty against one. Virtue, however, triumphed and Tydeus, as was remarked above, killed all but one of his assailants. Now compare Odysseus' story. He pretended to have served at Troy and to have returned home laden with booty. But he had not served under Idomeneus, preferring an independent command of his own. Orsilochus accordingly wanted to strip him of all his booty, and so Odysseus ambushed him and ambushed Orsilochus at night and with the aid of a companion (*Od.* 13.267–70). All this strikes us as a squalid saga of retaliation, with one insult provoking another, until events culminate in a far from chivalrous encounter between the offended and offending parties. Yet the story must be designed to win the approval of Odysseus' audience, and in this story the pseudo-Cretan exemplifies what was always a golden rule for the Greeks, harm your enemies (see Dover, 1974, pp. 180–4). And typically again, the means employed to achieve results are much less important than the actual achievement of results. For the Greeks the end does so often justify the means, but this will hardly surprise us in a society where deceit can be classed as a virtue. Our imaginary Cretan asserted his independence by not serving at Troy as the subordinate of Idomeneus; he proved an effective commander who brought booty back to Crete, and when his possessions, the material evidence which substantiated his claim to honour, were threatened, he took immediate and decisive action to protect himself against insult. Wealth is a measure of success and the fleeing homicide not only has the treasures that he has with him, but has also left its equivalent back with his family in Crete (*Od.* 13.258), and has further given a seemingly substantial amount to his Phoenician rescuers (*Od.* 13.273–4). All in all, this is a man whom no one would want or could afford to ignore. At a deeper level such a pose additionally suggests that the real Odysseus, when he similarly returns home from

Troy, will not be slow to take action against the suitors who lay waste to his property and court his wife.

Odysseus is transformed into an old beggar by Athene (*Od.* 13.379 ff. and 430 ff.), and it is in this guise that he presents himself to his swineherd Eumaeus. The laws of hospitality (see Gauthier, 1973 pp. 1–21) ensure that he is well received and is fed before he must explain his presence, and when he does he surely remembers Eumaeus' earlier statement when he expressed scepticism for the news brought by strangers in need (*Od.* 14.122 ff.). Odysseus' story, long though it is and reinforced by an oath, does not seem to convince his host (cf. *Od.* 14.363 ff.). But could Odysseus be more interested in creating a particular impression than in deceiving his servant? And if so, what impression is the hero's second lying tale meant to convey? Odysseus has been equipped by the goddess with the standard beggar's costume of filthy, ragged garb, staff, and wallet (*Od.* 13.434–8), but his story reveals him to be no professional beggar but someone very much down on his luck, and the distinction between a professional beggar and one reduced to seeking hospitality as a temporary expedient is important and well illustrated in Andalusia today. Thus Julian Pitt-Rivers refers to the different styles affected in Andalusia by the professional beggars and the countrymen forced to leave home in search of work and obliged, therefore, to ask for charity; when the latter come to a farm, they first ask for work and never attempt moral blackmail:

> They tend on the contrary to adopt a gruff and manly style to differentiate themselves from the professional beggars, for they are strangers, not beggars, and they sacrifice their shame no further than the implied (but not stated) confession of indigence. (Peristiany, 1968, pp. 22–3)

This is the type of person that Odysseus pretends to be, and it is significant that later in the poem when the treacherous Melanthius abuses Odysseus, now on his way to the palace, he accuses Odysseus of not wanting work but just to beg (*Od.* 17.226–8).

Examination shows that Odysseus' second lie (*Od.* 14.199 ff.) is very much a mixture of fact and fiction, if the word 'fact' is appropriate in a context where Odysseus appears to draw upon his experiences in making his way back to Ithaca in order to develop his lie. Certainly here we have a recital of adventures which is much more than an attempt either to mislead or simply to entertain Eumaeus. Again Odysseus claims to

have come from Crete, this time being the bastard son of a wealthy and, therefore, much honoured parent. The death of his father left him with very little but his valour secured marriage with a woman of wealthy lineage (*Od.* 14.199–222). But his skill as a soldier, an occupation likely to appeal to Eumaeus for whom it was impossible, was not matched by a comparable concern for farming; he had led nine expeditions across the sea for booty before leading forces to Troy. Public opinion, the strongest incentive to action in Homeric society, demanded that our Cretan and Idomeneus should sail to Troy, and there was no chance to refuse. After ten years he returned to Crete, but was content to spend only a month with his family before undertaking an expedition to Egypt (*Od.* 14.222–58). The raid proved a failure through no fault of his own and the Cretan was reduced to begging the Egyptian king for his life. He remained in Egypt the honoured guest of the monarch for seven years, collecting presents, and then a crafty Phoenician took him off to Phoenicia where a further year passed. Next he was embarked on a ship destined for Libya, but, suspecting a plot, avoided slavery when the ship was destroyed in a storm, and was carried to the land of the Thesprotians (*Od.* 14.259–315). Having been succoured by the king of that people, he learned news of Odysseus, who had departed to consult the oracle of Dodona, leaving behind fantastic wealth under the protection of the king. Sent on his way, the beggar was stripped of his finery by the crew of his ship and marked for sale into slavery once again. He managed to escape, however, when the ship lay off Ithaca and had thus come destitute to Eumaeus' home (*Od.* 14.316–59). This is a story difficult to better when it comes to excitement and thrills, for we have been led from Crete to Troy, Egypt, Phoenicia, Libya, and Thesprotia and have heard of piratical raids and daring escapes.

As was remarked above, Odysseus seems to draw upon his own experiences in concocting this splendid lie. Thus the attack on Egypt is reminiscent of the 'actual' attack on the Cicones (cf. *Od.* 9.39–59), while detention as an honoured guest in Egypt recalls how Odysseus was kept on Calypso's isle. His arrival and entertainment among the Thesprotians and their dispatch home of the guest suggest Odysseus' reception by the Phaeacians. One particular detail, however, stresses that we are discussing thematic material and that motifs reoccur in such episodes: I refer to the encounter on arrival in Thesprotia with a royal prince who brought the stranger home (*Od.* 14.317–19), for

comparable is the meeting with Nausicaa (*Od.* 6.110 ff.), with the Laestrygonian princess (*Od.* 10.105 ff.), and with the disguised Athene (*Od.* 13.221 ff.). The treasure which Odysseus is reputed to have left safely with the Thesprotians reminds us of the gifts bestowed on the real Odysseus by the Phaeacians and now carefully stored away; the storm which enabled the beggar to escape slavery the first time is provided with a close parallel by the storm which wrecked Odysseus' boat after his companions had consumed the cattle of Helios (cf. *Od.* 12.403 ff.). The repetition of verses in my last example (13.403–8 and 14.301–4; 12.415–19 and 14.305–9; see also 12.425 and 14.313; and 12.447 and 14.314) and the fact that further parallels can be identified, such as Menelaus' *periplous* [tour] (cf. *Od.* 4.81 ff.), stress that the Homeric epics are orally composed verse and such poetry is characterized by thematic repetition.[10] At the same time repetition is far from being mechanical, and it must surely be deliberate that Odysseus' story of a man who fought at Troy and, after a brief month at home, spent years in virtual exile reproduces so many of his own adventures. Even in character the Cretan and Odysseus share much in common: the Cretan cannot settle at home but must venture aboard in search of booty—his return home was short-lived and not the end of his tribulations, and Odysseus, if we may trust the prophecy of Teiresias (cf. *Od.* 11.119 ff.), had not concluded his adventures after the slaughter of the suitors. A command at Troy meant that the beggar must have known Odysseus and his exploits before that city, and Eumaeus has shown himself to be obsessively concerned for his absent master, although we may detect an element of self-interest which is very Greek in Eumaeus' distress (cf. *Od.* 14.61–7). Eumaeus' sympathies would also have been extended to someone who had twice narrowly avoided the fate of slavery and had been duped by a Phoenician trader, for this was so much like his own experience of life (cf. *Od.* 15.403 ff.).

No one can permit himself the luxury of trusting anyone else in Homer's world, and brothers divide their inheritance and warriors their plunder by lot (*Od.* 14.208–9; 232–3). The lie told by Odysseus illustrates most graphically the uncertainty of human life and the violent changes in fortune to which the Greek was exposed, and this in itself is a good reason why the swineherd, unsure of what the next day might

[10] In this paragraph I have drawn heavily upon Fenik, 1974, pp. 33–4 and 167–71.

bring in the absence of his master, should proffer hospitality now and so establish a claim on hospitality for himself if needed on any future occasion. Odysseus' story has what we may term a 'paradigmatic' quality inasmuch as it teaches that even an Egyptian king whose territory has been ravaged and subjects put to the sword or abducted obeyed the laws of hospitality. A feature of the *Iliad* is the use of the mythological *paradigm* when one person wishes to influence the actions of another: a good example in the *Iliad* is offered when Achilles urges the distraught Priam to take food, quoting the case of Niobe who ate, though she had lost not one son but a total of twelve children, slain by Apollo and Artemis (*Il.* 24.601 ff.). Details in this and other myths similarly exploited to serve as paradigms seem to have been invented by the poet in order to make the example more apposite.[11]

This function of the lying story is even better illustrated by the second lie told Eumaeus by Odysseus (*Od.* 14.459 ff.). It is a cold, wet night and the beggar decides to make trial of the swineherd to see if he is willing to provide another garment for his guest himself or to persuade one of his companions to do this. He, therefore, tells a story about the fighting at Troy, featuring Odysseus and an ambush, of which Odysseus and Menelaus were in charge and the Cretan third in command. As the Greeks lay concealed before the walls of Troy, the night weather deteriorated and snow fell from the sky. The rest of the force were wearing sufficient clothes, but the Cretan had left his *chlainē* [cloak] behind (*Od.* 14.468–82). By the third watch he was frozen and explained his plight to Odysseus, who responded by pretending to have had a dream and wanting a report carried back to Agamemnon at the ships to send more troops. At once Thoas ('Speedy') rose and dashed back with the message, having first thrown off his cloak, which was thus conveniently available for the Cretan to borrow. That the point of the story should not be missed Odysseus finishes with a wish that he were in his prime once more, as then one of those there would present him with the required garment (*Od.* 14.483–506). Eumaeus calls the story *ainos* (*Od.* 14.508), and it is difficult not to believe that the word here means 'story with a moral' (cf. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 202) rather than simply 'story' (cf. *Il.* 23.652). The story achieves its

[11] See Kakridis, 1949, pp. 96–103; Willcock, 1964, pp. 141–54; and Braswell, 1971, pp. 16–26.

purpose and provides its narrator with extra bedclothes. As Odysseus solved the narrator's problem in the past, so now the hero's swineherd does the same, fulfilling his duty as host. The story has been effective (cf. *Od.* 14.508–9), and this is more important than its literal truth.

Themes can be extended or abbreviated, and it is an abbreviated version of the first lie to Eumaeus that Odysseus tells the suitor Antinous (*Od.* 17.419–44). The beginning of the story is reduced to a statement that he himself was once rich; then follows the story of the raid on Egyptian territory with, however, a different conclusion in spite of the presence of Eumaeus: having presumably been captured, the beggar was shipped off to Cyprus to king Dmetor from where he made his way to Ithaca, though no further details are supplied. Antinous is short on patience: he makes a threatening move immediately before Odysseus tells his story (*Od.* 17.409–10), and greets the story with abuse and mockery (*Od.* 17.446 ff.); and then, admittedly under provocation from Odysseus, translates his earlier threat into action by hurling a footstool at Odysseus (*Od.* 17.462–5). Being a sympathetic listener, Penelope is treated to a longer story and one with a marked emphasis on her apparently absent husband (*Od.* 19.172 ff.). There is no need to rush the story and it starts at a very leisurely pace as it describes the island of Crete (*Od.* 19.172–9). This time the stranger again comes from Crete and supplies his name, Aethon, son of Deucalion and younger brother of Idomeneus. The names appear to be of the significant type, for we have already seen an instance of two names being given, one of which is an authentic name and the other a significant name (cf. Maeon and Polyphontes in *Il.* 4.394–5), and here we have the 'real' name Idomeneus. Aethon looks suspiciously like a name suitable to express the ravenous hunger of a beggar.[12] This Cretan entertained Odysseus when on his way to Troy (*Od.* 19.180–202). At this point the story is interrupted as Penelope weeps and asks for proof from the stranger that he actually saw her husband. Odysseus supplies this by detailing the clothes which Odysseus wore twenty years before and a remarkable brooch, and his story is made more convincing when he admits the possibility that perhaps this attire was given to Odysseus after he left home, for he himself presented Odysseus with sword and

[12] Cf. *aithona limon* [ravenous hunger] in Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 363, on which see McKay, 1959, and Hesiod, frag. 43 (Merkelbach-West).

clothes, and twenty years, after all, is a long time ago. As a final proof he briefly describes Odysseus' companion Eurybates (*Od.* 19.221–48). After another interruption by Penelope, Odysseus resumes his story in an attempt to persuade the queen that her husband is fast approaching home; he reports recent news that Odysseus is among the Thesprotians, bringing with him many treasures but no companions. Only a desire to accumulate more wealth prevented him from being returned straight home by the Phaeacians. At the moment Odysseus is off to Dodona (*Od.* 19.262–307).

Throughout this lie Odysseus concentrates on Penelope's husband. Its second part tells much the same story of Odysseus among the Thesprotians as before, supplemented with some information about the death of his companions and visit to the Phaeacians, again details which are 'true' and so add a touch of verisimilitude. Although he mentions very briefly his imagined departure from Crete slightly later (*Od.* 19.338–42), we lack any explanation as to how a Cretan prince came to arrive at Ithaca in such a state of destitution, but all that Penelope wants is a report of her husband's whereabouts and we have been carefully prepared for this and even for Odysseus' entertainment in Crete. In Book 17 Penelope has instructed the swineherd to bring the beggar to her, so that she may discover if he knows anything about Odysseus (*Od.* 17.507–11), and Odysseus has received this message (*Od.* 17.553–5). Eumaeus, moreover, has told his mistress something about the stranger and supplied one piece of information which he had not to our knowledge been given: thus Eumaeus tells Penelope not only that the stranger is a Cretan and claims to have heard that Odysseus is among the Thesprotians and alive (*Od.* 17.522–8), but also that he claims to be a *xeinos patrōios* [ancestral guest-friend] of Odysseus (*Od.* 17.522). Clearly the queen directs the course and emphasis of the story both by her evident distress and, even more obviously, by her demand for proof of her husband's entertainment in Crete. The fact that the beggar and Odysseus failed to meet in Thesprotia avoids an embarrassing request for precise evidence, confirming the truth of the story's second part. The poem is moving fast to its climax, and Penelope now has more to add to the news reported by Telemachus that Menelaus had it from Proteus that Odysseus was detained against his wishes by the nymph Calypso (*Od.* 17.140–6), an adventure that the disguised Odysseus discreetly omits from his own recital.

Odysseus' final lying story is told to his father Laertes after the suitors have been eliminated and the epic is reaching its end (*Od.* 24.304–14). Crete is no longer his supposed home but he is Eperitus, son of Apheidas, from Alybas; brought against his will from Sicania to Ithaca, he pretends to have entertained Odysseus four years ago and now hopes for the reciprocity of generosity so characteristic of Greek society (cf. also *Od.* 24.266–79). Whether or not Odysseus' lie implies that the hero is dead is not clear: on the one hand it is the fifth year since he was entertained and he ought to have reached home if alive by now; on the other hand the omens which attended his departure from his host Eperitus were favourable (*Od.* 24.311–13). The options seem to be left open. His story causes the old man to collapse and Odysseus is swift to reveal his identity and the death of the suitors (*Od.* 24.315–26).

Why does Odysseus deceive his father when there is no reason for him to aggravate Laertes' misery? Homer tells us that Odysseus hesitated, uncertain whether to reveal all or to make trial of Laertes, and decided in favour of the latter alternative (*Od.* 24.235–40; see also 24.216–18 and 221). Fenik has pointed out that the reunion with Laertes shares elements with Odysseus' encounter with Athene immediately on his restoration to Ithaca (Fenik, 1974, pp. 47–50). There is no need either for Odysseus to deceive Laertes or Athene to deceive Odysseus. What does either deception do other than to cause further suffering to the victim of the trick? Odysseus is no more callous towards his father than Athene had been in concealing the familiar view. The goddess was merely inflicting more pain on her favourite (cf. *Od.* 13.137 ff.) and her subsequent praise for Odysseus' cunning and her pledge of future support are no compensation (*Od.* 13.291 ff.). Odysseus and Athene are alike in disposition (*Od.* 13.296–9), and they illustrate this similarity when the former torments and teases Laertes and the latter indulges a comparable strain of cruelty at the expense of Odysseus. Both torment and tease, and teasing is cruel and only possible when its victim is in an inferior position, as the mortal Odysseus is in relation to the goddess Athene and the triumphant Odysseus is in relation to his dilapidated and despairing parent.

How are we to regard such teasing? Perhaps the peasant of contemporary Greece offers a clue. An inferior is vulnerable and must be taught to protect himself, and this process of education is not always pleasant. Teasing is a normal means of instructing the young in the village of

Vasilika: a mother will almost allow her baby to suckle and then pull herself away three or four times before the child, now in distress, is permitted to feed; a delicacy is snatched from an older child's mouth several times before he too is permitted to eat; very small children are encouraged to fight only to be picked up and caressed when they begin to cry; a two-year old is laughingly threatened with an injection like that being given to chickens to safeguard them against disease but comforted when really upset (Friedl, 1962, pp. 78–9). In the last case, as in the third, teasing is followed by solicitude, and Friedl states that 'when adults deliberately frighten children or even stimulate milder forms of distress, they do not abandon the child to his misery but try to relieve the anxiety by physical affection and soothing words'. A warm embrace, then, will follow teasing as it does between Odysseus and Laertes (*Od.* 24.320), for Odysseus is not slow to intervene when he appreciates the extent of his father's distress. In the *Odyssey*, roles are reversed, and son teases and next comforts parent. For the villager of Vasilika such reassurance shows that the danger is more apparent than real, and the adult feels that teasing of this type is a valuable source of discipline teaching the young how they must handle themselves if they are to avoid the shame of ridicule. Certainly it is harsh and never more so than in the case of the mentally retarded: 'Mentally retarded individuals never learn, and they are baited and teased for the amusement of the watcher all their lives'. Teasing as much as deliberate lying trains us to be on our guard, and the Greek peasant today, like the Homeric hero of the distant past, has a much greater need to remain vigilant than does the scholar safe in his study. Referring to the meeting between son and father, Agathe Thornton shows how everything said by Odysseus to Laertes is designed to cause pain, and argues that 'there is here obviously a region of judgment and feeling totally [different] from our own. We must . . . try to understand it' (Thornton, 1970, pp. 116–17). I agree and believe that the attitude of the Greek peasant today here, as elsewhere, provides a key to understanding.

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8

The Philosophy of the *Odyssey*

Richard B. Rutherford

> rursus quid virtus et quid sapientia possit
> utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulixen,
> qui domitor Troiae multorum providus urbis
> et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per aequor,
> dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
> pertulit, adversis rerum immersabilis undis.
> Sirenum voces et Circae pocula nosti;
> quae si cum sociis stultus cupidusque bibisset,
> sub domina meretrice fuisset turpis et excors,
> vixisset canis immundus vel amica luto sus.
> nos numerus sumus et fruges consumere nati,
> sponsi Penelopae, nebulones, Alcinoique
> in cute curanda plus aequo operata iuventus,
> cui pulchrum fuit in medios dormire dies et
> ad strepitum citharae cessatum ducere curam.

Then again, to show us the potential of virtue and wisdom he has set forth for us a valuable model in Ulysses, the conqueror of Troy, who foresightedly examined the cities of many men and their customs, while contriving a homecoming for himself and for his comrades, and who endured many harsh misfortunes, though without sinking beneath the hostile breakers of circumstance. You are familiar with the Sirens' songs, the potions of Circe; if he had drunk of those along with his companions, a slave to folly and passion, he would have become debased and witless in the

A slightly shorter version of the text of this paper was read to a meeting of the Oxford Philological Society in January 1985. Since then I have attempted to take account of some of the criticisms and suggestions made by my audience. I am grateful to Nicholas Richardson and Oliver Taplin for more detailed advice.

> service of a harlot mistress, living the life of a filthy hound or a sow wallowing in slime. We for our part are mere ciphers, men born to consume the fruits of the earth, suitors of Penelope, good-for-nothings, young courtiers of Alcinous, more concerned with keeping our skins sleek and smooth than with just dealing; their idea of virtue was to sleep until mid-day and to chase care away to the tune of the lyre.[1]
>
> (Horace, *Epistles* 1.2.18–31)
>
> So now let us turn from the vigour and combat of the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey* with its *ethos*. For that poem too is not altogether devoid of wisdom (ἀφιλοσόφητος).
>
> ([Heraclitus], *Homeric Allegories* 60)

The ancient critics are well known—some might say notorious—for their readiness to read literature, and particularly Homer, through moral spectacles.[2] Their interpretations of Homeric epic are philosophical, not only in the more limited sense that they identified specific doctrines in the speeches of Homer's characters, making the poet or his heroes spokesmen for the views of Plato or Epicurus,[3] but also in a wider sense: the critics demand from Homer not merely entertainment but enlightenment on moral and religious questions, on good and evil, on this life and the afterlife. When they fail to find what they seek, they follow Plato and find him wanting.[4]

In modern criticism of Homer this approach has not been altogether abandoned, but it has perhaps become less prominent. In the case of the *Odyssey*, the moralistic reading of Odysseus' character, well exemplified

[1] Translations are my own unless otherwise stated, though I have sometimes freely adapted the version of the *Odyssey* by W. Shewring.

[2] See further e.g. Pl. *Rep.* 10.620, Antisth. *frr.* 51–62 Caizzi, Sen. *Const. Sap.* 2.1, Dio Chr. *Or.* 55, 57, Plut. *de audiendis poetis*, M. Aur. 11.6, Max. Tyr. *Or.* 26 Hobein, [Plut.] *de vita et poesi Homeri* 133–40, etc., [Heracl.] *Alleg. Hom.* 70 and *passim*. For the Stoics, see esp. P. de Lacy, *AJP* 56 (1948) 241–71. For a very full and thorough history of such criticism see F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris 1956), esp. 365–91; also W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses theme*[2] (London 1963), esp. ch. 9; H. Rahner, *Greek myths and Christian mystery* (Eng. tr., London 1963), esp. ch. 8.

[3] Cf. esp. Sen. *Ep.* 88.5–8, with A. Stuckelberger's commentary; early instances cited by him include Anaxag. A1 D.-K., Pl. *Prt.* 316d.

[4] Pl. *Rep.* 10.607b 'there is an ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy'; and for Homer as the poet par excellence see 595b, 607d1, and *passim*. Further, see Plut. *aud. poet.* 15c, 16a–d, 17de, etc. (with E. Valgiglio's notes on 16a–b); [Heracl.] *Alleg. Hom.* 1 πάντα γὰρ ἠσέβησεν, εἰ μηδὲν ἠλληγόρησεν ('for if he has written none of it as allegory, then he has committed impiety throughout'); [Longin.] 9.7 *init.*

in the lines of Horace's poem quoted above, would probably be met with considerable scepticism today. Horace's reading of the *Odyssey*, it may fairly be said, is too limited and one-sided to do justice to the complex character of the hero, in whom we find not only wisdom, prudence, and endurance, but also curiosity, vanity, and above all a delight in crafty tricks and lies. Odyssean criticism seems not yet to have reconciled the poem's dominantly moral tone and the moral status of its hero. It is a commonplace that the *Odyssey* as a whole is, much more than the *Iliad*, a moral tale, in which, for example, the unjust man meets with the censure and punishment of the gods, whereas the suppliant, the stranger and the guest-friend are under their protection.[5] But how far are these and other ethical principles adequately represented and championed by the hero of the poem? To put the question another way, is Odysseus too rich and complex a character for the poem to accommodate?

What is here being suggested is that, although moral interpretation of the *Odyssey* is familiar and even orthodox in modern critical writings, the insight of the ancients, that such morality must be embodied in or illustrated by the hero himself, has been lost. This parting of the ways is disturbing not only because critics such as Horace or Plutarch or the Stoic allegorists merit a hearing, nor even because of the influence which the concept of Odysseus as a moral example, a symbol of man's voyage through life and quest for wisdom, has had upon later times;[6] it is also hard to deny that the moral reading of Odysseus' character and adventures gains considerable support from the poem itself. It is neither frivolous nor fanciful to observe that Odysseus, in abandoning Calypso for Penelope, exchanging eternal pampered passivity for a real and active mortal existence, shows exceptional self-denial and

[5] On the gods, see esp. nn. 14–19 below. On the institution of ξενία 'guest-friendship', see M. I. Finley, *The world of Odysseus*[2] (London 1980) 95–103: see e.g. *Od.* 4.169 f., 9.125 ff., 267–80, 477–9, 14.56–9, 402–6. Guests and suppliants associated: e.g. 8.546 ἀντὶ κασιγνήτου ξείνος θ' ἱκέτης τε τέτυκται ('a guest or a suppliant has the status of a brother'). On supplication in the *Odyssey*, see J. Gould, *JHS* 93 (1973) 74 ff., esp. 80, 90–4 [= J. Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory and Exchange* (Oxford 2000) 22–73, esp. 32–4, 51–8]. The pattern of hospitality and generosity granted (as by Nestor, Menelaus, the Phaeacians and Eumaeus), denied (as by the Cyclopes, the Laestrygonians and the suitors), or offered on certain terms or after delay (Calypso, Circe) is as vital to the poem's structure as to its ethics.

[6] Cf. Rahner (n. 2) *passim*; E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an age of anxiety* (Cambridge 1965) 100–1.

devotion.[7] Allegory, one of the chief weapons of the ancient critic, also has its origins in poetry, not least that of Homer himself;[8] and it may be seen, just below the surface, in episodes such as the escape from the Lotus-Eaters and the Sirens, or in the transformation of Odysseus' men by Circe. The trials and labours of Odysseus, like those of Heracles, were seen by the ancients as both a moral training and a testing-ground for virtue;[9] though we may not wish to endorse the specific allegories which they detected, it remains true, I think, that they saw something fundamental to the poem, and as important for its design and structure as for its ethos. Furthermore, the poet often makes Odysseus himself voice moral warnings and describe the condition of man: many of the themes of the poem are summed up, for example, in the powerful speech in which he cautions the decent suitor Amphinomus (18.125 ff.). The hero is also the exemplar of the good king, who is a father to his people (2.230 ff., cf. 47; 4.690 ff., 5.7 ff., 19.365 ff.).[10] When he

[7] Cf. W. S. Anderson, in *Essays on the Odyssey*, ed. C. H. Taylor, Jr (Indiana 1963) 73–86 on this episode; also J. Griffin, *Homer on life and death* (Oxford 1980) [hereafter Griffin] 59–60; B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey*, *Hermes* Einzelschr. 30 (Wiesbaden 1974) 62.

The temptation to forget home and abandon oneself to a softer, less demanding existence is another recurrent challenge for Odysseus and his companions (the Lotus-Eaters, life with Circe; the temptation of knowledge offered by the Sirens; Calypso, Nausicaa). On the Sirens see further Rahner (n. 2) 354 f.; E. Vermeule, *Aspects of death in early Greek art and poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1979) 201 ff. Vermeule 131 suggestively speaks of 'Lethe, ... the key theme of the *Odyssey*'; cf. N. Austin, *Archery at the dark of the moon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1975) 138–9. Calypso, as her name implies, seeks to *conceal* Odysseus, to rob him of fame and memory (cf. 1.235–43); she beguiles him (1.55–6), trying to make him *forget* Ithaca (57 ἐπιλήσεται 'he will forget', cf. 9.97, 102, 10.236, 472). In the *Odyssey*, importance also attaches to remembering or failing to recall the past: see, from various angles, 3.103 ff., 4.118 (contrast the drug scene, 219 ff.), 14.170, 19.118; also 2.233–4, 16.424–47.

[8] e.g. Eris, Hypnos, Phobos, Thanatos, Kudoimos, Ate and the Litai. For stout denial of allegory's presence in Homeric poetry, see D. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1959) 303; *contra*, see M. L. West's commentary on Hesiod's *Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 33–4; H. W. Clarke, *Homer's readers* (London and Toronto 1981) 64 ff.

[9] e.g. Sen. *Const. sap.* 2.1, *Tranq.* 16.4, Epict. 1. 6.32–6, 3.22.57 with Billerbeck's note; Dio Chr. *Or.* 7.28–35; Max. Tyr. *Or.* 15.6, 38.7; G. Galinsky, *The Heracles theme* (Oxford 1972) chs. 5 and 9; Buffière (n. 2) 377.

[10] The social dimension of the *Odyssey* means that we should not be concerned solely with Odysseus, but also with his people: see e.g. 14.92 ff., 16.360 ff., 20.105 ff., 209–25, 21.68 ff. Further, H. D. F. Kitto, *Poiesis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966) ch. 3, esp. 133–40. The suitors want not only Penelope, but the throne: cf. A. Thornton, *People and themes in Homer's Odyssey* (Otago 1970) ch. 6; H. Clarke, *The art of the Odyssey* (New Jersey 1967) 20–3; Finley (n. 5) 88–91, etc. For the passage from Book 19, see esp. West on Hes. *Op.* 225 ff.; also Aesch. *Supp.* 625 ff., *Eum.* 916 ff.; I. du Quesnay, *PLLS* 1 (Liverpool 1976) 61–6. E. A. Havelock, *The Greek concept of justice* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1978) chs. 8–10 also discusses these topics.

comes home, as one famous passage implies, the land will be restored to health and fertility, the crops will flourish once more; with the homecoming of the rightful king, prosperity will come again to Ithaca (see 19.107 ff.). In short, we can hardly claim that the character and experiences of Odysseus are not a central concern of the poet; and, as is proper and perhaps inevitable in serious poetry, they have a moral dimension.

It can still be asked, however, how important and coherent is the moral picture of Odysseus which is presented in the poem. My purpose in this paper is to chart the development of Odysseus, and to suggest some of the ways in which the changes in his behaviour and responses serve to illustrate and develop important themes of the poem. For the conception of a character developing is not anachronistic or inappropriate in the study of ancient literature, despite what some critics have maintained.[11] This is not to say that we should read the Homeric poems as psychological novels, but that Odysseus, like Achilles, reacts to and

[11] On this issue see most recently the thoughtful paper by C. Gill, *CQ* 33 (1983) 469–87. Tacitus' account of Tiberius (esp. *Ann.* 6.51) is usually prominent in such discussions, but 6.48 (Arruntius' comment) shows that a more developmental model of character was available to Tacitus; conversely, modern accounts of personality also stress the emergence of potential and the development of already existing tendencies (which is what I essentially argue for Odysseus: cf. n. 42). The debates of the sophists (Pl. *Meno* 70a, with Thompson's n.; *Clitopho* 407b; Eur. *El.* 367 ff., *I.A.* 558–62, Antiph. B. 62, etc.) reveal a keen interest in the relative importance of φύσις, ἄσκησις, and διδαχή (nature, training, and instruction): cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Hist. of Greek philosophy* vol. 3 (Cambridge 1969), esp. 250 ff.; K. J. Dover, *Greek popular morality* (Oxford 1974) 85–95.

We may distinguish between the development of a *young* man's character (scholars have long recognized the *Telemachy* as the ancestor of the *Bildungsroman*; cf. the case of Neoptolemus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*), and the rarer but not unknown phenomenon of character changing once the personality is adult and mature. In early literature, besides the case of Achilles, see esp. Croesus in Hdt. 1.207, 3.36 (another case of 'learning through suffering': 1.207.1); Croesus advances in understanding sufficiently to assume himself the role of 'wise adviser' which Solon had played to him, 1.30–3. (For a different view, see H. P. Stahl, *YCS* 24 [1974] 19–36.) Note also Adrastus in Eur. *Supp.* (n. 63); Soph. *O.C.* 7–8 (significant even if disproved by events, cf. 854–5, 954). And in Euripides the corruption of individuals through hardship or ill-treatment is a recurring theme (esp. *Med.*, *Hec.*, *El.*, *Or.*). In comic vein, compare Ar. *Vesp.* 1457 f., Men. *Dysc.* 708–47 with Handley's n.; Ter. *Ad.* 855–81.

is changed or affected by circumstances and experience.[12] Odysseus too, though not a tragic hero, learns and develops through suffering: he undergoes 'an enlargement of experience and comprehension'.[13] In the course of this paper, I shall attempt to trace the main stages in this process of enlargement; I shall try also to show that the ethical framework, the 'philosophy', of the *Odyssey*, is less clear-cut and more realistic than is sometimes implied; and that Odysseus, though a complicated and not always virtuous character, is none the less a coherent one, and a proper vehicle for that philosophy.

Inasmuch as Homeric morality is upheld, however capriciously, by the gods, they naturally feature from time to time in this paper; but I do not propose to linger on the thorny questions of Homeric theology, or to treat in full such questions as the similarity or differences between Iliadic and Odyssean religion,[14] the programmatic remarks of Zeus in Book 1 of the *Odyssey*,[15] or the relationship of the divine pantheon in either poem to contemporary belief or cult.[16] It is hardly possible, however, to avoid offering a few preliminary comments, which I hope will be relatively uncontroversial.

In general, I take for granted the presentation of the Iliadic gods in a number of recent works, perhaps most conspicuously in the last two chapters of Jasper Griffin's eloquent study *Homer on life and death* (Oxford 1980). The gods of the *Iliad* are beings of terrible power and majesty, yet also often frivolous, selfish, vindictive, and above all able to abandon or ignore their human protégés, to turn their eyes away from mortal suffering.[17] In the *Odyssey*, the picture is obviously rather

[12] For the debate on Achilles see e.g. Griffin 50 n. 1; P. C. Wilson, *TAPA* 69 (1938) 557–74; F. Hirsch, *Der Charakter Achills und die Einheit der Ilias* (diss. Innsbruck 1965).

[13] C. W. Macleod, *Homer: Iliad xxiv* (Cambridge 1982) 23, speaking of Achilles.

[14] See e.g. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1951) 10–11, 29–35; Griffin 164–5.

[15] See esp. Dodds (n. 14) 31–3.

[16] Wilamowitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*[3] vol. 1 (Basel and Stuttgart 1959) 311–34; G. Murray, *Rise of the Greek epic*[4] (Oxford 1934) 145, 265; G. M. Calhoun, in *A companion to Homer*, eds. A. B. Wace and F. W. Stubbings (London 1962) 442–50; W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaische und klassische Epoche* (Stuttgart 1977) 191–6 (= Eng. tr., 1985, 119–25).

[17] I allude particularly to *Iliad* 13.1–9, cf. Griffin 131. Contrast *Il.* 16.388 and context, or Hes. *Op.* 248–55, passages which imply that the gods maintain a constant surveillance over the doings of mankind. In the *Odyssey*, note esp. the contrast at 7.78–81 (the departure of Athene to Athens and her place of honour), juxtaposed with αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεύς ('But as for Odysseus...', 81), as the all-too-human hero prepares to enter

different; the problem is to decide precisely how different. We may observe that the gods appear less frequently, and that fewer of them are actually involved in the action. There are divine councils only at the openings of Books 1 and 5; Athene and Poseidon, though for different reasons deeply concerned with the destiny of Odysseus, seem prepared to forget about him for several years; and of all the gods in the *Odyssey*, only Athene has anything of the fullness of characterization which we find in the divinities of the *Iliad*. The gods are, then, less well known to us; and their purposes are obscure to the characters of the poem.[18] They move in disguise among men (esp. 17.482–7). Although they are said, and sometimes seem, to uphold justice, there are disturbing exceptions (in particular, the punishment of the Phaeacians by Poseidon, endorsed or at least condoned by Zeus himself, hardly corresponds to any human canons of justice);[19] and although in her plea to Zeus on Odysseus' behalf Athene praises the hero's piety (1.60–2, cf. 65–6), her own affection for him is based on their similarity of character (13.330–1).[20] In other words, the successful return and revenge of Odysseus is a special privilege, not a general law. Men should be pious, but piety does not automatically win rewards. Similarly, the gods may warn men, and (as we shall see) such warnings can never safely be ignored, but obedience may be impossible (as in the case of the starving companions of Odysseus in Book 12), and virtue and generosity, such as the Phaeacians

a new and unfamiliar society. Contrast also 5. 478 ff. with 6.41 ff. (C. W. Macleod, marginalia). For Virgilian developments of this vital contrast, see e.g. *Aen.* 5.859–61 (the falling, dying Palinurus contrasted with the effortless flight of the god); 10.464–73 (developing the passage of *Iliad* 13); 12.875–84.

[18] Note esp. the tactics of disguise and deception that Athene adopts in relation to Telemachus and Odysseus (contrast her openness with Diomedes in *Iliad* 5). See also 7.199–203: the gods' practice with the fairy-tale Phaeacians, who are akin to them (5.35, 7.56 ff., 19.279) offers a contrast to their behaviour with ordinary men. Further, H. J. Rose, *HThR* 49 (1956) 63–72.

[19] Note esp. that the Phaeacians are seafarers, protégés of Poseidon (and their king is his descendant, see 7.56–63).

[20] So too in the *Iliad* Aphrodite favours Paris, whose view of life and whose amorous gifts are like her own: cause and effect are inseparable (cf. *Il.* 3.39, 64–6, 391–4).

The 'piety' of Odysseus is embodied in his sacrifices; compare the praise of Hector in *Il.* 24.34, 69–70 (cf. 22.170, etc.; Griffin 185 f.; *h.Dem.* 311–12 and Richardson's n.). It thus remains ambiguous, and deliberately so, how far the gods favour mortals for their virtue and how much they are swayed by personal motives and consideration of their own τιμή (honour). In the last book of the *Iliad* the poet seems to bring this question—whom and for what reasons will the gods support?—sharply into focus: cf. Macleod (n. 13) on 24.33–76 and add 18.356–68. Cf. nn. 44–5.

show to Odysseus, cannot always save the unfortunate mortal from the anger of the offended god. The actions of Poseidon and Helios in the *Odyssey* recall the ruthlessness of the gods of the *Iliad* when they act in defence of their honour.[21] The divine background of the *Odyssey* shows little change: the gods, like human kings and overseers,[22] may show favour to certain selected mortals, and may at times even feel under some ill-defined obligation to step in and exercise their authority in support of the just cause, but that is not their normal or perennial preoccupation.

It is time now to return to Odysseus and his function within the moral structure of the poem. We have seen that ancient writers, including Horace, often saw him as a philosopher, a moral authority, even a *sapiens* (Stoic sage). As has already been indicated, this picture needs refining: the difficulty is to reconcile it with his deviousness, his greed and appetite, his ingenious spinning of lies, his almost comical pleasure in his own cleverness. On the one hand we have Odysseus the πολύτλας ('much-enduring'), the man of sorrows, who suffers yet finds the inner strength and wisdom to endure despite all his trials; on the other, the πολυμήχανος ('man of many wiles'), the crafty schemer.[23] In imitation and interpretation of the *Odyssey* we generally find that one side or the other is adapted or emphasized; already in classical times, later authors prefer to choose between the philosopher and the crook.[24] In Sophocles, for example, we find the Odysseus of the *Ajax* to be a sombre and compassionate statesman, whereas in the same author's *Philoctetes* it is the other side of the Homeric portrait which is stressed, and Odysseus emerges as an arch-sophist, a time-serving and scheming politician.[25]

[21] Cf. esp. *Il.* 7.442–63 (Poseidon protests at the building of the Achaean wall). Here κλέος (glory), human and divine, is the issue (451, 458): Poseidon is jealous of the Greek achievement. Cf. *Od.* 13.128 f. οὐκετ' ἐγώ ... τιμήεις ἔσομαι, ὅτε με βροτοὶ οὔ τι τίουσι, 'no longer will I receive homage, when mortals no longer pay me any honour'; 141 οὔ τι σ' ἀτιμάζουσι θεοί, 'the gods do not dishonour you at all' (140 = *Il.* 7.455).

[22] For the parallel between gods and kings cf. Griffin 186.

[23] The epithets of Odysseus are studied by Austin (n. 7) 40–53; W. Whallon, *Formula, character and context* (Washington D.C. 1969) 6–9, 87–91.

[24] See esp. Stanford's absorbing study (n. 2), not entirely superseding a series of earlier articles by the same author.

[25] On Odysseus in Sophocles see Stanford (n. 2) 104–11.

Homer himself, however, combines both these aspects, the liar and braggart and the moral avenger, within the same poem. It seems plausible that the earlier tradition had stressed the more disreputable, unheroic aspects of the character. In the *Iliad*, his capacity for deception is treated with veiled allusion by Achilles (9.308–14) and open insult by Agamemnon (4.339). His very appearance is unconventional and deceptive (3.209–24, cf. *Od.* 8.159–64). He deceives Dolon without a qualm (*Il.* 10.383); his successes in the funeral games are not quite innocently won (23.725 ff.); his retreat from the battlefield in the eighth book of the *Iliad*, ignoring Diomedes' appeal and Nestor's plight, was the occasion of considerable debate among the scholiasts (8.97 with ΣBT).[26] In the *Iliad*, he is a fine speaker and a quick thinker (as shown especially by his presence of mind in Book 2, when he saves Agamemnon from disgrace); but we are obviously meant to see him as a lesser hero and a less noble figure than Achilles. It is striking that what moralising Odysseus does offer in the earlier poem, in Book 19, is, and seems meant to appear, trite and insensitive (*Il.* 19.160 ff., 216 ff., esp. 225).[27] In the *Odyssey*, we hear of his relationship with the arch-thief and oathbreaker Autolycus (19.393–412), and in the first book we are also told of his use of poisoned arrows (1.257–64), though for dramatic as well as moral reasons the poet does not admit their use in the actual slaughter.[28] We may also observe that his womanising overseas with glamorous goddesses has been discreetly kept to a minimum, though not entirely bowdlerized. (There is some evidence that in other tales Odysseus' fidelity to Penelope was less uncompromising, his sexual morals more lax.[29]) All in all, the poet has not chosen a hero who can readily become the vehicle or the spokesman of ethical teachings.

Traditional analysis might see the wily trickster and the moral hero as originally two different treatments or traditions lying behind the tale

[26] N. J. Richardson, *CQ* 30 (1980) 273. On Odysseus in the *Iliad* see Stanford (n. 2) 12–21, 25–9; Griffin 15–16; J. D. Folzenlogen, *CB* 41 (1965) 33–5.

[27] Contrast the deeper humanity and sensitivity of Achilles' words to Priam in Book 24, where again persuasion to eat is in question. So also in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus' highly rhetorical and calculated speech employs the arguments which would convince *himself*: gifts, glory, and gain, with added touches of flattery.

[28] See S. West's commentary ad loc.; G. Murray (n. 16) 129–30.

[29] R. Lattimore in *Classical studies presented to B. E. Perry* (Illinois 1969) 101 n. 41. I owe my knowledge of this essay to the late T. C. W. Stinton.

of Odysseus, unhappily stitched together to create a patchwork.[30] More plausibly, refined analysis might deduce from the evidence so far given that the poet of the *Odyssey* imposed a moralizing picture on recalcitrant material, in an effort to transform folk-tale or fable into a narrative with greater ethical and religious significance.[31] Naïve Unitarianism might reply by simply appealing to human nature: people are complicated, characters in fiction as in real life possess many qualities and these may often be inconsistent; the character of Odysseus and the poem itself are the richer for this variety, which reflects the hero's chameleon-like versatility. Such a defence, superficially attractive, will seem less so if we believe that most classical literature characteristically imposes pattern and integrates contradictions within an artistic and formally structured whole. It is not usual for ancient authors to present their readers with loose ends, random juxtapositions or unrelated elements. Their preference is to include contrasting and conflicting scenes or viewpoints within a carefully organised, unified structure.[32]

In the rest of this paper I shall attempt to offer a more refined version of the Unitarian position, based on the assumption that Odysseus' character does change or develop, and that this development is not simply of psychological interest, but serves to reinforce, to convey more vividly and more thoughtfully, the moral lessons of the *Odyssey*.

When we first meet Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, on the island of Calypso in Book 5, his wanderings are of course well advanced. He has been stripped by ill fortune and divine persecution of ships, comrades, treasure, all that once was his. Part of the point of structuring the poem

[30] See further the surveys by A. Lesky, *Homeros* (repr. from RE Suppl. 11 [1968]) coll. 108–23; A. Heubeck, *Die homerische Frage* (Darmstadt 1974) 87–130; H. W. Clarke (n. 8) esp. ch. 4. For speculation on the pre-Homeric Odysseus see Stanford (n. 2) ch. 2; P. Philippson, *MH* 4 (1947), 8–22.

[31] Cf. W. Schadewaldt, *HSCP* 63 (1958), 15–32, *Studi in onore di L. Castiglioni* (Florence 1960), 861–76, both reprinted in his *Hellas und Hesperien* 1 (Zurich and Stuttgart 1960). For comment, see Fenik (n. 7) 208 ff.; Clarke (n. 8) 182–6.

[32] These generalisations are doubtless questionable, and I would admit e.g. Euripides as a notable and influential exception; but a full defence of the assertion in the text would require at least an article of its own; I hope to return to the topic elsewhere. For ancient concepts of unity and diversity see esp. Brink on Hor. *Ars* I ff. (*Horace on Poetry* vol. 2, 77–85); for unity of character, esp. Arist. *Poet.* 15.1454a 22–36, Hor. *Ars* 125–7. For an interesting modern discussion, see A. Dihle, *Studien zur Griechischen Biographie* (Göttingen 1956), 69–81.

in this way is in order to introduce us to the hero at the very nadir of his fortunes, just as in geographical terms he is at the outer limits of the known world. But it will be more convenient to go through Odysseus' adventures chronologically, and this means moving directly to the opening of the hero's narrative to the Phaeacians, in Book 9.

There is a certain difficulty here, given that these stories are told by Odysseus himself at a later date.[33] There are indeed some touches of bravado and the occasional reference to his own foresight or achievements, for instance at 10.156 ff., the episode in which he kills a mighty stag. It seems deliberate, and amusing, that he dwells so long on the episode, even repeating, in a matter of ten lines, the formula which emphasizes the beast's enormous size (10.171=180 *μάλα γὰρ μέγα θηρίον ἦεν*, 'for it was indeed a very large beast'); similarly, he takes the trouble to mention how long his followers spent gazing at the dead animal in wonder. But in spite of these boastful passages in the first-person narrative,[34] it remains the case that Odysseus does tell us a fair amount, sometimes ruefully and grimly, about his own errors as well as his companions' misdeeds.

From Troy, Odysseus sailed to the land of the Cicones. Here again, his narrative betrays a breezy heroic bravado: 'there I sacked their city and killed the people' (9.40; cf. e.g. *Il.* 9.326–9, 594–5). But a sterner note is heard when the men go on looting, despite Odysseus' warnings (9.44 *τοὶ δὲ νήπιοι οὐκ ἐπίθοντο*, 'fools that they were, they paid me no heed'). This disobedience sets the keynote of Odysseus' difficult relations with his followers. As a result, the neighbouring allies spring a counter-attack, and six men from each ship are lost before the rest can make their escape.

The second mishap is Odysseus' doing: indeed, the whole débâcle of the Cyclops episode is due, as he himself admits, to his insatiable curiosity, and to his eagerness to win friends and acquire gifts. Particularly noteworthy are his retrospective comments at 9.224 ff., in which

[33] Further, see *Od.* 11.364 ff. (Alcinous' complimentary remarks nevertheless associate Odysseus—and poetry—with lies: cf. Hes. *Th.* 27, Solon *fr.* 29 West, etc.); Juv. 15.16, with Courtney's notes; Lucian *VH* 1.3. See also W. Suerbaum, 'Die Ich-Erzählungen des Odysseus', *Poetica* 2 (1968), 150–77.

[34] For further possible touches of bravado and boastfulness in the first-person narrative see 9.19–20, 160, 213–15 (this foresight seems somewhat implausible, cf. D. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* [Cambridge 1955] 8), 442–5, 550–1, 10.447 (?), 11.512, 524, 12.208–12 (contrast the humility of Aeneas in Virgil's imitation of the last passage, *Aen.* 1.198–208). I would also include in this category 11.565 f. (*contra* Page, op. cit. 26–7).

he recalls the moment when he and his men had entered the Cyclops' cave. 'There my companions begged me to let them take away some of the cheeses and depart, driving kids and lambs out of their pens and aboard our swift ship, and setting out once more over the salt sea. But I did not heed them[35]—better, far better, if I had! I was still eager to see the owner of the place and find out if he would give me a guest-gift. But it was no kind host that my companions were to meet there . . .'. The rest of the story needs no summary here. Odysseus succeeded in getting some of his companions out of this predicament, but only after having got them into it. Furthermore, he cannot resist the temptation to mock the Cyclops from the apparent safety of his ship, taunting him in the fashion of an Iliadic warrior.[36] This is almost disastrous when Polyphemus hurls boulders at them; still worse, Odysseus has to exult in his own personal success, revealing his own identity and so making it possible for the Cyclops to harm him through his prayer to Poseidon. Here again, the companions desperately try to restrain Odysseus, but he pays no attention (9.492 ff.).

In the episode of the bag of winds (10.1–79), the situation is more complicated, for it seems that both Odysseus and his men are at fault: Odysseus for his characteristic lack of trust, never telling his men more than is absolutely necessary, always taking delight in his superior knowledge. Understandably, they do not trust *him*, and proceed to loot their captain's luggage (10.44 f.). As a result, when actually within sight of Ithaca, they are driven off course by the battling winds. Odysseus is filled with unequalled misery at this fresh setback: he considers hurling himself into the sea (50–2), but instead, as he puts it, 'I endured (53 ἔτλην) and remained; veiling my head, I lay in the ship'. This moment of self-control and restraint of his emotions (we are not told that Odysseus weeps, though the companions certainly do, 49) points the way forward to Odysseus' later endurance and patience in adversity. But it has yet to become the dominant, controlling force in his character. In these early

[35] 228 ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην, 'But I paid them no heed', echoes 44 οὐκ ἐπίθοντο, 'they paid me no heed' (of the companions); cf. also 500.

[36] See e.g. B. Fenik, *Typical battle scenes in the Iliad*, *Hermes* Einzelschr. 21 (Wiesbaden 1968) 222.

The episode is also disquieting because of Odysseus' possible blasphemy in 525, which already worried ancient critics: see Antisth. *fr.* 54 Caizzi, Arist. *fr.* 174 Rose, Buffière (n. 2) 370–1. Readers may differ as to whether this does constitute blasphemy, but if it does, the ancient excuses are certainly not sufficient to palliate it.

adventures he is still something of a dashing buccaneer; he has yet to become the brooding, deep-thinking planner and almost Stoic moralist whom we see in the making during the Phaeacian books and in action in the second half of the epic.[37]

These episodes help to explain the general tension between Odysseus and his companions, particularly Eurylochus, in subsequent adventures, notably the Circe episode. They admire, fear and even care about him, but they also distrust him. This emerges from 10.198–202, 244–73, and especially the splendid scene at 428 ff., when Odysseus returns from his encounter with Circe, to tell his waiting friends that all is well. At this point Eurylochus makes a panicky speech which culminates in an accusation of Odysseus: he says (in essence) 'where are you off to, you fools? She'll turn you all into pigs or wolves or lions; it'll be just like the Cyclops affair all over again, when our friends died because of *his* rash folly' (10.437 τούτου γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο).[38] Although Odysseus draws his sword in fury and has to be restrained by his more timid friends (10.443, 'No, descendant of Zeus, let's leave him here, if you bid us do so . . .'), we may well feel that there is some truth in what the rebellious Eurylochus says.

The next episode involving a warning that is not heeded occurs in Book 12, with the warnings of Circe when Odysseus finally leaves her island. She tells him privately of the dangers of the Sirens, but, knowing that he will not be able to resist listening to their song, she gives him instructions how to do so in safety.[39] These he follows to the letter: the story illustrates once again his curiosity, his fascination with new experiences, but it also indicates his greater prudence in comparison with earlier episodes in which he took unnecessary risks or forced his companions to do so. But Circe also warns him of the danger from Scylla and Charybdis: here he cannot avoid losing some men, and must

[37] For this interpretation see further K. Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist* (Göttingen 1960) 47–124, esp. 65 ff. [translated in *Reading the Odyssey: selected interpretative essays*, ed. S. L. Schein (Princeton 1996) 63–132]; also Fenik, *Studies* (n. 7) 161.

[38] For ἀτασθαλίαι 'rash folly', cf. *Il.* 4.409, 22.104 (only); *Od.* 1.7, 34, 22.437, 23.67, etc. (normally used of the suitors). Note that Odysseus does later attribute ἀτάσθαλα to himself (below, p. 176 on 18.139)—again an indication of his greater insight and his increased capacity for self-criticism.

[39] There is a pointed discrepancy between Odysseus' account to his men (12.160 οἷον ἔμ' ᾔνώγει ὅπ' ἀκουέμεν, 'I alone, she said, was to listen to their words') and Circe's actual words (49 αἴ κ' ἐθέλῃσθα, 'if you should wish . . .')! Circe suspects that Odysseus himself will not be able to resist listening.

be content if the ship itself is saved. At this point the heroic spirit of Odysseus the sacker of cities reasserts itself, and he asks if there is no way to make a stand against Scylla. The enchantress replies:

> Self-willed man (σχέτλιε), is your mind still set on war-like deeds, on struggle and toil? Will you not bow to the deathless gods themselves? Scylla is not of mortal kind; she is an immortal monster. (12.116–18)

Odysseus needs to learn that the old heroic code of facing your foe in head-on defiance, kill or be killed, cannot always work.[40]

In what follows, Odysseus shows that these lessons are only partially learnt. He retails the warnings to his companions, but with typical caution tells them only part: 'Of Scylla I did not speak, that inexorable horror, for fear the crew in panic might cease from rowing and huddle themselves below in the hold' (12.223–5). But he himself forgets Circe's warning—the familiar story-pattern once again makes its appearance—dons his armour and tries to threaten Scylla, to no avail (12.226 ff.). Six of his comrades are lost, in one of the most spine-chilling scenes of the *Odyssey*, and one which speaks clearly in the language and images of men's nightmares.

> ... I saw only their feet and hands as they were lifted up; they were calling out to me in their heart's anguish, crying out my name for the last time ... Scylla swung my writhing companions up to the rocks, and there at the entrance to her cave, she began to devour them as they shrieked and held out their hands to me in the extremes of agony. Of all the things I saw with my eyes, of all the trials I underwent in my quests of the paths of the sea, that was the most pitiful. (12.248–59)[41]

The next trial that Odysseus and his crew have to undergo is the episode of the Oxen of the Sun. Both Tiresias and Circe had been particularly insistent in warning Odysseus about this (11.104 ff., 12.127–41). If Odysseus lands on Thrinacia, he must not harm these animals, or his homecoming will be late and hard, and before that he must lose

[40] Cf. J. Griffin, *Homer* (Past Master series, Oxford 1980) 57.

[41] On these lines see further H. Fränkel, *Early Greek poetry and philosophy*, Eng. tr. (Oxford 1975) 49; C. Moulton, *Similes in the Homeric poems* (Göttingen 1977) 104, 119. Note the reversal in 22.383 ff., where Odysseus is the fisherman viewing his dying catch. So too 22.388 (τῶν μέν τ' ἠέλιος φαέθων ἐξείλετο θυμόν, 'whose life the blazing sun has taken from them') recalls the wrath and vengeance of Helios in Book 12; now Odysseus fills a comparable role (*cf.* nn. 75–6 below).

all his comrades (11.114=12.141). In Tiresias' speech of warning one line in particular stands out for its thematic importance, extending beyond this episode to the poem as a whole: 'If you are prepared to restrain your desire, and that of your comrades' (11.105 αἴ κ' ἐθέλῃς σὸν θυμὸν ἐρυκακέειν καὶ ἑταίρων ...). Self-restraint and self-denial remain important themes throughout the rest of Odysseus' career, not just during the wanderings.[42]

Odysseus himself would have preferred to steer past the island altogether, but again it is Eurylochus who protests, rebelling against their leader's strictness (12.271–302), and Odysseus is forced to yield, though not without insisting that his companions swear an oath not to touch the beasts. Needless to say, in the end, with the winds unfavourable and starvation looming, the companions, urged on by Eurylochus, forget their oath and embark upon the fateful meal (12.339 ff.). On this occasion they are clearly the offenders, but Odysseus' own position is ambiguous, since he had left them alone when he went away to pray and fell asleep, as he had before in the episode of the bag of winds. He tells the Phaeacians that the gods sent this disastrous sleep on him (12.338, cf. 370 ff., esp. 372 ἄτην, 'ruination').[43] A convenient excuse, as in Agamemnon's famous 'apology' (*Il.* 19.86 ff.),[44] or a malicious deity

[42] Telemachus too has to learn to conceal his emotions (as he fails to do in Book 2) and to contain his wrath: see esp. 16.274–7, 17.484–91, 21.128–9. This is one of many ways in which the development and adventures of Telemachus parallel those of his father: cf. n. 11, and *PCPhS* NS 31 (1985) 138–9. Notice also, of Odysseus himself, 11.84–9, 17.238, 284, 18.90–4, 20.9–30. In 19.479 ff. (esp. 481 ἐρύσσατο 'drew her back'), Odysseus restrains Eurycleia, as also in Book 22, when the nurse is about to utter a cry of exultation over the dead suitors (cf. n. 81).

Odysseus' self-restraint is not altogether a new thing: see Menelaus' narrative, 4.269–89, esp. 270–1 (271 ἔτλη [he endured]), 284 κατέρυκε καὶ ἔσχεθεν ἱεμένω περ, 'he held back and restrained them despite their eagerness', and compare the description of him as ταλασίφρων, 'enduring in his heart', in 241, 270. Both Menelaus' and Helen's tales prefigure later events of the poem (thus S. West on 4.244, comparing 19.386 ff.); either we must see Odysseus' endurance here as a thematic reflection of a major motif of the poem, or we may suppose that self-restraint of this kind, in a martial context, is exceptional but less demanding, more conventional, than Odysseus' later ordeals (for heroic 'endurance' see Macleod (n. 13) 22 n. 2; and for the qualities required of a hero in an ambush, *Il.* 13.275–86).

[43] On ἄτη see Dodds (n. 14) 5 f.; Barrett on Eur. *Hipp.* 241.

[44] *Contra* Dodds (n. 14) 1–6, 13–16. This passage, like Priam's words to Helen in *Il.* 3.164–5, has perhaps been too readily treated as central in discussions of Homeric theology and psychology. Dodds himself observes (ibid. 11) that we must distinguish between the poet's statements and the words of his characters (*cf.* Arist. *frr.* 146, 163 Rose); in the passages in question, Agamemnon seeks a portentous formulation which

at work, or a more complex theological paradox, by which the gods, like Jehovah in the Old Testament, lead their human victims into sin?[45] At all events, the companions perish while Odysseus is saved, but he too is to be punished, still dogged by the curse of Poseidon, now reinforced by the anger of Helios. As Tiresias warned him:

> εἰ δέ κε σίνηαι, τότε τοι τεκμαίρομ' ὄλεθρον
> νηΐ τε καὶ ἑτάροισ'. αὐτὸς δ' εἴ πέρ κεν ἀλύξῃς,
> ὀψὲ κακῶς νεῖαι, ὀλέσας ἄπο πάντας ἑταίρους,
> νηὸς ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίης· δήεις δ' ἐν πήματα οἴκῳ ...

If you harm them, I foretell destruction for your ship and your companions; and if you yourself escape, you will come home late and hard, after losing all your companions, a passenger on another's ship; and you will find troubles in your house... (11.112–15)

This story pattern is an important part of Homer's legacy to tragedy: the omens ignored, the warning inadequate, defied, or recalled too late.[46] We may remember the case of Creon in the *Antigone*, of Pentheus and Hippolytus, of the doomed Polynices in the *Oedipus Coloneus*. Like many characters in Greek tragedy, like Orestes and Oedipus, for example, the companions of Odysseus seem trapped by a problem that has no solution.[47] Precautions and warnings are not always enough. The travel books of the *Odyssey* do not offer us a simple, black and white fable in which Odysseus is always right and the companions always wrong or wicked. Eurylochus is not a hubristic figure or a *theomachos* (opponent of the gods). A more realistic and thoughtful pattern seems

will appease his opponent without putting himself in a bad light; and Priam's generosity to the guilt-ridden Helen exemplifies his typical kindness to her (cf. 24.770). This principle also affects the view we take of the gods' concern for justice in the *Iliad*: the Greeks, believing themselves in the right, sometimes declare that the gods must think likewise (esp. as regards the breaking of the truce): cf. 4.157 ff., 235 ff., 7.350 ff., 13.623–32. But the scenes on Olympus which the poet allows us to witness do not generally bear this out. See also Hutchinson on Aesch. *Sept.* 4–9.

[45] See esp. *Exodus* 7–9, 10.1 (cf. Hdt. 7.12 ff., 9.109.2, etc.); A. Dihle, *The theory of will in classical antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1981) 75 f., 198 n. 31. In the *Odyssey*, note especially the way in which Athene leads the suitors on into further crime: 17.360–4, 18.155–6, 346–8; 20.284–6 (*contra* H. Lloyd-Jones, *The justice of Zeus* [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1971] 29, 31 f., 44).

[46] Cf. *JHS* 102 (1982) 149 [= *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad*, ed. D. Cairns (Oxford 2001), 268–9], esp. n. 21, adding Aesch. *Sept.* 778, *Ag.* 709, and esp. Fenik, *Studies* (n. 7) 158 ff.

[47] Fenik (n. 7) 208–32.

to emerge: Odysseus survives not because he is pious or guiltless or devoid of vices, nor even because he does not make mistakes, but because he is able to learn from them, to adapt, to use what help he can get from others and stay on top. He learns, slowly and painfully, to curb both his heroic impulses (the instinctive desire to taunt an enemy, to fight on even when it is hopeless), and his more dangerous, more idiosyncratic quality, his curiosity. Moreover, we see him growing into a more sombre figure, isolated from his own kind after the deaths of his remaining friends, turned in upon himself and absorbed in his own loneliness and grief, suspicious even of those who offer help and support.

Here we turn back to Book 5, in which our first glimpse of Odysseus is as he sits weeping on the shore of Ogygia (151–8), and in which, after many years of captivity, he is finally told by Calypso that he can go. His suspicious response is striking: in surly fashion, he replies: 'you have something else in mind, goddess, you have no thought of sending me home, you who now bid me traverse the vast gulf of the sea on a raft...' (5.173–4). Nor is this a unique case; he reacts similarly to the overtures of the sea-nymph Ino, who offers him help when his raft has been shattered (5.333 ff., esp. his speech at 356–9). This is a negative and unprofitable suspicion; it appears again when he wakes up on the shores of Ithaca and immediately supposes, against all probability, that the Phaeacians have betrayed him (13.203–14). Their actual fate, as presented in the preceding scene, makes still clearer the unfairness of this suspicion and creates a poignant irony (esp. lines 213–14). It reappears once more when he will not believe Athene's assurance that he is at last home, even after she has revealed her identity (13.312 ff., esp. 324–8). Suspicion is one aspect of the gloomy pessimism which possesses Odysseus in the early books, especially 5–8. Tossed by fate and abandoned, perhaps even hated (10.73–5) by the gods,[48] he is now preoccupied with his own miseries, and loses no opportunity to comment on them to others. Thus in Book 5, when Calypso warns him that there are further troubles in store for him when he reaches his home, he replies in words which prefigure, and perhaps provide the model for, Aeneas' speech of *praemeditatio* (self-preparation) in response

[48] Cf. J. E. B. Mayor's comm. (London 1873) on *Od.* 9 and part of 10, on 10.72, citing e.g. 14.366, 19.275, 363 f.

to the parallel warning of the Sibyl in the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid* (103–5):[49]

> Even so, my desire and longing day by day is still to reach my own home and to see the day of my return. And if this or that deity should shatter my craft on the wine-dark sea, I will bear it (*τλήσομαι*), and keep a heart within me that can endure sorrow. For now indeed I have suffered and toiled long on the waves and in war; let new tribulations now join the old. (*Od.* 5.219–24)

This gloomy yet stoical fatalism appears further in the Phaeacian books, for instance in Odysseus' appeal to Nausicaa: '...and now some deity has cast me here, I suppose so that I can suffer some further misfortune. For I don't suppose it is at an end; no, the gods have further things in store for me...' (6.172–4). Nausicaa's reply produces the standard fatalistic thinking of early Greek literature, though we may here also suspect that the poet, as so often in the *Phaeacis*,[50] is having a little fun with his creations. Her words are: 'Stranger, since you do not seem to me a bad or foolish man, remember that Zeus himself, the Olympian, dispenses blessings to mankind, to good men and also to bad, to each as he chooses. This fate he has, we may be sure, given to you, and it is for you to endure it' (6.187–90; *τετλάμεν* again).[51] These remarks are doubtless very true and salutary; they come close, in fact, to Odysseus' own words to Calypso in the fifth book; but there is a gentle humour in Odysseus' hard-won insights being echoed thus by Nausicaa's sententious naïveté.

In the Phaeacian books we find further pessimistic remarks and unhappy speeches by Odysseus even after he has been hospitably received (6.325, 7.208 ff.); and in general in Book 8 he remains apart, brooding and weeping, reluctant or unable as yet to reveal himself and partake in their frivolous and peaceful existence (further, see

[49] On Aeneas' *praemeditatio* here (glossed by Sen. *Ep.* 77.33 ff.), cf. Norden on 103–5; further, Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Odes* 2.10.14; P. Rabbow, *Seelenführung* (Munich 1954) 160 ff., 182 ff., 344 ff.

[50] Note esp. the skilful use of repetition at 8.166 (Odysseus' retort *ἀτασθάλῳ ἀνδρὶ ἐοικας*, 'you look like a foolish fellow', snubs Euryalus and caps his sneer at 164 *οὐδ' ἀθλητῆρι ἐοικας*, 'you don't look like an athlete'). See also Alcinous' embarrassed speech at 8.236–55 (esp. 248–9; in 251–3 he has to revise his claims for his people, using the same phrasing as in 101–3!). As Plutarch observed, the tale of Ares and Aphrodite is appropriate to the pleasure-loving Phaeacians (*aud. poet.* 18F, 19F-20A). See further Lattimore (n. 29).

[51] On these *topoi*, see further Richardson on *h.Dem.* 147 f.

8.154–5, 182–3, 231–2, 478, 9.12 ff.). It is a commonplace, which I would endorse, that Phaeacia is a 'transitional' episode, a halfway stage between the magical, other-worldly fairyland of Odysseus' earlier adventures and the familiar Greek geography and society of Ithaca.[52] The Phaeacian books also prepare for and include events which foreshadow Odysseus' later experiences in Ithaca.[53] Most important, Phaeacia provides a suitable environment for Odysseus to recover from his adventures beyond the known world. He is able to mix with human beings again, to experience their compassion, their hospitality and finally their wonder and admiration. He regains some of his old self-confidence in the course of Book 8; he also realizes with delight that his old ally Athene has returned to aid him (8.199–200). In short, he begins to emerge from his shell of self-pity and self-centred despair; for the *Odyssey* no less than the *Iliad* is concerned with the role of man in society, with the preservation or the destruction of the bonds, social, emotional and moral, between a man and his fellows.[54]

No episode of the Phaeacian books is as moving and suggestive in charting the progress of Odysseus as the concluding scene of Book 8, the account of the third song by Demodocus and its aftermath.[55] Full of food and drink and pleased with himself, Odysseus asks Demodocus to change his song, turning to the fall of Troy. Tell us, he says, of the Wooden Horse, 'which Odysseus had brought into the citadel as a ruse' (8.494). Demodocus obliges with a detailed account of the sack of Troy highlighting Odysseus and his struggles. We expect the disguised hero to be pleased and flattered. But instead he weeps, and his tears are described in one of Homer's most moving similes, in which he is compared with a woman who weeps over the body of her husband, who fell protecting his city and their children, while she is left alive to be dragged off into slavery (8.521–31). Not precisely Andromache (for the

[52] C. Segal, *Arion* 1.4 (1962) 17–63, *PP* 116 (1967) 321–42; Fenik (n. 7) 54–5; P. Vidal-Naquet, in *Myth, religion and society*, ed. R. Gordon (Cambridge 1981) 90–4, 248 n. 58.

[53] Cf. *PCPhS* NS 31 (1985) 140–3. I should also have mentioned there that from this perspective the notorious 'recapitulation' of Odysseus' adventures to Penelope (23.306–43) corresponds to the full narrative to the Phaeacians in the first half of the poem.

[54] Cf. the suggestive comments of Buffière (n. 2) 384; also Colin Macleod's review of Griffin, *Homer on life and death*, in *London Review of Books* 6–14 Aug. 1981, p. 21: 'If the *Iliad* is "the poem of death"... the *Odyssey* might be called the poem of social existence, or, to use the more eloquent Latin word, of *humanitas*.'

[55] See esp. C.W. Macleod, *Collected essays* (Oxford 1983) ch. 1.

woman in the simile reaches her husband's body before he draws his last breath), the wife in the simile stands for all the widowed women of Troy, all those who suffered in the sack, and suffered at Odysseus' hands. Now the victor and the victim are united in suffering and grief: ll. 530–1 beautifully bring this out by the verbal echo:

> τῆς δ' ἐλεεινοτάτῳ ἄχεϊ φθινύθουσι παρειαί·
> ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς ἐλεεινὸν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἶβεν.
>
> and her cheeks are wasted in most pitiful grief;
> even so Odysseus shed a tear of pity below his brows.

Here we see Homer contrasting different ideas of what poetry does and what it is for. What Odysseus expects is, in effect, a panegyric of his own strategic and military successes. There seems no reason to doubt that in the aristocratic society of early Greece and Ionia, such poems would be common, as in many other oral traditions, and familiar to Homer (cf. Hes. *Th.* 80–93).[56] But what Odysseus actually gets is something deeper and more characteristically Homeric: not a partisan version, but one that sees both sides, Trojan and Greek. For when we look back at the summary of Demodocus' song, we find that it dwells on the delusion and the cruel destiny of the Trojans (511 αἶσα γὰρ ἦν ἀπολέσθαι, κ.τ.λ., 'for it was fated that they should perish'; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 2.54), and how near they came to destroying the horse. The situation and the chain of events would be familiar to Odysseus, who had himself been inside the horse (4.271–88), and we might expect him to remember this crisis with satisfaction and relief. It needs the eloquence and the compassion of a Homeric poet to open the springs of pity in Odysseus and to make him see that the victory he won all those years ago has become a matter for history and poetry; that the profits which he gained have slipped through his fingers; and above all that his own sufferings and his own separation from wife, child and home are not *more* important than the sufferings of the Trojans, but mirror images of them (as is brought out by the marital theme in the simile).[57]

[56] See R. Finnegan, *Oral poetry* (Cambridge 1977) 188–92, 226–7. In later Greece, we may compare the 'court poetry' of Simonides, Bacchylides, and Pindar, though the Homeric influence enriches their encomia with an awareness of the temporary and fragile quality of their addressees' achievements.

[57] There is a somewhat similar progression in the third book of the *Aeneid*. In l. 273 the Trojan refugees pass Ithaca, and curse the 'terram altricem *saevi*... Ulixi', 'the land that nurtured cruel Ulysses' (cf. 2.762, etc.). Later in the book, the pathetic Achaemenides (an honest version of Sinon) supplicates them, presenting himself as 'comes *infelicis* Ulixi', 'the comrade of the unfortunate Ulysses' (613). After hearing his tale and escaping from the perils which Ulysses had endured before him, Aeneas himself finds it possible to use the same epithet when speaking of Ulysses (691).

It has often been remarked that Odysseus weeps *twice* at Demodocus' songs, the first time being earlier in the day when he sang of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles. We may expect a recognition then, but Alcinous' tact leads him to stop the singing and divert the stranger in other ways. The second weeping-scene caps the first, not only because it is more emotional and prolonged,[58] but also because of the subject of the song and the object of Odysseus' grief and pity. In the earlier scene, he wept for himself and his comrades; in the scene we have just considered, he realizes, like Achilles, the common ground between friend and foe. This is the lesson of shared and common suffering, common not just to friends and allies, but to all mankind.[59]

In the later books of the *Odyssey*, this principle animates some of Odysseus' sternest and most serious speeches of warning to the suitors. Their offence has a broader moral significance because it ignores the humility and fragility of man. The suitors believe that they can live like gods, eternally feasting, unpunished (νήποινοι, a recurrent word: see 1.377, 380, etc).[60] Experience has taught Odysseus that such arrogant optimism is a delusion. As he says to Amphinomus, the one suitor who regularly has misgivings about what they are doing:

> I have something to say to you, and do you listen, and store it in your heart. Of all things that breathe and move upon the earth, earth mothers nothing more frail than man. For as long as the gods grant him prosperity, as long as his limbs are swift, he thinks that he will suffer no misfortune in times to come. But when instead the Blessed Ones send him sorrow, that too he has to bear, under compulsion, with enduring heart. The father of gods and men makes one

[58] So Fenik (n. 7) 102–4.

[59] Cf. *JHS* 102 (1982) 158–60 [= *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad*, ed. D. Cairns (Oxford 2001), 286–90]; add esp. J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford 1981) 104–6.

[60] Compare and contrast the world of the gods: in the song of Demodocus, although Aphrodite is caught in flagrante, she may depart with impunity (cf. n. 74), though there is some talk of compensation and surety (esp. 8.348). But this is a very different thing from the 'payment' Odysseus will exact. Note that the suitors do try to offer compensation at 22.55–67, but Odysseus rejects their pleas in words that seem to echo those of the impassioned Achilles (22.61–4, compared with *Il.* 9.379–87, 22.349–54; on the general question whether the *Odyssey*-poet knew the *Iliad*, see n. 89).

That the suitors are aspiring to the condition of gods is further suggested by the close analogy between *Od.* 18.401 ff. (cf. 17.219–20, 446), and *Il.* 1.575–6 (Hephaestus). Everlasting and contented feasting is godlike: cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 10.30 ff.

day unlike another day, and men on the earth must change their thoughts in accordance with this. I too once seemed marked out as a fortunate man; I did many reckless things (139 ἀτάσθαλ') to sate my desire for power and mastery, putting great faith in my father and brothers. And so I would have no man be lawless (ἀθεμίστιος); rather, let each accept unquestioningly whatever gifts the gods grant him. (18.130–42)[61]

There is falsehood here, and the story bears affinities to Odysseus' large-scale lies;[62] but like them it contains elements of truth about his travels and his past; and it also involves moral truths and warnings which draw on the basic ethical framework of the *Odyssey*: rashness, boldness, over-confidence coming to grief; and, by contrast, the advocacy of generosity, mercy, gentleness (see above all Penelope's speech at 19.325 ff.).[63]

If Phaeacia prepares Odysseus for the role he must play in Ithaca and the second part of the poem, it is the scene with Athena in Book 13, on the beach in Ithaca itself, which provides the pivot and completes the change in Odysseus' condition.[64] With Book 13 we move from

[61] The significance of this speech is also observed by Macleod (n. 55) 14, and treated from a more sociological standpoint in a thoughtful essay by J. M. Redfield, in *Approaches to Homer*, eds. C. A. Rubino and C. W. Shelmerdine (Austin, Texas 1983), esp. 239–44 [reprinted in the present volume]. For its legacy in tragedy see esp. Aesch. *Pers.* 588 ff., *Ag.* 1327–30, Eur. *Hcld.* 608 ff.; contrast the lighter, more hedonistic attitude deduced from the same premises by the buffoonish Heracles in Eur. *Alc.* 780–96 (see further Bond on Eur. *Her.* 503–5). See also n. 63.

[62] For instance, the father and brothers of 18.140 can be related to the fuller version in 14.199–210 (*cf.* 19.178–81); the 'me quoque' structure (138 καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ, 'for I too . . .') and the reference to past prosperity are analogous to 17.419–24 and 19.75–80, and so on. For other aspects of this and parallel speeches, see Fenik (n. 7) 185.

[63] See further Odysseus' speeches at 17.414 ff., 19.71 ff., Eurycleia's at 19.370 ff., Philoetius' at 20.194 ff., 205 ff., all of which reinforce these themes.

In tragedy, a further parallel is provided by Euripides' *Supplices*, in which we should note the fresh authority with which Adrastus, enlightened by experience, breaks his long silence at 734 (in a speech which echoes that of Theseus earlier, 549 ff.): see Collard ad loc. and on 634–777 in general. Acknowledgement of past folly and error leads the ὀψιμαθής 'late-learner' to a clearer view of human rashness and of morality in general. Now Adrastus is to *teach* the young Athenians (842–3). Note also Soph. *O.C.* 607 ff.: Theseus is wise and compassionate (562 ff.), but idealistic; the insight that Oedipus has gained through age and suffering means that he can see further than the young king.

[64] On the scene, see the admirable discussion in Fenik (n. 7) 30–7; also H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verstandnis der Odyssee* (Berlin 1972) 143–65. Athene's practical motives are explained in 13.189–93, which have been unjustly attacked by Analytic criticism. Moreover, like Odysseus himself, she enjoys deception and partial or gradual revelation: cf. esp. 18.160–2 (crassly handled by Page [n. 34] 124 f.); here, as in ibid. 191, the motives described are Athene's, not Penelope's (cf. C. Emlyn-Jones, *G&R* 31 [1984] 9–12 [= the present vol., pp. 221–4]). On divine deception cf. n. 73. In Book 13, notice

predominantly sea-going adventures to land, and from more magical and supernatural countries to a familiar part of Greece. The reunion with Athena marks the new upward turn in Odysseus' fortunes. From now on, instead of being the victim of the gods and the child of ill fortune,[65] he will be in control; instead of receiving warnings, he will give them; instead of being a passive figure who merely endures, he will become the active strategist and avenger; instead of indulging in self-pity and brooding on the past, instead of carrying grief or vanity or boastfulness to extremes, he learns the crucial lesson of self-restraint and self-control.

This is shown first when in Book 16 he beholds his son after their long separation (16. 1 ff.). The point is skilfully made through the use of a simile describing a father welcoming his son, the simile being applied not, as would be natural, to Odysseus, but to Eumaeus.[66] Eumaeus plays the role of a surrogate father to Telemachus (who calls him ἄττα 'papa', e.g. 16.31), and the spontaneous joy and openness of the swineherd's greeting to his young master (23 ἦλθες, Τηλέμαχε,

the subtle ironies of 219–20, 230 (Athene really *is* a goddess; contrast the successful flattery of 6.149–52); 234 (εὐδείελος is elsewhere used only of Ithaca); and especially the mischievous delaying tactics of Athene in 237 ff. The phrases she uses there to describe Ithaca, before actually naming it, echo more explicit descriptions of their homeland by Telemachus and Odysseus himself (4.605 ff., 9.25 ff.)—yet another self-conscious and creative use of formulaic language.

[65] For Odysseus' name and interpretations thereof, see 1.55, 60–2, 5.340, 423, in contrast with the explicit etymologising at 19.407–9. In the first four cases Odysseus is the victim and sufferer, and the etymological play presents him as persecuted by the gods. In 19.407 ὀδυσσάμενος may be middle or passive; if middle, and active in sense, this again brings out the reversal of fortunes in the second half of the poem. Odysseus, who was dogged by ill fortune, now becomes the persecutor and punisher. See further L. P. Rank, *Etymologiseerung en verwante Verschijnselen bij Homerus* (diss. Utrecht 1951) 52–60, who seems also to prefer the active sense here, as preparation for the slaughter. See also W. B. Stanford, *CP* 47 (1952) 209–13. G. E. Dimock, 'The name of Odysseus', *The Hudson Review* 9 (1956) 52–70, reprinted in various collections, is also suggestive, though some of his interpretations are wild. In general on significant names of this kind in Homer and elsewhere, see Rank, op. cit.; R. Pfeiffer, *History of classical scholarship* vol. 1 (Oxford 1968) 4–5; Fraenkel on Aesch. *Ag.* 687, Collard on Eur. *Supp.* 497, M. Griffith, *HSCP* 82 (1978) 83–6; and the brilliant discussion of Oedipus' name by B. Knox, *Oedipus at Thebes* (New Haven and London 1957) 127 f. (esp. *O.T.* 397).

[66] Further, Moulton (n. 41) 132–3. Cf. 16.25 and 60, in which Eumaeus calls the boy τέκος and τέκνον, 'boy, child'. The swineherd greets Telemachus *as though* he has been parted from him for ten years; Odysseus really *has* been separated from him for twice that time. The simile speaks of an *only* son, μοῦνον; compare the actual circumstances of Odysseus' house (16.118–20).

γλυκερὸν φάος, 'you've come back, Telemachus, my darling joy') provide a perfect foil to the silent presence of the disguised Odysseus in the background. The poet keeps Odysseus silent, and refrains from describing his emotions for some time; he does not break this silence until 16.90, when he is his usual collected self, and it is only later, after the recognition between father and son has taken place, that Homer gives some hint, however delicately, of the hero's feelings. Now we again see a father kissing and shedding tears; but what was only a simile before is now reality.

> ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας υἱὸν κύσε, κὰδ δὲ παρειῶν
> δάκρυον ἧκε χαμᾶζε· πάρος δ' ἔχε νωλεμὲς αἰεί.

With these words he kissed his son, and shed a tear that fell down his cheeks and to the ground; until that moment he had held the tear back always.[67] (16.190–1)

The self-discipline of Odysseus receives its severest trial in the encounter with Penelope in Book 19.[68] Here too he must mask his emotions and hold back his tears, even when he is forced to watch Penelope weep at the very words he himself utters; and here again, the poetic device of contrasting similes vividly communicates the lesson which Odysseus has now learned:

> ἴσκε ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα·
> τῆς δ' ἄρ' ἀκουούσης ῥέε δάκρυα, τήκετο δὲ χρώς.
> ὡς δὲ χιὼν κατατήκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν,

[67] A further simile at 16.213–19 marks the moment of acceptance and recognition by Telemachus and 'caps' the simile used of Eumaeus. By drawing a parallel with the *loss* of children, the poet stresses what might have been (Telemachus has just escaped the suitors' ambush). But the comparison with birds of prey reminds us of what is in store, revenge and punishment (for warriors compared with birds see e.g. *Il.* 13.531, 16.428, *Od.* 24.538; Moulton [n. 41] 35). Thus the similes are complementary; but whereas the first seemed to mark a conclusion, with the long-lost son happily home, the second looks ahead to new and destructive action. The sinister implications of the comparison are intensified in Aeschylus' imitation (*Ag.* 49–59, *Cho.* 246–9).

[68] For a fine treatment of this scene, see C. Emlyn-Jones, *G&R* 31 (1984) 1–14 [= *Homer*, ed. I. McAuslan and P. Walcot (Oxford 1998) 126–43; also rept. in the present volume] (besides its positive merits, his article decisively refutes the mistaken view, held in various forms by different critics, that Penelope recognizes Odysseus, whether subconsciously or otherwise, before the dénouement of Book 23). Judicious observations also in Fenik (n. 7) 39–46. Buffière (n. 2) 310 points out the contrast between Odysseus' self-discipline and the suitors' brash and emotional responses to Penelope's appearances.

> ἦν τ' εὖρος κατέτηξεν, ἐπὴν ζέφυρος καταχεύῃ,
> τηκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες·
> ὣς τῆς τήκετο καλὰ παρήϊα δάκρυ χεούσης,
> κλαιούσης ἑὸν ἄνδρα παρήμενον.[69] αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
> θυμῷ μὲν γοόωσαν ἑὴν ἐλέαιρε γυναῖκα,
> ὀφθαλμοὶ δ' ὡς εἰ κέρα ἔστασαν ἠὲ σίδηρος
> ἀτρέμας ἐν βλεφάροισι· δόλῳ δ' ὅ γε δάκρυα κεῦθεν.

He moulded all these falsehoods of his to resemble truth, and as the queen listened, her tears flowed and her cheeks grew wet. It was as when the snow melts on lofty mountains; the west wind brought it, the east wind melts it, and at its melting the rivers swell up to overflowing. So did her lovely cheeks grow wet as she shed tears and wept for the husband who sat so near her. As for Odysseus, his heart went out to his weeping wife, but beneath his eyelids his eyes kept as firm as horn or iron; he still dissembled, and showed no tears. (19.203–12, tr. W. Shewring)

Clearly, the similes are antithetical: melting snow versus hard iron or horn; overflowing emotion versus containment and control.

The meeting between Odysseus and Athene in Book 13 is also important in other ways for the thematic design of the poem. Two aspects in particular require comment: delayed recognition and testing (πειράζειν 'test' or 'make trial of' and cognates are key words in the second half of the *Odyssey*).[70] Athene deceives Odysseus, disguising herself and concealing from him the fact that he is now back in Ithaca; thus she has the pleasure and satisfaction of making the revelation herself. There is a sophisticated and humorous psychological point here: Homer understands the superiority we feel when we are in a position to reassure or bring good news to others, how we are often willing to delay giving the news, hoping thus to enhance their suspense and our pleasure. This is the superiority that Odysseus himself enjoys throughout the

[69] On the phrasing here see Macleod (n. 13) 41. On the stylistic devices of this passage see also J. D. Denniston, *Greek prose style* (Oxford 1952) 80. Note that the key word τήκετο 'melted away' was also used of Odysseus' weeping at the end of Book 8 (522).

[70] On recognition in Homer and tragedy see esp. Arist. *Poet.* 14 and 16; also Satyrus, *vita Eur.*, fr. 39. 7 Arrighetti. For modern studies see F. Solmsen, *Kl. Schriften* vol. 3 (Hildesheim 1982) 32–63; N. J. Richardson, *PLLS* 4 (Liverpool 1983) 219–35.

For the testing theme, see esp. *Od.* 11.442 ff., 454–6, 13.336, 14.459, 15.304, 16.304–5, 17.363, 19.45, 215, 23.108–10, 114, 181, 188, 202, 206. Anticipations of the theme do appear in the first half, e.g. at 9.74; but there Odysseus' expedition is imprudent, and no effective test takes place. See further Thornton (n. 10) ch. 4; Havelock (n. 10) 163–76.

second half of the poem. In almost all the recognition scenes it is he who chooses the moment of revelation (the exceptions are Argos, who does not really count, being a dog, and Eurycleia, where Odysseus has indeed slipped up, but remains in command of the situation and avoids further exposure). Athene, then, is showing him the way, but also demonstrating that she can play his game and deceive him. The scene is rich in witty ironies and double bluffs.[71] Athene deceives Odysseus successfully (he does not recognise who she is) and she makes her revelation (he is in Ithaca); but even in his moment of delight he does not give himself away. Instead of a spontaneous outburst of joy we find him responding with exquisite self-possession: 'Ah yes, Ithaca . . . yes, I've heard of that place, even far off in my home in Crete . . .' (13.256): these words form the prelude to one of his outrageous but splendidly circumstantial lies. In the end, Athene has to admit defeat and reveal her own identity (13.287–309, 330 ff.; note esp. 332–5, in which she praises his self-control).

Thus the poet prepares for the themes which will dominate subsequent books. Odysseus will move disguised among his household, *testing*, seeking out loyalty and treachery, good and evil.[72] Only when the test is passed will he reveal the truth. The scene in Book 13 is an ironic, touching but charming anticipation of the scenes of suspense, tension, and drama which are to follow. As often, the gods of Homeric poetry are like mortals; their actions are analogous, but there are also crucial differences. Athene is like Odysseus, and that is why she loves him; but it is also why she tests his calibre and seeks to deceive and only later to undeceive him. Teasing and deception are characteristic of the gods, even when dealing with their favourites.[73] It is also often

[71] Cf. n. 64. Note also how Odysseus' speech at 311 ff., after Athene has revealed herself, picks up and counters some of her phrasing: thus 312 *ἀντιάσαντι* 'encountering' echoes 292 *καὶ εἰ θεὸς ἀντιάσειε*, 'even if a god were to encounter you', and each begins by praising the other and proceeds to criticise, Athene fondly and humorously, Odysseus with genuine chagrin. Such responsion between speeches is a frequent and highly-wrought Homeric technique: cf. Macleod (n. 13) 9–10, 52–3, and in the *Odyssey* compare especially 23.166–80 (n. 79 below).

[72] Cf. esp. 14.459, 15.304, 16.304 f., 19.215.

[73] See Fenik (n. 7) 38. On a grander and far from light-hearted scale in the *Iliad*, compare the deception or delusion of Hector, who is led on by Zeus to his disastrous end (cf. Griffin 41, 169). For deception of man by the gods see esp. *Il.* 2.1–83 (Agamemnon's dream sent by Zeus), 4.68–104 (Pandarus deceived by Athene with divine approval), 22.214–99, esp. 247, 276 (Athene and Hector). Deception is again contemplated in

true that what is serious and even tragic for mortals is light-hearted and even unimportant for the gods, a point well illustrated by the *amour* of Ares and Aphrodite (8.266–366).[74] So too here, Athene's deception and testing of Odysseus' mettle is amusing, for her and for us; but nothing depends on it for her. As a goddess, she can, if she wishes, play such games, with no fear of human retaliation, whereas in the later books the tests and deceptions which Odysseus practises are very different. Despite all the ingenuity and brazenness that he employs, we know that his life depends on his keeping his identity secret until the right moment.

The analogy between Athene's actions and those of Odysseus is also thematically important in another respect. It has been well observed that Odysseus himself, with his superior knowledge and power, is to some degree in the position of a Homeric god, avenging insults and defending his honour.[75] This analogy has also a moral dimension. Odysseus' seemingly lowly status, which in fact conceals terrible power and anger, is close to the stories, common in many cultures and found, for example, in the Old Testament, which tell of gods visiting men in disguise in order to test the hospitality they receive, and to find out whether their hosts are just and pious (cf. esp. 17.482–7; Paul, *Hebrews* 13.1 'be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares').[76] And if Odysseus is like a god in his testing of men's behaviour, he is also like one in the punishment that he exacts, which, like many actions of the gods, is both just and terrible. We may compare the ruthlessness with which Poseidon punishes the Phaeacians (13.125–87), or the punishment that Apollo and Artemis exacted (also with the bow) from the family of Niobe (*Il.* 24.605 ff.; Soph. *Niobe* fr. 441 Radt). This analogy has

Il. 24.24, but is ruled out by Zeus (71–2); in the end Achilles is told outright what is to happen and why (24.133–40), and Hermes deals kindly, if not altogether openly, with Priam.

[74] Cf. n. 60; and esp. the laughter of the gods in the tale: see 8.326, 343. Yet at the end of the story Aphrodite remains *φιλομμειδής* 'laughter-loving' (362); she is unashamed and unrepentant (cf. Griffin 200–1). The laughter of the gods is employed to similar effect in the *Iliad* (esp. 1.595–6, 599; also in the theomachy, e.g. 21.389, 408, 423, 434, 491, 508).

[75] See esp. E. Kearns, *CQ* 32 (1982) 2–8.

[76] Further, cf. *Genesis* 18.1 ff., 19.2; Richardson on *h. Dem.* 93, 96; Hollis on Ov. *Met.* 8.611–724; Kearns, art. cit. esp. 6.

further implications for a number of scenes in the later books of the *Odyssey*.

First, as regards Penelope. When she awakens after the slaughter and hears the news that Eurycleia brings her, she cannot at first believe that it is truly Odysseus who accomplished it (her scepticism mirrors the earlier suspiciousness of her husband;[77] both Odysseus and Penelope need to learn that there is a time for trust and acceptance to supersede disbelief). Instead, Penelope supposes that it must be a god, who has come down from Olympus to punish the suitors for their villainy (23.63 ff). The scene which follows shows Penelope, in the midst of her confusion and doubt, formulating a plan to test the identity of the stranger (see esp. 23.108–10, 113–14). Once before, in Book 19, she had attempted to do so (see esp. 215 *νῦν μὲν δή σευ ξεῖνε γ' ὀΐω πειρήσεσθαι*, 'Now, stranger, I have it in my mind to test you'), but there Odysseus had side-stepped.[78] Now we see the tables turned, the biter bit, in the famous counter-test of the bed (see esp. 23.181 *ὣς ἄρ' ἔφη πόσιος πειρωμένη*, 'Thus she spoke, testing her husband'). Here Odysseus' celebrated caution and control vanish, and he bursts out with indignation. This scene not only trumps Odysseus' previous testing and Penelope's own failure in Book 19; Penelope here also goes one better than Athene in Book 13, for even Athene, though she deceived Odysseus and he failed to recognise her, could not make him give himself away; impasse. Penelope is the only person who could outwit Odysseus in such a test, and this shows, like so many other details and parallelisms between them, how well matched husband and wife truly are.[79] Further, it is not just the test itself,

[77] Elsewhere in the poem the same pattern of encouragement and good news being met with disbelief is used with Telemachus (esp. 3.218–21) and Eumaeus (14.121–32, an important passage; 166–7, 361–8). The encounter with Eumaeus and his refusal to accept Odysseus' assurances foreshadow the more emotional *ὁμιλία* 'conversation' with Penelope: cf. Fenik (n. 7) 155, 157, and compare esp. 14.151 and 391 with 23.72.

[78] For seminal observations on the deceptive move here, see Arist. *Poet.* 24.1460a18 ff., with Richardson (n. 70), esp. 221–3; Hor. *Ars* 150 'atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet' ('and this is how he tells his tales, how he mingles truth and falsehood'), with Brink's note.

[79] Further, compare above all the paired similes at 5.394–9 and 23.231–40 (cf. Moulton [n. 41] 128 f.): these similes are complementary in their application and parallel in structure (note esp. the triple repetition of *ἀσπάσιος* 'welcome', in both). Also parallel and equal in length are the probing speeches by Odysseus and Penelope before the latter's test (23.166–72, 174–80): *δαιμονίη* is answered by *δαιμόνιε*, 'you strange creature'; both address the old nurse; both feign a concession while hoping for submission or revelation; both give instructions about a bed (171, 179). For further cases of affinity

Odysseus' knowledge of their secret, which makes Penelope believe in him, but his moment of angry passion, of uncontrolled emotion. As commentators have pointed out, a god could have known the truth, but no mortal in the Homeric poems can trick or deceive a god; and the automatic, unthinking surge of anger at the thought of *his* bed, his wonderful creation, being violated, is wholly human.[80] As often in Homer, the emotions of human relationships are more intense and more precious than those shared between god and man; in this sense too, the reunion between Odysseus and Penelope 'trumps', and has greater force or seriousness than, the encounter of Odysseus and Athene.

In the course of the poem, as I have tried to show, Odysseus acquires greater severity and self-control, and wins a deeper understanding of human feelings and motives, perhaps even of the wider condition of man.[81] In this sense, and in his role as avenger and instrument of divine justice, he is a hero with special moral authority. This is not the whole story, however. The 'philosophic' Odysseus never totally displaces the older, wilier Odysseus; rather, the moral side coincides with and controls his instinctive sense of curiosity (as in the testing scenes), his greed (as in the scene in which the suitors offer Penelope gifts, and Odysseus inwardly rejoices [18.281–3]), and his vanity (as in the scenes in which he teases praise of himself from others). The moral task of testing and dealing out justice offers a suitable channel for Odysseus' native character and talents, as they were described by Athene (13.291–9,

compare 23.168 with 13.333–8 (Macleod, marg.); 19.325 ff. with 107 ff. (*κλέος* 'glory' in 108 echoed in 333); 20.87–8 with 93–4 (telepathy?). The praise grudgingly given to Penelope by Antinous (2.116–22) emphasizes her exceptional intelligence; and her character throughout the poem reveals her self-control and restraint. She is regularly *ἐχέφρων* 'self-restrained' (e.g. 24.294), as is Odysseus (13.332).

[80] Cf. Stanford (n. 2) 57–9 and the note in his commentary on 23.182.

[81] In 22.409 Odysseus restrains the overjoyed Eurycleia (411–12 *ἐν θυμῷ, γρηῦ, χαῖρε . . . / οὐχ ὁσίη κταμένοισιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν εὐχετάασθαι*, 'Rejoice in your heart, old woman . . . it is not holy to exult over men who have been slain'). Contrast the typical behaviour of the Iliadic hero (cf. n. 36; A. W. H. Adkins, *CQ* 19 (1969) 20 ff. on *εὔχομαι* 'boast, vaunt' *et sim.*). This again shows the authority and wisdom of Odysseus. It is not simply a matter of different rules for wartime and peace; the behaviour of Clytemnestra in Aeschylus (*Ag.* 1394 *ἐπεύχομαι* 'I exult') or of Electra in Euripides (*El.* 900 ff.) makes plain the degree of callousness and pride which was conceivable, even if horrifying, in success. Note also 24.545, where Odysseus *rejoices* at Athene's command to make peace (*χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ*, 'he rejoiced in his heart', a phrase ridiculed by Page [n. 34] 114). Odysseus welcomes peace in Ithaca; to battle without cause, against his own people, would be folly indeed.

306–10, and esp. 330–8). The older, craftier side of his personality is not dead (though it may seem so for a time in Phaeacia), but it is *controlled* in a way that it was not always before (most conspicuously not in the Cyclops episode). He still, for instance, enjoys making up the most detailed and persuasive lies about his background, using a different one for each new auditor (cf. 12.452–3).[82] But these lies now serve a necessary purpose, are suited to the addressee, and convey through their fictions a serious and consistent moral lesson.[83]

If these observations are correct, they may point the way to a better understanding of one of the most controversial scenes in the poem, the encounter of Odysseus with Laertes in Book 24, in which the hero conceals his own identity, describes a meeting with Odysseus long before, and generally leads his father to the grim conclusion that his son is lost to him forever.[84] It is important, not least in considering the question of the episode's authenticity, to observe that the scene continues the vocabulary of testing and recognition which we have seen to be recurrent throughout the second half of the poem (see 24.216, 238, 345–6). Here we come to the core of the problem with this scene. It has long been seen that there is no reason for Odysseus not to reveal himself at once and spare his father so much agony. Where is our 'moral' hero, or even moderately affectionate son, now? The curious form which the scene does in fact take has been explained as the work of a bungling and insensitive hack,[85] and as the conditioned reflex of an oral poet still working within the limits of a set theme, the 'testing' theme, which is

[82] On Odysseus' lies see further C. R. Tranham, *Phoenix* 6 (1952) 31–43; P. Walcot, *Anc. Soc.* 8 (1977) 1–19 [rept. in the present volume]; Fenik (n. 7) 167–71.

[83] Cf. nn. 59, 61–3 above. Does *Od.* 14.156 f. mischievously allude to the famous opening of Achilles' main speech in *Iliad* 9, lines in which he implicitly criticises Odysseus (308 ff.)?

[84] I am of course aware that the status of the so-called 'Continuation' of the *Odyssey* (23.296–24.548) is still very much *sub judice*, and it seems to me that there are good arguments on both sides. Those who are convinced of the spuriousness of the scene under discussion may be reassured to know that I intend to base no important conclusions on that scene alone. Arguments for excision, good and bad, are assembled by Page (n. 34) ch. 5, esp. 111–12; contrast W. B. Stanford, *Hermathena* 100 (1965) 1–21; Erbse (n. 64) esp. 166–250 [translated in *Homer: German Scholarship in Translation*, ed. G. M. Wright and P. V. Jones (Oxford 1997) 263–320]; D. Wender, *The last scenes of the Odyssey*, *Mnem.* Suppl. 52 (1978); Fenik (n. 7) 47–53. C. Moulton, *GRBS* 15 (1974) 153–69 is perhaps the most balanced short account.

[85] Page, loc. cit. (n. 84).

no longer relevant to the actual situation.[86] Perhaps there is room for a further suggestion.

We may note first that Odysseus does hesitate when he sees his father's sorry condition. Having previously proposed to test him (216), he now ponders for some time whether to do so, or to reveal himself at once (235–40). In other words, he has some qualms, as he never had before. Why, then, does he proceed? Perhaps the conditioned reflex is not Homer's, but Odysseus': he has lived so long with danger and the need for concealment that it has become almost second nature. Or again, he may still be smarting at having been outwitted by Penelope; he hopes to execute one more triumphant deception along the usual pattern, with himself the bringer of unforeseen good news and unhoped-for pleasure to his father.[87] At all events, the poet presents Odysseus here in a more dubious light, though he is not incomprehensible or despicable. What was previously a necessity and a dangerous game of self-preservation becomes a more mischievous, almost malicious joke on Odysseus' part. The 'moral' aspect of the testing theme slips away with the victory won and safety restored; now, the hero has one more moment of self-indulgence, of 'playing God', following the example of Athene in Book 13. There too, we should remember, the deception was unnecessary.[88]

But the scene in Book 24 backfires when the trick hurts Laertes, and hence Odysseus himself, much more than the latter had expected. Laertes cannot cope and hit back with skilful rhetoric and counter-play; he cannot control or contain his emotion as Odysseus did in Book 13 (where in any case the news was good). Instead he collapses in despair, whereupon Odysseus, filled with grief and dismay, pours out the truth with unprecedented suddenness and openness (24.318 ff.). The episode

[86] Fenik, loc. cit. (n. 84); also, with some additional points, Richardson (n. 70) 227–9.

[87] It may be objected that to attribute complex motives of this kind to the hero without the support of comment from the author is to come dangerously close to the documentary fallacy. But Homer does sometimes leave the reader to draw his own conclusions or deductions (Griffin 51, 61–6), and if we reject authorial incompetence as an explanation, then the oddity of Odysseus' behaviour compels us to explore these possibilities.

[88] Fenik (n. 7) 48–9 also sees this scene as the closest analogy to the encounter with Laertes.

shows Odysseus, and us, that self-protection through deception is not an end in itself: there is a time also for openness and trust. Here again, the analogy between god and man also highlights the contrasts: Odysseus cannot play games with his fellow-men and his family forever, but needs to learn to show himself to his father as he has, in each case after delay, to his son and his wife. Here again, as in those scenes and when he heard the song of Demodocus, others' grief and pain bring home his own emotion, his own *humanity*, more acutely. Since he lacks the detachment of a god, Odysseus' own distress (318–19) answers that of Laertes (as we have seen, the hero's moments of open, unsuppressed emotion form a significant sequence in the poem). Odysseus and Laertes share their feelings at last, as Odysseus and Penelope did in the preceding book and as Achilles (*mutatis mutandis*) finds common ground and speaks openly with Priam in *Il.* 24.[89] In short, the *Odyssey* no less than the *Iliad* offers a subtle and many-sided presentation of human behaviour and relationships; and the moral insight of the poet guides and stimulates the moral judgement of the reader in his assessment of the hero of the poem no less than the villains.

[89] Perhaps not only an analogy but a direct imitation, as Mr E. L. Bowie suggests to me. Achilles weeps with and for a substitute father, his true father being far away, helpless and grief-stricken (*Il.* 24.538–42, imitated [?] at *Od.* 11.494–503). But Odysseus regains his real father, and is able to do for him and his family what Achilles longs to do (*Od.* 11.496, 501–3).

The comparison of Achilles' fate with Odysseus' is prominent at the beginning of *Od.* 24, as it was in the first Nekuia: cf. Wender (n. 84) 38–44. In particular, Agamemnon's words at 24.192 cap his words of greeting to Achilles earlier in the scene (36), and strikingly modify a standard formula. Seven times in the *Iliad* and fifteen times in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is addressed with the line διογενές Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ, 'son of Laertes, descendant of gods, Odysseus of the many wiles'. Here alone the phrase is modified, and the line begins ὄλβιε Λαέρταο πάι..., 'Blessed son of Laertes', for only now could Odysseus be so described. Only Achilles and Odysseus are addressed as ὄλβιε 'blessed' in the whole poem, and it seems plausible to see the poet as measuring Odysseus against the great figures of the *Iliad*, and above all its hero. Already these characters are natural opposites: cf. further Pl. *Hipp. Min.* 365e; Hor. *Odes* 4.6.3–24. The *Odyssey* is often thought to be an attempt to rival the *Iliad* in scale (the Cyclic poems, to judge by the numbers of books recorded, were notably shorter); and, as [Longinus] 9.12 observed, it forms a fitting sequel, filling in the story since the tale of the *Iliad* with remarkable economy. For further argument, see nn. 60, 83; A. Heubeck, *Der Odyssee-Dichter und die Ilias* (Erlangen 1954) 39 (analogies between *Od.* 2 and *Il.* 2); Macleod (n. 13) 1–4.

AFTERWORD (2007)

This article, like the related piece 'At Home and Abroad: aspects of the structure of the *Odyssey*' in *PCPhS* NS 31 (1985) 133–50, grew out of lectures and marked a stage in my progress towards completion of a commentary on Books 19 and 20 of the poem, which was published in 1992. Subsequently, I attempted a more general account of Homeric studies, including a chapter on the *Odyssey*, in *Homer* (*G&R* New Surveys 26, 1996), of which a revised version with added bibliography is forthcoming.

On the whole the main argument of the paper seems to me still sound, though perhaps one-sidedly presented. It can hardly be denied that the *Odyssey* is a poem much concerned with moral values among men, and I still consider that the poet is concerned to show a development in Odysseus' character as a result of his experiences. I perhaps did not pay enough attention to the Slaughter, where the hero is certainly presented as vindicating his own rights, but with remarkable ferocity: the aftermath, especially the treatment of Melantheus and the maids, carries revenge to repulsive extremes (though it is notable that these actions are performed by Telemachus and his henchmen, not by the hero himself, a point neglected by Margaret Atwood in her brilliant reworking of the story as *The Penelopiad* (2005)). This is at best rough justice, and in this the hero can be seen as representative of the rough justice of the gods (cf. p. 181). In general I now feel that I was somewhat too preoccupied with establishing the moral consistency of the poet's presentation of Odysseus and of the divine order. In a tradition which obviously draws on generations of poetic tales and versions it is hardly surprising that there are conflicting notes here and there, even if the older Analysts exaggerated their number and importance. But for a recent discussion of the moral and religious framework of the epic tradition which argues for a high degree of consistency, see W. Allan, *JHS* 126 (2006) 1–35.

There has of course been much other valuable work on the poem since 1986, which cannot be fully reviewed here. The narratological studies of Irene de Jong seem to me especially helpful in bringing out the subtle variations and modifications of Homeric storytelling (see esp. her synthesis in *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*

[Cambridge 2001]). Her paper on 'The subjective style in Odysseus' wanderings', *CQ* 42 (1992) 1–11, may be added to the items in my n. 34. The work of G. Danek, *Epos und Zitat: Studien zu den Quellen der Odyssee* (Vienna 1998), comes from a different tradition, but also advances understanding by a detailed analysis of the texture of the poem, showing the sophistication with which the poet uses inherited motifs, often tantalising the audience and leading them to expect a development which does not come. This is relevant in particular to the *Odyssey*'s handling of the encounters between Odysseus and Penelope, especially in Book 19.

In the final section I discussed the Laertes scene and alluded to the problems of the Continuation (esp. n. 84). Here there have been notable contributions especially by S. R. West, *PCPhS* NS 35 (1989) 113–43 and by R. Oswald, *Das Ende der Odyssee. Studien zu Strukturen epischen Gestaltens* (diss. Graz, 1993). In my 1996 survey I moved closer to the position of those who deny authenticity, perhaps over-influenced by the interesting arguments of C. Sourvinou-Inwood in her *Reading Greek Death* (1995) 94–107. I have now returned to a position of agnosticism, but would regard the Laertes scene as one of the most successful parts of the conclusion, and one clearly composed by an author closely attuned to the themes of the poem as a whole. I would stress even more now the Greek fascination with situations in which good and crucial news is withheld, giving the bearer of that news an agreeable advantage over the ignorant party. There are highly instructive parallels to this situation in tragedy: see Sophocles, *Electra* 1098–1231, Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 467–826, and especially the closing scene of his *Alcestis* (1008–1126).

9

'Reverse Similes' and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*

Helene P. Foley

Two surprisingly similar similes mark the first meeting of Penelope and Odysseus and their hard-won reunion. In the first (19.108–14) Odysseus compares the reputation (*kleos*) of Penelope to that of a good and just king whose land and people prosper under him. Penelope replies that the gods destroyed her beauty on the day of Odysseus' departure for Troy; if he were to return her life and *kleos* would be fairer and greater. In the second (23.233–40) Odysseus is as welcome to Penelope as land to a shipwrecked sailor worn down by his battle with the surf. This simile at once recalls the situation of Odysseus before he struggles to land on Phaeacia (5.394–8). Thus both similes equate Penelope with a figure like Odysseus himself, as he has been and will be.

These two similes comparing a woman to a man form part of a group of similes of family or social relationship clustering almost exclusively around the incident in Phaeacia and the family of Odysseus as it struggles to recover peace and unity on Ithaca.[1] Many of these

A draft of this paper was originally presented at the December, 1976 meeting of the First Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies Conference at Briarcliff College, New York. I wish to thank Carolyn Dewald, Mark Edwards, Rick Griffiths, Duncan Foley, Michael Jameson, and Michelle Rosaldo for their helpful comments and criticisms, and John Peradotto for his editorial suggestions.

[1] Hermann Fraenkel, *Die Homerischen Gleichnisse* (Göttingen 1921), A. J. Podlecki, 'Some Odyssean Similes', *G&R* 18 (1971) 82, and W. C. Scott, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile, Mnemosyne* Suppl. 28 (1974) 123, all notice the structural position of these similes of family relation. Carroll Moulton, 'Similes in the *Iliad*', *Hermes* 102 (1974) 390 and Podlecki note the inversion technique in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

10

The Reunion of Penelope and Odysseus

Chris Emlyn-Jones

One of the most striking dramatic features of the climax of Homer's *Odyssey* is the lengthy postponement of the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus. The sequence of scenes which lead finally to recognition begins at 17.508, when Penelope asks the swineherd Eumaeus to summon the disguised Odysseus so that she may question him about her husband. But it is only at 23.205, after many diversions, that she breaks down in tears at the final realization that Odysseus is really home.

At first sight Odysseus' motivation for keeping his wife in the dark for so long may seem weak and implausible. During his extended conversation with Penelope in Book 19, he holds to his resolve even in the face of his wife's despair and grief. But what exactly is compelling him? In Book 11, he is advised by the spirit of Agamemnon, who has his own experience clearly in mind, not to reveal all to his wife and, above all, to return home secretly: *ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι πιστὰ γυναιξίν* ('since women are no longer to be trusted', 11.456).[1] Yet these warnings are themselves ambiguous, flanking, as they do, a tribute to Penelope in which Odysseus is assured: *ἀλλ' οὐ σοί γ', Ὀδυσεῦ, φόνος ἔσσεται ἔκ γε*

This article has its origin in a paper presented to the London branch of the Classical Association on 10 February 1983. I am grateful to Malcolm Willcock and Ronald Willetts for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

[1] Cf. 13.383 ff., where Odysseus acknowledges Athene's intervention as having preserved him from the fate of Agamemnon, who was killed by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus (related by Nestor [3.255–75; 303–10] and Menelaus [4.512–37] to Telemachus). On the influence of the Agamemnon 'Return' on the *Odyssey*, see U. Hölscher, *Die Atridensage in der Odyssee* in Festschrift Richard Alewyn (Köln-Graz, 1967) 1–16.

γυναικός ('not that your wife, Odysseus, will ever murder you', 11.444). What does Odysseus learn about his wife's attitude and intentions? Earlier in the same book, the spirit of his dead mother, Anticleia, in response to an enquiry about whether Penelope has remarried, assures him that she remains steadfast in her grief (11.181–3). Admittedly, she goes on to describe Telemachus as administering the paternal estate 'without hindrance' (*ἔκηλος*, 184), whereas Odysseus has already heard from Tiresias, the prophet, about the suitors (11.115–17). But even if we ignore the chronological and structural problems of Book 11, Anticleia's view is echoed, with decisive authority, at 13.379–81 by Athene, who informs Odysseus that Penelope gives hope to all, and makes promises to each man, sending messages: *νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοινᾷ* ('but her mind has other desires'). Athene playfully ascribes Odysseus' caution to his nature: he is *ἐπητής, ἀγχίνοος, ἐχέφρων* ('persuasive, quick-witted, self-possessed'). But it is clear from 13.189–93 that the postponement of the recognition is part of the divine plan too: Athene brings down a mist over Ithaca, after Odysseus has landed and while he sleeps, to give her time to explain the situation to him and make him unrecognizable to his wife, townspeople, and friends, *πρὶν πᾶσαν μνηστῆρας ὑπερβασίην ἀποτῖσαι* ('until the suitors pay for all their transgression'). However the apparent necessity of including his wife in the category of people to whom he must not reveal himself[2] seems to lose its justification in Book 19.204 ff. Penelope has explained how much she longs for Odysseus' return and how much she hates the attentions of the suitors. When the beggar tells how he met Odysseus on his way to Troy, Penelope dissolves into tears of grief. But Odysseus: *δόλῳ δ' ὅ γε δάκρυα κεῦθεν* ('hid his tears with guile', 19.212). Why, in Penelope's case, the *δόλος* ('deception')?[3] To say that Odysseus is obeying the instructions of Athene merely puts the problem back a stage; why did the poet choose what is, arguably, a weaker dramatic structure by developing the plot in this way?

[2] Odysseus includes Penelope in his instruction to Telemachus not to reveal his identity, at 16.300–4.

[3] B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey*, *Hermes* Einzelschr. 30, Wiesbaden, 1974, 40 thinks that O. 'has sound practical reasons for maintaining his disguise . . .'. I cannot see what these reasons are in Penelope's case, unless Fenik is thinking of the presence of serving-maids during the interview—surely not a strong psychological or dramatic motive for the postponement.

One answer to this question, based on Analytic premisses, is that the problem derives from the development of our *Odyssey* from an older poem in which the recognition of Odysseus by Penelope took place before the slaughter of the suitors in Odysseus' hall and the trial of the bow which precipitated the battle was the plan of Penelope and Odysseus acting in collusion.[4] This hypothesis was put forward to explain what have been seen as dramatic and psychological improbabilities in the plot of *Odyssey* 17–23.[5] Yet, even if the hypothesis is valid (and, as I shall demonstrate later, I do not believe that any of the so-called improbabilities point decisively in that direction)[6] it still does not furnish us with an explanation of why the poet of the *Odyssey* chose to expand in this way.

Another explanation of the problem, and one which has almost attained the status of orthodoxy in modern American Homeric studies, is that the recognition of Odysseus by Penelope is a gradual process, carried on at a largely subconscious or 'intuitive' level.[7] The *homophrosyne* of the beggar and Penelope develops and increases during their colloquy in Book 19.[8] Penelope is increasingly attracted towards the beggar, with his appearance and situation similar to that which she imagines for the 'absent' Odysseus, and with his authoritative predictions that her husband is about to return; Anne Amory argues that '... as she talks

[4] This is, in fact, how one of the dead suitors, Amphimedon, explains the recent events to Agamemnon in the Underworld, at 24.167–9.

[5] For a summary of the Analytic position on this question, see G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962), 245–8.

[6] See pp. 222–4 below.

[7] The starting-point was the thesis of P. W. Harsh, now generally regarded as highly improbable, that Penelope fully recognizes Odysseus in Book 19 and that all her subsequent words and actions must be seen in this light ('Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX', *AJP* 71 (1950) 1–21). The basis for more recent modification of this thesis was A. Amory, 'The Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope' in *Essays on the Odyssey: Selected Modern Criticism*, ed. C. H. Taylor, Jr (Bloomington, 1963), 100–36. See also C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Harvard, 1958), 303; C. R. Beye, *The Iliad, the Odyssey and the Epic Tradition* (London, 1968), 178; and recently N. Austin, *Archery at the Dark of the Moon* (California, 1975), 200 ff.; J. Finley, Jr, *Homer's Odyssey* (Harvard, 1978), 3 ff.; T. van Nortwick, 'Penelope and Nausikaa', *TAPA* 109 (1979), 269–76; and J. Russo, 'Interview and Aftermath: Dream, Fantasy and Intuition in *Odyssey* 19 and 20', *AJP* 103 (1982), 4–18.

[8] Some, e.g. Whitman, op. cit., 303, Amory, op. cit., 131 n. 6, and Austin, op. cit. 208 ff. put Penelope's suspicions concerning O's identity as far back as 18.158 ff., when, on the prompting of Athene, Penelope descends to the suitors (on this scene, see pp. 221–4).

with him ... Penelope becomes gradually certain that the stranger is in fact her husband. But, because she has so strong a fear of making a mistake in just this situation, she cannot rationally accept her interior certainty, and her recognition therefore remains largely subconscious.'[9] This subconscious feeling is, Amory thinks, strengthened by the prophecies, omens, and portents which increasingly occur in Books 17–20.[10] Despite her often expressed scepticism regarding signs and portents, Penelope is finally encouraged by them to trust to her intuition and institute the contest of the bow. As the most recent supporter of the 'intuitive Penelope' hypothesis, J. Russo, puts it, she is '... caught up in a swelling current of intuitions, intimations and half-believed hopes. It is the force of that current that led her to decide suddenly on the test of the bow.'[11]

Immediately before this decision, Penelope has related to the beggar a dream in which an eagle swoops down, kills the geese in her courtyard, and announces that he is her husband and that he will destroy the suitors. Having elicited the obvious interpretation from the beggar, that Odysseus will soon return and do just that, Penelope goes on to express scepticism, introducing the famous image of the gates of horn and ivory. This dream, Penelope thinks, came through the ivory gate and is therefore one of those, ἔπε' ἀκράαντα φέροντες ('bearing a message not to be fulfilled', 19.565).[12] Why, one may ask, does the decision of the bow follow such scepticism? Amory supposes that Penelope '... puts forward her suggestion about setting the contest, in a state of conflict and confusion. She genuinely feels that a decision is necessary, but she is very reluctant to make one. Seeking a further sign, she makes her reluctance plain, so that the stranger can discourage her plan if he is not Odysseus, but is really sure that Odysseus is coming soon. But the stranger does not merely repeat his assurance that Odysseus will return; he urges her to go ahead with the contest immediately because Odysseus will be there before it is completed. This assurance is so

[9] op. cit., 105.

[10] Prophecy of Theoclymenus the seer: 17.151–61; Omen of Telemachus' sneeze: 17.539–47; Dream of Penelope: 19:535–53; Vision of Theoclymenus: 20.345–57. There are others at which Penelope is not present (15.525–38; 19.36–40; 20.98–121; 20.240–6).

[11] op. cit., 17.

[12] On this image, see the interesting hypothesis of Amory, 'The Gates of Horn and Ivory', *YCS* 20 (1966) 1–57.

peculiarly explicit that Penelope must realize that Odysseus himself is speaking.'[13]

This is by no means the only plausible interpretation of the scene. It should be pointed out that the beggar has for some time been offering explicit assurances that Odysseus will soon be home, both to Penelope herself and others.[14] Likewise, Penelope's scepticism in the face of dreams and omens has rarely wavered, only occasionally straying into the optative in the fact of particularly convincing prediction.[15] It is difficult to see what can have brought about the change in her attitude at this point; certainly the beggar proves that he met Odysseus at the beginning of the Trojan War, but how does she make the jump from believing in this twenty-year-old meeting to having an 'intuition' of the truth of the often-heard prediction, that Odysseus will come home, let alone to believing that 'Odysseus himself is speaking'?

It is worth looking at how the scene ends. Odysseus has strongly supported her decision to hold a contest and given his assurance about her husband's return. Penelope concludes the interview by saying that she could listen to the beggar all night, but sleep is necessary. Amory interprets thus: '... Penelope is not yet ready emotionally to accept Odysseus' return, so she does not admit her recognition of him, but just gives up the whole problem for the moment. Understandably, in view of the variety and intensity of the emotions which she has undergone that day, she is overcome by a sudden weariness and a desire to return to her old condition of passive waiting.'[16] But, surely, it is equally plausible to see Penelope's appreciation of the beggar's ability to entertain her (τέρπειν, 590) as just that—a parallel to the cautious attitude of Eumaeus for whom Odysseus' entertainment-value as a storyteller was by no means accompanied by the guarantee that what he said was entirely true.[17] Admittedly, in Book 19 Penelope is greatly moved and

[13] Amory, 'The Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope', 106.

[14] See 19.300–7 (to Penelope) and 14.152, 14.391 ff. (to Eumaeus); 18.145–6 (to Amphinomus, one of the suitors); 20.232–4 (to Philoetius, an oxherd).

[15] We are also given to understand that Penelope has made a habit of consulting wayfarers and has often been deceived (e.g. Eumaeus at 14.124–30). Her scepticism is most notable at the beginning of Book 23, when she persists in asserting that Eurycleia, in believing that Odysseus is really home, is being tricked by some god.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Cf. Eumaeus to Odysseus at 14.361–89, following a prediction by the beggar of O's return. See also Eumaeus to Penelope at 17.513–16.

becomes attracted to the beggar to the extent of confiding in him; but does this imply any suspicion that the beggar is Odysseus? At the end of the book Penelope's weariness in the face of 'variety and intensity of emotions' begs the whole question of exactly what those emotions were.

The 'intuitive Penelope' theory, like the Analyst hypothesis before it, does attempt to offer an explanation of an apparent difficulty in the dramatic structure of the poem, namely: what motivates Penelope to decide on the contest of the bow—a decision that appears, it would seem, out of nowhere at 19.572? Yet the theory creates as many problems as it purports to solve; in order to accept the 'intuitive Penelope' interpretation, one has to assume that the poet is creating a psychological 'subtext' in which what Penelope thinks and feels is increasingly governed by unconscious or semi-conscious desires and wishes; Homer is supposed to have postponed the reunion because he wished to explore a subtle interplay between conscious and unconscious mind, and the gradual emergence of conscious certainty that the beggar is Odysseus (though it should be noted that scholars who support this hypothesis differ widely as to when this 'certainty' actually emerges into Penelope's conscious mind).[18]

Because, according to the hypothesis, this activity takes place at a semi-conscious level it is particularly difficult to substantiate from the text. It follows from the theory that 'intuitive Penelope' often thinks and feels very differently from what she actually says. But on other occasions Homer appears not to need a 'subtext', notably in Book 23, the final recognition of Penelope and Odysseus (see below p. 219 f. and 226 f.). The expression of Penelope's feelings at 23.85–110 provides conclusive evidence that Homer was perfectly capable of dealing directly with the psychological subtleties of mental and emotional confusion, when he so chose. Why then, one must ask, did he choose instead in Books 19–20 a technique so indirect and allusive as to require an interpretation which seems, on the face of it, to have more relevance to the novels of Henry James than to early Greek epic?

On a psychological level, it is surely more plausible to see Penelope's dream, as related at 19.535–53, as pure wish-fulfilment; her dream and her account of it is an expression, *not* of her belief or suspicion

[18] See above refs. at n. 8.

about the identity of the beggar but of her intense desire that Odysseus should come and extricate her from a terrible situation. Similarly, at the beginning of Book 20, when Penelope has one of her κακὰ ὀνείρατα ('evil dreams') that Odysseus is lying beside her (so vivid she thinks it is a ὕπαρ, 'a waking vision') and Odysseus lying in bed likewise has a vision of Penelope standing by his head, the poet is not '... doing his utmost to show both characters in the grip of an unusually powerful unconscious tug towards the full mental union that will not be possible for several books yet...'[19] but merely expressing Penelope's hope, forlorn, as she thinks, that her husband will come home, and allowing her, when awake, bitterly to contrast her dream with the, again as *she* thinks, almost certain fate of marrying one of the suitors; it is this contrast which makes the dream κακόν, 'evil'. On the other hand Odysseus' vision expresses his own strong anticipation of success.

But we do not need to read the scene primarily on a psychological level. The increasing frequency of dreams and omens which Amory noted (see above p. 211) is not so much an indication of the mental state of Penelope, as a device whereby the poet unifies his plot and increases dramatic tension by foreshadowing climactic events.[20] They are aimed at us, the audience, not as an external indication of some inner conflict which the poet hasn't the technique (or psychological knowledge?) to explain directly, but as a warning that the denouement is fast approaching. Thus, for example, in Book 20, immediately after Penelope and Odysseus have experienced dreams/visions of each other, Odysseus asks Zeus directly for a portent ἔκτοσθεν ('outside'); Zeus obliges with a thunderclap, and an omen (φήμη) is provided by a mill woman working outside who asks Zeus to grant her release from labour by making this the last day of the suitors' feasting (20.97–119).

[19] Russo, op. cit., 6. An extreme psychological interpretation of the dream of the eagle and the geese suggests that Penelope's sorrow at the slaughter of the geese and her relief that they are in reality unharmed, shows that her unconscious mind is considerably less hostile to the suitors than her conscious (Russo, op. cit., 9; van Nortwick, op. cit., 276; for the theory, see G. Devereux, 'Penelope's Character', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 26 [1957] 378–86). This, in the face of her continual emphatic assertions that she loathes the suitors and their attentions! This hypothesis represents a curious reversion, in the name of modern psychological interpretation, to the Victorian idea that Penelope did not entirely dislike the suitors (see S. Butler, *The Authoress of the Odyssey* [London, 1897], 130–1). On the dream, see the sensible remarks of J. Finley, op. cit., 19 n. 7.

[20] See the pertinent remarks of A. J. Podlecki, 'Omens in the *Odyssey*', *G&R* 14 (1967), 12–23, esp. 21–2.

Penelope's persistent scepticism about Odysseus in the face of what seems to be overwhelming evidence to the contrary enables the poet to exploit the dramatic irony in the contrast between seeming and reality. The obvious dramatic parallel is that of the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, as B. Fenik points out,[21] where the dramatist extracts the last drop of irony from Oedipus' inability to see the obvious truth.[22] Homer's dramatic irony, like that of Sophocles, is subtle and all-pervasive, present in small touches, e.g. 19.209, where Penelope's beautiful cheeks were streaming: κλαιούσης ἑὸν ἄνδρα παρήμενον ('weeping for her husband who was sitting beside her').[23] At 357–60, when bidding the old nurse Eurycleia to wash the beggar's feet, Penelope supposes that Odysseus must by now have hands and feet similar to those of the beggar: αἶψα γὰρ ἐν κακότητι βροτοὶ καταγηράσκουσιν ('for mortals age quickly in misfortune'). She is presumably to be seen as still listening immediately afterwards, when Eurycleia apostrophizes the 'absent' Odysseus in a way which initially suggests she is talking to the beggar.[24] The poet also causes Penelope to act in a manner which advances the plot and generates irony in the contrast between what she thinks she is doing and what is really happening. For example, in Book 21, when the suitors are trying unsuccessfully to string the bow, Penelope supports the beggar's request that he should be allowed to try the bow, ridiculing the implication that, if he were successful, he would have any marriage claim on her. If he is successful, she will give him clothing and transport to wherever he wishes to go.[25] Analysts and 'Intuitionists' are united in believing (on very different grounds) that at this point Penelope must be supposed to have guessed the beggar's identity. Why else would she support his request for the bow? Yet it is a characteristic of Homer's dramatic

[21] op. cit., 46.

[22] It is perhaps worth noting that Sophocles' play has also provoked a thesis that Oedipus comes to know the truth at an early stage in P. Vellacott, *Sophocles and Oedipus* (London, 1971), 104.

[23] Cf. also the often-observed irony in O's address to P. in 19.107: ὦ γύναι = 'lady' or 'wife'.

[24] 19.361–74. In 362 the omission of an addressee is surely deliberate here (R. Lattimore, in his otherwise excellent translation, *The Odyssey of Homer* [New York, 1965], includes a 'to him', mistakenly). Homer further exploits the ambiguity in σέο, τέκνον ('you, child', 363) for which the most likely addressee is the beggar. It is only when Eurycleia reverts to addressing Odysseus in the third person and the stranger as 'you' (370–2), that this ambiguity is resolved.

[25] Penelope has also given promises, in less detail, during their colloquy at 19.310–11.

technique that he pushes to extremes the contrast between appearance and reality and exploits to the limits of plausibility what his characters in their ignorance may say or do.[26] At the approach of a climactic point in the poem it may be thought dramatically appropriate, if not psychologically entirely plausible, that Penelope should, in ignorance, assist her husband.

A third possible approach to the Penelope–Odysseus reunion comes from a rather different angle. Thus far, I have referred to dramatic appropriateness and psychological plausibility in comparative isolation from a broader context. It is, however, significant that postponement of reunion and recognition is not confined to Homer, or even Greek culture. It has been one of the achievements of the last fifty years of Homeric studies to show that the Homeric poems have their origin in a tradition of oral poetry which, in terms of both detailed composition and more general thematic structure, has a great deal in common with traditional poetry of other cultures.[27] In the case of thematic structure to which the emphasis has tended to shift during the last thirty-five years or so, researches have shown that the Homeric poet, as well as his non-Homeric counterpart, was composing with repeated thematic elements, large-scale 'formulae'—a number of recurring associated motifs which we might call a 'sequence'.[28] One group of motifs which reveals clearly the characteristics of a sequence is that of recognition in the *Odyssey*. If we consider the Penelope–Odysseus recognition in the context of the whole of Books 12–24, it will be apparent that it is merely the most elaborate of a whole series: with Telemachus, Eurycleia, Eumaeus, servants, suitors, and finally Odysseus' father Laertes (not to mention Odysseus' old dog, Argos). Common to the sequence are:

[26] On this characteristic, see U. Hölscher, *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee*, *Hermes* Einzelschr. 6, Berlin, 1939, 61.

[27] I take this position, in the general form I have stated it, to be uncontroversial. The basic work was done by Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: Collected Papers*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford, 1971), see esp. 'Whole Formulaic Verses in Greek and South Slavic Heroic Song', 376–90 and A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Harvard, 1960).

[28] The idea of the sequence as a compositional device in Homer has been thoroughly explored in certain limited contexts by e.g. B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad: Studies in the Narrative Technique of Homeric Battle Description*, *Hermes* Einzelschr. 21, Wiesbaden, 1968; T. Krischer, *Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik* (Munich, 1971).

1. Odysseus in disguise.
2. A conversation in which Odysseus is pressed for his identity, in reply to which he tells a false story in which he claims to have seen Odysseus on his travels and predicts his early return. The other speaker refers frequently in conversation to Odysseus, usually introducing the topic very shortly after meeting him.
3. Odysseus tests the other's loyalty; the test is passed (or, in the case of the suitors and disloyal servants, failed).
4. Odysseus reveals himself.
5. The other refuses to believe.
6. Odysseus gives a sign (*sēma*) as a proof of identity.
7. Final recognition, accompanied by great emotion on both sides.
8. 'On to business'.

Despite great variety of length and treatment, some or all of these elements are recognizable in the various recognition scenes of the *Odyssey*.[29] They are also common to the 'Return of the absent husband' theme in a variety of poetic traditions, of which the *Odyssey* is recognizably one.[30] The comparative material reveals that the element of postponement of recognition by means of false stories, tests, disbelief, and signs, is by no means confined to the Homeric poems. A modern Greek ballad on the 'Return of the long-absent husband' theme neatly illustrates, in the space of 43 verses, all the elements of the recognition sequence mentioned above in the *Odyssey* context.[31] Notable is the apparent cruelty of the disguised husband, who, on meeting his wife, pretends not only that he is dead but that her dying husband's last wish was that she should marry the stranger. Particularly interesting are the σημάδια or signs, tokens, which the disbelieving wife demands from the husband; she requires knowledge of progressively more intimate details of courtyard, house, and bedroom until finally her husband, by referring

[29] So far as I am aware, there has, as yet, been no major study of recognition scenes in the *Odyssey* comparable in scope with those of Fenik and Krischer on the *Iliad* (see n. 28 above). For some discussion of the recognition sequence as a species of 'Testing', see A. Thornton, *People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey* (Otago and London, 1970), 48 ff.

[30] For the modern Serbo-Croatian tradition, see Lord, op. cit., and especially Appendix III, 242–59, 'Return Songs'.

[31] Conveniently quoted, with translation, in J. T. Kakridis, *Homer Revisited* (Lund, 1971), 151–3 (in the context of the Penelope–Odysseus recognition).

to marks on her body and also his amulet, which she wears between her breasts, convinces her of his real identity.

What light can this exquisite miniature throw on the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus? There is obviously a vast gap of scale and compositional technique; a recognition which the Greek ballad accomplishes in 43 lines extends in the *Odyssey* to approximately six books, or 2,500 verses. Moreover, whereas in the ballad the vital conversations between disguised husband and wife are laid out neatly and predictably in verses which are structurally symmetrical, the Homeric dialogue follows a vastly more complex pattern. Yet there are similarities. The element of, if not cruelty, then a desire to provoke or upset is clearly in Odysseus' mind just before his main conversation with Penelope at 19.45–6; he remains downstairs: *ὄφρα κ' ἔτι δμῳὰς καὶ μητέρα σὴν ἐρεθίζω / ἡ δέ μ' ὀδυρομένη εἰρήσεται ἀμφὶς ἕκαστα* ('so that I may further provoke the maids and your mother who in her sorrow will ask me about everything'). The plan of Odysseus to provoke Penelope to tears[32] is clearly part of the traditional sequence, stages 2 and 3 above, the questioning and false tale which test loyalty and precede recognition, elements which Homer uses again, even less acceptably to conventional taste, in the Laertes recognition scene in Book 24.[33]

In the long conversation of 19.104–360, which is interrupted by Eurycleia's own recognition of Odysseus' scar when she washes his feet, the expectation is created in the audience that Odysseus will finally reveal himself to Penelope, not only because this would seem dramatically the obvious thing to do, but also because it would constitute a traditional ending to the sequence.[34] Yet in avoiding this solution, Homer exploits the convention of the sequence in a curious way, by attaching all the major elements of stages 2–6 not to a genuine recognition sequence

[32] On *ἐρεθίζω* see LSJ ad loc. The word has clear overtones of unfriendly provocation (Lattimore's 'stir up' is rather weak).

[33] 24.226–350. On the element of cruelty in this recognition, see the remarks of P. Walcot, 'Odysseus and the Art of Lying', *Anc. Soc.* 8 (1977), 1–19 (reprinted in C. Emlyn-Jones, L. Hardwick, and J. Purkis (eds.), *Homer: Readings and Images*, London, 1992, 48–62 [and in the present volume]).

[34] But *N.B.*: the Eumaeus sequence, when an extended conversation in Books 14–15 (Eumaeus' loyalty is tested on several occasions) is put on ice, as it were, until Book 21 when, in a rather abbreviated version of the sequence, Odysseus finally reveals himself. It is hard to find a plausible explanation for the postponement except, perhaps, that there are more important people, such as Telemachus, to come first. Moreover, if, at the beginning of Book 16, Eumaeus is 'in the know' much of the irony of the Telemachus recognition would be lost.

but to the goal of merely establishing that the beggar *has* met Odysseus. Thus, when Penelope has asked the traditional question: *τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;* ('Who are you and where do you come from? Where is your city and who are your parents?', 19.105), and has received a predictably evasive answer, she refers immediately to her sorrow at the absence of Odysseus and her desperate attempts to keep the suitors at bay. This is followed by Odysseus' false tale (19.172–202). So far, this follows the normal sequence (see e.g. 14.185–359 in the Eumaeus recognition sequence). But at this point, Penelope breaks down at the mention of Odysseus and her tears are compared to the snow melted by the East Wind. Great emotion, accompanied by a simile, at this point in the sequence is elsewhere used for stage 7, the recognition itself.[35] But here Penelope weeps over a memory of her husband as he was twenty years previously, on his way to Troy. Her husband, sitting beside her, as the text emphasizes (19.209), takes no active part in this. Penelope continues to maintain the illusion of a genuine recognition sequence by asking for a *sēma* ('sign') to prove, not the identity of the beggar (this is destined to remain a secret from her for some time) but merely that he has actually seen Odysseus. When the beggar supplies evidence by relating details of the dress which Odysseus and his entourage were wearing on this occasion, Penelope weeps again *σήματ' ἀναγνούσῃ τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς* ('recognizing the certain signs that Odysseus had disclosed to her', 19.250). The extremes of irony and pathos in this scene arise not merely from the situation but from the poet's deliberate exploitation of all the elements of the sequence in a kind of 'spoof recognition', where the effect is obtained by using, and frustrating, the audience's undoubted knowledge and expectations.

The artistry of the final recognition scene in 23.1–240 in which Penelope and Odysseus experience difficulty in fully reuniting, has often been analysed (see also below pp. 226 f.).[36] After so long a separation, husband and wife take time to discover an effective means of recognition on an appropriate level; the postponement here has to do with feelings and relationships and is acutely and movingly portrayed.

[35] 16.213–19 (Telemachus); 23.231–40 (Penelope). The paucity of similes in the *Odyssey* (as opposed to the *Iliad*) may perhaps allow us to read significance into the positioning of several of them immediately after final recognition.

[36] The most sensitive and acute commentary on this scene is still W. Schadewaldt, 'Die Wiedererkennung des Odysseus und der Penelope' in *Neue Kriterien zur Odyssee-Analyse*, Sitz. der Heidelberger Akad. der Wiss. Phil.-hist. Klasse (1959).

Yet one can also look at the scene in terms of the working-out of the recognition sequence and what we may presume to have been audience expectations; stages 4–7 have not yet taken place: at the beginning of Book 23 Odysseus has not yet revealed himself, Penelope has not yet expressed disbelief and demanded her *sēma*. To have Penelope fly straight into Odysseus' arms would be not only far less effective; it would be antitraditional in a manner unthinkable for the Homeric poet, who exploited tradition but did not ignore it.

The revelation of the beggar's identity comes from Eurycleia; Penelope after initial joy falls back into scepticism but agrees eventually to come down to see the man who killed the suitors; the poet makes clear in subtle ways that her disbelief is not absolute.[37] Her disbelief is expressed directly to Odysseus in the form of silence; she and Odysseus find themselves only able to converse through Telemachus as a kind of mediator.[38] Penelope also uses Telemachus to indicate to Odysseus that she wants a *sēma*.

But it is, of course, Penelope herself who finally tricks the *sēma* out of an unwitting Odysseus. In ordering Eurycleia to make up a bed for him, and thus (for us, unthinkably) ending the scene yet again without full recognition, Penelope, in her turn, provokes Odysseus to anger and revelation of the secret of his bed, a *sēma* of particular appropriateness in this case.[39]

Thus the final elements of the sequence become a subtle game in which the two contestants toss the ball back and forth to each other.[40] The reversal of roles for the *sēma* where Penelope completely takes the initiative, is an appropriate final twist to the most extended and complex of Homer's recognition sequences. Perhaps it is not without deliberation that at the final recognition of 23.206, he repeats the formulaic line of the 'spoof-recognition' (19.250) when Penelope's knees and heart went

[37] Schadewaldt, op. cit., 13. 23.86–7 betray nicely Penelope's confusion, inclining towards a belief that she is hearing the truth. W. B. Stanford (*Homer's Odyssey* [London, 1957], note on line 86) is surely mistaken in supposing that there is any ambiguity in *φίλον πόσιν* ('dear husband') here, in view of the following line.

[38] See Schadewaldt, op. cit., 16, on Telemachus' role as a 'Vermittler' ('go-between').

[39] Stanford, op. cit., note on 188–9 acutely suggests that the idea of the *sēma* of the bed, namely its immovability (23.188–202) only gradually suggests itself to Odysseus in the light of a real *sēma* in the sense that Penelope requires, in the course of this speech, i.e. at 202. Cf. also 206.

[40] So Schadewaldt, op. cit., 16.

slack: *σήματ' ἀναγνούσῃ τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς* ('recognizing the certain signs that Odysseus had disclosed for her').

Thus far, an attempt has been made to answer the initial question of this paper—why the postponement of the Penelope–Odysseus recognition?—in terms of a poet using, and exploiting with great virtuosity and insight, the dramatic and thematic demands of his tradition, which were also, presumably, those of his audience. But we can, I believe, go a little further by looking more closely at the situation and attitude of Penelope herself.

At 18.158 Athene puts it into Penelope's head to descend so that she may inflame the suitors and seem more estimable (*τιμήεσσα*) in the sight of her husband and son than before. She laughs pointlessly (*ἀχρεῖον*, 163) and explains to her maid Eurynome that she wishes to show herself to the suitors and also to warn Telemachus about the dangers he faces from them. Eurynome approves the plan but suggests that Penelope should first wash herself and anoint her face, since nothing is gained by continual sorrow; for now Telemachus has come of age, which Penelope had always prayed for. Penelope rejects the advice, but Athene puts her to sleep and beautifies her. She then descends to the suitors and causes great passion among them. She then tells Telemachus off for the treatment of the beggar, and receives a conciliatory but firm answer. In reply to a compliment from Eurymachus, her chief suitor, Penelope says that her beauty departed when Odysseus left for Troy. Before leaving, he advised her to marry again when Telemachus should grow up. Penelope bewails the fact that this hateful marriage will now soon come and reproaches the suitors for their depredation of Odysseus' household. The disguised Odysseus, who has been sitting in the hall observing this scene, rejoices: *οὕνεκα τῶν μὲν δῶρα παρέλκετο, θέλγε δὲ θυμὸν / μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσσι, νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα* ('because she enticed gifts from them and enchanted their spirits with blandishing words, but her mind had other desires', 18.282–3). Antinous, the ringleader of the suitors, promises gifts but reaffirms the suitors' intention of remaining until Penelope chooses one of them in marriage. The gifts duly appear and Penelope reascends to her upper room.

I have set out this scene in some detail because it is at the same time one of the most revealing and one of the hardest to interpret in the whole poem. There are two main problems, Penelope's motivation and Odysseus' reaction.

First, Penelope's motivation: why, at this point, does she suddenly decide to descend? Does she really want to inflame the suitors? She certainly cannot want to appear more estimable to Odysseus (161–2) since she doesn't know he is there. So it seems likely that both reasons given in 160–2 are those of Athene. The goddess beautifies the sleeping Penelope, if not against her will (but see 178–81) then without her knowledge. The most difficult detail is in 163, where *ἀχρεῖον δ' ἐγέλασσεν* ('she laughed pointlessly') seems to suggest that she does not really know what she is doing or why.

If she is not a puppet, then she may be something worse; 'regina prope ad meretricias artes descendit' ('the queen stoops almost to the arts of the courtesan') has been the verdict of more than one commentator. This scene has also been cited by those who think Penelope is at least partly attracted to the suitors.[41] Her veil, it has been thought, is a sign of coquetry and note has been taken of Telemachus' characteristically harsh verdict, e.g. at 16.126–7: *ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν / ποιῆσαι δύναται* ('but neither does she refuse a hateful marriage nor can she make an end').[42]

Even more difficult is Odysseus' reaction. Why is he pleased at what Penelope is doing and how does he know that *νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα* ('her mind had other desires', 283) if, in fact, he is even correct about Penelope's *νόος* here? The analytic hypothesis would see lines 281–3 as clear evidence of the imperfect adaptation of the earlier plot, in which Odysseus and Penelope were in collusion by this time.[43] On the other hand, Fenik, on the assumption that Penelope is not sincere in mentioning her approaching remarriage in this scene, states that Odysseus is 'simply made to know' this by the poet, who neglects strict motivation '... in direct proportion to the extent to which he develops his favourite situations with their special emotions and ironies.'[44]

These interpretations have in common the belief that Penelope's feelings and actions in this scene, whether partly autonomous or wholly

[41] See above n. 19 for the psychological theory of Penelope's unconscious attraction to the suitors.

[42] On the significance of *δύναται* here, see below p. 224 f. At 15.20 ff. Athene hurries Telemachus back from Sparta with talk of the fickle *θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι γυναικός* ('spirit in the breast of a woman').

[43] See Kirk, op cit., 246.

[44] op. cit., 120. Note also that Athene informed Odysseus of Penelope's *νόος* at 13.381.

directed by Athene, are essentially subordinate to the dramatic development of the plot, which is in the hands of Athene and Odysseus. U. Hölscher, however, in a comparatively neglected short article,[45] has argued that interpretation of this scene turns on the interpretation of the phrase *νόος δὲ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα*, which means, he maintains, not that 'she has something else up her sleeve' but that she wants something else passionately, namely the return of her husband.[46] This interpretation of the phrase, which would seem to have strong linguistic arguments in its favour,[47] removes any grounds for supposing that Penelope is tricking the suitors and clears the way for the key point in Hölscher's interpretation, which is that we should distinguish clearly between Athene's motivation in this scene and that of Penelope herself. Athene's motivation is fairly clear: she, and the poet, wish to arrange for Odysseus to obtain a first sight of Penelope, in all her beauty and dignity—his first sight for twenty years; at the same time Penelope unwittingly provides evidence that she is still faithful to him, not only in her distaste for the suitors but also in her reiteration of his advice, which he had given her before leaving for Troy—to remarry when Telemachus came of age (259–70). Thus Odysseus had reason to be glad that she was increasing his wealth with the suitors' presents while still, in her heart, longing for him.

But there is another strand of motivation here: that of Penelope herself. Telemachus has shown himself to be of age, independent, and authoritative, nowhere more so than in his reply to his mother's complaint about his ability to protect the beggar (226–42). Her descent can be seen as a preparation for a genuine remarriage, which, however

[45] 'Penelope vor den Freiern' in *Lebende Antike: Symposion für R. Sühnel*, edited by H. Meller and H.-J. Zimmerman (Berlin, 1967) 27–33. [Trans. in Schein.]

[46] The phrase occurs also at 2.92 and 13.381, in the context of Penelope making promises to the suitors but *νόος δὲ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα*. Hölscher's interpretation fits these contexts as aptly as 18.283. Moreover, it is unlikely that the poem would have singled out one example of a formulaic phrase of this kind for special meaning. Thornton, op. cit. 98, assumes that the words refer to the forthcoming interview Penelope has arranged with the beggar; but this seems to be reading back significance into a meeting which, at the time, cannot have seemed to her to hold out any more hope than her previous encounters with strangers claiming to have met O. (See 14.126–30.)

[47] See H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1970) s.v. *μενοινάω* 'heftig verlangen' ('intensely desire', cf. *μένος*). Other Homeric uses of the word (see LSJ ad loc.) support this interpretation. On *νόος*, see K. von Fritz, '*νόος* and *νοεῖν* in the Homeric Poems', *CP* 38 (1943), 79–93, where the word is closely connected with inward vision of what is absent.

distasteful to her, she feels compelled to make, both to remain obedient to her absent husband's advice and to relieve the intense pressure on Telemachus' and Odysseus' household.

Penelope's motivation has been obscured by Athene's aims in her beautification of the queen—a process which Penelope repeatedly and emphatically rejects: all her beauty departed, she says, when Odysseus left for Troy. The fact that this is not true (she is obviously highly desirable to the suitors) should not lead us to suppose that the poet wishes Penelope to be regarded as lacking in sincerity here.

The two strands of motivation in this scene mirror the ambivalence of the structure of the last half of the poem as a whole. The revenge plot, with its excitement, and suspense (Odysseus arriving in the nick of time) tends to overshadow Penelope, who often appears to do unmotivated or badly-motivated things. For example, there appears to be no obvious reason for her decision to decide on a new bridegroom by means of the contest of the bow at 19.572,[48] but the decision leads smoothly to the climax of Book 21. Even more awkwardly, the only way the poet can get Penelope off the scene before Odysseus takes the bow and initiates the slaughter is to allow Telemachus, somewhat unconvincingly, to send her upstairs (21.350–3).

Yet, helpless victim though Penelope sometimes appears, there are signs that the poet also wishes us to be aware of her serious predicament and appreciate her lonely and courageous decisions in the face of social pressure, the *δήμοιό τε φῆμιν* ('voice of the people', 16.75) which sanctions fidelity to her absent husband and is, at the same time, powerless to prevent the results of this fidelity—the rapacious suitors' actions.[49] Her predicament is precisely, if unsympathetically, summed up by Telemachus, talking to the still-disguised Odysseus at 16.126–7: *ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν / ποιῆσαι δύναται* ('but neither does she refuse a hateful marriage nor can she make an end'), where Penelope's 'inability to make an end' surely refers not to

[48] This, like the story of the spinning and unpicking of the shroud for Laertes (2.93–110; 19.138–56), is clearly a folk-tale element in the story. It is perhaps significant that there is a slight discrepancy in Homer's account: at 21.1 ff. it is Athene who puts the idea of the bow contest into her mind.

[49] M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (London, 1962), 108 emphasizes the essentially passive role of the *demos* in the struggle over Penelope's marriage and Telemachus' inheritance.

her personal preferences or to some 'feminine' weakness but to the social situation.

It has been observed that the return of Odysseus, that is, the plot of the *Odyssey*, takes its motivation and precise starting point from Penelope's approaching crisis—the decision to remarry now that Telemachus has come of age.[50] That the decision and choice of bridegroom appear to belong to Penelope has been thought unusual and difficult to explain in the context of Homeric social custom.[51] In fact, the exact situation with regard to Penelope's prerogative in this matter is confused.[52] I would suggest that the poet may have granted her what initiative she possesses in the decision to remarry in order to focus our attention more closely on Penelope and her dilemma.

Certain themes which illustrate this dilemma tend to recur. At 19.124–61, in conversation with the disguised Odysseus, Penelope expresses them most acutely: her faded beauty, the attention of the suitors, the trick of the winding sheet for Laertes, the maturity of Telemachus.[53] She concludes (157–60):

> *νῦν δ' οὔτ' ἐκφυγέειν δύναμαι γάμον οὔτε τιν' ἄλλην*
> *μῆτιν ἔθ' εὑρίσκω· μάλα δ' ὀτρύνουσι τοκῆες*
> *γήμασθ', ἀσχαλάᾳ δὲ πάϊς βίοτον κατεδόντων,*
> *γιγνώσκων.*
>
> But now I cannot escape the marriage, nor can I find any other plan, but my parents strongly urge me to marry and my son, understanding what is going on, is distressed at their eating away of our livelihood.

[50] See Hölscher, 'The Transformation from Folk-Tale to Epic', in *Homer: Tradition and Invention*, ed. B. Fenik (Leiden, 1978), 51–67.

[51] See Finley, op. cit., 102–5: 'That prerogative mysteriously belonged to Penelope' (104). Thornton, op. cit., 108–10 thinks that Penelope has the right of choice by virtue of Odysseus' decree in his parting words to her before he left for Troy (18.259–70). But this seems to be placing too much emphasis upon a private conversation between husband and wife (hardly a 'decree') which would surely have cut little ice with the Ithacan *demos* or the suitors, even if they can be supposed to have known about it before Penelope's revelation at 18.25 ff.

[52] Certain contexts suggest that Telemachus has the right to send Penelope back to her parents, but refuses to do so for financial, religious, and social reasons (e.g., 2.130–7 where he is replying to Antinous' request that he do just that, so that she may marry *τῷ ὅτεῳ τε πατὴρ κέλεται καὶ ἀνδάνει αὐτῇ*, 'whoever her father instructs her to and whoever pleases her', 2.114). Elsewhere the suitors seem to suppose that Penelope has the sole, or at least, the deciding choice (see 18.288–9).

[53] See also 2.91–110, where the themes are associated by Antinous, the suitor.

Pressure from others and the impossibility of escape are the predominant motifs of Penelope's situation. Unlike Odysseus, who has the ear of Athene, Penelope has no help from the gods. Odysseus, too, has had a long period of wandering in which he has endured without divine help; but this is now over, whereas Penelope is forced to continue her well-founded scepticism and endure alone.[54]

It has often been noted that Penelope and Odysseus have to endure in different ways: for Odysseus, it is the active endurance of the Cyclops' cave, the Laestrygones, and the Underworld; for Penelope it is the passive and confined waiting in her upper room of the palace, a siege in which she occasionally, with precautions (two attendants and a veil over her face), descends to face her besiegers.[55]

Homer explores the ambivalent attitudes of others to this endurance. Odysseus, when he enquires in Book 11 whether Penelope has remained faithful to him, receives the information from his mother Anticleia that his wife endures: *τετληότι θυμῷ / σοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν* ('with enduring spirit in your palace', 181–2).[56] But the endurance befitting her sex is also required by Telemachus at 1.353 ff. when Penelope objects to the bard Phemius singing a song about the mournful homecoming of the Achaeans: he tells her *σοὶ δ' ἐπιτολμάτω κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀκούειν* ('let your heart and spirit be hardened to listen').

When the suitors have been slain and Penelope is informed that Odysseus is waiting for her downstairs (23.5 ff.), the incomprehension of Eurycleia and Telemachus is ironically reflected in their attitude to 'endurance': Penelope is reproached by Eurycleia for her *θυμὸς δέ (τοι) αἰὲν ἄπιστος* ('spirit always mistrustful', 72) and by Telemachus, *ἀπηνέα θυμὸν ἔχουσα* ('[you] having a harsh spirit', 97). In 100 he says that no other woman would keep distance *τετληότι θυμῷ* ('with enduring spirit') from a returning husband who had suffered so much: *σοὶ δ' αἰεὶ κραδίη στερεωτέρη ἐστὶ λίθοιο* ('you always have a heart harder than stone within you', 103). The effect is secured

[54] To this extent, Amory's picture of Penelope as looking 'at things only intermittently' (op. cit., 104) is correct; but, as I made clear above (p. 212) I cannot accept the psychological implications of Amory's thesis for the reunion; Penelope's inability to see things clearly stems entirely from her situation—its causes are wholly external to her.

[55] I am not forgetting Odysseus' confinement on Calypso's island; but this is not given major emphasis in the *Odyssey*.

[56] Repeated by Eumaeus to the returning Telemachus in 16.37–8.

here not only by the ironic contrast between the uncomprehending judgements of Eurycleia and Telemachus and what is really going on inside Penelope, but also by the use of the word for 'endure'; to persist *τετληότι θυμῷ* is no longer a commendable stance now that Odysseus is home! Note also how Eurycleia and Telemachus project these qualities into the past (Penelope was always [*αἰεί*, 72, 103] like this) and so, by implication, pass judgement on her long endurance and scepticism.

The eventual encounter between Penelope and Odysseus (see also above pp. 219 f.) is interrupted by a conversation (23.117–51) in which Odysseus and Telemachus decide how to act in the face of imminent vengeance from the relatives of the slain suitors. This was long regarded as an interpolation;[57] Fenik, in rejecting the interpolation theory, attempts to show how 'interruptions' of this sort are a normal feature of Homeric composition; there is no need for us to presume a tense, waiting Penelope 'on the stage' since epic does not, as a rule, consider the presence of 'silent characters'; during this interruption, Penelope ceases to exist.[58] Fenik makes a plausible general case, but I feel that, just as this whole scene (23.1–240) is exceptional in a number of ways,[59] so in this particular case, it is unlikely that an audience, having waited for the recognition for about 2,000 verses, and apparently faced with yet another postponement, would simply forget Penelope and her situation.[60] But there is another reason why the poet does not intend us to forget Penelope; at the end of the passage, Telemachus and the servants carry out Odysseus' instructions to wash, put on clean clothes, sing, and dance so that the neighbours and other outsiders will think that a wedding is taking place. We are then given the reaction of the outsiders—the *δήμοιό τε φῆμιν* ('voice of the people', 16.75) on Penelope: *σχετλίη οὐδ' ἔτλη πόσιος οὗ κουριδίοιο / εἴρυσθαι μέγα δῶμα διαμπερές, ἦος ἵκοιτο* ('hard hearted, she did not hold out to

[57] See Schadewaldt, op. cit., 19.

[58] Fenik, op. cit., 66–70.

[59] See Schadewaldt, op. cit., p. 13 ff. on the dramatic structure, and especially on the element of 'übereckgespräch' ('cross-conversation', 16) involving Penelope, Telemachus, and Odysseus.

[60] None of Fenik's parallels (op. cit., 68) are really comparable to the *Odyssey* Book 23 example in terms of dramatic suspense and importance of the character who has 'dropped out of sight'.

preserve the great house of her wedded husband, until he should return', 23.150–1). The δῆμος, in its censure of what it supposes Penelope to have done, applies, like Telemachus and Eurycleia, the double standard of 'endurance'.

When the scene is resumed and Odysseus has had a bath and has been made handsome again by Athene, husband and wife now talk directly to one another. Odysseus had offered provocation at 116 by accusing Penelope (through Telemachus) of slighting him because of his dirty and ragged appearance. But now (166) he loses patience and repeats word for word Telemachus' accusation of 100–2 (= 168–70) and echoes 103 in 172: ἦ γὰρ τῇ γε σιδήρεον ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ ('indeed, this woman's heart is iron within her'). The final condemnation comes, albeit in semi-humorous indignation, from the mouth of Odysseus himself.

Penelope is the most elaborately and searchingly portrayed of Homer's female characters. She is a great queen who exceeds in wisdom and insight the great heroines of old (2.117–21), receiving a fulsome tribute from Agamemnon (24.192 ff.) for her *aretē* ('excellence'). Yet the poet's ironic play on different attitudes to, and associations of Penelope's *aretē*—her fidelity and endurance—brings into the foreground the ambiguity of her situation and enables the poet to explore the personal and social pressures upon her sympathetically and at some depth. I would therefore maintain that in rejecting a version of the *Odyssey* in which Penelope and Odysseus defeat the suitors in collusion after an early recognition, and instead, deciding[61] on a late recognition after the slaying of the suitors, Homer's purpose was not only to exploit the dramatic possibilities inherent in a major extension of the recognition sequence but also to give himself time to establish the recognition of Penelope and Odysseus as the other, and perhaps equally important, climax of the *Odyssey*. It is the placing of this recognition, clear of the other main climax of the death of the suitors, which enables the poet to conclude in fitting manner his extended and searching portrait of the noble queen.

[61] I have assumed that the choice was Homer's; but I would not thereby wish to exclude the possibility that the poet of the *Odyssey* was working within a tradition in which this late recognition was normal. Of course, the evidence (or rather, the lack of it) does not allow us to decide.

ADDENDUM

Much water has flowed under the Homeric bridge since this article was written, and there have been many developments in relation to the related topics of Deception, Disguise, and Recognition in the *Odyssey*. Richardson has explained the dramatic and emotional effects of Aristotelian *anagnorisis* ('recognition') in relation to the *Odyssey*, with special attention to the literary criticism to be found in the scholiasts. A major study of Recognition has been undertaken by Cave, extending throughout European poetics from Aristotle to Barthes and Shakespeare to Conrad.

Narratological analysis of Penelope's role is found in Felson-Rubin and especially Murnaghan (which runs parallel to analysis in terms of an oral-poetic 'recognition sequence'), e.g. in M.'s idea that Penelope participates in a number of conflicting plots of which she is unaware and that she acts out a kind of recognition of Odysseus in 'recognition scenes that have gone underground' (52). Again in connection with Penelope, Katz has developed an argument that *Odyssey* 17–23 explores the 'indeterminacy of narrative direction' (192) in juxtaposing Penelope's indecision with the Clytemnestra and Helen paradigms which 'function . . . as an alternative narrative structure . . . ' (ibid.).

The arguments in 1984 against the idea of an 'intuitive recognition' of Odysseus by Penelope have proved controversial; in the introduction of his major commentary on *Odyssey* 17–20, Russo has restated the arguments for the psychological interpretation against what he believes to be a 'minimalist' or 'literalist' approach. On the interpretation of Penelope's dream at *Odyssey* 19.535–53, I think it can be disputed that P.'s bitter weeping over the slaughter of the geese '*can only point* (my italics) to some ambivalence in her true feelings towards (the suitors) . . .' (13 n. 13); see esp. Katz's careful interpretation, 145–8. For restatement of objections to the 'psychological interpretation', see Jones, 172–4 and especially Rutherford (2), who makes the point (35) that subconscious recognition reduces much of the subtle irony and pathos of the encounter of Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* 19, though I would now modify my own views in the light of Doherty's important re-examination of the whole issue in the context of reception and feminist approaches (31–63). Further exploration of the functional role of the language of the *Odyssey* as medium of disguise and identity can be found

in Goldhill, especially Ch. 1 of his (2). The key episode in *Odyssey* 19 has been given a substantial narratological analysis by de Jong (2) 458–82.

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11

Penelope's *Agnoia*: Knowledge, Power, and Gender in the *Odyssey*

Sheila Murnaghan

The *Odyssey* occupies a special place in the history of Greek representations of the female for its portrait of a heroine who is equal in importance and in heroic character to her husband, the male hero on whom the poem avowedly centres and whose triumph it primarily celebrates.[1] Penelope is seen to resemble Odysseus closely, sharing his distinctive traits of wiliness and endurance.[2] Those two traits combine in the action for which she is traditionally best known, her trick of weaving and unweaving a shroud for Laertes; in that action, she uses craft to hold out against the suitors and so to continue her determined waiting for that

I would like to thank the special editor of this issue [of *Helios*], Marilyn Skinner, and the two anonymous referees for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. [*Agnoia* is Greek for 'ignorance,' 'lack of knowledge'.]

[1] Notably, Penelope is one of the few female characters in Greek literature who escape the confining classification of women as either objects of erotic desire or respected wives and mothers, but not both, through which the Greek male imagination attempted to contain the power of the opposite sex. For a recent account of this dichotomy in classical Athenian social ideology and social practice, see Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 204–28.

[2] William G. Thalmann points out that Odysseus and Penelope are linked through diction expressing the endurance of suffering: *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 212, n. 25. The similarity in character between Odysseus and Penelope is explored by Marylin B. Arthur, 'Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude Toward Women', in John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan, eds., *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 15–16, and Helene P. Foley, '"Reverse Similes" and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*', ibid. pp. 59–78 [repr. this volume], and reflected in the title of a recent article: Patricia Marquardt, 'Penelope "Polytropos"', *AJP* 106 (1985) 32–48.

between them and their male partners, a woman's identification with Arete and Penelope also reinforces the patriarchal norms for female behaviour to which these characters adhere.

status, though of noble birth—hears an account of one of Odysseus' Trojan adventures (the tale of the cloak) from Odysseus himself. Moreover, the false tale of his wanderings which Odysseus tells to Eumaeus, and which Eumaeus compares to a skilled bard's performance (17.514–21), is clearly intended to entertain Eumaeus, and even suggests a commensurability—however temporary—between Odysseus' misfortunes and those of his slave. This gesture of inclusion may work like the inclusion of Arete and Penelope in Odysseus' audience, i.e. to flatter previously unrecognized members of the epic audience and simultaneously to reinforce their sense of the social roles they may properly play. [See now W. G.Thalmann, 'Female Slaves in the *Odyssey*', in S. R. Joshel and S. Murnaghan, eds., *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture* (London and New York, 1998).]

13

The Economic Man

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I. ON INTERPRETATION

Those who have written on Homer and History have usually taken the epic at its word, and have discussed the reality of the heroes. Had we been present, however, at the first performances of these monumental compositions we would have been made aware of their presence in history in a different sense. A poem is a communication, and a successful communication engages and thus characterizes its audience; it is something the audience wants to hear, understands, and finds significant. In this sense the *Odyssey* is evidence for life in the late eighth century B.C.

Stories are about better and worse, values are in play, and the storyteller's communication is founded on a shared normative culture, an ethical complicity with his audience. We can respond to Homer only if Odysseus is to us admirable, while Antinous is not; we must find the death of Dolon ignoble, while pathetic. A story is meaningful because it tests comprehensible motivations against relevant consequences; the characters make choices, and enjoy or suffer the result. Our response is an evaluation; a story need not have a moral, but it must be shaped by a morality. If we come uninstructed to culturally alien narrative—to Sanskrit drama, for instance, or the Noh—we may well find the story opaque. Conversely, to understand any story is to participate imaginatively in the culture of its intended audience.

If values were unambiguous, our lives would be as undramatic as those of the social insects, and culture would find room for at most one story. In fact life is interesting and drama is possible because culture presents us, not with a coherent set of instructions, but with a structured

problematic, a set of dilemmas and hard choices. We cannot be all at once successful men of affairs, creatures of romantic spontaneity, and utterly committed saints, yet all of these are admired. When they appear together in a story we can see that each in his own way acts well. Stories are not so much about good against evil as about good against good, and about intelligible disputes concerning the location of the lesser evil. It is often appropriate to take sides with the hero, but even the most perfect villain is one whose motives we reject, and therefore recognize, and therefore find at some level within ourselves.

Stories, in other words, dramatize values; each story is a kind of thought experiment which explores the problematic of a culture. As the culture is complex it gives rise to many heroes and many stories. From this point of view the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—and for that matter the *Works and Days*—can be thought of as essentially contemporary. These poems elaborate contrasting perspectives on a common set of problems. Odysseus refuses an immortality for which Achilles has a tragic longing. Eumaeus (as it were) takes centre stage in the *Works and Days* and makes a virtue of his limited aspirations. Everywhere we find dramatized in different forms the conflicting claims of household and community, a contradictory longing for security and pride in the taking of risk, a tension between the need for functioning authority and the assertion by the individual of his equal dignity. These conflicts characterize the culture which nourished the epics.[1]

The Homeric world, the world inhabited by the heroes, is not and has not been anywhere. It is an amalgam of elements from various periods and is to some extent purely imaginary. Nevertheless as an imaginary history it places its audience in history. Everywhere in epic we are told that the heroic age was earlier, and different. Yet even this point has different meanings in different poems. The *Iliad* is a retrospective poem; it tells of the death of heroes and the fall of cities, and ends in funerals and continuing war. The *Odyssey* looks back on an heroic age already ended, and also looks forward; its hero survives and leaves an heir, and it ends with a kind of wedding and a patched-up peace. The *Iliad* looks at the heroic world per se; the *Odyssey* links that world with the post-heroic.

[1] See P. Vidal-Naquet, 'Homère et le monde mycénien', *Annales ESC* 18 (1963), 703–19.

A sign of the differences between these worlds may be found in the relations of men and gods. Long ago or far away, we are told, men and gods are or were on equal terms. At the ends of the earth, among the Ethiopians, gods feast publicly with men (*Od.* 1.26; cf. *Il.* 1.423); in previous times, says Alcinous, the gods came in this way to the feasts of the Phaeacians (*Od.* 7.199–206) as they came to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (*Il.* 24.62–3). Within the world of the *Iliad* proper, however, the gods are less open. They appear to only one hero at a time, and when they appear in public they are invisible or disguised to all but one. When they speak to the crowd on the battlefield it is as disembodied voices or disguised presences.

In the *Odyssey* the gods are still farther away. Athena appears to mankind, but in dreams or in disguise; she reveals her identity to Nestor only by the manner of her departure (*Od.* 3.371–9). In another case Athena's intervention is a matter of deduction (4.655–6). Only to Odysseus (and in a modified sense to Telemachus, since her appearance to him [15.6–42], while like a dream, is not a dream) does she appear in her own person. Odysseus is thus marked as a hero in a world growing unheroic.

In the *Iliad* the gods help the heroes with their own hands; they strike a man from behind (*Il.* 16.790–3), shift the path of an arrow (4.127–40), pick up their favourites and move them out of danger (3.380–2, 5.311–17). In the *Odyssey* the gods work through the means of nature, as when Poseidon sends a storm, or through the minds of men, by implanting an idea or changing a character's appearance to others. (An exception is Athena's final epiphany—24.531–2.) When Athena comes to the slaying disguised as Mentor she promises to fight, but does no fighting; she turns herself into a bird and sits in the rafters, not giving victory, but testing the valour of the combatants (22.236–40). Odysseus has Athena's help on Ithaca, as he had it at Troy, but it seems less sure, less direct.

As Odysseus moves from Troy to Ithaca, in fact, he moves into a world much like that of the poet's audience. In that world the gods were surely always invisible, their interventions always uncertainly recognized, screened behind the means of nature. Odysseus enters a world grown demystified. If he survives as a hero in this world it is because his own kind of heroism is peculiarly suited to it. He can dispense with magic armor, immortal horses, and a titan-mother to whom even Zeus is

obligated; he can carry out his action with ordinary human means. His adversaries on Ithaca are dangerous, not because of their heroic stature, but for the banal reason that they are numerous (16.241–55). Odysseus speaks of the help of the gods (16.259–65) but he finds his really useful allies within his own household.

The difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can also be seen in the differences of the killings. In the *Iliad* killing takes place in the open, in the space between communities, a marginal environment often compared in the similes to the wild country where hunters meet wild beasts. In the *Odyssey* killing takes place within the community, and indoors. Several times in the poem we hear of the unheroic death of Agamemnon, killed by his wife's lover at a dinner party 'like an ox at the manger' (4.535–11.411). Similarly (and conversely) Odysseus kills his wife's suitors at a dinner party, and they rush about like cattle stung by the gadfly (22.299–301). The hunter has become a butcher.

We need not, as I say, ascribe the differences between the poems to cultural change between the moments of their composition; it is in fact impossible to place them far enough apart in time to allow for so massive a change. Rather the two poems give us, in the mirror of heroic story, two different integrations drawn from a common stock of cultural themes, which continued. Heroic values did not end with the *Iliad*; when Socrates wants to explain why he is helpless before the imperatives of his own ethic he can do no better than to compare himself to Achilles (*Apology* 28c–d). The post-heroic Odysseus, paradoxically, was less well received by later tradition; by the fifth century his special virtues of craft and patient indirection were often reconceived as vices, and he appears, most notably in the *Philoctetes*, as an unprincipled manipulator. As civil society grew more settled, Odysseus' talents perhaps seemed less necessary, and more dangerous. The Odysseus of the *Odyssey* justifies himself by his success as the refounder of his own house; he is ruthless, practical, inventive, self-seeking, and utterly committed to a few close loyalties. Such a man would surely have found ample play for his talents in the first great age of Greek entrepreneurial expansion, which was also the moment of the composition of the *Odyssey*.

In the last third of the eighth century the Greeks took effective if still tentative control of the east coast of Sicily and of Italy as far north as Taras, and of the bay of Naples. This explosive event, which was the

foundation of later Greek development, must also be evidence of earlier development, of new material resources, a new cultural morale and social effectiveness in the Greek homeland. Such development will have been uneven; the most progressive states were evidently the Corinthian and Euboean oligarchies, with Miletus and some of the islands close behind. But as the transformation of Greece proved itself by its success it gradually became pervasive.

The textbook label for this transformation is 'The Rise of the City-State'. As the city-state was an inclusive form of life its rise implies correlative changes on many levels. On the political level it involves the shift from a hierarchy centred on the king to oligarchic institutions relying on the rotation of office among a plurality of full citizens. On the social level it involves the creation of a free peasantry and the simultaneous spread of chattel slavery, with the sharpening of older class stratifications into class conflict. On the level of juridical and economic institutions it involves the emergence of private alienable property in land, of enforceable contracts, and an international market in agricultural commodities. Furthermore, this was an age of economic development, of capital accumulation and public investment, what Thucydides calls *periousia*. The rapid development of the western colonies can itself be seen as an effective deployment of capital by individuals and states.

To the culture-historian economic development appears as an aspect of a general transformation; it happens not of itself, but as persons come to see new kinds of behaviour as possible, desirable, and admirable. Implicit in every organization of economic life is a specific economic ethic. I here propose to discuss the *Odyssey* as a document dramatizing the progressive economic ethic of late eighth-century Greece.

II. THE ECONOMIC ETHIC

The economy, from one point of view, is the sphere of material life, of our interaction with nature. Our struggle to survive, however, gives rise to specifically economic activity only when it becomes problematic to ourselves. Breathing and dreaming both have survival value, but as they take place unreflectingly, neither is economized. If all activity were similarly instinctual or effortless, as in Eden or the reign of Cronos, mankind

would have no economic life. Thus many traditions see economic activity as the mark of our fallen condition, between god and beast.

It follows that the economic sphere comes into existence because we both are and are not part of nature, and therefore contend with nature as an adversary. Economic goods are those we wring from nature at the cost of our labour. Labour, then, is activity negatively evaluated as the necessary means to a desired end. Any activity—thinking, prayer, making love—may at certain moments become laborious in this sense. On the other hand, any activity may be undertaken for its own sake, for fun, for therapy, as an act of devotion. Tolstoy reaping with the peasants does what the peasants do, but for him the work has a different meaning—although the peasants also feel pride in their strength and skill, and the satisfaction of doing what is proper. Economic motives are always mixed with non-economic. The economic measure of labour, furthermore, is not the effort expended, but the negative evaluation of the activity as a necessary means. The economy, from this point of view, is not the sphere of material life (with which it certainly overlaps) but rather the sphere of economic motives, of this kind of evaluation.

Labour thus becomes a measure of value. We judge the value of the thing to us by what we are willing to undergo to obtain it. This way of thinking gives rise to others—for instance, to thought about efficiency. We seek to minimize labour—by skill, for instance. We also try to get others to do our labour for us; thus the idea of labour gives rise to the idea of dominion, and the economy generates a class structure.

Here again economic and non-economic motives are mixed. Skill may be valued for its own sake, so that production becomes a display of virtuosity, and shades into fine art. Dominion may be prized for the honour it confers, so that the labour of others, instead of being a means of production, becomes for us a kind of consumer good. The division of labour may be related to status, so that certain tasks are beneath the dignity of certain persons. In all these ways efficiency is restricted by other kinds of evaluation.

Yet it remains true that labour is the primary measure of value, for only in labour, where the activity is acceptable but negatively evaluated, can the means and the end be measured against one another. Thus it happens that while labour is negative, the capacity to labour is positively evaluated. There is an ethic of labour; it is a mark of seriousness, maturity, and discipline that a man is willing to undertake the necessary means.

The ethic of labour is complemented by the ethic of saving. The economic stock exists because we have held ourselves back from consuming all commodities immediately. Thus consumption, like production, enters the economic sphere only to the degree that it is negatively evaluated and minimized. A man who is willing to save receives (conversely) a positive evaluation; he has subjected his appetites to reason. By labour we overcome the nature outside us; by saving we overcome the nature within us.

'Economic' thus names a specific type of deliberation, which concerns itself with the problem of the necessary means. Because these means are always to be minimized—in the sense that we labour and save as little as possible—economic problems are problems of allocation. Allocation implies scarcity, and also the ethical neutrality of the means; we shall feel free to allocate them freely only if they are not of value in themselves, but only as means. The economic ethic is thus not an ethic of ultimate commitments, but of managerial rationality; this is not a sphere in which the purpose or meaning of life can be determined, but rather where the trade-offs between various options are rather coolly assessed. Economic thinking does not inquire into values; it estimates the cost of achieving values which it receives as a given, labelled as 'demand'.

Nor are these values found in nature, even though economic activity copes with nature. The song says: 'Since man is only human, he must eat before he can think.' However, it is also true that being human he must think before he can eat, think not only how to eat but what to eat; he will eat only what he thinks he ought to eat. Thus, although we confront nature, our economics is in the service of culture, and is itself cultural.[2] Each culture has its own view of basic human needs, and each has its own list of those means which are sufficiently neutral to be rationally allocated.

Nevertheless it is in the nature of mankind to be rational and to strive, at least some of the time, for an efficient allocation of some of the means available. While the economy is a different problem in every culture, it is always some kind of a problem. Therefore every culture has its own kind of economic thought, and in its own way institutionalizes economic life.

[2] See Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

In very simple societies the institutionalization may not go beyond the contrast between working day and a restful evening; in more complex societies more complex patterns emerge.

Different kinds of people are at home in different settings. Some will be happier collecting grubs, others telling stories. Some find happiness in thinking about money, others in ignoring it. It is with economics as with religion—for Clifford Geertz has reminded us that, while religion is a 'culture universal', it is by no means true that religion is of equal interest to all.[3] On the contrary: in any culture there will be some primarily concerned with religious questions, and many profoundly uninterested. Similarly with economics; a disregard of such questions may actually be one of the characteristics of a specific social role: the devoted scholar, the childlike wife, the soldier in combat, the fool of God. All these require others to look after them. If any society is to function, there must be some who, as we say, are 'minding the store'. Thus society generates some for whom economic questions are the most interesting questions. Such a one may well be called the 'economic man'.

III. ODYSSEUS' LABOURS

If we could pass through some Alice's Looking Glass into the imaginary world of the epics and begin an ethnographic study of their economics, we would surely make Odysseus our chief informant. He seems the person in Homer most at home with this aspect of life. Already in the *Iliad* he is notable for his cool rationality, as in the passage (11.401–10) where he considers becoming a coward, but decides that on the whole it is not for him. Odysseus does a kind of cost-benefit analysis of everything, weighing present expenditure against hoped-for utilities. It is miserable to spend even one month from home, he tells the troops, and for them it is already the ninth year, 'but all the same it is disgraceful to stay long and come home empty' (2.297–8). Similarly in the *Odyssey* he tells Alcinous that however eager he may be to get home, he would stay another year to come home rich (11.355–61). We may also think of

[3] Clifford Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. M. Banton (London: Tavistock, 1966), pp. 1–46; also in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 87–125.

his false but plausible tale of himself lingering among the Thesprotians, collecting gifts that would 'feed the tenth generation' (14.325=19.294).

Cedric Whitman says that Odysseus is a master of the delayed response, the long way round.[4] Much of his well-known craft is a matter of taking thought for the necessary means and the claims of material life. Thus in the *Iliad* he reads Achilles two lectures on the necessity of eating before battle (19.155–70, 216–32). He strikes a related note in the *Odyssey* when asked if he is a god:

> Alcinous, that is the wrong question. I'm not
> Like to the immortals, those that keep the heavens,
> In frame or stature, but like to mortals who die.
> Whomsoever you know most heavily burdened with grief
> Among men, to theirs I would compare my pains,
> And greater still the evils I could tell you—
> So many I've struggled through by the will of the gods.
> Just let me take my meal, although I've had troubles.
> There is nothing more like a dog than the hateful belly;
> By force it calls me to remember it
> Worn though I am, for all my sorrow at heart.
> So I keep sorrow at heart, but always it
> Calls me to eat and drink; it puts out of my mind
> All my sorrows, and orders me to fill it.
>
> (7.208–21)

This is materialism of the Brechtian sort: 'Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral.' ('First comes feeding, then comes morals.') Odysseus' version is: 'First feeding, then grieving.' As so often, economic thought is a matter of setting priorities. Odysseus speaks of his own organic nature as an adversary whose overriding claims must be respected. (See also 17.281–9.)

For Odysseus an essential element of nobility is the willingness to measure up to the demands of reality. Nobody promised him a rose garden; *μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω*, 'let this happen after that' as he says to Calypso and Eumaeus (5.224=17.285), in other words: 'whatever!' His action is not so much achieved as endured; it is a matter of *aethloi*, a word which means 'contests', normally with prizes.

[4] Cedric H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958).

An *aethlos*, of course, is properly an event in the games. The word is used once by Nestor in the *Odyssey* (3.262) and once by the narrator of the *Iliad*—in the description of Helen's web (3.126)—for the struggle around Troy. (Helen is the prize of that contest.) Otherwise the word is used for the labours of two heroes: Odysseus and Heracles. Both do what must be done, and both have their eye on the prize.

There are other parallels: both are bowmen, both descend into the underworld (*Od.* 11.623–4). But they also contrast. Heracles labours in the service of another, and his prize is to marry a goddess and live forever (*Od.* 11.602–4). Odysseus labours for himself; he refuses immortal marriage with Calypso and wins as his prize a quiet old age and peaceful death (*Od.* 23.281–4). He never tries to say why these things are worth having; he says only ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ἐθέλω, 'yet even so I wish it' (*Od.* 5.219). Odysseus' house is a 'second-rate palace', as Alan Wace says, 'where the geese waddle about the court littered with dung-heaps.'[5] Odysseus wants what most men already have: a family, a house, a city where he is at home. We measure the value of these things by the extraordinary price he is willing to pay for them. The *Odyssey* displays to us in this way the extraordinary value of ordinary things. In this sense the *Odyssey* is a poem about the labour theory of value.

Odysseus' labours throughout are in the service of his household (*oikos*), and this makes him an economic hero in another, specifically Greek, sense. Within the *Odyssey* the secure possession of an *oikos* is the working definition of happiness—as in Odysseus' prayers for the Phaeacians (7.146–52, 13.44–6). Odysseus' aim throughout is to recover and reconstruct his own *oikos*. If he must re-establish himself as king of Ithaca, this is because he can only in this way securely regain his property. Odysseus' drive for possession—rather than honour, fame, or power as primary aims—marks his engagement in the problem of the necessary means, and his commitment to the economy as institutionalized by his society.

The *oikos* is in Odysseus' (as in later Greek) society the only functioning economic unit. It administers consumption, and also production (of food and textiles), and also saving; the surplus is held in household stores. The household joins the material means with the social

[5] A. J. B. Wace, 'Houses and Palaces', in *A Companion to Homer*, ed. A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 489.

preconditions of livelihood; the household loyalties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, are seen as a mutual support system against a hostile world. The implicit ideal is that of household autarky and autonomy; possession and inheritance secure the honour of men and the sexual purity of women.

Yet Odysseus is also interested in public honour, fame and power; he is no Hesiod, to live by the proverb: 'Home is best, since harm is out of doors' (*Works and Days* 365 = *Hymn to Hermes* 36). The sort of household which is proper to an Odysseus is necessarily involved in a complex fabric of relationships, both redistributive and reciprocal. The wealth of the king's household is in a sense held on behalf of the community at large, and involves sacred and secular obligations of entertainment and sacrifice. The king holds a *temenos*, literally a 'precinct', with the specialized meaning of a share of ploughland and vineyard worked for him by the *dēmos*, the people at large, whose gift it is. He has private relations with certain clients and a public standing marked by privilege, *geras*, enacted and adjudicated in the *agorē*, the assembly of the *dēmos*. Household self-sufficiency is modified by the positive reciprocities involved in relations with *xenoi*, guest-friends—and, at a deeper level, by marriage-exchange—and by the negative reciprocities of the vendetta. At least one human good—*kleos*, enduring fame—is absolutely unavailable within the household. Thus the very proper stress placed by M. I. Finley and others on the primacy of the household should not lead us to ignore this other aspect.[6] There is, in fact, in the *Odyssey* a persistent tension between the aspiration to household self-sufficiency and the recognition that security and happiness are only possible in the context of a wider community. This tension is finally enacted at the conclusion of the poem, where Odysseus' purification of his household, while righteous, leads to an explosion of vendetta made harmless only by divine intervention. We find already in the *Odyssey*, in other words, a version of that tension between private and public which structures so much of later Greek discourse—a tension which, as J.-P. Vernant has seen, can be talked about in terms of Hestia and Hermes, or in terms of a private sphere centring on women and marriage and a public sphere centring on male solidarity and warfare.[7] And this tension, like so many other

[6] M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: Penguin, 1979).

[7] J.-P. Vernant, 'Hestia-Hermes', in *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Maspero, 1969), pp. 97–143.

aspects of the poem, must have had its correlate in the early colonies, since they were from the beginning founded on the distribution of property and attracted settlers by offering private *klēroi*, 'land-lots', while at the same time they must have required an extraordinary solidarity to survive on a hostile frontier.

To this tension corresponds an ambiguous attitude toward labour in the literal sense of agricultural work. Insofar as labour involves servitude it is low; the lowest position of all is to be day-labourer to a man without a *klēros* (*Od.* 11.489–90).[8] But in itself agricultural labour can be admirable. When Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, is ironically offered a job hedging and ditching (or terracing, the Mediterranean equivalent) he reacts with an angry challenge: if only there could be a contest in reaping or ploughing, so that he could outwork them all, or a war, so that he could outfight them all (18.356–86). He responds much as when challenged to the games in Phaeacia. Agricultural labour, like games and warfare, is a proper test of manhood, and as such is classless.[9]

In the *Odyssey*, in fact, culture is often quite literally gardening, and a master-symbol of the poem—of equal standing with Odysseus' scar and Penelope's bed—is Dolius' garden, where the old Laertes retires to solace himself by working the land. Odysseus finds that everything in this garden bears the marks of *komidē*, 'close care and attention', except the old man himself (24.244–55). The implicit contrast is with Alcinous' garden, where the same fruits grow by magic; here, in the real world, the garden is maintained only by constant labour. And such labour is a form of heroism. We can here, I think, glimpse the ethical basis of Greek colonization, which from the beginning involved the agricultural exploitation of the *chōra*, the countryside, most often by Greek smallholders, and was thus in contrast to Phoenician colonization, which until the fifth century was a matter of outposts and emporia, focused on the search for metals. So when Odysseus describes the island offshore from the Cyclops (this island could well be Pitheccousa, the earliest of the western colonies) he describes it with a farmer's eye: its meadows, possible vineyards, and arable land with deep topsoil (9.116–51).

[8] See Alfonso Mele, *Società e lavoro nei poemi omerici* (Naples: Università di Napoli, Istituto di Storia e Antichità greca e romana, 1968).

[9] Cf. H. Strasburger, 'Der soziologische Aspect der homerischen Epen', *Gymnasium* 60 (1953), 97–114.

Exchange of commodities, by contrast, is not in the poem a source of livelihood. It is rather a form of social interaction, and takes the positive and negative forms of gift-giving and stealing, whereby we enact and reinforce our relations with friends and enemies. The commodities exchanged as gifts are usually not intended for consumption; they are *keimēlia*, literally 'things laid away', intended for display and future gift-giving. Commodities stolen include cattle and slaves, and these are in a sense consumed, but raiding is itself a form of display, not of rational accumulation. In his story of himself as a Cretan bastard Odysseus says that he was a raider, unconcerned for *oikōpheliē*, 'the increase of the household, which nourishes lovely children' (14.223).

Trade, in fact, is deleted from the Homeric picture of the heroic world; like fish-eating and iron weapons it is something Homer (and his audience) knew all about, but thought unsuitable for heroes. This deletion is itself important evidence for late eighth-century values. Odysseus bristles to be called a master of *prēktēres*, traders (8.162). Only the Phoenicians trade; they are like gypsies, selling gewgaws and stealing babies.

However it is also true that Odysseus has a trader's mind. In the Cretan lie already quoted there is an odd contradiction; after saying that raiding does nothing for *oikōpheliē*, he then says that his spoil made his house increase, οἶκος ὀφέλλετο, and he became impressive and respected among the Cretans (14.233–4). Odysseus knows that those who acquire wealth can buy social status with it; this is the basic bourgeois insight (cf. also 11.60–1).

Sometimes we see Odysseus inspecting the gift-giving system with the cool eye of the narrator of the *Iliad*, whose comment on 'bronze for gold' (*Il.* 6.234–6) caused Marcel Mauss to assert that Homer did not understand heroes.[10] Odysseus exploits the system by taking gifts from Phaeacia, where he will never have to reciprocate. Furthermore, he makes it clear that it is the value of the gift, not the thought that counts. No wonder Odysseus takes so readily to the role of beggar. Such unreciprocated reception of gifts is really a form of begging, but on a heroic scale. The clash of scale is represented on the language level by a clash of formulae in Odysseus' story of himself among the

[10] Marcel Mauss, 'Une forme ancienne de contrat chez les Thraces', in *Oeuvres*, vol. 3 (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969), pp. 35–57. This article first appeared in 1921.

Thesprotians, where he says he will come home rich, κειμήλια πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ / αἰτίζων ἀνὰ δῆμον 'asking throughout the people for many fine *keimēlia*' (*Od.* 19.272–3). Here the objects obtained are heroic riches, like those obtained from the sack of a city (cf. *Il.* 9.330 with *Od.* 19.272), but the phrase for the mode of acquisition is proper to begging (cf. *Od.* 17.558 with *Od.* 19.273).

A man who can find peaceful entertainment and come home rich is most of the time a trader; Odysseus' voyage is not a trading voyage, but it works like one. In this sense trade is a latent theme in the *Odyssey*, and this latency is suggested in a number of places, as when the disguised Athena twice describes her own voyaging in language appropriate to trade (*Od.* 1. 183–4, 3.366–8). In Odysseus' description of the island near the Cyclopes there is great praise of the harbour; Odysseus clearly imagines living there as the Greeks lived everywhere—as a seafaring farmer. The economic aspect of this seafaring is not, however, discussed.

Here again we find in the *Odyssey* an ambiguity which continues in the later Greek economic ethic: there is a tendency to undervalue trade at the expense of agriculture, and yet to trade far more than one admits. The later version is the oligarch or Athenian bourgeois who presents himself as a landed gentleman, although the greater part of his fortune might be invested in the carrying trade in agricultural commodities. So also Odysseus, although his journey is involuntary and he says he wants no more than to recover what is already his, does not fail to grasp his opportunities. As the sort of man he is, we think all the better of him for that.

IV. ODYSSEUS' ADVENTURES

The plot of the *Odyssey* is in its second half; the first part of the poem is all prelude. The scenes on Ithaca are an exposition of the problem which the plot of the poem will resolve. Otherwise the first half consists of two journeys. Odysseus begins on the far periphery; he makes his way back and on the way tells the story of where he has been. Telemachus makes his way to the centre of Greek life and hears the stories of where others have been. Through these journeys and stories the poet gives us an extended account of the world; it is as if the first half of the poem tells us all we need to know in order to understand the second half.

Among these adventures the narrative of Odysseus has a privileged place, not only because it is the hero's own, and thus defines him twice, in the doing and in the telling,[11] but also because it sets against the human world another world. The world of the adventures, as Vidal-Naquet noticed, lacks agriculture and sacrifice, the cultural bonds between man and nature, man and god.[12] The gods never go there; while he is there Athena leaves Odysseus strictly alone (*Od.* 13.316–21). Helius is traditionally the god who sees everything (*Il.* 14.344–5), but when his cattle are killed he does not know it; a nymph has to go with a message (*Od.* 12.374–5). Zeus is present, but only in the form of weather (*Od.* 12.403–17). Only Hermes, crosser of boundaries, can visit in his own person (as at *Od.* 10.275–308), but even he is a rare and unexpected visitor; there are here no cities of men 'who would make sacrifice and choice hecatombs' (*Od.* 5.102). Similarly there is no proper economics here; life is largely or entirely without labour. Even the Laestrygonians, who appear to occupy a city with an *agorē* (here: a place for assembly, *Od.* 10.114) have no ploughed fields, 'works of men and oxen' (*Od.* 10. 98)—and turn out to be murderous cannibals.

The world of the adventures is a void populated by monsters. *Alkē*, the prowess of the warrior, is of no value here (*Od.* 12.116–20), and those who perish receive neither funeral nor *kleos*. They simply disappear, snatched by the *harpuiai*, the Harpies, personifications of the storm winds (*Od.* 1.234–43, 5.306–12, 14.365–71).

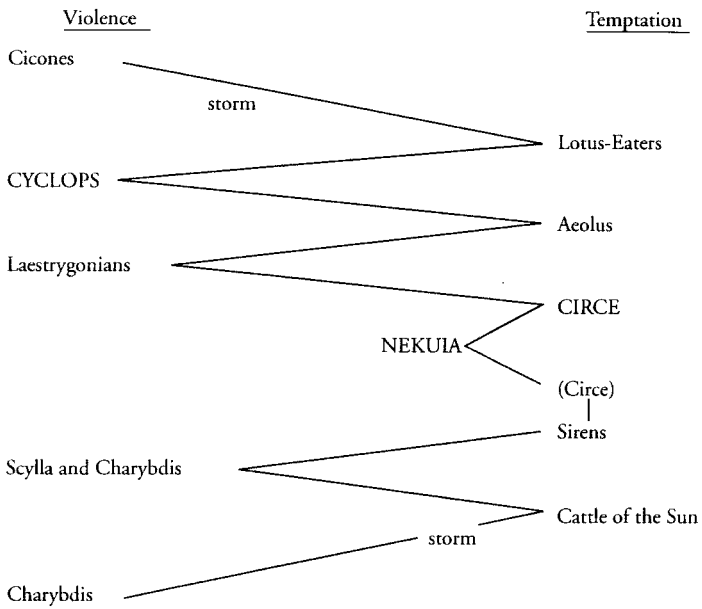
Nevertheless this world has a structure, represented by the variety of the adventures; no place here is fit for man or god, but this does not mean they are all the same. I see two patterns in the adventures. They are, first, grouped and proportioned to form a satisfying whole; this pattern is a little like sonata form. Two brief adventures are followed by a long one, this last being introduced by an elaborated description of landscape and incidents of hunting. The whole is then repeated, two more short adventures again followed by a long one, again introduced by elaborated landscape and hunting. There is then a sort of

[11] Cf. J. M. Redfield, 'The Making of the *Odyssey*', in *Parnassus Revisited*, ed. A. C. Yu (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), pp. 141–54. First published in *Essays in Western Civilization in Honor of Christian MacKauer*, ed. L. Botstein and E. Karnovsky (Chicago: The College of the University of Chicago, 1967), pp. 1–17.

[12] Vidal-Naquet, 'Valeurs religieuses et mythiques de la terre et du sacrifice dans l'*Odyssée*', in *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne*, ed. M. I. Finley (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1973), pp. 269–92.

free development, the *nekuia* (the visit to the underworld)—which has a pattern of its own: three encounters, catalogue, narrative break, three encounters, catalogue. This unit is framed by the two visits to Circe. Finally there is a sort of recapitulation consisting of adventures foretold by Circe; this section concludes with an internal repetition or coda. The very first adventure concludes, as the last is introduced, with a storm.

Across this pattern runs another, based on strict alternation. Odysseus faces two kinds of dangers; he may be killed before he gets home, or he may be induced to stop on the way. He faces violence and temptation. The interplay of these two patterns may be represented by the following diagram:



On his travels Odysseus seeks the status of guest; he is the victim, alternately, of hypo-entertainment and hyper-entertainment. In hypo-entertainment the stranger is treated as a creature of another species, a beast or fish (cf. 10.124) usable for food. This theme is introduced among the Cicones (for combat, as we learn from the *Iliad*, is a modified form of cannibalism), continues with the Cyclops and the Laestrygonian cannibals, and concludes with Scylla, a carnivore whose proper diet is the traveller, and Charybdis, a whirlpool which simply swallows everything.

To be eaten is to be incorporated into the nature of another. Hyper-entertainment, by contrast, threatens cultural incorporation; the traveller is to be transformed by his host and so perfectly socialized that he can never leave. The transformation is accomplished by drugs—the lotus, the drugs of Circe (who is *polypharmakos,* rich in drugs—10.276), the song of the Sirens (the Sirens do not eat their victims, but allow them to rot—12.46). In the case of the Cattle of the Sun and Aeolus, improper consumption prevents the travellers from leaving; while Aeolus tries to send them home Odysseus' men treat his winds as a consumable commodity, and their attempts to 'consume' them bind them to their source.

The contrast between hypo- and hyper-entertainment is an aspect of the broader contrast between hypo-culture and hyper-culture. At one extreme stand the purely natural monsters, and next to them the Cyclopes, primitives who lack agriculture (9.108) and seafaring (9.126) and whose social organization consists of isolated families 'unconcerned with one another' (9.115, cf. 188–9). The Cyclops' vessels are baskets and he sleeps on withes (9.219, 247, 427–8). He lives in a cave surrounded by a rough stone wall (9.184–5). He seems not to have the use of metal tools. At the opposite extreme is Aeolus, whose palace walls are made, not *with* bronze, but *of* bronze (10.3–4). The little society here is excessively intimate, and is in fact incestuous (10.5–7).

Both hypo-culture and hyper-culture are abundant, but differently. For the Cyclops abundance comes unlaboriously from a fertile nature (9.109–11); the Laestrygonians are similarly blessed (10.82–6). Goods here are simple but plentiful. The Cyclops is a milk-drinker, and while he has some kind of primitive wine (9.357–8), the civilized product of Ismarus tastes to him like nectar and ambrosia (9.359) and acts on him like a drug.

Aeolus, on the other hand, feasts endlessly without any territory at all; his floating island is a city in the sea. His abundant roast meats (10.10) must be supplied by magic. Circe (like Calypso) also lives in a magic household; both live in utter social isolation, yet both have servants (5.199, 10.348–51); both live in utterly wild territory, yet are supplied with human food.

I have written elsewhere of the *Iliad* as a poem which dramatizes the contradiction of nature and culture, a contradiction which is there seen to be tragic, which can be mediated only in thought and in poetry.[13] In the *Odyssey*, I think, culture is seen in contrast to the primitive and the decadent; in contrast to these two kinds of abundance, spontaneous or magical, stands a sober culture founded on a respect for the realities of scarcity. Culture is thus itself the mediating term, defined by contrast to the two negations of excess and defect. The cultural order is seen, not as a given, parallel with nature, but as a human construct, something man has made, could spoil, and might reconstruct.

This brings us back to the economic ethic. If we look at the contrast between violence and temptation from the point of view of Odysseus we shall not, I think, be utterly fanciful to see in it the contrast between labour and saving. Faced with temptation Odysseus must husband his resources, not consume, or not too much, or too soon. He must not go to bed with Circe until she has sworn an oath; otherwise he would have been castrated (cf. 10.296–301). Twice, with Aeolus and the Cattle of the Sun, disaster comes because he falls asleep, and because his men are greedy. The precondition of ultimate enjoyment, it seems, is the capacity to endure deprivation.

On the other side of the chart Odysseus is threatened by a violence to which mere counter-violence is an inappropriate response. He confronts overwhelming forces, and counter-force must be supplemented by agile planning and technique. With the Cicones the time comes to retreat (9.43–4). With Scylla he can only minimize his losses; similarly with the Laestrygonians Odysseus, when he hears his companions screaming for help, unhesitatingly cuts his cable and runs (10.121–32). Odysseus resists the temptation to kill the Cyclops (9.299–302). He survives because he knows the limits of his powers and is clever enough to use such forces as he has where they will be most useful. Uncultivated nature is a realm of forces which can be overcome only if they are respected.

If we now apply our diagram to the poem as a whole, we are immediately struck by an asymmetry. Except within the rigid frame of the adventures, the balance is not maintained; the *Odyssey* as a whole is mostly about the threat of hyper-culture. Telemachus journeys into hyper-cultural territory; Nestor suffers from hyper-piety and looks faintly ridiculous making Athena sacrifice to her adversary Poseidon (3.36–62); when we last see him he is trying to repair the confusion by making another massive sacrifice, this time to Athena. Nestor also hyper-entertains; it is dangerous to call on him, in case he makes you stay too long (15.199–201).

[13] Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

Menelaus elaborately disclaims any such tendencies (15.68–74), but his house is hyper-culturally like that of the gods (4.74–5). Menelaus is almost a god himself. Mortals survive through their sons, but Menelaus has no legitimate son (4.12–14); on the other hand he will not know death, but will go to the Isles of the Blessed (4.561–8). In the meantime he has experienced good and bad fortune, but seems to have achieved no synthesis, only a mixture. When he is tired of grieving, Helen hands about the Lotus-like Nepenthe, imported from hyper-cultural drug-rich Egypt (4.227–32). Menelaus had offered to include Odysseus within his own kingdom (4.169–82), but Odysseus had evidently preferred to attempt a return to Ithaca, 'a rough land, but a good nurse of men' (9.27). Telemachus also is eager to get back, even though he knows well that the land is rough (4.594–608).

Odysseus' own travels are asymmetrical, in that the framing adventure, that of Calypso, is hyper-cultural and the leading instance of hyper-entertainment; Calypso's offer to make him immortal would presumably involve transforming him by feeding him nectar and ambrosia (cf. 5.195–9). The Phaeacians also, with their metal palace, extraordinary fabrics, magic servants, ships, and garden, are hyper-cultural. They also threaten to keep Odysseus, by transforming him into Nausicaa's husband (7.313–14).

Yet for all the charm and luxury of Phaeacian life—'feasting, the lyre and the chorus, changes of clothing and hot baths and bed' (8.248–9)—there is a latent strain of savagery here. The Phaeacians are hereditary enemies of the Cyclopes (6.4–6), but both peoples are descended from Poseidon (9.529, 13.130), and Periboia, the consort of Poseidon who founded their royal house, was herself descended from the Giants (7.56–9). The Phaeacians are close to the gods 'as are the Cyclopes and the savage race of the Giants' (7.206). They are thus like the Laestrygonians, who are like the Giants (10.120), and at first glance Laestrygonia and Phaeacia look very much alike. Travellers to both places meet a

little girl carrying water from a spring (7.19–20, 10.105–8), then the queen, last the king. No wonder Odysseus had feared he might again be among savages (6.119–21); indeed, the disguised Athena warns him that the Phaeacians are unwelcoming to strangers (7.30–3), and Nausicaa herself says 'there are some pretty overbearing people here' (6.274). (*Hyperphialos*, 'overbearing,' is also used of the Cyclops—*Od.* 9.106).

This is odd, because the Phaeacians boast of their kindness to strangers (8.32–3); certainly they are lavish to Odysseus. This very lavishness, which Odysseus exploits, is nevertheless also a problem. Entertainment, properly, involves generalized exchange; the same person is at one time guest, at another time host (4.33–6). When we entertain we see ourselves in the other; the host and the guest, the secure man and his vulnerable double, recognize their common dependence on the will of Zeus. One may fail of this recognition in two ways: in hypo-entertainment the man away from home is treated as if he were not a man at all; in hyper-entertainment one fails to recognize that his home is not here but elsewhere. Both failures are somehow the same; the extremes meet. That is why the frivolity of hyper-culture has latent in it the savagery of hypo-culture.

The Phaeacians feel immune to circumstance, and are thus somewhat careless of the gods, like the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.275–6). They live far off (6.8), where no one can attack them (6.200–5, cf. 6.270–1). So also they form no bonds with others. Their voyaging does not make them into guests, since their magic ships can make the longest voyage in a single day (7.325–6). Their entertainment of others is thus not an enactment of our common vulnerability, but is rather a sort of self-indulgence and self-display, like their other amusements. Zeus says that in entertaining Odysseus they have 'yielded to strength and to force' (13.143). Thus Zeus-of-the-stranger does not protect them; rather he allows Poseidon to punish them.

From the Phaeacians Odysseus passes through the hut of Eumaeus, where he is properly entertained, into his own house, where he is entertained by the loathsome suitors. In the case of the suitors the meeting of the extremes is complete; their continuous feast is hyper-cultural and treats Odysseus' resources as if they were magically infinite, while at the same time they are a sort of cannibals, eating Odysseus' house (4.318, 11.116, 13.396 = 13.428 = 15.32, 19.159, 19.534). Odysseus feels himself almost back in the Cyclops' cave (20.18–21). The suitors might indeed kill Odysseus—or they might incorporate him in their mad society as a pet beggar (18.48–9).

The suitors' momentary success has utterly deprived them of judgement, as with Odysseus' men among the Cicones; Odysseus nearly makes the comparison explicit (17.419–44). Later he is still more explicit, in the speech in which he tries to get Amphinomous to leave before the massacre begins.[14]

> The earth rears nothing more wretched than mankind,
> Of all that breathe and creep upon the earth.
> He says no trouble will happen to him later
> While yet the gods give excellence and maintain him;
> But when the blessed gods bring about sorrows,
> Unwilling he bears these too with enduring heart.
> Such is the mind of men who live on earth
> As the day the father of gods and men may bring them.
> I once was ready to be prosperous among men;
> I did many outrages, yielding to force and strength,
> Confident in my father and my brothers.
> So let no man be utterly lacking in law;
> Let him keep the gods' gifts in silence, whatever they give.
> (18.130–42)

Odysseus here explains the strand of savagery latent in luxury. When we have everything we want we forget that these things are not ours by right, but are the gift of the gods to whom we owe in return piety and lawfulness. Odysseus, we should note, calls mankind wretched, not because our life is too hard, but because it is sometimes too easy. The *Odyssey* is mostly about hyper-culture because prosperity, not want, sets the most difficult ethical problems. Nature, the external adversary, proposes mostly technical problems, although there is also an ethic of labour. When, however, these problems have been solved, we too easily forget the problematic of life and fall victim to our inner nature. *Koros* 'satiety' begets *atē* 'delusional error' and *hubris*, 'outrageous behaviour'.

The economic ethic is always and everywhere an ethic of realism, of the man who measures up to the realities of the world with the skill

[14] Cf. G. Bona, *Il νόος e i νόοι nell'Odissea* = *Università de Torino, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia* 11.1 (Torino: 1959).

and discipline to adopt and conserve the necessary means. Among the Greeks the economic ethic is also an ethic of the middle way.

V. CONCLUSION

The *Odyssey* is a poem of economics in that its hero is driven by economic motives and by his commitment to economic institutions. At the beginning of the poem Odysseus' household—his proper economic arena—is in disarray. The householder is absent, and it is not known whether he is alive or dead. Therefore no one else is able to play a proper role. Penelope is neither wife nor widow, Telemachus is neither child nor man, Laertes is neither rich nor poor, the maids are neither obedient nor free, the herdsmen control flocks which belong neither to them nor to anyone else, the suitors are neither guests nor robbers, neither friends nor enemies. On his return Odysseus clarifies these relations and gradually reconstructs these roles; he puts the whole institution back together. In the process he displays the virtues proper to the economic man.

The *Odyssey* thus complements the *Iliad* on the literary level as the *oikos*, the household, complemented the *polis*, the city-state, on the institutional level. The *Iliad* is a poem of public life, in which private relations are important for their public consequences. From the time of Homer onward the *polis* existed for the sake of war, and to create public space, an *agorē*, in which people can become visible, *ariprepees*, in debate, in games, in rituals, and theatrical performances.[15] The *oikos*, on the other hand, was an enclosure, a sphere of secrets, intimate or conspiratorial. Women, children, and slaves were confined to the *oikos*, but men could have both sorts of lives. Politics was agonistic; men defined themselves against each other through display of strength, rhetoric, and wealth. Economics was cooperative, founded on the division of labour and a cycle of production and consumption. Political actors were in principle equal; they came to inequality as they acted on one another. The economic actors were in principle unequal; economics, as Aristotle saw, was a sphere of asymmetrical relations: between husband and wife,

[15] Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

parent and child, master and slave—and, we may add, host and guest. As these act, they come, not to equality, but to unity. Odysseus' aim in the *Odyssey* is to re-establish this unity, and to do this he must have an idea of it, a vision of its form.

As the Greeks set out to expand their civilization—an enterprise which was, as much as anything else, an enterprise of economic development—they took with them the *Odyssey* as a kind of handbook of the economic life—not on the technical but on the ethical level. I have suggested three aspects of this Odyssean economic ethic; each is stateable in terms of a tension. There is, first, the tension between an aspiration to household self-sufficiency and the need to maintain a public order. Second, there is the tension between an aspiration to agricultural autarky and the need to maintain market exchange. Third, there is the tension between an aspiration to affluence and the need to limit the cultural impact of affluence. All three of these tensions can be documented right through the classical period down to the time of Aristotle; they give us the beginnings of a statement of the Greek economic ethic.

The most important, I think, is the third. The Greeks always considered economics, not as concerned with problems of maximization, but with problems of adequacy, of the mean. The ethical problem was that of developing a *noos*, a mind (the word Odysseus uses to Amphinomous) to some degree independent of the day Zeus brings us, able to confront scarcity and plenty without despair or insolence. Such a *noos* would be capable of economic thought.

16

The Shadow of Ulysses beyond 2001

Piero Boitani

I would like to start my journey at that point at the beginning of our now vanishing century which most perfectly incarnates Homer's *Odyssey*: at the modern *Ulysses* par excellence, Joyce's, and more precisely, the next to last section, 'Ithaca'. Leopold Bloom, the English-speaking Irish Jew who here represents Homer's hero, has finally returned home and recognizes in Stephen Dedalus his own Telemachus; he is also about to join his Penelope, the unfaithfully faithful Molly, in their marriage bed. Bloom is glancing with horror at his forthcoming senescence, to which he imagines two alternatives: decease ('change of state') and departure ('change of place'). He opts, of course, for the latter, as the 'line of least resistance'.[1] He then sets off on his mental journey, which takes in first the whole of Ireland, then with planetary extensions towards a number of significant places: Ceylon, Jerusalem, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Parthenon, Wall Street, the Plaza de Toros at La Linea in Spain, Niagara, the land of the Eskimos, 'the forbidden country of Thibet' ('from which no traveller returns'), the Bay of Naples ('to see which is to die'), and the Dead Sea. He travels by night, at sea, northwards, guided by the pole star, and overland, by night, southwards, by the light of a 'bispherical moon revealed in imperfect varying phases ... through the posterior interstice of the imperfectly occluded skirt of a carnose negligent perambulating female, a pillar of cloud by day'. Bloom here takes on the universal binomial denominator of being and non-being, Everyman and Noman,[2] travelling on and on:

[1] Throughout this article I use James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969). These quotations at p. 647.
[2] Ibid., pp. 647–8.

Ever he would wander, selfcompelled, to the extreme limit of his cometary orbit, beyond the fixed stars and variable suns and telescopic planets, astronomical waifs and strays, to the extreme boundaries of space, passing from land to land, among peoples, amid events. Somewhere imperceptibly he would hear and somehow reluctantly, suncompelled, obey the summons of recall. Whence, disappearing from the constellation of the Northern Crown he would somehow reappear reborn above delta in the constellation of Cassiopeia and after incalculable eons of peregrination return an estranged avenger, a wreaker of justice on malefactors, a dark crusader, a sleeper awakened, with financial resources (by supposition) surpassing those of Rothschild or the silver king.[3]

Shortly afterwards, though, Bloom's Scholastic mind (and indeed Joyce's: the whole of 'Ithaca' is a series of catechetical *quaestiones*) decides that his journey is out of the question: first, in envisaging an irrational return, governed by an 'unsatisfactory equation between an exodus and return in time through reversible space and an exodus and return in space through irreversible time'. But as a departure, too, it is undesirable, given the late hour, the darkness, the dangers, the need to rest, and above all given the proximity of an occupied bed ('obviating research'), the 'anticipation of warmth (human) tempered with coolness (linen) obviating desire and rendering desirable; the statue of Narcissus, sound without echo, desired desire'.[4]

Note here what this astonishing twentieth-century Homer-cum-Dante is doing with the myth: Bloom-Ulysses, old and terrified by old age, wishes to return home and to 'push off' like Tennyson's Ulysses; to sail, like Dante's, towards the Pillars of Hercules (where Molly, his wife, was born, and where *Ulysses* ends, with the superimposition of Howth Head in Dublin); to visit the places of death (Tibet, Naples, the Dead Sea); and, both Everyman and Noman, to journey further and 'wander beyond the [...] stars' (shadowed here by the Ulyssean Keats reading Chapman's Homer), to the utmost bounds of space, 'passing from land to land' like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, but *among* peoples, *amid* events, to return, finally, like Odysseus, like a Crusader, like the Count of Monte Cristo.

Nocturnal wanderings towards death, beyond boundaries (Niagara, 'over which no human being had passed with impunity'; 'the *forbidden* country of Thibet', whence, as Hamlet says of death, 'no traveller

[3] Ibid., pp. 648–9. [4] Ibid., p. 649.

returns'): like the wanderings of Dante's Ulysses. A biblical exodus, too ('pillar of cloud'), a journey through the Ptolemaic, Copernican, and modern universes,[5] and a mystic flight: transformation into comet, ascent beyond the fixed stars, Ascension to the Empyrean, rebirth and messianic Advent. His departure an eternal *Star Trek*, a *2001: A Space Odyssey* return. A journey through history and through peoples; homeric *nostos* and revenge à la Dumas. In one page Joyce moves backwards through what I have elsewhere called the 'shadows' of Ulysses,[6] himself projecting new ones, to create his own Ulyssean myth, simultaneously a universal symbol of Everyman and Noman.

This dreamed voyage of Bloom's also contains, of course, a psychologico-touristico-cultural element: the tour of Ireland which precedes all other journeys takes in all the places which still today are de rigueur for their history and natural beauty, as well as Belfast's docks, for a reality-aware protagonist like this particular Ulysses. Other Ulysses, it should be remembered, foreshadowed by him, are to follow Joyce out of Ireland: those of Padraic Fallon, Thomas Kinsella, Eiléan Ní Chuilleánain, and Michael Longley.[7]

Then, significantly leaping over Britain without so much as a downward glance, a virtual visit to Ceylon, both exotic ('the spice gardens') and demotic, as it were, linked to the compulsory beverage, tea, and its English producers and Irish distributors. La Linea, in Spain, just on the Gibraltar border, draws him on account of the Plaza de Toros; the land of the Eskimos not simply for its remoteness, but because its inhabitants are 'eaters of soap'. With sound capitalist intuition he is attracted not to New York in general but to Wall Street ('which controlled international finance'). And then all the archetypes of the West: Athens, or more specifically the Parthenon, and even more specifically its statues, 'nude Grecian divinities', which stimulate Bloom intellectually and sensually;

[5] Joyce speaks of 'fixed stars', 'cometary orbit', 'suncompelled', 'extreme boundaries of space', and 'incalculable eons'.

[6] Piero Boitani, *The Shadow of Ulysses. Figures of a Myth* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994).

[7] Padraic Fallon, 'Odysseus' and 'Heureux qui comme Ulysse', in *Collected Poems* (Manchester, Carcanet, 1990), pp. 78 and 161; Thomas Kinsella, 'Ulysses', in *Another September* (Dublin, Dolmen Press, 1962), p. 15; Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, 'Odysseus Meets the Ghosts of the Women' and 'The Second Voyage', in *The Second Voyage*, ed. Peter Fallon (Dublin, The Gallery Press, 1986), pp. 25 and 26–7; Michael Longley, *Gorse Fires* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1991), *passim*, and *The Ghost Orchid* (London, Cape, 1995), *passim*.

and then Jerusalem, 'the holy city' not only for the Jewish people of this particular Ulysses but also for the Muslims ('with mosque of Omar and gate of Damascus, goal of aspiration', access, from the East, to the holy places of both religions).

To retrace our steps: at the beginning of the twentieth century, Leopold Bloom reincarnates the Ulysses of the past and foreshadows those of the future; he dreams of a journey through the real, through psychological impulses, and beyond reality, culturally and existentially bound for his—and our—roots (Ireland, Athens and Jerusalem, Naples and the Straits of Gibraltar), moving ontologically towards nothingness (death) and fulness (the stars, regeneration, and return); towards the 'entity' of Everyman and the 'non-entity' of Noman; towards alienation and supreme beauty:

> What tributes his?
>
> Honour and gift of strangers, the friends of Everyman. A nymph immortal, beauty, the bride of Noman.[8]

Leopold Bloom, most ancient and modern of Ulysses, is a shadow of twentieth-century man, of our history, and our culture. Let us follow, then, the long cone which overshadows our imagination.

One shadow I shall cast no light on is that of science fiction: not out of lack of interest, but a lack of conviction that I could deal with it fully here. That the *Star Trek* series, on the large and small screen, has antecedents in Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's Ulysses requires no demonstration. Every episode opens with the portentous 'These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise, the ongoing mission to explore strange, new worlds, to seek out new life-forms and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before'. Equally, I need make no comment on the title of the greatest classic of the contemporary sci-fi imaginary, *2001: A Space Odyssey*.[9] When the entire planet on which humanity was born has been explored and reduced, in Leopardi's words, '*in breve carta*', where can Ulysses go other than into the silence of infinite space and time? Which was precisely what Leopold Bloom dreamed of. Clarke's and Kubrick's hero 'fulfils'—figuralism again—Bloom's wish.

[8] Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 648.

[9] For which see *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, edited by Jerome Agel (New York, Signet, 1970); A. C. Clarke, *2001. A Space Odyssey* (London, Legend, 1990); P. Scarpi, *La fuga e il ritorno. Storia e mitologia del viaggio* (Venice, Marsilio, 1992), pp. 54–81.

The appearance of the black monolith in the opening scene, to the notes of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, marks the transformation of monkey into man. The stone, the silent sign of human destiny, reappears on the moon to edge David Bowman towards the boundaries of the solar system, *di retro al sol*, behind the sun, into an unpeopled world, a *mondo sanza gente*. It is here that Dante's Ulysses is seized by the whirlpool and the sea closes over him. The 2001 vortex, however, does not sink his successor, but launches him into a 'mad flight' beyond Jupiter, into the mysteries of the cosmos. Bowman, like Odysseus, returns home after his journey through space-time: an aged child, a new man, an evolutionary stage forward, perhaps the superman announced by Strauss-Nietzsche at the beginning. And of course Zarathustra himself had prophesied the coming of this man in two images of Eternity centring on Dante's and Homer's Ulysses:

> If I love the sea and all that is sealike, and love it most when it angrily contradicts me: if that delight in seeking that drives sails towards the undiscovered is in me, if a seafarer's delight is in my delight: if ever my rejoicing has cried: 'The shore has disappeared—now the last fetter falls from me, the boundless ocean roars around me, far out glitter space and time, well then, come on! old heart!' Oh how should I not lust for eternity and for the wedding ring of rings—the Ring of Return![10]

Is this the resurrection that awaits us in three years' time? Or has the great metamorphosis already taken place? Perhaps our Ulysses of the year 2001, battling with the all-too-human computer Hal, is already among us, a reincarnation of Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong, on the threshold between two eras of human civilisation. Will history fulfil the film's prophecy? I do not know. Ulysses returns again and again to this sort of question, and we too should bear it in mind. All we know is what has already happened. And what has happened is that poetry and history, the imaginary and actual events, have already met once, at least, in the flesh and culture of the West, during our splendid, terrible century. It is precisely here that, following Bloom's itinerary, Athens meets Jerusalem or, more exactly, enters Jerusalem through Central and Eastern Europe.

[10] F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1961), p. 246, slightly modified for closer rendering of the original, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Stuttgart, Alfred Krüner, 1988), p. 256.

It is no accident, I believe, that so many of the greatest philosophers and writers of Ulysses in the early twentieth century—Ernst Bloch, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Kafka, Canetti, Fondane, Mandel'stam—come from the Jewish diaspora of those parts, almost as if the traditional wanderings of Israel had finally found their incarnation in the figure of a Greek, a Gentile equally permanently wandering.

In this philosophico-narrative context, the figure of Ulysses would seem singularly divided: positive and negative, Everyman and Noman. Above all, it seems to signify something else. For Bloch, fascinated by Dante's flame, Ulysses is a 'Gothic' Faust of the sea, a Christopher Columbus by other means.[11] For Horkheimer and Adorno, Odysseus incarnates the dialectic of the Enlightenment not only historically, but as a cultural category: the man of reason.[12] For Canetti, at a personal level, Ulysses is the hero of metamorphosis and irrepressible curiosity.[13] So far so good, then, for our Everyman. But even for Kafka, whom Benjamin defines as a 'latter day' Ulysses, things are more complicated: Ulysses survives the Siren encounter thanks to the cunning of reason and technical tricks, but the most important point is that, in his famous parable, the Sirens are silent. This silence, Benjamin holds, is due to the fact that, for Kafka, music and song are 'an expression, or at least a promise, of salvation'.[14] Their silence, then, is a prelude to nothingness: a silence of being and of poetry as mere comment. In Kafka's account language destroys not only *mythos* but *logos*, logical articulation, and so battles with itself, prefiguring not only the end of narration but of interpretation too (both of which, I need hardly add, will roundly resurface, starting from Kafka himself, in Brecht and Blanchot).[15]

[11] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1959), vol. III, pp. 1201–4; and 'Odysseus Did Not Die in Ithaca', in G. Steiner and R. Fagles, eds., *Homer* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1962), pp. 81–5.

[12] M. Horkheimer und T. W. Adorno, 'Odysseus oder Mythos und Aufklärung', in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt a.M., Fischer, 1969), pp. 50–87. For Bloch, Horkheimer, Adorno and other German philosophers and writers, see *Lange Irrfahrt-grosse Heimkehr. Odysseus als Archetyp—zur Aktualität des Mythos*, edited by Gotthard Fuchs (Frankfurt a.M., 1994).

[13] See Boitani, *Shadow*, pp. 3 and 125.

[14] For Kafka, see Boitani, *Shadow*, pp. 183–8; W. Benjamin, 'Franz Kafka', in *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn (New York, Schocken, 1969), pp. 111–40, at pp. 117–18.

[15] B. Brecht, 'Odysseus und die Sirenen', *Berichtigungen alter Mythen*, in *Gesammelte Werke. Prosa*, vol. I (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1967), p. 207; M. Blanchot, 'Le chant des Sirènes', in *Le livre à venir* (Paris, Gallimard, 1959), pp. 9–37.

The design projecting Ulysses' shadow of Noman is now complete, and will reach fulfilment after the Second World War. Again, let us take our departure point from Jewish philosophers. The theories of Bloch, Horkheimer, and Adorno now seem to have become mere illusion. Emmanuel Levinas even goes as far as to state that the whole itinerary of Western philosophy, metaphysics, and theology 'reste celui d'Ulysse dont l'aventure dans le monde n'a été qu'un retour à son île natale—une complaisance dans le Même, une méconnaissance de l'Autre' ('remains that of Ulysses, whose adventure in the world has been but a return to his native island, a satisfaction within the Same, a misrecognition of the Other'). Against the myth of Ulyssean *nostos* Levinas sets, as a figure of the 'nomadic' philosophy moving from the *Même* to the *Autre*, 'l'histoire d'Abraham quittant à jamais sa patrie pour une terre encore inconnue et interdisant à son serviteur de ramener même son fils à ce point de départ' ('the story of Abraham, who leaves his fatherland forever for an as yet unknown land, and who forbids his servant to lead even his son back to that departure point')—i.e. Athens against Jerusalem.[16]

Well, as a non-philosopher, I shall rashly state my case. It seems to me that Levinas forgets all about Dante while at the same time, curiously, agreeing with him. Let me explain. Dante's Ulysses leaves Circe's shores with no desire to return, heading towards a land which is not promised but unknown. From that moment on, in Western culture he has never stopped, becoming the paradigm of restlessness for a whole civilisation. At the same time, in Canto XXVI of the *Inferno* it is Ulysses himself, with his tongue of flame and his shipwreck, who experiences the burning, drowning encounter with the Supreme Other: a God who seems to be the exact opposite of what Levinas calls 'le dieu des philosophes, . . . un dieu adéquat à la raison, un dieu compris qui ne saurait troubler l'autonomie de la conscience' ('the god of philosophers, . . . a god adequate to reason, a comprehended, comprised god who could not trouble the autonomy of conscience').[17] Yet, from such

[16] References in this paragraph are to E. Levinas, *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (Paris, Fata Morgana, 1972), p. 40; and *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris, Vrin, 1974), p. 191. For further references in Levinas, see P. Boitani, 'Introduzione: Ulisse. Archeologia dell'uomo moderno', in *Ulisse: archeologia dell'uomo moderno*, edited by P. Boitani and R. Ambrosini (Rome, Bulzoni, 1998), pp. 26–7 and notes.

[17] E. Levinas, *En découvrant l'existence*, p. 188.

diverse images of Ulysses, Dante and Levinas reach similar conclusions, Dante condemning to Hell, with the cloven flame, the whole of Western civilisation, Levinas, together with the narcissistic gratification of return, burning all the West's painstakingly elaborated logos.

How not to read into this singular coincidence a prophecy on the one hand and on the other a reflection—Harold Fisch would say a 'remembered future'[18]—of the terrifying event which has marked Europe in our century, the Shoah? The Ulysses–Israel link is a long-established one. Glossing God's appearing to Abraham among the terebinths of Mamre, Philo of Alexandria recalls Ulysses' return to Ithaca as a ragged tramp, and reads Homer's idea in the context of the gods' habit of appearing as 'strangers'. And it is one of the early fathers of the Church, Clement of Alexandria, who establishes a parallel between the wanderings of Ulysses across the seas, and of the Jews across the desert.[19]

The Rumanian-French poet Benjamin Fondane, author of a long poem entitled *Ulysse*, compares the emigrants' journey to South America to the Exodus, and leads them through Dante, Baudelaire, and the figure of the Wandering Jew.[20] Fondane's life, poetics, and aesthetics are dominated by the figure of Ulysses, albeit autobiographically hebraized ('Juif naturellement et cependant Ulysse'), and then, *tout court*, 'naturellement', Jew. The aesthetics of the 'risque poétique' [poetic risk] which Fondane calls 'd'Ulysse' [of Ulysses] is never, however, a mere quest for form, nor simply an existential pursuit of a Baudelairean 'gouffre' [abyss]. What is being questioned in the poetry of Ulysses, as demonstrated by the last few pages of *Baudelaire et l'expérience du gouffre*, is 'cette chose *extrême*, cet *apeiron* qui, jadis, au retour de la montagne, rayonnait . . . sur le visage du Prophète' ('that *extreme* thing, that *apeiron* [infinite], which shone once on the face of the Prophet

[18] H. Fisch, *A Remembered Future. A Study in Literary Mythology* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984).

[19] Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, Book IV, in *Philo. Supplement*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, W. Heinemann, Loeb Classical Library, 1979), p. 274; Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, IX, 71 (Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, W. Heineman, Loeb Classical Library, 1953), pp. 190–1. And see H. Blumenberg, *Der Prozess der theoretischen Neugierde* (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 138–43, 282–3.

[20] B. Fondane, *Ulysse* and 'Amérique, Amérique . . .', in *Le Mal des fantômes* (Paris, L'Ether vague-Patrice Thierry, 1996), pp. 91–134, 135–58. And see M. Jutrin, *Benjamin Fondane ou Le Périple d'Ulysse* (Paris, Librairie Nizet, 1989).

when he returned from the mountain'):[21] the reflection, in other words, of that 'Other' which killed Dante's Ulysses. Should we ask ourselves whether it was this same Other who killed Fondane at Auschwitz? The Italian Jew Primo Levi, a fellow prisoner in that death camp, asked himself the same question indirectly, seeing in the 'com'altrui piacque' ('as Another willed') of *Inferno* XXVI 'something gigantic . . . perhaps the why of our destiny, of our being here'.[22]

Thus the shadow of Ulysses once again enters history. The tragic *iter* [journey] transforms Dantesque flame into crematorium fire so stunningly and unbearably as to lead to its ultimate reversal. Paul Celan's poetry is dominated by the theme of return (two of his titles, *Inselhin* [to the island] and *Heimkehr* [return home], speak for themselves), and he himself, in ironic reversal, calls Ulysses his 'monkey'. But when he evokes the Shoah and sings his *Psalm*, Ulysses appears as Nobody, and Nobody is actually God, the definitive Other, just as nothing is his creation, flourishing *entgegen* [in opposition], for his sake *and* despite Him:

Niemand knetet uns wieder aus Erde und Lehm,
niemand bespricht unsern Staub.
Niemand.

Gelobt seist du, Niemand.
Dir zulieb wollen
wir blühn.
Dir entgegen.

Ein Nichts
waren wir, sind wir, werden
wir bleiben, blühend :
die Nichts-, die
Niemandsrose . . .

[No one moulds us again out of earth and clay,
no one conjures our dust.
No one.
Praised be your name, no one.
For your sake

[21] B. Fondane, *Baudelaire et l'expérience du gouffre* (Brussels, Editions Complexe, 1994), pp. 254–433, quotation at p. 433.
[22] Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo* (Turin, Einaudi, 1979 edn.), p. 145.

we shall flower.
Towards
you.

A nothing
we were, are, shall
remain, flowering,
the nothing-, the
no one's rose.][23]

Should we, then, recognise that Athens and Jerusalem are irremediably separate: that Athens, not to mention Rome, has destroyed Jerusalem more than once, and that history ends in the Old World, at Auschwitz? Levi himself, from the death camp, wrote that Ulysses' 'Considerate la vostra semenza' ('Take thought of the seed from which you spring') seemed to him 'like the voice of God': 'fatti non foste a viver come bruti' ('you were not created to live as brutes'), but in His image and likeness, 'per seguir virtute e conoscenza' ('to follow virtue and knowledge').[24] Derrida, glossing Levinas, calls our attention to the copula 'is' which joins the two parts of the proposition in the sentence defining Joyce's Ulysses: *Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet.*[25] Perhaps the salvation Kafka despairs of finding will come to us from Bloom, this little Hebrew-Celtic and Anglo-Greek Messiah living in an Ogygia strongly connected to Rome.[26]

Let us now start to consider our answer. Since the Second World War, and in the last two decades in particular, the shadow of Ulysses has extended over the whole planet: not just to Russia (which has been exploiting its knowledge of Homer and Dante in poetry since the late nineteenth century) and Japan, where it arrived at the beginning of this century, the United States or Latin America, which have been familiar with our hero for quite some time, but even to Canada, whose literature finds its basic correlative in the 'Odyssey', Australia (a

[23] P. Celan, *Selected Poems*, translated by Michael Hamburger (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1996 edn.), pp. 178–9. References in the preceding paragraph are to pp. 102–3, 110–11, and 252–3 of this volume.
[24] Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, pp. 143–4.
[25] J. Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris, Seuil, 1967), ch. 4, note 2.
[26] And see R. Alter, 'Joyce's Ulysses as Comic Messiah', in *Ulisse: archeologia*, eds. Boitani and Ambrosini, pp. 265–80.

Dantesque-cum-penal Purgatory of an island in the collective imaginary), Africa, India (Anita Desai's *Journey to Ithaca* was published in 1995), the Arab world (where Ulysses is pursued by Syrian, Lebanese, Tunisian, and Palestinian poets), and the Caribbean.

No literary wanderlust will take me quite so far here. What I can, I think, state is that the West's conquest of the earth—via the arms, goods, media, languages, and culture of Europe and America—is the prime cause of this Ulyssean multiplication. It makes, obviously, for the universalising of the symbolic import of the whole of the mythical topos of Ulysses, fast becoming even more an Everyman and a Noman: a gesture, an oar, a glance, an endless wandering. At the same time each new incarnation lends our already polymorphous hero an extra face. The protagonists of Anita Desai's *Journey to Ithaca*,[27] for example, are an Italian young man searching for the fulness of experience and earthly transcendence which the West now believes resides in India; an Arab girl who searches for herself only to become, via Paris, Venice, and America, an Indian guru, the Mother; and the Italian boy's German wife who follows through all the stages of the life of the Mother who has taken her husband. A trinary Odyssey with one goal, an Ithaca modelled on Kavafy's celebrated lines and identified with India. The novel's triple Ulysses is astonishingly like the neoplatonic Ulysses of Plotinus and Porphyry,[28] the allegorised Ulysses who traverses and attempts to throw off matter to reach the fatherland and his Father pure and whole: a Ulysses who is a shadow of the mystic and in whose route the Western, Islamic, and Indian cultures combine.

The syncretism of Late Antiquity is typical of the postmodern shadow of Ulysses. That of the Lebanese Khalil Hawi is a singular, bitter, apocalyptic concretion of Gilgamesh, Ulysses and Sindbad, Coleridge and Eliot, a 'sailor' who wanders through the unconscious, sacrifices his soul for knowledge, despairs of science, and sets sail towards the primordial banks of the Ganges where an ancient dervish foresees his death, the flames and ashes to fall on the coasts of the West, the emergence of boiling mud from a scowling earth, a new Athens or

[27] A. Desai, *A Journey to Ithaca* (London, Heineman, 1995).

[28] For which see J. Pépin, 'The Platonic and Christian Ulysses', in H. Bloom, ed., *Odysseus/Ulysses* (New York, Chelsea House, 1991), pp. 228–48; and Boitani, 'Introduzione', pp. 25–6.

Rome.[29] For the Palestinian Khàlid Abu Khàlid, the 'Odyssey' is his own life history and that of his people: exile 'dragged by the winds', homesickness, a Ulysses reduced to a shadow 'in the light of a door opening, / back turned on time / which sinks into sand', his breast 'tormented / between a place beneath the ruins / and another, there, in the desert'.[30]

For 'syncretism' do not read painless absorption, acquiescence in another's models: read, as the Jews were forced to read, anguish, culture clash, and a tearing divide in life and history. Ulysses, as Dante understood once and for all, is no statue, but a flame, the tongue of fire which tells of a Greek condemned to death by the god of another's culture. Ulysses *is* the West *and* he who knows it: attracted by it, his struggle is with himself.

It is no accident that the great Nigerian writer in exile, Wole Soyinka, describes the British conquerors of Africa, with scorching irony, as self-considered descendants of Ulysses,[31] and that he sees Nelson Mandela as a Ulysses resisting all the Sirens of the mind and of the world. 'Glued to a . . . promontory', the waves try to 'flush the black will of his race', while albino eels 'search the cortex of his heart', offering him oblivion and deliverance from jail, trying to seduce him and win him over by crushing his identity, reminding him of the apparently unarrestable compromises of history, the passing of time, his own chained tongue, and himself, a poor Nobody. To each temptation, including that which invites him to 'Be ebony mascot / On the flagship of our space fleet, still / Through every turbulence', albeit as a mere 'spectator of our Brave New World', Mandela-Ulysses replies 'No'. No, because, 'Precedent on this soil', he has 'toiled', in the guise of an ancient demiurge, 'as in the great dark whale / Of time, Black Hole of the galaxy', to give the world new worlds. Ulysses here has the qualities of Prometheus and Antaeus, while refusing the fake honour of the Ancient Mariner or Captain Kirk. His rock, his island, the Ithaca he is bound to and which nurtures his strength, is the

[29] I rely on the Italian translation of 'Il marinaio e il derviscio' by P. Blasone in *Linea d'ombra*, 79 (February, 1993), pp. 66–7. Other poems by Hawi are to be found in *Naked in Exile*, edited by Adman Haydar and Michael Beard (Washington, D.C., Three Continents Press, 1984).

[30] I owe this reference to the courtesy of Pino Blasone, who gave me his translation of sections of Khàlid's 'Odyssey'.

[31] Wole Soyinka, 'Ulysses Britannicus in Africa', in *Ulisse: archeologia*, eds. Boitani and Ambrosini, pp. 367–74.

whole of Africa. '*I am* that rock / In the black hole of the sky', he ends, with biblical certainty.[32] Ulysses, the cunning politico of Greek tragedy and Latin poetry, Dante's fraudulent counsellor, has become the victim of politics, and the hero of the ideal.

Yet if this is the powerful political, ethical, and historical message of the Nigerian Ulysses, Soyinka, as a literary man, also adopts the general pattern of the 'Odyssey' in his autobiographical *Isarà*. Hardly devoid of political and cultural conflict, it is at the same time a fictional journey 'round' the life and heroic times of his father Essay. There is also a hint of the poet as explorer seeking for justice, the Ofeyi of *Season of Anomy*.[33] Lastly, there is a personal, existential identification with Ulysses. In a short poem in *A Shuttle in the Crypt* entitled 'Journey', he states:

> I never feel I have arrived, though I come
> To journey's end...
> ...
> I never feel I have arrived
> Though love and welcome snare me home
> Usurpers hand my cup at every
> Feast a last supper[34]

The shadow of the Ulysses of Dante, Tennyson, and Homer are quite clear here, with a politically aware superimposition of the Gospels: a return which is never, for the mind, the end of the journey: shadow, too, of the Suitors, preparing Passion and death; the awareness of 'the road not taken', of possessing flesh 'nibbled clean, lost / To fretful fish among the rusted hulls'—of being, in a word, once again reduced to Nobody.

Ulysses is one of Soyinka's basic 'archetypes' (the others being the Joseph of the Bible, Gulliver, and Hamlet), as indicated in the *A Shuttle*

[32] Wole Soyinka, '"No!" He Said', in *Mandela's Earth* (London, Methuen, 1990 edn.), pp. 21–3.

[33] Wole Soyinka, *Isarà: A Voyage Around Essay* (London, Methuen, 1990); *Season of Anomy* (London, Rex Collings, 1973). Soyinka has made important considerations on myth in his *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[34] Wole Soyinka, 'Journey', in *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (London, Rex Collings, 1972), p. 30.

in the Crypt section called *Four Archetypes*.[35] From his Nigerian prison the poet writes what he himself calls 'notes' for the students of his Joyce class. This time the search is decidedly internal. 'Haunting the music of the mind', as he begins his poem, he watches a raindrop 'lengthen out to rivers' on the window pane. Then, stretched 'on this painless rack of time', he feels the 'heritage of thought, clay and voices / Passing easily to wind and rain-becoming', and, so as not to lose the 'landmarks of [his] being', he drums out an imaginary rhythm with his fingertips. Sleep-walking through 'the weary cycle of the season's womb / Labouring to give birth to her deathlesss self'—and thus searching for a life which makes a painful, periodic attempt to produce something that goes beyond death—he meditates on past experience, becoming one with the world 'in great infinitudes', descending to the Hades of the mind, of the 'archetypal heart / Of all lone wanderers'. Here he rediscovers his ancient game of 'toy[ing] with concepts', intellectual activity, teaching, all now seeming a 'crystal cover' on the real world. The latter, in its turn, shatters the illusion in the 'rake of thunders' of experience: torn tobacco leaves, swollen seas, building detritus, crushed flowers and thorns, 'mud consummation', all leading to the inevitable question:

> How golden finally is the recovered fleece?
> A question we refuse to ask the Bard.

Joyce (now finally, with Homer, the 'Bard'), is unable to respond to the supreme question of life and poetry. Each individual, each poet has to ask her/himself how much importance attaches to the golden fleece of knowledge and verse. Soyinka searches for the answer in the archetypal image of Ulysses as shadow of himself: hence, again, the 'wine-scented waves', the 'swine-scented folds', the straits 'between vaginal rocks'. Circe, the transformer of Ulysses' men into pigs, had kept him prisoner without, however, managing to turn him into an animal. The passage between Scylla and Charybdis, Nigeria and Biafra, was a horror faced and overcome. Each experience tears away its piece of flesh and erodes the skin. Yet to become an expert in the things of the world, human vices, and human value is the noble part of life, the only one to allow 'minds grown hoary from the quest' to remain rooted, in work and

[35] Wole Soyinka, 'Ulysses', in *Shuttle*, pp. 27–9. On Soyinka's poetry, see Obi Maduakor, *Wole Soyinka* (New York and London, Garland, 1986), and T. Ojaide, *The Poetry of Wole Soyinka* (Lagos, Malthouse Press, 1994).

commitment, like a 'boulder solitude amidst wine-centred waves'—the only solitude to allow us to maintain, on 'dark-fallen seas', 'our lighted beings / Suspended as mirages on the world's reality'.

Africa is no New World, but a very ancient one—perhaps the first which *homo erectus* trod with legs, and a *sapiens* mind: perhaps the place where for the first time Hercules and Achilles, the heroes of brute force, became Ulysses, the man of intelligence. A land heavy with blood, too: with hunger, injustice, exploitation, and genocide. Soyinka's African Ulysses gives some sort of answer to my question: no, history did not end in Auschwitz. It continues as an individual hell for each of us. Our survival tactic is necessarily to take on the shadow of our archetypes, from the Ulysses of Joyce, Dante, and Homer; virtually to become them and finally incarnate a new Ulysses which in the syncretism of conflict will contain Joseph, Gulliver, Hamlet, Essay, Ofeyi, and Nelson Mandela.

Humanism, George Steiner would point out, did not stop the German Gauleiters from slaughtering millions of innocents.[36] It has, however, helped the victims—Primo Levi and, inside and outside the West, Wole Soyinka. And we are all victims. History is not, as Paul De Man would like Benjamin to state, a 'motion', 'an errance of language which never reaches its mark', the 'illusion of a life which is only after-life'.[37] History is real, human, perhaps 'all zu menschliches' [all too human]. So I ended one of the last chapters of *The Shadow of Ulysses*.[38] If I were to return to it, I would begin with Derek Walcott's lines from 'The sea is History'.[39]

'First', he writes, 'there was the heaving oil, / heavy as chaos; / then, like a light at the end of a tunnel, // the lantern of a caravel, / and that was Genesis. / Then there were the packed cries, / the shit, the moaning: // Exodus . . . '. In the books of the Bible, from the Old to the New Testament, Walcott traces the history of the Afro-Americans: deportation, slavery, and emancipation. The sea is history, blood, and oppression. But the Caribbean has a primeval light and a stunning

[36] George Steiner, *Language and Silence* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979 edn.), p. 83.
[37] Paul De Man, 'Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator"', in *The Resistance to Theory* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), p. 92.
[38] Boitani, *Shadow*, p. 162.
[39] Derek Walcott, 'The Sea is History', in *Collected Poems 1948–1984* (London, Faber, 1992), pp. 364–7.

beauty. Thus this archipelago of islands so like those of the Aegean becomes Ulysses' new medi-terranean, suffering and splendid, and not just for Walcott, but for all the contemporary Caribbean poets: David Dabydeen, in his *Coolie Odyssey*; Edward Brathwaite, who has called his New World trilogy *The Arrivants* and divided it into *Rights of Passage*, *Islands*, and *Masks*; Wilson Harris, whose splendid *Eternity to Season*, reworking the Ulyssean *nekyia* of Pound's *Cantos*, presents Cumberland, an ancient village on the Guyana coast, whose 'archetypal characters'—Tiresias the prophet, Heracles the slave, Achilles the runner, Anticlea the mother—all address Odysseus, while he himself, later, speaks to Calypso of love and immortality.[40]

But in Walcott the shadows of Homer and Ulysses are still more consistent. In 1992, in Stratford, Walcott staged a play, *The Odyssey*,[41] a wonderful rewriting of Homer, now narrated by Billy Blue—a Blues-singing sailor—but also a Phemius and a Demodocus: i.e. the bard of the Caribbean. In 1990 Walcott published his poem *Omeros*: 'O', he writes, 'was the conch-shell's invocation, *mer* was / both mother and sea in our Antillean patois, / *os*, a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes / and spreads its sibilant collar on a lace shore'. And *Omeros*, mixing the hexameter and terza rima, with echoes of Joyce and Montale and Hemingway and the Bible, tells of a simple fisherman, the 'quiet Achille, son of Afolabe', whose only slaughter is of fish, and 'whose end, when it comes, will be a death by water', and sings Hector, too, and Helen, and the Caribbean Sea, 'our wide country', which is 'still going on'.[42]

But even before *Omeros* Walcott had already jettisoned the *Iliad* and found in Ulysses the more appropriate shadow for his Caribbean Nobody. 'That sail which leans on light, / tired of islands, / a schooner beating up the Caribbean // for home', he writes in 1976 in *Sea Grapes*, 'could be Odysseus, / home-bound on the Aegean'. Here, however,

[40] David Dabydeen, *Coolie Odyssey* (London and Coventry, Hansib and Cangaroo, 1988); Edward Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973; a second, Bajan trilogy, comprising *Mother Poem*, 1977, *Sun Poem*, 1982, and *X/Self*, 1987, all published by Oxford University Press, charts the discovery of Africa in the Caribbean); Wilson Harris, *Eternity to Season*, 2nd edition (London, New Beacon Books, 1978): see in particular 'Tiresias', p. 31; 'Anticleia', p. 34; 'The Stone of the Sea (Odysseus to Calypso)', pp. 51, 84–5; 'Canje', pp. 72–9.
[41] Derek Walcott, *The Odyssey: A Stage Version* (London, Faber, 1993).
[42] Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (London, Faber, 1990); quotations at pp. 14, 320, 325.

it is not just a question of finding a model, and tracing a tradition. Anyone connected with Western culture, directly or indirectly, who sees a sail and a lone man outlined against the sea, Walcott maintains,[43] would think of Ulysses, Ulysses representing for us a sign, a conditioned image, a reflection of our own eyes. But this won't do. That sail *could* be Odysseus: that fatherly, husbandly homesickness, 'under gnarled, sour grapes' '*is* / *like* the adulterer hearing Nausicaa's name in every gull's cry'. But 'this brings nobody peace': 'The ancient war / between obsession and responsibility / will never finish and has been the same // for the sea-wanderer or the one on shore / now wriggling on his sandals to walk home, / since Troy sighed its last flame, // and the blind giant's boulder heaved the trough / from whose groundswell the great hexameters come / to the conclusions of exhausted surf. // *The classics can console. But not enough*'.[44]

History, then, with all its 'cunning passages', should never be forgotten: its torment, its tottering steps. Before the *Odyssey* there is always a Trojan War, and he who returns to Ithaca is he who has reduced Ilium to ashes and embers, the first European to destroy the 'other' and transport slaves to the West. The time comes, however, when poetry—which, we have Aristotle's word for it, is a more serious and philosophical business than history[45]—seizes the primeval moment, its own beginning and that of the world. Biblically, the moment of Creation. In the culture which comes down to us from the Greeks through myriad metamorphoses, it is another instant of creation. Walcott has caught it impeccably in his *Map of the New World*, thus fulfilling Homer and the

[43] Derek Walcott, 'A Sail on the Horizon', in *Ulisse: archeologia*, eds. Boitani and Ambrosini, pp. 47–8.

[44] Derek Walcott, 'Sea Grapes', in *Collected Poems*, p. 297. Walcott's Ulyssean poems are many: see, for instance, the whole of 'The Schooner *Flight*' and 'The Divided Child', ch. 6, IV, in *Collected Poems*, pp. 345–61, p. 181. Often, the theme is superimposed on that of the castaway and that of Robinson Crusoe. For an examination of Walcott's poetry and poetics, see the following: R. Hamner, *Derek Walcott* (Boston, Twayne, 1981); J. Brodskij, Introduction to D. Walcott, *Poems of the Caribbean* (New York, Limited Editions Club, 1983); S. Brown, ed., *The Art of Derek Walcott* (Bridgend, Poetry Wales Press, 1991); R. Terada, *Derek Walcott's Poetry: American Mimicry* (Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1992); R. Hamner, ed., *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott* (Washington, Three Continents Press, 1993); W. Baer, ed., *Conversations with Derek Walcott* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1996); *The Poetics of Derek Walcott: Intertextual Perspectives*, special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 94 (Spring 1997), edited by G. Davis.

[45] Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. 9, 1451b1.

Leopold Bloom who, we know, thinks back to Homer when dreaming of his return from his imaginary voyage through the universe of time and space:

> At the end of this sentence, rain will begin.
> At the rain's end, a sail.
> Slowly the sail will lose sight of islands;
> into the mist will go the belief in harbours
> of an entire race.
>
> The ten-years' war is finished.
> Helen's hair, a grey cloud.
> Troy, a white ashpit by the drizzling sea.
>
> The drizzle tightens like the strings of a harp.
> A man with clouded eyes picks up the rain
> and plucks the first line of the *Odyssey*.[46]

[46] Derek Walcott, *Map of the New World*, in *Collected Poems*, p. 413.

Glossary

Aethiopis — one of the cyclic epics; it described the deaths of the heroes Penthesileia (an Amazon), Memnon (an Ethiopian, hence the title), and Achilles

agōn — (athletic) contest, struggle

akhos — pain, grief

Apologoi (Apologue) — Odysseus' narration of his own adventures (*Odyssey* Books 9–12)

aretē — excellence

aristeia — 'the narrative of a hero triumphing in battle' (Cook)

atasthala, atasthaliai — reckless deeds

atē — 'delusional error' (Redfield)

basileus — king, monarch (Rose); alternatively, esp. in plural (*basilēes*), member(s) of a ruling elite, oligarchs (Rose)

biē — violence, might

dēmos — people, community; 'townspeople' (Rose)

Dios apatē — the episode of Hera's 'deception of Zeus' in *Iliad* 14

dolos (plural **doloi**) — trick(s), cunning

e silentio — [argument] from silence, i.e. for which there is no positive evidence

homophrosyne — like-mindedness; harmony of mind

hubris (= **hybris**) — 'outrageous behaviour' (Redfield); extreme arrogance

Iliou Persis — *The Sack of Troy*, one of the lost cyclic epics

katabasis — descent [to the underworld]

kleos — fame

Kyklopeia — the Cyclops episode of the *Odyssey*

Kypria (Cypria) — one of the lost cyclic epics, which related the events leading up to the Trojan War

laos (plural **laoi**) — 'a term that means both "community" and "army" ' (Cook)

mētis — cunning intelligence; the homonymous phrase *mē tis* means 'no one'

Mnēstērophonia — the episode of the killing of the suitors in *Odyssey* 22

Nekuia (plural **Nekuiai**) — 'summoning of the dead'; term used to describe *Odyssey* 11 and 24.1–204

nostos — return [to home]; the plural, *Nostoi,* was the title of one of the lost cyclic epics

oikos — household

parēchēsis — repetition of the same sound(s) in successive words for poetic effect

P(e)isistratids — a family of tyrants who ruled Athens for much of the sixth century BCE

Phaiakis (Phaeacis) — Odysseus' visit to the Phaiakians (Phaeacians), *Odyssey* Books 6–8 (or more broadly, Book 6 to 13.1–187)

Seirens — Sirens

sēma — sign

themis (plural **themistes**) — 'right'; normative behaviour; in plural, norms, precedents

theomachy — 'battle of the gods'; term used for the passages in *Iliad* 20–1 where the gods fight each other

topoi — commonplaces; traditional arguments or themes

Acknowledgements

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