

# 1 The poet hero: language and representation in the *Odyssey*

Heavenly hurt it gives us –  
We can find no scar.  
But internal difference  
Where the Meanings are.

Emily Dickinson

The *Odyssey* is a central text in any discussion of ‘the poet’s voice’ in Greek poetry. Not only is Homer throughout the ancient world a figure of authority and poetic pre-eminence against whom writers establish their own authorial voice, but also the text of the *Odyssey* demonstrates a concern with the major topics that will recur throughout this book. For the *Odyssey* highlights the role and functioning of language itself, both in its focus on the hero’s lying manipulations and in its marked interest in the bewitching power of poetic performance. It is in the *Odyssey*, too, that we read one of the most developed narratives of concealed identity, boasted names and claims of renown, and the earliest extended first-person narrative in Greek literature. Indeed, the *Odyssey* is centred on the representation of a man who is striving to achieve recognition in his society, a man, what’s more, who is repeatedly likened to a poet.

In this opening chapter, I shall begin by looking at the fundamental issues of recognition and naming, and then discuss the interplay of the hero’s lying tales with the poet’s own voice as narrator. I shall be particularly concerned with the relation between representation in language (story-telling, naming, the exchanges of social discourse) and the construction of (social) identity.

## RECOGNITION

### *First words*

The proper study of mankind is . . .

ἄΝΔΡΑ: what is (to be) recognized in this first word of the *Odyssey*? The first question I wish to raise is how exemplary, how generalizable, a (male, adult) figure the subject of this epic is represented to be – a question focused in an English translation by the difficulty of choosing between ‘a man’, ‘the man’ or even ‘man’. For the uneasy tension between

paradigmatic model and unique individual typical of the representation of heroes is especially marked in the case of Odysseus. On the one hand, recent critics have emphasized how Odysseus' reintegration is 'a return to humanity in the broadest sense'<sup>1</sup> – a paradigmatic representation of (a) man's reaffirmation of social identity. The boundaries and values of the *oikos* (household) are mapped by the transitions and transgressions of Odysseus' journey: Odysseus' travels leave behind both the extremes of civilization experienced among the Phaeacians, and also the extremes of violent transgression and distorted versions of human culture experienced in the non-human encounters leading to the Phaeacians, as the hero struggles to regain the *oikos*, disordered by his absence. Human social existence and man's place in it become defined through these different views of alternative or corrupted order. So, the normative thrust of the *Odyssey* is to be discovered not merely in the punishment of the suitors' wrongdoing but also in the projection and promotion of the norms of culture – an articulation of man's place. (And particularly since Vidal-Naquet's classic analysis of land, agriculture, food and sacrifice, many other aspects of this patterning of norm and transgression have been outlined – from the fundamental social institutions of marriage and guest-friendship to such diverse signs of the cultural system as trees, dogs, weaving, bathing . . .)<sup>2</sup> In *andra*, then, there is to be recognized a paradigmatic and normative representation of what it is to be a man in society, an announcement that the narrative to come will explore the terms in which an adult male's place is to be determined.

On the other hand, Odysseus is not an allegorical figure like Everyman. He is also *the* man whose special qualities allow him to survive a unique set of wanderings and sufferings and to make his return to a particular

<sup>1</sup> Segal (1962) 20. The paradigmatic qualities of Odysseus are also discussed by Taylor (1961); Segal (1967); Vidal-Naquet (1981 (1970)); Austin (1975) 81–238; Foley (1978); Niles (1978); Goldhill (1984) 183ff; Rutherford (1985).

<sup>2</sup> On marriage, see Hatzantonis (1974); Pomeroy (1975) 16–31; Gross (1976); Foley (1978); Forsyth (1979); Northrup (1980); Goldhill (1984) 184–95; Goldhill (1986a) 147–51; on guest-friendship, Finley (1954) 109–14; Gunn (1971); Stagakis (1975) 94–112; Stewart (1976); Edwards (1975); Bader (1976); Kearns (1982); Herman (1987) and Murnaghan (1987) 91–117, who rightly relates this institution to the problem of recognition; on trees, see Finley (1978) 78–9, who writes 168: 'Trees progressively mark his [Odysseus'] return.' On the olive, see Segal (1962) 45, 55 (with n. 31 and n.41). Vidal-Naquet (1981 (1970)) 60–1 notes that the tree under which Odysseus shelters on the beach at Scheria (as Odysseus returns from the wild travels to the civilized world of the Phaeacians) is half wild, half domestic olive! On dogs, Rose, G. (1979); Goldhill (1988c) 9–19 (both with further bibliography); on weaving, Snyder (1981); Jenkins (1985); Goldhill (1988c) 1–9; Segal (1967) 337–9; on bathing, Segal (1967) 329–34.

position. So, indeed, *andra* is immediately qualified by its (first and marked) epithet *polutropon*, ‘of many turns’. Since antiquity, the ambiguity of this term has been debated.<sup>3</sup> As Pucci has analysed at greatest length, *polutropos* is the first of a series of distinctive *polu-* epithets indicating Odysseus’ ‘chief characteristic: versatility, manyness of travels, resources, tricks, stories . . .’<sup>4</sup> (So the proem goes on to emphasize Odysseus’ ‘many [*polla*] wanderings’ (1), to see the towns of ‘many [*pollōn*] men’ (2), and to suffer ‘many [*poll’]* pains’ (3).) *Polutropos*, ‘of many turns’, implies both ‘of many wiles’ and ‘of many journeys’; and the ambiguity is significant in that it is Odysseus’ wily turns of mind that allow him to survive his wanderings: the many experiences of Odysseus and his quality of being *polutropos* are linked by more than the repetition of *pol-*. What’s more, Pucci adds a third meaning, ‘of many turns of speech’, derived from *tropos* in its sense ‘figure of speech’, ‘trope’ – although there is no secure evidence for this sense of *tropos* before the fifth century. What can be said, however, is that it is a defining aspect of Odysseus’ wiliness that he is the master of tricky language (and Hermes, the only other figure called *polutropos* in the Homeric corpus, is the divinity associated particularly with deceitful communication and the problems of exchange<sup>5</sup>). So, too, that Odysseus is the *object* of a multiplicity of (rhetorical) descriptions in the epic is an integral element not only of the many-sided representation of the hero, but also, more specifically, of the instantiation of his *kleos*, his renown – ‘to be talked of by many’. (‘Tell me, Muse . . .’) There is, then, to be recognized in *andra*, especially as it begins its lengthy glossing with the specific and polyvalent

<sup>3</sup> For modern discussion specifically on *polutropon*, see in particular Rüter (1969) 34–9; Detienne and Vernant (1978) 27–54, especially 39–43; Pucci (1982); Clay (1983) 29ff. See also Basset (1923); van Groningen (1946). Milman Parry singles out the word as his first example of a particularized epithet (1971) 154. Bekker (1863) inaugurates a lengthy discussion among Analytic scholars, for which Rüter has extensive bibliography. For ancient discussion, see e.g. Porphyry. Schol. ad *Od.* 1.1. = Antisthenes fr. 51 Declava Caizzi. At Plato *Hipp. Min.* 365c–d, Hippias, in discussing Homer, joins *πολύτροπον*, ‘of many turns’, and *ψευδῆ*, ‘lying’, as apparent synonyms, but Socrates says he will not discuss Homer since one cannot ask what he had in mind when he composed the lines. For the most interesting modernist treatment of *polutropos*, see Ellman (1982).

<sup>4</sup> Pucci (1982) 51.

<sup>5</sup> The only other example in the *Odyssey* is *Od.* 10.330, where Odysseus is recognized by Circe from an oracle as he tricks her. It occurs elsewhere in the Homeric corpus only in the *Hymn to Hermes* 13 and 439, applied to Hermes, for whose tricky qualities, see Kahn (1978). Hermes also helps Odysseus with Circe in particular (*Od.* 10.277ff) and supports Odysseus’ grandfather, Autolycus (*Od.* 19.397ff).

*polutropos*, the sign of a particular figure – ‘the (especial, inimitable, famous) man’.

As Odysseus struggles to reinstitute the norms of the *oikos*, and proves the only man capable of winning the struggle, this ambivalent paradigmatic status informs the narrative of *nostos* (return). And *andra* is programmatic of this.

The surprising lack of a proper name in the first line(s) of the epic, then, prompts the question not simply of *to whom* does the opening expression refer, but of *what* is (to be) recognized in such a periphrastic reference.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the withholding of the name invests the poem with the structure of a *griphos*, a riddle, an enigma, where a series of expressions (of which *polutropon* is the first) successively qualifies the term *andra* as the name ‘Odysseus’ is approached. The rhetorical strategy of gradual revealing (that is also a continuing (re)defining) provides a programmatic model for the narrative of Odysseus’ gradual re-establishment on Ithaca, where each encounter successively and cumulatively formulates the character and *kleos*, ‘renown’, of the hero, as his recognition is approached.

This nameless opening expression, however, does not merely set up the mapping of *andra* (as man, adult, male, husband . . .) but also poses the question of what is at stake in a (proper) name, of what is the difference between saying *andra* and saying ‘Odysseus’: from the Cyclops’ cave to standing in the hall before the suitors, speaking out the name of Odysseus is replete with significance. *Andra*, then, also announces the concealment and revealing of the name that plays a crucial role in the *kleos* of Odysseus’ return. Yet, as Pucci also notes, the name is displaced by an adjective, *polutropon*, that itself expresses the very quality of deceptive wiliness that is seen most strikingly in Odysseus’ constant disguises, which, precisely, withhold the proper name.<sup>7</sup> *Polutropon*, in other words, both marks Odysseus’ capability to manipulate language’s power to conceal and reveal, and, at the same time, *enacts* such a revealing and concealing. There is to be recognized here, then – another pro-

<sup>6</sup> The lack of name has often been commented on. The modern Analytic debate begins with Bekker (1863) (see n. 3). Wilamowitz in a fine example of Analytic rhetoric regards it as a ‘carelessness’ (*Unbedachtsamkeit*) that the poet ‘forgets to name the man of many turns’ (*den ἄνθρωπον πολύτροπος zu nennen vergisst*) (1884) 16. For an extensive bibliography, see Rüter (1969) 34–52, to which can be added the important works of Dimock (1956); Austin (1972); Clay (1976); Clay (1983) 10–34.

<sup>7</sup> Pucci (1982) 49–57.

grammatical gesture – how the *Odyssey* in a self-reflexive way highlights, first, words and their use as a concern.

There is, then, in these first words a multiform programmatic expression. The question of what is (to be) recognized in the first word(s) of the *Odyssey* is itself framed to emphasize how, in responding to this narrative which progresses through a series of defining recognitions, the reader or audience is necessarily implicated in a process of drawing out significances, connotations, relations between words (phrases, lines, scenes) – inevitably implicated, that is, in a process of defining and recognition. (And in Greek *anagignōskein* means both ‘to read’ and ‘to recognize’.)<sup>8</sup> There is, then, also to be recognized in the first words of the *Odyssey* the (self-)involvement of the reader or audience in comprehending the narrative of recognition – which, as we will see, is fundamental to the normative project of the *Odyssey*.

Like its hero, the opening words of the *Odyssey* are canny in what they reveal and in what they conceal. They are programmatic not merely by the opening of a thematic concern but also by the very way that such an opening is formulated. This very brief opening discussion is intended not only to sketch the *Odyssey*’s programmatic beginning by way of introduction to the argument that follows, but also explicitly to emphasize the critical problems that – from the first – arise from the interplay between a reader’s or audience’s activity of recognition and the narrative of Odysseus’ recognitions. So, let us turn now to the narrative of recognition by which Odysseus makes his return to Ithaca.

### *Seeing the pattern*

That anonymity which overhangs a man until his context is complete

R. Frost

Recognition is not merely a perceptual process. It also involves authorization, power, legitimacy, as in the recognition by one country of an-

<sup>8</sup> Although *anagignōskein* is a Homeric term, there is depicted, of course, no scene of ‘reading’ in a narrow sense. There are, however, innumerable scenes that revolve around the difficulties of interpretation and communication. Hence my phrase ‘reader or audience’: it is used to avoid two chimaeras of Homeric criticism: the speculative reconstruction of necessary restrictions for the audience’s comprehension of an oral performance; the presupposition that an oral performance necessarily requires clarity, transparency or ease of comprehension. For the implications of such a privileging of the spoken word, see the famous discussion of Derrida (1976), well used specifically for Homer by Lynn-George (1988).

other, the recognition of legitimate children by a father.<sup>9</sup> Both aspects are central to Odysseus' return. On the one hand, the need for disguise and concealment of his identity emphasizes the danger of a premature realization by the suitors of his presence in Ithaca. On the other hand, to be recognized as Odysseus is to reassert his role as head of the *oikos*, and as king. The aim of Odysseus is recognition in both senses. Each act of recognition is at one and the same time a perception of identity and an assertion of role. The *nostos* is not complete without recognition.

I wish first to consider the various moments of recognition for Odysseus in Ithaca – an interrelated series of encounters – and I will begin with a scene that has all too rarely been discussed in detail but which offers an instructive model of the process of recognition in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus is delivered by the Phaeacians to Ithaca, he is left on the beach, the very edge of the island, asleep. Once before, blown by the winds of Aeolus, he had reached close enough to see people tending fires on the island, but then sleep had come to his eyes, exhausted as he was by nine days at the rudder (10.28ff). It is a nice irony that, as the moment of return to the fatherland is achieved, Odysseus fails to do what has been his repeated expression of desire, precisely, to *see* his country.<sup>10</sup> When he awakens, however, recognition is still delayed. For Athene has surrounded the island in mist, and Odysseus, alone on a shore again, fails to recognize the fatherland (13.187–94):

But when godlike Odysseus awoke,  
from his sleep in his fatherland, he did not even recognize it,  
so long had he been away. For the goddess, Pallas Athene  
daughter of Zeus, poured a mist around, so that she might  
make him unrecognizable, and tell him everything,  
and not have his wife and citizens and folk recognize him  
before he had punished the suitors for every outrage.

After his constant desire to see the homeland, it is a further irony that even after he wakes up, it is seeing (and recognizing) that is impossible for Odysseus. The goddess' deception masks the moment of arrival. She makes the island *unrecognizable* for him (οὐδέ μιν ἔγνω 188) in order that she might make him *unrecognizable* (ἄγνωστον 191) to prevent *recogni-*

<sup>9</sup> I have found Bourdieu (1977) especially 164ff particularly stimulating on recognition, and two books which appeared after this chapter was written but which I have attempted to incorporate: Cave (1988); Murnaghan (1987).

<sup>10</sup> E.g. in Odysseus' mouth 5.220; 8.466; 9.28; and from others, 5.41; 5.114; 6.314; 7.76; 8.410; 9.532. On 'sleep' as a motif, see Segal (1967) 325–9.

*tion* (μη γνοίη 192) by his wife (*alokhos*), by his fellow countrymen (*astoi*) and by his own people (*philoī*).<sup>11</sup> The triple repetition of words of ‘recognition’ stress both the thematic focus of the scene, and also the different perspectives of recognition – that is, both Odysseus’ recognition of the island and the recognition of Odysseus by his wife, the citizens and his *philoī*, who make up three different aspects of the *nostos*. The word for ‘wife’, *alokhos* (rather than *gunē*, as at 1.13), is etymologically connected with the word for (marriage-)bed, *lekhos*, and is often translated ‘bed-fellow’. The full significance of this term is realized not merely in Odysseus’ rejection of his previous bed-fellows, Calypso and Circe (and the offer of Nausicaa as a bride) but also in Odysseus’ journey towards the bed at the centre of the house. The ‘citizens’ will be the figures with whom Odysseus is finally depicted as making a truce; and the varying reactions of Odysseus’ *philoī* (from Eumaeus to Telemachus, Eurycleia to Laertes) form the substance of the successive encounters of the returning king. What’s more, as we will see, for each of these figures the process of (mis)recognition of Odysseus is different; and for each something different depends on Odysseus’ return. As Odysseus opens his eyes on Ithaca, then, both the process of recognition and what is at stake in recognition for Odysseus are immediately highlighted.

Odysseus’ protecting divinity continues her manipulative trickery. She arrives in disguise, and in answer to Odysseus’ question as to where he has arrived, she withholds the name of ‘Ithaca’ until the very last line of her speech of reply (13.236–49). She begins: νήπιός εἰς, ὃ ξεῖν’, ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας, ‘You are foolish, stranger, or come from far’ – if he does not recognize this island. With the same line with which the Cyclops dismisses the possibility of guest-friendship’s obligations, Odysseus is introduced (as a stranger) to his homeland.<sup>12</sup> At the mention, finally, of the name of Ithaca, Odysseus silently rejoices at the recognition that he is in ‘his own fatherland’ (251); but in response defensively spins a tale about who he is – the first of the Cretan lies that I will discuss in depth later. Odysseus may know he is in Ithaca, but Ithaca is not yet to know

<sup>11</sup> Pucci (1987) 100, alone of modern scholars, takes ἄγνωστον as active, ‘unrecognizing’ (αὐτόν μιν = ‘himself’). On this conversation of Odysseus and Athene, see the good comments of Clay (1983) 186–212 (whose overall theory of the role of Athene’s wrath in the epic is difficult to accept, however); Maronitis (1981). Murnaghan (1987) calls this scene ‘pivotal’, but fails to discuss it in any detail.

<sup>12</sup> See 10.273. In different ways, the Cyclops and Athene both treat Odysseus as a foolish child (νήπιος, ‘foolish’, etymologically means ‘not capable of speaking’); both bring forth, however, Odysseus’ qualities of *mētis* precisely in speech.

that Odysseus is home. The (mutual) process of recognition is far from complete.

Athene reacts to Odysseus' deceit with a speech famous for its ironic banter as well as its description of Odysseus as master of deceit – I shall discuss this also further below. But for Odysseus the recognition that he is faced with (a previously disguised) Athene brings a sudden suspicion. To what extent has she been tricking him? Is this really Ithaca (13.324–8)?

Now I entreat you by your father – for I do not think that  
I have come to bright Ithaca, but turned off course  
to another land. I think you are teasing me,  
when you tell me this, to beguile my mind.  
Tell me if it's really true that I have reached my dear fatherland.

The recognition of the name of Ithaca that caused Odysseus' earlier joy is turned to doubt by the recognition of the goddess who spoke the name. Is he in fact home yet? Or is it some other land? He needs assurance against his suspicion of deception that he has truly reached his 'dear fatherland', the land with a history that gives him his proper place.

Athene now clears the mist sufficiently so that Odysseus can finally recognize his homeland and its topography. He rejoices again in his land and kisses the grain-giving soil (13.352–4):

As she spoke, the goddess dispelled the mist; and the land  
was visible. Then godlike, much enduring Odysseus  
rejoiced, delighting in his land, and he kissed the grain-giving soil.

The addition of the act of kissing the soil to the expression of joy that had also been provoked by the earlier announcement of the name of Ithaca not only marks a heightening of expression after the hesitation of doubt but also qualifies the significance of this point of *nostos*: it is to the grain-giving land of Ithaca, after his journeys in the wild and uncultivated lands, that Odysseus has finally returned.<sup>13</sup>

The point of return to Ithaca itself – when exactly is there achieved the fulfilment of the desire for *nostos*? – is fenced with hesitations and the ironies set in play by the goddess' powers of disguise. The confusion of perception, the dangers of deceptive language, the mutual testing and the interplay of doubt and joy, all ironically defer and manipulate the regularly expressed desire 'to see the fatherland'. This complex and ironic treatment of recognition as a mutual *process*, veined with the uncertainties

<sup>13</sup> On the significance of the term 'grain-giving', see Vidal-Naquet (1981 (1970)) 45.'



of (verbal) exchange, is paradigmatic of scenes of recognition in the *Odyssey*.

Hesitation and deferral are integral to Odysseus' relation with Eumaeus, whose farm marks the edge of Odysseus' property – to where he travels from the edge of the island. As Odysseus approaches the farm, the dogs run out barking – a significantly different reception from that offered around Circe's palace (10.216–17) where the animals 'fawn like dogs fawn on their master when he is returning from a feast' (14.29–32):

Suddenly, the baying dogs saw Odysseus.  
They ran at him with a great outcry. But Odysseus  
with cunning sat down. His staff dropped from his hand.  
There, by his own steading, he might have suffered an outrageous  
mauling ...

The return of the master to his own property is made dependent on his slave's observance of the proprieties of guest-friendship, as Odysseus is forced to hesitate – to sit down – at the moment of entrance. Yet the hesitation is also represented as a typically Odyssean move – performed with 'cunning', κερδοσύνη – and the dropped staff, *skēptron* – which means both a beggar's stave and a king's royal sceptre – also hints at the double role of king and beggar.<sup>14</sup> A return in disguise, which contains signs of recognition (a veiled hinting that will be seen again and again, particularly between Odysseus and Penelope).

It is in Eumaeus' hut that Odysseus first allows himself to be recognized – not by the swineherd, for whom revelation is deferred by a long testing, but by Telemachus. That this is the first act of mutual recognition is important not merely for the workings of revenge – Odysseus needs Telemachus' support – but also for the thematic stress on the relations between father and son in the patriarchal and patrilineal *oikos* (which can scarcely be overstressed). To return to the fatherland is to return to the role of father. Here, too, however, the recognition is not effected without its hesitations. After he has viewed Telemachus from the vantage of his disguise – Telemachus, who calls Eumaeus ἄττα, 'daddy' (e.g. 16.31) – Odysseus returns from outside the house in his undisguised splendour. Telemachus is amazed and assumes the stranger is a god, and, very properly, prays to be spared. Odysseus responds (16.186–9):

<sup>14</sup> On this scene, see Finley (1978) 168; Rose (1980); Williams (1986). Lilja (1976) 20 has extensive bibliography on whether it really is cunning to sit down before angry dogs.

Τὸν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς·  
 'οὐ τίς τοι θεός εἰμι τί μ' ἀθανάτοιοι ἐίσκεις;  
 ἀλλὰ πατήρ τεός εἰμι, τοῦ εἵνεκα σὺ στεναχίζων  
 πάσχεις ἄλγεα πολλά, βίας ὑποδέγμενος ἀνδρῶν.'

Then much enduring, godlike Odysseus responded.  
 'I am not a god. Why do you liken me to the immortals?  
 But I am your father, for whose sake you grieve and  
 suffer many pains, as you entertain the violence of men.'

The echo *theos eimi*, 'I am a god', and *teos eimi*, 'I am your', at the same metrical position in the line, and the question 'Why do you liken me to the immortals?' stress the importance of the rejection of immortality with Calypso and the return to the (human) relationship with his son with all the implications of maintained generational continuity as opposed to immortality. It is as 'father' and not as 'Odysseus' that the returning hero introduces himself to his son – without using his proper name (and *ou tis* ('no one', 'not a'), the words with which he begins this assertion of identity perhaps recall Odysseus' most famous concealment of his proper name?). Moreover, the assertion that Telemachus has suffered many pains for his father further constructs a link between the two figures. Odysseus, who is so often termed 'much enduring' (as in the introductory line to this address to his son) and who so often comments on how he 'suffered many pains' (as the proem describes it (1.4)), recognizes that his son too 'suffers many pains' (189).<sup>15</sup> As the narrative is turned so that Telemachus and Odysseus make parallel returns from abroad and come together at the farm of Eumaeus, so the father recognizes the parallel experience of the son. 'Like father, like son . . .', the essence of patrilineal generational continuity.

Telemachus, however, remains unconvinced (16.194–5):

You are not Odysseus, my father, but a divinity who is  
 beguiling me, so that I may mourn with still more grief.

Telemachus uses the proper name to deny that the stranger is Odysseus, his father. Both the reintroduction of the name and the use of 'my father' are relevant. For Telemachus, since his opening exchange with the disguised Athene, has shown an uncertainty about Odysseus as man and as father. Telemachus is first seen imagining the arrival of Odysseus in the hall in full military splendour (1.113–8) – an arrival quite different from

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Od.* 13.310, where Athene says, precisely, that Odysseus will have 'to suffer many pains entertaining the violence of men', *πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλά, βίας ὑποδέγμενος ἀνδρῶν*.

the insults the disguised beggar receives – and his journey to Menelaus and to Nestor is to learn about the *kleos* of Odysseus.<sup>16</sup> So, when Athene asks him if he is Odysseus' son, Telemachus replies that Penelope says it is so, but 'no one really knows his own father' (1.216).<sup>17</sup> Paternity cannot be proved, only accepted.<sup>18</sup> There are no recognition *tokens* between Odysseus and Telemachus. *Recognition is part of the relationship (to be) recognized.* This hesitation to accept Odysseus is not merely because he was too young to know his father who left so many years before, then, but also a part in the development of the relation of son and father, crucial to the establishment and continuity of the *oikos* for which they together fight. The son needs to accept the father as the father (as a father *recognizes* his children) – the gestures that maintain structured (patriarchal, patrilineal) authority in the *oikos*. Indeed, even as he makes his denial, Telemachus' suspicion that he is being tricked by a divinity may well remind us of his father who had suspected Athene in a similar way – as here too the mutual joy of recognition is deferred through the process of doubt, testing and acceptance.

It is only after Odysseus has explained Athene's role in his transformation that Telemachus accepts that it is his father returned. 'For no other Odysseus will come here', says Odysseus (16.204), echoing his son's use of the proper name as he asserts his identity now as both father and Odysseus (205–6):

But here I am, that man, who has suffered evils, and wandered far.  
Now I have reached my fatherland in the twentieth year.

The suffering (*παθών*) and the many wanderings (*πολλὰ ἀληθείς*) recall and vary the proem's opening description of the man; and 'the fatherland' as the object of return takes on a particular relevance as Odysseus claims his position of father to Telemachus. Telemachus, then, recognizes his father, and the two together finally cry.<sup>19</sup> A significant moment in the

<sup>16</sup> See now Jones (1988) on Telemachus, *kleos* and Odysseus.

<sup>17</sup> I follow the standard translation here, but it is worth pointing out that γόνον, the word translated 'father', is perhaps less straightforward in the Greek than the proverbial ring of the translation might suggest. Here, it means 'descent', 'stock' or perhaps 'parentage', which is paralleled only at *Od.* 11.234 and perhaps 19.166. Most often in Homer, as in later Greek, γόνος means 'offspring', 'child' (e.g. *Il.* 5.635; 6.191). See the lengthy note in the scholia on this line, which also offers other examples of the proverb.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Barnes (1973) who writes 68: 'Fathers are not self-evident as mothers are: "genitor" is a social status.' Cf. Coward (1983) for a historical survey and bibliography of this idea.

<sup>19</sup> On the tears of the members of Odysseus' family, see below, p. 61.

construction of Odysseus' return is achieved, but the *nostos* is not complete for Odysseus, for Telemachus (as his *paideusis* proceeds) or for the relationship between them. There is more to come.

From the farm Odysseus travels to the palace itself, which he recognizes, in his disguise, as clearly Odysseus' house (17.264–71). That Odysseus is given a *speech* of recognition, after the narrator's many representations of the landscapes and buildings to be faced by Odysseus, marks the peculiar investment of the hero in this expression of what is to be seen in this house. At the door, the point of entrance is (once more) surrounded by deferral and hesitation. First, Eumaeus initiates a lengthy conversation at the threshold itself about who should go in first. Odysseus sends Eumaeus in ahead; he himself will wait at the margin (17.272–89). As they talk, Argus, the hunting dog, now old, flea-ridden and on the dung-heap, recognizes his master and wags his tail – and dies. Despite Odysseus' (concealed) tears at the sight, this is not merely a sentimental moment.<sup>20</sup> First, it is another arrival for Odysseus at an animal-guarded threshold – as at Eumaeus' house where the disguised master was threatened with (unrecognizing) violence, until he was received as a *xenos*; and as at Circe's, where the wild animals, described as being like dogs who recognize their returning master, offered a different sort of threat to the order of things; and as at Alcinous' palace, where the doorway is guarded by gold and silver dogs, who never sleep or die, paragons of the positive qualities of guard-dogs. The boundaries of the civilized order of the *oikos* are defined in part by opposition to the outside world of the wild, the uncivilized, the uncultivated. Man's relation to the natural world is a basic factor in defining *andra*, 'a/the man', and the structure of the *oikos*. The threshold of the *oikos* is protected by an animal who articulates the boundary between the inside and the outside of the cultural sphere of the *oikos*;<sup>21</sup> and Odysseus' return to his own threshold must be seen within the sequence of his different approaches to animal-guarded doorways. The different depictions of animals at the threshold form a part of the system of ideas in which Odysseus' *nostos* is to be understood. At Odysseus' house, we find a hand-reared hunting<sup>22</sup> dog on the dung-heap – a once regal creature, his master's partner in the hunt, disregarded in

<sup>20</sup> The following paragraphs draw on Goldhill (1988c). It is surprising that Murnaghan does not discuss this scene of recognition.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Goldhill (1988c) 9–19 (with bibliography) which builds on Redfield (1975) 192–203 in particular.

<sup>22</sup> On the significance of hunting here, see Goldhill (1988c) 14 with bibliography n. 66.

the disordered house without its master. The figure of Argus is used to articulate both a sense of past order and present disorder.

Second, this is a moment of mute (mutual) recognition. Odysseus is a master of deception through verbal disguise. Here, the recognition without words is in significant contrast both with Odysseus' persuasion of Telemachus and with the scenes to come both of Odysseus' manipulations of language (to effect recognition and misrecognition) and of the risks of premature recognition for Odysseus. Argus immediately recognizes Odysseus (despite his disguise) without signs (such as a scar), without the vagaries of speech.

Third, Argus acts as a model of a faithful *philos* (like Eumaeus), who contrasts with the maidservants and Melanthius.<sup>23</sup> But he is a *philos* (unlike all the others) who needs no testing. This recognition is without testing on both sides. Argus indeed, since antiquity, has been taken as a parallel for his returning master in his suffering: long-enduring, aged, disregarded.<sup>24</sup> The mutual recognition offers signs of shared experience resulting from the master's absence from the *oikos*. A recognition (for the reader) of a similarity between hound and master, that qualifies the understanding of both figures. Finally, as the scene stresses a moment of recognition and return, it also extends the hesitation at the entrance. It focuses on the act of crossing the threshold as being in itself significant. As the recognition scene with Telemachus is formulated through a system of ideas basic to the patriarchal *oikos*, so Argus' recognition articulates a complex network of significances in the return of Odysseus to the threshold of the *oikos*.

Odysseus enters the house (though he will have yet to fight for his place even at the threshold with the beggar, Irus (18.1ff)), and the slow process of (mutual) recognition within the household begins. The first person apart from Telemachus to recognize Odysseus is the old servant, Eurycleia. Unlike Telemachus' recognition (but like Argus'), Eurycleia's discovery of the scar on Odysseus' thigh is unplanned by Odysseus, who at the last attempts to deflect the nurse's perception by turning towards the shadows (19.388–9). The struggle to maintain control over revelation that so amused Athene is here critical. The moment of identification is preceded by dangerous hints of premature recognition – in particular,

<sup>23</sup> See in particular Rohdich (1980); also Rose (1979).

<sup>24</sup> See Richardson (1975) 80 who suggests that Antisthenes' work called *περὶ τοῦ κύνοσ* drew out the parallels between Argos and Odysseus. The obvious parallels with Laertes also seem pertinent.

the nurse's comment that the stranger looks like Odysseus (19.379–81) – and as she discovers his identity the narrative explains at length the circumstances of how Odysseus received the scar.<sup>25</sup> As Odysseus is recognized in his home for the first time, held, like a child, in the arms of his nurse, the narrative returns to Odysseus' childhood and youth to tell of Odysseus' birth, naming and coming of age. The piercing of his disguise is through a sign that is layered with the memory of previous threats, previous crises. The loss of memory – the threat of the Lotus-Eaters – threatens *nostos*: here the re-telling of Odysseus' past marks the re-cognition of the returned man. I will discuss below the relevance of this passage in the narrative; here I wish to stress that not only is the moment of recognition extended and manipulated in the narrative – and then violently controlled by Odysseus' silencing of Eurycleia – but also, after both the affirmation of a tie with Telemachus and Argus' different awareness, the recognition through the scar itself realigns the question of what is (to be seen as) a mark of identity – as the nurse through the shadows and the disguise perceives this sign, with its tissue of past associations, always ready to be opened into another telling of Odysseus' story.

The manipulation of the tokens of identity is replayed (21.188ff) as Odysseus finally brings Eumaeus and Philoetius into the plot to slaughter the suitors, whose punishment is so important to the ethical sense of the *Odyssey*. For the recognition is by the scar again – but this time it is a planned, manipulated gesture by Odysseus as a prelude to the bloodshed of the massacre in the hall, to enlist, as master in the *oikos*, the necessary help of his *philoí*. For the herdsmen, the scar brings different associations from the personal involvement of Eurycleia in the naming and childhood of Odysseus. The scar for the herdsmen is a different sign, a different recognition, different issues.

The trial of the bow which leads to the massacre is explicitly established as a contest to compare those present with Odysseus: to fail to string the bow is to be seen to be a lesser man than its owner (21.85–95). Telemachus, however, is the only one present even to come close to passing the test – the son like the father.<sup>26</sup> Odysseus' (re)appearance before the suitors is, then, significantly at a contest that proves his superiority, that he has no equal. Even when Odysseus begins the slaughter with

<sup>25</sup> On this scene, see Auerbach (1953) ch. 1 and for an opposing view Köhnken (1976) with bibliography; Clay (1983) 56–68. Auerbach is brilliantly criticized by Lynn-George (1988) iff and by Cave (1988) 10–24.

<sup>26</sup> On Telemachus' role here, see Goldhill (1984) 189–90; Goldhill (1986a) 149–50.

the apparently accidental shooting of Antinous – from the threshold – the suitors fail to recognize the disguised king, as they have failed to recognize all the portents of his imminent return.<sup>27</sup> *Xeine*, ‘stranger’, they begin their outraged address to the man who could string Odysseus’ bow (22.27). Odysseus responds (35–41) not by revealing his name but by claiming that, contrary to their predictions, he has returned (the *polutropos* announces he is *hupotropos*, ‘returned’), and that they are faced with destruction for their outrages against the *oikos* (36), maidservants (37) and the wife of a still living man (38), outrages which show fear neither of gods (39) nor men (40). Even after Odysseus thus reveals the significance of his return as the fulfilment of the promise of just revenge for transgression, Eurymachus not only responds with a conditional recognition, ‘If indeed you are . . .’ (45), but also attempts to divert the logic of his necessary punishment by placing the blame for the suitors’ behaviour on the dead Antinous (48ff). What is revealed in this scene is not merely Odysseus’ return, but also the suitors’ misrecognition of Odysseus and of their own (responsible) position, a misrecognition that continues to the moment of death.

After the purging of the house of the suitors and their corrupt associates, the *nostos* continues with Odysseus’ reunion with Penelope. The recognition of husband and wife is one of the most discussed elements in the *Odyssey*, and it shows all the signs of deferral, refusal and irony that have marked the earlier points of return. Even after the death of the suitors, Penelope will not accept Odysseus until she has tested him – to Telemachus’ confusion (23.97–103) – and each meeting with Odysseus as beggar before the death of the suitors ‘leads the couple to the brink of recognition only to leave our expectations unfulfilled as he [Homer] makes them veer away at the last moment’.<sup>28</sup> I will discuss the complex verbal exchanges of husband and wife below: first I want to look at how these scenes, like the other junctures of the narrative of return, produce their various delays of recognition by the interplay of disguise, appearance and the faculty of sight.

For their first face to face meeting, Odysseus demands that Penelope wait until night – deferral, again – with the express aims that she might not be forced to deal with the hubristic suitors and that she might not see his pitiful clothes (17.564–73), but with the result also that the en-

<sup>27</sup> In particular, Theoclymenus’ prophecy, on which see Erbse (1972) 42–54; Fenik (1974) 233–44. On the suitors’ failure or refusal to recognize, see Murnaghan (1987) 56–90.

<sup>28</sup> Fenik (1974) 42.

counter will take place in the uncertain light of the fire at night. When Eurycleia sees the scar, despite the shadows, and turns to see if Penelope has spotted that this is her husband, at the key moment Penelope is looking away (19.476–8):

She looked at Penelope with her eyes,  
wanting to indicate that her dear husband was here.  
But Penelope was not able to look that way, nor perceive [*noēse*];  
for Athene had turned her perception [*noon*] aside.

The repetition of words of perception emphasizes the visual barriers to recognition (as the servant but not the mistress sees through the disguise). The scene indeed goes on to play with the idea of ‘vision’ and recognition: Penelope tells the disguised Odysseus a dream in which a metamorphosed Odysseus appears in order to prophesy his return (19.535–53) – a dream which the disguised Odysseus then interprets to indicate his imminent return. (I will discuss this interplay of disguises and interpretation later.) Penelope, however, turns from the implications of this her vision by pointing out that some dreams are true, but others are deceptive, and the scene ends with the queen returned to her bedroom, crying for her absent husband, until sleep closes her eyes.

Similarly, after the slaughter of the suitors, Eurycleia rushes to tell Penelope to come and ‘see with her eyes what she has desired all her days’, the return of Odysseus (23.5–7); but Penelope refuses to believe that this can be a μῦθος ἐτήτυμος, a ‘true tale’, and at first calls the nurse ‘mad’ (23.11) and then merely ‘old’ (23.24), but finally is persuaded to go and see what has been done by her . . . son.<sup>29</sup> The meeting takes place in the firelight (23.89), like their first exchange. Husband and wife sit in silence on opposite sides of the room (23.89–95):

Then she sat opposite Odysseus, in the firelight,  
by the other wall. He sat by the tall pillar, looking down,  
waiting to see if his majestic wife would say anything  
to him, when she saw him with her eyes.  
She sat in silence a long while; wonder held her heart.  
With her gaze, now she stared at him full in the face,  
now she failed to recognize him with the foul clothes on his body.

Again, the recognition is marked by the repeated words of perception – ὀρώων, ἴδεν, ὀφθαλμοῖσι, ὄψει, εἰσίδεσκεν, ‘looking’, ‘saw’, ‘eyes’,

<sup>29</sup> Besslich (1966) 88 notes how ἡδ’ ὄς ἐπεφνεν, ‘and who has killed them’ (*Od.* 23.84), is separated far enough from παῖδ’ ἐμὸν, ‘my son’, to allow a suggestion of Odysseus.



'gaze', 'stared' – and by misrecognition (blindness?). Odysseus' appearance – he had worried about his 'pitiful clothes' for their first meeting – deceives Penelope. The antithesis that describes her reaction is hard to appreciate. As printed in the Oxford text and translated here,<sup>30</sup> it seems to imply that the opposition is between at the one time staring into the face of Odysseus, at another time failing to recognize him. If this opposition is right, there is perhaps some irony in the assumption, after all the misrecognitions, that a steady gaze could reveal Odysseus in his disguise. Perhaps it indicates a contrast between a willingness to see and believe and an inability to recognize.

It is, however, only after his bath and the beautifying change from Athene that Penelope, to the background of the marriage music which Odysseus has arranged to deceive and delay the dead suitors' relatives, is prepared to accept her husband's return at least to the point of testing him with her trick about the marriage bed. She has misread the disguised words and appearance of her husband, and now looks of testing 'signs' (*sēmata* 23.110) between them. After the physical, external mark of the scar, the sign that leads to recognition here is the private and secret knowledge of the bed at the centre of the *oikos* – and Odysseus' reaction to its violation. To Nausicaa, Odysseus can describe nothing finer than the state where husband and wife, like-minded in attitude, maintain the *oikos*, (and critics have recognized this ideal of like-mindedness in the mutual testing, mutual steadfastness of Penelope and Odysseus<sup>31</sup>). Their like-mindedness, however, like the private signs of recognition, also excludes others: Telemachus fails to understand his mother's reaction to Odysseus, though Odysseus rejoices (23.97–111); Odysseus' testing of Penelope is seen as restrained beyond any normal human reaction;<sup>32</sup> Penelope's appearance before the suitors gives joy to Odysseus, though

<sup>30</sup> ὄψει δ' ἄλλοτε μὲν μιν ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν,  
ἄλλοτε δ' ἀγνώσασκε κακὰ χροὶ εἴματ' ἔχοντα.

On this passage, see the discussion of Fernandez-Galliano and Heubeck (1986) ad 94–5.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Harsh (1950); Whitman (1958) 303; Amory (1963); Beye (1968) 178; Erbse (1972) 55ff; Austin (1975) 181ff, especially 231; Finley (1978) 3ff; Van Nortwick (1979); Russo (1982); O'Sullivan (1984); Emlyn-Jones (1984); Thalmann (1984) 160–3, 170; Murnaghan (1987) 118–47; and for a different view to this tradition, see Henderson (1986) 27, 37–40.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Od.* 13.332ff, where Athene says another man would have gone home immediately to see his wife and child (cf. *Od.* 11.440ff). Amphimedon (24.167) says that Odysseus ordered Penelope to set up the bow-contest. This mistake has been read as arising from the suitor's mistaken assumptions about Odysseus' likely behaviour; for discussion and bibliography, see Goldhill (1988c) 1–9.

the suitors fail to understand that they are being beguiled.<sup>33</sup> Yet Penelope's testing of Odysseus provokes from him the sort of angry outburst that he has been restraining throughout his adventures. It is the knowledge admitted in a moment of uncharacteristic lack of control, as Odysseus of the many wiles becomes the victim of an (Odyssean) deception, that confirms for Penelope Odysseus' identity. The symmetry of the mutual testing results in a paradoxical recognition of Odysseus as untypically revealing of his identity and knowledge. Once again, the narrative realigns the dynamics of control and revelation.

The moment at which Penelope and Odysseus retire to the bedroom – another threshold to be crossed, protected by a delaying trick – and to their marriage bed has seemed to critics since Hellenistic times to be a fitting conclusion to the *Odyssey*.<sup>34</sup> Odysseus has built up stage by stage the series of relationships by which 'a/the man' is defined within the *oikos*, and Penelope seems the point towards which so much of Odysseus' travelling has been tending. But this is (first) to repress the connotations of the terms *oikos* and 'fatherland'. For the household and the fatherland have a history, form a continuity, and hence the need to refound the relationship with Laertes, his own father. So for Odysseus, 'the Ithacan', the relations between his own *oikos* and the island also need to be re-established.

The scene of recognition with Laertes is also fenced with ironies and a deferral which have seemed to many readers positively cruel, as Odysseus reduces his father to abject misery with yet another deceptive story.<sup>35</sup> (Odysseus also sits by dry-eyed while Penelope cries, and is himself mocked by Athene in disguise: recognition again and again involves a reciprocal testing.) Odysseus' story to Laertes is of how he once entertained the travelling Odysseus: ἄνδρα ποτ' ἐξείνισσα, he begins: 'a/the man I once played host to . . .' (24.266). Odysseus' language punningly

<sup>33</sup> The critics also fail to understand the *homophrosunē* of Odysseus and Penelope here; Odysseus' reaction is called 'not . . . natural' by Kirk (1962) 246. Many other critics agree with this judgement. For discussion, see Goldhill (1988c) 6–9. See also, most recently, Byre (1988).

<sup>34</sup> See Page (1955) 101–36 (with bibliography on the analytical tradition on which he draws); Kirk (1962) 244–52. For a critique of Page, see Wender (1978), with further bibliography, and Moulton (1974). On the Hellenistic ending, see Apthorp (1969) 64ff; Erbse (1972) 166–77; and for most recent discussions, Fernandez-Galliano and Heubeck (1986) ad xxiii 297–xxiv 348 and Goldhill (1988c) 26 n. 2.

<sup>35</sup> See Wender (1978) 57–60 (with bibliography); Thornton (1976) 115–6; Finley (1978) 224–33, and most recently the sensible comments of Fernandez-Galliano and Heubeck (1986) ad xxiv 205–412.

recalls the epic's opening concealment of his name, as here he hides himself from his father. In this scene, Odysseus uses the word 'Odysseus' once, to say that he has not seen Odysseus for five years (24.309), and Laertes uses it once in a conditional clause 'If you are in fact Odysseus, then give me a sign . . .' (24.328–9). Father and son, like Eumaeus, both hesitate to proclaim the name of Odysseus in recognition.

The recognition tokens which Odysseus uses give some indication of the importance of the meeting with his father. First the scar is used again, though with a further specific point, since it was to Laertes, his father, that Odysseus is described as returning from Autolycus after the initial hunt and expedition abroad. Each use of the scar is different, as the sign is differently manipulated, tells a different story, and constructs a different relation between the partners in recognition. The return of Odysseus explores the varying possibilities of the tokens of identity, the *difference within* the tokens of identity. As Cave writes: 'The scar is the mark of the treacherously concealed narrative, waiting to break the surface and create a scandal; it is a sign that the story, like the wound, may always be reopened'.<sup>36</sup> Second – and the addition of a further token to what was previously sufficient is itself significant and puts a strong focus on the addition – Odysseus reminds Laertes of the fruit-trees he planted for his son. This is both relevant to the particular context – Laertes is found by Odysseus working in the garden – and also indicative of a further element at stake in the *nostos*, namely, the patrimony that a father passes to his son, which we have seen Telemachus and Odysseus together fight for in the hall, but which is now placed in a wider generational context of the three generations of each man and his one son. Odysseus is placed now as the son, the inheritor, and he is to inherit the trees (which produce food, which are rooted in the soil of the *oikos*, which need human care across the generations). Odysseus tells how 'when he was a boy' (24.338) his father had taken him through the orchard and named all the trees for him. Particularly in a patriarchal, patrilineal culture, the father's power to name is crucial to the role of the father: the scene of paternal naming and recognition is a foundation of a child's social identity (although, of course, Odysseus is named by his maternal grandfather, Autolycus, as the first proof of the scar recalls). In another sense, however, Laertes does give Odysseus his name. For Odysseus is identified by his patronymic, *Laertiadēs*, 'son of Laertes' (as Laertes is called by his disguised son, *Arkesiadēs*, 'son of Arkesias' 24.270). Odysseus recalls being a child, and

<sup>36</sup> Cave (1988) 24.

his father's naming<sup>37</sup> (of the trees) as signs of recognition between son and father. It is not merely the fruit-trees that form Odysseus' patrimony. The father of Telemachus is recognized by reminding his father of what he has passed on.

Indeed, in the fight against the suitors' families, all three generations of men stand together, a visible incarnation of maintenance of the patrilineal, patriarchal family. As Laertes says, rejoicing (24.514–15):

What is this day for me, dear Gods? I am overjoyed.  
My son and grandson are vying in courage.

Athene responds by encouraging him to throw the first spear at the on-rushing Ithacans. She too calls him *Arkesiadēs*, 'son of Arkesias', adding in the patronymic a further generational tie. The possible problems of transition between the generations – the sort of conflict so often depicted in Greek texts, and assumed to be a major factor in early social history – are avoided in the *Odyssey* by the reciprocal recognition of son and father, both Telemachus and Odysseus, and Odysseus and Laertes, and by each father having only one son.<sup>38</sup> In Telemachus' attempt in the bow contest or in Odysseus' near killing of his father with his false tale, there are perhaps indications of the very repression of such conflicts.<sup>39</sup> The *Odyssey* constructs for Odysseus' *oikos* a model of passing on which avoids the death of the father. The well-known problems about the status of Laertes in the hierarchy of the household may be thought to result from this (idealized) model of inheritance without any disastrous conflict or tension.

Odysseus' meeting with Laertes, then, prompts a question not merely about why Odysseus tricks his father but also about what it means for the adult male to return to his father, and for recognition to take place between such figures. As such, this scene must be placed within the

<sup>37</sup> Page (1955) 107 stretches a point when he finds the use of *ὄνομαίω* here 'unhomeric' (cf. Shipp (1972) 362). Fernandez-Galliano and Heubeck (1986) ad loc. are rightly less worried, as is Wender (1978) 49; Erbse (1972) 214–15 argues the case in most detail. On naming and the recognition, see also Whitman (1958) 304–5; Wender (1978) 60–2.

<sup>38</sup> Generational conflict is, of course, a staple of tragic drama. Discussion of an agrarian crisis in early Greece, focused on problems of land tenure and the transition of property between generations, remains vexed, especially on particular texts (e.g. on Hesiod, see Millett (1984) against Will (1957); Detienne (1963); Will (1965)). I mean here merely to suggest that each father having one son avoids the obvious difficulties of splitting the property (*κλήρος*), and that the willing support of all three men for a common aim avoids the possible tensions of the son of mature age not having his own *oikos*/authority.

<sup>39</sup> On the ambiguity of Telemachus' bow attempt, see Goldhill (1984) 189–91; Goldhill (1986a) 149–50.

sequence of recognition scenes, not merely to confirm that deception is typical or characteristic of Odysseus, but rather to continue the exploration of what is at stake in the process of recognition. Odysseus and Telemachus recognize each other without tokens but through Odysseus' explanatory words: as Telemachus had said, 'no one *knows* his own father'. Odysseus takes his place through Telemachus' acceptance and recognition (as the father recognizes the son). The word of the father suffices. In a different way, Argus and Odysseus effect a mutual process of acknowledgement. Without language, without the possibility of disguise, but with a memory of past glories in present disorder and with the significance of a past relationship. Eurycleia's perception of the scar pierces Odysseus' disguise, a scar layered with the recollection not merely of an earlier relationship but also with the naming and maturation of Odysseus. Odysseus' nurse again holds Odysseus, but is prevented from the expression of recognition by Odysseus. She, too, must practise a strategic concealment of knowledge. For Eumaeus and Philoetius, recognition comes through the controlled exposure of the scar now as a guaranteed token of identity for Odysseus' *philoí*, but without the close associations of the nurse and her role in the naming of Odysseus. All too late, the suitors recognize Odysseus at the end of an arrow (to end their reckless eating of the house). A recognition in death, as the second episode in the Underworld makes plain.<sup>40</sup> But their failure to recognize the pervasive logic of transgression and revenge continues even into Hades. Penelope, even when Odysseus appears rejuvenated from the bath, tests him with a trick which leads to an uncharacteristic outburst from Odysseus that confirms his identity for his wife. And following that recognition we find Odysseus without any disguise, but using (characteristically) deceptive words, fooling his unrecognizing father almost to death, before Laertes recovers to rejoice in the day that brings his son and grandson together to compete in valour. Each of these recognition scenes is, then, a mutual process, each recognition forms and takes place as an interrelation between figures linked in the *oikos*' system of power, property and authority. As a series, the scenes of recognition constitute an exploration not only of the tokens of recognition – the signs of identity – but also of the possibilities of mutual authorization, that is, an exploration of what it is to recognize.<sup>41</sup> Each of the deferrals, hesitations and

<sup>40</sup> On this episode, the so-called Second Nekyia, see Wender (1978) 19–44; Moulton (1974) 161–4 (with bibliography); Finley (1978) 221–3. Agamemnon authorizes the *kleos* of Odysseus and Penelope in reaction to Amphimedon's tale 24.192–202.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Whitman (1958) 301–5.

manipulations that dog the process of recognition not only emphatically extends recognition beyond a moment into a process, but also invests that process with a set of ironies and misrecognitions that are not the obverse of the act of recognition but part of the (unending) movement towards *establishing* recognition. The *Odyssey* sets in juxtaposition different and developing models of recognition in the formulation of differing and developing interrelations of *philoï*.

An understanding of Odysseus' identity is being constantly formulated in the series of these scenes of mutually constitutive recognitions, but not merely in *contrast* with the figures Odysseus encounters. Rather, Odysseus and each of his *philoï* are linked in a network of similarities *and* differences in the search for his proper place in the property and proprieties of the *oikos*. So, for example, Telemachus is the son who is to look like, act like and suffer like his father; Argus too suffers in his age and disregard like his master and Laertes; Eurycleia enacts a policy of concealment, as Eumaeus struggles to maintain the order of the *oikos* against the suitors; Penelope's 'like-mindedness' is seen not only in her faith and forbearance but also in her weaving wiles; Laertes is described in terms all too suited to Odysseus' earlier disguise of ancient beggar. The defining relations between *philoï* in the *oikos* are dis-covered, then, through an interplay of similarities and differences that the narrative of disguise, recognition and return sets in motion.

Laertes, however, is not the final act of recognition or of *nostos*. Together with Dolios and his sons – further recognizers of Odysseus<sup>42</sup> – the men are ready to fight to regain Odysseus' place in Ithaca. It is, however, rather with a god-ordered truce between the noble families of Ithaca that the *Odyssey* reaches its conclusion. A thunderbolt from Zeus and the ministrations of Athene stop the work of returning from continuing into a further bloody battle. Odysseus' travelling, however, is projected beyond this formal closure. In the Underworld, Teiresias tells Odysseus that his search for *nostos* will not be finally fulfilled until he can appease Poseidon, which can only be achieved by travelling to a place which does not know the sea and there to make certain ritual sacrifices. He will know when this place is reached by carrying an oar – a man will eventually

<sup>42</sup> Dolios and his sons join the meal of Odysseus and his other *philoï*. Dolios asks if Penelope yet knows of his return or should he send a messenger to announce it (24.404–5) – a question which neatly points both to the complexity of Odysseus' reunion with Penelope as portrayed in the *Odyssey*, and to the possibility of other narratives of recognition. On Dolios, see Wender (1978) 54–6, who agrees with the Analytic strictures on this scene, although not with their conclusions.

ask what is the 'winnowing fan' that he is carrying; and then Odysseus will recognize through this misrecognition that the sea is not known (11.119ff). This story is repeated to Penelope by Odysseus before they even go to bed; indeed, his first words after her acceptance are (23.248–51):

My wife, not yet have we come to the end of all  
our trials. There is yet to come an immense toil,  
long, and difficult, which I must complete.  
For so the soul of Teiresias prophesied for me . . .

Odysseus and Penelope have not yet reached an end of their travail. There is more to come. Odysseus goes on to repeat at length Teiresias' instructions (23.264–84) and his remarks about old age. Odysseus must make another journey to effect his *nostos*, a journey away from Ithaca, to . . . where? A place which does not know the sea (but knows about winnowing, and therefore crops?) Somewhere which does not know the *Odyssey*, or Greek or the fame of Odysseus; somewhere different even from all the places Odysseus has yet visited (by sea). For Odysseus there is more to come for (or before) his *nostos*.<sup>43</sup>

In my opening discussion, I mentioned how critics have often seen the *Odyssey* as a journey of definition for 'a/the man of many turns'; *nostos* as the return into the nexus of relationships by which his place in society is formed. Certainly in the *Odyssey* we see the nexus of Odysseus' relationships of authority, power, place being slowly developed – from the edge of the island, to his own property, to the town, to the house itself and its bedroom, re-forming ties, obligations, understandings with his son, his faithful servants, his wife, his father and the townspeople. Odysseus' reintegration is formed through the scenes of mutual recognition that construct these interrelations. Each act of recognition – the perception and authorization of these interrelations – is surrounded, however, with suspicion, doubt, irony and hesitation. Crossing the threshold of recognition is marked by deferral. Moreover, the narrative projects still more journeying for Odysseus. The formation of interrelations through the travelling of *nostos* is not to be completed yet. But deferred to a further journey. Another threshold. Recognition is to remain a continuing process. The social identity of the man formulated by his *nostos*, by the relations constructed in this *nostos*, is, then, not yet completed.

The series of recognition scenes, then, does not constitute merely a

<sup>43</sup> See in particular Bergren (1983) 50ff.

'map' of a man's or the man's role in society. Rather, throughout the narrative we see a process of continuing exploration of the possibilities of recognition through the different models of recognition. As Aristotle says, 'It is recognition throughout.' The audience/reader's role is crucial here.<sup>44</sup> For it is the audience/reader's recognition which formulates differences and interconnections between the various scenes and their constitutive elements. In other words, the audience/reader is also involved in a process of exploring recognition. The audience/reader becomes implicated in recognizing the differences between a man and the man, that is, between recognizing a cultural norm and a specific identity (that which stands out from a cultural norm). This is not merely a point about an audience/reader's active construction or authorization of sense (although it is the case, as I have noted, that *anagnōskein* means in Greek both 'to read' and 'to recognize'). Rather, it demonstrates an important aspect of the ethical, normative thrust of the *Odyssey*. The *Odyssey* does not offer simply a didactic message about norm, transgression and punishment, but turns back on the reader the work of moving through the different models of recognition towards a recognized model of social identity and social behaviour. What is (to be) recognized in *andra*. The complex interplay between the narrative of recognition and the audience/reader's activity (*anagnōskein*) is, then, of fundamental importance to the functioning of the *Odyssey* as a normative text. The discourse of recognition is finally an ethical discourse. As I began by saying, recognition is not merely a perceptual process. It also involves authorization, power, legitimacy . . .

#### NAMING AND DISGUISE

When one names oneself, one always names another.

Brecht (in *Mann ist Mann*)

Odysseus' disguises – crucial to the narrative of return – are most often verbal: the concealment of identity by concealing the name. While language is used to veil, mislead and test, recognition (as the articulation of social identity) involves the power of words to define, determine, predicate – the scene of nomination. The act of naming is the gesture of legitimation and ordering without which it is hard to imagine a relation to language and in language. The thematic focus on naming in the

<sup>44</sup> For an extended discussion of the ideas in the following paragraph from one particular and stimulating perspective, see Brooks (1984).



*Odyssey* therefore forms a fundamental link between recognition and the telling of tales – and thus between the first and third sections of this chapter.

The use of names in the *Odyssey* has received considerable attention from critics.<sup>45</sup> Many names, particularly of minor characters, seem to have a special significance – the bard in Ithaca, for example, is called, in Stanford's translation, 'Fame-man, son of Joy-maker' – but it is particularly the name of Odysseus on which discussion has focused. The choice and sense of the name 'Odysseus' are especially brought to the fore in the tale of how Odysseus received his scar. The recognition of the scar leads to the tale of Odysseus' first blood, first kill, when he was scarred – his initiation into the male world of hunting. This in turn leads to an explanation of how he came to Autolycus, his grandfather, to receive gifts – the fulfilment of Autolycus' request made at Odysseus' birth and naming in Ithaca. The story of the scar takes Odysseus back through the transitions by which he became, in all senses, the object of recognition. Eurycleia, who holds Odysseus now, held out the first son to his grandfather (19.403–4):

Autolycus, now you yourself find the name to give  
to the dear child of your child. He is much prayed for.

Autolycus is asked to choose Odysseus' name – with the broad hint that he is πολυάρητος, 'Much-prayed-for': an invitation at least to choose a typically well-omened name. Autolycus himself has already been described (19.395–8), however, as pre-eminent for his thievery and use of oaths, the manipulations of deceitful action and language associated with his patron god Hermes.<sup>46</sup> Now this man chooses a name for his grandson (19.406–9):

My son-in-law and daughter, give him the name  
I tell you. For *I* come here hateful to many  
men and women on the fruitful earth.  
Wherefore let his name be Odysseus, a sign of such hate.

The name is *epōnumon*, a name to declare the essence of its bearer. Because Autolycus up and down the land has been hated (*odussamenos*) by men and women, the name Odysseus (*Odysseus*) is chosen. The pre-

<sup>45</sup> See e.g. Dimock (1956); Podlecki (1961); Brown (1966); Austin (1972), on whom I draw in the following paragraphs; Bergren (1983) 65–7; Clay (1983) 54ff; and, in more general terms, Sulzberger (1962). On the *Iliad*, see e.g. Nagy (1979) 69ff (with bibliography).

<sup>46</sup> See Kahn (1978) *passim*.

cise sense of this etymological play has been much discussed. Does it imply simply 'one who is hated', or rather 'one who causes hate'? Both Dimock and Austin in order to preserve what is perceived as a significant ambiguity, suggest the translation 'trouble',<sup>47</sup> a term which is 'pregnant with active and passive meanings' and which indeed captures much of the reciprocal nature of Odysseus' violent and deceptive interactions with the world. Odysseus' given name is a sign of his experiences to come.

The narrative of Odysseus' *nostos* can certainly be seen to fulfil the implications of this inaugural act of naming. Indeed, at four points in the *Odyssey* the narrative is expressed precisely in terms of Odysseus' relation of *ὀδυσσέσθαι*, 'hate', with the gods. First (1.62), Athene, when she begs Zeus to free Odysseus, asks why the king of the gods so hates (*ōdusao*) the hero. Second (5.339–40), Ino, the goddess who saves Odysseus as he attempts to land in Scheria, asks why Poseidon so hates (*ōdusat'*) him. Third, Odysseus himself, in the breakers off Scheria, recognizes the source of his troubles as Poseidon's continuing hatred (*ōdōdustai*) (5.423). Finally (19.275–6), when the disguised Odysseus tells Penelope that her husband will return, he explains that the fleet was lost because Zeus and Helios hated (*odusanto*) him.

At four turning points of the narrative, then, Odysseus' relation to the divine is expressed in language which seems to assert through the predictive and prescriptive etymology of his naming the identity of man and name. As Autolycus implied in calling the name *epōnumon*, 'rightly named', the *nomen* proves to be an omen. Eurycleia's recognition turns back to the past to validate itself, as the name turns out to have been always already indicative for the future.

Birth, naming, first blood, a return home laden with gifts to his *oikos* – the scene of recognition turns back to the series of events through which Odysseus became the man he is, turns back to the transitions, the passages of his 'journey to manhood'. The scar is not merely a token of identity but a sign which indicates the story of how Odysseus became that which is, in its full sense, the object of recognition. As with Odysseus' stories among the Phaeacians, the narrative of return itself turns back to express the present as a function of the past. The recognition turns back to the past to validate itself.

There is more, however, to the interplay of the scene of naming and the scene of recognition. For naming and recognition are necessarily inter-related in their parallel structures of delineation and authority. For like

<sup>47</sup> Austin (1972) 3; cf. Dimock (1956) 53.

recognition, naming always involves an act of classification. To name is to assert a relation in the exchange of language (a relation of power as well as definition). One never names, one classes.<sup>48</sup> Different namings assert different relations – *philos*, *xeinos*, father, lord, king, child etc. The proper name in particular is invested with a classificatory force that is inherently concerned with what is, in all its senses, the property of an individual. On the one hand, the proper name, like all names (signs) can be seen in its uses and combinations as part of a system of differences – open to dissemination.<sup>49</sup> To say ‘Odysseus’, or ‘Odysseus, son of Laertes’, or ‘Odysseus the Ithacan’, or ‘Odysseus of the many wiles’, or ‘Odysseus, my father’, etc. is to assert a different relation to the subject. On the other hand, the proper name, as a mark of identity, as that which stands for the sum characteristics or connotations of a subject, can be seen as having a special connection with the individual and a special power for and over the individual. Indeed, in each culture – and specifically in ancient Greek cultures – the use of the proper name is invested with cares, controls and restrictions and implies a particular positioning within the exchanges of language.<sup>50</sup> To use the name ‘Odysseus’ makes a difference. (A difference the significance of which is raised by the opening words of the epic.)

It is not by chance, then, that the scene of recognition returns to the scene of nomination. It is not only the significance of the given name that is focused on in the episode of the scar but also the importance of the name as a sign of identity and authority for the act of recognition.

Both Odysseus and other members of the *oikos* demonstrate the need for caution with regard to the name. Eumaeus, for example, when Odysseus tries to find out the name of the swineherd’s absent master, prevaricates for some twenty lines, finally utters the word ‘Odysseus’, but immediately adds (14.145–7):

Stranger, I am ashamed to name him even when he is not here.  
For he is particularly kind to me, and cares for me in his heart.  
I call him honoured lord, even when he is absent.

<sup>48</sup> See e.g. Lévi-Strauss (1966) 161ff, especially 185; Leach (1964); Tanner (1979). This is, of course, now a standard object of anthropological research.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Dissemination’ is a term developed by Derrida for the slippage between signs in language perceived as a system of differences. See e.g. Derrida (1981) *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> For the specifics of Greek cultural taboos, see e.g. on women’s names, Schaps (1977); on names in funeral speeches, Loraux (1981a) (index, ‘anonymat’ and ‘éloge’); on law and insults, Clay (1982). This topic has been much discussed with regard to Athenian tragedy: see e.g. Jouan (1978); Zeitlin (1982b), especially 23ff; Goldhill (1984) (index, ‘naming’).

*Aidōs*, roughly translated ‘shame’ – the force whose observance prevents transgression of the orderings of the structures of society – restrains Eumaeus from the free utterance of the name of the absent master. He is happy to call him ἡθεῖον, ‘honoured lord’, ‘lord and brother’, ‘kind master’, but the specificity of the name is held back.<sup>51</sup> The ‘hatred’, ‘trouble’ of ‘Odysseus’ is to be turned to a more auspicious naming. So Penelope in her half-asleep conversation with the disguised Athene uses an elaborate periphrasis for Odysseus, without mentioning his name (4.814–6):

Since first I lost a noble, lion-hearted husband,  
who surpasses the Danaans in all sorts of virtue,  
a noble man, whose fame is broad in Greece and midmost Argos.

The man whose *kleos* reaches heaven is not named. She even asks Athene directly about her husband without mentioning the name and receives an equally circumspect answer (4.832–7):

‘Please tell me about that pitiful man too,  
whether he is alive somewhere still and sees daylight,  
or whether he has already died and is in Hades’ halls.’  
The dark shape replied and said:  
‘As for that man, I will not tell you the whole story,  
whether he lives or is dead. It is bad to babble vainly.’

*Kai keinon*, says Penelope, ‘that man too . . .’; *keinon ge*, replies Athene, ‘As for that man’. The refusal to utter the name seems to be connected both with the need for the caution of *euphēmia* – the silence that prevents an ill-omened expression<sup>52</sup> – and with the absence of the master of the *oikos*. So *nostos* involves the recognition – predication – that the *xeinos* is ‘Odysseus’; the master returned.

It is in particular Odysseus, however, who refrains from the utterance of his own name. This is not merely in the lying tales he tells for strategic reasons to conceal his identity. In Scheria, Arete, the queen, asks him directly who he is – and receives no answer. Alcinous, too, makes more than one attempt to discover who the stranger is. Odysseus’ unwillingness to name himself raises the question not only of what it means to use the name ‘Odysseus’, but also and more precisely what it means to say

<sup>51</sup> ‘Odysseus’ name is a tangible reality which Eumaeus goes to remarkable lengths to circumvent’, Austin (1972) 6.

<sup>52</sup> Greek religious ceremonies usually begin with a command to maintain silence, εὐφημεῖτε, precisely to avoid the possibility of an ill-omened utterance. See Burkert (1985) 73, 199, 248, 273.

'I am Odysseus'. The *xeinós* is properly not asked who he is until he has eaten and drunk, but Odysseus extends the delay over several days and in the face of some prompting from his hosts. What difference does it make to delay offering his name so long?

The most extensive discussion of this question is to be found in the important study of Bernard Fenik. He places his interpretation carefully in the major traditions of Homeric scholarship. First, he argues tellingly against the position that Odysseus' failure to answer Arete's question indicates an earlier version of the text, where the question was immediately answered, which has been awkwardly grafted into the present text. He then notes certain psychological approaches which see the delay as 'a certain natural reluctance' on Odysseus' part 'after the enormous trials of the last days and under the physical and mental exhaustion that wears him down' – or even as an awareness on Odysseus' part of his 'loss of self-awareness and heroic identity'.<sup>53</sup> Fenik is willing to accept that an element of 'believability' is inherent in the scene: 'the poet has provided the raw material for each of us to complete the picture for himself'.<sup>54</sup> But he questions the principle of searching for a rigid, precise and absolutely clear psychological picture behind the silence, as if there were 'no middle ground between haphazard, fortuitous behaviour on the one hand and absolutely defined motivation on the other'.<sup>55</sup> More importantly, Fenik asks whether the 'thematic significance' of Odysseus' silence may 'compromise' an 'inward personal motivation'. It is through the recognition of this thematic significance that Fenik proceeds in his analysis, by considering Odysseus' silence as part of 'the dynamics of a typical Odyssean situation'. 'There is . . . the fact that all important identifications in the *Odyssey* are subjected to considerable delay'.<sup>56</sup> These delays are regularly used 'to produce an elaborate range of emotions and ironies, especially through the favourite technique of allowing persons to speak of things to an unrecognized stranger that touch him deeply'<sup>57</sup> – Eumaeus' talk of Odysseus' property, Penelope's description of her dream are two examples. Delaying the pronouncement of a stranger's name is typical of the *Odyssey's* search for 'drama, suspense, irony', and the growth of curiosity among the Phaeacians is an essential foundation of the Scheria interlude. Thus, concludes Fenik, 'it would . . . contradict an unchanging bent of the *Odyssey* if the hero *did* answer Arete and name himself directly'.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Fenik (1974) 16. <sup>54</sup> Fenik (1974) 16. <sup>55</sup> Fenik (1974) 16. <sup>56</sup> Fenik (1974) 53.

<sup>57</sup> Fenik (1974) 53 (extending the thesis of Hölscher in particular).

<sup>58</sup> Fenik (1974) 53.

It is indeed important to emphasize how this scene is constituted within ‘the dynamics of a typical Odyssean situation’, and also – as we have seen in the first section of this chapter – how the manipulation of such dynamics is used in the different recognition and disguise scenes to such different effect. (Being ‘typical’ is never a sufficient critical conclusion.) But it is also important not to occlude the linear progression of the narrative. What difference does it make that this extended scene of withholding the announcement of identity should occur at this point in the text?

When Odysseus reaches Scheria, he has been depicted through the stories told at the palaces of Menelaus and Nestor to Telemachus (who has been travelling precisely to find out about his father); through the reflections and memories of Penelope, Telemachus and his other *philoï*; through the debate of the gods, and through the description of his time on Calypso’s island and his escape from it. After his arrival on Scheria, we have seen his tactful supplication of Nausicaa, and his acceptance at the palace. Between Arete’s question and its answer, however, Demodocus sings two songs directly related to Odysseus’ past (as hero at Troy), and one song indirectly related to Odysseus’ position – the story of Aphrodite and Ares with its tale of adultery and punishment.<sup>59</sup> Odysseus has demonstrated his athletic prowess, and deflected all moments of danger with care. Certainly the deferral of the answer to Arete’s question helps build up Odysseus through these scenes and the announcement of name becomes a finely prepared dramatic climax. But since Odysseus has already been offered his trip home, elaborate gifts and Nausicaa’s hand in marriage and an *oikos*, even if he receives further gifts after his story, it is not merely in order to raise Odysseus’ status among the Phaeacians that his name is deferred.

Odysseus announces his name at the beginning of the four book (9–12) first-person narrative of his travels from Troy to Ogygia. The announcement of name is not only a conclusion of the doubt as to Odysseus’ identity but also the opening of the story which explains the process by which Odysseus came to Scheria and which is indeed an essential factor in understanding Odysseus, not least in the terms by which he announces himself (9.19–21):

I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, who in all tricks  
surpasses men, and my fame reaches heaven.  
I live in bright Ithaca . . .

<sup>59</sup> On this song’s relation to the epic, see Burkert (1960); Braswell (1982).

The narrative has been turned so that the announcement of Odysseus' name and his self-description as pre-eminent in trickery, famed to heaven and an inhabitant of Ithaca open the extended self-representing narrative. To say 'I am Odysseus' is to begin the story that tells what it is to be Odysseus.

The episode of this narrative of Odysseus which further revolves crucially around the use of the proper name is, of course, the first extended scene, set in the Cyclops' cave,<sup>60</sup> and this will offer further insight into what it means to say 'I am Odysseus'. The Cyclops immediately asks the strangers who they are (9.252–5). As much as his question seems to violate the expected norms of guest-friendship, so Odysseus' reply is perhaps surprising in its apparent willingness immediately to identify himself (9.259–64):

We are Achaeans wandering from Troy,  
driven by all manner of winds over the vast expanse of the sea.  
We desire to get home, but we have come now one way,  
now others. So, I suppose, Zeus wished to plan for us.  
We profess to be the men of Agamemnon, son of Atreus,  
whose fame is now the greatest under heaven.

The name 'Odysseus' is, however, notably absent from the marks of identity. It is Agamemnon's *kleos* which he mentions.

The question of the name returns when the drunken Cyclops requires more wine (9.355–6):

Be kind, and give me more; and tell me your name  
right now, so I may give you a guest-gift to make you rejoice.

The giving of the name will lead to the giving of a guest-gift. After the Cyclops has drunk still more, Odysseus offers a name (9.364–7):

Cyclops, you ask my famous name? I will tell you.  
You give me the guest-gift as you promised.  
No One is my name; my mother and father and all other  
companions call me No One.

After the corrupting gift of wine, the deceptive name – which leads to the famous trick by which the Cyclops prevents the other Cyclopes from helping him – is responded to with an equally improper guest-gift,

<sup>60</sup> On the much-discussed Cyclops scene, I have found the following most useful: Page (1955) 1–20; Schein (1970); Kirk (1970) 162–71; Glenn (1971); Calame (1976); Newton (1983); Mondì (1983); Clay (1983) 112–32; Bergren (1983) 45–50; and the works on guest-friendship cited in n. 2.

namely, to be eaten last. The reciprocities of guest-friendship are perverted to a reciprocity of transgression. With Odysseus, guest-friendship always involves *taking in*.

There is a double pun<sup>61</sup> in the famous trick by which the Cyclops is outwitted. For as the syntax changes when the other Cyclopes ask Polyphemus if he is being hurt, *outis* appears in the form *mē tis* (which has the same sense) (9.405–6; 9.410). The pun is articulated by Odysseus as narrator, who comments on the success of his game with the name (9.413–4):

So they spoke and left. My heart laughed within me,  
that my name and my brilliant wife had deceived them.

It is Odysseus' 'wife', 'deceit', *mētis*, that has triumphed. His name *outis* and its synonym *mē tis* in the exchange between the Cyclopes and Polyphemus is itself a *mētis*. *Mētis* is both the description of and an essential sign in the game of words.

When Odysseus finally escapes, he cannot resist the opportunity to taunt the blind monster (9.502–5):

Cyclops, if ever any mortal man asks you who it was  
that inflicted the shameful blinding of your eye,  
say Odysseus, sacker of cities, blinded you,  
the son of Laertes, who has his home in Ithaca.

The boast is the statement also that he is 'Odysseus', with his father's name and place of inhabitation – the normal markers of identity, which contrast precisely with his earlier general description of themselves as Greeks of Agamemnon's force. For the Cyclops this is – he recognizes – the fulfilment of an oracle he learnt long ago,<sup>62</sup> that he would be blinded by 'Odysseus' (9.513–6):

<sup>61</sup> At least a double pun. Photios writes that Ptolemaeus Chennos says that *outis* was a nickname of Odysseus because of his big ears (*ous* = 'ear', *otis* = 'bustard with long ears') (Ptolemaeus Chennos fr. 11 Chatzis = Photios *Biblio.* (190) 147a11). This etymology is accepted at face value and developed by Carpenter (1946) 140–1. Ptolemaeus also writes that the name 'Odysseus' was given because his mother, when pregnant, fell down in a heavy rain storm by the road (ὀδός/ὄσεν), a story repeated in the scholia to *Od.* 1.75 and attributed to Silenus the Chian; cf. Eust. 1871.20. Like the scar, the name, a token of identity, can tell different stories.

<sup>62</sup> Action is seen here as a fulfilment of that which is already declared. Therefore Todorov writes (1977) 64 'Every non-discursive event is merely the incarnation of a discourse, reality is only a realization.' So too Detienne (1967) 56 writes of oracular pronouncement 'La parole oraculaire n'est pas le reflet d'un événement préforme, elle est un des éléments de surréalisation.' Cyclops' failure to recognize the truth of the oracle is part of its verification.



But I always expected some big and noble mortal  
 would come here, clothed in great strength.  
 Now someone meagre, a nobody, a weakling  
 has blinded my eye, when he had tamed me with wine.

The contrast of predicates contains yet another pun. Cyclops expected a 'big' and 'noble' man to come, instead he was blinded by a 'weak' (*oligos*), 'powerless' (*outidanos*), 'worthless fellow' (*akikus*), or, to keep the echo of *outis* in *outidanos*, a 'nobody'. Cyclops' failure to recognize the echo of *outis* in *outidanos*, a 'nobody'. Cyclops' failure to recognize *πολύμητις* 'Ὀδυσσεύς, 'Odysseus of the many wiles', 'of much *mētis*', is heard once more in the irony of his description of the man who tricked him by the word *outis* as *outidanos*. The polysemy of the name continues to sound in Polyphemus' language.

The Cyclops, however, has the last word. He offers Odysseus a guest-gift if he will come back and get it, and when Odysseus taunts him further, he curses Odysseus by praying to his father, Poseidon (9.528–35):

Hear me, Poseidon, earth circling, dark haired.  
 If I am truly yours, and you profess to be my father,  
 grant that Odysseus, sacker of cities, son of Laertes,  
 who has his home in Ithaca, does not reach home.  
 But if it is fate for him to see his own people and reach  
 his well-built home and his own fatherland,  
 let him come late and badly, having lost all his crew,  
 in a foreign ship, and let him find troubles at home.

The curse echoes precisely Odysseus' self-description, and its content indeed predicts the course of the narrative in terms we have already seen to be significant. To reach home is described as to see his *philoī*, *oikos* and fatherland; and when Odysseus does return it will be in a foreign ship without his crew, to find troubles at home. Odysseus' declaration of his name is the stimulus and perhaps even the condition of possibility of the curse which lays the terms of Odysseus' odyssey. It is the manipulation of the power of language and in particular the power of the proper name which is narrated here by Odysseus. The name is invested with a (dangerous) power which not only declares the fame, authority, position of the subject but can also be turned against the subject in curse, oath, defamation, and utilized in beguilement. Odysseus' manipulation of naming to deceive the monster is followed by the monster's manipulation of the name against Odysseus – and now by Odysseus reciting this story of names. The first extended episode related by Odysseus in Scheria demonstrates to the full what is at stake in naming oneself, what is at stake in withholding the name.

The focus on the name of Odysseus in this scene, then, looks back to Odysseus' unwillingness to answer Arete and forward to the scenes on Ithaca where Odysseus again and again adopts a fictitious persona, a false name. The delay of Odysseus' *nostos* through the anger of Poseidon (his 'hatred' of Odysseus, 'man of hate'), which is co-extensive with Odysseus' deferrals of self-identification, stems from Odysseus' declaration of his (significant) name to the Cyclops and from the Cyclops' turning of Odysseus' boast against the utterer (realizing the significance of the name). Naming and withholding the name indeed form an essential dynamic of the narrative of the *Odyssey*.

The pun on *mētis/mē tis/outis* has a further significance, however. For one of the commonest epithets applied to Odysseus is πολύμητις, 'of many wiles' (*polumētis*). As Austin has shown, this epithet is used almost invariably in the *Odyssey* to introduce a speech by Odysseus, or to describe Odysseus as speaker, and Austin has claimed that far from being merely ornamental, the epithet *polumētis* emphasizes that 'when Odysseus speaks he is usually pleading a case, marshalling his most persuasive arguments'.<sup>63</sup> Austin's excellent study perhaps underestimates in this conclusion the deceptive manipulation of the situation implied by *mētis*.<sup>64</sup> Athene, whose description of Odysseus stands at the head of the Ithacan episodes, stresses precisely this deceptive element in Odysseus' characterization (13.291–9):

The man who could beat you in all tricks  
would be wily and a rogue, even if it were a god up against you.  
Outrageous man, subtle in *mētis*, insatiate of tricks, so it is not your way  
to cease, even in your own land, from deceits  
and roguish tales, which are dear to you through and through.  
But come, let's talk no more of this; we both know  
sharp practices, since you are by far the best of all men  
in planning and tales, and I am famous among all the gods  
for *mētis* and sharp practice.

Only a consummate rogue could outdo Odysseus in every trick. *Skhetlie*, 'outrageous', which is how Odysseus addressed the Cyclops is scarcely polite and colours the force of ποικιλομήτηα, 'subtle in *mētis*', and δόλων ἄτ', 'insatiate of tricks'. This bantering, ironic address also draws Odysseus and Athene together: they are similar, he in his pre-eminence among mortals for counsel (*boulē*) and for speaking (*muthoi*), she among the gods

<sup>63</sup> Austin (1975) 11–80.

<sup>64</sup> See Detienne and Vernant (1978) *passim* and Pucci (1986).

for her *mētis* and resourcefulness. (It is in order to weave together a *mētis* (13.303) that Athene has come to her hero.) As with Athene, so for Odysseus tricks and deceptions are part of his very nature: ‘they are dear (*philoī*) to you through and through’. Odysseus may desire to return to his *philoī*, but elements of what is *philos* travel with him. Indeed, when Odysseus announces his name to the Phaeacians, it is qualified by *ὄς πᾶσι δόλοισι ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει*: Odysseus’ ‘fame reaches heaven’ and he is ‘pre-eminent for all tricks among mortals’.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, his fame is precisely that of the arch-trickster, arch-manipulator of words and plans. The puns which form the essence of Odysseus’ tricky escape from the Cyclops, then, manipulate the very term by which Odysseus is most often represented as a speaking character. The way in which *polumētis Odusseus* uses or withholds a name is a defining aspect of his *mētis*, of what it is to be (*polumētis*) Odysseus. To say ‘I am *outis* and that is my name’ is to veil the name ‘Odysseus’, but also to reveal something important about the man for whom lies and deceit are *philoī*. To hide the name in Odysseus’ case is telling.

To name oneself ‘no one’ is not to be without a name, then. (It is not to return to some pre-cultural, pre-linguistic state as seems sometimes to be suggested. From whatever outside Odysseus makes his return, it is not outside language.) As Alcinous says, a human cannot be without a name: *Ou . . . tis*, he says, is anonymous (8.550–4):

Tell me the name that your mother and father and  
the others who live around your city call you there.  
For no one of men is absolutely anonymous,  
neither bad man nor good, when he is first born.  
But parents name everyone, when they give birth.

The parents (or in Odysseus’ case, a grandparent) name a child and in society a person has a name (which, of course, are not necessarily the same – as in the case of Irus, the beggar whose parents named him Arnaius (18.5–7). A person on the margins of society – a beggar, a king – may find his name/identity affected by such social positioning. It is as a wandering man that Odysseus shifts the name he uses.) A name comes with a history, with connotations. To use the name ‘Odysseus’ (with its etymon of ‘trouble’, with the fame that attaches to it) or *polumētis Odusseus* or *outis* (which with *mētis* points towards Odysseus’ description as a speaking subject) is not simply to point to some ‘essential idea’, not

<sup>65</sup> Suerbaum (1968) translates this as ‘famous for tricks among all mortals’; but see *Od.* 13.292. Segal (1983) calls it ‘ambiguous’.

simply and absolutely to *refer* to a subject. Rather, in the exchanges of language, there can be no absolutely neutral, ‘degree zero’, reference. The name is always already inscribed in the network of differences which make up social discourse. So, too, to refer to oneself is to enter oneself (as speaking subject) into this social discourse. To say ‘I am Odysseus’ is not simply self-*reference* but also self-*representation* – it begins to tell the story of Odysseus.

Naming, then, may now be seen as an essential factor in the process of *nostos* and recognition, and an essential aspect in any discussion of self-representation – it is the unachieved aim of saying in his own hall ‘I am Odysseus’ that founds the return. There is, first, a continuous defining of Odysseus through the predications by which Odysseus refers to himself and is referred to by others. The various namings of Odysseus provide a basic element in the process of defining ‘a/the man’, from the first mention of *andra . . . polutropon*, ‘a/the man of many turns’, to the proclamation εἶμ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς Λαερτιάδης ὄς . . . , ‘I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, who . . .’ Naming disseminates recognition throughout the narrative of return. There is also an express indication of the significance of Odysseus’ name for the narrative of his odyssey, and, moreover, an awareness of the dangers and powers involved in using or withholding a name. Odysseus is both master of and mastered by his name. Indeed, the *Odyssey* articulates how naming is both referential and at the same time descriptive, authorizing, classifying (much as recognition is both a perceptual and a legitimating process). When the narrative reverts again and again to the concealment or deferral of the name, this recognition of a gap between a subject and his proper name (a name could only ever be a *sign* of identity) raises the question of what’s in a name.

The use and manipulation of the name in the *Odyssey* indicates, then, a further key aspect of the narrative of *nostos* – a concern for the complex relations between man and his language, particularly in self-representation. The arguments presented here are designed to demonstrate that this is no casual feature of the narrative of return, but rather a constitutive dimension of narrative itself, and in particular of narration – the stories that are told of the self. To which I now (re)turn.

#### TELLING A TALE

To speak is to assume a responsibility, which is why it is to incur a danger.

Todorov

Telling is both a responsible and a commercial act.

Barthes

The *Odyssey* is, as 'Longinus' puts it, 'mostly story telling'.<sup>66</sup> There are two particular sets of stories that I wish to consider in this section, the tales Odysseus tells in Ithaca where he conceals his identity – the so-called Cretan lies<sup>67</sup> – and the narrative of his journeys to Scheria that he tells to the Phaeacians. In both cases, I shall be dealing with types of self-representation. How do the tales which Odysseus tells inform our understanding of 'the man of many turns'? How do the stories which Odysseus tells about himself bear on what I have been discussing in the previous two sections, namely, the relations between man and his language and the construction of social identity through recognition?

The first Cretan story is told by Odysseus to Athene (13.256–310). He is a Cretan, he claims, on the run after killing the son of Idomeneus, and he has been left behind by Phoenician sailors. There is no mention of Odysseus in this story, although the Cretan fought in Troy and 'suffered pains' (*pathen algea* 13.263; cf. 1.4); and his ship has been brought here by an 'unwilling deception' (13.277). (As I will discuss below, several of Odysseus' deceptive stories contain episodes of deception.) This story is delivered in reply to Athene's deception, her disguise. The deceptive first-person narrative is an exchange (of language) and, indeed, Athene in her recognition – a speech I discussed in the previous section – not only describes Odysseus as an arch-deceiver but also links herself and the hero together in their shared powers of trickery and misrepresentation. As the disguised *xeinós*, it is within the reciprocities of guest-friendship that Odysseus' lies are offered. The deceptive exchange of language both enables Odysseus' extended reintegration into the exchanges of social intercourse and marks him as a sign and source of 'trouble' within such social exchanges.

It is also as a Cretan that Odysseus answers Eumaeus' quite properly delayed enquiry to a *xeinós* (14.187), 'Who are you, and from where? What is your city and who are your parents?' This enquiry and the story Odysseus tells in response have been prepared for, however, not merely in the preceding rituals of guest-friendship. For the previous exchange of Eumaeus and Odysseus also focuses on beggars' false tales in relation to the homecoming of Odysseus. Odysseus first asks Eumaeus who his master is, and in a speech I have already looked at, Eumaeus hesitates to name the man he is prepared to praise. He begins this speech as follows (14.122–7):

<sup>66</sup> 'Longinus' *De Sublim.* 9.13.

<sup>67</sup> On the Cretan lies, see Trahman (1952); Marg (1957) 12ff; Todorov (1977) 59ff; Walcott (1977); Maronitis (1981); Haft (1984).

ᾧ γέρον, οὐ τις κείνον ἀνήρ ἀλαλήμενος ἐλθὼν  
 ἀγγέλλων πείσειε γυναῖκά τε καὶ φίλον υἱόν,  
 ἀλλ' ἄλλως κομιδῆς κεχρημένοι ἄνδρες ἀλήται  
 ψεύδοντ', οὐδ' ἐθέλουσιν ἀληθέα μυθήσασθαι.  
 οὐς δέ κ' ἀλητεύων Ἰθάκης ἐς δῆμον ἵκηται,  
 ἐλθὼν ἐς δέσποιναν ἐμὴν ἀπατήλια βάζει.'

Old man, no one who has wandered could come here with a report  
 of that man and persuade his wife and dear son;  
 but vainly, wandering men in need of sustenance  
 tell lies, nor do they want to tell the truth.  
 Any vagrant who comes to the people of Ithaca  
 goes to my mistress and babbles deceitful tales.

The opening phrases of the speech (which will hesitate to name Odysseus) seem to hint at the varying possibilities of reference for the king. 'Old man' addresses Odysseus in his disguise; 'no one' [*outis*] perhaps recalls Odysseus' own concealment of his name in the Cyclops' cave; 'that man', *keinon*, is Eumaeus' reference to Odysseus, which like Penelope's and Athene's use of *keinon*, refuses to name the master; and 'who has wandered' may recall the opening of the epic, 'the man who wandered many ways . . .' Eumaeus seems to assume that Odysseus, like others before him, will wish to go to Penelope with a story about her absent husband in order to obtain a recompense of food or clothing. The lying of wandering men is taken for granted. Indeed, the language seems to set up a punning interplay between 'wandering' and 'truth': *alēthēn* 120, 'I have wandered'; *alalēmenos* 122, 'wandering'; *alētai* 124, 'wanderers'; *alēteuon* 126, 'vagrant'; *alēthea* 125, 'truth' – note also *allōs* 124, 'in vain'. The tale of a wanderer deviates from the path of truth?<sup>68</sup> Eumaeus himself, to follow his suggestion that Penelope and Telemachus will not be taken in by such story-telling, proceeds to express his deep pessimism about the possibility of Odysseus' return (14.133ff). Odysseus responds (14.149–52):

Dear host, since you completely deny it, and say still  
 that man will not return, then your heart is ever untrusting.  
 But I will not speak in the same way, but say on oath that  
 Odysseus is coming. May I get a reward for good news  
 immediately, whenever that man reaches his home.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Strabo 1.2.23: ἀλαζῶν δὴ πᾶς ὁ πλανῆν αὐτοῦ διηγοούμενος, 'everyone who tells the story of his own wandering is an *alazōn* (wanderer/braggart)'.

Odysseus is prepared to say under oath that Odysseus is coming home (which will provide him with a reward for good news on the spot, that is, as a beggar he will receive the cloak that he desires). The present tense of what is a prophecy for the future also reveals what is the case: Odysseus is in the process of effecting his return. Odysseus swears to what we already know to be the truth, and the repetition of words of speaking (*anaineai*, 'you deny'; *phēistha*, 'you say'; *muthēsomai*, 'I will say'; *euangelion*, 'good news') emphasizes the irony of the exchange here as a series of misplaced speech-acts: the oath conceals a truth as it reveals another (has Autolycus passed on his prowess 'in oaths' to his grandson?); Eumaeus denies that what has happened will happen; and the reward for good tidings which will not be claimed until the very moment of Odysseus' arrival only ironically represents Odysseus' return to the *oikos*. Odysseus goes on to make his oath, calling to witness Zeus, the guest-friend table and the hearth of Odysseus; but first, with continuing irony, he expresses his hatred of beggars' lies (14.156–7):

Hateful to me like the gates of Hades is the man  
who, yielding to poverty, babbles deceitful tales.

Odysseus, who looks like (*eoikōs*) a beggar, hates the person who yields (*eikōn*) to poverty and tells deceitful tales. Deceitful tales are 'dear' (*phīloi*) to Odysseus (as the deceptive man is 'hateful' (*ekhthros*)), and this expression of distaste for deceptive wanderers' tales stands as a prelude to his own Cretan lie.<sup>69</sup> For it is in response to this speech of Odysseus that Eumaeus finally asks the stranger who he is.

This second Cretan story, then, is significantly preceded by an exchange which focuses on the possibilities and motivations of deceptive speech, particularly in such stories with regard to Odysseus' homecoming. And the tale itself depicts Odysseus as a Cretan who, amongst other adventures, is the sad victim of deception: a Phoenician's lies lead him into slavery (*apatēlia* 258, 'deceitful tales', echoes *apatēlia* 157, 127; and *pseudea* 296, 'lies', echoes *pseudont'* 125, 'they lie'). This tale is lengthy (193–359), and introduced with a claim of its absolute veracity:

<sup>69</sup> The only other time that the expression 'Hated to me as the gates of Hades is that man who ...' occurs in the Homeric poems is the famous passage where Achilles dismisses Odysseus' persuasion as deception (*Il.* 9.312). The rejection of the beguiling Odysseus in the mouth of the best of the Achaeans becomes here a mark of beguilement in Odysseus' disguise as a lowly beggar. For an extended analysis of textual interrelations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, see Pucci (1987).

ταῦτα μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω 192, 'I will say these things quite truly'.<sup>70</sup> It constructs a story of a life full of journeying and suffering, a picture of a Cretan who willingly and unwillingly has wandered from place to place. It is not only this general similarity to Odysseus' own story that has been noted. Also, like Odysseus' earlier narrative of his attack on the Cicones (9.39ff), the Cretan sails to a foreign city which his men attack to their own cost. In this case, it is only by supplicating the Egyptian king that the Cretan makes an escape from the soldiers who wish to kill him – a supplication which succeeds because of the Egyptian king's respect for Zeus Xenios.<sup>71</sup> So the Cretan goes to Troy, is involved in the sack of the city, and experiences a storm on leaving. So, the Cretan collects guest-gifts from all the inhabitants of the land which takes him in. Both the similarities and the differences from Odysseus' own experience are evident. The explicit connection of the story with the home-coming of Odysseus, however, is made towards the end of the telling. The stranger claims to have met and been entertained by Pheidon, the Thesprotian king, who had entertained Odysseus (14.321–2), and who shows the Cretan the absent Odysseus' accumulated guest-gifts. Odysseus, swore Pheidon (331), is at present in Dodona consulting the oracle whether he should return home openly or in secret. The Cretan, then, claims to have met a man who swears to have seen and helped Odysseus recently. Only the existence of Odysseus, the choice between an open or secret return and the collection of guest-gifts correspond to the narrative of Odysseus' return so far, and the Cretan claims no direct contact with the absent king.

Eumaeus is moved by the story, and convinced by it all, except that part which pertains to Odysseus (14.361–5):

Ah! wretched stranger, you have greatly moved my heart,  
telling in detail how much you suffered and wandered;  
but I think part at least is not in order; nor will you  
persuade me in your story about Odysseus. Why must  
a man such as you lie pointlessly?

An echo of the pun between 'truth' and 'wandering' may be heard in *alēthēs* (362), 'you have wandered', (*alēthēs* = 'true'), and the assumption that the wanderer is lying (*pseudesthai* 365). The stranger has spoken οὐ κατὰ κόσμον, 'not according to order', 'not what is fit', with regard to

<sup>70</sup> A remark which leads Todorov (1977) 61 to comment 'Invocation of the truth is a sign of lying.'

<sup>71</sup> See in particular Herman (1987) 54–8.



the absent king. 'The only part of the narrative Eumaeus treats as false is the only part which is true.'<sup>72</sup> Eumaeus remains convinced of his master's destruction, and, he says, he has even lost interest in asking about him since the time when an Aetolian man deceived him with a *muthos* (14.379–85):

Since an Aetolian man deceived me with a tale;  
he came to my home after he had killed a man and  
wandered over many a land. But I treated him well.  
He said he had seen him with Idomeneus in Crete,  
repairing his ships which storms had shattered.  
He said he would come either in summer or autumn,  
bringing many possessions, with his godlike crew.

The Aetolian liar was also a wanderer (*alētheis* 380, 'wandered') and also told a tale of Crete and Idomeneus. He said Odysseus would return in summer or autumn, laden with gifts and with his companions. As with Odysseus' own Cretan lies, the Aetolian told a tale which hints at elements of the truth, even as it fabricates and misrepresents. Eumaeus' disappointment in the Aetolian is set in an ironic parallel with Odysseus' deception. The men exchange tales of Cretans, Odysseus to deceive and yet test Eumaeus' fidelity, Eumaeus to express his fidelity, and yet to be deceived as to the stranger's identity, although not to be taken in by this Cretan tale about his absent/present master. The exchange of stories turns not merely on Odysseus' misrepresentations, but on an interplay of deceptive tales.

It also leads to a further proposed exchange of words, a *ρήτηρ* (393), 'a verbal covenant', or 'wager'. Odysseus remarks on Eumaeus' lack of belief even in his oath (391–2), and suggests a deal: if the master returns, Eumaeus will give him a cloak; if he does not return as promised, Eumaeus may have his servants throw him off a cliff to teach all lying beggars a lesson. The irony of the already returned master's manipulation of the servant is clear, but Eumaeus avoids the wager with an appeal to the propriety of guest-friendship – How could he kill a man whom he had invited into his home? – and the exchange turns finally to the sacrifice and the consumption of the evening meal, the 'guest table' by which Odysseus had sworn his oath. The deceptive exchange of language reverts finally to the ordered exchange of guest-friendship (a marked contrast with the Cyclops episode).

That night, the stranger tells Eumaeus a further story, this time of a

<sup>72</sup> Todorov (1977) 61.

direct, if long passed, encounter with Odysseus, in which the hero takes an active and key role. This is an anecdote with strongly marked object, to persuade Eumaeus to give him a cloak in the inclement night.<sup>73</sup> A story for a cloak. Hence it begins with an elaborate and periphrastic apology for speaking what perhaps should not be said (14.462–7) (a *politesse* which demonstrates that desire – which gives rise to narrative – must be veiled in language).<sup>74</sup> The story is an episode from the siege of Troy, an ambush led by Odysseus, Menelaus and the Cretan, in which the Cretan finds himself without a cloak and freezing to death. (A god ‘deceived’ him (488) – again the deceiving tale expressly mentions deception.) Odysseus, typically of his character as counsellor and fighter (he claims 490–1), comes up with a scheme. The Cretan is told to be quiet, and Odysseus calls for a volunteer to run back to Agamemnon with a message, and the volunteer naturally leaves his cloak as he runs off. So the Cretan passes the night comfortably. The story has its desired effect on Eumaeus, who regards this tale as told most suitably, to the point (οὐδέ τί πω παρὰ μοῖραν ἔπος νηκερδὲς ἔειπες 509, ‘Nor have you said anything contrary to what is right or unprofitably’); and he provides the stranger with a comfortable and warm bed for the night. It is noticeable, however, that the Cretan’s tale is predicated on Odysseus’ manipulative skill with words, his prowess in counsel (491) and *muthoi* (492). Once more, *mētis* is both the subject and the nature of the narrative (as the Cretan retells Odysseus’ *muthos* to gain himself again a warm covering). The lying story also reveals a truth of *polumētis* Odysseus, the speaker.

In Eumaeus’ house, then, we see not merely Odysseus telling a false tale to protect his disguise and to test Eumaeus’ fidelity, but a series of exchanges that revolve around wandering, deception, misplaced faith; a series of conversations, set in the context of the reciprocal rituals of guest-friendship, that both veil and reveal the two speakers in a complex network of truths and fictions, fidelity and belief.

The next time that Odysseus tells a Cretan tale is in his own palace to Antinous, the leader of the suitors. This shorter story (17.415–44) also mentions a voyage to Egypt and the Cretan’s escape from death. The escape, however, is not through a direct supplication of the king of Egypt that results in being treated as a *xeinos*. Rather, Odysseus merely states (17.442–5):

<sup>73</sup> On the second Cretan lie, see Redfield (1973) 38; Svenbro (1976) 23–4; Walcot (1977) 15–16; Detienne and Vernant (1978) 30–1; Nagy (1979) 235–8; Edwards (1985) 33–4.

<sup>74</sup> See e.g. Barthes (1975); Barthes (1978); Tanner (1979). On classical material, see e.g. Carson (1986) who draws heavily on Barthes (1978); Goldhill (1987b).

But they gave me away, into Cyprus, to a *xeinos*,  
 who arrived, Dmetor Iasides, who ruled strongly in Cyprus.  
 From there, I have now come here suffering woes.

He is given to a *xeinos* to take to Cyprus. The word *xeinos* recalls the previous magnanimous display of guest-friendship by the Egyptian king, as it changes the story. Why does Odysseus change his version? The scholiast notes rightly that in this version all mention of the returning king is repressed – there is no talk of the Thesprotians. As much as his previous tale of Odysseus was construed by Eumaeus as a deliberate attempt to please the listener, so it is easy to appreciate here the beggar's unwillingness to recall Odysseus before the aggressive suitors. But there is a further reason. For the Cretan's tale is put into a particular context. The speech opens (17.415–21):

Give, friend. You do not seem to be the worst of the  
 Achaeans, but the best,<sup>75</sup> since you look like a king.  
 So you must give alms more generously than the others.  
 I would spread your fame through the endless earth.  
 For I once lived in my own house among people,  
 prospering in wealth, and often I gave to a wanderer,  
 according to what he was and what he wanted when he came to me.

The story of the Cretan's reversals of fortune is told to demonstrate the propriety of giving generously to a *xeinos*. The first words, *dos, philos*, 'give, friend', are an appeal for alms, and in the address *philos* a claim to be treated as a *xeinos*.<sup>76</sup> Antinous, the addressee, is described as 'not seeming to be the worst', since he 'looks like a king'. The vocabulary of 'seeming' and 'being', of 'looking like' (as the disguised king speaks to the pretender) points precisely to the gap between appearance and reality in this exchange. Antinous dismisses the beggar sarcastically as a 'ruiner of the feast' – the previous telling of the tale had led to the guest table of Eumaeus – and sends him away from his table (17.447). Odysseus immediately stresses the disjunction between Antinous' appearance and his behaviour (17.454):

For shame! There is not, then, in you a mind to match your looks.

The Cretan's tale is thus constructed as a testing of Antinous, as host and king. It stands in significant contrast with Eumaeus' reaction to a

<sup>75</sup> On the importance of ἄριστος in Homeric epic, see in particular Nagy (1979), with bibliography.

<sup>76</sup> The link between *philos* and *xeinos* is shown by Benveniste (1973) 275ff.

similar situation, the previous telling of the tale. The omission of the story of the Egyptian king's beneficence and the Thesprotian king's guest-friendship serves to stress the absence of such behaviour here in the man who would be king. 'The change in emphasis between versions . . . demonstrates that the story *can* be used by the teller to convey subtly facts about himself and different aspects of his personality, as well as convey warnings and suggest paradigms for behaviour.'<sup>77</sup> The story is a fiction to reveal the truth.

It is Penelope who next asks Odysseus directly who he is. She has indicated her desire to question the stranger about her husband. Odysseus, however, begins by talking of Penelope (19.107–9):

My lady, no mortal on the endless earth could fault you.  
For your fame reaches to broad heaven,  
like some blameless king . . .<sup>78</sup>

This flattery of Penelope also recalls the expression by which Odysseus had announced himself to the Phaeacians ('And my fame reaches to heaven' (9.20)) and also the periphrasis by which Penelope had referred to her husband ('His *kleos* is broad through Greece and midmost Argos' (4.726, 816)). Odysseus' language, as it deflects a direct reply, hints towards the truth and towards a parallelism between Penelope and himself, which will be further expressed in the series of 'reverse similes'<sup>79</sup> (where Penelope, for example, is likened to a sailor returning to land). Here, Penelope with her *kleos* is 'like a king'.

Odysseus requests that he is not asked about his name: μάλα δ' εἶμι πολύστονος, he says, 'I am much grieving'. (Odysseus *polumētis*, *polutlas*, *polutropos* etc. again hides and hints at his identity in the assertion 'I am *polustonos*'<sup>80</sup> – as recognition is diffused through the language of self-representation.) But the queen will not accept such brooking. She replies with a lengthy speech (19.124–63) about her troubles with the suitors, how she longs for Odysseus' return, and how she has tricked the suitors with her weaving. Her story of grief concludes with the restatement of her question about the stranger's identity. If his is a tale of woe, let it be in exchange for her tale of misery. Odysseus' response is the next tale of

<sup>77</sup> Emlyn-Jones (1986) 8.

<sup>78</sup> There is a difficulty in construing the remainder of this sentence; see e.g. Stanford (1959) ad xix 109ff and Russo (1985) who follows Monro's emendation of ἦ to ἧ.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Foley (1978) *passim* and on these lines especially 11ff. *Kleos* will be discussed in the next chapter. On *kleos* in the *Odyssey*, see Segal (1983).

<sup>80</sup> On *πολυ-* compounds, see n. 3 above.

Crete, which begins, as his narrative to the Phaeacians opened with a description of Ithaca, with a general picture of the island (19.172ff). Again, his picture of the Cretan recalls earlier descriptions of Odysseus, particularly in the line (170) ‘wandering through many towns of men, suffering pains’, which echoes many terms of the *Odyssey*’s proem in particular. This tale, however, turns on a relation of guest-friendship between the Cretan and Odysseus. The Cretan now claims to have entertained Odysseus in his home and given him guest-gifts. In the first tale, there was no mention of Odysseus; in the second, the Cretan claimed to have met a man who entertained Odysseus as a *xeinos*; in the next, to have been on a military expedition once with the king; now he claims to be a *xeinos* of the king. The fictions and the truth of the speaker are approaching one another, at least in the stories told.

The comment that follows the story is different from previous remarks on Odysseus’ tale-telling (19.203):

ἴσκει ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα·

In his speech, he made his many lies seem like the truth.<sup>81</sup>

‘Lies like the truth’, ‘lies similar to reality’, expresses not only the plausibility of Odysseus’ narration but also the manner in which his tales can hint at a truth while resisting any direct expression of it. Indeed, the proof Odysseus offers of the truth of his tale – his final convincing of the doubting if moved queen – is the description of his own clothing and jewelry<sup>82</sup> of twenty years earlier (19.221ff) and the effect of Odysseus and his companions on those who saw them. The representation of the actual past is woven into Odysseus’ misrepresentation.

Penelope is deeply moved, but Odysseus tells her a further story to stop her weeping. This is (again) an anecdote about the Thesprotian king and Odysseus’ trip to Dodona. But there is a marked difference in the re-telling of the tale. For now the Cretan has the Thesprotian king say that Odysseus reached Thesprotia after the loss of his companions sailing from Thrinacia (the island of the Sun); the crew’s fault in eating the cattle of the Sun is placed as the cause of their destruction. Odysseus’

<sup>81</sup> On the translation of this line, see Stanford ad loc. and Russo (1985) ad loc. This line is significantly echoed in Hesiod *Theog.* 26–8 and forms a basis of Pucci’s subtle analysis of Hesiod’s self-reflexive writing (Pucci (1977)), now interestingly criticized by Ferrari (1988). West comments (1966 ad 27) that the Homeric line is ‘less satisfactory of the two as Greek, and the less firmly integrated in its context’. This bizarre judgement, however, stems from West’s polemic that Hesiod predates Homer.

<sup>82</sup> On the dog brooch, see Rose (1979) 223ff.

survival by hanging onto the keel of his ship and his rescue and transport by the Phaeacians finds a place in the narrative. The Thesprotian king's story in the story of the Cretan brings the misrepresentation once more closer to the actuality of (the narrative of) Odysseus' journey. Again, Odysseus' deceit *manipulates* the difference between truth and fiction in his 'lies like reality'.

This exchange between Penelope and Odysseus leads to the queen's offer of a bathing which results in Eurycleia's recognition of her master – where Odysseus' physical and verbal disguise is penetrated (to reveal the truth that the man who looks like her master is the master). Penelope, however, remains unaware of the interchange between nurse and stranger, and after the bathing again questions Odysseus. After outlining her grief, and her doubt as to what she can, or should, do, she asks the guest to interpret a dream for her. She dreamt that an eagle killed her geese which she was feeding; she grieved, but the eagle claimed to be Odysseus, returning to kill the suitors (19.535–53). The metamorphosed king reads the dream in which he appears (metamorphosed) in the same way as the eagle (Odysseus) in the dream indicates: 'Odysseus himself', says Odysseus himself, 'has indicated how the dream is fulfilled' (19.556–7). The ironic interplay of self-representation and disguise reaches a brilliant climax. As each Cretan lie has brought the Cretan into closer and closer contact with Odysseus, here the disguise of Odysseus and Penelope's dream overlap, to the extent that Odysseus can both maintain his fictive persona and at the same time express what is the case without falsehood. The different levels of fiction in the text are so manipulated that the same statements signify with equal point, even as they signify different things, on each different level. Lies like the truth.

The tales Odysseus tells, then, do more than chart 'a progressive rise in Odysseus' fictitious status throughout the lies',<sup>83</sup> as he approaches the adoption of the status he once held in his *oikos* and Ithaca. Nor can it be said simply that 'His lies are blatant misstatements of fact'.<sup>84</sup> Rather, in his falsehoods which are like the truth, there can be seen an awareness and manipulation of language's subtle possibilities of veiling and revealing elements of truth in fiction. The fictive personae that Odysseus creates through his tales cannot but in different ways reveal both himself and others in their reactions to him. Indeed, it would be difficult to maintain a simple and absolute opposition between the 'true representation' of Odysseus and his fictive personae, but rather the tales construct a series

<sup>83</sup> Haft (1984) 301–2.

<sup>84</sup> Wilkerson (1982) 112.

of different shifting levels of representation (in the exchanges of language between *polumētis* Odysseus and those with whom he converses). Telling tales not only may conceal identity and test the listener, but also are telling about the speaker. Homer, the teller of tales, makes his hero a tale-teller who manipulates different levels of fictional (self-)representation.

The first-person narratives in which Odysseus represents himself as a Cretan who has wandered far, are preceded in the *Odyssey* by the extensive first-person narrative in which Odysseus represents his wanderings to the Phaeacians.<sup>85</sup> The relations between this long tale and Odysseus' Cretan stories have all too rarely been adequately discussed, despite the fact that in ancient writing the discussion of truth and falsehood with regard to the *Odyssey* is focused in particular on the Phaeacian narrative.<sup>86</sup> (Certainly since Eratosthenes, Odysseus' wanderings were regarded by at least some critics as merely a fantastic and untrue tale.) This critical tradition of Odysseus as fabricator and braggart, however, leads to important insights into the narrative technique of the poem, even if the question 'Does Odysseus lie through books 9–12?' may not receive a single-word answer. Although I certainly will not make any attempt to prove that Odysseus' Phaeacian tales are lies, I will be investigating what in the narrative techniques of the *Odyssey* makes possible such an evaluation. Now Alcinous, in the break in Odysseus' tale in Book 11, may seem to raise precisely the problem of the status of Odysseus' stories (11.363–8):

Odysseus, we do not think, to look at you, that you are  
a braggart and rogue, like many men the black earth  
feeds, far-scattered fellows, fabricators of lies, lies that  
no one could ever see to test. In your case, there is a shape  
to your words, and you show sound sense;  
you have spoken a tale knowingly like a poet.

As so often in the *Odyssey*, the narration of a tale prompts a comment on its telling. Athene declares that it would take an *epiklopos*, 'rogue', to

<sup>85</sup> On the first-person narrative, see in particular Marg (1957); Maehler (1963) 9–34; Suerbaum (1968); Voigt (1972). Suerbaum has extensive further bibliography to which can be added Frontisi-Ducroux (1976); Stewart (1976) 146–95; Moulton (1977) 145ff; Thalmann (1984) 157ff; Walsh (1984) 19ff.

<sup>86</sup> See in particular Strabo's discussion of Homer 1.2.1ff, usefully discussed with bibliography by Schenkeveld (1976). Pindar's remark in *Nem.* 7.20–3 is particularly important: 'For the critical picture of an Odysseus who is all λόγος and no ἔργον, whose celebrity far exceeds any martial accomplishments he can claim, begins here in Pindar, and continues through Gorgias, Antisthenes, and the tragedians to become one of the clichés of Western literature' (Most (1985) 149 (with references and useful discussion of the Pindaric lines)).

outstrip Odysseus in tale-telling (13.291) and here Alcinous says that Odysseus does not resemble a ‘rogue’, *epiklopos* (or a ‘braggart’, ‘charlatan’, ἠπεροπῆα) to those watching. He is not like typical wandering men who construct lies of which there can be no seeing and testing (although it is not clear how this is different from Odysseus’ tales). Rather, Odysseus’ words have ‘shape’, ‘form’, μορφή, and there is good sense in them; his story is like a tale of a bard who is skilful and knows (ἐπισταμένως has both senses). It is the ‘form’ of Odysseus’ speech which brings conviction (like a poet?) – though it is difficult securely to comprehend what is meant by the term *morphe*<sup>87</sup> here. Indeed, Odysseus opens his long narration with a question about the ordering of his story (9.14–16):

What, then, first, what last shall I say?  
For the heavenly gods have given me many cares.  
Now, then, first I will tell my name . . .

This retrospective narration within the narrative of the *Odyssey* marks its own deliberate ordering. So, indeed, the narration ends with a comment on the technique of story-telling (12.450–3):

Why should I tell the rest of this story?  
For already yesterday I began telling you and your  
noble wife in the house. It is distasteful for me  
to tell a story again, once it has been well told.

The oral poet’s Odysseus finds repetition distasteful (*ekthron*) when it comes to telling stories (*muthologeuein*)!

The complex structuring of the *Odyssey*’s narrative, furthermore, is stressed by another retrospective. In Book 23, Odysseus after making love with Penelope exchanges stories (23.300–1):

When they had taken their pleasure in delightful love,  
the pair took pleasure in tales, speaking to one another.

The pleasures of love lead to the pleasures of *muthoi*, as once again Penelope and Odysseus exchange versions of the past. Penelope is briefly described as telling of her suffering in watching the suitors and their feasting (302–5). Odysseus, however, narrates all the sufferings he both had caused and experienced – the active and passive sense of his name, ‘trouble’ – and Penelope listens with pleasure wide-awake (23.310–3):

He began how first he had destroyed the Cicones, then  
had come to the fertile land of the Lotus-Eaters;

<sup>87</sup> See e.g. Walsh (1984) 6ff. Cf. for the use of μορφή *Od.* 8.170.



and all the things the Cyclops had done, and how he had taken revenge for his strong companions, who had been eaten and not pitied.

He begins his story with the Cicones, and the narrative reports a brief account of each of the tales he tells. Unlike the *Odyssey*, these proceed in chronological order, and each is told in similar restricted detail, so that what has extended over eight books is now narrated in some thirty-one lines<sup>88</sup> (and in the space of a single night). The retelling of the tale cannot but emphasize the difference in repetition: the reordering of events into a linear pattern of chronological order, the removal of the thematic repetitions (guest-friendship etc.), the repression of so much detail, stress the *Odyssey*'s manipulation of the narrative order as well as its narrative techniques of expansion, repetition and choice of material. The narrative within the narrative, then, marks the text of the *Odyssey* as a composed, a constructed artifice. (That is, re-telling raises the question of representation.) The (self-)awareness of a narrative as composed, as ordered in a particular way, as using particular material, stands against Auerbach's famous description of Homeric narrative as presenting the surface of the world without the depth provided by silences and gaps, as it stands against the assumption of a simple, paratactic linearity of narrative, which seems to be supposed by certain exponents of oral theory.<sup>89</sup> Rather, the different modes and structures of narration in the *Odyssey* demonstrate that far from an unmediated presentation of material there is always already in story-telling the manipulation of representation.

The differing levels of poetic narration, moreover, are importantly at play in the lines leading up to Odysseus' first-person narrative of his wanderings. This extensive scene in the court of Alcinous offers a further, highly relevant insight into the nature of tale-telling, as viewed in the *Odyssey*, and provides a particular context for the first-person narration.

Three times the bard of the Phaeacian court, Demodocus, is brought forward to entertain and Odysseus' reactions to the bard's performance – he is twice reduced to tears – are essential to the narrative's development towards his recognition and the announcement of his name. Two of the

<sup>88</sup> Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3.16, 1417a14) notoriously says this passage has sixty lines. It is usually assumed either that Aristotle's text is corrupt, or that Aristotle misremembered the Homeric text, or that this is further evidence for the unreliable state of our text of Homer.

<sup>89</sup> Auerbach (1953) ch. 1. Kirk, for example, calls paratacticism 'unsophisticated' (1962) 169; see also Notopoulos (1949); Notopoulos (1951). I have argued against this view of Homeric narrative in Goldhill (1988c). See Lynn-George's critique of Auerbach (1988) *iff.*

songs are directly related to Odysseus' past as hero at Troy and provide an essential background on the one hand to the picture of Odysseus in the *Odyssey* (which has often been seen as constructing an extended commentary on or against certain of the values and indeed the world-picture of the *Iliad*<sup>90</sup>) and on the other hand to the esteem in which Odysseus is held by the Phaeacians – he arrives to them already a subject for epic song. These two songs provide an importantly different perspective on Odysseus and his fame. The first song (8.73ff) is of a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles,<sup>91</sup> and the pleasure of Agamemnon at such a dispute, since it fulfilled an oracle that predicted the fall of Troy (does this allude to the *Iliad*, where the quarrel of the best men, Achilles and Agamemnon, leads to the death of Hector, which heralds the fall of Troy? The festival that turns to violence is a pattern, however, suggestive of many other narratives from the Centaurs and Lapiths or Zeus and Prometheus – a violation of the celebration of the immortals themselves – to Odysseus' final slaughter of the suitors at a feast day of Apollo. The allusiveness of myth is always to a network, a system of tales . . . ) (8.73–83):

The Muse stirred the bard to sing of the famous deeds  
of men, a song whose fame then reached broad heaven,  
the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, son of Peleus,  
how they once fought at a luxurious festival of gods  
with terrible words, and Agamemnon, lord of men,  
rejoiced in his mind, that the best of the Achaeans were fighting.  
For so had Phoebus Apollo spoken in an oracle to him  
at sacred Pytho, when he entered the stone doorway  
to consult him. For that time was the beginning of trouble rolling on  
for the Trojans and the Greeks, through the plan of great Zeus.  
These things the famous bard sang.

The performance of the bard is represented only as reported speech, framed by the inspiration of the Muse and the concluding expression, 'these things the famous bard sang'. The violence of the language of the quarrel is represented merely in the summing up phrase *ἐκπάγλοις ἐπέεσσι*, 'terrible words'. So, too, the pronouncement of Apollo – a speech within a song within the epic – is not in direct speech. The famous singer's famous song of the famous deeds of men is merely outlined in these seven lines of description, as the focus shifts to Odysseus' tearful reaction as he listens to this version of his past (8.83–95).

<sup>90</sup> In particular, see Nagy (1979) 15ff; Clay (1983) 96ff; Edwards (1985); Pucci (1987).

<sup>91</sup> On this, see in particular Marg (1956); Diano (1963); Nagy (1979) 15ff; Edwards (1985) 38ff.

The second song Demodocus sings is the tale of Ares and Aphrodite and their discovered adultery.<sup>92</sup> Again, the description of the performance marks what follows as a reported summary of the song (8.266–9):

He struck up on the lyre, and began finely to sing  
about the love of Ares and sweet-garlanded Aphrodite,  
how first they slept together in Hephaestus' house  
in secret.

The subject (ἀμφ', 'about') and the particular focus (ὅς, 'how') are expressed in as general an expression as that which introduced the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles. The narrative, however, immediately seems to shift to a more direct form of expression as details of the plot and Hephaestus' machinations are described, and as the characters interact with direct speech (8.290–5):

He rushed into the house,  
and grabbed her hand, and spoke to her using her name:  
'Let's go, dear, to bed here and make love.  
For Hephaestus is no longer about, but, I suppose, has  
already gone to Lemnos to see the wild-voiced Sintians.'  
So he spoke, and it seemed pleasing to her to make love.

The brusque proposal of Ares, like the interchanges that follow once he has been trapped, are marked off as direct speech. Unlike the 'terrible words' which summed up the violent language in a phrase, the violent language itself is represented.

This far longer story also ends with 'These things the famous bard sang' (367). The contrast between this song of Demodocus and his previous performance is not merely in the relation of the subject material to Odysseus, its tone, or the reaction of the listening hero.<sup>93</sup> It is also in the nature of its mode of representation.

The third song is requested by Odysseus himself – a gesture which has worried many commentators and which certainly seems pregnant with possible meanings. For it once again reduces the hero to tears, and leads to Alcinous' final demand to know the identity of this *xeinós*, who is so moved by songs of the fall of Troy. Why does the hero returning from Troy ask for the song which narrates the final acts of the siege, and, moreover, his role in it? Odysseus' request has been seen as an attempt to increase his reputation before the announcement of his identity; as a

<sup>92</sup> See Burkert (1960); Braswell (1982).

<sup>93</sup> The relation between the song – divine adultery, with no lasting consequences – and Odysseus' own situation is discussed by Braswell (1982) and Burkert (1960).

typically roundabout way to effect a recognition; as a statement of how far Odysseus has travelled – in spiritual terms, or in terms of ‘heroic identity’ – from Troy and the world of the *Iliad*.<sup>94</sup> It certainly looks forward to the ironies and dramas of the future scenes where as a disguised *xeinós* Odysseus is faced with and prompts talk about himself (scenes which will also test Odysseus’ emotional reactions and the behaviour of his hosts<sup>95</sup>). It also has a role to play as a prelude to the extended self-representing narration of Odysseus. Not only does it take Odysseus back to the point from which his narrative journey begins Ἰλιόθεν (9.39), ‘From Troy . . .’, so that Odysseus’ story can be seen as a continuation of Demodocus’ epic tale; but also it provides a further narrative viewpoint, as it were, in the picture of Odysseus. Further to the tales of Helen and Menelaus, who tell Telemachus the story of the Trojan horse from the inside (4.266–89, discussed below); further to the narrative description of Odysseus’ escape from Calypso, there is now also a different bardic voice in the epic, constructing the story of Odysseus. Odysseus requests and receives a tale which represents himself as hero, and then proceeds to tell the next episode of the story himself (self-representing himself as hero). The story of Odysseus is made up of these different strains in the exchange of narratives.

This third song of Demodocus is also represented in a different way from the first two performances. Like the other two songs, it is introduced with language that indicates the reported nature of the song to follow (8.499–501):

He began, stirred by the goddess, and showed forth his song,  
starting from when the Argives boarded their well-benched ships,  
and sailed away, after setting fire to their shelters.

So, like the previous two songs, it is concluded with the phrase ‘These things the famous bard sang’. This short and condensed song, however, seems to be divided into four sections, the Trojan council (the Trojan horse from the Trojan side after Menelaus’ version from the Greek side), the sack of Troy, Odysseus’ and the other Greeks’ dispersal through the town, and finally Odysseus’ most terrible fight in Deiphobus’ house. These sections are punctuated by the repetition of words of speech: ‘he sang’, ‘he said’ (the subject is Demodocus), ἦειδεν (8.514), αἶιδε (8.516), φάτο (8.519), markers which do not occur in the other two songs. Each

<sup>94</sup> See in particular Mattes (1958).

<sup>95</sup> See in particular Fenik (1974) 8–60.

section has strong elements of the summarizing seen in the first song (8.514–15):

He sang how the Achaeans' sons destroyed the town,  
pouring out of the horse, leaving their hollow ambush.

There is, however, also what appears to be direct authorial commentary in the song. The description of the Trojan council's division of opinion concludes (8.509–11):

For the city was destined to be destroyed when it took in  
the vast wooden horse, where all the best Argives sat  
bringing death and doom to the Trojans.

It is unclear whether this comment is to be taken as part of the reported song, a perhaps more vivid representation of the performance of Demodocus, or whether it is a comment like 'he sang', 'he sang', 'he said', which should not be attributed to Demodocus. Not only does this represented song, like the versions of his travels that Odysseus tells to Penelope, give a differently constructed narrative of events already told in the *Odyssey*, but also it helps develop the complex variety of modes of narration.

This song also reduces Odysseus to tears and his weeping is described in a remarkable simile (8.523–30):

As a woman weeps, fallen over the body of her dear husband,  
who has fallen before the city and his people, trying  
to ward off a pitiless day from the city and his children.  
She sees him dying and gasping for breath, and winding  
her body around him, she shrieks piercingly, while men  
behind her hit her back and shoulders with their spears,  
as they drive her into slavery, to toil and misery.  
Her cheeks are washed with the most pitiful weeping.

After the description of Penelope in the first four books of the *Odyssey*, this certainly constitutes what Helene Foley has aptly called a 'reverse simile', a simile in which one spouse is described in terms applicable to the other (Penelope's weeping for a supposedly lost husband is a refrain of the Ithacan books<sup>96</sup>). But it also draws in an extraordinary way on the song which has just been described. It is in the context of a sacked city that the wife cries: like a victim indeed of Odysseus' rush 'like Ares' through Troy. The song of Demodocus is not a discrete unit, but is

<sup>96</sup> Foley (1978); although she does not discuss this simile in depth, see her suggestive comments 20. Cf. Diano (1963) 419f; Pucci (1979) 125–6.

echoed immediately in the framing narrative (as it echoes Menelaus' story). In this way, the possible significance of Demodocus' song for the narrative is opened. It is precisely such a juxtaposition of the simile and the song of Demodocus, like the juxtaposition of Odysseus' request and his reaction to it, which poses the question – but makes any certain answer hard to find – why this song should have been requested by Odysseus or why Odysseus' tears should be the means or the prelude of his recognition. It is in such juxtapositions – such gaps – that the work of reading the *Odyssey* takes place (and why 'reading' cannot usefully mean 'discovering that which can be said with certainty'). The varied critical responses to this text – like Alcinous' and Odysseus' very different responses to Demodocus' song – can only continue to testify to the active work of the reader in the construction of meaning.

There is, then an elaborate preparation for the first-person narrative of Books 9–12, not merely in the lengthy delay of Odysseus' name in answer to Arete's question but also in the significant interplay of subtly different modes of narration, different songs within the epic narrative, different voices telling the story of Odysseus. Now we are to hear another voice – the self-representing story of the hero.

The general point that a first-person narrative has a different authority, a different relation to actuality from a third-person narrative has often been made in narratological criticism.<sup>97</sup> In particular, the different structuring of an authoritative viewpoint in these differing narrative modes has been extensively investigated and contested. Although the Phaeacian story is like the Cretan stories (and many other speeches in Homer) in that it is a first-person narrative within the framework of a third-person narrative, it seems to raise in a heightened manner particular questions with regard to its status or authority as a story. The Cretan tales are explicitly marked as lies in the framing lines; the signification of the stories, their elements of fiction, falsehood and suggestion may be analysed, as I attempted above, in contrast with the authoritative framing narrative – as with Odysseus' working of the Phaeacian episode into his lies to Penelope. Even as such signification may be considered or questioned, it is always in the context of Odysseus' conning. Even such markers of truth and falsehood, however, are occluded in the Phaeacian

<sup>97</sup> Most modern studies take their start from Genette's work (1966, 1969, 1972), some of which are available in English in Genette (1980) and Genette (1982b). For one view of a more extensive history, see Culler (1975) especially 189ff.

narrative. There are no explicit comments on the nature of the story in the framing narrative, except for the ambiguousness of the Phaeacians' enchanted reaction and Alcinous' remark that Odysseus speaks like a knowing poet – which may seem to point towards a question about the status or authority of Odysseus' utterances. Moreover, the framing narrative does not exclude the possibility of falsehood (as the various ancient and modern critics' questioning of the (absolute) veracity of the tales could suggest). Odysseus' encounter with Calypso and on Thrinacia are certainly described elsewhere in the *Odyssey's* narrative, but all the other stories, as well as Odysseus' reactions to and involvement in them are part only of the self-representing narrative. How, then, is the first-person narrative to be authorized?

This change in the narrative voice as Odysseus takes over the telling, then, affects a listener's or reader's role in what might be called the narrative exchange. In the Ithacan episode, like Telemachus after the recognition, the listener or reader observes the art of Odysseus' testing and deceptive language, evaluates or questions its 'lies like the truth'. In Scheria, with the lack of even such markers of truth and falsehood for the first-person narrative, the readers or listeners find themselves placed in a similar position rather to Alcinous and Arete. The hearing or reading of this tale of Odysseus is not to observe a scene of deception, or simply observe a scene of enchanting story telling; but rather, like Alcinous, to listen to tales told (as if) by a (the) poet.

The first-person narrative of Odysseus in Alcinous' palace, then, can be seen to perform several functions in the text of the *Odyssey*. First, by telling Odysseus' travels in retrospect it sets Calypso's island as the starting point for Odysseus' return – and thereby forms a series of particular juxtapositions, which are of fundamental importance in the dynamics of *nostos*. Second, it develops a different view of Odysseus: the representation of Odysseus as he represents himself. The multiplicity of voices in the description and understanding of 'a/the man' is essential to the complex poetic texture of the *Odyssey*. What critical gestures have to be made if the episode in the Phaeacian palace is to give rise to descriptions of Homer's poetic voice as simple, direct and unsophisticated? Third, the narrative within the narrative may be thought to raise for the reader or listener a series of questions about (self-)representation and authority in story-telling. Not least the often posed doubt about the veracity of Odysseus' tale. To recognize a possibility of uncertainty about the boundaries between truth and fiction in Odysseus' narrative (espe-

cially with regard to the importance of this narrative for understanding *nostos* and 'a/the man') is to recognize in Odyssean (*polumētis*) language an essential duplicitousness. It is a language which both veils and reveals not only in the exchanges of social discourse with its disguises, testings and emotions, but also in the very narratives of self-representation, the narratives by which the self is formulated.

Tale-telling, then, is the means by which Odysseus conceals himself and describes himself: always telling. What is (to be) recognized in *andra* is formulated by this repertoire of songs within songs, and narratives within narratives – the network of differing narrative modes that also highlights the self-reflexive awareness of the ordering of the artistic work. What is told, how it is told and to whom it is told is a thematic concern of the tale of the *Odyssey*. As naming, that crucial gesture of recognition, raises the question of self-representation – of how saying 'I am Odysseus' is to begin to tell the story of Odysseus – so the first-person narratives of Odysseus are of particular importance in the multiplicity of views of the (much-trope) hero. For how Odysseus is represented as representing himself is a key aspect of the *Odyssey's* deployment of deceitful language – the manipulations, disguises, fictions that language can effect. 'A/the man' is *made up* by the language in which he represents himself and is represented. And for 'a/the man', duplicitous fictions are a necessary part of the representation and formulation of the self. Man's place is (to be) found only in and through the displacements of language.

It is, however, the poet, the professional manipulator of words, the creator and preserver of reputations and representations, who must remain a key figure in any such discussion of the relations between man and language in the *Odyssey*, and it is to the poet to which I must now turn to complete this discussion.

#### THE VOICE OF THE BARD

And they said, 'But play, you must.  
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves.

A tune upon the blue guitar  
Of things exactly as they are'.

Wallace Stevens

The word 'bard', 'singer', ἀοιδός, occurs only once in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 24.720), but representations of bards appear again and again through the



*Odyssey*, inaugurating the history of the poet in the text.<sup>98</sup> The importance of Demodocus, the bard in Alcinous' court, and his three songs has already been discussed. It is also significant that it is in Scheria that there is such an emphasis on poetry and music. Scheria, as a 'transitional' world between the savagery of Odysseus' travels and the human world of Ithaca, is a society where civilized behaviour reaches its heights (8.246–9):

For we are not excellent boxers or wrestlers,  
but we run lightly on our feet and are best in ships,  
and always the feast, harp and dances are dear to us,  
and changes of clothing and warm baths and beds.

Music and dance are part of the self-proclaimed prowess of the Phaeacians. Alcinous boasts how the Phaeacians excel all others 'in seafaring and speed of feet and dance and song' (8.253) – a speech which introduces the dance of the Phaeacian youths and the song of Ares and Aphrodite. The song of Demodocus is to demonstrate the excellence of the Phaeacians in singing, and Odysseus, like the Phaeacians, reacts with pleasure. Song is a defining aspect of the Phaeacian world.

When Odysseus requests Demodocus to sing of the Trojan horse, he precedes his request with a present of meat, and with the explanation that bards are of all human beings worthy of honour and respect because the Muse has taught them songs and holds them in particular esteem (8.479–81). The request itself specifies the song that Odysseus wants to hear (8.492–5) and is framed by two comments on Demodocus' singing. First, Odysseus praises the bard – either the Muse or Apollo must have taught him (8.489–91):

For all too in order do you sing the fate of the Achaeans,  
all the Achaeans did and suffered and toiled,  
as if you were there yourself or heard it from one who was.

The bard sings 'all too according to the order of things', *liēn kata kosmon*. It is as if he were at Troy or heard it from an eye-witness (to the man who was there). An accurate representation of reality 'in order', *kata kosmon*, is the object of the poet's voice. The qualification *liēn*, 'all too'

<sup>98</sup> A much discussed topic: see Kraus (1955); Marg (1957); Lanata (1963); Maehler (1963); Treu (1965); Koller (1965); Vernant (1965) 51–94; Detienne (1967) especially 9–27; Harriott (1969); Stewart (1976) 146–95; Svenbro (1976) especially 1–73; Murray (1981); Scully (1981b); Murray (1983); Bergren (1983) 38ff; Thalman (1984) especially 157ff; Gentili (1983); (1984); Thornton (1984) 23–45.

in order, leads Walsh to suggest that Odysseus in these lines questions the traditional assumption that a song should be composed *kata kosmon*, and evaluated (at least in part) according to that criterion. He argues that there is for Homer's Odysseus 'a second "order" external to song, the human context of performance into which the song must fit. The song that suits a social order will be "appropriate" because it is what the audience wants, or perhaps because it is morally proper.'<sup>99</sup> So, he continues, Odysseus' tears represent an engaged audience, whereas the Phaeacians' enchantment indicates a contrasting, less involved reaction. The combination of the Phaeacian pleasure in listening and the assumption of the truth of the poetic voice seems, to Walsh, 'more closely aligned with the assumptions that each Homeric poet inherits from generations of poets before him'.<sup>100</sup> It is difficult, however, to take *liēn* as a negative term here,<sup>101</sup> as Walsh requires, nor is there any reason to assume that the song of Demodocus is in some way 'inappropriate' to audience or morals, despite Odysseus' tears – he will, after all, go on to request a further song about the Trojan war and cry then too, before lavishly praising the singer. Nor can a rigid opposition between the 'traditional' audience of the Phaeacians and Odysseus with his 'critical idiosyncrasy' be maintained.<sup>102</sup> Certainly, there is little suggestion of a norm of impassive or disengaged listening to tales elsewhere in the *Odyssey*. None the less, Walsh does point towards an important sense of differing paradigms for the poetic exchange: Odysseus, as an audience engaged to the point of a powerful overflow of emotion and as a tale-teller who is always personally involved in the (first-person) story he tells, offers a different model from his hosts. It is also in the contrasting responses of audiences

<sup>99</sup> Walsh (1984) 8–9.      <sup>100</sup> Walsh (1984) 5.

<sup>101</sup> *liēn* may have the negative sense of 'too much' in Homeric Greek (the lexica agree), but only, it appears, where there is already a negative evaluation expressed or strongly implied in the sentence – which makes it hard to distinguish between the senses 'extremely', 'very' and 'too much', 'to an excess' (e.g. between 'Do not be extremely troubled'/'Do not be excessively troubled', *Il.* 6.486). Most commonly *liēn* is an intensive (especially in the phrase *καὶ liēn* which starts a sentence 'Aye, certainly . . .'). The phrase *οὐ κατὰ κόσμον* is common (e.g. 3.138; 14.363; 20.181) which may help stress *liēn* but cannot determine its tone. Ameis-Hentze (1900) gloss *liēn κατὰ κόσμον* with *εὖ κατὰ κόσμον*. *καὶ liēn* in a negative statement, as at *Il.* 1.533, is, as Dawe (1988) 70 comments, surprising.

<sup>102</sup> Walsh also says (1984) 5 that 'Clearly . . . the Phaeacians are exceptional. Perhaps Odysseus' tears more accurately figure the norm for Homer's audience.' I do not see how this can be reconciled with Walsh's other statements on the Phaeacians as audience. On the difference in audience response, see also Harriott (1969) 121–2.

and performers, differing paradigms of poetic truth, that the *Odyssey* develops (its representation of) the exchange of poetic performance.

It is to sing according to how things are, that is the criterion of judging the performance to come also – and Odysseus promises that he will spread the fame of the bard in return for the requested song (which will sing of the *kleos* of the hero) (8.496–8):

If you could tell me this according to how it happened [*kata moiran*],  
I will speak of you before all mankind, and say  
that the kind goddess has given you a remarkable song.

Odysseus' tears follow Demodocus' performance and his further extensive praise for the singer (9.2–11). To listen to a bard sing is a pleasure that crowns a feast (even as it reduces Odysseus to tears). It is with this description of feasters listening to the fine poet that Odysseus begins his tale to the Phaeacians at the feast.

In the Phaeacian court, then, it is not merely the different songs of the bard which form a frame for Odysseus' song, but also the explicit discussion of the role and performance of the singer.

The bard Phemius plays an important role in Odysseus' palace in Ithaca. He claims – to save his life – that he was forced to sing for the suitors (22.330–60) and Odysseus spares him from the final massacre.<sup>103</sup> But his first appeal is as a poet (22.345–9):

You will be sorry in time to come if you kill a poet;  
I, who sing both for gods and for men.  
I am self-taught, and the goddess has implanted all sorts  
of songs-paths in my mind. I seem to sing before you  
as to a god. So do not long to behead me.

It is because of the power of the poet's voice (for the future) – the power to make known and preserve the name of men – and because he is a self-taught, god-inspired poet that Phemius claims his life. There would be grief (*akhos*) hereafter (rather than *kleos*?) were Odysseus to kill a bard. The poet defends himself on the grounds of his privileged role in the presentation and construction of the reputation of men through song. Odysseus, as he completes the revenge which founds his *kleos*, is faced by – and spares – the bard, preserver and constructor of fame.

<sup>103</sup> His fate can be contrasted with the bard left behind by Agamemnon to protect Clytemnestra, who is abandoned on a desert island by Aegisthus; see Moulton (1977) 145 n. 15; Scully (1981b); Pucci (1987) 228ff.

Phemius is first described as singing – by compulsion – as Telemachus and the disguised Athene talk privately (1.154–5). The bard’s song is further described after Athene has made her disappearance. The theme is briefly stated (1.326–7):

He sang the return of the Achaeans, the bitter  
return which Pallas Athene inflicted on them from Troy.

Like the *Odyssey*, Phemius’ song is a song of *nostos*. And after Athene has just left, the song is also of Athene’s role as the force behind the bitter return of the Achaeans. The song has evident parallels with the framing narrative. Indeed, it disturbs Penelope precisely because of its relevance to her case; like her husband, she cannot hear such a tale without becoming emotionally involved (1.337–44):

Phemius, you know many other enchantments for mortals,  
deeds of gods and men, which bards make famous in song.  
Sit beside them and sing one of those, and let them drink  
their wine in silence. Stop this song, so bitter,  
which always gnaws into the heart in my breast,  
since unforgettable grief bears down on me in particular.  
For I long for so dear a person, when I remember that  
man, whose fame is broad in Greece and midmost Argos.

The remembrance of her (unnamed) husband makes this song of the ‘bitter’ (λυγρόν 327) return of the Achaeans so ‘bitter’ (λυγρήν 341) to her. The context of the singing is the feast (as in Scheria), but the queen’s language adds a further insight into the description of the functioning of poetry. For, the poet knows *thelktēria*, ‘enchanting things’. *Thelgein*, ‘to enchant’, is used in a variety of contexts but in particular to describe verbal and sexual seduction (which are often intertwined in Odysseus’ case and in much later literature<sup>104</sup>). It is the term used for Circe’s bewitching (10.291, 318, 326), and for Calypso’s control over Odysseus (1.56–7); when the suitors are overcome by desire for Penelope (18.212), and then when she beguiles them into giving her presents (18.282). It is such enchantment that Telemachus fears when Odysseus appears for the first time undisguised before him, as if he were a divinity (like Hermes who ‘enchants’ the eyesight of men (5.47; 24.3)). The songs of the bard, then, are, in Penelope’s eyes, a beguiling enchantment for mortals: a possibly deceitful or dangerous allure, which, for her, wastes her spirit.

<sup>104</sup> See e.g. Barrett (1964) ad 1274; Kahn (1978) 139ff; Buxton (1982) (index, *thelgein*); Easterling (1982) ad 335; Goldhill (1984) 164–5.

Her tearful reaction to a song in which Odysseus is implied, looks forward to Telemachus' tearful reaction to Menelaus' mention of Odysseus (4.113–16) – a scene which also parallels Odysseus' concurring of his head when he hears his own name in Demodocus' songs. The tearful reactions to stories relevant to the wandering Odysseus link together the family in a shared emotional response. Songs 'enchant' – a possibly dangerous power – but also affect Odysseus, Telemachus and Penelope with grief; and each of these expressions of grief affect and move the plot in different ways.

Telemachus' reaction to his mother's request shows the immediate effect of Athene's advice. He justifies the bard's performance (1.346–52) and concludes that she should return to her room and her weaving, if she cannot bear to listen (352–7). He finishes (358–9):

Tale-telling is man's business,  
all of us and particularly me. For mine is the authority in the house.

Tale-telling (*muthos*) is the men's concern and particularly Telemachus'. For his is the *kratos* in the house. Telemachus's rebuke to his mother is an assertion of his (incipient) male, adult role. Song has become the focus not merely for an emotional reaction or involvement, but for the disorder in the house, its uncertain structures of power. As Alcinous halts the singing of Demodocus in response to his guest's concealed tears, so Telemachus sends his mother upstairs to cry in private, as he attempts to take control of the *muthoi* in the house.<sup>105</sup>

The control and evaluation of *muthoi* play a major role in Telemachus' visit to Menelaus' palace. There is a bard at the wedding celebrations (4.17–18), but it is in the exchanges between Menelaus, Helen and Telemachus themselves that the reaction to and manipulation of *muthoi* are stressed.<sup>106</sup> Menelaus' grieving reminiscence of Odysseus prompts Telemachus to cry. Helen arrives at this moment and she immediately recognizes Telemachus by the resemblance to his father (4.138–46, *eoikota* 'like father, like son'). This recognition leads to Menelaus' amazement that the son of his friend Odysseus should be in his house, and this speech brings them all to tears. It is within this emotional context that Helen mixes a drug into the wine (4.220–1):

She threw a drug into the wine they were drinking,  
pain-removing, anger-removing, inducing forgetfulness of all evils.

<sup>105</sup> It is worth noting that Phemius does not continue the song, since Telemachus sends the suitors away, so that Penelope gets her way after all.

<sup>106</sup> The following section is taken in part from Goldhill (1988c).

This drug, *pharmakon*, which could conquer even the grief felt over a dead parent or child (4.224–5) was given to Helen in Egypt, the home of *pharmaka*, good and evil (4.230):

Drugs, many good ones mixed, many bitter.<sup>107</sup>

With her *pharmakon* mixed into the wine, Helen starts the *muthoi*. And as so often in the *Odyssey*, a tale contains a comment on its telling (4.238–42):

Now sit and feast in the hall,  
and enjoy tale-telling. For I will say fitting things.  
I will not tell everything nor name  
all the trials of Odysseus, strong in mind.  
But here is one thing the stalwart man did and endured.

To delight the audience (like a bard?) Helen will tell a tale which is *eoikota*, which is translated ‘fitting’, ‘like a truth’, ‘easily believable’. *Eoikota*, however, is also one of the key terms in the discourse of disguise and (false) appearances (‘like’, ‘to be like’, as Telemachus ‘looks like’, *eoikota*, Odysseus). Indeed, her tale will be of appearances and disguise. Her story, she goes on, is selective and partial – but one example of the many possible *muthoi* of Odysseus’ sufferings; and it is a fitting example for Telemachus not only in that it sings of the *kleos* of Odysseus, but also in that it may hint of what is to come when Odysseus returns in disguise.

Helen’s story depicts herself as keen to help the disguised Odysseus, keen to return to her husband (like a good wife) and rejoicing in the Trojan men’s destruction. In this self-representing story, ‘her aim, it appears, is not only the *kleos* of Odysseus, but also her own “fame” among the assembled men’.<sup>108</sup> Odysseus’ powers of deceit are matched by Helen’s, whose inward feelings have changed (4.259ff). Helen’s story places the teller firmly to the fore: she is the only one to recognize the master of disguise; she aids and abets the Greek cause; she ends her story with flattery of her husband and blame of Aphrodite.

Menelaus, however, replies with a further *muthos*, the tale of the Trojan horse. He first praises his wife’s tale, spoken *kata moiran*, ‘according to due’, ‘as it happened’, ‘as is fit’;<sup>109</sup> and he himself will also offer a single example to show the excellence of Odysseus. This is the story of how Odysseus managed to prevent any sound coming from the Trojan

<sup>107</sup> On the sense and implication of this line see Bergren (1981) 213–14.

<sup>108</sup> Bergren (1981) 208.

<sup>109</sup> Bergren does not discuss this line. See Goldhill (1988c) 22–3.

horse, as Helen attempts to deceive those inside by imitating their wives' voices. The story is again of concealment and trickery. Odysseus and the Greeks are in the horse trying to enter rather than escape from the city, but now threatened by the possibility of discovery through the deceitful language of Helen. The woman who was the saviour is now the danger; the woman who concealed threatens to uncover. The paradigmatic figure of an adultress imitates each man's wife to tempt an error (she behaves like each man's good wife?). Both stories tell of Odysseus' cunning exchanges with Helen (both include the same summing up phrase 242/271), but there is considerable contrast in the depiction of Helen. If she appeared as a true ally in the first *muthos*, Menelaus' story constructs a different view of the double-agent.<sup>110</sup> (The two, agreeable stories may seem difficult to reconcile. *eoikota*?) The *pharmakon* (which can be 'good mixed and bitter') leads to double tales of double-agents behaving duplicitously.

The juxtaposition of these two stories, then, with their different representations of Helen has indeed raised for critics a problem: what is to be made of such a difference? Does the contrast indicate the contrasting nature of (personal) recollections of the past – the inevitable differences of retelling?<sup>111</sup> Or are the stories to be reconciled to produce a single composite picture? There is no further reaction from the story-tellers – say, of 'pain' or 'anger' or 'memory of evils' – to guide a response. Is this the effect to the drug – to allow the juxtaposition of such stories without apparent conflict or emotional response from the participants?

Menelaus' story, moreover, does not correct Helen's story but praises it. The two stories are juxtaposed as *supplements* to each other. Yet each introduces a subverting doubt into the truth value of the other. Neither can be securely used to establish a level of truth from which the other deviates (and, as we have seen, a further account of the Trojan horse is offered in the Phaeacian episode). The two stories, then, cannot be reformulated as a secure opposition as if they were absolutely contradictory with mutually exclusive claims on truth. Nor can the supple-

<sup>110</sup> 'La texte épique s'y emploie ... en projetant ... la pluralité des lectures sur les deux pans du diptyque' (Dupont-Roc and Le Boulluec (1976) 35).

<sup>111</sup> Often expressed in psychological terms; e.g. 'The subtle, tense interplay shows in perfect clarity the weakness of Menelaus, the isolation and helplessness of Helen, their animosity and the reconciliatory attempts which they quietly employ to ease it.' Beyé (1968) 174. Kakridis (1971) 40–9 rehearses the predictable Analytic response that the two stories represent two imperfectly combined traditions of Helen in Troy. See now Collins (1988) 46–67.

ment be reformulated as merely adding more of the same – as if there were no significant difference between the stories. In this exchange, there remains an *irresolvable* uncertainty in the relation between the representations and also in the relation between the representations and any supposed ‘master-version’ of the Trojan war.

Helen and Menelaus may swap a pair of tales over wine to create pleasure, but the result is pain (4.291–3):

Great Menelaus, son of Atreus, leader of people,  
This is more painful; for none of all this kept bitter  
destruction from him,  
Not even if his heart within were made of iron.

The stories, which were of pain endured for a greater good, lead for Telemachus to more pain, in that not even such an iron spirit as Odysseus’, not even such deeds, saved him from bitter destruction. If Menelaus’ song seems in uneasy juxtaposition with Helen’s, Telemachus’ reaction seems to indicate no influence of the drug to remove pain. Telemachus seems scarcely seduced by the enchanting words of his hosts. Indeed, he proposes immediately that all should retire to bed (the opposite reaction to Odysseus’ stories for which the audience would and do stay up all night). The interchange of Telemachus, Helen and Menelaus, apparently designed to relieve pain and to educate Telemachus about his father, seems to lead to Telemachus’ increased grief. There is no straightforward *paideusis*, no painless lesson, for Telemachus in this initiation into social exchange.

The model of the telling and reception of a tale is difficult, then, in this scene. Menelaus praises Helen for speaking *kata moiran*, ‘as it happened’ (as she had promised *eoikota*, a ‘fitting’ tale); but then tells a tale himself which may be thought at least to contrast with the self-representation of his wife in the previous *muthos*. To both, and despite Helen’s drug, Telemachus reacts with an expression of increased misery. The *pharmakon* introduces not unmixed pleasure, but an uncertain duplicitousness in the exchange of language. The problematic relation between *muthoi*, the listener and (self-)representation projects a complex model for the enchanting truth of the poet’s voice.

Odysseus’ story of the Sirens, too, offers an image of the power and reception of song.<sup>112</sup> The danger of the Sirens is the enchantment of their singing (12.44–5):

<sup>112</sup> On the Sirens see Pucci (1979) and Segal (1983) 38–43.



But the Sirens enchant with their shrill song,  
sitting in their meadow . . .

Like Penelope's description of the bard's songs, like Calypso's and Circe's spells, the Sirens song 'enchants', *thelgein*. This song threatens death and not merely delay, however. Around the Sirens lie the rotting flesh and bones of those who have heard. Odysseus, as Circe suggested, alone of his crew may listen to the song, provided he is tied to the mast, and so he can repeat it to the enchanted Phaeacians (12.184–91):

Come here, Odysseus of many tales, great glory of the Achaeans;  
pull up your ship, to listen to our voice.  
For no one yet has sailed past here in his black ship,  
until he has heard our mouths' sweet-sounding voice,  
and takes pleasure in it, and learns more, and goes on.  
For we know all that the Argives and the Trojans  
suffered in broad Troy because of the gods.  
We know everything that happens on the teeming earth.

The dangerous allurements is to hear the voice and learn. Not merely pleasure but knowledge is offered. Indeed, the Sirens know everything that happened in Troy, everything in the world. The Sirens, like a bard, claim a privileged – even absolute – access to truth and knowledge;<sup>113</sup> but their voice leads the listener to disaster. Odysseus is, indeed, overcome by the enchantment of the Sirens' song and begs his men to set him free. They tie him more tightly to the mast and row on. The power of the Sirens' song of knowledge enchants even the man who knows of its enchanting danger.

The reaction of the Phaeacians to the performance of which the Sirens' song is a part, is silence (13.1–2):

So he spoke; but they all remained quiet, in silence;  
they were held in a spell through the dark hall.

The listeners are held in a spell, κληθημῶ, enraptured. Their reaction to the earlier break in the narration is the same (11.333–4). At that pause, Alcinous breaks the silence with the lines I have already quoted which liken Odysseus to a knowing poet (11.367–8). This reaction to Odysseus' tale-telling is seen also in Ithaca. Eumaeus describes the stranger to Penelope in the following way (17.514, 518–21):

<sup>113</sup> Schadewaldt (1965) 85 notes that in this universal knowledge the Sirens function as 'dämonische Gegenbilder der Musen'. See also Pucci (1979) 126–7.

Such things he tells, he would enchant [*thelgein*] your very heart . . .

As when a man looks at a bard, who has learnt from  
the god to sing words pleasing to mortals;  
and they violently desire to hear him, when he sings.  
So that man sitting in the hall kept enchanting [*thelgein*] me.

The repetition of *thelgein*, ‘to enchant’, draws together Odysseus’ power of language not only with the poet’s power to enrapture and enthral but also with the dangerous spells and bewitchings which have threatened his *nostos*. His *muthos* makes him seem like a man who knows – again, the connection of the poet with the voice of truth. Odysseus’ lying tales are also spoken like the bard’s authoritative narrative.

So, as Odysseus starts to string his bow – as he is about to adopt his true identity before the suitors – the hero is again likened to a poet, but this time it is not by one of the listeners to his tale-telling (21.405–9):

But Odysseus of the many wiles  
Once he had taken up the great bow and looked it all over,  
as when a man who knows the lyre and the song,  
easily stretches the string on a new peg,  
holding the well-turned sheep-gut from both sides,  
so, without ado, Odysseus strung the great bow.

The poet who has had Odysseus tell his tales like a poet, now has the hero prepare his bow for battle . . . like a poet string a lyre. Using this bow to rid his home of the suitors will be like playing a (heroic) song. The lyre and the poet, lauded so often as accompaniments to the feast, are ironically likened to the bow and its user who are to destroy the present (corrupt) feasting of the suitors. Odysseus is again likened to a singer who knows – *ἐπιστάμενος* – and the point of the comparison is strengthened by his close inspection of the bow, by which he is to make himself known to the suitors. As Odysseus prepares to complete the act which will gain him the *kleos* of a revenge successfully obtained (the justice announced in the opening debate of the gods), he is likened to the figure who may construct and preserve such *kleos*, the singer. The hero is not merely the subject of the poet’s song, but likened by the poet to the poet himself.<sup>114</sup>

The way in which Odysseus and the figure of the poet are drawn together can be seen in a different way in two further similes. When

<sup>114</sup> A commonly made assertion; see e.g. Moulton (1977) 145–53; Walsh (1984) 19–21; and the works quoted in n. 115.

Nausicaa comes to the beach to wash clothes and play ball, she is likened to Artemis in a lengthy simile (6.102–9). When Odysseus wakes and approaches the young girl, his first words of supplication are (6.149–152):

I supplicate you, mistress. Are you divine or mortal?  
 If you are a divinity, who holds broad heaven,  
 I liken you most closely to Artemis, daughter  
 of great Zeus, in beauty, figure and stature.

The interplay between the voice of Odysseus and the framing voice of the poet is again complex. Moulton comments ‘The echo is lightly ironic in a sophisticated way: Odysseus apparently so wild and desperate, possesses the resilience and tact to describe Nausicaa to her face exactly as she is independently described by the singer. It is not for nothing that Alkinous and Eumaeus call him ἀοιδός (‘bard’).<sup>115</sup> Odysseus’ ‘tact’ is also the poet’s ‘description’. Does the juxtaposition authorize Odysseus’ ‘tact’ as the voice of truth? Or does it mark a difference in signification when the same words occur in Odysseus’ speech and in the framing narrative? Does such an ironic and sophisticated echo bear testimony to a self-consciousness and manipulation of the poetic voice by the poet? Are we to recognize self-recognition here?

The conjunction of hero and poet affects both figures. It marks the hero not merely as a man of action but also as a man of words. Or rather it constructs words as a particular sphere of action in which Odysseus excels. The various elements of the self-awareness of language and of Odysseus’ manipulation of the medium come together in the description of the hero as ‘like a poet’. So, especially but not solely in Alcinous’ palace, Odysseus is both the gainer and commemorator of glory – even the gainer of glory through the act of commemoration. Although the figure of the poet is associated with the voice of truth and knowledge, that is, with the power to describe, preserve and make pleasurable the truth of things (the authoritative narrative), he is also associated through the similes likening Odysseus to a bard with the power of language to deceive, to create a narrative which is like the truth (but a falsehood). ‘Homer does not explicitly suggest that singers may therefore sometimes deceive their audiences’, writes Walsh cautiously, ‘but he has certainly made the inference inevitable for the later tradition.’<sup>116</sup> Throughout the *Odyssey*, we see different models of the functioning of songs both in their affect on listeners and in their relation to truthful (self-)representation.

<sup>115</sup> Moulton (1977) 121.

<sup>116</sup> Walsh (1984) 20.

In numerous *muthoi* we see selective and partial as well as feigned versions of events. We see a claim of absolute knowledge that threatens destruction to the listener. There is an ambiguousness in the 'enchantment' that words can have over a listener. In the narrative of the *Odyssey*, the fictive is always part of the voice of truth.

What I hope to have shown in this chapter is the *Odyssey's* fundamental interest in the relations between man and language – language as the medium of recognition and representation in social exchange. In particular, the multiplicity of Odysseus' self-representations – from naming to the tales he weaves of himself and his guises – demonstrate the fictive power of the word: how language may conceal, reveal, manipulate, but is always telling. This interest in the mastery of words is also seen in the repeated self-descriptions and (self-reflexive) discussions of the bard's voice of authority – the voice that tells it how it is (*kata kosmon, kata moiran*). Yet the depiction of the deceptive hero as 'enchanting like a bard' also seems to point to a more complex (self-)awareness of the seduction and fictiveness of *muthoi*. Above all, I hope to have demonstrated how a discussion of the representation of the poet and his role cannot be adequately isolated from such questions of tale-telling, of naming, of the bard's *muthoi* in relation to other *muthoi*. As we will see in different ways in the following chapters, to analyse the poet's voice is necessarily to become involved in the whole range of questions of what it means to use language in society.