

# Interpretation

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# The Fabric of the Longer Repeated Passages in the *Odyssey*

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## INTRODUCTION

According to well-known legend, the shield and other arms which Hephaistos crafts for Achilles at the behest of Thetis in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad* were awarded to Odysseus after Achilles' death. A widely held interpretation of the shield finds the two cities which Hephaistos fashions upon its face (*Iliad* XVIII 490–540) as heralding the shield's two bearers, Achilles and Odysseus; we find represented thereon the two cities, Troy and Ithaca, respectively, with which the two heroes are primarily associated and around which the actions of the two tales, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, revolve.<sup>1</sup> The associations of the besieged city on the shield with the siege of Ilium are direct enough, while the marriage scene in the other city on the shield recalls the theme of marriage which pervades the *Odyssey*, and the dispute over the blood of a fallen relative, also depicted in that city, is the action with which the *Odyssey* concludes.

If the shield of Achilles is our guide and the interpretations given above are germane, the significance of the parallels in the *Odyssey* is somewhat different from that in the *Iliad*. Unlike the city under siege on Achilles' shield, where Ares and Athena are prominent and Strife, Tumult, and Fate (*Eris*, *Kudoimos*, and *Ker*) are active in the fray, no divinities are manifest in the other city of peace and celebration. In the *Iliad* itself Zeus, the other Olympians, and minor divinities figure constantly in the action, both aloft and on the battlefield itself.<sup>2</sup> One might say that the poet depicts two dramas, a human one unfolding on the plain before Ilium and another, divine one, not simply restricted to the plain of Troy. There is little sense of this in the *Odyssey*. Zeus himself is present in councils only briefly in the first, fifth, and last books of the epic and in the vengeful shipwreck of Odysseus in the twelfth. Indeed, it becomes apparent from the first Olympian council that only when the order of the peaceful city, Ithaca, is threatened, as it is being then threatened by the usurping suitors, do the gods become involved at all. Hermes is dispatched as messenger by Zeus in the fifth book and appears briefly to aid Odysseus with Circe in the tenth. Of

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the remaining Olympians, only two emerge directly in the drama, Poseidon and Athena: Poseidon in isolated acts of retribution throughout the wanderings of Odysseus, and Athena as intermittent guide and counsellor first to Telemachos and then to Odysseus. Finally, Achilles is a demigod with an aged mortal father, Peleus, and immortal mother, Thetis, and through her has a direct link to and claim upon the immortals. Odysseus, in contrast, is fully mortal with an aged, mortal father, Laertes, and a deceased mother, Anticleia. Whatever links to and claims upon the immortals Odysseus may have, they are not those of parentage.

Long repeated passages in the *Odyssey*, no less than in the *Iliad*, constitute a distinct element in Homer's poetics, and they occur with about the same frequency in the former poem as in the latter. One hundred-thirteen such passages have been identified in the *Odyssey*.<sup>3</sup> I have included in this collection three variations where the two parallel passages would match up and agree, save for one interpolated line.<sup>4</sup> In 22 of the 113 repeated passages in the *Odyssey* the poet is speaking to us directly, and these comprise part of the narrative description of the epic. The remaining 91 parallels are portions of dialogue, the speeches of gods or men. While the proportion represented by diction is higher here than the proportion such passages represent in the *Iliad*, the number of dialogue passages that can be construed as "messages"—where instructions (usually from a god) are relayed verbatim to another (often a mortal) by an intermediary, or instructions to a second person are described as carried out to the letter—is less than in the *Iliad*: only 9 here compared to 37 in the *Iliad*.<sup>5</sup> While the messages in the *Odyssey* are important, we can infer they do not in themselves suffice to direct and carry the poem's action. This result perhaps ought not to be unexpected: if the role of the gods in the action of the *Odyssey* and their relation to Odysseus differ from their role in the action of the *Iliad* and their relation to Achilles, then we might expect this to be reflected in differences in the patterns of iteration and their significance in the two poems. But what is that divine role and its relation in the *Odyssey* and how is it so reflected? This study is to suggest some answers by turning the inquiry around, that is to say, by using the repetitions of the *Odyssey* to point the way to an interpretation of the divine action in the poem.<sup>6</sup>

This much, at least, is clear from the general nature of the repetitions in the *Odyssey*: most are found in the speeches of the poem. They constitute portions of declarations, sometimes of one person again to another later on a different occasion; sometimes of one to two different parties on separate occasions; at times of two different speakers to the same person on different occasions; or even of two different speakers to different parties on different occasions. All combinations are found. In general also, the second occurrence (or third, etc.) is more widely separated from the first in the text than was the case with the repeated messages in the *Iliad*. If, indeed, style reflects substance, then it should be possible to give an interpretation of this feature also. The repeated dialogue and associated descriptive passages in the *Odyssey* have

been collected into 24 stages, following the general chronology of Homer's narrative, and they are examined with respect to the drama of the poem as a whole.

## STAGES OF THE POEM

### A. *The Fame of Odysseus*

First Stage: Telemachos laments to the visitor Mentos (Athena in disguise): if Odysseus had died "*among his comrades or in the hands of his dear ones when he had wound up the war, then all the Achaeans would have made a tomb for him and he would also have gotten great fame (kleos) for his boy thereafter, but now the harpies have snatched him up without kleos.*" So says later Eumaios, the swineherd, to his disguised master, Odysseus, in book xiv (i 238–241 = xiv 368–371). Telemachos continues his lament to the stranger, Mentos, in words he will put to another stranger in book xvi (again, the beggar, Odysseus in disguise): "*Because many of the best, who hold sway over the islands, Dulichium, Same, and woody Zacynthos, and as many as command throughout rocky Ithaca are wooing my mother and are consuming the house. But she neither refuses a hateful marriage nor is she able to make an end to it; but in eating they are wasting away my home; soon they will make an end to me also*" (i 245–251 = xvi 122–128).

The disguised Athena answers and advises Telemachos: "*Go and learn of your father, gone for a long time now, if any among mortals might tell you or if you might hear from Zeus any rumor (ossa), which especially bears news (kleos) to men. . . . If on the one hand you might hear of the life and homecoming of your father, then, though being consumed with grief, you ought to bear yourself up for another year; but, on the other hand, if you might hear of him dead, no longer existing, then, having returned home to your dear fatherland, heap up a grave for him and bury with honors many of his possessions, as many as is seemly, and give your mother to another man.*" Athena's advice is conveyed in as many words the next day to the Ithacans in assembly by Telemachos (i 281–283 = ii 215–217; i 287–292 = ii 218–223), and he eventually finds a ship and crew and departs on his mission.

Athena's arrival at the Ithacan palace is preceded by a description of her binding on the golden, ambrosian sandals to carry her like the wind to Ithaca, a description repeated for Hermes upon his dispatch to Ogygia and Calypso in book v and also Hermes to Priam in the ultimate book of the *Iliad* (i 96–98 = v 44–46 = XXIV 340–342). These three appearances might be said to constitute a setting in motion of men whose actions will resolve and complete their respective tales. Athena's presence will result in Telemachos' temporary absence from Ithaca; Hermes will get Odysseus released from his nine-years' stay

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with Calypso; and in the *Iliad* Hermes will guide Priam to the final ransoming scene with Achilles.

Taken together, the three portions of repeated dialogue quoted above serve to establish the theme of *kleos* or repute, the first of the major themes which run throughout the poem. Odysseus is a man who has lost his *kleos*, a fate worse than losing his life, because Odysseus' family has now by extension lost theirs. His wife is uncertain whether or not she is a widow and the son uncertain whether he is or is not master of the house. The situation compels its resolution: Telemachos must learn the *kleos* of his father and must journey to do so. In this respect, it is remarkable that we do not meet Odysseus himself until the fifth book of the poem, or about one-sixth of the way through the narrative, and indeed Odysseus is not named as such in the proem of the epic until the twenty-first line.<sup>7</sup> All that has preceded, both in the first four books and in the opening of the proem, turns upon his *kleos* and serves to emphasize it through his absence, building, therefore, to his actual presence.

Second Stage: Penelope makes four public appearances before the suitors: in book i (lured by the song of Phemius), in book xvi (alarmed by the report by Medon of a plot against Telemachos), in book xviii (produced by Athena as an allure to the suitors), and in book xxi (moved to announce the bow contest). These appearances are all put in nearly the same terms (i 332–334 = xvi 414–416 = xviii 208–210 = xxi 63–65; i 332–335 = xviii 208–211 = xxi 63–66; i 331–335 = xviii 207–211): Penelope stands by the doorway, her face veiled, and (except in xvi) flanked by two attendants. In the first and last of these four appearances she is dismissed by Telemachos as follows (i 356–364 = xxi 350–358): “*‘But proceeding to our home, attend to your own affairs, the loom and the distaff, and bid your attendants go about their work, and the word will be of concern to all the men and especially to me, whose rule is in this house.’ And, astonished, she went back into the house, because she set in her mind the sage word of her son. And, having mounted to her upper chamber with the two attendant women, she then cried over Odysseus, her dear husband, until gleaming-eyed Athena cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.*” Telemachos' dismissal of his mother bears affinities to that of Hector of Andromache in *Iliad* VI (i 356–358 = xxi 350–352 = VI 490–492), where the last part is changed in the *Iliad* to “*war will be of concern to all the men, those who have come to Ilium, and especially to me.*” In the *Iliad* war is contrasted with the work of weaving as an active to a quiet activity. Here in the *Odyssey* it is the word (*muthos*) contrasted to weaving, but, I suggest, not in the same way as war to weaving but rather as a public, open declaration of the word as opposed to a sequestered, private occupation.

Third Stage: Galvanized by the presence of Mentos, the young Telemachos now turns with surprising authority to manage not only the affairs of his mother but of the household at large, and first of all he turns with particular scorn upon

the suitors. He warns them and again in the assembly on the following day (i 374–380 = ii 139–145) “*to get out of my chambers. Partake of other feasts, eating and drinking your own goods, and taking turns in your own homes. But if it seems to you advantageous and better to destroy the livelihood of one man without punishment, then rend them, and I will cry out to the ever-lasting gods that Zeus might grant there arise works of vengeance. Then you ought to have [preferred to have] perished without punishment in your own homes.*” Again in the assembly Telemachos will make another similar declaration to the suitors, one which he will repeat to them again later upon his return to Ithaca and the palace: “*But frequenting our house all their days, sacrificing bulls, sheep, and fat goats, they banquet and idly drink sparkling wine, and much has been finished. For there was not such a man as Odysseus to ward off bane from the house*” (ii 55–59 = xvii 534–538).

Telemachos’ new authority both at the assembly here in the second book and later at his return to Ithaca is signalled by his new appearance, manifest in the way he is described as rising and clothing himself with robes, sword, and sandals for the assembly, just as king Menelaos will do later on in Sparta (ii 1–5 = iv 306–310), and he advances through the palace followed by his hounds and enhanced in stature and appearance by Athena both before and after his return (ii 11–13 = xvii 62–64). Authority is also apparent in the way he responds to old Aegyptius’ challenge in the assembly itself: Has he (Telemachos, the caller of the assembly) heard something of an oncoming army or does he raise some other public matter? Telemachos promptly denies these in as many words (ii 30–32 = 42–44).

The portions of the two declarations quoted above are cries for divine retribution against violation of a household, that is, against the rules of hospitality or *xenia*, which emerges here as the second major theme which pervades the poem’s drama. Odysseus as lord and defender of the house is absent, and only the gods themselves, therefore, can directly defend it and exact the penalty. The suitors are present in the house not merely because Odysseus is absent, however, but because there is no news of him, no *kleos*. We have been led to surmise (first stage) that had Odysseus died with full honors in the eyes of his Argive comrades, the issues of succession, the disposition of his goods, and the remarriage of his widow, Penelope, would have been settled by this time. But they are not, and instead we have an agonizingly protracted period of uncertainty, of which the unscrupulous youths have boldly taken advantage. Their acts now call for nemesis.

### *B. The Web of Penelope*

Fourth Stage: Antinoos, chief among the suitors, retorts to Telemachos in the assembly that Penelope has been full of promises to them for over three years now, and “*She has pondered this other trick in her mind: having stood a*

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great loom in her chambers, she wove a garment, thin and very long. Then straightaway she spoke among us: 'Young men, my suitors, since Odysseus has died, let you, being pressed, wait for my marriage so that I might finish this cloak, lest my weaving perish to the winds. This is a burial shroud for the hero Laertes, so that when the destructive allotment (moira) of death, which brings long griefs, might have taken him down, no one in the land of the Achaean men might take nemesis at me if Laertes, having acquired much, would lie uncovered.' Thus she spoke, and the manly spirit in us was persuaded. Here also she used to weave on the great loom by day, but during the night, on the other hand, she used to loosen the threads when she set the torches before. Thus for three years she escaped notice by means of this trick, but when the fourth year came and the seasons came on, then did someone among the women speak, one who knew clearly, and we discovered her loosening the splendid loom. So she, not wishing to marry, did finish the cloak by compulsion (anangke)." This tale of weaving and trickery (the longest repeated passage in the *Odyssey*) is repeated by Penelope herself to her disguised husband in book xix (ii 94–107 = xix 139–152), changing the betrayal scene slightly and implicating more than one servant woman as the tattler, and it is repeated again in the last book by the psyche of the departed suitor, Amphimedon, to Agamemnon in Hades (ii 93–110 = xxiv 128–142, 144–146).

The action of weaving raises here the third major theme which subsequent episodes in the poem will further establish and on which the larger drama will turn—the theme of covering and concealment. The tale of the woven-unwoven shroud itself is replete with associations throughout the *Odyssey*. To take one of the more significant of these, if we regard the burial shroud as not simply for Laertes but indeed for the house of Laertes, then its unfinished condition epitomizes rather precisely the status of the *kleos*, the repute of the house as a whole. As the strands are woven together by day into a finished garment, so the tale moves to its completion and the *kleos* of the house of Laertes emerges. But as the strands are unstrung at night, the process is reversed: *kleos* is lost and the status of the house is uncertain, which is, in fact, the case in general during the more than three years Penelope is besieged by the suitors. There is no news of Odysseus, the burial shroud remains incomplete, and Laertes remains alive, if barely, on the outskirts of the city. Odysseus himself will learn of Laertes from his mother, whom he will meet in Hades and who passed on before her time in longing for Odysseus. She is named, significantly, Anticleia or "antikleos." Conversely, Odysseus' perspicacious nurse, chief among the attendants to Penelope, is named Eurycleia or "wide kleos" and is a woman whom we are told (i 432–433) Laertes honored like a wife but never slept with, for he shunned the anger of Anticleia. Thus the upbringing of Odysseus himself hangs in the balance between his natural, biological mother ("antikleos") and his foster-mother nurse ("wide kleos"). The name of his wife, Penelope, itself may have something to do with the *pene*, a bobbin thread on the shuttle of the loom and (in the plural) its web.<sup>8</sup>

There are other associations of weaving with the tale as well. The fact that *histos* means not only loom but also mast—hence anything that “stands” or is “stood up”—calls to mind here the connection between loom and mast. The shredded or furled sail and lowered mast in this context come to represent the undoing or hiding of the fabric of *kleos*, and the spread sails and upright mast the completing of this fabric and, by extension, the return of Odysseus over the sea. Here we may wish also to compare Penelope’s weaving of the shroud and Helen’s weaving of the tapestry of battle in the third book of the *Iliad*. Both works represent their weavers, but in entirely different ways; that of Penelope traces as a memorial the house of which she is still a part, while that of Helen reflects her own glory in those of the heroes and their deeds brought forth upon the plain before the city of Troy which holds her.

Penelope’s trick succeeds because she is able to convince the suitors that a partly woven garment is a perishable thing indeed. Their assent, one suspects, is motivated not so much out of the respect for the burial rites to be accorded Laertes but rather for the native impulse to see the completed work, just as there is that elemental desire in all men to hear out the half-completed melody or half-told tale. Hence, the weaving trick here presages the added irony that the suitors become, oddly, partisans to their own destruction—an observation that will be taken up again later in this study.

Fifth Stage: In the assembly Mentor upbraids the other Ithacans, who do nothing to stop the ravaging of Odysseus’ home. Their inaction, he adds, constitutes not only an ingratitude to Odysseus and Laertes but indeed to benevolent rulers everywhere: “*Let not any sceptred king still be progressively-minded and kind and gentle and knowing what is fitting, but rather he ought to be ever difficult and do impious deeds, since nobody remembers divine Odysseus, not one among those he ruled as his people, and as his father was gentle.*” But Mentor’s attempt to whip up the indignation of the Ithacans against the suitors fails. There are simply too many of the latter, and they are too strong for the Ithacans. But when Athena puts the same complaint to the Olympians in the fifth book, she succeeds (ii 230–234 = v 8–12). The suitors are not too numerous or too strong for the Olympians, but Zeus’s decision in the matter is not to intervene directly. Rather, Odysseus himself will be brought back to light and his *kleos* fulfilled as the divine instrument to set the affairs of his house straight.

### *C. The Entertainment of Telemachos*

Sixth Stage: The arrival of Odysseus is marked, cleverly, by the departure of his son, who is to go in search of him. This stratagem will not only distract the suitors’ attention from any arriving strangers but gets the son out of danger

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from their reprisals. Telemachos' departure has to be made discreetly. He does not want his mother to become distressed and raise a scene. He extracts from Eurycleia a promise not to tell Penelope of his departure "*before the eleventh or twelfth day might come or before she has yearned and heard of me having started forth, so that in crying she might not assail her beautiful face.*" Eurycleia will later confess this promise in as many words (ii 374–376 = iv 747–749) to her mistress herself after Penelope has learned of Telemachos' departure and expedition from Medon.

Penelope is now, it appears, doubly bereft as a widow. She laments to her women attendants and again later in a dream to Athena, who appears in her sleep disguised as the image of her sister Iphime (iv 724–726 = iv 814–816) "*me who once before lost a good husband with the spirit of a lion, a husband having excelled all the Danaans in all sorts of virtues, a good man whose repute is wide throughout Hellas and the middle of Argos.*" The dream image of Iphime tells Penelope to take heart, because indeed Athena herself escorts her husband; when questioned further in the dream by Penelope, however, the image refuses to inform her of the whereabouts of her husband, whether he is in Hades or somewhere in the lands of the living. Though we commonly associate the *Odyssey* with travel and with a man who "*was very much driven about,*" as the opening lines of the poem state, a different sort of geography from the ordinary mapped kind seems to be at work here, namely, the geography of *kleos* or repute. The dimensions of this *kleos* are, as in the passage above, "wide" or "broad," more like the tapestry we find Helen weaving in the third book of the *Iliad* than the long, thin, burial shroud of Penelope's work. Where, then, is the figure of repute, whose fame and glory are being celebrated, situated on this broad tapestry? That seems to depend as much on the celebrant as on him who is being celebrated and, finally, depends on the fancy and imagination of the former: Penelope's lament over her husband and the disguised Athena's refusal of further news about him turns out to be, in fact, an invitation to us to widen the repute of Odysseus and to complete the tale ourselves by weaving it into our own world.

Seventh Stage: "*Wherefore I have come to your knees now, if you might wish to tell of the sorry end of that man, if you have seen him anywhere with your own eyes or if you have heard by word of another of him being struck down. For above all did his mother beget him as a miserable one. Do not, showing reverence or pity for me, soothe me but relate well to me what you know. If once my good father Odysseus, having promised you some word or deed, than fulfilled it in the land of the Trojans where you Achaeans suffered miseries, I beseech you now recall these things to mind for my sake and tell me exactly.*" Telemachos will put his inquiry to Nestor at Pylos in these words and later in the same words to Menelaos at Sparta (iii 92–101 = iv 322–331). What does Telemachos learn from the two Argive leaders and veteran com-

patriots of Odysseus? Some particulars will be put forth below, but on the whole we may answer this question by saying that little is learned of the whereabouts of Odysseus. In its stated objectives, therefore, Telemachos' trip is a disappointment. But all the same, much is present before his eyes and ours. When Telemachos first lands at Pylos, he finds a great sacrifice to Poseidon in progress. This sets the theme of Telemachos' visit to both Pylos and to Sparta thereafter: the rites of sacrifice and worship accorded the gods and the rites of hospitality accorded strangers are prominent, in marked contrast to the disarray largely prevailing back at Ithaca. Arrivals and departures; washing, sacrificing, and feasting; the introductions and conclusions of speeches—all of these are cast into short, stock phrases or "formulae," which are repeated to characterize these moments. Their possible significance in general will be discussed later. Those which are of particular importance here and may engage our attention are the repeated passages pertaining to the entertainment of guests. Thus, the seating and hand washing and table setting of the guest Telemachos at Menelaos' palace in Sparta is described in the same terms as that of Mentos (Athena) at Odysseus' house by Telemachos earlier in Ithaca (i 136–142 = iv 52–58). And again, portions of Mentos' entertainment by Telemachos emerge subsequently in the setting of the table before Odysseus at Alcinoos' palace and will be repeated at Circe's house and still later on before him, disguised as a guest in his own house, as well as before Telemachos in Menelaos' palace (i 136–140 = vii 172–176 = x 368–372 = xvii 91–95 = xv 135–139). The bathing with oils of Telemachos at Sparta is called to mind by the same passage applied to Telemachos' guest, Theoclymenos, when they return to Ithaca (iv 48–50 = xvii 87–89). Telemachos' dinner conversation with his fellow guest Peisistratos at Sparta is evoked in that later between Telemachos and Eumaios (iv 67–69 = xvi 54–56) in Eumaios' hut.<sup>9</sup> What Telemachos and we learn through these and other repetitions, then, is that the institutions of hospitality and the entertainment of strangers are indeed widespread and well established as institutions.

Eighth Stage: In an intricate series of exchanges between the sea nymph, Eidotheia, and Menelaos, becalmed with his crew in Egypt, and a series of exchanges between Proteus, her father, and Menelaos shortly thereafter, the Spartan king is able to learn something of the fate of Odysseus. Menelaos will pass this news on to Telemachos. Menelaos reports that he took the reproach of Eidotheia, "*So now for a long time you are being detained on the island, nor are you able to find any end to this, and the heart of your companions diminishes*" (iv 373–374), and recasting it in the first person, "*So now for a long time I am being detained on the island, nor am I able to find any end to this, and the heart of my companions diminishes*" (iv 466–467), and joining it with this question he had posed to her, "*But tell me this, and the gods know all things, who among the immortals is binding me and has bound me on my way and return home?*" (iv 379–381) put the whole to Proteus (iv 373–374, 379–

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381 = iv 466–470). In response to the statement and question, Proteus tells Menelaos that Zeus and the other gods demand sacrifice from him, and that upon this hinges his release from Egypt with good winds. In the course of this answer Proteus also tells him of another Argive stranded in his attempt to return home, namely Odysseus. Menelaos tells Telemachos that Proteus says he saw Odysseus, tearful, “*in the chambers of the nymph Calypso, who holds him by necessity (anangke), and he is not able to arrive at his fatherland because there are no ships with him nor companions at the oar, who should send him over the broad back of the sea.*” Athena will report Odysseus’ whereabouts in these words to the other Olympians in the assembly in book v (iv 557–560 = v 14–17), and Telemachos upon his return to Ithaca will deliver this divine bit of information to his mother in book xvii (iv 557–560 = v 14–17 = xvii 143–146).

Thus in the course of narrating his own detention, Menelaos tells of that of Odysseus. Odysseus is stranded. But, more than that, Odysseus is “calypsoed,” which we may take in association with the Greek *kalupto* to mean “she who conceals, veils, shrouds, engulfs, covers, etc.”<sup>10</sup> If we may be allowed a paradox here, Odysseus, it seems, has the *kleos* of having no *kleos*—an “antikleos” of dropping out of sight, of hiding. That he has been hiding has been divulged to Menelaos and to Telemachos and to us by Proteus, who also conceals himself by changing shapes after wrestling with Menelaos. This wrestling, in turn, is remote; it took place some time ago in Egypt. As if to distance us further from Odysseus, Menelaos prefaces his story with the lament and wish: “*Oh shame, those without might have much desired to bed down in the bed of a man of stout heart. Just as a doe, having bedded down her new-born, milk-suckling fawns in the thicket of a stout lion, then grazes the mountain vales and hollows abounding in grass and then the lion comes upon the bed and sends an unseemly end on the two of them, so will Odysseus send an unseemly end on these. O Zeus, father, and Athena and Apollo, would that Odysseus, being such as he was then when in well-made Lesbos he stood up and wrestled with Philomeleides in a dispute and threw him down strongly and all the Achaeans were pleased, be such a one now and mix it up with the suitors and all of them come to a brief time on earth and a bitter marriage. Of the things you inquire and beseech from me I will not speak beside the point, digressing, nor will I deceive. Of those things which the unerring old man of the sea told me I will hide from you none of them nor will I conceal a word.*” Telemachos will put the same preface to Penelope upon his return in book xvii (iv 333–350 = xvii 124–141) and then tell the news of Calypso, as we have already observed above. Both Eidotheia and Proteus, finished with Menelaos, then similarly dive beneath the sea (iv 425–430 = iv 570–575) and leave the Spartan king with much to ponder on the strand.

Ninth Stage: Nestor reminds Telemachos, as Athena had reminded Telemachos earlier (i 299–302 = iii 197–200), of the tale of Agamemnon’s son

Orestes “when he slew his parricide, the crafty-minded Aegisthos. And you, dear one—for much do I see you fine and great—are mighty, so that any one of those coming in later times would speak well of you.” Thus Telemachos is placed as an avenging Orestes, capable of paying back those who would destroy his house. The old Argive leader then gives Telemachos the lesson of Agamemnon’s tale: “And let you, dear one, not wander for long far off from home and abandon your goods with such overbearing men in your house, lest they divide up and consume everything and you come to naught.” This Nestorian advice, which thus sets forth the fourth principal theme of the tale, entrapment and betrayal, is repeated verbatim by Athena later to Telemachos in book xv (iii 313–316 = xv 10–13), as she rouses him to return from Menelaos’ Spartan palace to Pylos and thence home to Ithaca. Between Telemachos’ initial setting forth and visit to Pylos and Sparta and his return home the poet has interpolated the adventures and homecoming of Odysseus. Three repeated passages serve to link up Telemachos’ visit in the first four books and his later return in the fifteenth. First, Menelaos presents and re-presents his guest with a most valued, gilt mixing bowl (iv 613–619 = xv 113–119); second, Telemachos’ return journey overland from Sparta to Pylos mirrors that of him going out (iii 486–493 = xv 184–191); third, his setting sail from Pylos to Ithaca is described in the same words as his initial departure from Ithaca (ii 422–426 = xv 287–292). That there are indeed hostile men at home is the warning Athena delivers to Odysseus, newly landed on Ithaca, and to Telemachos himself at Sparta (xiii 426–428 = xv 30–32). There is an ambush set by the suitors for Odysseus’ son: “They making their way to kill him before he has arrived at his fatherland; but I do not believe that will happen before the earth will also hold some of the suitor men, who consume your livelihood.” Telemachos’ unlikely and thus unexpected escape is reflected in the greeting both Eumaios and Penelope give him (xvi 22–24 = xvii 40–42): “And, lamenting, addressed him winged words: ‘You have come, Telemachos, sweet light. I said I would not see you again.’” By the will of the gods Telemachos evades the sort of homecoming given Agamemnon.

Tenth Stage: Athena’s warning of the ambush to Odysseus and to Telemachos, a warning which takes the form of a prediction (see above), comes after the prediction which Zeus makes for the homecoming of Odysseus and which frames the actions of Odysseus himself in the poem. In the assembly of the gods (book v) Zeus decrees to Hermes, prior to sending him on his mission to Calypso for Odysseus’ release, that Odysseus will reach the Phaeaceans, “who will honor him at heart like a god and who will send him in a ship to his dear fatherland, they having given him much bronze and gold and clothing in heaps, as much as not ever would Odysseus have lifted from Troy if he had come home unharmed with dominion over a portion of the spoil” (v 36–40). Parts of this decree will surface later, part to Penelope in book xxiii when

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Odysseus explains to Penelope how he came home (v 36–38 = xxiii 339–341), and part back to Zeus himself when Poseidon complains in book xiii to the father of gods and men about the deed of the Phaeaceans (v 38–40 = xiii 136–138): “*And they, leading him sleeping in a swift ship upon the sea, placed him down in Ithaca and gave him unspeakably great gifts, bronze and gold and woven clothing in heaps.*” Odysseus will later (book xvi) produce this explanation (xiii 134–136 = xvi 229–231) to Telemachos for his presence back on Ithaca.

Zeus will grant Poseidon actions of vengeance upon the Phaeaceans, actions that are not entirely unexpected. Alkinoos had earlier told Odysseus and later tells his own people as these actions are about to be fulfilled: “*Nausithous, who used to say that Poseidon will drive us because we are the unharmed escorts of all. He once said that a well-built ship returning from escort on the misty sea will be shattered and a great wall will cover us round in our city. So the old man used to say; and those things the god will wrap up*” (viii 565–570 = xiii 173–178).

Why at this point does Poseidon decide to take vengeance on the Phaeaceans? The specific reason Poseidon is angry is told to the Phaeaceans by Odysseus himself: Odysseus has blinded the one-eyed, giant son of Poseidon, the Cyclops Polyphemus. Nausithous, Alkinoos’ father, is also a son of Poseidon, and the Phaeaceans are gifted sailors with miraculous ships. By giving Odysseus not only safety and entertainment on their island but escorting him back to Ithaca, the Phaeaceans have more than fulfilled the dictates of hospitality; they have also affronted their “grandfather” Poseidon and their “cousins,” the Cyclopes. Although hospitality is important, kinship and the respect due it also count for something. An opposition is set up between the two institutions, *xenia* on the one hand, and kinship, *suggeneia*, on the other. This is an opposition faced at the conclusion of the poem as well, with, however, a much different result (see the twenty-third stage below).

### *D. The Seclusion of Odysseus*

Eleventh Stage: Poseidon’s anger and consequent actions are thus rooted in the activities and ultimately in the character of Odysseus himself and not simply in the workings of events and circumstances on Scheria. We gain a glimpse into this character, I think, in the following passage describing the Ithacan leader’s first night on that island. Odysseus, now released by Zeus from a forced seven-year seclusion on the island of Ogygia with the nymph Calypso, has rafted himself out to sea. After he sailed for seventeen days, Poseidon spotted the lone sailor, raised a furious storm, and wrecked the raft. After a harrowing experience in which he nearly drowns, followed by three days adrift in heavy seas, Odysseus has clambered ashore, naked, on the island of Scheria

and, full of weariness, seeks a place to sleep. Homer tells us: “*And then he came upon a pair of shrubs grown out of the same root, the one of thorn and the other of olive. And the watery strength of blowing winds hadn’t blown through them, nor had the shining sun hit them with its beams, nor had a storm traversed straight through, so dense they grew interlaced with one another*” (v 476–480). Beneath this naturally fabricated canopy Odysseus will slumber, like a smoldering firebrand, the poet says.

Now later on in book xix Odysseus is back on Ithaca. Though disguised convincingly as a wandering beggar by Athena, he has been accorded hospitality by Penelope, including the customary treat of a bath, which, as it turns out, his old nurse, Eurycleia, is giving him. Here in a famous scene the nurse recognizes the stranger by a scar on his thigh and is practically strangled by him into keeping the discovery secret.<sup>11</sup> This leads to a digression, an account by the poet of how Odysseus got the scar in the first place as a youth in a hunt on Mount Parnassus. “[*Here a great boar lay in a dense lair.*] *And the watery strength of blowing winds hadn’t blown through them, nor had the shining sun hit them with its beams, nor had a storm traversed straight through, so dense it was, and there was a great pile of leaves.*” From this cover the wild boar charges, gashing the hunter in the thigh, while the hunter strikes the boar dead with a spear through its shoulder. The repetition (v 478–480 = xix 440–442) thus serves to link up the naked survivor on the island of Scheria with the youthful hunter on Mount Parnassus.

What is the significance of this linkage? Let us recall that Homer tells us that the hunt is part of a visit by the boy to his uncle, Autolykos (“lone wolf”), who, we are also informed, is a notorious thief, trickster, and ready student of the stratagems of Hermes. Just prior to the hunt the boy was given the name “Odysseus” by his uncle, a name which means variously “man of anger,” “man of woe,” “man of pain.”<sup>12</sup> The scarring by the boar, then, might be said by analogy to constitute part of the boy’s pagan “baptism,” part of his achieving a name and an identity before gods and men, or, as the ancients would have it, the foundation of his *kleos*, his reputation and fame. Certainly in book xix Eurycleia recognizes the old wound; it is the means by which Odysseus will also shortly identify himself to Eumaios and Philoetius, his swineherd and cowherd compatriots (xxi 217–220); and Eurycleia later advances it in book xxiii (xxiii 70–77) as evidence in her attempt to convince the reluctant Penelope that the stranger really is Odysseus, previously in disguise. It will also figure in Odysseus’ identification to his father (xxiv 331–335). But let us return to our newly arrived hero, who lies naked in the leaves on Scheria, covered by a green fabric of woven, intertwined branches. At first it would seem that Poseidon in his anger and vengeance against Odysseus has indeed been successful in depriving the man of everything, of completely denuding him. But there remains the scar. It is the one distinctive, ineradicable element left to him, a persistent reminder to its bearer of who he is. Recollection of the circumstances

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of the scar's origin is equally important here as an emblem of his mode of existence. The boar reminds Odysseus not only of a leafy refuge but of ambush, not only of a defensive, passive strategy of seclusion (the olive) but of an offensive, active strategy of attack (the thorn). The two modes together constitute the distinctive habitus of Odysseus, of which the scar is the sign.

But what of the name "Odysseus" itself, whose manifold significations reflect the polymorphic style of its bearer? "Man of pain" is evident in the wound, of which its impression, the scar, remains, and pain will emerge in his adventures. But there is also a "man of anger," not only in the vengeance which we see taken by him on those who are destroying his house and wooing his wife, but also anger against Odysseus himself. There is something not very likeable in someone who holds himself in reserve beneath the screen and bursts forth like a flame in moves of deception. A proper name serves as a link between the inner habitus and outward appearance of its bearer. In the case of this Odysseus, however, his name would serve to betray the very mode of existence which that name represents: to name Odysseus is to defeat him. Hence, the name "Odysseus" must be hidden by its bearer, forestalled in its declaration, effaced in favor of an indefinite, common "somebody" (*tis*), or replaced in favor of another name, a pseudonym and a false identity.

When Odysseus awakens from his slumber that first night on Scheria, he will exclaim: "*Oh my! To what land of mortals have I come? Are they insolent and wild and unjust or are they stranger-loving and god-fearing in their nous?*" He will also exclaim this upon awakening back on Ithaca itself (vi 119–121 = xiii 200–202). These repeated utterances serve to establish the polarities in which this polytropic man of many devices will act. As we have already learned from Zeus (see previous stage), Odysseus will encounter the Phaeaceans, decidedly a stranger-loving and god-fearing people, ruled by a king, Alkinous ("mighty reason"), and queen, Arete ("prayed for"). They will return him to Ithaca, where he will encounter the suitors, insolent, wild, and unjust, presided over by Eurymachos ("wide-fighter") and Antinous ("anti-reason"). The drama of the *Odyssey* is largely that of how this self-marked man identifies himself in these two, very opposite companies.

Twelfth Stage: This much, at least, is also clear. Both Nausicaa and Athena advise Odysseus (vi 313–315 = vii 75–77) that his first identity, that before the Phaeaceans—and particularly before Queen Arete—is prerequisite to his second, that before the suitors, his family, and fellow Ithacans. "*If she might hold you dearly in her mind and in her spirit, then there is hope for you to see your dear ones and to arrive at your well-made home and your fatherland.*" Odysseus must convince Arete, who has veto power over his trip. This is later pointed up by the fact that Athena beautifies Odysseus before his appearance before the Phaeaceans in the same manner that she will later beautify him prior to his final revelation to Penelope (vi 230–235 = xxiii 157–162) and that the

black ship the Phaeaceans draw down to the sea, provision, and moor, an engine of destruction ready to take Odysseus home, repeats the description of the ship the suitors have equipped to ambush Telemachos (iv 780–783, 785 = viii 51–55).

Thirteenth Stage: *"I was borne for nine days and on that tenth dark night the gods drew me near the island of Ogygia where fair-tressed Calypso dwells, terrible god, who having taken me. . . "* Odysseus' Phaeacean story is framed, so to speak, by the shipwreck and his eventual arrival at Ogygia, the event with which he begins his tale in his private audience to the king and queen and with which he concludes his tale later in the Phaeacean assembly (vii 253–255 = xii 447–449). Odysseus has just explained in his audience to the king and queen *"when Zeus, having confined me in the middle of the wine-dark sea, cleaved my swift ship with a white thunderbolt. Here all the rest of my good companions died."* This pitiable scene had previously been described in nearly the same terms by Calypso to Hermes (v 131–133 = vii 249–251), and there Calypso is hoping to raise sympathy with Hermes (and Zeus) for herself and for the hopeless plight of the shipwrecked man whom she rescued and with whom she wants to continue living. Here, it seems, Odysseus is trying discreetly to raise sympathy with the Phaeacean king and queen for his own survival and continued fortune.

In the general Phaeacean assembly that tone of suffering and its attendant pity is manifest in Odysseus' lament after hearing the two songs of Troy sung by the minstrel Demodocos (viii 93–97 = viii 532–536): *"Here then, pouring a libation of tears he [Odysseus] escaped the notice of all the others, and Alkinoos alone considered him and marked him in his nous; and sitting near him, he heard him sighing deeply. And quickly he [Alkinoos] spoke among the oar-loving Phaeaceans: 'Hear now, leaders and counsellors of the Phaeaceans. . . .'"* We will hear no more of Troy on Scheria, either from Odysseus, Demodocos, or the others. The city-sacking man of wrath from Ilium has been replaced by the homeward-returning man of woe, bound for Ithaca. The details of this transformation are worked out in the tale which Odysseus must sing of himself before the Phaeaceans. This is his odyssey proper, the tale of his wanderings, structured in twelve episodes (or thirteen, if we include the Phaeacean adventure) which shift back and forth between hostile encounters and peaceful receptions: thus from the Ciconians (hostile) to the Lotus Eaters (peaceful) to the Cyclopes (hostile) to Aeolus (peaceful) to the Laestrygonians (hostile) to Circe (peaceful, with Hermes' aid) to the Sirens and Scylla (hostile) to Helios (peaceful) to Charybdis (hostile) to Calypso (peaceful) and thence to the Phaeaceans (peaceful). Of the peaceful episodes, only two, Aeolus and the Phaeaceans, are happily governed kingdoms, and here Odysseus is properly received as a guest and sent on his way back to Ithaca, failing the first time when he is thwarted by his suspicious and jealous shipmates (the release of the bag of

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winds of Aeolus), but succeeding the second time (the Phaeacean escort). In the remainder of the peaceful sojourns, Odysseus runs the risk of being trapped and in the hostile encounters, of course, the risk of being killed. Thus, spy missions to both the Lotus Eaters and Laestrygonians (ix 88–90 = x 100–102) fail to return or to return intact but for entirely different reasons, namely amnesia, a sort of death of soul, in the first case, and actual, physical death in the second. It is not surprising, therefore, that the wary Ithacan spy, Eurylochos, suspecting such a trap on Circe's island, Aeaëa, holds his ground and reports her trap to Odysseus (x 230–232 = x 256–258) and that Odysseus' final glimpse of the veiled Circe, with whom he lived for a month, repeats his final glimpse of Calypso, with whom he lived seven years (v 230–232 = x 543–545).

Fourteenth Stage: *“And cloud-gatherer Zeus urged the wind Boreas upon the ships in an awful tempest and covered land and sea alike with clouds, and night roused down from the heavens.”* The eleven episodes leading up to Calypso are framed, so to speak, by the storm of Zeus, which follows the raid and sack of the city of the Ciconians by Odysseus and his comrades (first episode) and the second storm which follows the killing of the cattle of Helios in the ninth episode (ix 67–69 = xii 313–315). These are the only two episodes in which the Ithacans themselves initiate aggression against their hosts, and Zeus sends sea storms in retribution. Together with the Laestrygonian adventure (fifth episode), these three encounters result in the loss of all of the companions with whom and the things with which Odysseus set out from Troy. After the Ciconians and Laestrygonians, where the majority of the Ithacans are lost, Odysseus and his remnant grieve mightily for two days (ix 74–76 = x 142–144).

In the case of the Helios episode, which effectively completes the loss of Odysseus' shipmates, Odysseus himself has been warned, first by Teiresias and then by Circe (xi 110–114 = xii 137–141) of the dire consequences of killing the cattle. But the warning went unheeded. Odysseus alone will survive to give this vivid description to the Phaeaceans and repeat it later to Eumaios on Ithaca in explanation of how he arrived at the sea-girt island (xii 403–406 = xiv 301–304; xii 415–419 = xiv 305–308): *“But when we left the island and not any other land was manifest to us but only the heavens and sea, the son of Cronos stood a dark blue cloud over the hollow ship, and the sea was shrouded in mist under it. . . . And all at once Zeus thundered and cast his thunderbolt into the ship, and the entire ship, stricken by Zeus' thunderbolt, was spun round and filled with sulfur, and all my companions fell from the vessel and like sea crows were borne about the black ship on the waves, and the god took away their return home.”*

Fifteenth Stage: *“Thus the whole day long up to the sinking sun we sit feasting on unspeakably great meat and sweet wine, and when the sun sank and went into darkness, we laid ourselves down to sleep at the breakers of the sea.”*

*And when early-born, rosy-fingered dawn appeared, then I bade my companions to go up and loosen the stern moorings. And quickly they entered the ship and sat at the oarlocks and seated, struck the sea in succession with their oars. Thence we sailed further on, grieved at heart*" (ix 556–558, ix 562–565). There are numerous short, repeated passages of about eighteen feet or so in Odysseus' tale to the Phaeaceans which describe embarkations, landings, or feasting, such as that above, where Odysseus and his party, having escaped Polyphemus and his neighboring Cyclopes, feast on the adjacent "Goat Island," and the next day Odysseus bids them to the oars and they depart. These repeated passages can be viewed as the counterpart here to the repeated rites of hospitality during Telemachos' journey (see seventh stage). The feasting portion of the passage above is repeated in the feast upon arrival at Circe's island (ix 556–560 = x 183–187) and is further incorporated into two other important feasts, namely, that at which the Ithacans decide to petition Circe to leave the island, and that just prior to their final departure from Aeaea (ix 556–558 = x 183–185 = x 476–478 = xii 29–31; x 475–479 = xii 28–32). The departure passage above is also intricately related to other repetitions in the Odyssean adventure: the last three lines also describe the departure from the Lotus Eaters (ix 563–565 = ix 103–105), while the first three the departure from Goat Island for the Cyclopes and their final leave of Circe (ix 562–564 = ix 178–180 = xii 145–147). Here Circe sends them a following wind, making further rowing unnecessary, as she also did when they set out from her for Hades (xi 6–10 = xii 148–152).<sup>13</sup> Odysseus' initial landfall on Goat Island anticipates his landfall on Aeaea after returning from Hades (ix 150–152 = xii 6–8), and the landfall on the land of the Lotus Eaters anticipates his second arrival on Aeolus (ix 85–87 = x 56–58). With the exception of this last parallel and one other reference to departure from the Lotus Eaters, all of the other repeated passages focus on the Cyclopes and Circe adventures, providing an epochal punctuation around these episodes, and revealing thereby something of their similar structure. The Cyclopes sequence begins with a landing on Goat Island, an expedition led by Odysseus to "Cyclopes Island" (both islands, significantly, are never named in the poem itself), an underground encounter, escape, return to Goat Island, and departure.<sup>14</sup> The Circe sequence, apart from those portions dealing with Circe herself, also begins with a landfall on Aeaea, an expedition to an underground place, Cimmerian Hades, return to Aeaea, and departure. This formal similarity leads us to inquire further into the interrelation of these two central episodes, Cyclopes and Hades, in Odysseus' tale.

Sixteenth Stage: Altogether Odysseus and his companions spend three days trapped in Polyphemus' cave with the giant and his goats, and the giant cannibalizes two men each day for his supper. Here is a portion of Odysseus' description to the Phaeaceans for the second day: "[*And then he rekindled the fire and milked the goodly flocks*] all according to moira and set the new-born

under each female, and when in toiling he had advanced these works, then again seizing two men he made ready supper" (ix 308–311). This must have buried itself in Odysseus' mind, because he repeats this to the Phaeaceans for the third day (ix 309–311 = ix 342–344): "[And sitting he milked the ewes and bleating goats] all fittingly and set the new-born under each female, and when in toiling he had advanced these works, then again seizing two men he made ready supper." The contrast in these two passages between the giant's care of his flocks, on the one hand, and his raw cannibalism, on the other, is marked; Polyphemus ("much talked-about") is not wild, but he is not human either, rather a deformed being whose signal deformation consists in his single eye. This incongruity in Polyphemus' activities is noted by Odysseus, who repeats to the Phaeaceans not only the horrors of the loss of two of his companions but also the suckling and care of the animals as well. The latter may very well, in fact, furnish Odysseus in the end the plan of escape from the cave: to tie his men in a "suckling" position beneath the bellies of the giant's rams and to escape himself in a similar manner when the flocks are released from the cave. But what sort of a man would come up with such a notion in the first place, given the dire straits in which he finds himself? To perceive and hold in mind not only the devouring of his men but also to take note at the same time of the milking and suckling of the flocks preceding this devouring would require one with the capacity for a detachment from the immediate, compelling acts of cannibalism in order to see and take detailed observance of the wider field.<sup>15</sup>

This Odyssean capacity for detachment is illustrated further by the second couplet of repetitions in the Cyclopes episode. Polyphemos, now blinded by Odysseus and angered at his escape and that of his companions from the cave, casts two large rocks at the fleeing ship, bearing the Ithacans away from the island and back to Goat Island. The first rock: "*And it hit a little in front of the dark blue-bowed ship and missed arriving at the tip of the ship, and the sea washed up over the down-plunging rock*" (ix 482–484). After an exchange of words between Polyphemos and Odysseus, to which we shall return momentarily, the giant launches the second rock: "*And it hit a little behind the dark blue-bowed ship and missed arriving at the tip of the ship, and the sea washed up over the down-plunging rock*" (ix 539–541). The first rock misses too far, but the resulting splash drives the ship back inland; the second rock misses too near, and the resulting splash forces the ship farther out to sea.<sup>16</sup> Both rocks, the second counterproductive to the first, miss. Although Polyphemos has the correct direction of the ship, doubtless from hearing the splash of its oars, he cannot get the correct range because of his blindness. Therefore the rocks overshoot or undershoot the vessel. The giant cannot perceive depth, a limitation not only produced by his blindness but inherent in his Cyclopean, one-eyed nature itself—a lack of stereoscopic vision.

It is this lack of depth perception, enlarged to its mental dimensions, that is

particularly at issue here, however. Polyphemos will greet Odysseus and companions with the same challenge Nestor will greet Odysseus' son, Telemachos at Pylos (iii 71–74 = ix 252–255): “*Strangers, who are you? Whence do you sail on watery ways? On some business have you wandered here or idly over the sea, like pirates, who, having put their psyches at risk, wander and bear evil to foreigners?*” But unlike Nestor, who entertains Telemachos as an honored guest, Polyphemos is unimpressed with Odysseus' truthful answer and begins the destruction of his visitors. In fact, it does not really matter whether the Ithacans are pirates or not. The giant lacks the vision to frame the question properly and to probe its truth: better, then, to treat all strangers as hostile, whether Zeus approves of this or not.

It is this same lack of vision that allows Odysseus to play his famous “no man” trick on Polyphemos and his fellow Cyclopean neighbors. What Polyphemos takes to be a proper name, “Noman,” when Odysseus tells him “Noman is his adversary,” his Cyclopes neighbors take as a common noun in the generic statement, “No man is his adversary.” Hence, they do not hasten to Polyphemos' aid, and the Ithacans make good their escape.<sup>17</sup> But the Ithacan leader, now out at sea and having evaded the first rock, cannot resist a boast reminiscent of those on the battlefield at Troy: “*Say that Odysseus, sacker of cities, son of Laertes, and having his home in Ithaca, blinded you*” (ix 504–505). This boast prompts the second rock, and although it too misses its target, Polyphemos through prayer to his father, Poseidon, still seems to have the last word. Poseidon, in vengeance, will now indeed do everything in his power to insure that Odysseus does, in fact, become the “no man” he claimed to be before Polyphemos. Odysseus will become a man apparently lost at sea and vanished without a trace.

Seventeenth Stage: “*Dig a trench as much as a cubit long here and there and about it pour an offering to all the corpses, an offering first with mixed honey, then with sweet wine, and thirdly with water, and upon this sprinkle white barley. And supplicate the many powerless heads of the corpses, and when you arrive back on Ithaca, sacrifice a barren heifer, that which is best in your chambers, and fill a pyre with goods, and in addition to all this sacrifice to Teiresias alone an all-black sheep, a distinguished one in your flocks. And when you beseech the renowned throngs of the corpses. . . . Having flayed the flocks, now down upon the ground, slit their throats with the pitiless bronze, burn [the bodies] down, and pray to the gods, to mighty Hades and to dread Persephone. Drawing your sword by your thigh, sit and do not allow the powerless heads of the corpses to come near the blood before learning from Teiresias.*” This portion of the instructions Circe gives Odysseus is repeated by Odysseus himself almost verbatim as he describes to the Phaeaceans how he carried her directions out (x 517–526 = xi 25–34; x 532–537 = xi 45–50). The rites of entrance to the world of the dead are thus performed; a link is

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established between the two worlds. Just as in the rites of hospitality it is openly recognized that the guest is both in his host's house but yet not of this host's house, so here too Odysseus sojourns as a guest both in yet not of the house of Hades. As if to emphasize this ambiguous situation, Odysseus now first meets in Hades his hapless shipmate Elpenor, who describes to Odysseus his death as the poet had previously described it taking place in the land of the living (x 558–560 = xi 63–65) and who asks for the rites of burial when Odysseus returns so that Elpenor's psyche may properly enter Hades.

Odysseus' specific and primary mission to Hades is to hear the words of the blind seer, Teiresias, who, Circe tells us, alone of all the psyches in the underworld has been granted intellect (*nous*) and a steadfast mind (*phrenes*) by Persephone. Teiresias, then, unlike the other psyches there, who speak only of their past and know nothing of what has happened since their departure from the land of the living—unless informed by a newcomer—has understanding of the present and of the future. Teiresias alone of the souls Odysseus meets can advise him. The seer first warns Odysseus not to harm the cattle of Helios, a warning that Circe will later repeat upon the Ithacan's return (xi 110–114 = xii 137–141): if these animals are harmed, Odysseus will indeed return late to his home, alone, in a foreign ship and to a house full of woes—thus fulfilling Poseidon's ill wishes for him (cf. ix 532–535). Next Teiresias tells Odysseus that he will take vengeance on the wooers and then gives him instructions concerning the journey with the oar: *“Having seized the well-fitted oar, go until you have arrived at those men who do not know the sea nor eat salted food nor know the red-cheeked ships nor the well-fitted oars that turn out to be their wings. I shall tell you a clear and manifest sign, and it will not escape your notice: when some wayfarer, joining up with you, says that you have a winnowing fan upon your stately shoulder, then, having stuck the well-fitted oar in the ground, and having performed fine sacrifices to Poseidon—a ram, a bull, and a boar, a mounter of sows—go back home and perform sacred public sacrifices to the gods who hold the broad heavens—indeed to all of them one after another. And then a gentle death will come to you far off from the sea, a death that might kill you distressed by sleek old age. And your people about you will be rich. These things I say to you unerringly”* (xi 121–137). Odysseus will later repeat these instructions in the same words to Penelope after their reunion on Ithaca (xi 121–137 = xxiii 268–284). In effect, Odysseus will have to journey to an area remote from the sea and make an empty sailor's grave. In so doing he will, in fact, carry out the funeral rites for *outis*, for “no man,” and join to these the propitiatory rites to Poseidon, and then later on rites to all the Olympians individually. It is by these ceremonies that Odysseus may hope to depart the land of anonymity and recover his *kleos*.

Eighteenth Stage: *“Thus he spoke, and my spirit was broken, and seated in the sands I wept, and my heart no longer wished to live and see the light of the*

*sun.*” The heartbroken response Menelaos tells Telemachos when he learned of his brother’s death is repeated by Odysseus when he learns from Circe that he must visit Hades (iv 538–541 = x 496–499) and may, perhaps, herald Agamemnon’s appearance to Odysseus in the underworld. Odysseus asks Agamemnon’s psyche there (xi 399–401): “*Did Poseidon subdue you in your ships, he having roused the unenviable breath of grievous winds, or did ill-fitting men do you harm on the dry land [when you were cutting off for yourselves cattle and beautiful flocks of sheep or were fighting over a city and women?]*” The psyche of Agamemnon, who will later appear similarly to the suitors as to Odysseus (xi 387–389 = xxiv 20–22) and put the same question above to the psyche of Amphimedon, one of the slain suitors (xi 399–403 = xxiv 109–113), will reply to Odysseus in kind (xi 399–401 = xi 406–408): “*Poseidon has not subdued me in my ships, he having roused the unenviable breath of grievous winds, nor did ill-fitting men do me harm on the dry land.*” Agamemnon will explain to Odysseus the treachery of his wife, Clytemnestra, in conspiracy with her suitor, Aegisthus, who killed him as he returned home unknowingly “*as one kills an ox at the stall*” (xi 411). “*And the psyche of Peleus’ son, Achilles, came upon [Odysseus] and that of Patroclus and that of blameless Antilochos and that of Ajax, who was the best of the other Danaans in body and looks after the blameless son of Peleus.*” The souls of the Argive heroes at Troy will similarly encounter the souls of the slain wooers at the end of the *Odyssey* as they encountered Odysseus here in the eleventh book (xi 467–470 = xxiv 15–18), but, unlike Odysseus’ earlier visit, these Argive heroes will have nothing to say to the new arrivals in Hades.

If the themes told by Teiresias in the underworld have their center of reference in the observance of the rites of the household, then the themes introduced by Agamemnon there have a corresponding center in the violation of such rites. Although the words of the blind seer are Odysseus’ primary object in his visit to Hades, those of the slain Mycenaean king emerge as no less important. The polarity between the godly and hospitable, on the one hand, and the ungodly and wild, on the other (see eleventh stage), while no less operative, is sometimes not an easy one to discern; apparent friends may be enemies. Odysseus is told, in effect, that he must be alert to the possibility of the most malicious treachery and dissimulation, that of spouse against spouse. The example of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra is decisive in determining how Odysseus will reenter his own household.

In order to set this homecoming in a still wider context, the four principal thematic strands thus far indicated in the tale may be set forth, as Odysseus and his escorts leave Scheria for Ithaca: first of all, *kleos*, especially that of Odysseus, its vanishing and the attempt to recover it, as here in the first, second, sixth, eighth, and seventeenth stages, above; in the second place, *xenia* and its violation by the suitors and by Odysseus and his shipmates, as here in the third, fifth, seventh, tenth, thirteenth, and fourteenth stages; in the third place, weav-

ing and concealment by Penelope and by Odysseus, as in the fourth, eleventh, twelfth, and sixteenth stages; in the fourth and last place, entrapment and betrayal, especially in the story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra in the ninth and eighteenth stages. We shall see how these four themes, together with a fifth, introduced next, are interwoven by Zeus and Athena in Odysseus' homecoming.

### *E. The Roots of Ithaca*

Nineteenth Stage: As the ship bearing the sleeping Odysseus nears its Ithacan landfall, the poet describes the harbor wherein the ship will land. "*And at the head of the harbor there is a long-leaved olive tree and near it a pleasant, misty grotto, which the naiads among the nymphs call sacred.*" Athena will shortly repeat these words to Odysseus, who is in disbelief that he is actually home and suspicious of a trap (xiii 102–104 = xiii 346–348). Grotto and olive tree are emblematic of the place. Catching sight of these, Odysseus is convinced and offers prayers of thanksgiving to the naiads. Their grotto will be sanctuary for the gifts the Phaeaceans have given him, and its image leads both Odysseus and us to thoughts of refuge and security which only a homecoming can bring. The olive, rooted as it is in its singular presence at the head of the harbor, furnishes us with that sense of definitive and unique presence we sense when we actually are home. The events on Ithaca will compel us to return to the olive and these thoughts later on.

Twentieth Stage: "*And exceedingly does she remain with enduring heart in your chambers, and ever do woes night and day cause her to waste away, shedding tears.*" Anticleia tells Odysseus in Hades these words, referring to the constant lament and grief of his wife, Penelope, over his absence, and Eumaios, having spied out Ithaca for the recently returned Telemachos, will repeat them later in book xvi (xi 181–183 = xvi 37–39). Penelope herself makes four repeated professions of her sorrowful longing for her husband and her dilemma at Ithaca; in all four instances one of the hearers is the disguised Odysseus himself. First, in the fireside audience in book xix: "*Mounting up to my upper chamber, I will lie upon the bed which is built for me as a bed of wailing, ever wet with my tears from the day when Odysseus went with the sons of Atreus to Ilium.*" She had previously also declared this to Telemachos after questioning him upon his return about news of Odysseus (xvii 101–103 = xix 594–596). Second, to the compliments of the disguised guest in book xxiii, as to those of the suitor Eurymachos earlier (xviii 250–256 = xix 123–129): "*Him then circumspect Penelope answered: 'Eurymachos [stranger], my virtue in looks and form the immortals destroyed when the Argives went up to Ilium and after them went my husband Odysseus. If he in coming should attend my life, so much the greater and more beautiful should be my kleos, but now I*

*ache, for such evils has the daimon put upon me.'*" Third, of these evils she tells the stranger in their fireside chat that she is faced with the choice whether she should "*show reverence for the bed of her mate and the talk of the land, or whether she should follow now one of the Achaeans, whoever as a man woos her the best in her chambers and furnishes her the most.*" Telemachos had pondered this alternative earlier with Eumaios as the two sat in the swineherd's hut (xvi 75–77 = xix 527–529). Fourth, in response to the stranger's oath that Odysseus will come at the waning of the old month and at the rising of the new, an oath he had previously sworn to Eumaios in book xiv (xiv 159–162 = xix 304–307), Penelope replies: "*Oh would that this word, stranger, be wrapped up. Accordingly you should soon know much affection and many gifts from me, so that someone meeting you would call you blessed.*" Penelope had uttered this earlier on hearing Theoclymenos' prophecy that Odysseus is already on Ithaca (xvii 162–165 = xix 308–311), as had Telemachos exclaimed it still earlier at Theoclymenos' interpretation of the omen of hawk and dove on Pylos (xv 536–538 = xvii 163–165 = xix 309–311).

After telling the stranger of dreaming of a similar apparition, that of an eagle (husband) devouring geese (suitors), a dream she believes came forth from the false gate of ivory rather than the true gate of horn, Penelope announces to her disguised husband and later to the assembled wooers the contest of the bow (xix 577–581 = xxi 75–79): "*He who might most easily stretch the bow in his palms and shoot through all twelve axes, him I ought to follow, leaving my wedded house, much beautiful, a fulfillment of life. I believe I shall remember it even then in my dreams.*" Note here that Penelope really sets forth two challenges in this contest: not only a test of strength but also a test of skill. The suitors will not meet even the first of these tests. One by one they fail to stretch the bow and set the string. One by one each contestant sets down the bow again and leans it against the door jamb and returns to his seat (xxi 136–139 = xxi 163–166).<sup>18</sup> And so the contest at once resolves the dilemma of her remarriage, responds to the mystery of the whereabouts of Odysseus on the island, and answers her dream: Penelope will award her disguised husband the engine of destruction for the suitors. Indeed, it will pass through their very hands to Odysseus, who will not fail to meet the twofold challenge. Between the gates of horn of the bow true bane will come for them, as for the geese in the talons and beak of the eagle of Penelope's dream.<sup>19</sup>

Twenty-first Stage: "*And one ought to live off of these things yet unto the tenth generation, so many of the treasures of the lord lay in his chambers. He said that Odysseus went to Dodona to hear the counsel of Zeus from the divine, lofty-leaved oak concerning how he ought to return home to the rich land of Ithaca, whether openly or in secret, he being absent now a long time.*" Despite the evidence (above) of the faithfulness and trustworthiness of Penelope, Odysseus continues in his disguise to his wife. He tells her that Odysseus, ship-

wrecked and deprived of his shipmates by a storm raised by Zeus near Thrinicia over their slaughter of the cattle of Helios, was honored like a god by the Phaeaceans and is now gathering still more wealth among the Thesprotians. In part of this tale he lifts a passage from a tale he told previously to Eumaios about the whereabouts of Odysseus (xiv 325–330 = xix 294–299): Odysseus is getting counsel from Zeus whether he should return openly, like Agamemnon, or in secret as he did when he penetrated the walls of Troy in the belly of a wooden horse. The stranger will continue this tale to Penelope as follows: “*And he [King Pheidon of the Thesprotians] swore to me, pouring a libation in his home, that he drew down the ship and the mates are ready who will send him to his dear fatherland. But he sent me away earlier, because a ship of the Thesprotian men going to Dulchium of much wheat chanced upon us.*” Thus the stranger tells Penelope that he narrowly missed meeting Odysseus in words again borrowed from that told earlier to Eumaios (xiv 331–335 = xix 288–292).<sup>20</sup> Despite not having met Odysseus in person, the beggar-stranger seems to know a great deal about him, and both Penelope and the stranger agree that the stranger himself looks much like Odysseus. Both Eumaios and Penelope thus learn that Odysseus has the option of returning openly or hidden. The latter course of action, as we know, has already been given to Odysseus. Zeus and Poseidon, by depriving Odysseus of his Ithacan shipmates and by rendering him an anonymous “no man” on the high seas, have given him the perfect cover to slip back into Ithaca unnoticed and incognito. The two gods, together with Athena, have given him, so to speak, the power of making himself invisible. It is through the visible actions of others provoked by this invisible man that certain matters are rendered visible to us, the hearers of the tale, who are also situated in a privileged, invisible position. These matters thus brought to light may be said to constitute the lesson of the story.

The fireside audience with the beggar-stranger concludes. “*And having gone up to the upper chamber with her attendant women, she then cried over Odysseus, her dear husband, until gleaming-eyed Athena cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.*” So will she also conclude her final appearance to the suitors after announcing the bow contest and being dismissed from the hall by Telemachos (xix 602–604 = xxi 356–358).

Twenty-second Stage: “*[I should wish] to have died than ever to have seen these unseemly deeds here and them striking guest-strangers and dragging slave-women and women in an unseemly manner through the beautiful house.*” Odysseus, while yet in disguise to his son, tells him these sentiments, and later Telemachos rebukes the suitor Ctesippus in the presence of his comrades and repeats these words to them (xvi 107–109 = xx 317–319). It is clear here and in other passages that the suitors will only quit the house of Laertes by force and, in fact, that they must be killed.<sup>21</sup> But we have also been informed that there are 108 of these wooers plus a dozen or so accomplices and attendants

recruited from Odysseus' own who are their partisans—a far greater number than the four protagonists (plus Eurycleia) who will face them.<sup>22</sup> Here then we have a situation corollary to that in Polyphemos' cave: there a mighty giant faced numerous weaklings; here numerous suitors, mighty in their collective power, face a few, weak in numbers.

But the question is not if Odysseus' group will vanquish these foes but how. Although greatly outnumbered, our protagonists will succeed because the suitors are not successful in penetrating Odysseus' disguise. This failure is part and parcel of the sort of men the suitors are. They are repeatedly introduced as dancing, sporting types; so do we find them back on Ithaca while Telemachos is away at Pylos and Sparta: "*The suitors, on the other hand, delighted themselves before the chambers of Odysseus with quoits and the casting of javelins on the wrought floor, where they had just as much hubris as before.*" And so do we find them described again (iv 625–627 = xvii 167–169) on the next to last day of their frolic in the Ithacan palace. And they convene for their penultimate and ultimate evening festivities, "*set down their cloaks on couches and thrones and slaughtered great sheep and fat goats and slew fatted pigs and a heifer of the field*" (xvii 179–181 = xx 249–251). Finally, on the eve of Telemachos' call to assembly and again on the eve of their own destruction "*having turned themselves to dance and desirable song, they delighted themselves and awaited the coming of evening. And dark evening came upon them delighting themselves*" (i 421–423 = xviii 304–306). The suitors as a group are totally unaware of the dark events being shaped for them.

Furthermore, there are numerous challenges to Odysseus to identify himself throughout the adventure. The challenge that Telemachos puts to Athena, disguised as Mentos, in book i—"*Who and whence are you among men? Where is your city and parents? Upon what sort of ship did you arrive here? How did the sailors lead you to Ithaca? Who do they boast to be? For I do not believe you came here on foot*"—is later put by Eumaios to the newly arrived Odysseus, disguised as a beggar (i 170–173 = xiv 187–190). In abbreviated form, Telemachos will question Eumaios about the new arrival and, after Odysseus has revealed himself to his son, Telemachos will question his father directly: "*Upon what sort of ship did you arrive here? How did the sailors lead you to Ithaca? Who do they boast to be? For I do not believe you came here on foot*" (i 171–173 = xiv 188–190 = xvi 57–59 = xvi 222–224). No such questions, however, greet the disguised Odysseus from the suitors and their partisans.

As far as the suitors and their allies are concerned, Odysseus is what he appears to be, a lowly beggar, a nonentity, a "no man." He is not asked his name nor his parents nor his past nor his manner of arrival on Ithaca. Unlike his appearances before the members of his own family and household, Odysseus is not constrained to fabricate an identity for them, but, as if to point up their lack of curiosity, he volunteers one in their presence to his principal antagonist, the wooer Antinoos, and later to the goatherd Melanthius, who is

aiding and abetting the suitors (xvii 419–424 = xix 75–80): “*For I also once dwelt among rich men in a rich house and often used to give the wanderer, whosoever he might be and of whatsoever need he might come. Indeed, there were many slaves and much else by which men live well and are called rich. But Zeus, son of Cronos, drained me of this—for so he wished.*” And Odysseus continues to Antinoos in the same words a portion of his Cretan tale told earlier to Eumaios (xiv 258–272 = xvii 427–442): that as a wealthy Cretan and former comrade of Idomeneus at Troy, he later came to ruin during his return from Ilium in an abortive city-sacking expedition in Egypt. This story and the subsequent episodes told of the wanderings of the Cretan fail to excite the interest of Antinoos, however; the stranger in his eyes is still a beggar, and Antinoos takes offense, flings a footstool at him, a footstool which lacks sufficient force to do any damage, however, much less make the beggar reel from its impact.<sup>23</sup> While it is then suggested by one unidentified suitor (xvii 482–487) that the beggar-stranger might be a god in disguise, this possibility is dismissed out of hand (xvii 488). At another point (xviii 124–150) Odysseus resumes to the suitor Amphinomos with the moral: man is feeble and fortune fickle. But this tale too fails to impress. Later, Eurymachos, another chief suitor, observes a certain radiance about the beggar (xviii 351–355) but mocks it, taunts the stranger as a lazy good-for-nothing as did Melanthius earlier (xvii 226–228 = xviii 362–364), and, when challenged by the stranger, berates him for his boldness as Melanthe, Melanthius’ sister, did earlier (xviii 330–333 = xviii 390–393) and throws another footstool. This one Odysseus ducks, and it hits a wine server in the hand, knocking server, jug, and wine to the floor. The stranger becomes the active object of derision among the group as a whole. Although it is twice suggested in the same words by different suitors, Amphinomos and Damastor (xviii 414–417 = xx 322–325) that “*Friends, no one ought to make difficulties by appealing with wrangling words against a just one speaking. Neither strike the stranger nor any other among the slaves who are in the home of divine Odysseus.*” these warnings too are of no avail.

In contrast, the behavior of the “Odysseans” in the household is marked by acts of hospitality to the stranger, most notably, as we have seen, by that of Penelope herself, but also in small gestures, such as Eumaios’ promise, “*Yet when the dear son of Odysseus might come, he himself will give you a cloak, tunic, and robes, and he will send you where your heart and spirit bid.*” This offer is given twice, after the tale of the stranger in book xiv and a second time just before Telemachos’ arrival in book xv (xiv 515–517 = xv 337–339). Again, in the company of the suitors Telemachos spies his disguised father at the door, gives two loaves of bread into the hands of Eumaios, and orders the swineherd, “*bearing these, give them to the stranger and bid him, going about all the wooers, to beg. Shame is no good companion for a man in want.*” Eumaios relays both the loaves and the message to the guest: “*Telemachos gives these to you, stranger, and bids you going about all the wooers, to beg.*”

*Shame is no good companion for a man in want*" (xvii 345–347 = xvii 350–352).<sup>24</sup>

In Odysseus' arrival on Ithaca and the subsequent two days of the assembly we thus have woven together four of the major thematic strands that have developed and pervaded the earlier portion of the tale: *kleos* and its vanishing; *xenia* and its violation; weaving, covering, and hiddenness; disloyalty and betrayal. Odysseus is the exemplar of the first and third of these two themes, *kleos* and hiddenness. The suitors and their allies in Odysseus' household bear witness to the second and the fourth, *xenia* and disloyalty. The interweaving of the four as dramatized before us constitutes this lesson: despite the rags, Odysseus' woven covering, and the stories that he fabricates about his past, the suitors are unwilling to probe the depth of the man to reveal the *kleos* of Odysseus. This stands in marked contrast to Penelope, Telemachos, and Eumaios, who all ask the stranger who he is. The unwillingness of the suitors reveals an incapacity of which we have been made aware earlier, namely, that they have the same sort of Cyclopean mind that Polyphemos demonstrates—a lack of depth, a superficiality, epitomized here by their game playing. This incapacity is linked to the impropriety of the suitors as hosts for the stranger, on the one hand, and as guests of the stranger, on the other hand; in the case of their servant-allies, it traces to their disloyalty and betrayal of the household. This stands again in marked contrast to Penelope, Telemachos, and Eumaios, who offer acts of hospitality and retain their proper stations in the household. All four themes, repute, hospitality, hiddenness, and disloyalty, thus associate here and entwine, so to speak, about a common root. Just as Odysseus will complete the Cyclopean condition by blinding Polyphemos, so too, here Athena finally drives the suitors witless: "*roused unquenchable laughter and turned their minds aside, and now they laughed with alien lips and ate bloody flesh and their eyes were filled with tears and their spirits were bent on wailing*" (xx 345–349).

On the acts of insolence of the wooers, the poet tells us twice, once on each day of Odysseus' encounter with these men (xviii 346–348 = xx 284–286): "*But Athena would not allow the manly suitors to hold themselves back at all from grievous outrage, in order that still more would the ache enter the heart of Odysseus, son of Laertes.*" The lesson which Athena is manifestly teaching Odysseus here is not lost on the hearers and witnesses of the drama, and it culminates within the story itself in the declaration of the cowherd Philoetios, who rails against the suitors to the disguised stranger: "*'You would know what sort of power is mine and my hands back it up.'* And thus also did Eumaios pray to all the gods that ready-minded Odysseus would return to his home." The two servants, Philoetios and Eumaios, are moved to make these declarations and acts twice (xx 237–239 = xxi 202–204), once before and once after the suitors are roused to madness by Athena. After the second declaration, the stranger reveals himself as Odysseus and gains two ready recruits to his cause.

Twenty-third Stage: “. . . Yet you are to exhort the suitors with soft words when they, yearning, might question you: ‘I have placed them [the weapons] down away from the smoke, since they no longer seemed such as they were when Odysseus left for Troy but were marred insofar as the breath of fire reached them. Furthermore, the son of Cronos also set in my mind this: lest you, having gotten drunk and having stirred up some dispute among yourselves, might come to grief and act shamefully toward one another both in the feast and in wooing; for the iron itself draws a man to it.’” Odysseus gives these instructions to Telemachos twice (xvi 286–294 = xix 5–13) concerning the stratagem to remove the weapons hung on the walls of his chambers safely out of the suitors’ sight and use: the weapons need cleaning and the suitors might injure themselves with them. The trap is thus set, and it closes when Odysseus relays the order to Eumaios, who repeats it to Eurycleia (xxi 236–239 = xxi 382–385) “to bar the close-fitting doors of the chamber, and if anyone might hear the moan or noise of men within our bulwark, she is not to advance but remain there in silence with her work.” With the women out of the picture and the doors secured, the ensnarement of the unsuspecting, unwary suitors is now complete.

But the ensuing action is not without its anxious moments. Telemachos has left the sequestered weapons in a closet which he has forgotten to lock, and Melanthius has filched them for some of the suitors. Odysseus and his companions now face superior arms. Athena has to intervene. “Then to them Athena, daughter of Zeus, came near, looking like Mentor in body and in voice. Seeing her, Odysseus was glad and spoke a word” (xxii 205–207). Significantly, only Odysseus is able to penetrate the goddess’ disguise, and he greets her: “Mentor, ward off ruin and remember me, a dear companion who has done you good” (xxii 208–209). The suitors merely see Mentor, whom they threaten if he goes over to Odysseus’ side. Athena chides and rallies Odysseus. Now the wooers cast their spears at the Odysseans, but Athena “set them all in vain. One of them hit the doorpost of the well-placed chamber and another the close-fitting door and another ashen spear, heavy with bronze, fell upon the wall” (xxii 256–259). The Odysseans throw in return, each of them taking down a victim. The wooers again cast their spears at the Odysseans, but Athena again sets them all in vain (xxii 273–276 = xxii 256–259). The battle now turns to close fighting, in which the Odysseans are victorious. By this means Athena closes the trap temporarily sprung open by the goatherd’s treachery; all of the suitors are killed, as are subsequently all of their household allies.

But such a closure has its dire consequences. The families of the slain men, led by Antinoos’ father, Eupheithes, seek vengeance upon the house of Laertes. Once again (refer to stage ten above) interests based on the just treatment of guests are opposed to those based on kinship. As Poseidon had earlier avenged his son Polyphemos by bringing down all of Odysseus’ Phaeacean hosts, so here Athena has avenged the violation of Odysseus’ household by bringing

down all of the suitors; the second action of the Odysseans (suitor slaying) has, in effect, answered the first action of Poseidon (the Phaeacean destruction). But this act now serves to bring on the next retaliatory cycle, based on kinship; in seeking to reestablish the house of Laertes, Athena has created conditions in which it is impossible for the house to persist, much less to rule. Laertes, Odysseus, Telemachos, and their allies, ten men in all, face the hostile relatives and partisans of the slain suitors. With Zeus' approval, Athena has to intervene. "*Then to them Athena, daughter of Zeus, came near, looking like Mentor in body and in voice. Seeing her, Odysseus was glad and spoke a word*" (xxiv 502–504 = xxii 205–207). However, the word spoken here, unlike that on the previous occasion, need not be spoken to beseech the aid of Athena, but is spoken to rally Telemachos. This time the Odysseans have more confidence in themselves and more success. It is Athena who finally calls off their attack and makes peace.

Twenty-fourth Stage: "*No other woman with a hard heart ought to stand apart from her man, who, having suffered much, should have come in the twentieth year to his native land.*" Telemachos utters this reproach to Penelope, who is now having second thoughts about the supposed return of her husband, and Odysseus himself repeats it to her later (xxiii 100–102 = xxiii 168–170), after the macabre, mock wedding scene, his shedding of the rags, and epiphany at the hands of Athena. Does Penelope believe the suitor-slayer is actually a god in disguise, as she professes (xxiii 63–68)?<sup>25</sup> Or does she recognize that it is Odysseus all along, has played the part of the ignorant spouse, and now perhaps wishes to tease her husband for his godlike *hubris*? Penelope, it appears, has as many subtleties and stratagems as Odysseus. A much closer reading than that given here would be required, especially of the latter portion of the *Odyssey*, to begin to resolve these questions.<sup>26</sup> Whatever their answer, it seems clear that Zeus, Poseidon, and Athena, in contributing to the return incognito of the man as a "no man," have rendered him a sort of demigod. Achilles held his semidivine status by birth and by stature; Odysseus holds his by the endowment of the gods and by craft. But if then by craft, then by craft the man has to be tricked forth again: the boar must be made to charge forth from his lair. This Penelope does by telling him that his bedstead, hewn long ago from the stump of a long-leafed olive in situ, has been uprooted, sawn off, and placed outside the master bedchamber. Odysseus immediately explodes in anger and disbelief that anyone could have done such a thing. The man stands revealed, and "*right there her knees and dear heart were loosened, and she recognized the signs, the steadfast ones, which Odysseus told her*" (xxiii 205–206). Once again the rooted, long-leafed olive has given a certain and secure sign, this time to Penelope. In a similar manner, the trees of the place will also assure Laertes that the stranger he sees before him really is his son (xxiv 336–344). Odysseus can tell Laertes the kinds and numbers of the fruit trees and

where they were planted in the orchard when he was a boy, and likewise the vines in the vineyard. By such knowledge and attentiveness thereto the wanderer reveals to his father, as he revealed to his wife, and indeed as it was initially revealed to him by Athena, that his *physis* is also of the rock and soil of this place, Ithaca, and not of some other place or even of no place on earth at all.

#### FINAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Thus far, the long repeated passages have been taken as guides to reveal the development of five principal themes and their interweaving in the *Odyssey*: repute, hospitality, hiddenness, betrayal, and rootedness. To return now to the questions with which this study began: Do the themes that thus emerge from the *Odyssey* provide at least in part an interpretation of the repetitive style in which the drama is set? How does this style and its interpretation, in turn, reflect the pattern of divine action in the poem? Some answers to the first of these questions will, perhaps, suggest an answer to the second.

The first question will be considered under two aspects: from the standpoint of the theme of repute and then in aspects which more properly relate to hospitality and betrayal. "News" and "fame" imply, on the one hand, that the newsworthy or famous exhibits—often repeatedly at different times and in different places—by either word or action that which, on the other hand, is remembered and talked about by others at various times and in various places. Here we see scattered throughout the narrative repeated laments of Penelope, Telemachos, Eumaios, Philoetios over the absence of Odysseus, similarly repeated protestations over the behavior of the suitors, the repeated questions of Telemachos concerning the whereabouts of his father. Other repetitions surface as part of the repeated stories in the poem—Penelope's weaving trick, Agamemnon's murder and Orestes' vengeance, Odysseus' scar, Odysseus' Cretan identity.<sup>27</sup> All of these incidents, both the short fragments and the longer stories, scattered as they are throughout the narrative, constitute the "news" and "fame" which pervade the poem itself and which direct our attitudes to the persons within it and serve to raise certain broad themes, just as the poem itself, in turn, is part of the wider "news" and "fame" of the larger legend in which we participate as its witnesses, bearers, and disseminators. Seen in this light, the repetitions thus become icons for the *kleos* of Odysseus and the other characters in the poem and, indeed, of the poem as a whole.

To introduce the second aspect, that of hospitality and its betrayal, one recalls (especially in the seventh and fifteenth stages) that there are numerous epochal, liminal moments common in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* which are set in repeated longer passages, such as those considered here, or in shorter repeated formulae. Indeed, some of these repetitions are common to both epics, and

include signs of greeting such as the greeting Hephaistos gives Thetis in *Iliad* XVIII: "Why do you come to our house, revered and dear one? You do not frequent it before. Speak what is on your mind. My spirit (thumos) bids me fulfill it if I am able and if it is indeed that which is fulfillable." Calypso gives the same greeting to Hermes in the fifth book of the *Odyssey* (XVIII 424–427 = v 87–90). Also among these moments are signs of the opening or closing of scenes and actions: "And the wind swelled out the middle of the sail, and the purple wave about the stern of the ship gave a great hiss, and the ship ran through the wave making its way." In such words are described the departures of Odysseus, after delivering the daughter of Chryses, in *Iliad* I and Telemachos from Ithaca for Pylos in *Odyssey* ii (I 481–483 = ii 427–429). Prayers, sacrifices, and other observances to the gods also belong here. Consider the following familiar passage: "And when they had prayed and cast before the coarse-ground barley, they first drew back the victims' heads and slit their throats and flayed them; and then they cut out the thighs and covered them with sacrificial fat, having made a double layer; and on these they placed pieces of meat. And when they had burnt down the thighs and tasted the inner parts, they cut up the rest and pierced it through with spits and roasted it carefully, and then drew off all the spits. And when they had ceased from their labor and prepared the feast, they feasted, nor did a spirit lack in the equally-shared banquet. And when they had put off from the desire of drinking and meat. . . ." Lengthy portions of this passage appear in Chryses' sacrifice to Apollo in *Iliad* I, Agamemnon's to Zeus in *Iliad* II, the rites of the Argive assembly to the gods in *Iliad* VII, Eurylochos' sacrifice of the cattle of Helios in *Odyssey* xii, and the sacrificial observances of Telemachos and company to the gods in *Odyssey* xvi.<sup>28</sup> Conversely, prophecies, commands, and other messages from the gods and the divine realm belong here, such as Teiresias' warning to Odysseus about the cattle of Helios, repeated by Circe (xi 110–114 = xii 137–141), or the blind prophet's instructions to Odysseus concerning the winnowing fan, repeated by Odysseus to Penelope (xi 121–137 = xxiii 268–284). Arming and dressing scenes are also epochal moments. In illustration, elements of the following passage are found repeated in the *Iliad* in the arming of Paris (book III), of Agamemnon (XI), of Patroclus (XVI), and of Achilles (XIX): "And first he set on the beautiful greaves about his calves, the greaves fitted with silver bands, and second he put on the cuirass about his chest, the decorated, starry cuirass of Aeacus' descendant, the swift-footed one. And about his shoulders he cast his bronze sword, whose hilt was studded with silver nails, and next his large, compact shield, and upon his mighty head he set the well-made helmet with its horse-hair crest, and terribly did the crest nod from above; and he grasped his powerful spear, which fitted into the palm of his hand."<sup>29</sup> Finally among epochal moments we include the reception of guests and their hospitality, as we find when Achilles orders a bed for Priam and his herald in *Iliad* XXIV and Helen for Telemachos and Nestor's son in *Odyssey* iv

(XXIV 644–647 = iv 297–300): “to set the beds under the colonnade and cast thereon fine purple blankets and spread out the coverlets on top and lay upon and clothe them with fleecy cloaks. And the slave women went from the chamber holding torches in their hands.”

These epochal moments of greeting, departure, divine and public rites, commands and warnings from the gods, dressing, hospitality, and the opening and closing of scenes are all characterized by the recognition of peculiar, paradoxical and transitional modes of being. The stranger whom I greet is greeted as one known, but in fact I do not (yet) know him. The friend to whom I bid farewell will be absent from me but is not forgotten, and hence will be both an absence from and a presence to me. Address from mortals to the gods and also from gods to mortals implies familiarity with them, but since they are immortal beings with powers vastly exceeding those of humans, an indicated unfamiliarity also—thus, both a nearness to and also a distance from them. This same nearness yet distance may suggest the primary reason gods often speak to mortals through intermediaries, messengers of less divine status, rather than directly. Further, in dressing either for daily activity or for specific tasks, as in arming for battle, my private being is overlaid with a public being, a public persona, and I go forth as two beings in one presence. In addition, the opening of scenes and actions, which are often dictated in formulae, indicates a beginning to a series of events which we would otherwise naturally regard as a continuation of those from an unarticulated past, and conversely, the closing of scenes from a naturalistic standpoint is always a terminus imposed on a series of events which we have every expectation will continue on into an uncited future. Finally, of crucial importance in the *Odyssey* is the institution of hospitality. By according the various rites of hospitality to a guest, the guest is received by his host as one who is both in his host’s house but is yet not of his host’s house, which is to say that the guest is treated as a kinsman while yet preserving the distinction of stranger. The institution of hospitality thus steers between two poles. If the guest is in fact welcomed in as kinsman, as Clytemnestra welcomed Aegisthus as husband and as Penelope ponders doing with one of the suitors, the rest of the family is betrayed. On the other hand, if the guest is welcomed as guest and then treated as stranger, as we see in the various hostile encounters in Odysseus’ tale, or if the welcome is refused outright, as in the case of the boorish suitors, then the guest is trapped and betrayed.

In such liminal moments as these—greetings (“Hello”), openings (“Once upon a time”), receptions (“Welcome”), prayers (“Amen”), closures (“And so it was”), and departures (“Goodbye”)—the language of discourse shifts into elevated, repeated, anonymous locutions. Common, if vestigial, examples of such expressions in our ordinary conversation are mentioned parenthetically above to point out that these are present in prose as well as in poetic speech and in modern languages as well as in ancient ones. The shift to the repeated formulae of the impersonal, traditional past occurs to indicate quite precisely the

ambiguous, extraordinary, and transitional character of those situations in which speech in its fullness and adequacy fails us. When the value of the situation becomes ambiguous, the simple persona of the narrator is cancelled, and the burden of the narrative is assumed by an unnamed, unlocated "somebody." Where such situations are central to a poet's concerns, as they are central to Homer's and his Greek contemporaries', such locutions will contribute to and heighten the overall formal style of the poetry. Reverberation in the *Odyssey* is the emblem as well as the ornament of this concern.

But it is of signal importance here that it was just such transitional moments with their attendant paradoxes that were surmounted by the hero of the *Odyssey* in winning his own homecoming. Odysseus, by virtue of the perspicuity gained in his anonymous concealment, by his disguise in false identities, and by the aid of his patron Athena, was able to discern most acutely these situations and was able to act most properly and effectively in them. Conversely, the suitors were blind to their situation, and consequently blunderers and transgressors in it. It was Odysseus' particular distinction that he was able to reverse the usual warrior's tale by wearing the private garb of a mendicant to disguise his public intentions and so recover his home and rule in Ithaca.<sup>30</sup> And so also the suitors met their doom.

What then of the second question, that of the nature of the divine action in the poem? We turn our gaze again to the shield of Achilles and upon the two cities which Hephaistos had wrought upon it. In that city which represents Troy, Ares and Athena figure prominently at the head of the army, and minor divinities are also active in the fray. But where, it was asked, are the gods in the Ithacan city? In conclusion an answer can be suggested: one of the wedding guests, or court heralds, or onlooking citizens may actually be one of the gods in disguise. Perhaps one of these also may figure as a guest-stranger and thus stand not only under the patronage and protection of Zeus but be capable of surveying the city and its inhabitants from the detached perspective of the gods. These possibilities issue a perennial challenge to all those who are host-citizens of the place: to be alert to such circumstances and to act accordingly.

## NOTES

1. C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 293–94: "In the broadest sense, the *Iliad* draws upon the formulae of heroic warfare, the *Odyssey* upon those of peace, the norms of social existence, and of the adventures of long-existent popular folk tales. It is truisitic to point out that the polarities involved exist side by side in the shield of Achilles."

2. The theme of Zeus's direction of the action of the *Iliad* through messages repeated by divine messengers and the ramifications of such messages are explored by the author in "Design in the *Iliad* Based on the Long Repeated Passages," *Interpretation* 22, no. 2 (Winter, 1994–95): 191–214.

3. In the *Iliad* there are 102 repeats of fourteen feet or greater in the 15,689 lines of Allen and

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Monro's Oxford text (3d ed., 1920), and another 113 similarly long repetitions are found in the 12,111 lines of Monro's second Oxford edition (1917) of the *Odyssey*, from which I give here my own literal translations. Certain key Greek words (italicized) are transliterated. Upper-case and lower-case Roman numerals refer to books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, respectively. An index of all repeated portions six feet or greater in Bekker's text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* can be found in Carl Eduard Schmidt's compilation, *Parallel-Homer oder Index aller homerischen Iterati in lexikalischer Anordnung* (1885; reprint, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965).

4. These include ii 93–110 = xxiv 128–142, 144–146; xix 139–150, 152–153 = xxiv 129–140, 142–143; iv 780–783, 785 = viii 51–55. There is also one exception included where five lines intervene: iv 373–374, 379–381 = iv 466–470. The distribution of these 113 by line length is as follows: eighteen lines—2; seventeen lines—1; fifteen lines—1; fourteen lines—2; ten lines—2; nine lines—2; eight lines—2; seven lines—4; six lines—8; five lines—16; four lines—17; three lines—56. In all instances save six, these repetitions are “doublets” (repeated once). One of the five-line repeats is a “sextuplet” (i 136–140 = iv 52–56 = vii 172–176 = x 368–372 = xv 135–139 = xvii 91–95); one of the four-line repeats is a triplet (iv 557–560 = v 14–17 = xvii 143–146); two of the three-line repeats are quadruplets (i 171–173 = xiv 188–190 = xvi 57–59 = xvi 222–224, and ix 556–558 = x 183–185 = x 476–478 = xii 29–31); and two three-line repeats are triplets (ix 178–180 = ix 562–564 = xii 145–147, and ix 177–179 = xi 636–638 = xv 547–549).

5. These include:

- \* xi 121–137 = xxiii 268–284
- \*\* x 517–526 = xi 25–34
- i 287–292 = ii 218–223
- \*\* x 532–537 = xi 45–50
- iv 557–560 = v 14–17 = xvii 143–146
- xxi 236–239 = xxi 382–385
- i 281–283 = ii 215–217
- xvi 107–109 = xx 317–319
- xvii 345–347 = xvii 350–352

The three denoted by asterisks belong in part (\*) or wholly (\*\*) to Odysseus' song before the Phaeaceans.

6. Portions of this study were read under the title “Style, Substance, and Divine Presence in Homer's Poetics” at the annual southwestern regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Dallas, Texas, March, 1992.

7. Bernard Fenik in *Studies in the Odyssey* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), part I, calls our attention to the reluctance of Odysseus to give his name later in book vii to the Phaeaceans; it has to be coaxed tearfully out of him. There is also a similar tearful reluctance on the part of Telemachos to identify himself to Menelaos in book iv; indeed, of Eumaios to name his lost master to the disguised Odysseus in book xiv; and, of course, of the stranger to furnish his name to Penelope in book xix.

8. See W. Whallon, “The Name of Penelope,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 3(1960): 57–64.

9. Three additional parallels on this motif are worthy of note. First, the dismissal of Telemachos' audience with Nestor and the filling of the drinking bowls in book iii parallels the later dismissal of the bow contest by the suitors and the resumption of drinking in book xxi and also the dismissal of the council at Troy by Nestor and the bringing of wine in the ninth book of the *Iliad* after it has resolved to send an embassy to Achilles (iii 338–340 = xxi 270–272 = IX 174–176). Second, at Athena's (Mentor's) departure the next day as an osprey, the astonished Nestor promises to sacrifice a heifer to her, as did Diomedes when he heard her presence as a screeching heron on the night-spy expedition in the *Iliad's* tenth book (iii 382–385 = X 292–295). Finally, Telemachos is bedded down in Menelaos' palace in Sparta in a setting identical to that of Priam at Achilles' quarters at Troy in the last book of the *Iliad* (iv 297–300 = XXIV 644–647).

10. On this point, I follow George Dimock in *The Unity of the Odyssey* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), pp. 14–15.

11. See chapter 1, "The Scar of Odysseus," in Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

12. See George Dimock, "The Name of Odysseus," *The Hudson Review* 9 (1956): 52–70; Glenn Arbery, "Against the Belly of the Ram: The Comedy of Deception in the *Odyssey*," in *The Terrain of Comedy*, Louise Cowan, ed. (Dallas: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1984), pp. 19–40. The meanings of other Homeric names are discussed by Dimock in "The Name of Odysseus," and by Max Sulzberger, "ONOMA EPONUMON: Les Noms Propres chez Homère et dans la Mythologie Grecque," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 39 (1926): 381–447; W. B. Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939), chap. 7; Norman Austin, "Name Magic in the *Odyssey*," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 5 (1972): 1–19; and John Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). Ann Bergren has called attention also to the polysemous nature of "Polyphemus," Odysseus' antagonist, which may mean "much talked-about" or "he of the many prophecies or curses" in "Odyssean Temporality: Many (Re)Turns," in *Approaches to Homer*, Carl Rubino and Cynthia Shelmerdine, eds. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), pp. 38–73.

13. This passage, the description of the preparation of the ship bound for Hades, incorporates in part the earlier description of the Phaeacean ship bound for Ithaca (xi 1–3 = viii 50–52).

14. In general, the lands of the hostile encounters (including the Lotus Eaters' territory) seem not to have names, whereas those of the peaceful, fruitful encounters do. "Goat Island" is the appellation given by Jenny Strauss Clay to the anonymous island to which Odysseus first comes in Cyclopes territory. See J. S. Clay, "Goat Island: OD. 9.116–141," *Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 30 (1980): 261–264.

15. Odysseus' stance as knower (his perceptive perspective) is directly that by which he may deceive, and his skill with words, which make knowledgeably present what is absent, may also be used to lie—make absent what is present. Hence, it is possible for Socrates in Plato's *Hippias Minor* to reverse the traditional order of the relative merits of Achilles and Odysseus, which gives priority to the former, in favor of the latter, since the latter is more knowledgeable.

16. The sense of the near misses is clear if the ship is regarded as moored bow inland, so that the overshoot drives the bow in toward shore; the second time the ship is turned around and on the open sea, and an undershoot will drive it further out. The problems of Cyclopean vision were introduced to me by the late Michael Ossorgin many years ago.

17. Many commentators have noted the Greek (cf. ix 408, ix 410) has a further play on this pun, namely *outis* (nobody) and *metis* (craft, cunning). Odysseus' later boast (ix 502–505), "If some mortal should ask you about the unseemly blindness of your eye, tell him that Odysseus, sacker of cities, son of Laertes, having his home in Ithaca, blinded you," is his attempt to make a name for himself with the no-name trick, and it elicits an appropriate response from Poseidon.

18. The effect of repeating the description here may be to evoke in a few words the fact that the bow challenge is failed repeatedly, many times and by all. See Dimock, *The Unity of the Odyssey*, p. 283.

19. It has often been pointed out that *keras* (horn) is a Greek play on words on *kraino* (accomplish) and *elaphas* (ivory) on *elephairomai* (deceive), but there may be significance beyond this. See Anne Amory, "The Gates of Horn and Ivory," *Yale Classical Studies* 20 (1966): 1–57. I suggest that the gates of horn refer to the two branches of the bow: see *Iliad* IV 105–111 for a description of Pandarus' bow. The gates of ivory refer to the mouth, in particular to the *herkos odonton*, or barrier of teeth, a common locution found seven times in the *Odyssey* and thrice in the *Iliad*. The import of Penelope's dream to the stranger would thus be: stop talking and start shooting!

20. Odysseus plays variations on a tale of his adventures as a Cretan before Eumaios and later before Penelope (xiv 325–330 = xix 294–299; xiv 331–335 = xix 288–292) and also later to Antinoos (xiv 258–272 = xvii 427–442). Part of his Cretan tale to Eumaios (the shipwreck) is borrowed from the earlier account of his own adventures to the Phaeaceans (xii 403–406 = xiv 301–304; xii 415–419 = xiv 305–308), and part of the story to Antinoos later appears verbatim to the goatherd, Melanthius (xvii 419–424 = xix 75–80). On the reliability of these and other auto-

biographies, see Chris Emlyn-Jones, "True and Lying Tales in the *Odyssey*," *Greece and Rome*, n.s., 33 (1986): 1–10, who writes, "whether his story is true or false the question of truth or falsity is meaningless in the dramatic context the important thing for the guest is to combine exciting material with a skilled delivery in order to create the best possible impression and gain the greatest possible advantage." The conflation of the guest with the entertainer and its consequences in the case of the *Odyssey*, however, certainly cannot be considered meaningless.

21. So Teiresias tells Odysseus and us in Hades (xi 118–120), that when Odysseus has killed the wooers in his house either by a trap or openly, then he is to go on the journey with the oar.

22. So Telemachos informs his father (xvi 240–257) before they enter Ithaca of the number and homes, but not parentage, of the suitors: 52 from Dulichium, 24 from Same, 20 from Zaccynthos, and 12 from Ithaca itself, for a total of 108 wooers, plus 6 men-attendants from Dulichium, and a herald (Medon), a minstrel (Phemius), and 2 stewards from Ithaca.

23. There is later a third throw, an oxhoof by Ctessipos. As Bannert points out, not only is this throw unprovoked, unlike the earlier two, but its aim is off the mark entirely and, in fact, in the festive context constitutes a sacrilege and affront to Apollo. See H. Bannert, *Formen des Wiederholens bei Homer: Beispiele für eine Poetik des Epos* (Vienna: Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), pp. 105–108.

24. The relationship of hospitality to disguise in the *Odyssey* was expressed by Sheila Murnaghan as follows: "The failure of mortals to recognize a disguised god, which is a prominent feature of accounts of divine disguise in the Homeric epics and the Homeric hymns, is echoed in the suitors' failure to recognize Odysseus." Failure of recognition "often brings mortals to disaster

frequently accompanied by a display of divine anger, as in the case of the sailors in the *Hymn to Dionysus* or of Metaneira in the *Hymn to Demeter*." See *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 68. But Murnaghan also finds here that the gods are unsurpassably good at disguising themselves "so that mortals can hardly be expected to recognize them," and failure of recognition cannot be "a moral failing that would make a hero culpable in human terms. Rather it is a sign of the inevitable frailty and impotence of even the greatest mortals in a universe controlled by the gods, a condition that is often labelled tragic." Perhaps. Certainly we will concede with the poet in the *Hymn to Demeter* that "it is hard for mortals to see divinity." But perhaps also we labor here under the shadow of the *Iliad*, where the hidden plan of Zeus unfolds and guides the action of both gods and mortals through a series of repeated, echoed messages until the sad denouement is finally reached in Achilles' tent. In the case of the *Odyssey*, where a mortal is in disguise, a somewhat more optimistic conclusion is reached: "By following the scenarios written for them by society, especially scenarios for the reception of strangers (one of the most ritualized activities in the Homeric world and one of the most clearly patterned sequences in Homeric narrative), characters can act in ways that compensate for their failure to see through a disguise and that even eventually lead to the removal of that disguise" (Murnaghan, p. 90).

25. Emily Kearns is quite right to emphasize the divine character of this figure in "The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny," *Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 32 (1982): 2–8.

26. Five positions emerge in the readings of various critics, of which the third seems to me most likely. First, it has been maintained that Penelope is unaware of who the stranger is and naively and unwittingly falls into Odysseus' plot; this seems to be the majority view. Second, it has been stated that Penelope is aware of the stranger's identity and engages in either a silent or overt conspiracy with Odysseus; see P. W. Harsh, "Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX," *American Journal of Philology* 71 (1950): 1–21; E. T. H. Brann, "The Poet of the *Odyssey*," *St. John's Review* 25 (1974): 5–12; and J. Winkler, "Penelope's Cunning and Homer's," in *The Constraints of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 129–161. Third, some say that Penelope's protean modulations from one intention to another, her reverses, and general discrepant behavior are all stratagems whereby she gains her own perspective and intelligence, just as Odysseus is doing by his disguise; this is the reading of P. Marquardt ("Penelope's Polutropos," *American Journal of Philology* 106 [1985]: 32–48) and N. Felson-Rubin ("Penelope's Perspective: Character from Plot," in *Beyond Oral Poetry: Recent Trends in Homeric Interpretation*, J. M. Bremer, I. J. F. DeJong, and J. Ralff, eds. [Amsterdam: B. R. Gruener, 1988], pp. 61–83. Fourth, there is the thesis that Penelope vacillates between the "reality" that Odysseus will not return and her "uncon-

scious wish" state that he will, as argued by Joseph Russo, "Interview and Aftermath: Dream, Fantasy, and Intuition in *Odyssey* 19 and 20," *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982): 4–18, and by Anne Amory, "Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope," in *Essays on the Odyssey*, C. H. Taylor, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 100–121. The fifth and final position is that the contradictory and elusive behavior of Penelope does not so much point to a character as embody and personify the uncertainty and ambivalence of the poem as a whole, and thereby thematizes the self-conscious fictionality of the work; this has been argued by Marilyn Katz in *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

27. To which Robert Woolsey adds the story of the grief of Laertes and Anticleia (although it does not involve a verbatim repetition) in his study, "Repeated Narratives in the *Odyssey*," *Classical Philology* 36 (1941): 167–181.

28. I 458–461 = II 421–424; I 464–469 = II 427–432; I 465–468 = VII 317–320; I 459–461 = xii 359–361; I 467–469 = xvi 478–480.

29. III 330–332, 334–338 = XVI 131–133, 135–139; III 330–332 = XI 17–19; III 330–332, 334–335 = XIX 369–373.

30. The stratagems of deception, ambush, and indirection are to be associated generally with weaklings rather than with the strong. That Odysseus, therefore, represents a very different kind of hero from those we commonly see in the *Iliad* has been explored by Mera Flaumenhaft in "The Undercover Hero: Odysseus from Dark to Daylight," *Interpretation* 10 (1982): 9–41.