

A STUDY OF TEARS IN THE *ODYSSEY*

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ABSTRACT

ALEXANDRA L. DALY: A Study of Tears in the *Odyssey*
(Under the direction of William H. Race)

In this thesis, I argue that tears function in the *Odyssey* as an important index of character. I discuss the weepers in three groups: Penelope and the slaves (Chapter 1), Odysseus' companions (Chapter 2), and Odysseus and Telemachos (Chapter 3). Tears characterize the first two groups relative to Odysseus, demonstrating loyalty to/memory of him and serving as foil for his resolve, respectively. Telemachos' few tears link him with his father, who otherwise weeps like no one else in the epic.

For Kevin

there are no
analogies

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INTRODUCTION

The abundance of tears in Homer is often noted, but unevenly studied. Much work has been done on individual weeping scenes (especially *Od.* 8.521-31), formal laments,¹ and Homer's rich language of pain,² but discussion of the tears themselves tends to be simplistic, subordinate,³ and mired in modern assumptions about the motivations for and reactions to their expression. In general, no distinction is made between explicit tears and words (namely κλαίειν⁴) that may, but do not necessarily,

¹ See especially Monsacré 1984: 163-6; Holst-Warhaft 1992; Murnaghan 1999; Tsagalis 2004. Alexiou 2002 remains the seminal work on the Greek lament from ancient to modern times.

² See, e.g., Mawet 1979, 1981; Arnould 1986, 1988; Rijksbaron 1991, 1997; Spatafora 1997.

³ Mawet 1979, for example, seldom discusses tears; neither δάκρυ(ον)/δάκρυα nor any verb of weeping appears in her index. I note here that I have observed no difference between plural and singular tears in the *Odyssey*; in my discussion, I will not adhere strictly to the number specified in each passage.

⁴ κλαίειν in Homer seems primarily to convey a shrill wailing or sobbing. *Il.* 7.426-7 clearly shows that tears are not necessarily implied in this verb: Priam forbids the Trojans from κλαίειν, so they gather their dead shedding tears in silence (δάκρυα θερμὰ χέοντες...σιωπῆ). See also p. 30 below on *Od.* 9.469. While acknowledging this difference, Arnould and others still tend to blur sound and tears: “Néanmoins, κλαίω peut être étroitement lié à δάκρυ χέων, ce qui, au demeurant, est bien naturel, au point qu’il devient souvent difficile de savoir si l’aspect vocal se maintient partout ou si le verbe ne désigne pas déjà les larmes sous leurs double aspect” (Arnould 1990: 145). I will be focusing on explicit tears, with discussion of implicit tears or other expressions of grief where relevant.

imply them, nor much effort to untangle the emotions involved; tears are assumed⁵ and psychologized as the argument demands. Arnould 1990, for instance, largely consists of lists of examples of tears categorized by cause (*douleur physique, peur, joie, etc.*); interpretation is minimal, and the causes are often facile and inferred with little textual support. Can the tearful reunions of the *Odyssey* really be attributed merely to *joie* (94-5)? Is that all Odysseus and Telemachos feel as they embrace, weeping like birds bereft of their nestlings, for the first time since Telemachos was a newborn (16.213-19)?

Besides Arnould, most scholars focus on acquitting the tearful heroes of the charges of effeminacy and ignobility lodged by such ancient critics as Plato,⁶ Dio Chrysostom,⁷ and Zoilos of Amphipolis,⁸ with some minor exceptions,⁹ they conclude

⁵ At worst, tears are assumed where the text gives no indication of their presence. Katz, for instance, claims that Dolios embraces “Odysseus with tears of joy at his *nostos*” (1994: 69) in the absence of any word that could possibly imply tears.

⁶ *Rep.* 387e-388d. See recently Baumgarten 2009.

⁷ οὐδ’ ἄν Ὀμηρον ἐπαινέσαιμι, ὅτι φησὶ δεύεσθαι τὰς τε ψαμάθους καὶ τὰ ὄπλα τοῖς δάκρυσιν τῶν Ἀχαιῶν (29.22).

⁸ A harsh critic of Homer, he condemned Achilles’ tears for Patroklos as unsuitable even for a “barbarian nurse” (οὕτως οὐτ’ ἄν βάρβαρος τιτθὴ ἐποίησεν, *FgrHist* 71 F11), that is, the polar opposite of the noble Greek man (Föllinger 2009: 32).

⁹ According to Neuberger-Donath 1996, for example, *τέρεν δάκρυον* is reserved for women, with the exception of Patroklos when Achilles compares him to a little girl (16.11) and aged Peleus (19.323) as his son imagines him wasting away in his halls. Both men are thus supposed to be feminized, exhibiting through such tears the cowardice and infirmity proper to women. But only two women shed a “tender tear” in Homer (Helen, *Il.* 3.142; Penelope, *Od.* 16.332). The collocation seems primarily to mark not gender but helplessness and strong, especially pitiful emotion; otherwise, women shed the same “hot” (*θερμόν*) or “blooming” (*θαλερόν*) tears as men.

Monsacré 1984: 159-84 argues for an essential difference between male and female tears in the *Iliad*: tears “dissolve” or “melt” women into helplessness but revitalize men. Her characterization of male tears may be accurate in combat situations, but the *Odyssey*’s

that Homeric tears do not discriminate by gender or by class.¹⁰ This work has shed much new light on Homeric gender, but the cherry-picked passages and blanket statements often used to support the arguments distort the big picture, and to my knowledge no comprehensive study of Homeric tears exists.

This thesis is such a study of tears in the *Odyssey*. Although the *Iliad* dominates the relevant scholarship, the *Odyssey* contains far more tears and gives them special emphasis as speech introductions and conclusions¹¹ and as part of many of its most beautiful and intricate similes.¹² Nearly all its tears, moreover, are spontaneous; those in laments and funerals are required by the ritual context and do not necessarily reflect grief

men weep mainly outside combat and often quite like women; note, for example, that both Odysseus and Penelope “melt” (τήκετο, 8.522; 19.204, 208; τῆκε, 19.264). Moreover, as Holst-Warhaft 1992 and Murnaghan 1999 show, Iliadic women assert narrative control through lament, “and it is the men, rather than the women, who must be enjoined to stop weeping lest they become morbid or dangerous” (Holst-Warhaft 1992: 108).

The only somewhat gendered terms for grieving in Homer are female κωκύειν and male οἰμώζειν and groaning (Monsacré 1984: 172; Arnould 1990: 150-6), though Föllinger 2009: 21 n. 7, 8 notes exceptions. In any case, these expressions do not necessarily imply tears (cf. n. 5 above on κλαίειν). Arnould 1990: 23 brands ὀλοφύρεσθαι feminine, but without consideration of men besides the pleading Lykaon; is Eumaios, for example, supposed to be feminized by his reaction (ὀλοφυρόμενος, 16.22) to Telemachos’ return?

A social distinction seems to develop only in tragedy (Wærn 1985: 228). Antinoos rebukes Eumaios and Philoitios as “stupid yokels” (νήπιοι ἀγροιώται, 21.85) not for their tears *per se*, but for their insensitivity to Penelope’s emotional fragility (86-8).

¹⁰ For similar conclusions on tears in Attic tragedy, see Suter 2009.

¹¹ See Arnould 1990: 173-6.

¹² All of the weeping similes (8.521-31; 10.407-14; 16.16-21, 213-19; 19.204-9) mention δάκρυα explicitly in some form. 23.233-240 is not as clear; see p. 23-4 below. The *Iliad* contains three crying similes, at 9.13-16 (Agamemnon weeps like a dark spring), 16.2-4 (Patroklos weeps like a dark spring), and 16.7-11 (Achilles likens Patroklos to a weeping girl clinging to her mother’s skirts).

for the dead.¹³ These characteristics of Odyssean tears are not, I hope to show, merely a consequence of the poem's bittersweet theme.

Emotion in Homer is a tricky subject. Despite much criticism of the strain of scholarship introduced by Bruno Snell,¹⁴ many still cling to “the basic Snellian position that there is much that is fundamentally primitive and alien”¹⁵ in the Homeric mind. He characterized the Homeric person as an assemblage of parts utterly prey to the gods and to circumstance, lacking a concept of self and the capacity for decision-making.¹⁶ To account for these and other “peculiarities,”¹⁷ Dodds formulated a core distinction between

¹³ Tears may be shed as a formality or with ulterior motives. Achilles' slavewomen, for instance, use Patroklos as a pretext to grieve for their own sorrows (ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες / Πάτροκλον πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ' αὐτῶν κήδε' ἑκάστη, *Il.* 19.302-3); see Murnaghan 1999: 206; Tsagalis 2004: 65, 67; Suter 2009: 60. On the “necessary distinction” between spontaneous and funereal tears, see Suter 2009: 59. van Wees uses the latter to discuss tears in general, ignoring his own caveat (1998: 47 n. 17), while others do not even note the distinction in the first place. Funereal tears proper, shed in the *Odyssey* only at 12.12 (Elpenor's funeral) and 24.45-6, 61 (Agamemnon's account of Achilles' funeral), will not be discussed in this paper.

¹⁴ For other significant contributions to this strain, see Russo and Simon 1968: 483 n. 2; to their list add Adkins 1960.

¹⁵ Cairns 1992: 1. For thorough criticism of Snell's views, in “welcome contrast to the prevalent tendency to dismiss [them] as counter-intuitive and preposterous” (*ibid.*), see Schmitt 1990: 12-71 and *passim*; see also the extensive bibliography at Sullivan 1988: 18 n. 46 as well as Gill 1996: *passim*. Sullivan herself offers concise criticism of Snell's views on Homeric selfhood, decision-making, and the analogy between psychic terms and organs (2-10). On decision-making, see also Gaskin 1990. Williams 1993: 21-49 offers the best philosophical critique of Snell's ideas.

¹⁶ In the same vein, Fränkel termed the Homeric person “ein offenes Kraftfeld” (1962: 88-90), lacking “structural bounds that would help separate and insulate it from the effects of forces all around it” (Russo and Simon 1968: 485). For similar views, see the bibliography at Sullivan 1988: 18 n. 48.

¹⁷ Dodds connected the Homeric tendency to externalize behavior and mental states as “psychic intervention” with that to intellectualize them (“Nestor and Agamemnon know

Homeric and modern Western culture: the former is a “shame culture,” in which the “strongest moral force [is]...respect for public opinion, *aidōs*,” while the “highest good is...the enjoyment of *tīmē*, public esteem.”¹⁸ Accordingly, the individual projects onto external sources anything that would as cause him to “lose face,” that is, would violate the status quo and thereby incur contempt and ridicule.¹⁹ We, as a “guilt culture,” simply cannot grasp Homeric emotions, for they are not experienced or expressed as they are by us; our emotions look inward, in “fear of god” and in hope of “a quiet conscience.”²⁰

Few now accept these theories wholesale, but the idea of a gulf between us and Homeric characters persists. de Romilly goes so far as to claim that Homer depicts characters “sans s’arrêter aux analyses, sans donner de noms à leurs sentiments, sans expliquer les enchaînements. Il montre des réactions.”²¹ Most would agree that Homeric psychology consists of considerably more than reactions, but hesitate to approach it. Alternatively, scholars close the gulf by subjecting Homeric characters to modern

friendly things to each other”) and with the treatment of organs as independent (1951: 15-18).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 17-18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; see also Russo and Simon 1968: 485. They rightly observe that his construct is too narrow, since in Homer “*virtually every kind of mental activity can be ascribed to an outside source, including the most trivial and ordinary*” (497, their emphasis). Moreover, “it cannot be demonstrated that shame as a social stricture is any more consistently associated with the extensive use of projection than is guilt.”

²⁰ Dodds 1951: 18.

²¹ de Romilly 1984: 26; cf. Arnould 1990: 171-2.

psychological analysis, with varying success²² —if the couch is uncomfortable even for written creations of a single author, oral composites may refuse to lie down at all.

Homer's characters have a human root. This is why they are so dangerous for the Kallipolis of Plato's *Republic*: Achilles in his grief seems utterly real. It is also part, I think, of why Sokrates cannot help but love Homer.²³ But this root is very hard to dig up. In my attempt to unearth something about tears, I have avoided modern psychology and kept to the text as much as I could. A given instance of tears may contain a wealth of information in the form of causes, descriptors, accompanying gestures, weepers' and witness' reactions, and consequences. This instance, in turn, may have connections with other tears. Through careful study of this information, I will argue that tears, one of the most conspicuous and compelling expressions of human emotion, function in the *Odyssey* as an important index of character.²⁴ I discuss the weepers in three groups: Penelope and the slaves, Odysseus' companions, and Odysseus and Telemachos. Tears characterize the first two groups relative to Odysseus, demonstrating loyalty to/memory of him and serving as foil for his resolve, respectively. Telemachos' few tears link him with his

²² Penelope in particular has been deluged with psychological analysis; the bibliography is too vast to list here. Shay 1994, in my opinion, is the most successful marriage of modern psychology and Homeric characters to date.

²³ He prefaces his criticism with an admission of lifelong love and reverence: καίτοι φιλία γέ τίς με καὶ αἰδῶς ἐκ παιδὸς ἔχουσα περὶ Ὀμήρου ἀποκωλύει λέγειν (*Rep.* 595b).

²⁴ As they do on occasion in the *Iliad*, e.g., when Agamemnon weeps in self-pity for his failure to capture Troy and the disgraceful return to Argos he expects (9.13-28; he is also the only one of the shades Odysseus meets in the νέκυια to weep, again in self-pity; see pp. 50-1 below). But tears do not contribute significantly to the characterization of nearly all the major characters, as I hope to show they do in the *Odyssey*.

father, who otherwise weeps like no one else in the epic.²⁵

²⁵ Odysseus and Agamemnon greet their homelands with similar tears, but the former exercises caution; see pp. 43-4 below.

CHAPTER 1: PENELOPE AND THE SLAVES

Penelope

Penelope's tears earned little love from earlier commentators, who tended to blame feminine weakness and emotional instability. Stawell pronounces her "just the kind of woman who cries herself to sleep in difficulties, and wakes up looking wonderfully plump and fresh"—escapist and vain.²⁶ But even for Fenik sixty-five years later she is "feckless, lachrymose, and rather tiresome."²⁷ More recently scholars have recognized the inapplicability of modern gender norms to ancient texts, pointing out that Penelope weeps no more than male characters and generally with the sympathy of both witnesses and the narrator.²⁸ But little has been said about what Penelope's tears mean for her as a *character*, rather than as a representative Homeric woman. Her tears, I will argue, reflect the conflict of loyalties between husband and son in which she is mired until the couple's reunion: according to her own formulation, if faithful to Odysseus, she deprives Telemachos of the property for which he has come of age; if fair to Telemachos, she allows Odysseus to be replaced (19.156-63, 524-34). With a few exceptions to be treated in the course of this discussion, she weeps in memory of/longing for Odysseus or fear for Telemachos. Her tears for her son, however, are consistently suppressed, while

²⁶ Stawell 1909: 127. Cf. Stanford 1959 *ad.* 1.346: "rather vain and inert."

²⁷ Fenik 1974: 165.

²⁸ See, e.g., Foley 1979: 23 n. 9; van Wees 1998: 14; Föllinger 2009: 28.

those for her husband are flaunted and encouraged. Although she vacillates between their interests like the warbling nightingale,²⁹ she freely expresses tears for and remains loyal to Odysseus.

In keeping with the narrator's tendency to provide in their first appearance "a sample of the character's ἦθος that will be extended and deepened in the course of the epic,"³⁰ Penelope débuts in her characteristic tears for Odysseus. Stirred from her chamber by Phemios' song of the Achaians' "sad homecoming" (νόστον.../ λυγρόν, 1.326-7), she descends to the hall with two attendants and, bursting into tears (δακρύσασα, 336), implores the bard to choose another in his wide repertoire of lays. As the grounds for her request, she cites the unforgettable,³¹ surpassing grief for her husband that his current song arouses (340-4):

ταύτης δ' ἀποπαύε' ἀοιδῆς
λυγρῆς, ἥ τέ μοι αἰεὶ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλον κῆρ
τείρει, ἐπεὶ με μάλιστα καθίκετο πένθος ἄλαστον.
τοίην γὰρ κεφαλὴν ποθέω μεμνημένη αἰεὶ
ἀνδρός, τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ' Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος.

Now, Telemachos just complained to Mentos that the Harpies snatched away his father "without fame" (ἀκλειῶς, 241): Odysseus "has gone unseen, unheard" (οἷχετ' ἄϊστος, ἄπυστος, 242), that is, incapable of achieving the recognition through burial (τύμβον,

²⁹ For this point of comparison "between the shifting notes of the nightingale's warbling song (19.521) and the turning of Penelope's thoughts to and fro in search of a solution to her problem," see Rutherford 1992: 192-3, as well as Amory 1963: 131 n. 9 and Austin 1975: 228-9.

³⁰ Race 1993: 79. For the "essence of the tearful Penelope, faithful to the memory of her husband, maintaining her distance from the suitors, and...confined to her own chamber," see 88-9.

³¹ Following LSJ and Cunliffe's etymology of ἄλαστος: ἀ- privative + λαθ, λανθάνω.

239) and song that “could keep his memory alive.”³² Penelope, on the other hand, proclaims his κλέος (344) and shifts the narrator’s epithet for the Achaians’ homecoming to the song about it. For her, Odysseus’ death is still an open question—she does not yet count him among the “many others” who lost their day of homecoming (354-5)—so *his* νόστος is not yet “sad”; what grieves her is the incorporation of his death into the poetic tradition.³³ Unlike Nestor and Menelaos,³⁴ Phemios does not hold out hope for Odysseus as the one Achaian still unaccounted for; instead, he sings the army’s “sad homecoming” as though it is a finished story and suggests that Odysseus’ story falls into this general pattern.³⁵ Penelope’s suitors and even her son already believe that Odysseus is dead; she resists the canonization of this version by silencing Phemios and remembering her husband continuously.³⁶

³² Segal 1994: 105.

³³ Nieto Hernández 2008: 47. Monsacré maintains that Penelope both precludes “la célébration publique de sa mémoire héroïque” and “refuse la mort d’Ulysse” (1984: 162-3). But if Odysseus has died as Telemachos describes, then he has no κλέος for Phemios to celebrate. In any case, Odysseus is not specified as the subject of the song; see n. 35 below.

³⁴ Menelaos knows his whereabouts from Proteus (4.555-60), but even in ignorance Nestor maintains hope (3.216-25)

³⁵ “This brief indication [1.326-7] of the contents of the song establishes as its subject a general pattern of experience without specifying which heroes are involved” (Murnaghan 1987: 155).

³⁶ “Such a head...of my husband” may reflect doubt that Odysseus is still alive, since this periphrasis is often used of the dead, as West 1988: 118-19 and de Jong 2001: 37 observe. Penelope, then, silences Phemios also to allay her own doubts. Her conviction of his death in the accounts of the shroud (2.96 = 19.141 = 24.131) is part of her ploy—it makes her look sincere—and cannot be taken at face value.

Telemachos does not take kindly to his mother's encroachment on the male preserve of significant speech (μῦθος δ' ἄνδρεςσι μελήσει, 358)³⁷ and sends her back to her upper chamber and proper tasks (τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα, 356), the loom and the spindle. The application of his primary epithet, "sensible," to his command (μῦθον πεπνυμένον, 361) is focalized through Penelope, for she duly leaves to continue mourning Odysseus in private with her maids until Athena puts her to sleep (362-4).³⁸ Telemachos is not being rude or callous to his long-suffering mother, as some critics believe,³⁹ rather, he is heeding Athena-Mentes' advice to grow up and claim his patrimony. While Penelope publicizes her memory of Odysseus and thereby sustains a measure of κλέος for him, she prevents her son from taking his rightful place as the head of the household. Antinoos later points out the discrepancy between her μέγα κλέος and her son's dispossession (αὐτὰρ σοί γε ποθὴν πολέος βίότοιο), the results of her delaying schemes (2.125-6), and Telemachos seems to agree, attributing his reluctance to expel her merely to fear of her father, her Furies, and men's indignation (130-7). Much as Telemachos may sympathize with his mother's plight and long for his father's return, he must accept the possibility of

³⁷ Martin defines μῦθος in the *Iliad* as "a speech-act indicating authority, performed at length, usually in public" (1989: 12). Clark concludes that Martin's definition holds at *Od.* 1.358, though he shows that the word has a wider range of meaning in *Odyssey*. Telemachos uses the same formula to exclude Penelope from the bow contest (1.356-9 = 21.350-4, substituting τόξον for μῦθος); cf. Alkinoos' claim on πομπή at 11.352-3. For the power struggle between mother and son through μῦθοι, see Wohl 1993: 38-40; Fletcher 2008: 78-81.

³⁸ Although only κλαίειν is used here (κλαίειν ἔπετ' Ὀδυσῆα, 1.363), her tears are probably to be understood as continuing into this scene.

³⁹ West is among the most forceful: "Certainly the favourable impression created by Telemachos' earlier observations is quite destroyed by this adolescent rudeness, culminating in the outrageous claim that speech (μῦθος) is not women's business, quite contrary to Homeric custom" (1988: 120). I follow Clark 2001 and Heath 2001: 139 in my interpretation.

Odysseus' death in order to win κλέος and prove himself worthy of his patrimony. By searching in Pylos and Lakedaimon “for the conclusion to the narrative that will at once testify to his father’s life and confirm that it is over,”⁴⁰ Telemachos will gain a twofold κλέος ἐσθλόν (1.95): he will not only recover Odysseus’, but he will also initiate his own, since once he learns for certain that Odysseus is dead, he can, as Athena-Mentes urges, set his house in order by remarrying his mother and slaughtering the suitors (289-97). Telemachos’ dismissal of his mother constitutes the first step in his maturation: by declaring Odysseus dead and suppressing Penelope’s objections, he makes his father’s place available to himself.⁴¹ He immediately asserts his newfound authority by calling an assembly and rebuking the suitors, and they, like Penelope, react with stunned silence (381-2).

After Penelope learns of Telemachos’ departure and the suitors’ plan to ambush him, her tears shift temporarily to her son. Medon’s report paralyzes her physically and verbally (4.703-5):

ὥς φάτο, τῆς δ’ αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ,
 δὴν δέ μιν ἀμφασίη ἐπέων λάβε· τὰ δέ οἱ ὄσσε
 δακρυόφι πληῖσθεν, θαλερὴ δέ οἱ ἔσχετο φωνή.

This total surrender of one’s body outside (γούνατα) and in (ἦτορ) conveys overwhelming emotion, usually dread, as when Odysseus is confronted with only reefs and rocks (5.406), and when the suitors realize that Odysseus intends to kill them all, not

⁴⁰ Murnaghan 1987: 157.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*: 155-6.

just Antinoos (22.68).⁴² The enclosure of Penelope's tearful eyes in silence further illustrates the helplessness and isolation of her fear; indeed, after Medon leaves, she sinks, engulfed in grief (τὴν δ' ἄχος ἀμφεχύθη θυμοφθόρον, 4.716) to the threshold (718), the place of those, like beggars, who have no place.⁴³ Once she recovers her voice, still lamenting (γοόωσα, 721) she links the loss of Odysseus long ago (πρὶν μὲν πόσιν, 724) and Telemachos most recently (νῦν αὖ παῖδ', 727) in a succession of woes and, rebuking her slavewomen for their secrecy, goes so far as to claim that she would have committed suicide if Telemachos had left with her knowledge. Penelope thus comes close to ranking her son above, or at least equal to, her husband.⁴⁴ Eurykleia immediately steps in to lull her grief (τῆς δ' εὔνησε γόον, σχέθε δ' ὅσσε γόοιο, 758) with advice to bathe and pray to Athena for Telemachos' safety. That night, Penelope continues to fret over him, so Athena sends a phantom of her sister to stem her tears (800-1):

ἦος Πηνελόπειαν ὀδυρομένην, γοόωσαν,
παύσειε κλαυθμοῖο γοοῖό τε δακρύνοντος.

Penelope admits that she grieves even more for her son than for Odysseus (τοῦ δὴ ἐγὼ καὶ μᾶλλον ὀδύρομαι ἢ περ ἐκείνου, 819), given Telemachos' immaturity: in her view, he

⁴² For the phrase λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ used of fear, see also 5.297, 22.147. It refers not to fear only at 23.205 and 24.245, where Penelope and Laertes, respectively, react to Odysseus' "certain signs." At 18.212, only the suitors' limbs loosen, and for the very different reason of sexual arousal.

⁴³ On thresholds in the *Odyssey*, see Goldhill 1988: 10-11; Lateiner 1992: 147; Reece 1993: 16; Segal 1994: 79-84. Houston 1975 links Odysseus' elevation from nameless beggar to honored guest to, finally, master of the house to his movement from threshold to δῖφος to θρόνος.

⁴⁴ Her description of Telemachos' disappearance (νῦν αὖ παῖδ' ἀγαπητὸν ἀνηρείψαντο θύελλαι / ἀκλέα ἐκ μεγάρων, 4.727-8) closely echoes his of Odysseus' (νῦν δέ μιν ἀκλειῶς ἄρπυιαι ἀνηρείψαντο, 1.241).

remains “a child, versed neither in the works of war nor in councils” (νήπιος, οὔτε πόνων εἶδῶς οὔτ’ ἀγοράων, 818),⁴⁵ and therefore stands no chance against his many enemies.⁴⁶ Iphthime assures her that she needn’t weep for him by confirming Athena’s protection and implies that she shouldn’t by redirecting her tears to Odysseus.

Remarriage logically follows if Telemachos takes priority; the phantom therefore reprioritizes Odysseus by refusing to reveal his whereabouts and keeping him ὀϊζυρός (832), the object of her tears.⁴⁷ Upon his return, Telemachos shows that he too understands where his mother’s tears belong. Both he and his herald set out to allay Penelope’s fears and dry her eyes,⁴⁸ and he sensibly (πεπνυμένος, 17.45) responds to her tearful (δακρύσασα, 38) reception with an order not to stir his emotions, but to bathe and vow hecatombs to the gods. He kept his departure from her lest she mar her complexion with crying (ὡς ἂν μὴ κλαίουσα κατὰ χροῖα καλὸν ἰάπτῃ, 2.376 = 4.749, substituting ἰάπτῃς for ἰάπτῃ), but now that Odysseus has returned, his purpose is to preserve not her beauty (her marriageability?) but his father’s household. Accordingly, he not only

⁴⁵ Cf. Phoenix’s description of young Achilles: νήπιον, οὗ πῶ εἰδόθ’ ὁμοῖτον πολέμοιο / οὐδ’ ἀγορέων (*Il.* 9.440-1). This parallel and Penelope’s concern with “enemies” make the meaning “works of war,” common for πόνος, the most likely here.

⁴⁶ On Telemachos’ maturation from νήπιος to young adult, see Heath 2001: *passim*, esp. 142 n. 23.

⁴⁷ Between this vision and Telemachos’ return, we see Penelope just once, when she rebukes the suitors for their plot to kill her son. But after Eurymachos’ deceptive speech, she returns to her chamber to cry for *Odysseus* (16.449-51 = 1.362-4); Iphthime was successful.

⁴⁸ Telemachos does not specify “fear,” but the condition on which she will stop weeping, seeing him, implies this emotion: οὐ γάρ μιν πρόσθεν παύσεσθαι ὄϊω / κλαυθμοῦ τε στυγεροῖο γοοῖό τε δακρυόεντος, / πρὶν γ’ αὐτόν με ἴδῃται (17.7-9). Fear is specified in the herald’s mission: ἵνα μὴ δείσασ’ ἐνὶ θυμῷ / ἰφθίμη βασιλεια τέρεν κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβοι (16.331-2).

refuses to indulge her maternal grief, but he also turns her attention to securing divine aid in the vengeance (ἄντιτα ἔργα, 17.51) that he knows is at hand.

Besides these few suppressed tears for Telemachos, Penelope weeps only for Odysseus. Twice her tears serve explicitly to prove her constancy. As soon as he meets someone—his mother—abreast of the situation in Ithaka, Odysseus asks whether his wife has preserved his estate or wed the best of the Achaians; Antikleia emphatically confirms the former with Penelope’s endless tears, shed night and day in *his* halls, in withering woe (11.181-3):

καὶ λίην κείνη γε μένει τετληότι θυμῷ
σοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν· οἷζυραὶ δέ οἱ αἰεὶ
φθίνουσιν νύκτες τε καὶ ἡμέατα δάκρυ χεοῦση.

Antikleia here denies Penelope a narrative independent of Odysseus’: in his absence, her time “wastes away,” melts into a stagnant crying pool; after all, if Penelope directed her own narrative, she would no longer be available as the space through and towards which Odysseus directs *his* narrative.⁴⁹ Penelope is not entirely passive, however: she waits with an “enduring heart,”⁵⁰ that is, committed to stagnation over easier choices such as remarriage or suicide. Eumaios uses the same lines (16.37-9 = 11.181-3) to reassure

⁴⁹ Much ink has been spilled over the extent of Penelope’s subjectivity. Katz 1991 makes the most extended case for its indeterminacy, considering it emblematic of the text’s basic investment in indeterminacy, rather than specific to Penelope’s situation (192-5). Cf. Murnaghan 1986; Winkler 1990: 129-61; Felson-Rubin 1993. Foley 1995 and Holmberg 1995 both take Penelope’s motives at face value; the former focuses on her capacity to direct the narrative; the latter, on the subordination of her narrative to Odysseus.

⁵⁰ One of many qualities she shares with her much-enduring husband: Odysseus grips the ram’s belly τετληότι θυμῷ (9.435) and resolves to endure (ἔτλην, 10.53) after debating κατὰ θυμόν (50) whether to commit suicide or live on after his companions open the bag of winds.

Telemachos upon his return. Athena has hastened him home by claiming, with no support elsewhere, that Penelope is on the point of marrying Eurymachos under pressure from her father and brothers and may even walk off with some of Telemachos' property (15.16-19). The goddess bolsters her claim with a generalization—a woman's heart forgets her previous husband and children in favor of her new household—and advises him to entrust his possessions to the best of his slavewomen. This is the first time that Penelope's remarriage has been represented as a threat to Telemachos, and with good reason. In preparation for their reunion, Athena now aligns Telemachos' interests with his father's: both want Penelope to keep waiting. As soon as he enters the hut, Telemachos asks after his mother's fidelity and implies with disgust that she has rushed into another's bed, since she has been gone long enough for Odysseus' bed to become covered with "foul cobwebs" (κάκ' ἀράχνια, 16.35). He accepts Eumaios' testimony and sends the swineherd to reassure his mother.⁵¹

Penelope herself recognizes the significance of her tears. Eurynome approves (κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες, 18.170) of her intention to appear before the suitors and urges her to beautify herself, namely, to cleanse her face of tears. Telemachos has grown a beard, after all (173-6):

μηδ' οὔτω δακρύοισι πεφυρμένη ἀμφὶ πρόσωπα
 ἔρχευ, ἐπεὶ κάκιον πενθήμεναι ἄκριτον αἰεὶ.
 ἤδη μὲν γάρ τοι παῖς τηλίκος, ὃν σὺ μάλιστα
 ἠρῶ ἀθανάτοισι γενεΐσαντα ιδέσθαι.

⁵¹ In the ensuing conversation, Telemachos shows more sympathy for Penelope's fidelity than he has previously. For the first time, he formulates her dilemma in the same terms as she does (16.73-7), then he sets the suitors' violence against his property and himself in the lap of the gods (129).

Penelope soon makes the connection between his maturation and her own remarriage explicit: Odysseus Troy-bound instructed her to mind his household until their child grew a beard (γενεήσαντα, 269) and then to marry whomever she wished. Leaving implicit a δέ clause encouraging her to remarry, Eurynome obliquely reminds Penelope that this time to exchange loyalties has come (ἤδη). Penelope refuses on the basis that her beauty left with Odysseus (180-1):

ἀγλαΐην γὰρ ἐμοί γε θεοί, τοὶ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
ᾠλεσαν, ἐξ οὗ κείνος ἔβη κοίλης ἐνὶ νηυσίν.

She reiterates and expands this self-effacement first with the suitors, after Eurymachos exalts her above all women (245-9), then with the beggar, after he likens her to a blameless king whose land and people prosper under his leadership (19.108-14). To accept these compliments would be to admit Odysseus' replaceability: she can still attract a new husband or even rule in his stead.⁵² Penelope rightly demurs, locating all her excellence, both mental and physical (ἐμὴν ἀρετὴν εἶδος τε δέμας τε, 18.251 = 19.124), in Odysseus and claiming delinquency and incompetence in royal duties (19.134-5, 309-16, 325-34) out of longing for him (ποθέουσα, 19.136).⁵³ His return would increase her κλέος by confirming her fidelity (18.254-5 = 19.127-8); in the meantime, she maintains her grief (νῦν δ' ἄχομαι, 18.256 = 19.129) as proof.

Twice Penelope describes her life as a constant state of mourning and longing for Odysseus. She awakens from Athena's makeover with a prayer for death (18.202-5):

⁵² On the implication in the beggar's compliment that Penelope has replaced Odysseus, see Murnaghan 1987: 44.

⁵³ "It is Penelope's *mêtis* to make her excellence and praise ultimately take the shape of her husband's" (Bergren 2008: 218).

αἶθε μοι ὦς μαλακὸν θάνατον πόροι Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή
αὐτίκα νῦν, ἵνα μηκέτ' ὀδυρομένη κατὰ θυμὸν
αἰῶνα φθινύθω, πόσιος ποθέουσα φίλοιο
παντοίην ἀρετήν, ἐπεὶ ἕξοχος ἦεν Ἀχαιῶν.

Rather than specify tears, Penelope uses the broad verb ὀδύρεσθαι, which indicates continuous action and includes both emotions and their expression,⁵⁴ to make a general characterization of her existence. Athena may have washed her face with beauty itself, but Penelope's grief runs deeper than skin: "waste" has become a way of life. Penelope thus reaffirms her fidelity just before extracting gifts from the suitors.⁵⁵ As the bow contest dawns, she starts from sleep and, sated with crying (κλαίουσα κορέσσατο, 20.59), again prays for death, so as to keep Odysseus before her eyes (Ὀδυσῆα / ὀσσομένη, 80-1) and avoid a lesser husband. Her "evil" (κακά) dreams of Odysseus have made her suffering unbearable, depriving her of the peace that sleep should grant from daily anguish (83-5):

ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν καὶ ἀνεκτὸν ἔχει κακόν, ὀππότε κέν τις
ἦματα μὲν κλαίῃ, πυκινῶς ἀκαχήμενος ἦτορ,
νύκτας δ' ὕπνος ἔχῃσιν.

Before, Athena would eventually shed "sweet sleep" (ὑπνον / ἠδύν) over her crying eyes (1.363-4 = 16.449-50 = 19.603-4). Now, as the possibility of remarriage approaches, her husband consumes all her time, even when her eyes cannot weep.

⁵⁴ On these aspects of ὀδύρεσθαι, see Spatafora 1997: 15-18.

⁵⁵ The gift-extraction scene has generated much debate. Hölscher's interpretation is the simplest and most consistent with the text: νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα (283), he argues, means not that "she has something else up her sleeve," but that she *wants* something else, i.e., the return of her husband, even as she accepts gifts in preparation for remarriage. On the merits of his argument, see Emlyn-Jones 1984: 11.

A change comes over Penelope in the course of the *Homilia*. The first Kretan tale elicits tears worthy of Odysseus' pity (ἐλέαιρε, 19.210) and the snow simile (203-9):

ἴσκε ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα·
τῆς δ' ἄρ' ἀκουούσης ῥέε δάκρυα, τήκετο δὲ χρώς.
ὡς δὲ χιῶν κατατήκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν,
ἦν τ' Εὐρος κατέτηξεν, ἐπὶν Ζέφυρος καταχεύη·
τηκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ῥέοντες·
ὡς τῆς τήκετο καλὰ παρήϊα δάκρυ χεούσης,
κλαιούσης ἐὸν ἄνδρα παρήμενον.

Her flesh becomes the very source of tears, the snow that melts into rushing mountain streams: frozen into Penelope's face, her memory of Odysseus gushes forth at the slightest touch, at the mere mention of him in a plausible context. The "certain signs" further increase her desire for lamentation (249-50). But for the first time in the poem, she takes her fill of weeping (τάρφθη πολυδακρύτοιο γόοιο, 213 = 251), and she is sufficiently convinced by the first tale to request confirmation of the beggar's acquaintance with Odysseus (215-19) and by the second to honor him as a friend (φίλος τ' ἔση αἰδοῖός τε, 254). At this point she still insists that Odysseus will not return (257-8), but the beggar's oath weakens her conviction. He begins with a plea that she stop weeping: though no one could blame her for mourning such a godlike husband, he speaks the truth of Odysseus' return; further tears would indicate defeatism. She not only complies, but she also wishes for fulfillment of the oath (αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε, ἔπος τετελεσμένον εἶη, 309) and doubts, rather than denies, that Odysseus will return: ἀλλά μοι ᾧδ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ὄϊεται, ὡς ἔσεται περ· / οὔτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔτι οἶκον ἐλεύσεται (312-13).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Contrast Eumaios' unqualified futures after the same oath: ᾧ γέρον, οὔτ' ἄρ' ἐγὼν

Her speech after the footbath supports this impression of hope. However boundless (πένθος ἀμέτρητον, 512), her pain apparently does not prevent her from doing her part to sustain the household (513-14):

ἦματα μὲν γὰρ τέρπομ' ὀδυρομένη, γοῶσα,
ἔς τ' ἐμὰ ἔργ' ὀρώσα καὶ ἀμφιπόλων ἐνὶ οἴκῳ.

In contrast to others' and her own claims elsewhere, here she does not live in grief, but incorporates it into her daily routine.⁵⁷ Only at night do the cares come thick and fast, as she wavers between her husband's bed and her son's birthright. This is not a long-standing conflict, however, but a recent development (νῦν, 532), now that Telemachos has reached adulthood and, anxious for his property, prays for her to leave.⁵⁸ The possibility of Odysseus' death does not figure in her deliberation as formulated here. Penelope thus presents herself as the best wife possible in her circumstances: she remembers her husband but does not forget her duties, and she considers remarriage in light of their son's, not her own, interests.

εὐαγγέλιον τόδε τίσω, / οὔτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔτι οἶκον ἐλεύσεται (14.166-7). He does wish for Odysseus' return and the household's happiness (171-3), but he dismisses the oath (ἀλλ' ἦ τοι ὄρκον μὲν ἐάσομεν) as a needless reminder of his troubles.

⁵⁷ This is not to say that she enjoys it. Stanford 1959 *ad* 513-15 takes ὀρώσα closely with τέρπομαι and reads the first two participles separately, as "her fixed condition." Alternatively, she may mean τέρπομαι ironically. My point is that here her grief is manageable. Elsewhere it is portrayed as all-consuming (esp. 11.181-3; 13.336-8; 16.37-9; 18.202-5; 20.83-5), even to the point of hindering her productivity. For example, she twice returns not to her proper tasks, as Telemachos commands, but to crying for Odysseus (1.356-64; 21.350-8).

⁵⁸ Previously, he forbade her from leaving: παῖς δ' ἐμὸς ἦος ἔην ἔτι νήπιος ἠδὲ χαλίφρων, / γήμασθ' οὐ μ' εἶα πόσιος κατὰ δῶμα λιποῦσαν (530-1).

At this point she turns abruptly to her dream. Those who read Penelope's sorrow for her geese as subconscious or suppressed affection⁵⁹ for the suitors ignore the logic of the dream as well as its function in her speech. She mourns the geese *as her pets*. However obvious the equation geese = suitors might seem to modern interpreters, Penelope has no reason to make it at first: the number of geese does not match that of the suitors,⁶⁰ nor do the birds eat in a very suitorly manner—rather, they warm her heart (ιαίνομαι, 537). The eagle then *consoles* her—“take heart” (θάρσει, 546)—by clarifying their identity. Upon waking, she searches (παπτήνασα, 552) for the geese to confirm the dream, but finding them still alive, she cannot help but doubt the eagle's assertion of its reality and fulfillment (οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ' ὕπαρ ἐσθλόν, ὃ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται, 547).⁶¹

The dream thus further justifies her indecision: not only is time running out, but an

⁵⁹ Devereux was the first to advance this reading, and he presents it as self-evident: “it is hard to understand how literary critics could have overlooked the obvious fact that a rapidly aging woman, denied for some twenty years the pleasures of sex and the company and support of a husband, would inevitably be unconsciously flattered by the attentions of young and highly eligible suitors” (1957: 382). Many have since concurred, e.g., Rankin 1962: 617-24; van Nortwick 1979: 276 n. 22; Clayton 2004: 45. Others, e.g., Felson-Rubin 1987: 72-4 and Katz 1991: 146-7, see overt, not suppressed, affection. But as Pratt points out, “Penelope never acknowledges affection for the suitors and openly wishes for their death (*Od.* 17.545-47)” (1994: 148 n. 4). I add that she weeps in glee upon learning of their death: ὦς ἔφαθ', ἣ δ' ἐχάρη καὶ ἀπὸ λέκτροιο θοροῦσα / γρηῖ περιπλέχθη, βλεφάρων δ' ἀπὸ δάκρυον ἦκε (23.32-3). For arguments for a Freudian interpretation, see the bibliography at Kessels 1978: 118-19 n. 27; for criticism, see esp. 93-5. For a summary of the various readings of the dream and bibliography, see Katz 1991: 146. My reading is indebted to those of Kessels 1978: 91-110, Marquardt 1985: 43-5, and Pratt 1994: 148-50.

⁶⁰ On this point, see Pratt 1994: 150-1.

⁶¹ Marquardt 1985: 43-4.

alleged sign of Odysseus' return is far from straightforward.⁶² Although the beggar fails to allay her doubts, she does not fall back into despair. Time is forcing her hand, but she does not deny that Odysseus is alive and may return. She lays the contest as a test: if Odysseus really is the eagle, if he really will return in time to string the bow, then she is saved; if not, then at least she will buy herself more time, for no one else *can* string his bow.⁶³ In parting from the beggar, she uses the bed tear-soaked since Odysseus' departure ([εὐνή] αἰεὶ δάκρυς' ἔμοῖσι πεφυρμένη, ἐξ οὗ Ὀδυσσεὺς / οἴχετ', 19.596-7)⁶⁴ to remind him that her adherence to what is "right" (θέμις, 14.130)⁶⁵ for a wife is not an isolated incident, but a habit, which she resumes after their interview (19.602-4 = 1.362-4). But in drying her eyes and testing his oath and her dream, rather than rejecting them outright, she expresses hope, and thereby passes a test suggested to Odysseus by Athena.

As she reintroduces him to Ithaka, Athena ostensibly deploys the image of weeping Penelope to the same end as Antikleia and Eumaios. But she prefaces it with praise for Odysseus' caution: unlike Agamemnon, he will test his wife before the welcome party (13.333-8):

⁶² As bird-signs go, it is a strange one: normally the interpretation confirms the audience's initial emotional reaction (Pratt 1994: 151 n. 12), and no other bird acts as its own interpreter.

⁶³ So Austin: "[t]o institute a contest in which the event and the instrument are both the peculiar property of Odysseus is to elicit Odysseus' epiphany. Penelope has read the signs but she needs some confirmation that her senses are reading true. The contest will be definitive proof, either of her folly or of her intelligence" (1975: 230). Cf. Marquardt 1985: 41, who emphasizes her cunning in laying the contest.

⁶⁴ She uses the same lines to lay claim to Telemachos' knowledge of Odysseus from his journey to Pylos and Lakedaimon (17.101-6).

⁶⁵ According to Eumaios, it is θέμις for women to weep for their dead husbands: καὶ οἱ ὀδυρομένη βλεφάρων ἄπο δάκρυα πίπτει, / ἢ θέμις ἐστὶ γυναικός, ἐπὶν πόσις ἄλλοθ' ὄληται (14.129-30).

ἀσπασίως γάρ κ' ἄλλος ἀνήρ ἀλαλήμενος ἐλθὼν
ἴετ' ἐνὶ μεγάροις ἰδέειν παῖδάς τ' ἄλοχον τε·
σοὶ δ' οὐ πῶ φίλον ἐστὶ δαήμεναι οὐδὲ πυθέσθαι,
πρὶν γ' ἔτι σῆς ἀλόχου πειρήσεται, ἣ τέ τοι αὐτῶς
ἦσται ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν, διΐζυραι δέ οἱ αἰεὶ
φθίνουσιν νύκτες τε καὶ ἡμέματα δάκρυ χεοῦση.

If Athena intends Penelope's tears as proof of her fidelity, why propose the test in the first place? Why not end her suffering and enlist her help, as Amphimedon assumes he did (24.167-9)? The following lines provide the answer. Athena asserts her own unshaken conviction of Odysseus' homecoming (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τὸ μὲν οὐ ποτ' ἀπίστεον, ἀλλ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ / ἦδε', ὃ νοστήσεις, 13.339-40) *in contrast* to Penelope's constant weeping. She does not mean to reassure Odysseus at all, but by recasting the emblem of his wife's fidelity into one of her despair, to call her endurance into question. Penelope's heart may remain with Odysseus, but she encourages the suitors (379-81)—is she weaving more wiles or, as the likelihood of his return dwindles, keeping her options open? Her hopeless tears and grief for his homecoming (νόστον ὀδύρομένη, 379) certainly suggest the latter, and Odysseus expresses relief not at his wife's devotion, but at his narrow escape from Agamemnon's fate (383-5). Not that she would have betrayed him—to impugn Penelope's intentions, as Agamemnon did and Athena will do with Telemachos, would be too simplistic, not to mention cruel and counterproductive. Rather, Athena pushes Odysseus to test the depth of his and Penelope's like-mindedness: can she, like him, steel her heart, or has she given up? Is she still his wife in spirit as well as in name?

Once Odysseus passes the bed test, Penelope bursts into tears (δακρύσασα, 23.207). Her apology heightens his desire for lamentation, and he cries, holding the wife

fitted to his heart (κλαῖε δ' ἔχων ἄλοχον θυμαρέα, 232) in one of the poem's most famous similes: he is as welcome to her as land to a shipwrecked sailor. As many have observed, this equation of their experiences reaffirms the ὁμοφροσύνη on which Odysseus bases the ideal marriage (6.180-5).⁶⁶ The couple then grieves (ὀδυρομένοισι, 23.241) until what would be dawn without Athena's intervention. The combination of ἴμερος γόοιο and the motif of grief that could have continued until sunset/sunrise recurs elsewhere only in Telemachos and Odysseus' reunion (16.215), marking these two moments as the most intensely emotional in the epic.⁶⁷ But unlike father and son, husband and wife grieve separately until after the simile, which brings them together emotionally as well as physically.

⁶⁶ For the normal restriction of this quality to male relationships, see Bolmarcich 2001.

⁶⁷ The "desire for lamentation" recurs at 4.113 (Telemachos), 4.183 (Menelaos' court), and 19.249 (Penelope). The reunion with his faithful maids arouses an expanded variation in Odysseus: τὸν δὲ γλυκὺς ἴμερος ἦρει / κλαυθμοῦ καὶ στοναχῆς (22.500-1).

The Slaves

The household slaves shed tears similar to Penelope's. She (21.55-7), Eumaios, and Philoitios (82-3, 86) all weep upon seeing Odysseus' bow, a token of their lord and the means, as they fear, of his replacement. Both Eurykleia (19.361-2) and Philoitios (20.204) note the beggar's resemblance to Odysseus, then weep and offer a memory: the nurse, of his thankless sacrifices to Zeus (19.363-8);⁶⁸ the cowherd, of his own appointment to the herds by Odysseus (20.209-10). In a tangle of *χάρμα* and *ἄλγος*, Eurykleia again wells up as she recognizes Odysseus by a physical manifestation of her memory, the scar (19.471-2). But unlike Penelope's, the slaves' tears do not suffice to prove their loyalty. Only after Eurykleia and the herdsmen have pledged verbal⁶⁹ and physical support,⁷⁰ respectively, does Odysseus take her into his confidence and reveal himself to Eumaios and Philoitios.

The slaves also differ from Penelope in that they, as the property of the male line, are not conflicted between Odysseus and his son. Eumaios and Eurykleia are singled out as the most loyal to both. Their loyalty to Telemachos is parental, and they anticipate his real parents in tearfully welcoming him home. So surprised as to drop his wine bowls,

⁶⁸ Cf. Eumaios' citation of Odysseus' sacrifices to the fountain nymphs at 17.240-6.

⁶⁹ She offers silence and information about the other slave-women (19.492-8). Odysseus here declines but later requests (22.417-18) the latter.

⁷⁰ αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε, ἔπος τελέσειε Κρονίων· / γνοίης χ' οἴη ἐμὴ δύναμις καὶ χεῖρες ἔπονται." / ὧς δ' αὐτῶς Εὐμαιὸς ἐπεύξατο πᾶσι θεοῖσι / νοστήσαι Ὀδυσῆα πολύφρονα ὄνδε δόμονδε (20.236-9; cf. 21.200-4).

the swineherd heads straight for his young master and showers him with kisses. A “blooming tear” falls⁷¹ as Eumaios embraces him like a father embraces his only son, back from a nine-year absence in a faraway land (16.16-21):

θαλερὸν δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε δάκρυ.
ὥς δὲ πατήρ ὄν παῖδα φίλα φρονέων ἀγαπάζη
ἔλθόντ' ἐξ ἀπίης γαίης δεκάτῳ ἐνιαυτῷ,
μοῦνον τηλύγετον, τῷ ἔπ' ἄλγεα πολλά μογήσει,
ὥς τότε Τηλέμαχον θεοειδέα δῖος ὕφορβός
πάντα κύσεν περιφύς, ὥς ἐκ θανάτοιο φυγόντα.

Eumaios does serve as a father figure for Telemachos: in the ensuing conversation, they address each other as “dear child” (φίλον τέκος, 25) and “father” (ἄττα, 31), and earlier the swineherd described “his many pains” for the boy in parental terms.⁷² But ultimately a figure, a simile, is all Eumaios can be, so he does not threaten to replace his father: the slave’s affection for Telemachos is an extension of his loyalty to Odysseus.⁷³ “By far the first” in the palace to notice Telemachos, Eurykleia bursts into tears (δακρύσασα, 17.33) and, abandoning her fleeces, hurries towards him. Her tears are maternal, but her devotion belongs not just to Telemachos, but to the entire family: Laertes bought her quite young, and she nursed both Odysseus and his son.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Acting as the subject of a verb only here and at 14.129 and 18.204, tears take over for Penelope and Eumaios. For the usual syntax of tears, see Arnould 1990: 130-1.

⁷² See de Jong 2001: 352 on 15.174-84.

⁷³ He is well-disposed to plural masters: ἀνάκτεσιν ἦπια εἰδώς (15.557).

⁷⁴ Above all, Eurykleia is the slave of Odysseus (Scott 1918: 75-9; Fenik 1974: 189-91). For her role as a doublet for Odysseus’ mother, see Murnaghan 1987: 41.

The disloyal slavewomen are usually laughing, like the suitors.⁷⁵ They weep only once, as they emerge to dispose of their lovers' corpses and clean the hall before their own unclean death. The juxtaposition of Odysseus' charges (22.444-5) and their vigorous tears (θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσαι, 447) suggests a causal relationship: even if they are out of earshot in the women's quarters, they know that they are in danger for remembering Aphrodite instead of their master.⁷⁶ They may grieve terribly (αἴν' ὀλοφυρόμεναι)⁷⁷ for their lovers, but this verb need not take an implied object and, in light of their own impending execution, primarily conveys fear for their own lives.⁷⁸ These tears undermine any pity that their hanging may rouse by demonstrating, in contrast to the faithful slaves' loving welcome of Odysseus (498-501), their misguided

⁷⁵ The suitors weep only once. Colakis argues that their hysterical laughter at 20.346-7 reveals a "total inattention to reality" consistent with their character and portentous of "their well-deserved death" (1986: 141). If their laughter thus reflects their muddled wits (παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα, 346), then their simultaneous tears and thoughts of lamentation (ὄσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων / δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὤϊετο θυμός, 348-9) constitute the appropriate reaction to the blood-spattered meat: proleptic self-mourning. Indeed, both γόος and Theoklymenos' οἰμωγή (353) are generally used of the dead. For γόω/γόος as "spécialisé dans le deuil," designating "la lamentation traditionnelle," see Arnould 1990: 147; Mawet 1979: 260 connects them to tragic threnody. For οἰμωγή as the masculine counterpart to feminine κωκυτός in funereal contexts, see Arnould 1990: 155. The prophet foresees the suitors' slaughter in the bleeding walls and ghost-filled courtyard. They can only emit, not sense their foreboding, however, for after his vision they continue their damning sweet laughter (ἦδὺν γέλασαν, 358).

⁷⁶ Telemachos is to stab them "until they forget Aphrodite": εἰς ὃ κε...ἐκλελάθωντ' Ἀφροδίτης (22.443-4).

⁷⁷ The combination αἴν' ὀλοφύρεσθαι appears only here in Homer.

⁷⁸ Cf. Kirke (ὀλοφυρομένη, 10.324) when Odysseus rushes her with his sword.

loyalty—to their lovers and to themselves—just before they are punished as a warning to the rest of the household.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ For the slavewomen as “scapegoats for anything improper that was done in Ithaka while Odysseus was away,” see Fulkerson 2002.

CHAPTER 2: ODYSSEUS' COMPANIONS

Odysseus' companions weep, wail, or lament (or want to, but he prevents them) in connection with nearly every one of the adventures. Scholars tend to defend their tears as the normal, socially acceptable reaction to their “difficult and apparently hopeless” circumstances, citing the frequency with which their own commander and other noblemen weep.⁸⁰ I agree—after all, Odysseus never rebukes his men for effeminacy or impropriety—but I believe that a real difference between his and their tears has been overlooked, in large part because of the conflation of implicit and explicit tears. Nearly all the companions' tears are merely implied in various expressions of distress, and these implicit tears include most of those shared with or condoned by Odysseus.

The men mainly “wail” and “grieve” at the loss of companions, and Odysseus usually joins them: he insists on the triple ritual cry for those killed by the Kikones (9.64-6)⁸¹ and grieves at heart with the others (πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ) for them, as well as for the Laistrygones' and Kyklops' victims (9.62-3 = 565-6 = 10.133-4). For their one recoverable casualty, Elpenor, Odysseus provides full funeral rites, weeping vigorously

⁸⁰ Föllinger 2009: 27-8; cf. Wærn 1985: 224. van Wees deems their tears “within limits acceptable even to us” (1998: 12).

⁸¹ On this ritual cry, see Stanford 1959 *ad* 10.65 and Heubeck 1989: 17. Cf. *Aen.* 6.506.

with the others: θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (12.12).⁸² If Odysseus does not participate, he at least commiserates.⁸³ After a meal, the men’s first action on Thrinakia is to remember and mourn those “dear companions” devoured by Skylla: μνησάμενοι... φίλους ἔκλαιον ἐταίρους (12.309).⁸⁴ Odysseus himself considers these deaths the most pitiful sight of all he saw in his travels (οἴκτιστον δὴ κείνο ἔμοις ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι / πάντων, 258-9) and, before cautioning them against Thrinakia, acknowledges the survivors’ trauma: κακά περ πάσχοντες ἐταῖροι (271). He never suppresses their mourning, and he curtails it just once, for strategic reasons. As his crew groans for the six in the Kyklops’ belly (τοὺς δὲ στενάχοντο γοῶντες, 9.467), he forbids them only from *wailing* (ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ οὐκ εἶων... / κλαίειν, 468-9), which would give away their position; hence his silent gesture, a nod (467-8), and abstention from taunts until they are nearly out of earshot (473-4).⁸⁵

With the exception of these examples for the dead, grief figures in a contrast that Odysseus develops between himself and his men. As the sole survivor of their adventures, he can depict himself in whatever light he chooses, and black and white morality has little appeal for the hero of many wiles. As many have observed, his

⁸² For the communalization of grief as standard practice in the *Iliad*, see Shay 1994: 55-68. These tears are not related to those in Book 10 that I discuss below (pp. 36-40), but required by the funereal context (see n. 13 above).

⁸³ His nonparticipation on Thrinakia reflects the rift just opened between himself and his men: they united against him (ἢ μάλα δὴ με βιάζεστε μοῦνον ἔόντα, 12.297) in favor of disembarking.

⁸⁴ The epithets “wretched” (9.65) and “dear” (9.63, 566; 10.136) not only evoke pity, but also indicate the dead companions’ value to the living.

⁸⁵ For mute signs such as nods as characteristic of Odysseus, see Montiglio 2000: 275.

account does not bear out the main narrator's condemnation of the men *en masse* for the consumption of Helios' cattle (1.6-9):⁸⁶

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὧς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἱ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο
ἦσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.

The majority in fact perishes at the hands of the Laistrygones, who sink all but Odysseus' own ship, that is, eleven out of twelve. His responsibility here is debatable, but elsewhere beyond question.⁸⁷ When Odysseus returns safe and sound to summon the men to Kirke's, Eurylochos foresees mass destruction and spits the narrator's words back at his commander: "She'll turn you all into beast-slaves! Remember how our friends died at the hands of the Kyklops because of *his* wickedness?" (τούτου γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο, 10.437). Odysseus nearly decapitates him not in spite but *because* of the truth in his words,⁸⁸ which could well be applied more broadly. Although Odysseus protects his men with exemplary courage and cunning, he repeatedly fails to keep them out of trouble in the first place and even drags them to their deaths on a few

⁸⁶ "Why does the *narrator*, the poet himself, single out felonious feasting on Sun-brand beef as the cause of six hundred deaths, when at least 550 are already dead?" (Shay 2002: 102); cf. West 1988: 71-2. The culpability of the men even on Thrinakia is controversial; see Fenik 1974: 212-15 and Rutherford 1986: 153. Segal rightly stresses their "serious transgression of the boundaries between human and divine" (1994: 215).

⁸⁷ See Rutherford 1986: 150-3; Segal 1993: 33-6. Shay is especially harsh on Odysseus' "grim and despicable failures of leadership responsibility" (2002: 42-5, 70-1, 100-12, 231-41).

⁸⁸ Cf. Rutherford: "Although Odysseus draws his sword in fury and has to be restrained by his more timid friends...we may well feel that there is some truth in what the rebellious Eurylochos says" (1986: 151).

occasions. He is careful to separate the innocent and the guilty,⁸⁹ and he does admit fault at times.⁹⁰ Once he commits just the kind of god-blaming that Zeus deplores in Aigisthos: his sacrifice of Polyphemos' ram must have been a failure, since the son of Kronos was plotting the destruction of all his ships and trusty companions (9.552-5). Blame in the *Apologoi* slips, slides, perishes, decays with imprecision, will not stay in place—this much Odysseus acknowledges.

He crafts this world of moral chaos, populated by amoral beings and unmoored from moral forces, in order to showcase his μῆτις. Whoever is to blame for a given crisis, Odysseus stands out from his companions for his perseverance and resourcefulness, for his ability to take effective action in the thick of disaster; they, on the other hand, become paralyzed with fear and despair.⁹¹ This is not to say that he is unfeeling. As they watch Polyphemos demolish his first pair of men, Odysseus and the others, wailing, raise their hands in futile prayer, and helplessness seizes their hearts (9.294-5):

ἡμεῖς δὲ κλαίοντες ἀνεσχέθομεν Διὶ χεῖρας,
σχέτλια ἔργ' ὀρόωντες· ἀμηχανίη δ' ἔχε θυμόν.

⁸⁹ Shay is incorrect that Odysseus considers all six hundred deaths “their own damned fault” (2002: 43); he never subsumes the others under his impious crew, and he generally portrays losses with pity and regret.

⁹⁰ The companions plead with him to make off with some cheeses and livestock before the cave's owner returns (9.224-7), but he does not listen, though this would have been far better (ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην, ἢ τ' ἄν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν, 228); likewise, they plead with him not to taunt the Kyklops (494-9). They must remind him of his homecoming as he languishes with Kirke (10.472-4). He terms the loss of the winds “our folly” (ἡμετέρη ματίη, 10.79).

⁹¹ Cf. Rutherford: “Odysseus survives not because he is pious or guiltless or devoid of vices, nor even because he does not make mistakes, but because he is able to learn from them, to adapt, to use what help he can get from others and stay on top” (1986: 153).

At this moment, they are utterly at the mercy of the merciless *Kyklops*, incapable of rescuing their friends or protecting themselves from the same fate; stabbing the monster will trap them in the cave, so they resign themselves, groaning (*στεναχόντες*, 306), to a night of waiting—for morning and two more deaths. They express similar despair while approaching *Skylla* and *Charybdis*. Although *Odysseus* and his crew sail up the strait with different fears—he of *Skylla*, his secret, they of *Charybdis*⁹²— they bewail their entrapment together (12.234-5):

ἡμεῖς μὲν στενωπὸν ἀνεπλέομεν γοόωντες·
ἔνθεν μὲν Σκύλλῃ, ἑτέρωθι δὲ δῖα Χάρυβδις.

The difference lies in *Odysseus*' recovery time: as soon as *Polyphemos* leaves, he conceives a plan for vengeance, and he keeps the ship on course, then arms for *Skylla*, determined to save his men in defiance of *Kirke*. Indeed, he rallies so impressively that the companions rarely express anything but gratitude and relief, and he can even exhort them with their escape from the *Kyklops* as a triumph of his “courage, counsel, and intelligence”: ἐμῆ ἀρετῆ βουλῆ τε νόῳ τε (12.211). They and the reader easily forget that most of his triumphs began as salvage operations.

The companions' grief is not to their discredit, however, for with prompting they prove obedient and capable. They cooperate in fleeing the *Laistrygones* (οἱ δ' ἅμα πάντες ἀνέρριψαν, 10.130) and “quickly” (ὄκα, 12.222) adopt the course *Odysseus* prescribes for the strait of *Messina*. Despite their ill-timed grief for *Polyphemos*' victims, they “immediately” (αἶψ', 471) fulfill his commands, and they soon demonstrate better strategy, urging silence after *he* provokes the *Kyklops*. On three occasions, *Odysseus*

⁹² To be precise, her waves (12.202); they have not yet seen *Charybdis* herself.

shines as a saving light for men incapable of anything but grief. While he and his crew sail away from the Kyklopes' island, the others sit around the ships lamenting and awaiting them always: ἀμφὶ δ' ἑταῖροι / ἦατ' ὀδυρόμενοι, ἡμέας ποτιδέγμενοι αἰεὶ (9.544-5). Under orders to remain on Goat Island and, anyway, ignorant of Odysseus' precise location, these men can do nothing but hope for the best and expect the worst; their lamentations and posture reflect their powerlessness and dependence upon their commander,⁹³ as do the cries of the lotos-eaters forced to remember their homecoming (κλαίοντας ἀνάγκη, 9.98) and of the pigs penned in the sties (κλαίοντες, 10.241).

His grief surpasses theirs and overwhelms him only once. As the winds burst from Aiolos' bag and sweep them away from Ithaka, the men wail (κλαίοντας, 10.49), but Odysseus first contemplates suicide, then lies down on the deck wrapped in his cloak: καλυψάμενος δ' ἐνὶ νηϊ / κείμην (53-4). Homeric characters prostrate or veil themselves in their moments of deepest sorrow and surrender,⁹⁴ and these gestures are combined nowhere else in the *Odyssey*.⁹⁵ In order to live on, Odysseus must come to terms not only with his men's folly, but also with the breakdown of trust for which he, as their

⁹³ For sitting as a sign of helplessness, cf. 4.101, 539; 5.82, 151; 10.497, 567; 20.58; 21.55.

⁹⁴ On this use of veiling, distinct from women's regular veiling in public, see Cairns 2009.

⁹⁵ The *Iliad* provides two parallels, albeit inexact. In mourning for Hektor, Priam sits veiled and caked in dung from rolling in it (*Il.* 24.159-65). After Antilochos informs him of Patroklos' death, Achilles is veiled not in a garment but in "a black cloud of grief" (ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα, 18.22) and lies in the dust (ἐν κονίησι.../ κείτο, 26-7). On these passages, see Cairns 2009: 49-52.

commander, is to blame.⁹⁶ Odysseus acknowledges that this is his greatest *personal* failure by isolating himself from his men, both visually (with his cloak) and vocally (with his silence).⁹⁷ This isolation continues after Aiolos turns him away. He and his men may share the blame (ἡμετέρη ματίη, 79) and grieve their easy νόστος together (πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ, 77), but he “groans deeply” (βαρέα στενάχοντα, 76)⁹⁸ at his failure to set things right.

Odysseus redeems himself on Aiaia. As with Polyphemos and Skylla, he distinguished himself during the Laistrygonēs’ attack by cutting the moorings and ordering his distraught companions to their oars (10.126-30). Now, he is just as demoralized by the devastation of their fleet, for they all spend the first days and nights on Kirke’s island eating out their hearts with pains and exhaustion: κείμεθ’, ὁμοῦ καμάτω τε καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἔδοντες (143). But on the third morning, he sets out to reconnoiter and returns with a great stag. He attributes the lucky catch to a god, who in pity sent the beast into his path. This blessing prefigures the aid he will receive on the way to Kirke’s: both reward his initiative, the uniqueness of which Odysseus emphasizes here by connecting the god’s pity to his own isolation: ὀλοφύρατο μούνον ἔοντα (157). At this point, he still sympathizes with his companions, heartening each with “gentle words”

⁹⁶ Cf. Segal: “[t]he Aeolus episode is perhaps the most painful failure of trust between Odysseus and the companions” (1994: 34). Shay 2002: 51-9 is perceptive on the combination of distrust and fanaticism in Odysseus’ secrecy and monopolization of the rudder.

⁹⁷ See Cairns 2009: 41 on Thetis’ (*Il.* 24.93-4) and Priam’s (cited in n. 95 above) veiling as signs of their alienation from the other gods and his sons, respectively. For the “increasing privacy” of Odysseus’ adventures, see Segal 1994: 35.

⁹⁸ An expression of profound sorrow, used elsewhere only of Odysseus on Ogygia (4.516 = 5.420 = 23.317). βαρὺ...στενάχοντος occurs only after the first (8.95) and third (534) songs of Demodokos, as Race 2012b: 2 observes.

(μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσι, 173) and quelling their fears of death (174-7); indeed, they have veiled themselves (καλυψάμενοι, 179) as much in anticipation of their own deaths as in mourning for the dead.⁹⁹

The first explicit tears fall the next morning, and they flow throughout and exclusively in the Kirke episode. Here and only here, Odysseus succeeds *in spite of* his companions, as his action and their inaction become diametrically opposed. Tears, then, mark the most extreme manifestation of the contrast, elsewhere marked by general distress, between his and their reactions to adversity. Though sensitive to their suffering (189 = 12.271), he proposes further exploration of the island as a μῆτις to regain their bearings.¹⁰⁰ His own preliminary observation of smoke rising in the center, a sign of habitation, promises success. But this detail reminds (μνησαμένοις, 199) the men of their sufferings at the hands of the Kyklops and Laistrygones, and, in expectation of the same, their hearts break and they wail, weeping vigorously: κλαῖον δὲ λιγέως, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (201). They react even more intensely to their impending νέκυια: their hearts again break and, sitting on the beach, they tear out their hair, a gesture associated

⁹⁹ Cairns suggests that their veiling “is perhaps an expression of their resignation to what appears to be an imminent death” (2009: 53. 26). On the veiling of those about to die, see 52-4 and Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 303. Dramatic irony lurks in Odysseus’ wording, for they soon will “go down to Hades”: οὐ γάρ πο καταδυσόμεθ’, ἀχνύμενοί περ, / εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους (10.174-5).

¹⁰⁰ For “his claim to be bankrupt of ideas” as “mere pretence,” see Heubeck 1989: 54. “[I]n reality the grounds he gives (γάρ, 194) for his alleged perplexity (including the report of his own reconnaissance) indicate his own μῆτις, without explicitly stating it.” This indirection may indicate that he expects resistance from his men.

with mourning ritual¹⁰¹ and therefore appropriate for those who are about to “die” (566-7):

ὥς ἐφάμην, τοῖσιν δὲ κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ,
ἐζόμενοι δὲ κατ’ αὐθι γόων τίλλοντό τε χαίτας.

In both cases, Odysseus considers their behavior unproductive (ἀλλ’ οὐ γάρ τις πρῆξις ἐγίγνετο μυρομένοισιν, 10.202 = 568)¹⁰² and takes the lead, dispatching a scouting party and commencing the voyage. He does include himself as the two groups cry in parting (208-9):

βῆ δ’ ἰέναι, ἅμα τῷ γε δύω καὶ εἴκοσ’ ἑταῖροι
κλαίοντες· κατὰ δ’ ἄμμε λίπον γοόωντας ὀπισθεν.

But he has formulated a plan, and Eurylochos’ group is on its way to implement it. They are active, if apprehensive; note that Odysseus does not specify the tears probably implicit here. And, though he reacts quite like his men to Kirke’s instructions,¹⁰³ he satiates himself with wailing and wallowing (κλαίων τε κυλινδόμενος τ’ ἐκορέσθη, 499), and he joins them in weeping only while they are already in the process of going to

¹⁰¹ For this association, cf. *Il.* 22.78, 406; 24.71 and see Alexiou 2002: 28-9, 33, 91, 96, 163. Kirke later calls them “twice dying” (δισθανέες, 12.22) for their living journey to Hades.

¹⁰² The participle μυρομένοισιν indicates that tears are involved in both. On the practical inutility, but psychological utility of tears in Homer, see Arnould 1990: 108-10.

¹⁰³ His heart breaks, and he sits on the bed wailing: ὥς ἔφατ’, αὐτὰρ ἐμοί γε κατεκλάσθη φίλον ἦτορ· / κλαῖον δ’ ἐν λεχέεσσι καθήμενος (10.496-7).

the ship¹⁰⁴ and embarking for the underworld.¹⁰⁵ Even at the horrible prospects of losing more men and facing Hades, Odysseus can subordinate emotion to action, while idle tears mark their inability, or unwillingness, to do so.

This gap between Odysseus and his men widens when Eurylochos returns from Kirke. Charged with reporting his companions' "cruel fate" (ἀδευκέα πότμον, 245), he wells up and struggles to articulate the horror (246-50):

οὐδέ τι ἐκφάσθαι δύνατο ἔπος, ἰέμενός περ,
κῆρ ἄχεϊ μεγάλῳ βεβολημένος· ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε
δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὤϊετο θυμός.
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ μιν πάντες ἀγασσάμεθ' ἐξερέοντες,
καὶ τότε τῶν ἄλλων ἐτάρων κατέλεξεν ὄλεθρον.

Between his arrival and his speech, the others' "fate" becomes focalized through him as "destruction," which he infers from their disappearance. His mistaken grief, highlighted by tears, serves as foil for Odysseus' extraordinary reaction: he immediately arms and orders Eurylochos to lead the way. Still lamenting (ὄλοφυρόμενος, 265), however, Eurylochos clasps his knees, obliging Odysseus to spare him, and begs to escape while they still can. Odysseus condemns not his terror *per se*, but the blithe desertion and outright selfishness that he urges because of it (266-9). In his finest moment of the *Apologoi*, Odysseus resolves to rescue his companions at any cost, even that of his own life: "by all means, keep glutting yourself by the ship; I will go" (271-3). And this

¹⁰⁴ ἐπὶ νῆα θοῆν καὶ θῖνα θαλάσσης / ἦομεν ἀχνύμενοι, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (10.569-70).

¹⁰⁵ ἂν δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ / βαίνομεν ἀχνύμενοι, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (11.4-5).

initiative—Hermes appears just before he reaches Kirke’s house¹⁰⁶—earns him divine aid.

The rescue produces three reunions, but only that between Odysseus and those on the beach involves tears.¹⁰⁷ These men are not helpless, like the victims, but like the companions who shed tears elsewhere, unwilling to help: they held back with Eurylochos, leaving Odysseus to face Kirke himself. But rather than resent them, Odysseus pities them (οἴκτρ’ ὀλοφυρομένους, 409) as they mourn under the assumption that he and the rest are dead. He then likens them to calves gamboling around their mothers as the herd returns from pasture (408-15):

εὔρον ἔπειτ’ ἐπὶ νηϊ̄ θοῆ̄ ἐρήρας ἐταίρους
οἴκτρ’ ὀλοφυρομένους, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντας,
ὡς δ’ ὅτ’ ἂν ἄγραυλοι πόριες περὶ βοῦς ἀγελαιίας,
ἐλθούσας ἐς κόπρον, ἐπὴν βοτάνης κορέσωνται,
πᾶσαι ἅμα σκαίρουσιν ἐναντίαι· οὐδ’ ἔτι σηκοὶ
ἴσχουσ’, ἀλλ’ ἀδινὸν μυκώμεναι ἀμφιθέουσι
μητέρας· ὡς ἐμὲ κείνοι, ἐπεὶ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
δακρυόεντες ἔχυντο.

He blurs their emotions by launching immediately into the simile, postponing the action in which they resemble the calves, their congregation around him, until the very end.

Their tears belong grammatically to grief, but structurally to joy as the opening of the

¹⁰⁶ ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ἄρ’ ἔμελλον ἰὼν ἱερὰς ἀνὰ βήσσας / Κίρκης ἴξεσθαι πολυφαρμάκου ἐς μέγα δῶμα, / ἔνθα μοι Ἑρμείας χρυσόραπτις ἀντεβόλησεν / ἐρχομένῳ πρὸς δῶμα (10.275-8).

¹⁰⁷ Both reunions with Kirke’s victims focus on sound—the house resounds with wails and groans (ἀμφὶ δὲ δῶμα / σμερδαλέον κονάβιζε, 10.398-9; κλαῖον ὀδυρόμενοι, περὶ δὲ στεναχίζετο δῶμα, 454)—that seems to include Odysseus. In the first reunion, “desired lamentation came upon everyone”: πᾶσιν δ’ ἱμερόεις ὑπέδν γόος (398). Odysseus uses third person verbs in the second, but then says that “our proud hearts obeyed” (ἡμῖν δ’ αὐτ’ ἐπεπείθετο θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ, 466) Kirke’s command to stop lamenting (μηκέτι νῦν θαλερὸν γόον ὄρνυτε, 456) and enjoy her hospitality.

ring that frames the simile. This joy gives rise to an equation between his return and their homecoming to Ithaka, “where they were born and raised” (415-21):

δόκησε δ' ἄρα σφίσι θυμὸς
ὥς ἔμεν ὡς εἰ πατρίδ' ἰκοίατο καὶ πόλιν αὐτὴν
τρηχέϊς Ἰθάκης, ἵνα τ' ἔτραφεν ἠδ' ἐγένοντο·
καὶ μ' ὀλοφυρόμενοι ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων.
“σοὶ μὲν νοστήσαντι, διοτρεφές, ὡς ἐχάριμεν,
ὡς εἴ τ' εἰς Ἰθάκην ἀφικοίμεθα πατρίδα γαῖαν·
ἀλλ' ἄγε, τῶν ἄλλων ἐτάρων κατάλεξον ὄλεθρον.”

But they continue to grieve throughout their winged words and close the outer ring by returning to their original source of tears, the demise of their missing companions. Only his “gentle” (μαλακοῖς ἐπέεσσι, 422) assurance of safety and hospitality restores their hope. On Aiaia, Odysseus resembles a parent in that he singlehandedly sustains his men, filling their bellies, lifting their spirits, and wresting them from the jaws of death. The resemblance is made explicit as he returns to those who neither act nor hope without him. These two similes show just how completely they have relinquished control to and become dependent upon Odysseus.

Odysseus provides a parallel for his companions' tears in his account of the Trojan horse. He contrasts the behavior of the other generals and Neoptolemos as parallel processes: while they were wiping their tears and trembling in their limbs, he, restless for battle, bent on harming the Trojans, fiddled with his weapons and pled to go out. A ring of tears isolates their terror and the denial of his involvement from his valor (11.526-32):

ἔνθ' ἄλλοι Δαναῶν ἠγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες
δάκρυά τ' ὠμόργυνντο τρέμον θ' ὑπὸ γυῖα ἐκάστου·
κεῖνον δ' οὐ ποτε πάμπαν ἐγὼν ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν

οὔτ' ὠχρήσαντα χροῖα κάλλιμον οὔτε παρειῶν
δάκρυ ὁμορξάμενον· ὁ δέ με μάλα πόλλ' ἰκέτευεν
ἰπτόθεν ἐξέμεναι, ξίφος δ' ἐπεμαίετο κώπην
καὶ δόρυ χαλκοβαρές, κακὰ δὲ Τρώεσσι μενοίνα.

Odysseus himself was waiting for the signal to open the hatch (524-5), but only Neoptolemos showed the necessary resolve; the others stalled. If Neoptolemos felt any fear, he was able to overcome it and focus on the task at hand, just as Odysseus does with his companions. To the great pride of his father, Neoptolemos shines as the very best of the “best of the Achaians” (Ἀργείων οἱ ἄριστοι, 524).

CHAPTER 3: ODYSSEUS

Introduction

Besides Penelope, Odysseus sheds the most tears in the epic. Many confuse quantity with quality, however, in their attempts to resist modern gender stereotypes.¹⁰⁸

Foley and van Wees are typical:

I think all critics put too much emphasis on Penelope's constant weeping. Odysseus, Menelaus and Telemachus weep frequently also.¹⁰⁹

The narrative [of the *Odyssey*], in fact, does not suggest that women cry more easily than men. Penelope may spend all her days weeping for her lost husband, but during his seven-year stay with Kalypso, Odysseus behaves much like his wife.¹¹⁰

I do not think my emphasis on Penelope's tears is misguided or excessive, for her tears embody her conflict between the two most important men in her life, as I hope I have shown in my first chapter. In any case, Homeric men and women do not necessarily weep the same tears just because the epics do not associate greater proneness to tears

¹⁰⁸ Some studies show that these stereotypes are changing in the United States: in particular, the stigma against male tears may be diminishing. Vingerhoets et al. 2000 offer a helpful summary of the psychological literature on tears.

¹⁰⁹ Foley 1978: 23 n. 9.

¹¹⁰ van Wees 1998: 14.

with women or tears, as a feminine attribute, with weakness.¹¹¹ Close reading does reveal differences between male and female tears in Homer. Tears of homecoming, for instance, are exclusively male. This observation may seem trivial—after all, men do most of the traveling in the Homeric world¹¹²—but such tears rank among their strongest, more so than those of pain or fear. Hence Odysseus’ companions liken his return from Kirke, the greatest joy conceivable in their present circumstances, to their own homecoming, the absolutely greatest joy.¹¹³ Agamemnon sheds the first happy tears in the *Odyssey* as he sets foot on Argos (4.521-23):

ἦ τοι ὁ μὲν χαίρων ἐπεβήσετο πατρίδος αἴης,
καὶ κύνει ἀπτόμενος ἦν πατρίδα· πολλὰ δ’ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ
δάκρυα θερμὰ χέοντ’, ἐπεὶ ἀσπασίως ἴδε γαῖαν.

“Hot tears” are shed elsewhere only by Eurykleia as she laments her lost master (19.362) and by the Achaians as they bury Achilles, their finest warrior (24.46). These and the few Iliadic examples¹¹⁴ are situations of hopelessness and profound loss; here the adjective reflects the depth of Agamemnon’s relief at his “painless homecoming” (νόστος

¹¹¹ *Il.* 16.7-11 is not an exception, if read carefully. Achilles is neither mocking (van Wees 1998: 14) nor rebuking (Monsacré 1984: 82, 219 n. 18) Patroklos; he pities him (ᾄκτιρε, 5). Both he and the little girl weep out of helplessness and dependence; there is no indication that such tears are characteristically female. Föllinger 2009: 30 n. 20 interprets 2.289-90 along the same lines.

¹¹² Of those who can hope for a homecoming, that is. Captive women travel to their new masters’ homes, of course, but they have lost their homecoming.

¹¹³ Cited above, pp. 40.

¹¹⁴ The Trojans gather their dead, weeping in silence (7.426); Patroklos, weeping like a dark spring, approaches Achilles as the Achaians battle around the ships (16.3); Achilles’ horses (17.437), Antilochos (18.17), and Achilles (18.235) weep for Patroklos.

ἀπήμων, 519), so different from many Achaians'.¹¹⁵ Oblivious to the scout lurking in the next line, he overflows with joy, repeatedly kissing and prematurely welcoming his homeland. His incaution is foil for Odysseus' circumspection on Ithaka: he conceals his initial delight (γῆθησεν.../ χαίρων ἤ γαίῃ πατρώῃ, 13.250-1), openly rejoicing and kissing the earth (κύσε δὲ ζεῖδωρον ἄρουραν, 354) only after Athena has cleared his wife of suspicion and the island of mist. Both men, however, experience νόστος with the deepest emotion: it is ecstasy if secure, agony if lost.

On Ogygia Odysseus weeps not for Penelope, as is commonly claimed, but for Ithaka. Kalypso seems to attribute his tears to memory of/longing for Penelope when she warns him that if he knew the extent of his coming anguish, he would stay despite his desire for his mortal wife: ἰμειρόμενός περ ἰδέσθαι / σὴν ἄλοχον, τῆς αἰὲν ἐέλδεται ἤματα πάντα (5.209-10). He responds by admitting Penelope's inferiority to the goddess and subsuming his desire for her beneath that for his entire homeland (219-20):

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἤματα πάντα
οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι.

Husband and wife do not weep the same tears because they do not have the same significance for each other. In weeping for Odysseus, Penelope preserves her entire social identity. But she constitutes just one, albeit one quite important, part of his role as βασιλεύς. His tears keep the memory not just of Penelope, but of Ithaka alive in the one situation where he cannot actively pursue, and therefore runs the risk of forgetting, his νόστος. Each time his seaside tears are described, the narrator cites compulsion (ἀνάγκη,

¹¹⁵ Perhaps the adjective also anticipates the true nature of his homecoming, which came to resemble the other situations involving θερμὰ δάκρυα. For the irony in ἀσπασίως, see Taaffe 1990: 134-5.

4.557, 5.154; οὐκ ἐθέλων, 5.155) and/or his inability to return (οὐ δύναται ἦν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι, 4.558; νόστον ὄδυρομένῳ, 5.153). His tears do resemble Penelope's in that they become his way of life. When Hermes comes to Ogygia, he does not see Odysseus at first, for he is sitting on the shore in his accustomed spot: ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, ἔνθα πάρος περ (5.82). This is how Kalypso finds him, in his constant state of gazing over the sea, wracked with pains and homesickness (151-8):

τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὔρε καθήμενον· οὐδέ ποτ' ὄσσε
 δακρυόφιν τέρσοντο, κατεῖβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν
 νόστον ὄδυρομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη.
 ἀλλ' ἦ τοι νύκτας μὲν ἰαύεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
 ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ·
 ἦματα δ' ἄμ πέτρησι καὶ ἠϊόνεσσι καθίζων
 δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων
 πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

Tears frame the image, first in litotes, then as the object of a positive participle. δάκρυα λείβων (158) is anticipated by the unique phrase κατεῖβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν (152), in which his life flows away like tears.¹¹⁶ When he fails to recognize Ithaka at first sight, Odysseus again plunges into despair (13.198-200):

ᾧ μωξέν τ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα καὶ ᾧ πεπλήγετο μηρῶ
 χερσὶ καταπρηνέσσ', ὀλοφυρόμενος δ' ἔπος ἠΰδα·
 “ὦ μοι ἐγώ...

And, convinced of the Phaiakians' treachery, he can manage only to count his treasure and drag himself, buried in grief, along the shore (219-21):

¹¹⁶ κατεῖβειν denotes the shedding of tears at *Od.* 21.86 and *Il.* 24.794 and the flowing of water at *Od.* 5.185 = *Il.* 15.37 and *Il.* 21.261. Kalypso uses a more conventional verb for passing time in her plea: μηδέ τοι αἰὼν / φθινέτω (5.160-1).

ὁ δ' ὀδύρετο πατρίδα γαῖαν
ἐρπύζων παρὰ θῆνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
πόλλ' ὀλοφυρόμενος.

Without Athena's intervention, the much-enduring Odysseus may well have given up here—so potent is νόστος among male emotional experiences. Most women have no access to this experience, and the one female νόστος, Helen's, receives scant mention.¹¹⁷

As this example and my previous two chapters show, we must take far more than quantity into account to do Homeric tears any justice. As we shall see, Odysseus does not weep at all like his wife until their reunion or, for that matter, like anyone else except Telemachos (who weeps quite seldom, *pace* Foley). I will discuss Odysseus' tears in two groups: those of pity and those shared with Telemachos.

¹¹⁷ Menelaos speaks of his, not their, homecoming: δίδοσαν δέ μοι οὔρον / ἀθάνατοι, τοί μ' ὄκα φίλην ἐς πατρίδ' ἔπεμψαν (4.585-6). Helen does say that she rejoiced when Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, slaughtered droves of Trojan men, “since by that point my heart had inclined to go home”: ἐπεὶ ἤδη μοι κραδίη τέτραπτο νέεσθαι / ἄψ οἴκόνδ' (260-1). But we do not actually see her return. This is not to say that νόστος is insignificant for her—in the *Iliad*, she expresses her longing for home quite poignantly (3.139-42, 172-6; 24.764-6)—but it is not emphasized in the epic of homecoming as it is for the men.

Pity

Tears of pity are shed only by Odysseus and contribute to his characterization as the supreme endurer, who moves through rather than succumbs to suffering: he is the pitier, not the pitied.¹¹⁸ He weeps for the most pitiful of his φίλοι, the dead and the two closest to death, Argos and Laertes. In the νέκυια, these tears mark turning points: the first shade, the first in the catalogue of women, and the first of the Achaians' finest. Elpenor's corpse lies unwept and unburied (ἄκλαυτον καὶ ἄθαπτον, 11.54), the worst fate imaginable in Homer,¹¹⁹ after a drunken tumble from Kirke's roof. In their haste, the others either missed or forgot him—and no wonder, for he had “little of the heroic about him”:¹²⁰ he was the youngest, and “in no way very valiant in war nor well endowed with intelligence”: οὔτε τι λίην / ἄλκιμος ἐν πολέμῳ οὔτε φρεσὶν ἦσιν ἀρηρώς (10.552-3). The mass of nameless dead from every stage of life struck Odysseus with “pale fear” (χλωρὸν δέος, 11.43), but the sight of “this feeblest and most worthless of his companions” floods him with pity (τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ δάκρυσα ἰδὼν ἐλέησά τε θυμῷ, 55), initiating a psychological process observed by Segal:

¹¹⁸ The two exceptions at 8.531 and 16.219, where he sheds a “pitiful tear” (ἐλεεινὸν δάκρυον), are discussed below, pp. 62-4, 66-8.

¹¹⁹ Cf. the fate that Aigisthos would have suffered, had Menelaos returned in time: τῷ κέ οἱ οὐδὲ θανόντι χυτὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἔχευαν...οὐδέ κέ τις μιν / κλαῦσεν Ἀχαιϊδάων (3.258-61). On non-burial as a denial of status in Homer, see Redfield 1975: 167-223 and Griffin 1980: 160-1. For a summary of funerals, see Morris 1989: 46-7.

¹²⁰ Segal 1994: 41.

The formulaic repetition [of line 55 with Antikleia at 87 and Agamemnon at 395] not only creates a forward-moving rhythm and sense of accumulating grief, but also helps mark the continual deepening of [Odysseus'] compassion and sorrow as he sees the ravages of death on those closer to him.¹²¹

Emerging from the generic billow of death, Elpenor confronts Odysseus with “the immediate experience of death close at hand, in a companion but recently seen alive.”¹²²

To remind his commander of the connection they had in life, he invokes Odysseus' living kin, specifying his wife, the father who reared him, and Telemachos left alone in the halls, and their shared memories of wandering, embodied in the oar with which he rowed among his companions (τῷ καὶ ζῶδες ἔρεσσον ἐὼν μετ' ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν, 78) and which he asks Odysseus to plant on his tomb. By burying him, by acknowledging his ties and fulfilling his obligations to such a minor φίλος, Odysseus shows exceptional humanity and responsibility.

Bringing death closer to home and stinging her son with pity, Antikleia approaches next and unexpectedly, for she still lived when Odysseus left for Troy: τὴν ζῶην κατέλειπον ἰὼν εἰς Ἴλιον ἱρήν (86). Elpenor and Agamemnon too were unexpected at the time, but Odysseus introduces them with a notice of their deaths (53-4, 388-9), downplaying his shock and associating his tears with their present state. As for his mother, he weeps instead at the hole she has left in his life. By keeping her death a mystery until her own account, he recreates in the narrative the tension he felt as he waited through Teiresias' words. In his eagerness for interaction with Antikleia, Odysseus coolly accepts his own fate as the gods' spinning and asks the prophet how she

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*: 40.

can recognize her son.¹²³ After drinking the blood, she reciprocates with her own eagerness and surprise—she addresses him first¹²⁴ and asks how he, still living, has managed to enter the darkness—and this shared reaction between mother and son evokes tender pathos. When at last he learns her fate, Antikleia provides the cruelest demonstration of the household’s dependence on Odysseus—she literally died of longing for him (σός...πόθος, 202)—and, as the only member whom he can pity openly,¹²⁵ an outlet through which to recognize that dependence. But she does not allow him to wallow in his pity. As he fails three times to reach her and “delight together in chill lament,” his grief mounts: does Persephone send this phantom as a special torment? No, Antikleia explains, for every soul flits away insubstantial as a dream. By thus

¹²³ In particular, he asks Teiresias to explain her failure to look at or address him: οὐδ’ ἐὼν υἱὸν / ἔτλη ἐσάντα ἰδεῖν οὐδὲ προτιμυθήσασθαι (11.142-3). Note also the strong adversative at 88: ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὧς εἶων προτέρην, πυκινόν περ ἀχεύων. He would address her, as he does Elpenor and Agamemnon, but for his more pressing task. Elpenor seems capable of recognition and speech without drinking the blood because he is not yet a full member of Hades.

¹²⁴ Unlike Elpenor and Agamemnon, who respond to Odysseus.

¹²⁵ To keep his cover, he must suppress his tears for Telemachos (ὧς ἄρα φωνήσας υἱὸν κύσει, καὶ δὲ παρειῶν / δάκρυον ἤκε χαμᾶζε· πάρος δ’ ἔχε νωλεμῆς αἰεὶ, 16.190-1) and Penelope, hardening like horn or iron as she melts (ὀφθαλμοὶ δ’ ὧς εἰ κέρα ἔστασαν ἠὲ σίδηρος / ἀτρέμας ἐν βλεφάροισι· δόλω δ’ ὅ γε δάκρυα κεῦθεν, 19.211-12). On Argos and Laertes, see pp. 51-5 below.

Telemachos picks up this strategy as the suitors abuse his father: Τηλέμαχος δ’ ἐν μὲν κραδίῃ μέγα πένθος ἄεξε / βλημένου, οὐδ’ ἄρα δάκρυ χαμαὶ βάλεν ἐκ βλεφάροϊν, / ἀλλ’ ἀκέων κίνησε κάρη, κακὰ βυσσοδομεύων (17.489-91).

contextualizing Odysseus' deepest loss in the universal "way of mortals" (ἀλλ' αὐτὴ δίκη ἐστὶ βροτῶν, 218), she allows him to let go, to return to the world of the living.¹²⁶

Agamemnon approaches after Odysseus resumes his tale and Persephone disperses the female shades. Once he drinks the blood and recognizes his old comrade-in-arms, he preempts and surpasses Odysseus in crying (391-4):

κλαῖε δ' ὅ γε λιγέως, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβων,
πιτνάς εἰς ἐμὲ χεῖρας, ὀρέξασθαι μενεαίνων·
ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ οἱ ἔτ' ἦν ἴς ἔμπεδος οὐδέ τι κῆκυς,
οἷη περ πάρος ἔσκεν ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι.

The collocation κλαίειν + λιγέως is rare in the *Odyssey* and elsewhere combined with θαλερὸν δάκρυον only at 10.201. None of the other shades, moreover, weeps¹²⁷ or seeks embrace; what emotion does Agamemnon express so acutely here? His account of his own murder makes clear that these are tears of self-pity, of mourning one's own misfortune and demise. He lays the pathos on thick: like an ox in its stall—helpless, unsuspecting—he “died a most pitiful death” (ὡς τίς τε κατέκτανε βοῦν ἐπὶ φάτνῃ. / ὡς θάνον οἰκτίστῳ θανάτῳ, 11.411-12), as did his companions, slaughtered like pigs for a banquet; he heard “the most pitiful cry” (οἰκτροτάτην... ὅπα 421) from Cassandra as he writhed around Aigisthos' sword, supplicating the infernal powers for vengeance.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ In closing, she urges him to hasten to the light and convey his newfound knowledge of the “way of mortals” to Penelope: ἀλλὰ φώσδε τάχιστα λιλαίεο· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα / ἴσθ', ἵνα καὶ μετόπισθε τεῆ εἴπησθα γυναικί (11.223-4).

¹²⁷ Elpenor “wails” (οἰμώξας, 11.59); Antikleia “laments” (ὀλοφυρομένη, 154).

¹²⁸ I follow Stanford 1959 and Heubeck 1989: 102-3 on the difficult lines 11.423-4. If ἐγὼ ποτὶ γαίῃ χεῖρας ἀείρων / βάλλον means “raising my hands I beat them on the ground,” there are parallels for this gesture as a method of invoking the infernal powers for vengeance (*Il.* 9.568, 14.272; *Hymn to Aphrodite* 333).

Refusing him even the final service of closing his eyes and mouth, his bitch wife showed no pity in committing that most vile and shameless of outrages. In case the expected response is at all unclear, Agamemnon maintains that Odysseus would have felt the greatest pity at the sight of their corpses strewn among the tables: ἀλλά κε κείνα μάλιστα ἰδὼν ὀλοφύραο θυμῷ (418). The enervation of this once great warrior moves Odysseus to his own tears of pity (395), but by the end of the conversation his pity has gained an additional dimension. Agamemnon reaches for Odysseus not only as a lost loved one, like Achilles for Patroklos¹²⁹ and Odysseus for Antikleia (205-8), but also as a lost self, as the man fortunate in homecoming and in marriage whom he failed to become. Without caution, Odysseus could well meet the same fate, “since women are no longer to be trusted” (ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι πιστὰ γυναιξίν, 456).¹³⁰ Agamemnon and Odysseus recognize their equivalence as they share a “blooming tear” (ἔσταμεν ἀχνύμενοι, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες, 466), mourning the death they could have shared.

The first member of his household whom Odysseus sees upon reaching the gate with Eumaios is Argos. The dog senses their presence, but the narrative suspends his recognition with an extensive description of his abject state: plagued by pests (κυνοραιοστέων, 17.300) and denied twenty years of vitality and happiness with Odysseus (οὐδ’ ἀπόνητο, 293), this well-bred hound wallows in shit and neglect: δὴ τότε κεῖτ’ ἀπόθεστος ἀποιχομένοιο ἄνακτος, / ἐν πολλῇ κόπρῳ (296-7). But his love for Odysseus endures: he alone recognizes his master through the years and rags first and without

¹²⁹ ὧς ἄρα φωνήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶ φίλησιν / οὐδ’ ἔλαβε· ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἦϊτε καπνὸς / ὄχετο τετριγυῖα (*Il.* 23.99-101).

¹³⁰ For a detailed discussion of the function of the Agamemnon stories in the *Odyssey*, see Olson 1990.

tokens, by his voice.¹³¹ His gestures of helpless joy¹³²—wagging his tail, flattening his ears—and inability to reach Odysseus bring the pathos of the scene to a head; having noticed the dog in turn, Odysseus wipes away a tear, concealing it from Eumaios for the purely strategic reason of self-concealment.¹³³ The swineherd goes on to extol Argos’ former build and abilities (313-15):

εἰ τοιόσδ’ εἶη ἡμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ ἔργα
οἷόν μιν Τροίηνδε κιῶν κατέλειπεν Ὀδυσσεύς,
αἰψά κε θηήσαιο ἰδὼν ταχυτῆτα καὶ ἀλκίην.

These, like Penelope’s beauty, have withered in Odysseus’ absence (νῦν δ’ ἔχεται κακότητι), for the slavewomen disregard the dog, along with the rest of their duties (318-21). Many read Argos as an embodiment of the entire household: without his master he has no purpose or protection and has fallen into disrepair.¹³⁴ At this first sight of his derelict estate and disrespected family, Odysseus weeps in pity and perhaps in shock.

Odysseus next weeps for the *last* family member with whom he reunites, Laertes.

Again their meeting is delayed, this time by Odysseus’ failure to find Dolios and his sons

¹³¹ He pricks up his ears and raises his head at Eumaios and Odysseus’ conversation (17.290-1), and knows that Odysseus is near (ἐνόησεν Ὀδυσσεῖα ἐγγυς ἐόντα, 301). Dolios and his sons recognize Odysseus immediately (24.391), but he is no longer in disguise at this point.

¹³² Perhaps the canine equivalent of human reaching for embrace. On the human treatment of Argos, see de Jong 2001: 421. She notes that his “solemn death formula” (17.326) is used of dying warriors in the *Iliad* (5.83; 16.334; 20.477).

¹³³ αὐτὰρ ὁ νόσφιν ἰδὼν ἀπομόρξατο δάκρυ, / ῥεῖα λαθὼν Εὐμαιον (17.304-5). The formulation of his question about Argos’ identity (308-10) is also part of this strategy: he gives twice the length and the second position to the “table dog” alternative, which he knows is incorrect.

¹³⁴ Beck 1991; Ahl and Roisman 1996: 198-201; de Jong 2001: 421.

(24.222-5), and again the wretchedness of the object of pity is described at length: he finds his father alone (οἶον, 226), run ragged by old age (γήραϊ τειρόμενον, 233), “increasing his grief” (πένθος ἀέξων, 231) with toil and self-neglect. And again Odysseus sheds tears out of sight: στας ἄρ’ ὑπὸ βλωθρὴν ὄγχην κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβε (234). The idiosyncratic construction of his ensuing deliberation, in which the first alternative is expressed by an infinitive, and the second is introduced by ἤ, has baffled scholars (235-8):

μερμήριξε δ’ ἔπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν
 κύσσαι καὶ περιφῶναι ἐδὸν πατέρ’, ἠδὲ ἕκαστα
 εἰπεῖν, ὡς ἔλθοι καὶ ἴκοιτ’ ἐς πάτριδα γαῖαν,
 ἢ πρῶτ’ ἐξερέοιτο ἕκαστά τε πειρήσαιτο.

I offer a tentative interpretation of this construction through Odysseus’ psychology at this moment. Unlike with Argos, he has not yet managed to wipe away his tears, and he is so overcome with emotion that he initially chooses reunion, expressing it with the infinitive and with twice as many lines as the second alternative; the optative projects the test into a remote, less likely future.

Ultimately, he does go through with the test. As critics of his deception protest, Laertes’ loyalty is not subject to doubt.¹³⁵ An extensive discussion of this difficult passage exceeds the bounds of my paper, but I read the test as an attempt to lift his father out of the misery that effectively disguises him.¹³⁶ Laertes has abandoned every aspect of his identity, exchanging society for solitude, wealth for poverty, “fine fabrics for ashes and leaves, growth for decay, order for dissolution. He has descended from the human

¹³⁵ For a concise summary of approaches to the test, see Scodel 1998: 9-10.

¹³⁶ For Laertes’ misery as a disguise, see Murnaghan 1987: 26-30.

level to the animal and even to the vegetable.”¹³⁷ He prays to die (Δὴ δ’ εὖχεται αἰεὶ / θυμὸν ἀπὸ μελέων φθίσθαι, 15.353-4) and is all but dead from longing for his son: “I too died that way” (οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἐγὼν ὀλόμην, 11.197), Antikleia explains. Odysseus therefore encourages his father to reassert his true identity by deliberately misidentifying him as a slave and representing himself as a guest-friend of Odysseus: as the king he seems to be (βασιλῆι...ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας, 24.253), Laertes should react with indignation and offer hospitality.¹³⁸ But Odysseus underestimates the depths of his father’s despair. Laertes says nothing about his own condition and simply calls the stranger’s gifts “wasted,” since Odysseus can make no return. Like Penelope, he weeps (κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβων, 280) at the first mention of Odysseus, and presumably these tears persist in the background, since later Odysseus bids him cease his “tearful lament” (γόοιο...δακρυόεντος, 323). But unlike her, he shows no hope: he is so convinced of Odysseus’ death that he grieves only the return of his body, which surely fed fishes and beasts; he has ceased even to wish for a living Odysseus. The second lie confirms his conviction,¹³⁹ and he reacts with gestures of mourning, covering his head with dust and groaning vehemently (315-17):

ὥς φάτο, τὸν δ’ ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα·
ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἐλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
χεύατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς πολιῆς, ἀδινὰ στεναχίζων.

¹³⁷ Austin 1975: 102.

¹³⁸ Scodel 1998: 13.

¹³⁹ Odysseus supposedly left the stranger five years ago with good omens, but he has yet to return.

At this sight, Odysseus aborts the test and reveals himself. After the “certain signs,” Laertes’ knees loosen and, like Penelope, he embraces Odysseus, but then, in the emotional climax of the reunion, he faints into his son’s arms. This is a kind of death—to faint is to “breathe out one’s spirit” (ἀποψύχοντα, 348)—that like Argos and Antikleia’s illustrates the household’s dependence upon Odysseus. But if the sight of Odysseus fulfilled Argos (αὐτίκ’ ἰδόντ’ Ὀδυσῆα ἔεικοστῷ ἐνιαυτῷ, 327), his return breathes new life (ἔμπνυτο, 349)¹⁴⁰ into Laertes.

¹⁴⁰ Cunliffe connects this form with πεπνῶσθαι, which, along with πινυτός and πεπνυμένος, tends to be dissociated from πνεῖν. But see Heath 2001: 133-4 n. 11 for arguments in favor of association.

Telemachos and Odysseus

The *Telemachy* is generally read as an education in “the manners of the civilized world” and “the models of the heroic life.”¹⁴¹ Above all, his father is held up for imitation as a consummate warrior and strategist, and Telemachos takes this lesson to heart. Many have observed how he gradually acquires Odyssean characteristics like cunning and endurance, and from Book 17 success hinges on the young man’s ability to put them to use in an ongoing deception: he must “endure” (τετλάτω, 16.275) his father’s mistreatment, sweet-talk the suitors, and keep the rest of the household in ignorance (299-305).¹⁴² Telemachos of course passes his final exam with distinction. But one must first gain admission to higher education, and Telemachos does so with raw talent: by the time he leaves for Pylos, we have caught enough glimpses of the Odyssean essence of his character that we have no doubt of his paternity and potential.¹⁴³

His “maiden-speech” at the Ithakan assembly tends to be excluded from these glimpses, largely because of his emotional reaction: enraged, he hurls the scepter to the ground and bursts into tears, reducing all the people to pity and silence (2.80-3):

¹⁴¹ Austin 1969: 56; see also Clarke 1963.

¹⁴² For Telemachos’ Odyssean characteristics, see Austin 1969. For the dependence of success on him, see Jones 1988: 504-5.

¹⁴³ His reception of Athena-Mentes, like all first appearances in the *Odyssey*, lays the foundation for his ἦθος. See Race 1993: 80-3 and Reece 1993: 47-57.

ὥς φάτο χωόμενος, ποτὶ δὲ σκῆπτρον βάλε γαίη,
δάκρυ' ἀναπρήσας· οἴτκος δ' ἔλε λαὸν ἅπαντα.
ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἀκὴν ἔσαν, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
Τηλέμαχον μύθοισιν ἀμείψασθαι χαλεποῖσιν.

These “sudden, passionate” tears are usually attributed to his immaturity and/or ineffectuality.¹⁴⁴ In the last gasp of his childhood, he is supposed to be “whining... about his genuine powerlessness and inexperience: ‘For no man is found here, such as Odysseus was, to ward off destruction from the house’ (2.58-9).”¹⁴⁵ Given the general absence from Homer of our stigma against adult male crying, however, we cannot simply assume here that “big boys don’t cry,” and tears at other assemblies tell against this interpretation. Aigyptios and Eupheithes each address the Ithakans as the first speaker and in tears for a son: τοῦ ὅ γε δάκρυ χέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπε (2.24 = 24.425).¹⁴⁶ With two sons at home, one among the suitors, and one in the *Kyklops*’ belly, Aigyptios constitutes a cross-section, a typical representative of the Ithakan people. His tears serve as a visible representation of their shared memory (ἄλλ’ οὐδ’ ὧς τοῦ λήθεται, 2.23) of and grief for the missing army, news of which takes priority among public business (30-1). As for Eupheithes, he unites “more than half” (ἡμίσεων πλείους, 24.464) the Ithakans

¹⁴⁴ Stanford 1959 *ad.* 2.81. Wærn 1985: 225 and Chaston 2002: 3-4 attribute his tears to his failure to persuade the assembly.

¹⁴⁵ Heath 2001: 150; cf. 140: “[h]e is still innocently direct and poignantly ineffectual in his speech as he tries in vain to prove his maturity” and Clarke: “we feel that this is clearly not the kind of speech his father would deliver, and whatever faint effect it might have had on the hard hearts of the Suitors is dissipated when he concludes his words with a sudden burst of tears. [. . .] Once again Telemachus’ attempt at oratory has been abortive and ineffective” (1967: 33). His speech is directed not at the suitors, however, but at the people, and succeeds in securing their compassion.

¹⁴⁶ Odysseus is in some way responsible for the deaths of both sons, though Aigyptios is unaware of his son’s fate.

against Odysseus, who, he claims, has made a career of wronging Achaians: first he lost his “many good” (πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοῦς, 427) men at sea; now he has murdered “by far the best of the Kephallenians” (Κεφαλλήνων ὄχ’ ἀρίστους, 429). Eupheithes’ strategy consists of convincing the Ithakans that his “unforgettable pain” (ἄλαστον...πένθος, 423) is just as much theirs as his and therefore warrants collective vengeance; the tears framing his speech serve the vital function of securing pity (ὥς φάτο δάκρυ χέων, οἴκτος δ’ ἔλε πάντας Ἀχαιοῦς, 438), which prevails over “pale fear” (χλωρὸν δέος, 450) and guilt. If Aigyptios’ tears represent solidarity, Eupheithes’ conduce to it.

Telemachos’ tears should be read in this light. He introduces the matter for discussion as private (ἀλλ’ ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος, 2.45), not public (οὔτε τι δῆμιον). Aigyptios indeed gave the impression that the βασιλεύς is of little consequence to civic order: any man with need (χρειώ, 28) can issue a call to assemble, but no one has for the past twenty years. If Ithaka can operate smoothly without Odysseus, why should his household be a public concern? In the course of his speech, Telemachos argues that his personal situation is, in fact, the Ithakans’ concern, appealing alternately to pity, righteous indignation, loyalty, and guilt.¹⁴⁷ Through a common bond with Odysseus, ethical code, and fear of the gods, he attempts to unite the Ithakans with himself, throwing the scepter to indicate the violation of θέμις, the set of expectations and values underpinning their society; Achilles uses the same gesture (ποτὶ δὲ σκῆπτρον βάλε γαίη, *Il.* 1.245) to denounce his deprivation of due honor.¹⁴⁸ Telemachos’ arguments carry such force that no one dares respond with their own harsh words; but for the suitors’

¹⁴⁷ For the structure of his speech, see de Jong 2001: 48.

¹⁴⁸ On the violation of θέμις in the *Iliad*, see Shay 1994: 23-38. On 1.245 in particular, see 25.

blame-shifting and threats, he may well have carried the day. The pity of the people does not reflect poorly on his rhetoric¹⁴⁹ or their ethics; as with Eupheithes, it means that he has won over their hearts. His tears, then, are a rhetorical tool for cohesion and persuasion, not the final tantrum of “one so recently a boy.”¹⁵⁰ Like his father, he knows how to manipulate an audience with his own emotions.¹⁵¹

In the course of his education, Telemachos learns about Odysseus not only through the anecdotes of his hosts, but also through his own miniature Odyssey. The parallels between the experiences of father and son—journeys far from home, fraught with obstacles and temptations—have enjoyed much discussion and need not be recited here.¹⁵² The connection between the recognition scenes at Lakedaimon and Scheria, in

¹⁴⁹ As West thinks: “Telemachus has not succeeded in inspiring any feeling of outrage at the suitors’ behaviour, much less any general desire to help him” (1988: 136).

¹⁵⁰ Stanford 1959 *ad* 2.81.

¹⁵¹ As the beggar, Odysseus himself twice uses tears to secure pity. In the backstory he tells Eumaios, the Egyptian king preserves him, weeping, through a gauntlet of angry spearman: ὁ δ’ ἐρύσατο καὶ μ’ ἐλέησεν, / ἐς δίφρον δέ μ’ ἔσας ἄγεν οἴκαδε δάκρυ χέοντα (14.279-80). In the *Homilia*, he begs off questions about his homeland with a vivid description of the tears that would ensue (19.115-22). Penelope asks anyway—perhaps the tears piqued her curiosity instead. Perhaps Odysseus intended them to do so. His language is distinctive: μύρεσθαι, though fairly common in the *Iliad*, occurs in the *Odyssey* only here (μυρόμενον, 19.119) and at 10.202-568, while δακρυπλώειν (19.122) is a hapax.

For the deliberate use of tears, see also n. 13 above on laments and funerals.

¹⁵² On the shared experiences of father and son, see Rose 1967; Fenik 1974: 5-60; Austin 1975: 181-200; Powell 1977: 50-6. Apthorp 1980 treats in particular the common obstacles to their returns. Reece 1993 offers a summary of the parallels (73-4), and himself focuses on the theme of detention (71-6).

particular, has been recognized since antiquity.¹⁵³ What I hope to add to this body of scholarship is a fuller interpretation of the role that tears play in this “sympathetic harmony”¹⁵⁴ between father and son. Both, I will argue, confront their pasts through tears and prepare to move forward, Odysseus to his homecoming, Telemachos to adulthood. In other words, both undergo a kind of therapy.

Race has already offered a persuasive reading of Odysseus’ sojourn with the Phaiakians as his “rehabilitation...through the provision of basic physical necessities, socialization, and physical and psychological therapy.”¹⁵⁵ Contrary to the prevailing view of Alkinoos as a “bungling host,” he argues that the Phaiakan king is a “perceptive mind-reader” and “skilled therapeutic facilitator,” who gradually eases Odysseus into the last step, facing and verbalizing what he calls his “grievous woes” (ἐμὰ κήδεα...στονόεντα, 9.12-13).¹⁵⁶ Demodokos’ three songs punctuate the second day: one at the morning meal, one outside after the athletic competition, and one at the evening feast. Though introduced as the “glories of men” (κλέα ἀνδρῶν, 8.73), the first ends with the ugly truth of war, as “the beginning of woe was rolling down on the Trojans and Danaans through the counsels of great Zeus” (81-2): whoever won, both sides suffered.

¹⁵³ See the scholia to 4.113; 8.43, 489, 492; Eustathius 1489, 35-40; Austin 1975: 179-200; Powell 1977: 30-2, 52-3; Apthorp 1980: 12-22; Richardson 1983: 223-5; Reece 1993: 80-3; Lateiner 1995: 150; Ahl and Roisman 1996: 76; de Jong 2001: 90; Cairns 2009: 38-40.

¹⁵⁴ Reece 1993: 76.

¹⁵⁵ Race 2012a: 1. The following two paragraphs owe much to this manuscript and to Race 2012b.

¹⁵⁶ Race 2012b: 1-2. For Alkinoos’ sensitivity, see further Austin 1975: 194-6 and Race 1993: 93-4, 2012a: 9 n. 17. For the importance of a trustworthy and compassionate listener in the communalization of trauma, see Shay 1994: 188-9.

As detached listeners, the Phaiakians can “delight” (τέρποντ’, 91) in such a song as pure entertainment,¹⁵⁷ but Odysseus, who came to know that truth first-hand, reacts by weeping and drawing his cloak over his head in shame (8.83-6):

ταῦτ’ ἄρ’ αἰοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
πορφύρεον μέγα φᾶρος ἔλων χερσὶ στιβαρῆσι
κάκ κεφαλῆς εἴρυσσε, κάλυψε δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα·
αἶδετο γὰρ Φαίηκας ὑπ’ ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβων.

During intermissions he regains composure, wiping his tears and uncovering his head, only to retreat back into his cloak each time the bard resumes (87-92). Alkinoos alone takes note of his exceptional suffering (93-5):

ἔνθ’ ἄλλους μὲν πάντα ἐλάνθανε δάκρυα λείβων,
Ἀλκίνοος δέ μιν οἶος ἐπεφράσατ’ ἠδ’ ἐνόησεν
ἦμενος ἄγχ’ αὐτοῦ, βαρὺ δὲ στενάχοντος ἄκουσεν.

But for now, “with no public acknowledgement of Odysseus’ grief, Alcinous bids the party go outside for sports, thereby buying time and [in the form of athletics and the second song] relief for Odysseus.”¹⁵⁸ At first, Odysseus is “too depressed to exert himself,”¹⁵⁹ his mind too immersed in sorrows (154); his display of excellence with the discus restores his self-confidence to the point that he boasts of his prowess with the bow and reveals that he was with the Achaians at Troy (219-20). He then enjoys the song of the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite along with the Phaiakians.

¹⁵⁷ For detachment as a condition of enjoying tragic poetry, see Macleod 1983: 8-12 and, on Odysseus in particular, 10-11.

¹⁵⁸ Race 2012b: 2.

¹⁵⁹ Race 2012a: 10. For the athletic competition as “abuse therapy,” see 10-12.

This self-confidence follows him back to the hall. At dinner Odysseus sends Demodokos a hefty tip, slices of pork chine, and praises him “above all mortals” for his accurate portrayal of the Achaians’ fate, “as though you yourself had been present or heard it from someone else” (487-91). He then requests a song on the Trojan horse, his own contrivance and the vehicle of Troy’s destruction. He seeks, I think, straightforward glorification¹⁶⁰—note his self-flattery with the epithet *δῖος* (494)—and the sack of the city, the end as opposed to the beginning, seems a safe bet. In the song, Odysseus is indeed “glorious” (*ἀγακλυτόν*, 502), the “very image of Ares” (*ἡῦτ’ Ἄρηα*, 518), and he triumphs in a “most terrible battle” (*αἰνότατον πόλεμον*, 519) against Deiphobos. Why, then, does he again break down in tears? Race, I believe, is correct that the song stirs up a whole complex of emotions, designated by the “general term *ἄχος*,” including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, survivor guilt, and pity for his victims.¹⁶¹ But the song’s emphasis on the Trojan perspective—their ill-starred deliberations form half and the center (505-13)—and the simile describing Odysseus’ reaction suggest that pity hits him the hardest. He melts like the widow of a sacked city (521-29):

ταῦτ’ ἄρ’ αἰοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
 τήκετο, δάκρυ δ’ ἔδευεν ὑπὸ βλεφάροισι παρειάς.
 ὡς δὲ γυνὴ κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσοῦσα,
 ὅς τε ἐῆς πρόσθεν πόλιος λαῶν τε πέσησιν,
 ἄστει καὶ τεκέεσσιν ἀμύνων νηλεὲς ἦμαρ·
 ἢ μὲν τὸν θνήσκοντα καὶ ἀσπαίροντα ἰδοῦσα
 ἀμφ’ αὐτῷ χυμένη λίγα κωκύει· οἳ δέ τ’ ὀπίσθε
 κόπτοντες δούρεσσι μετάφρενον ἠδὲ καὶ ὤμους
 εἴρερον εἰσανάγουσι, πόνον τ’ ἐχέμεν καὶ οἴζυν.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Rutherford: “What Odysseus expects is, in effect, a panegyric of his own strategic and military successes” (1986: 155).

¹⁶¹ Race 2012b: 4.

As many have observed, this woman can stand “for all the widowed women of Troy, all those who suffered in the sack, and suffered at Odysseus’ hands.”¹⁶² But why does the poet choose a captive widow, in particular, to represent all this suffering? Such women arguably suffer the most in war. Unlike the men, they must live with its consequences: Hektor can hope to die before hearing Andromache’s cries as an Achaian drags her away, but she will live on as a slave, at the loom and in the bed of the enemy. And unlike the unmarried girls, widows must endure the replacement of husbands by captors, who may well have killed those husbands. In the simile, then, Odysseus identifies with his most pitiful victim, and through her, all his victims.¹⁶³ Victor and vanquished unite in weeping, but her suffering is acknowledged as the greater.¹⁶⁴ His cheeks are wetted with a “pitiful tear,” but hers are wasted with “*most* pitiful grief” (530-1):

τῆς δ’ ἐλεεινοτάτῳ ἄχεϊ φθινύθουσι παρειαί·
ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐλεεινὸν ὑπ’ ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἶβεν.

Alkinoos again notices and silences the bard, but this time he announces that the entertainment has been grieving the guest. What has changed since Demodokos’ first song? Odysseus regained his heroism in the athletic competition, and now he has reevaluated it through the eyes of his enemy—in other words, he has internally processed his past as much as he can. The next step is to narrate,¹⁶⁵ to share his experiences with this sympathetic audience, and he indicates that he is now ready by not concealing

¹⁶² Rutherford 1986: 155; cf. Segal 1994: 120 and Race 2012b: 3.

¹⁶³ For the importance of treating the enemy as human, see Shay 1994: 103-19.

¹⁶⁴ Race 2012a: 16.

¹⁶⁵ On the role of narrative in healing trauma, see Shay 1994: 188-93.

himself in his cloak of shame.¹⁶⁶ His narration, albeit painful, is vital to his recovery in that it puts the past behind him once and for all.¹⁶⁷

Telemachos' therapy also begins with a sensitive host. When his herald leaves Telemachos and Peisistratos waiting on the threshold, Menelaos "indignantly" (μέγ' ὀχθήσας, 4.30) rebukes him as a fool for his failure to understand the reciprocal nature of hospitality: just as they received much hospitality on their grievous journey home, so too should they offer it to these visitors.¹⁶⁸ He then proceeds to treat the young men to one of the longest and most lavish receptions in the poem.¹⁶⁹ Attentive and alert, he overhears (ξύνετο, 76) Telemachos' effusions of wonder, though he has leant in close to Peisistratos for secrecy: ἄγχι σχῶν κεφαλὴν, ἵνα μὴ πευθοῖαθ' οἱ ἄλλοι (70). Menelaos explains that grief for the casualties of Troy tempers any delight he might take in his wealth, singling out Odysseus as his greatest loss, a constant source of "unforgettable pain": ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος αἰὲν ἄλαστον / κείνου (108-9). Telemachos reacts by casting a tear to the ground and holding his cloak before his eyes (113-16):

ὥς φάτο, τῷ δ' ἄρα πατρὸς ὑφ' ἴμερον ὤρσε γόοιο,
δάκρυ δ' ἀπὸ βλεφάρων χαμάδις βάλε πατρὸς ἀκούσας,
χλαῖναν πορφυρέην ἄντ' ὀφθαλμοῖν ἀνασχῶν
ἀμφοτέρησιν χερσὶ· νόησε δέ μιν Μενελάος...

¹⁶⁶ I disagree with Cairns 2009: 44 that the cloak is to be understood in Odysseus' reaction to the third song.

¹⁶⁷ The next time he tells this story, both he and Penelope "take delight": τερπέσθην μύθοισι (23.300).

¹⁶⁸ On "Eteoneus' impropriety... as a foil for Menelaus' magnanimous hospitality," see Reece 1993: 78.

¹⁶⁹ See *ibid.*: 77-99.

Menelaos notices his guest’s reaction and debates whether to confirm his intuition or allow Telemachos to mention his father himself. In waiting to ask questions, Menelaos not only follows etiquette, but also respects the privacy of memories. He has just described how “remembering” (μνωμένω, 106) Odysseus spoils his sleep and appetite. For Telemachos to mention his father would be to make his own memory of Odysseus public. Telemachos, I think, veils himself not only because he is shy, as Peisistratos explains, but also because he, like Odysseus after Demodokos’ first song, is not yet ready to take this step. Menelaos knows that communalization should not be forced, and he subtly chides Helen for her insensitivity in identifying Telemachos outright. He greets the identification as a revelation—“now that you mention it, I *do* see the resemblance (οὕτω νῦν καὶ ἐγὼ νοέω, 148)—” but then hints that he already made it based on Telemachos’ reaction to his reminiscing about Odysseus (μεμνημένος ἀμφ’ Ὀδυσῆϊ, 151). Helen stays on the surface; Menelaos looks deeper, into his guest’s mental state, and therefore knew to hold back.¹⁷⁰

Menelaos initiates the next step of Telemachos’ therapy by reducing the entire company to tears with his shattered hopes for a lifelong friendship with Odysseus. Each reminded of their own losses, Helen, Telemachos, and Menelaos successively “wail” in a priamel that culminates with Peisistratos (184-9):

κλαῖε μὲν Ἀργεῖη Ἑλένη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα,
κλαῖε δὲ Τηλέμαχος τε καὶ Ἀτρεΐδης Μενέλαος,
οὐδ’ ἄρα Νέστωρος υἱὸς ἀδακρύτῳ ἔχεν ὄσσε·
μνήσατο γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονος Ἀντιλόχοιο,
τὸν ῥ’ Ἡοῦς ἔκτεινε φαεινῆς ἀγλαὸς υἱός·
τοῦ ὃ γ’ ἐπιμνησθεῖς ἔπεα πτερόεντ’ ἀγόρευεν.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Nestor, the great orator of the Achaians, who upon learning Telemachos’ identity likens him to his father on the basis of language: ἦ τοι γὰρ μῦθοί γε εὐκότεες (3.124).

Parallelism indicates that the third clause expresses the same idea as the two anaphoric clauses (κλαῖε μὲν...κλαῖε δέ) in litotes, i.e., that κλαῖειν here does involve tears. But Peisistratos' are the most important and therefore specified. Why does he take center stage over Telemachos? As he does throughout their journey, Peisistratos provides Telemachos with a model, in this case, for managing grief. In his speech, Peisistratos extends mourning to all the dead as their due tribute and cites his brother as an example, reminding Telemachos that others besides Odysseus lost their homecoming (195-9):¹⁷¹

νεμεσσωμαί γε μὲν οὐδὲν
κλαίειν ὅς κε θάνησι βροτῶν καὶ πότμον ἐπίσπη.
τοῦτό νυ καὶ γέρας οἶον οἴζυροῖσι βροτοῖσιν,
κείρασθαί τε κόμην βαλέειν τ' ἀπὸ δάκρυ παρειῶν.
καὶ γὰρ ἐμὸς τέθνηκεν ἀδελφεός...

But dinner, he explains to Menelaos, is not the time to mourn: for the living, life must go on. Peisistratos thus allows Telemachos to see his own loss in the wider context of the mortal condition and shows him by example how to move beyond it.¹⁷²

Accordingly, Telemachos never again weeps for his father; he weeps next and for the last time in the epic with Odysseus, as together they cry more intensely than vultures or eagles whose nestlings have been stolen by countrymen (16.213-21):

ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας κατ' ἄρ' ἔζετο, Τηλέμαχος δὲ
ἀμφιχυθεὶς πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ὀδύρετο, δάκρυα λείβων.
ἀμφοτέροισι δὲ τοῖσιν ὑφ' ἡμερος ὄρτο γόοιο·
κλαῖον δὲ λιγέως, ἀδινώτερον ἢ τ' οἰωνοί,

¹⁷¹ Menelaos fixates on Odysseus: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν που μέλλεν ἀγάσσεσθαι θεὸς αὐτός, / ὅς κείνον δύστηνον ἀνόστιμον οἶον ἔθηκεν (4.181-2).

¹⁷² Although he praises Peisistratos for wisdom proper to a son of Nestor and complies with his request, Menelaos cannot teach this lesson himself. He, like all of Lakedaimon, is chained to the past, incapable of recovery and regrowth.

φῆναι ἢ αἰγυπιοὶ γαμψώνυχες, οἷσί τε τέκνα
ἀγρόται ἐξείλοντο πάρος πετεηνὰ γενέσθαι·
ὥς ἄρα τοί γ' ἔλεεινὸν ὑπ' ὄφρυσι δάκρυον εἶβον.
καί νύ κ' ὄδυρομένοισιν ἔδυσ φάος ἠελίοιο,
εἰ μὴ Τηλέμαχος προσεφώνεεν ὄν πατέρ' αἶψα.

This simile, though greatly admired in antiquity,¹⁷³ has suffered at modern hands.

Analytic critics condemn it as the sorry work of a *Bearbeiter*. Stanford sees shrillness and intensity as the only points of comparison; “otherwise it is curiously inept.”¹⁷⁴ A few have equated the nestlings with Odysseus and Telemachos’ lost years, but only in passing.¹⁷⁵ This track can be pursued further. After Odysseus reveals his identity to Telemachos, he kisses his son releases and the tear he withheld in Eumaios’ presence. But Telemachos does not believe him at first. He just related to the beggar how his father left without enjoyment of his newborn and only child: μούνον ἔμ’ ἐν μεγάροισι τεκὼν λίπεν οὐδ’ ἀπόνητο (120). Telemachos therefore shares no “certain signs,” no memories with Odysseus; unlike the rest of the household, he must accept his father on faith. Like the birds, then, Odysseus and Telemachos have lost something that they should have fledged together: a relationship as father and son. The comparison of both to parents reflects the shared nature of this loss, as well as the analogy between their experiences drawn throughout the poem and just underscored. In the simile of Eumaios and Telemachos’

¹⁷³ Both Aischylos (*Ag.* 48-59) and Vergil (*G.* 4.511-15) imitate it.

¹⁷⁴ Stanford 1959 *ad.* 16.216-18. Podlecki 1971: 85 and Moulton 1977: 133-4 are more sympathetic, but offer few insights.

¹⁷⁵ Eisenberger 1973: 226; de Jong 2001: 397; Konstan 2009: 313. Rood 2006 concludes her discussion on the implications of vengeance in the simile by equating the nestlings with Telemachos’ childhood. This, however, does not account for the comparison of *both* father and son to parents. Her observation that τέκνα in the *Odyssey* is otherwise reserved for human children is well taken.

reunion, the son's ten years in a faraway land evoke Odysseus' twenty of wandering, while the father's "many pains" evoke those suffered by Telemachos during *his* father's absence (cf. 4.164 and 16.188-9).¹⁷⁶ Now, during the only reunion in which *both* parties weep together,¹⁷⁷ they confront their empty nest and begin to fill it by collaborating in the following books.

¹⁷⁶ de Jong 2001: 389.

¹⁷⁷ Otherwise, only the one who waits (Odysseus' companions, Eumaios, Eurykleia, Laertes) weeps; on Penelope and Odysseus' reunion, see pp. 23-4 above. Odysseus sheds a tear before approaching but not with Laertes. Another preserve of father and son is the adverb "to the ground," used only of Telemachos (χαμάδις, 4.114; χαμαί, 17.490) and Odysseus (χαμᾶζε, 16.191).

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