The Beginnings of Narrative Closure in Homeric Epic

Kathrin L.G. Lüddecke
Lady Margaret Hall
Faculty of Literae Humaniores
D.Phil. thesis
Trinity Term 1999

Abstract: The Beginnings of Narrative Closure in Homeric Epic

Kathrin L.G. Luddecke
Lady Margaret Hall
D.Phil. thesis
Trinity Term 1999

The Homeric epics are the earliest specimens of classical narrative that have come down to us. They have also exerted a lasting influence throughout antiquity and beyond; indeed, they may be termed the "founding narratives" of Western literature. For these two reasons they offer an ideal focus for a study which attempts to begin developing a flexible yet systematic approach to narrative closure, in which it is hoped that modern literary theory and practice can inform a new reading of the Classics and vice versa.

The term "closure" itself has been invested with a myriad of meanings and has not always been employed with the necessary clarity because of the continuing boom in closural studies, not only in literary criticism. A brief but comprehensive review of the subject will help clarify this central concept and lead up to a definition of closure which will be most useful for its investigation in narrative, and ancient epic in particular. In this context it is further suggested that a generic approach might offer particular advantages, at least with reference to Classics. A study of closure, if appropriately and clearly defined, should - paradoxically - open up new perspectives on a work of literature, and a more detailed methodological section offers a preliminary overview of possible avenues of investigation in ancient (especially epic) narrative; these include the role of plotting and of characters in the development of closure, and the contribution and interaction of various thematic and structural devices. While my approach is informed by discourse theory and narratology, specialized vocabulary is generally kept to a minimum.

Based on this theoretical framework, readings of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* assess the crucial, though characteristically different role of closure in both epics, following a brief review of scholarly opinion on Homeric closure up to date. The narrative dynamics and preoccupations of each poem are illuminated through this new perspective, thus contributing to a fresh understanding of disputed features (in particular in the *Odyssey*). The results of these two related but separate discussions are then summarized and compared, illustrating the sophistication of texts even at what is for us the beginning of Western narrative. The final section returns the closural strategies explored in the Homeric epics into the context of the broader theoretical discussions set out in the introduction. It concludes with a short overview of possible ways in which the study of epic and narrative closure might fruitfully be pursued.

Acknowledgements

This thesis owes its inception to Don Fowler, who also largely oversaw the process of its metamorphosis from a study of closure in Catullus to the present work on Homeric epic. I wish to thank him for all his friendly advive and for his committed and above all characteristically brilliant supervision. I would also like to thank both Oliver Lyne who guided my first approaches to the topic of closure and Denis Feeney whose kind assistance over the last few months has been invaluable.

I would not have been able to embark on this project without a two year grant from the Micheal-Foster-Trust, supplemented and extended to a third year by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Nor would it have been brought to a conclusion without the constant support, financial and emotional, of my family, in particular of my mother but also my sister and brother. I still find their unwavering confidence in me and my work surprising. Finally, my thanks go to the many friends, both those left behind inFreibury and those newly gained in Oxford, whose ability to listen as well as give advice whenever it was needed has been vital in helping me through the last years. To everybody my heartfelt thanks.

Note on Texts and Abbreviations used

The editions used for quotations from ancient authors are the standard editions, in most cases the latest editions of the *Oxford Classical Texts (OCT)*. The abbreviations used when referring to their works are those of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary (OCD*^{2}*)*.

The abbreviations used when referring to journals in the bibliography are those to be found in *L'Année Philologique*. Other abbreviations used are for the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, for the New Edition of the English-Greek Lexicon by Liddell and Scott, revised by Stuart Jones and McKenzie *(LSJ)* and for the *Thesaurus Linguae Grecae (TLG)* in its electronic form.

Table of Contents

i. Introduction 1

1. Concepts of Closure 2

1.1 Closure and the Novel 8

1.2 Closure and Classics 31

2. Methodology: Epic and Closure 41

ii. Interpretations 57

1. Views on Homeric Closure so far 57

2. The Iliad 68

2.1 Ends in Dispute 68

2.2 Plotting 75

2.3 τέλος θανάτοιο and Beyond 90

2.4 Special Closural Devices 116

2.5 Summary 124

3. The Odyssey 127

3.1 Odysseus' μῦθος: the search for the end 128

3.1.1 Absence 128

3.1.2 Release 151

3.2 Recognizing Odysseus, Recognizing Closure 176

3.2.1 Disguise 176

3.2.2. Presence 198

3.3 Special Closural Devices 233

3.4 Summary 239

iii. Conclusion 245

iv. Bibliography 249

v. Partial Index [2023] 267

"τὸ γὰρ τέλος πάντες βούλονται καθορᾶν"
Aristotle *Rhetorica* 1409a31f

i. Introduction

There is little doubt about the enduring importance of endings in literature.[1] The concept of 'closure', however, is distinct from the mere study of endings and, as a critical subject in its own right, is a specifically modern one. Its importance in a theoretical context has steadily increased over the century, though the term itself is attested in English from Chaucer onwards in a fairly small number of restricted, mainly practical uses.[2] The concept of closure has now been applied to a number of subjects, ranging from philosophy and psychology, music, visual art, the cinema, sociology and linguistics to literary studies of different cultures and periods.[3] That critical studies often cover more than one of these aspects of closure may perhaps be linked to the rise of modern literary theory.[4] In its various attempts to deepen and systematize our understanding of literature it has enabled investigation of areas outside literary texts as such. Critical movements such as semiotics, formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, feminism or

[1] Cf. e.g. A. Booth (1993a) 2: "Endings conventionally are the most emphatic and often the most memorable parts of novels, and they are often the most notorious or critically famed parts as well"; Bonheim (1982) 118; Dunn (1996) 197; Torgovnick (1981) 3ff; Mortimer (1985) 10; Gransden (1984) 12f; Putnam (1995) 4; Barchiesi (1997) 181.

[2] The *OED s.v.* does not include any items after 1964; but its section 10 ("In Gestalt psychology, the process whereby incomplete forms, situations, etc., are completed subjectively by the viewer or seem to complete themselves; the tendency to create ordered and satisfying wholes"), with a quotation from Richards (1925) 107, gives some indication of how closure became important in literary criticism (and theory) through the influence of *Gestalt* criticism; cf. also Smith (1968) 33 with n.29, 41f with n.4 and 5; Krieger (1989) 5. It also offers evidence for the largely technical application of the term in e.g. geography, architecture, politics, and cricket (to be contrasted with general terms like 'end' and 'ending'). On the evidence of bibliographical searches, references to practical applications such as industrial or surgical closures should be added, as well as the recent use of "bringing about closure" to mean the emotional or psychological resolution of certain matters, for example the "Clinton and Lewinsky-affair".

[3] Cf. e.g. Mortimer (1985) 31f on discourses about closure by Derrida, Greimas, Barthes or in modern art. A good example in its wide-ranging discussion is Eco (1989; first Italian edition 1962): he integrates a discussion of literature with statistics and information theory (ch.III), *Gestalt* and later psychology (70-83) and its application in music (62-5; 74f-81), the visual arts (ch.IV), television and cinema (ch.V). For cinematography see also Neupert (1995); Russell (1995); and the collection of Chesher (1992). In linguistics cf. investigations of actual language use such as Schegloff/Sacks (1973).

[4] Cf. Dunn (1996) 9: "Any survey of approaches to closure at once becomes a survey of critical interests and approaches."

reader response criticism have been concerned with the creation of texts, their structures and special properties, as well as with their position in societies and their reception.

There are, however, not only different schools of thought that influence the way in which literary critics view closure, but also different conceptual categories. Thus the meaning of closure can vary significantly depending on the subject-matter in question and its level of abstraction: some critics see closure predominantly in terms of wider philosophical or metaphysical issues, others in terms of socio-cultural negotiations or of critical practice in particular, and again others in terms of more specific narrative structures, identifying detailed closural strategies and devices.[5] The many different combinations of such conceptions and of theoretical backgrounds arguably account for the almost overwhelming variety in closural studies, and complicate classification.

1. Concepts of Closure

No one study can hope to review all such conceptions and uses of closure. A full investigation would soon turn into an extensive critique of theories of signification, textuality and literature themselves, as is evident from Hamon (1975). He attempts to show how the new critical concept of closure may best be envisaged by drawing attention to the problems of accommodating ideas of closure within a number of theories of meaning (503-9; cf. below p.16). Still, it should be possible to convey an idea of the discussion in areas related to narrative closure. Prior consideration of the significance of the term in cultural criticism, deconstruction, feminism, and reader-response criticism will provide a wider context for my subsequent summary of studies of narrative closure itself.

A Culture of Closure

The understanding of closure as a - broadly speaking - ideological concept, expressing general cultural concerns, is a recurrent theme in critical studies. In fact, it may be regarded as the over-arching link in the following discussions, insofar as the influence of ideology in its widest sense extends to texts, or groups of texts (be it syn- or diachronically, in the form of

[5] Cf. Dunn (1996) 9, who identifies conceptual categories of closure (more or less formal devices, aesthetic coherence, totalizing meaning) and argues that its study is "in an important way, atheoretical" because of the wide range of its objects (endings of poems, their devices and patterns, the rhetorical goals of some forms of fiction, a quasi-religious transformation in the modern novel, and a work's aesthetic (in)coherence). D. Fowler (1997) 13 toys with a similar move beyond theory; cf. too Brooks (1984) 92, who notes that the function of the end remains fascinating, "whether considered syntactically (as in Todorov and Barthes) or ethically (as in Aristotle) or as formal or cosmological closure (as by Barbara H. Smith or Frank Kermode)".

literary movements or genres), and readers. The semiotician Lotman (1986; originally published 1966), for example, argues that the concept of beginnings and endings is characteristic of what he calls "secondary model-building systems" such as mythologies or religions (829).[6] This view is easily transferred to the sphere of art; indeed, he sees a work of art as doubly closed in the sense that it both represents the concrete embodiment of an abstract closed model of thought and offers in itself a 'closed' model of the outside world.[7]

"Western" Closure

At a similar level of abstraction, the often mentioned identification of closure as characteristic of Western culture in general deserves attention.[8] Assmann (1996), for example, has brought closure into connection with the temporal structure of past, present and future in indogermanic languages (6). Most often, however, the origins of the importance of the end have been traced back to an organicism expressed by Plato and in particular Aristotle.[9] Plato refers specifically to narrative (λόγος) when advocating an organic model: ... δεῖν πάντα λόγον ὥσπερ ζῷον συνεστάναι σῶμά τι ἔχοντα αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ, ὥστε μήτε ἀκέφαλον εἶναι μήτε ἄπουν, ἀλλὰ μέσα τε ἔχειν καὶ ἄκρα, πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ γεγραμμένα (*Phaedrus* 264c; cf. also 267-8). Indeed classical texts themselves continue commonly to be perceived as overwhelmingly closed.[10] A wider concern with closure can be identified in Aristotle's assorted writings, ranging

[6] He claims, 832, that in a culture historical development can be imagined as either a return to the beginning or a movement towards the end, and models of the world which mark both beginning and end are developed out of these two primary concepts of regressive and progressive development. Cf. Jauss (1996) 388, who explains that history as it is narrated takes on different meanings: "je nachdem ob der Anfang (Ursprung), das Ende (Telos) oder die Differenz zwischen Anfang und Ende (communatio rerum) ihren Sinn bestimmen soll". Küpper (1996) 446f presents a similar hypothesis, identifying historicism with narrative that looks towards the present and teleology with that directed towards the future.

[7] Lotman (1986) 832f, note e.g.: "Die Funktion des Kunstwerks als eines endlichen Modells von dem seiner Natur nach unendlichen 'Rede-Text' der realen Fakten macht das Moment der *Abgegrenztheit*, der Endlichkeit zu einer unerläßlichen Bedingung für jeden künstlerischen Text..."

[8] Cf. e.g. Birus in Stierle (1996b) 650, contrasting the Iranian *Šāh-nāme* and Indian *Mahābhārata*; concerning narrative Peradotto (1990) 43; Hamon (1975) 500.

[9] Krieger (1989) is an important study in this context. He sets Aristotelian organicism into a wider context of Western thought; cf. e.g. 2f and 5: "The tendency to seek closure - beginning as perceptual and for the modern mind sustained as metaphysical - can be seen as deriving from the organicist model, first in philosophy, then in aesthetics, and then in literary theory." Cf. also Richter (1983) 287; Söring (1990a) 10f; Stierle (1996a) 579.

[10] Cf. e.g. D. Fowler (1994) 231; Mortimer (1985) 16; Rutherford (1986) with n.31 claiming that ancient authors usually opt for a "carefully organised, unified structure"; cf. below p.32.

from the *Metaphysics* and his biological work to the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*.[11] Irrlitz (1996) argues that Aristotle's theory of the σύνολον in the *Metaphysics* shows that without an end there could be no aesthetic perception (335). Peradotto (1990) quotes *Metaphysics* 2.994b9 and 9.1050a8, noting that "Aristotle's remarks on *telos* look almost as if they had been designed as tools for narrative analysis" (43). Aristotle's notion of a well-constructed plot (μῦθος) in the *Poetics* applies the organic model of development (*Poet.* 1451a30-5) to the ending of a drama (*Poet.* 1450b26-34).[12]

Closure Deconstructed

The suggested hegemony of closure in Western thought has, however, lately been queried. Here too various philosophers are credited with challenging the certainty implied in closure: Söring (1990a) for example mentions Nietzsche as instrumental in this shift, referring in particular to his "Aphorismus vom *Hinfall der kosmologischen Werte*" (11f). But reference is also often made to recent scientific developments, in particular in relation to quantum physics.[13] On the other hand, H. Miller (1978) attempts to deconstruct traditional ways of talking about closure by going back to Aristotle's own terminology of δέσις and λύσις concerning tragic endings (3f; cf. *Poet.* 1455b24-9) and by collapsing the distinction between tying and untying, ravelling and unravelling (6f).[14] His is ostensibly a position of critical aporia: "If the ending is thought of as a tying up in a careful knot, this knot could always be untied again by the narrator or by further events, disentangled or explicated again. If the ending is thought of as an unraveling, a straightening of threads, this act clearly leaves not one loose thread but a

[11] Cf. *Metaph.* 1021b29f: διὸ καὶ ἡ τελευτὴ κατὰ μεταφορὰν λέγεται τέλος, ὅτι ἄμφω ἔσχατα; 1023b26f; cf. 1024a1-3; again Krieger (1989) 2f.

[12] The same is said explicitly about epic in *Poet.* 1459a16-20; on Aristotle's discussion of Homeric closure cf. below 61. On a smaller scale, Aristotle mentions both a prose rhythm suitable for ending a speech (mirroring another for the beginning) and internal rhymes (*Rh.* 1409a10-21; 1410a24-37).

[13] Cf. Söring (1990a) 16; Moses (1990) 117, also arguing, 119, that it would be (too?) artificial to identify either a starting or closing point in the "texture" or "flow" of life; Eco (1989)13ff, 90 on the structure of artistic form as reflecting the way science or contemporary culture view reality; Mortimer (1985) 31: "On aime invoquer le principe d'incertitude de Heisenberg, ou parler d'indétermination au bout de la clôture."

[14] Cf. H. Miller (1978) 4, where he mentions Theodectes' *Lynceus* as evidence that an awareness of the problem reaches back into antiquity itself. Cf. already Adams (1958) 207, describing a resolution of conflicts in the beginning-middle-end paradigm as a paradox, in that "knots of one sort must be untied so that those of another sort can be retied"; cf. Iser (1996) 361 on the uncertain localization of the end between an "unprethinkable future" and the explication of a beginning, it is determined by goals which are not its own, also 665.

multitude...all capable of being knotted once more" (5f).[15] He argues that it is impossible to decide whether an ending is closed or open, since a narrative "always begins and ends still *in medias res*, presupposing as a future anterior some part of itself outside itself" (4), and even extends this view to literary history: "Attempts to characterize the fiction of a given period by its commitment to closure or to open-endedness are blocked from the beginning by the impossibility of ever demonstrating whether a given narrative is closed or open" (7).[16] Miller himself is indebted to the concept of Derridean deconstruction, which has probably been most influential in querying the validity of closure: famously based on the notion of *différance*, in a development of Saussure's distinction between signified and signifier, it is argued that the establishment of fixed meaning (i.e. closure) constantly eludes us in the free play of the signifiers.[17]

Closure and Play

Such a view of closure opens the door to what may be termed a political understanding, in which it can come to be understood as an authoritarian concept, as Krieger (1989) notes: "Analogizing (as many have come to do) the text to a body politic, one could see a unifying principle as not only totalizing but also totalitarian, so that the text as a closed system becomes a closed society and hence repressive" (4).[18] This political dimension has been taken up by feminist critics who have mapped it onto traditional gender oppositions, contrasting closure and play. Their wish has been to break through the perceived teleology and logocentrism of

[15] His prime example is death which always leaves behind some other person, relative or not, dramatizing how "a clarifying *telos*, law or ground of the whole story, always recedes, escapes, vanishes" (6). Cf. Einstein (1976) 186, quoted in Söring (1990a) 18: "Ein Ereignis mit Vorbedingungen und Folgen geben. Wo beginnen jene und endigen diese? Mit dem Tod der Beteiligten? Ich sehe nicht ein, warum nicht jeder, dem sieben Gattinnen, vier hoffnungsvolle Söhne, drei Töchter, zwei Väter, ein Kind im Mutterleib verlorengingen, wenn er sich aufhängte, abgeknüpft werden kann? Der Abgeknüpfte ist wahrscheinlich bemerkenswerter und erfahrener als das Familienkaninchen. Jede Handlung kann auch anders endigen - wenn man nicht orthodox katholisch ist, und selbst hier gibt es die unerforschliche Güte Gottes, das Wunder und so weiter."

[16] In the same volume, however, Welsh (1978b) 8f upholds the helpfulness of the terms "beginning, middle and end" against H. Miller: while they might ultimately blend into one another, they can be distinguished nonetheless for purposes of convenience; cf. Mortimer (1985) 220 below on the moment before the deconstructionist aporia; D. Fowler (1997) 7.

[17] Cf. Schwab (1984) 191 on Jaques Derrida (1967) 423; Jefferson (1986a) 115.

[18] Cf. Eagleton (1983) 131f: "'Teleology', thinking of life, language, and history in terms of its orientation to a *telos* or end, is a way of ordering and ranking meanings in a hierarchy of significance, creating a pecking order among them in the light of an ultimate purpose."

traditional male-dominated culture in general, and of literary criticism in particular.[19] Without getting involved in the debate, we may note that this itself strictly binary "dialectic between masculine 'closure' and feminine resistance to patriarchal plotting" (28 n.2), in the words of A. Booth (1993a), and the elevation of *écriture féminine*, connected in particular with Derridean criticism, has been questioned by some feminists.[20]

Movements of Closure?

A more differentiated picture of literary closure already emerges, if the perspective is further narrowed from the general cultural to the historical: even in Western culture certain movements, as for example romanticism, lyricism or expressionism, have attempted to elude an ideology of closure.[21] Thus Adams (1958) defines "romantic openness" as the mind's attempt to remain unresolved before the fullness of experience, since closure implies some act of exclusion; formal literary unity is felt to be a constraining, artificial concept (180; also referring to the concept as theorized by Herder, 181f). Söring (1990a) notes that the romantic tendency to extend and ultimately to rescind limits potentially leaves the "art of ending" at a dead end in the form of fragmentary works (13).

Closure and the Text

Furthermore, from the even more restricted point of view of the reading process itself, *every* text remains always open to yet more readings. For example, Eco (1979) argues that every work of art, though organically completed, allows a continuous generation of new internal relations in terms of different tastes, perspectives or performances (63).[22] From a metahistorical position, then, the overall process of interpretation invariably remains an open one, even if every

[19] Cf. e.g. Krueger (1993) 135; S. Friedman (1989) 164; and below on Roman epic p.38.

[20] Cf. A. Booth (1993a) 10. On a revision of the binary opposition between closure and play by utilizing the psychoanalytical dialectic between desire for the (deferral of the) end cf. also Krueger (1993) 151 n.4 ; A. Booth (1993a) 31 n.29; cf. the application of psychoanalysis to literary studies in Brooks (1984), D. Miller (1981) and Mortimer (1985) discussed later.

[21] These movements are mentioned by Hamon (1975) 517.

[22] Cf. Eco (1989) 74, describing a 'first degree of openness' (more fundamental than that characteristic of modern poetics), which is inherent in all cognitive processes since it calls for integration by the perceiving subject, and on which aesthetic pleasure depends; cf. somewhat ironically W. Booth (1989) 58. This concept of integration appears to approach that of closure in *Gestalt* criticism; cf. p.1.

single interpretation as such necessarily constitutes a closure of the text in question.[23] For even those readings which wish to stress the openness of a text, be it in structural and (or) ideological terms, cannot but impose a closure of sorts.[24] Likewise, it is true too from the perspective of literary composition, that in order for a text to be intelligible some closure must be imposed on the potentially unlimited material available while writing.[25] These closures inscribed in the text in turn provide a certain control with regard to the basic openness of interpretation; a complex process that has been analyzed in some detail by reader response theory.[26]

A Call for Clarity

Indeed, a more balanced view of closure may eventually be reached by combining these insights into the processes both of the composition and the reception of texts, each set against the background of general cultural influences.[27] Thus it should be possible to describe in a clear and reasoned way those respects in which a particular text can be said to be closed and in which it can (at the same time) be said to be open.[28] W. Booth's redefinition (1989) of "a totally open-

---

[23] Cf. Martindale (1993) 37: "Criticism can then be represented as another telling, another story to explain the text, which thereby enacts a particular closure, or series of closures, on that text, but which in turn opens itself to further interpretations"; A. Booth (1993a) 2f noting that the 'play of discourse' with its "*unending* bids for ultimate authority" continues; Prince (1984) 190: "Every one of these frames [psychoanalytic, sociocritical, etc.] institutes a closure (...) and the meaning of the text is the untotalizable sum of its closures"; Rosmarin (1989) 22; Mortimer (1985) 203.

[24] Cf. e.g. Prince (1984) 188 on Sartre's *La Nausée*: "...any account taking the novel to represent a unit of some sort must institute a closure, even if (as) it tries to evade it and valorize openness."

[25] Cf. e.g. W. Booth (1989) 65.

[26] Cf. Wimmers (1988) xvii: "...the reading of novels is at once open and controlled - open, because novels are not finished products but anticipate further action on the reader's part; controlled, because as a 'work in movement' (...) novels give us freedom within a space circumscribed by conventions and textual strategies; ..."; Iser (1984) *passim*, e.g. 202f employing *Gestalt*-terminology, on which cf. below p.13; Eco (1989) 34.

[27] Cf. Krieger (1989) 2 on closure as residing both within an aesthetic object itself and the aesthetic experience of it; Bonheim (1982) 157f; D. Fowler (1989) 78f who distinguishes five senses of closure, but continues: "The interconnections are obvious: where the concluding section of a work makes the reader feel that it has closed satisfactorily by resolving all the conflicts of the work, the reader will tend to see the meaning of the work in that resolution. A work on the other hand which leaves questions unanswered will be 'open' to different interpretations, and may leave the reader feeling that where the work stops is not really The End"; Eco (1979) 22 notes the importance of ideology to the reader's relation to the text.

[28] Cf. Martindale (1993) 38, who sees 'closed' and 'open' as complicit terms; Torgovnick (1981) 207f. We may see the beginnings of such a conciliatory attitude in Duckworth (1978) 113-16, who is also concerned with Derrida's work and its impact on "readerly" criticism which used to assume that "an originating intuition", developed through the plot, "leads to a final truth". In fact novels in particular with their multiplicity of themes, characters and plots are said, 114, to pose "formidable difficulties to the critical powers of recovery and definition" that mark readerly criticism. He advocates, 124, "a new thematic criticism, self-conscious with respect to its wish to 'close' the novel", and a new concept of originality which "exists not despite but by virtue of [the author's] use of cultural and literary codes", while the question of the aesthetic unity of a literary work remains intact.

ended work" as "leav[ing] a reader totally free to invent meanings", with his conclusion that such a work "would be either a blank page or a page of randomly distributed symbols not recognizable as belonging to any alphabet or culture" (65), may serve as an example of why such increased clarity would be welcome. It is not quite certain whether he cleverly uses the confusion surrounding the different levels, or concepts, of closure or in fact falls prey to it: calling a work 'open-ended' is commonly meant to indicate an underlying attitude favouring openness over closure; here Booth instead takes it to refer to the privileging of openness, or non-choice, over closure in compositional and linguistic rather than ideological terms, thus allowing him to draw his polemical conclusion.

1.1 Closure and the Novel

A Seminal Debate

We may now proceed to consider studies specifically concerned with narrative closure, before turning to the subject of closure in relation to Classical texts and modifying the approaches developed concerning modern narrative with more specifically epic concerns in the final section of this chapter. I wish to summarize major contributions to the debate over openness versus closure played out over the last half-century, in particular with regard to the development of the modern novel. Such a substantive, though by no means exhaustive, overview should be especially useful because none is provided in these studies themselves. Together, these works allow us to appreciate the range of approaches. Moreover, they have been seminal to the wider study of closure and continue to influence subsequent writers, including classicists.

The Novel and Epic

As a large-scale narrative genre epic may fruitfully be set side by side with the novel, despite possible claims that the novel is removed from ancient epic in general and Homeric epic in particular in certain respects, for example with regard to its poetic form, the manner of its reception and its much debated cultural background.[29] In fact, it is possible to regard the modern novel itself as only the latest product of a literary tradition that can be traced back precisely to

[29] Dunn (1996) 64 notes the importance of closure in every narrative genre.

the Homeric epics.[30] Scholes and Kellogg (1966), for instance, make a strong case for a certain continuity in the Western narrative tradition (4) and warn against "the novel-centered view of narrative literature" as jeopardizing appreciation of literature before and after it (8). I would also like to point out already that my understanding of genre, which can offer a useful framework for individual interpretations of closure, is quite distinct from the abstract and ahistorical 'modes' as theorized by Bakhtin (cf. below p.34). His influential distinction between 'romance' (or the novel), in which events gradually develop into an as yet unknown future, and 'epic', in which they are organised towards a known end respectively, pits one against the other rather than seeing one as the eventual successor of the other.[31] That these 'modes' are different from 'genre' is also illustrated by the fact that Bakhtin's opposition has even been used to contrast the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* themselves, as noted by Fusillo (1997): "Western fiction begins with two poems that literary critics regard as opposing literary archetypes (epic vs. novel, tragic vs. romance, and so on). This contrast also includes techniques of closure" (213).[32] As ever, it is equally possible to see similarities as well as differences between the two narratives and we will be able to come to a fully argued, though perhaps surprising conclusion concerning their approach to closure at the end of this study, demonstrating how developments in the study of the novel may further our appreciation of these epics as narratives comparable to the novel.

An Overview

My present discussion is organized along both chronological and thematic lines, starting with the first proponents of the 'open' text, Adams (1958) and A. Friedman (1966). Putting such work into perspective, Kermode (1966) is concerned both with closure in general anthropological terms and with its relation to literature, as he argues that the conceptual human need for endings cannot be avoided even by (post)modern novelists. A number of studies of closure then follow the lead of Smith's work on poetry (1968) in examining and categorizing

[30] Cf. Todorov (1981) 63: "...for the Ancients, the *Odyssey* indisputably belonged to the genre 'epic'; but we should be rather inclined to attach the *Odyssey* to the genre 'narrative' or even 'mythological narrative'"; cf. too on Homer as the "father of Western literature" Ford (1992) 11f; J. Foley (1997) 161 on the "unique position of Homer as the source of Western literary aesthetics".

[31] Cf. Dunn (1996) 127 for this summary of Bakhtin's thought; also Jauss (1982) 61: "...[the modern novel] has systematically dismantled the teleology of the epic story, and developed new narrative techniques in order to incorporate the open horizon of the future into the story of the past, to replace the omniscient narrator by localized perspectives, and to destroy the illusion of completeness through unexpected and unexplained details".

[32] Cf. similarly Burrow (1993) 2. Adams (1958) sees the two as complementary, in that "epic codifies and imposes values on a world which romance explores and enlarges" (210f).

specific closural strategies and devices. These include the review by Hamon (1975), Torgovnick (1981) on the novel and Bonheim (1982) on the short story. A less formalistic and more dynamic view of the plot, influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, is theorized by Brooks (1984) and applied to specific texts by D. Miller (1981), while Mortimer (1985) offers a historically based study. A brief glance at increasingly numerous and specialized studies of narrative closure will end this section, leading into one concerned with the study of closure in Classics.

The "Open Form": I

R.M. Adams (1958) offers a first definition of the "open form" as a "literary form (a structure of meanings, intents, and emphases, i.e. verbal gestures) which includes a major unresolved conflict with the intent of displaying its unresolvedness" (13). Adams' view of the open form is a differentiated one: it may express a certain philosophy, it may be used to gain a certain perspective on the work itself, to fulfill a certain style (206) or one sort may be characterized by a direct, unmediated relation to the audience (208). He argues not only that the failure to reach a decision may itself be a unifying conclusion, but also that emotional conclusions may be as valid as logical ones (12f). He identifies works displaying such openness throughout literary history. Intriguingly, he begins by contrasting Euripides' *Bacchae* which refuses a resolution, leaving the audience in psychological tension and critics in disagreement, with Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which provides resolution and repose for the audience (29-32). Later examples of similar writings include works by Keats, Stendhal, Flaubert and the metaphysical poets. The latter are seen to come close to modern concerns in that they juxtapose different, indeed often contrasting, points of view without reconciling them, thus mirroring human experience of the world (112). He also discusses the works of Joyce, Kerouac and Faulkner in this century, arguing that it is more difficult to offer solutions in a world characterized by an outsize, or divided, universe and by similarly fragmented views of the self than in a world characterized by a generally accepted philosophy (197; 202).

The "Open Form": II

Alan Friedman (1966) explicitly distinguishes his use of the term 'open' from Adams' (xvi): he sees the change towards the open form in the novel as rooted in a specifically modern

experience, a "mutation in the ends of culture" in that "endlessness has become an end" (xiif).[33] The central subject of his analysis is not theme or plot, but the process of ethical experience expressed in a novel, the "stream of conscience", which forms its meaning (xvi; 13). This flux of experience may be left open as either uncontained, unreduced or still expanding (30). Tracing the increasing use of open endings from Emily Brontë and Dickens to Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, Forster, Lawrence and others, he makes a number of points: for example, marriage and death, traditionally employed to contain the stream of conscience in a novel, serve to complicate or intensify disturbances in that experience (29f).[34] And even a thematically resolved novel may need to portray experience as an open process (35). On the whole, modern novels have found many solutions to "end without closing" (180), in contrast to the old myth "that anyone's disturbing, expanding experience can ever be ordered finally, finally made sense of, finally limited and hence transcended" (187). In fact, Friedman sugests that much of the criticism levelled against them seems to stem from their readers' investment in the traditional paradigm of closure.

Fictional Ends

In a series of lectures, published under the title *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode (1966) argues instead for the continuing human need for endings. He illustrates that fictions of the end are necessary to humans, who can only ever experience life in the midst, by tracing the persistent influence of apocalyptic thought in evershifting permutations (ch.I).[35] Paradigmatic fictions in which a plot gives meaning to the interval between the beginnings and endings, which we cannot help seeing, are all-pervasive (46). Yet Kermode distinguishes literary fictions from myth through their self-conscious fictionality, which encourages scepticism (39; 64). His analysis of 'peripeteia' in the novel or drama (but which is absent from myth) provides a case in point: a 'peripeteia' eludes simple expectations about the end of a narrative without putting the end as such in question, so that "by upsetting the ordinary balance of our naïve expectations,

[33] But note Thickstun (1988), who offers a reworking, e.g. 10: "...Friedman's exclusive focus on 'open form' compels him to avoid or disparage those endings in modern fiction which attempt most fully to reconcile openness of experience for the characters with strong and compelling forms of narrative closure."

[34] Cf. Thickstun (1988) 9: "Conventional endings in marriage and death become psychologically implausible because it is impossible to believe in any external power - ... - to distribute prizes and impose punishments."

[35] Cf. Richter (1974) 121, who argues that the end of Pynchon's *V.* suggests the approach of the apocalypse through the convergence of its historical and contemporary chapters.

[the work] is finding something out for us, something *real*" (18). Paradoxically, those fictions which incorporate at least some of the harshness of reality can offer most consolation to our existential anxieties, while too easy fictions are seen as escapist (179).[36] He thus disagrees with George Eliot's view that a conclusion is by nature "at best a negation", as he advocates that "[e]nds are ends only when they are not negative but frankly transfigure the events in which they were immanent" (174ff; he sees this criterion fulfilled for example in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*).

Literature, then, can offer us a chance of "temporal integration", what Kermode identifies as a third order of time, the time of angels in between the immortality of god and the mortality of humans (71f). This notion of "perpetuity", contrasted both with death and eternity, originated as a "concord-fiction" in the attempt to reconcile Aristotelian thought with Genesis, but has spread out into other areas, including literary fictions (ch.III). Novels, in contrast to non-narrative poetry, have to search for such "intemporal concord" by putting on layers of time, by somehow employing the paradigm of beginning-middle-end (174). We will return to his discussion of perpetuity in Spenser and Shakespeare in the *Odyssey* chapter (below p.237).[37] Though Kermode contends that humans cannot do without fictions both in the world and literature, he acknowledges that we are becoming less easily satisfied with them (35f; 42f). Awareness of the fictionality of all ends is increasing, as is the fragmentation and specialization of our fictions, which he relates to the proliferation of time-scales in modern society.[38] As it becomes more and more difficult to believe that there are any patterns of order that are not human fictions, our scepticism towards them has also become deeper (167). While Kermode believes that this feeling of crisis is not essentially different from earlier ones (95), beginnings and endings in the novel as a genre that "paradigmatically, imitates the form of the world" have become more problematic than ever (174). Nevertheless, his analysis of works by Beckett and Sartre shows that fictional paradigms based on beginnings and endings are still necessary, if

---

[36] Cf. Robey's description of Eco's article 'Apocalittici e integrati' (first published 1964) in Eco (1989) xviif.

[37] Kermode (1966) 47-9 claims that the Greeks (as well as the Hebrews) did not possess the concept of *kairos*, "a point in time...charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end", since their gods were unable to change the past in the way that the New Testament changes the Old; but he qualifies this by saying that "sharp distinctions between Christian rectilinearity and Greek cyclism" are overstated. Indeed, Kermode is aware that what he offers in *The Sense of an Ending* are in themselves fictions, which others might at times regard with scepticism (128).

[38] Cf. Kermode (1966) 63: "...; the time of the art-historian is different from that of the geologist, that of the football coach from the anthropologist's. There is a time of clocks, a time of radioactive carbon, a time even of linguistic change, as in lexicostatistics. None of these is the same as the 'structural' or 'family' time of sociology."

their fictions are to remain communicable and relevant to a critical number of readers (cf. on Beckett 116f, 122ff; on Sartre 150ff).[39]

Describing Closure

Following on these studies concentrating on the concepts of openness and closure, Barbara Herrnstein Smith's study (1968) offers both a more universal and a more practical analysis of poetic closure. Her work is one of the most influential in the field, and even though she concentrates primarily on lyric closure, her general introduction and many of the techniques analyzed have a bearing on any study of literary closure. Indeed, it will be of interest to see to what degree aspects of epic closure can be described in terms of lyric closural devices as discussed by Smith. The fact that these epics are in themselves in verse seems not as important in this respect as are more general correspondences between the achievement of closure in any text (cf. below p.41).

Smith defines closure as "the sense of finality, stability and integrity", which imparts wholeness, or integrity, to a work of art (26). Understanding structure dynamically as that which "keeps [a poem] going", she is interested in the factors that determine a reader's perception of a particular end as an appropriate conclusion to the whole, avoiding the mere tautology that "a poem ends at the end" (4f). Principles of *Gestalt* psychology are applied to the reader's experience of a poem's structural development, where the interaction of expectation and its modification create "excitement" (14).[40] In this framework the conclusion is special "for it is

[39] Even if authors were to refuse the job of plotting completely readers might not be able to read that way (139). Cf. Adams (1958) 199f; Richter (1974) 7: "...to be expressive as an aesthetic object, a work must minimally be one whole object, not a fraction of one"; Chatman (1978) 47; W. Booth (1989) 65; Eco (1989) 60 on modern art.

[40] *Gestalt* psychology has proven fruitful for art criticism in general, both for those who accept its principles of a correspondence between the organization of objective reality and the perceiving subject, allowing for closure (cf. above p.1), and those who react against it in the later appreciation of openness; cf. e.g. Eco (1989) 71f and 81 arguing that the range of possibilities in an object is never exhausted:"...this process of exploration eventually ends when the perceiver chooses one particular form (which from that moment on imposes itself on all the others)." In *Gestalt* psychology "the law of *Prägnanz*...predicts the tendency of any mental form or structure towards meaningfulness, completeness, and relative simplicity" as explained by Richter (1974) 132. Cf. Eco (1989) 75 on Leonard Meyer's work on music according to the formal law of *Gestalt*.

only at that point that the total pattern...is revealed" (13).[41] Smith therefore holds that it is only meaningful to talk of closure in "highly organized structures", where the gratification it provides is not arrived at immediately, but through "tensions created by local deferments of resolution and evasions of expectation" (2f).[42] Closure is "relative" but not simply "subjective", since it depends to an extent on each reader's view of a poem's intention and pattern (196; 211).[43] The reader's role is relevant also to a "failure of closure" (and more marginal cases), since closural value tends to be attached to what is known to be an end (211f).[44] Indeed, when closural effects are weak, the importance of interpretation increases: readers may react differently to non-confirmation of their running hypotheses, and if they fail to adjust these accordingly, the closure will remain disappointing (212); this can make it difficult to distinguish an innovatory from a failed ending (213).[45] This issue may be of interest with respect to the discussion of the ending of the *Aeneid* and, as I hope to show, also to some extent to the *Odyssey*.

Smith also systematizes the study of poetic closure by looking at its place in both formal and thematic structures: formal elements are those connected to the physical nature of words (i.e. rhyme, alliteration, syllabic meter); thematic, those connected to their symbolic or conventional nature (including everything from reference to syntax to tone; 6). She begins with a discussion of formal elements, noting for example that in stanzaic poetry a 'terminal modification' is often

---

[41] Cf. Iser (1984) 63(ff) - also influenced by *Gestalt* terminology - on the continual modification of the reader's perspective, "bis er [the point of view] zum Schluß mit dem über die Vorstellungssequenz konstituierten Sinn zusammenfällt"; Eco (1979) 32. In his investigation of endings as "one of the crucial places in a text where canonization and reading practice interact" (120), Rabinowitz (1989) calls the assumption that a text's meaning as intended by the author emerges most clearly at its end the "Rule of Conclusive Endings", which seems to govern most reading in our culture (121f). He queries its suggested universality by looking at the matter from the reader's and a social-cultural point of view, pointing out the danger of a vicious circle in that issues, which are seen to be resolved by the ending, tend to be read back into the interpretation of the whole (128).

[42] Cf. Brooks (1984) 102ff; Kermode (1966) 18, 179 above. Note also Rabinowitz (1989) 123 on "noninertial" endings - in fact, high culture attaches particular value to, and canonizes, such texts which are "not yet coherent" (123); cf. D. Fowler (1989) 81: "...it is essential to the *moral* of the great literary work that ending and continuation are in tension."

[43] Cf. Kermode (1978) 146ff, who stresses the reader's involvement in, and search for, closure; he mentions Shlovsky's "illusory endings", which only provide an observation on the scenery or weather, or over-fine interpretations, which attempt to make problematic endings appear less so.

[44] Cf. Bonheim (1982) 157 on critics integrating the end of a story "into the total plan, and thus interpret[ing] it, rightly or wrongly, as a neatly tied bow on the bouquet".

[45] Returning to the concerns of this century and the rise of "anti-closure" in an "age of suspicion" (238; 240), Smith argues that "weak" closure, too, can be part of a good poem: it may be incorporated into one's experience of it if perceived as integral to the overall design (220; 233). Complete "anti-structure", however, is impossible in poetry (as in language) and she prefers to speak of "hidden closure" (243f).

employed to signal closure, possibly strengthened by thematic elements (56f). Surveying poetic structure in general, Smith in fact concludes that "no formal principle...in itself can prevent a poem from continuing indefinitely" (50). Forms like blank verse, for instance, are compared to "a spool of tape" whose shape or length suits itself to that of the material; the repetition of the basic verse even exerts a strong force for continuation (80). As long as formal and thematic (including syntactic) elements do not coincide, continuation remains expected; when they do at last, the force of closure is strengthened (83). Smith suggests that "in general, as the number of formal principles decreases, closural effects increasingly depend upon the thematic features of the poem" (78); it may be anticipated that such is the case in ancient epic with its extended series of hexameters (cf. below p.43).

Turning to an analysis of thematic closure, Smith first considers the necessary relation of poetic to nonliterary discourse, whose conventions it "adopts and adapts" (97). The importance of readers' assumptions about this relation is stressed (98), and the influence of changing culture on literature is mentioned (121 n.17). Sequential structures often rely on extraliterary principles for their generation, which sometimes offer (possible or probable) closural points, for example the seasons, months, ages (110). Allusions to death or other "natural" stopping places in human experience may also be used to wind up paratactic structures, which in themselves indicate no specific concluding point (101-8). A simple "temporal sequence", employed as a structural principle in lyric but especially in narrative poetry, too does not in itself imply an end. Smith transfers this argument to plays and novels in which appropriate terminations may instead be achieved, for example, through traditional endings on death or marriage, if these are related to the narratives' major thematic principles (118f). As there usually are "a considerable number of [thematic principles], each appropriately resolved", identifying *the* theme of a narrative can of course be difficult (118f). It is precisely the end which plays a crucial role in this process, since through it "...connections and similarities are illuminated, and the reader perceives that seemingly gratuitous or random events, details, and juxtapositions have been selected in accord with certain principles" (so-called 'retrospective patterning'; 119). If what had been only conjecture is confirmed at the end, anything beyond this end will either be of no significance to the reader, predictable, or "another story" (120). An inadequate definition of themes or the use of themes which are in themselves infinitely extensible can, however, result in non-closure (120).

Smith next looks at closural devices which do not necessarily "follow" from structural principles (151f). She argues that the same thematic principles which structure a poem throughout can contribute to its closure when concentrated at the end (155). Besides the identification of thematic principles, such generally applicable features will be of most interest to a discussion of epic closure (cf. below p.41). A device which Smith shows to be used as a non-structural terminal device is the assumption of a tone of authority, often detectable through the relative frequency of universals, superlatives, absolutes and the absence of qualifications (157; cf. 93; 182-6). Parallelism and antithesis can help to give an impression of control and coherence (168f). Stylistic features such as alliteration, internal rhyme, assonance or metrical regularity cumulatively reinforce closure (160).[46] Frequent and thematically significant "key" words may effectively "sum up" a poem (165), while puns and closure can reinforce each other (168) to engender a stable but surprising (witty) conclusion (199; 206). There also are a number of "words and phrases such as 'last,' 'finished,' 'end,' 'rest,' 'peace,' or 'no more,' which, while they do not refer to the conclusion of the poem itself, nevertheless signify termination or stability" (172). Such 'closural allusions' may in fact be more easily accommodated by a poem's thematic structure than more explicit thematizations of closure and are thus ubiquitous (172-82).

Some Queries Answered

Philippe Hamon's (1975) paper 'Clausules' is a collection of various thoughts and questions, written in response to Smith (1968).[47] Hamon includes a highly theoretical section, raising the question of the status of closure in relation to various theories of meaning (505-9). While I do not wish to become further engaged in this debate, it may be useful to show how at least some of the difficulties he identifies need not be as problematic as he claims. For example, Hamon points out that in the context of information theory a view of closure as surprising and unexpected is difficult to reconcile with its tenet that redundancy and predictability increase towards the end of a message, while the information value decreases (507f). But in his investigation of the subject Eco (1989) concludes that it is wrong simply to transfer the statistical use of information theory to human (especially aesthetic) communication; it only makes sense

[46] Metrical regularity (especially effective after deviations) can be combined with monosyllabic diction to suggest a slowing down of pace (160).

[47] Note the title of his article: in theory, 'clausules' can be distinguished from 'clôture' as designating the ending as such in contrast to the degree of finish it displays (499); yet Hamon accepts that it may be difficult in practice to keep apart the categories of "fin, finalité (fonction), finition", i.e. the ending, the general (often ideological) finality, and the finish of a text (499; 503). His aim in particular is to find ways of defining 'clausules' while avoiding mere tautologies, circularity and subjectivity (503; 508).

for human language if placed in the framework of a general semiotics (66-9).[48] Hamon also contends that the individual reading process is *per se* "inanalysable" (and distinct from criticism) by relating it to structuralist thought, in which - he claims - it is individual readers who choose what they regard as strategic points leading up to the closure (506f). Such a contention is questionable in particular in view of recent advances in reader-centred criticism with its more balanced understanding of the respective roles of text and reader.[49]

In more practical terms, Hamon briefly lists categories to be considered when studying endings, such as predictable, emphasized, stereotyped, generic, deceptive, retrospective, internal closure and their opposites (509). He concludes that in most cases various devices combine to reinforce closure (518ff; 526). The role characters can play in announcing closure is also mentioned (513; 520); this will be a crucial concern of my own approach (cf. below p.51). They, including the "character" of the writer, often draw attention to the fact that the end is the "lieu métalinguistique par excellence, de la thématique de l'écriture, du travail de l'écrivain, de l'effort, de la réflexion sur la distorsion des temporalités écriture/aventure/lecture, de la fatigue, lieu d'interrogation rétrospective ou prospective sur le vouloir-dire, le pouvoir-dire, ou le savoir-dire" (514).[50] He classifies as "metalinguistic", too, Smith's closural allusions such as stopping, death, night, silence, extremes (516), but he points out that these can be used to indicate an internal break as well as closure and that, depending for example on the genre, they can even occur at beginnings (517).

Indeed, Hamon notes the importance of genre as "un horizon d'attente thématique et formel institutionnalisé", suggesting that certain types of closure may serve to classify genres of texts like the tale, the letter, cooking recipes, fables, ballads, charades, aetiologies or prayers (500f; also e.g. 505 on particular genres); I will consider such an approach below (p.35). He

---

[48] Cf. Iser (1984) 39f. According to Eco (1989) disorder in the statistical sense depends on violations of the laws of probability as laid down in the principle of entropy (47f). Such disorder, Eco argues, is unlike the use of elements of disorder in a communicative context, where the partial rupture of, or departure from, the linguistic system of probabilities is employed to increase its signifying potential (58). This 'opening up' of a semantic system to significant deviation becomes the basic openness of all works of art (58).

[49] Cf. above p.6; also e.g. Iser (1984) 193. Hamon himself acknowledges that it is always necessary to argue for why one part of a text is seen as closural and not another, for the dividing lines with which one structures one's reading in the case of repetition: it can be evaluated both as a force for continuation because of its constant reappearance as well as for closure by virtue of its very predictability (507f).

[50] Cf. Hamon's earlier distinction of three levels of time potentially involved in closure: that of writing, reading and of the actions narrated (502). He thinks, 525, the question of proving e.g. acceleration or slowing down in narrative could be dealt with by narratological analysis as proposed by Genette (1980); cf. below p.47.

also wonders how far closural devices like the 'happy end' are truly universal or appertain to a narrative type, genre or particular ideology (500 n.18, 506 n.30). Perhaps these distinctions are best seen as complementary rather than exclusive of each other; his identification of the various levels on which readers' expectations can be built up or influenced in particular is useful. Thus, for example, texts also develop their own "code" which allows for closure as much as wider generic codes: "La clausule d'un texte est toujours plus ou moins rendue prévisible, ou soulignée, selon que le texte explicite plus ou moins, par une paraphrase interne et un métalangage accompagnateur, son protocole général de production-consommation" (513; cf. 499).[51] Indeed, it is such text-specific development of closure which will be the focus of my interpretations of the Homeric epics, which may eventually allow more secure conclusions concerning wider generic codes to be reached.

Studying the Novel

Following Smith (1968), Marianna Torgovnick (1981) intends to provide "flexible, non-polemical ways to describe endings and strategies of closure" for the novel (10), to counteract the lack of a common framework for such discussion as exemplified in the miscellaneous collection of articles by Welsh (1978). She begins her investigation of *Closure in the Novel* by illustrating the general importance of "ways in which stories end" (3). Even though endings in fiction are (according to Henry James) "never easily found" but artistic choices, "the retrospective patterning used to make sense of texts corresponds to one process used to make sense of life: the process of looking back over events" (4f).[52] First readings in particular resemble ordinary life in that guesses concerning the future are constantly made and revised; whereas rereadings allow patterning to be better appreciated (8). She goes on to look at closure in terms of the structure of the whole text; indeed the study of closure is particularly inclusive, covering "the discussion of aesthetic shape - verbal, metaphorical, gestural, and other formal patterns..., themes and ideas embodied in the text and...relevant extratextual contexts that help form those themes and ideas" (6). Torgovnick suggests that the inclusion of more than one ending in a text

[51] According to him titles, chapterheadings and the like can give such indications (510). Cf. Japp (1990) 189, who notes that the thematic end can already be signalled by, e.g., the title.

[52] Torgovnick (1981) 8 believes that the analogies between life and fiction have been neglected by Kermode (1966). She also very briefly criticizes two other studies on closure in the novel (9f): Girard (1965; originally published 1961), she holds, unduly privileges one paradigm of what "novelistic closure" entails, namely "'conversions' in which the hero recognizes the deceitfulness and mediated qualities of his desires and thereby comes to share the author's viewpoint and be '*capable of writing the novel*.'" A. Friedman (1966) discussed above, on the other hand, is seen as biased towards Modernist endings "with an expanding, unresolved moral consciousness".

can open up a view into the varied nature of life, and that an effective ending can invite thought about "the artfulness of a fictive structure, the essence of some human experience, or both" (209). She holds that it is important to define what constitutes an effective ending as widely as possible to guard against ideologically determined value judgements: "The test is the honesty and the appropriateness of the ending's relationship to beginning and middle, not the degree of finality or resolution achieved by the ending" (6).[53] The ending itself is approached by her in a pragmatic manner as the "last definable unit of a work - section, scene, chapter, page, paragraph, sentence - whichever seems most appropriate for a given text" (6).

Torgovnick provides a number of descriptive terms for basic closural strategies, organized around "the relationship of the ending to the novel's shape, to the author's preoccupations, and to the experience of the reader" (12). Novels can be shaped according to various forms of "circularity" and "parallelism" (a series of similarities), or they may feature an incomplete form of either of these patterns, such as a "tangential" ending which introduces a new topic and can be used to bind a work into a series (13f). Concerning the author's and reader's viewpoint at the end, an overview may be presented (which can also be shared by the protagonist, though mostly the characters' understanding will be inferior to that of author and reader and often involves a time-shift, for example an epilogue), or a close-up which does not involve temporal distance or authorial comment (often a scenic ending; 15f). I will return to some of these categories in my methodological section below (p.47). Thirdly, authors may either anticipate a "complementary" relationship to their readers, assuming that their views will be shared (or that readers can easily be educated to do so), or expect rather more resistance from readers (an "incongruent" relation; 17).

In contrast to the achievement of Smith (1968) concerning lyric, Torgovnick believes that the greater length of the novelistic genre "requires detailed, sustained analyses of representative works, rather than an attempt at a comprehensive survey" (10). She chooses works by Eliot, Dickens, Tolstoy, Hawthorne, Thackeray, Flaubert, James, Faulkner and Woolf because of their inherent interest and importance and because of chronological considerations (10). Despite her systematic terminology, Torgovnick's emphasis remains on the need to

[53] This definition is meant to correspond to the notion of "completeness" in Richter (1974), which Richter argues to be achieved primarily by the use of persuasive arguments appropriate to the purpose, in distinction to more mechanical closing devices such as abandoning a quest (170), and that of "integrity" in Smith (1968), though Torgovnick wishes her definition to include what other critics, like Adams (1958) or again Smith, had called "unresolved" or "open" works.

evaluate closure according to what it is meant to achieve in each instance (202f). Thus the ending of Eliot's *Middlemarch* acknowledges the existence of problems that stand in the way of a totally 'happy end', while Dickens and the early Tolstoy retreat from such problems into endings that seem less realistic, but allay their anxieties (202). Hawthorne on the other hand presents the validity of the different views of the community and the individual by employing a framing technique (100). Woolf manages to convey her double vision of the universal life force and the individual by means of a similarly doubled ending in *The Waves* (196f). Thackeray and Flaubert, however, oppose the common aspirations of their time, including what is expected of endings (118).[54] James' inversions of conventional endings are seen to suit his fictions and their particular patterns (203f). Faulkner ends self-referentially with a partial affirmation of the value of storytelling in particular (173).

While different novels thus clearly show different concerns (209f), Torgovnick also attempts to draw some more general conclusions regarding literary history, describing continuities and discontinuities in the development of novelistic closure, in particular the relation between author and audience. In her view, confrontational endings appear from the late 1840s, but then fade from 1920 onwards because readers' expectations have been revised over time (200f). In fact, so-called open endings themselves often become merely conventional (206). On the whole, however, Torgovnick's commendable focus on each text in its own right means that her conclusions remain largely particularized, in spite of the structuralist approach she takes; in fact her very general descriptive categories may be somewhat too general to be of as much use as suggested.

Studying the Short Story

Helmut Bonheim (1982) takes an even more structuralist approach to both story openings and endings, facilitated by his focus not on the novel, but on short stories (x). He notes, however, that endings lend themselves less easily to such analysis since by that point a fund of information about characters, events and themes has been amassed (118). He distinguishes four narrative modes ('description', 'report', 'speech', 'comment'; 12) and investigates which are most commonly used; some modes will be more fashionable in one age than in another (8). Bonheim suggests that these changes may be connected with the changing purposes of fiction (moral, historical, scientific; 14). He also distinguishes a scale of mediation, moving from highly mediated narrative such as 'drama', 'speech', 'report', 'description', 'comment' to

[54] Cf. Adams (1958) 103 on Flaubert as not providing resolution in his endings.

'metanarrative' which is least mediated, with various gradations inside these categories (40; cf. the table in 134).[55]

Leaving aside Bonheim's discussion of beginnings, we may look at some of his conclusions concerning endings: in his view, endings often appear to be complementary to beginnings in that expositional openings will have closed endings ('modal consonance'); but "a large middle range of stories will display a mixture of techniques" (122). A closed ending is usually signalled by repetition of an earlier element, a summary, a panorama or by a symbolic or "natural" ending as in a play or poem, such as a departure or death, whereas in an open one action and dialogue continue in the modes of speech or report (119).[56] Yet generally closure is brought about by a combination of various kinds of content and technique (120). For example, many stories end in a Janus-headed fashion, looking both forwards and backwards (143), and all rhetorical forms like repetition, epanalepsis, anaphora and so forth can be used to mark the ending as something special (144-54; cf. Smith (1968) 151f on "special terminal features").

The Dynamics of Plot

By way of contrast, Peter Brooks (1984) bases his dynamic view of the plot, both as written and as read, on a perceived relation to Freudian psychoanalysis (35f; 10), since he finds formalistic analysis along linguistic lines "less valuable as a systematic model...than as a suggestive metaphor" (17). His work has been especially influential with regard to Latin epic and its relation to its historical context (cf. below p.38). The text is viewed as "a system of internal energies and tensions, compulsions, resistances, and desires", acknowledging the temporal nature of narrative which is shaped by memory and desire (xivf). Narrative is set in motion by desire "beginning to seek its objects [for example survival, love, ambition], beginning to develop a textual energetics". The proems of the Homeric epics are mentioned as thematizing the search for an object (38): "This claim to an act of repetition - 'I sing of,' 'I tell of' - appears to be initiatory of narrative" (97).

However, the role of repetition in narrative is paradoxical: on one hand, it can be seen as the expression of the death instinct in that it moves forward towards the end; on the other hand, it also keeps retarding this end, expressing rather the pleasure principle's search for gratification

[55] Bonheim (1982) 160 is aware that, for example, final words in metanarrative mode may still be open to doubt through irony or mock modesty. He also looks, 43ff, at the possible relations of narrative to narrated time; cf. below p.47.

[56] According to Bonheim's scheme, an ideal structure, tapering off, would be 'speech' and 'report', followed by 'description' and final 'comment' (119).

(102f): “the concept of repetition hovers ambiguously between the idea of reproduction and that of change, forward and backward movement” (100). This deeply ambivalent attitude extends to endings, as the narrative paradoxically “diminish[es] as it realizes itself, leading to an end that is the consummation (as well as the consumption) of its sense-making” (52; cf. 58 on Balzac, Lacan). There is a “danger of short-circuit”, leading to a premature closure, which can be thematized in the text itself through a sub-plot where the “right choice” must be made so the “main plot will continue through to the right end” (103f). Readers may be aware that all endings are artificial terminations (23; cf. 95f), yet they continue to be animated by the search for the “shaping ends that...promise to bestow meaning and significance on the beginning and the middle” (19).[57] Indeed, the influence of the end can be so strong that whatever cannot be “enchained toward a construction of significance” is passed over (94).

Yet while the (metaphoric) end of a narrative at last gives meaning to its (metonymic) sequence, it still originates from the middle, thus illustrating the “paralogical status of [narrative’s] ‘solutions’” (29).[58] The metaphor at the end of a narrative momentarily holds together past and present, but it does not abolish the movement of the middle (92). Rather, it refers “back to its middle, to the web of the text: to recapture us in its doomed energies”, in fact suggesting another return, or new beginning: a rereading (109f). Fictional plots are therefore employed to prevent continued repetition, “suggest[ing] that the idea of beginning presupposes the end, and that the end is a time before the beginning, and hence that the interminable never can be finally bound in a plot”, potentially divesting the narrative of any final authority (109).

Introducing the ‘Narratable’

D.A. Miller’s *Narrative and its Discontents* (1981) also combines psychological insights, in particular on the nature of desire, with literary criticism. Even though published in the same

[57] Cf. Brooks (1984) 281: “The closure demanded by narrative understanding - the closure without which it can have no coherent plot - is always provisional, as-if, a necessary fiction”, and 23, noting that the “anticipation of retrospection” remains central to approaching narrative: “...we still read in a spirit of confidence, and also a state of dependence, that what remains to be read will restructure the provisional meanings of the already read” (referring to Propp, Kermode, Sartre and Benjamin; 21).

[58] Kermode (1978) 147 anticipates Brooks in saying: “Endings, then, are faked, as are all other parts of a narrative structure that impose metaphor on the metonymic sequence.”

series as Torgovnick (1981), his approach is thus very different and her study is not referred to.[59] Miller does not look at form or themes in general; instead his study is unified by the over-arching question of how different novelists relate the 'narratable' (the principle of narrative production which issues from instances of disequilibrium, suspense and insufficiency) to the 'nonnarratable' (a state of quiescence assumed before the beginning and supposedly recovered at the end) (ix-xi). His aim is to show through his readings of three authors how even the traditional novel can never really be fully comfortable with the 'narratable', even at the point of closure itself (xiiff): "[The 'narratable'] may be suspended by a moral or ideological expediency, but it can never be properly brought to term" (xi). Indeed, he finds that the problematic of closure can be located particularly in the form of the novel with its subplots, digressions and potential for serialization and continuation and in the nineteenth century with its emphasis on progress (277ff), even if the authors he analyzes are all concerned with different issues. On the other hand, he suggests that the modern novel still always operates with a notion of closure even if it is negated, elided or otherwise questioned (280ff; cf. below on Stendhal).

In Jane Austen's novels the underlying principle of the 'narratable' is identified as infringements of the moral, and erotic, propriety which is the narrator's overriding concern, as is obvious from the clear-cut values expressed through its point of view (x, *passim*). At an ideological level, her novels thus tend to disown what they (need to) embrace on a constructional one, as impropriety becomes the 'narratable' (54). This focus on moral issues means that Miller primarily analyses the treatment of the characters, as well as the stance of the narrator (42).[60] Minor characters representing the 'narratable' can be marginalized at closure and left as imperfect as ever, implying that they stay the same ("etc principle"; 38). The same applies to

[59] They both discuss - from different perspectives - Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dickens' *Bleak House*, and there are many similarities in their estimate of the closure of *Middlemarch* (e.g. that there is a compromise as regards the wished for reconciliation of epic and domestic life; cf. Torgovnick (1981) 33ff and D. Miller (1981) 129-52), yet also differences: Torgovnick (1981) 31 sees some characters as achieving some success in this aim, while Miller thinks they all fail at least partly; Torgovnick (1981) 33 also has a much more benign view of the role of the novelistic community. Richter (1983) in fact reviews them together as exponents of the two "opposable stances" on closure, which have marked criticism for quarter of a century: André Gide's "pourrait être continué" and Henry James' artistically drawn circle (287). He quarrels with Miller's privileging of the 'narratable' over the novelist's "imposed resolutional strategy" and holds that the beginning of the 'narratable' is as contrived as its end (288f). Torgovnick's weak point consists in her failure to distinguish between different forms of the novel; otherwise Richter believes her systematizing approach to be rather more valuable than Miller's (291f). For my part, I find Miller's flexible and dynamic approach to narrative development as encapsulated in the concept of the 'narratable' inspiring and believe it can still be combined with an analysis of the resolutional strategies which allows closure nonetheless.

[60] He gives separate explanations of what this ideology of propriety implies for closure in essential, social, cognitive and linguistic terms (50).

social life in general which is simply abridged (the "narrative of circumstance"; 43). Major characters, however, who encapsulate the 'narratable' such as Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park*, are significantly absent at closure: his characteristic wavering and hesitation are judged to be morally deficient both by the protagonists and the narrator and thus excluded (25f). In the case of a more ambiguous figure like Henry's sister Mary, her character has to be somewhat unfairly reduced in the protagonists' judgement to allow them to disregard her in the interest of closure; the narrator indeed acknowledges their suppression of a more complex view (and thus "the intrinsic incapacity of [a univocal] closural system ever to totalize the novel") while sympathising with it (88f).[61]

Middlemarch is taken as representative of George Eliot's novels, as Miller investigates the three different perspectives on narrative (including closure) that are present in it, namely those of the novelistic community, the protagonists and the narrator (109). He identifies tensions between their value systems, which leave the narrator in particular worrying about closure: "under the sway of both a moral imperative and an intellectual doubt, [it] must be at once definitive and inconclusive, simple and problematic, supremely real and perhaps impossible" (189f). Thus there is a "compromise formation between a fully narrated closure and an unlimited narratability that can never be all told" (194).[62] He shows in detail how the desires of the protagonists to join the socially given with the metaphysically meaningful, which set them apart from the community, are surrendered, reduced or replaced (129-52). This non-fulfillment of the characters' desire is connected with the narrative project itself: "Transcendent desire must always seem degraded when it is carried by metonymical sequences and synechdochical transferences that inevitably make fractions of it" (150). And while the narrator attempts to show a way of resolving the ideological clashes between the protagonists and the novelistic community at large through sympathetic fellowship, the solution of problems by "co-opting them in an alien frame of discourse" itself results in ambiguities (154f): "the narrator's formation carries everywhere within it the imprint of the discrepancies that it would seem to sublate" (156).

Stendhal takes the doubt about closure even further in the direction of modernism by elevating the novel's suspensive play to the position of supreme value (195). Closure itself

---

[61] A similar awareness of what is in the interests of closure may be expressed at the end of *Persuasion*, where a "perhaps" is inserted into the remark that the delay of the "perfect union" may have enhanced it: if taken seriously, such an idea would put the absolute nature of its perfection in doubt (105f).

[62] Again, he specifies this observation regarding psychological, ideological and textual levels (194).

becomes part of the 'narratable' as that which needs to be continuously evaded: in the plot of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, for example, the means taken to some end very often deflect from it by becoming an end in themselves ("counterfinality"; e.g. 209). Love affairs in particular show how the end "function[s] merely to relay a cycle of repetitions" (211). Desire, sexual as well as that of ambition, gets successively displaced from one object to another, as the characters feel the need to invent ever new ends.[63] Altogether, "the suspense that constitutes the narratable inevitably comes to imply a suspensiveness of signification, so that what is ultimately threatened is no less than the possibility of a full or definitive meaning" (265). Stendhal "retain[s] the traditional ideal of closure while eliding it, reinstalling this ideal in the guise of its opposite" (280).

Closure is thus ultimately revealed as a fake ("faire semblant"), since it cannot be generated out of the narratable (the text) that it is supposed to close.[64] It depends on the attitude of the author how strong this semblance will be (xi): Austen is most suspicious of the 'narratable' against which she sets moral perfection and perfect unions. Eliot exhibits more doubt about the possibility of such closure, leaving the different perspectives shown in the work ultimately unreconciled and the protagonists' projects ambiguously partly defeated, partly achieved, and is thus only able to impose partial closure by strategically misreading the data (188f). Stendhal even elevates narratability into the ultimate signified, that is closure itself (280), endowing only two of his novels with the "minimal narrative coherence of biography" (241f), while others tellingly remained unfinished (241f).

Miller's focus on the meaning of closure, its claim to a resolved meaning, rather than its form, is interesting. His approach means that the emphasis is less on closure as it develops all through the narrative than on the 'narratable' which remains still active at the point of closure, although he states at the beginning: "My real argument, of course, is not that novels do not 'build' toward closure, but that they are never fully or finally governed by it" (xiii). Even if the traditional novel is always "a quest after that which will end the questing" in various forms (4), the 'narratable' will keep asserting its narratibility. In a later article (1984), which is concerned with "the various textual-cultural interests involved in producing and maintaining the problem"

---

[63] This is very similar to Mortimer's (1985) description of the structure of the romantic novel, 111f; cf. also Adams (1958) 180ff on "romantic openness" and the romantic hero: "Sometimes he cannot find what he is looking for, sometimes it recedes as he approaches, so that the search becomes endless, and the form is apt to be open terminally." Odysseus' narrative of his own past to the Phaeacians could be seen this way.

[64] Cf. Torgovnick (1981) 209 referring to Sartre and the different ways in which endings "fake".

of closure, Miller argues that the problematic closure of the traditional novel contributes to the formation of "a subject habituated to displacement and psychic mobility" (165), and is thus given a positive political value.

Reading Backwards: Closure through the Ages

In contrast to Miller's (1981) focus on the 'narratable', Armine Kotin Mortimer (1985) presents the results of the process of reading backwards, relying on the importance of the end of a work in determining its interpretation (9f).[65] Since in the end closure is a matter of individual readings, Mortimer regards general paradigms such as developed by Smith (1968) and Torgovnick (1981) only as starting points for describing closure (23f; cf. 12); she briefly mentions various metaphorical descriptions of closure and how they suit different types of narrative.[66] She studies closure in French prose narrative from the seventeenth to the twentieth century in an eclectic but wideranging fashion (9). Her analysis gains coherence through a historical structure. Without ever explicitly discussing historical evidence about society at the time, it becomes clear how the different concerns, the different ways of seeing the world in different periods, can be linked to preferred ways of ending narratives. In a few cases she mentions novels whose underlying principle of construction, including closure, anticipates that of the next epoch. This approach relies on a survey of a number of novels, which Mortimer chooses as representatives of different eras. The connections she draws between the wider cultural background and literature with its distinctive closing strategies open up an interesting area of enquiry, although any generalizations of such a kind obviously have to be taken with some caution.

Mortimer's detailed discussion begins with novels of the seventeenth century which resemble aristocratic society by usually showing a return to an (often political) centre, following a path which is clearly oriented towards such an ending (33f; 74). These works invite the reader to view history generally as a "perfected" aristocratic history (75). In the eighteenth century both writers' practice and readers' expectations are seen to change perceptibly, as endings become much more provisional and books can be easily continued with a new publication. Narrative

[65] Note her idea of artistic "finality", 31: "Cet art [verbal] crée sa propre finalité en s'ecrivant, ne cherchant pas une eschatologie en dehors de sa propre existence en tant que fiction, devenant autotélique."

[66] Mortimer (1985) 16-28 summarizes the following closural strategies: coda, opening and unveiling, closing and enclosure, *deus ex machina*, fading and distancing, return, reversal, crowning event, art, tag-line, present, future, falling off (incl. apocalypses), apotheosis, reintegration (literal, political, social), dispersal, chopping off, unity, tying and untying.

structures which feature much repetition come to be preferred; such narrative series are often contained within a circular framing structure, if they are not ended by a modification of its last element (though inside expansion always remains possible; 78-82).[67] There is therefore no centre or authority nor a "finish" which could unequivocally close the narrative; rather the end is more or less arbitrary (Mortimer connects this to a prevalence of appearances over truth in wider terms), even if some recognizable conventions for weaker dénouements still survive (death, retreat, happy marriage; 104-7).

The romantic novel, however, is founded on the theme of desire, both the passionate desire of the characters and the "narrative" one of the reader, which carries in itself a clearly defined end in the form of its eventual satisfaction (111).[68] Yet the underlying structure of desire and its final fulfillment is typically foiled as idealized desire is substituted at the end: by not gratifying but endlessly deferring it, desire is paradoxically fixed and eternalized as a metaphysical principle (112). Mortimer sees in this idealization a nostalgia for clear, predictable ends, yet a loss of authority in society is mirrored by closures which are "authoritative" only in so far as death (generally of the female protagonist) clearly seals the characters' fates, but which leave the over-all meaning as vague and elusive as desire in its ideal state (135-7).[69]

Mortimer traces to the realistic novel of the last century the common notion of closure as a solution of all problems raised in a fictional world, which in itself is more coherent than the real one (115; 137). Realist novels are on the whole "closed" thematically, lexically, spatially and in narrative terms (149). Important to such narrative and its closure is authority, focused as the authority of the writer which is deployed especially at the end: "il est impossible au récit de dire sa propre fin, sans une voix autoritaire" (170). In this century writers have instead resolutely problematized narrative closure, rendering it uncertain, disturbed or absent (175). As a result, endings have become more and more explicitly concerned with the relation of the writing to the reader, and the act of reading is often made to coincide with that of writing (215). Readers have of course always had to play their part in closure, but the nature of this participation changes

[67] Cf. Smith (1968) 53, also 98-109 on paratactic structure.

[68] Her view of desire is less ambiguous than that developed by Brooks (1984) from a psychoanalytical background as discussed above.

[69] Though undertaken from a literary rather than historical perspective, D. Miller's (1981) analysis of the absence of closure in Stendhal may be seen to be related.

(211ff): either closure can be offered by the text to a receptive reader or the reader can be invited to become actively engaged in the search for closure (221).

Mortimer recognizes that current preferences for "open" closure and the "writing" reader are also influenced by the particular context of deconstructionist thought and the Derridean critique of logocentrism as well as the decline of eschatology in historical thought (31f; 219).[70] Even though hers is a historical study, she responds to this critique and hopes to find a niche for her work in the space before deconstructionist indecision and aporia set in (220). She does not, however, extend the postmodernist doubt about the stability of meaning back to older works (223), though in some respects modern tastes may be regarded as similar to eighteenth century attitudes (226). Some closural topics indeed recur throughout the centuries, such as death, retreat, marriage, morality or departure (19).

Expanding Closure

Mortimer's is the last study I wish to present in any detail, although there are many collections of articles on specific endings of a number of texts written in different languages at different times, as well as more diverse studies of closure in general. They all attest to the increasing popularity of the subject and to the variety of approaches.[71] Some may be surveyed very briefly, before we turn to consider the impact the study of closure has had in Classics.

Richards (1963) argues that poems develop and end organically by creating a "linguistic problem" which is then also solved by language, more specifically the "mutual enablement and control" that words exercise over each other. A special edition of *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, edited by Welsh (1978), discusses mostly French and British novels of that period and includes articles by H. Miller and Duckworth which engage with deconstruction, as well as Kermode on reader-response criticism. A special number of *Yale French Studies*, edited by Hult (1984), includes articles on Derrida and Heidegger, oral texts, the tableau-poème, Machiavelli, Diderot, medieval French romances, Balzac, Sartre, Beckett, Roche, and Racine. Montandon's *Le Point Final* (1984) features papers mainly concerning French and English literature from the middle ages onwards, including philosophical treatises, drama, novels, and tales, as well as Salat on the end of the *Aeneid*. The collection edited by Alison Booth (1993) "focuses on conventions of

[70] Cf. also 27: "L'image de la clôture narrative comme créatrice d'ordre dans un monde sans fin s'impose de nous jours." Yet deconstructionists in particular are concerned with the alleged impossibility of closure (31 with n.27); cf. e.g. H. Miller (1978) above p.4.

[71] Studies have even started to appear in German, although it can be very difficult to find a proper translation for English "closure" or French "clôture"; cf. Schulz-Buschhaus (1987) 145.

gender and closure, and hence on the final but seldom closed patterns set down with the novels' last words: patterns in the characterization and representation of women and men, in the interplay of gendered values, voices, or images, or in the adjustment of social relations and literary debts" (1); we have touched upon the subject in the introduction (above p.5). Söring's collection (1990) discusses works by Dante, Goethe, Balzac, Dürenmatt, Keller, Sterne and Joyce, Calvino, Rilke, Hofmannsthal, Musil, Kafka, Benjamin and Hildesheimer; the emphasis is mainly on the modern refusal of (Aristotelian) closure (cf. also above p.3). Karlheinz Stierle (1996) together with Rainer Warning has published contributions on egyptology, musicology, Greek and medieval romance, theology, sociology, history and Classics delivered at an interdisciplinary symposion under the title *Das Ende. Figuren einer Denkform*. As mentioned, more and more studies of closure are appearing, and the subject is fast becoming too vast to survey.

Summary

I hope to have shown how the study of closure paradoxically began as an attempt to capture a phenomenon perceived as characteristic especially of twentieth century culture, 'openness'. This has in turn prompted reflection on the importance of the end in both wider fictional paradigms and individual literary fictions as illustrated by Kermode's study (1966) in response to Adams (1958) and A. Friedman (1966). From these beginnings the study of closure has both widened and deepened. An increasing number of texts (in particular of Western literature) over the centuries has become the subject of closural analysis, and this thesis is itself part of this development. On the other hand, the boom in closural studies has also led to a more and more detailed and differentiated understanding of the nature and techniques of achieving closure in (especially narrative) literature. Smith (1968) has been seminal, followed by the more obviously structuralist works of Torgovnick (1981) and Bonheim (1982). The subject has also shown itself to be open to the influence of other literary theories, in particular the psychoanalytical approach theorized by Brooks (1984) and applied to specific texts by D. Miller (1981). In their readings closure has come to mark a text right from the beginning as that which needs to be deferred.

Altogether a sophisticated, yet diverse set of tools for the investigation of literary closure on all levels has been developed. Some of these will be more useful to an appreciation of closure in epic than others and we will return to this subject in more detail after surveying the

approaches already taken with regard to closure in the Classics generally. Still, I already wish to indicate briefly which aspects of the studies just discussed appear most helpful for readings of (Homeric) epic. As we have seen, closure is often discussed with some reference to authorial intent as well as to the wider cultural context. Such an approach is likely to be contentious and would be open to serious criticism in the case of the Homeric epics with their disputed historical background and authorship. More recently, however, the concept of the 'narratable' as put forward by D. Miller (1981) has allowed consideration of the implicit themes of a narrative without necessitating reference to a historical author. Instead the analysis remains focussed on the thematic preoccupations evident in the text itself, including of course the voice of the narrator. By virtue of its dynamic view of the text, this approach also radically links closure with the whole work (especially relevant in the case of extended narrative). For these reasons the 'narratable' will play a part in tracing the development and role of closure in the Homeric epics too (cf. also Murnaghan (1997) for such an approach).

Yet this wider thematic analysis need not be exclusive of a more formalistic approach concerned with the classification of specific closural strategies. Such analysis focusses more on the ending itself, for example its topics, style and language, as practised by Torgovnick (1981) and to an extent Smith (1968), who however herself also advocates a dynamic view of textual structure. Indeed, one area where dynamic and formal studies overlap somewhat is in the consideration of the characters' role in achieving closure. Despite their widely differing approaches, both D. Miller (1981) and Torgovnick (1981) mention the aims and views of the protagonists of novels such as Eliot's *Middlemarch* as important in establishing a sense of closure (or not, as the case may be). Mortimer (1985) too refers to the desire of the characters to achieve certain ends in the novels of the romantic period as relevant to the question of closure. It appears, however, that such specific observations have not yet been explicitly put into the context of a reasoned methodology, which would take into account recent developments in the understanding of narrative, in particular concerning the role of the narrator and the characters. This is somewhat surprising given the crucial importance of characters in narrative, in contrast (generally speaking) to lyric in particular. I will offer further suggestions how their role with regard to closure may be described more systematically and how its analysis can in fact be seen to provide a crucial element in the whole range of closural analysis, stretching from particular thematic concerns to universal structural and formal devices (cf. below p.51).

1.2 Closure and Classics

The insights into the study of closure gained so far must now be set in relation to classical scholarship. A brief sketch of the development of closural studies in the subject will allow us to conclude this introduction with a systematic methodology for the study of epic closure in preparation for my own analysis of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. As in modern literary criticism, a veritable host of work on endings is to be found in Classics. Indeed, as D. Fowler notes in his "Introductory Note" to a recent bibliography on the subject in Roberts (1997): "A complete bibliography of works dealing with ancient endings would be immense: in some cases (such as Virgil's *Aeneid*) almost all critical treatments involve discussion of closure" (275f). While it would be neither feasible nor productive to attempt an exhaustive survey of all work on classical closure, this section may serve to draw attention to recent approaches which have clearly been influenced by modern work on closure and to highlight particular issues of special concern to Classics, such as the question of genre.

Closed or Open?

Two papers by Don Fowler (1989) and (1997), in which he surveys the literature and discusses relevant issues, provide both a convenient starting and reference point for this section.[72] Giving examples of how the "polarity between 'open' and 'closed' works can be projected onto a number of different oppositions", Fowler (1989) mentions its application to oral and written texts, a subject we will also briefly consider with regard to Homeric epic (79; cf. below p.64). Intriguingly, he shows how it has been held both that "the literary work is open while the oral work is closed, or the literary work closed but the oral work open" (79 with notes

[72] D. Fowler (1989) 77 notes himself that he is "offer[ing] a brief general discussion of ancient endings, to map out the terrain and to prevent too many critics 'reinventing the wheel' in ad hoc discussions". He also suggests, 101-4, that studies on closure should be collected and ordered, theoretical issues further clarified and ancient thought on closure researched. There appear, however, to be very few ancient discussions of closure in general. One might hope to find some material in rhetorical treatises, as he mentions 103f (referring to Demetrius, Aristotle, Dionysius of Halicarnassus), but Hamon (1975) 497f claims that ancient rhetoricians have little to say on the subject. Gómez Pallarès (1995) 41ff cites Aristotle and Horace as authorities for his view, 36, that the use of beginning and ending is grounded in aesthetic preoccupations and general structuring principles (cf. above p.3); Horace in particular seems to extend the call for basic (organic) unity as both aesthetically pleasing and necessary from tragedy and epic to all poetry (*AP* 23; 43).

16f).[73] That the distinction works either way goes to show that it is imperative to define which kind and what level of closure is referred to. The need for greater clarity is also illustrated by the review of Hamon (1975) already mentioned: he contends both that an oral text usually signals closure more explicitly and that myths and oral performances function rather like continuums (*sic*!), though displaying 'finality' in ideological terms (502; 500). Though Fowler (1989) too assumes that an oral work might need to signal closure more clearly to its audience than a written text to its readers, he himself indeed argues that the strong opposition beween oral and literary works is exaggerated (93ff).[74] As he explains in his later article (1997), textuality as such need not be seen as "closed": "Différance and dissemination are inevitable features of language..." (11f). Finally, Fowler (1989) shows that a similar confusion exists with regard to closure and classic texts, in that "the classic work, in comparison to popular and ephemeral literature" is supposedly characterized by a continued openness to new interpretations, while in comparison with "the Romantic" one "the classical work" is "closed and complete" (79).[75]

The Question of Boundaries

That closure is not an absolute term is further illustrated by Fowler's later definition of it as part of segmentation; such setting of boundaries is at least partly culturally determined and may therefore require special investigation. Fowler (1997) draws attention to specifically Greek and Roman units of thought such as certain processions or parades, succession of magistracies and the *cursus honorum* which may influence textual patterns and structures (13).[76] Indeed, Fowler (1989) had already distinguished various levels at which segmentation may be located; the tension between continuation and closure operates not just at the end of a text, but at strategic points inside it, as well as throughout whole collections or *œuvres* (82). Taking the 'infratextual'

---

[73] For the former position he refers to C. Segal (1986) 'Greek Tragedy' 75-109; for the latter to Hamon (1975) 500; Zumthor (1984). Cf. D. Fowler (1997) 12, noting that the opposition between orality and literacy "plays itself out in contradictory ways: writing is both orphan and surrogate/supplement, it both fixes and frees".

[74] Cf. Fusillo (1997) 210.

[75] Cf. above p.3 on this issue; the distinction between Western and Eastern endings, which is also mentioned, has also been mentioned there. D. Fowler (1989) moreover notes that this diachronic opposition is extended too to contrast modernist and postmodernist works, in which postmodernist ones can be seen both as "more radically open" and as "ironically achiev[ing] the closure that modernism made impossible" (79). Cf. finally D. Fowler (1997) 9ff on the "double perspective on constructions of the feminine" with regard to classical closure.

[76] Ennius' *Annales* offer an example, as Skutsch (1985) 553 argues that "Ennius intended to end the *Annals* with an account of the campaign conducted by his patron M. Fulvius Nobilior in Aetolia, ..., concluding with Fulvius' triumph in 187 BC and the founding of the temple *Herculis Musarum*" (also 6), even if they were continued later (563ff).

perspective, Fowler explains how the internal divisions of texts into books, chapters, paragraphs and stanzas affect how we read and interpret them (86-97), arguing that ancient books and their organization need to be further researched (105-8).[77] False and surprise closure, which are defined by the absence and presence of an externally marked end respectively, are a case in point (97-101). Fowler (1997) adds the relation of the endings of inset-narratives to those of the main texts and *mise-en-abyme* as illustrations for the problematic or ambiguous nature of closure (17ff). 'Infratextual' closure, however, will not be the focus of my discussion of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, "where we are not confident in seeing any existing articulation as primary", as Fowler (1997) himself remarks (13 with n.46).[78] It would take a separate study to address questions such as these in any depth and I will concentrate for the most part on clarifying over-arching closural strategies.

Fowler (1997) also points out that segmentation may extend beyond a single work to "the grouping of texts into oeuvres or genres or periods [which] is central to our readings of them" (13). Indeed, Elena Theodorakopoulos (1997) has recently investigated the ways in which "a teleology which constructs the *Aeneid* as the simultaneous closure - ideological and narrative - of Virgil's life and his writings" has been imposed on his *œuvre* (155), establishing a poetic version of the *cursus honorum* (156). Such a biographical view of closure again will not interest me in relation to the Homeric epics; indeed Theodorakopoulos explains that her approach is especially suited to Vergil "because the *Aeneid* comes to an end when its author dies" and because of "the explicitly self-referential passages in which Virgil presents himself as author involved in the shaping of his text" (156).

But we may pause to reflect very briefly on how epic is seen to afford closure by its preeminence in a hierarchy of genres in this kind of 'supertextual' reading of Vergil's poetry before turning to consider the epic genre in the different context of intertextual closure, in order

---

[77] He (1989) notes that, for example, book divisions in lyric collections and epic have long been controversial; an improved understanding of closure might help investigations of doubtful, unfinished or lost endings which pose a special problem in Classics, such as in the Catullan collection, Tibullus book 2 (77) or even the *Aeneid* (84f).

[78] I will refer to the "books" of these epics for convenience of citation, though the divisions are not thought to be original, but - probably - to date from Hellenistic times; cf. especially Taplin (1992) 285ff; N. Richardson (1993) 20f. S. West (1967) 18-25 presents the scarce and inconclusive evidence of Ptolemaic papyri; what appears clear is that book divisions become marked as a matter of course around the first century AD (the end with a coronis, the beginning with a new column). - Stanley (1993) 248-61 offers arguments on book division and closure, then proceeds to consider them in the light of oral theory and the genesis and transmission of the poem.

to avoid confusion between the two concepts.[79] In fact, the *Aeneid* with its perceived strong teleological movement arguably has itself contributed much to the common view of epic as the 'closed text' par excellence.[80] This stereotyping of epic is already evident in its portrayal as concerned exclusively with men and conflict (though with varying twists to the argument) by the Latin elegists.[81] Similarly reductionist perceptions about both the closed world-view inscribed in epic and the closed nature of its reception and interpretation recur in neoclassical criticism and in Bakhtin's distinction between the 'modes' of epic and the novel.[82] While the influence of such views continues to be felt occasionally, as is the similarly simplistic view of classical works in general as closed, this simple classification of certain genres or groups of texts as closed has increasingly been challenged.[83] As Hardie (1997) remarks on epic itself: "Epic, at the summit of the ancient hierarchy of genres, is obsessed with power, structures of control, and ends that justify their means (Homerically, the capture of a city or the reinstatement of the head of a household). But ancient epics have a way of being strangely uncertain about their endings" (139).

---

[79] Cf. D. Fowler (1997) 14: "The 'hierarchy' of genres through which Virgil ascends from pastoral to didactic to epic is clearly a sort of *cursus honorum*..."; cf. further below. Callimachus appears to have self-consciously used the idea of such a hierarchy to thematize closure, moving from the *Aetia* to the *Iambi*; cf. e.g. Fusillo (1997) 211 with n.10; D. Fowler (1989) 84 with n.37.

[80] Cf. Hardie (1993) 2: "The *Aeneid's* claim to totality is, on the surface, far more strident than anything in the Greek tradition, ...pushed beyond the cultural and literary spheres into the ground of history itself." Written in Latin, the *Aeneid* remained well known throughout the centuries and exerted a considerable influence on later literature; cf. Martindale (1997a) 3, also 11; Hardie (1993) 3 with n.3; Quint (1989) 9; Quint (1993) e.g. 33: "If the plot of imperial history projected by Virgilian epic may already be modeled upon a classical idea of literary form [i.e. Aristotle], it, in turn, seems to lend its linearity and teleology to the epic narrative itself, which typically recounts a critical, founding chapter in that history"; Clarke (1981) 116f; Kermode (1966) 5. But note Theodorakopoulos (1997) 155-7, mentioning ways in which the *Aeneid* in fact resists the "closure of epic".

[81] Hinds (forthcoming); cf. too the characterization of a genre as defined through its expression of a special, 'closed' view of the world elaborated by Conte (1994) with respect to Roman love elegy in particular, e.g. 112: "Every genre is a model of reality which mediates the empirical world", and 37, 125, 65 on the 'closure' of the elegiac code; also Solodow (1988) 33.

[82] For neoclassicism cf. also Burrow (1993) 1: "Neoclassical literary theory has, since at least the mid-sixteenth century, celebrated epic as a form unified by plot, by canons of decorum, and by subject-matter." On the Bakhtinian 'modes' cf. above p.9; Burrow (1993) 1: "For Bakhtin, 'epic' discourse is a single, monoglot, past-centred opposite to the delightsome novelistic mode"; Quint (1989) 34.

[83] D. Fowler (1989) 80 rejects the simple equation of classical with closed: "But it does seem correct to deny that any text can be hermetically sealed. This is important for classical criticism since it is precisely *our* texts that are often seen as 'closed' works." Doherty (1995) 10-12 identifies degrees of openness and closure both in readings and texts; cf. also D. Fowler (1997) 5-7.

A Generic Framework for Closure

However, if itself understood as part of the segmentation of literature, a specific instance of intertextuality, genre offers a useful first frame of reference in which individual works and their closural strategies may be related to each other. Most, if not all, the studies of narrative closure reviewed in the previous section work with a notion of genre, and the value of a genre-based approach (especially for wide-ranging diachronic studies) has often been suggested.[84] In practical terms, Fowler (1989) suggests that with regard to Classics, lyric and elegy would deserve a separate investigation to discover whether, in addition to those identified by Smith (1968), there are specifically classical closing strategies (119-21). Bearing in mind Aristotle's important work in the *Poetics*, drama could also offer a useful starting point (113-16), from which it would be possible to turn to the narrative genres of epic, history, biography and the novel (116-19). For such investigations, genre is perhaps best understood as made up of a number of features or traits, varying in composition and even in kind according to the genre (and period) studied. In fact, genre criticism seems to have moved from the metaphor of *Kreuzung* - with its implication of an almost mechanistic hybridization of (usually) two otherwise distinct genres - towards the more flexible image of family resemblances, in which genres consist of distinct exemplars, each exhibiting a different combination of traits from a shared pool.[85] Most recently, the image of a web has been suggested, trying to reflect more accurately the multiform nature and complexity of generic relations and moving further away from biological metaphors.[86]

A text is seen as belonging to a particular genre because of the impression conveyed by the pattern of features as a whole. Distinctions may then be drawn between more important, identifying (primary or core) traits, which appear to be specifically characteristic of a genre, and

---

[84] Cf. e.g. Hamon (1975) 517; Smith (1968) 31f on the possibility of a historical study of closure, "trac[ing] in succeeding literary generations the emergence, prevalence, decline, and disappearance of various kinds of poetic conclusions"; D. Fowler (1989) 113; Dunn (1996) 133; A. Fowler (1982) 59 on incipits and closure types as generic features.

[85] The former has been famously popularized in classics by Kroll; its biological background and the influence of his work as well as recent changes are discussed by Barchiesi (forthcoming). For the latter metaphor, cf. A. Fowler (1982) 41, tracing it to Wittgenstein: "Representatives of a genre may then be regarded as making up a family whose septs and individual members are related in various ways, without necessarily having any single feature shared in common by all"; Jauss (1982) 79f. Rosenmeyer (1985) 82 traces it to antiquity itself, as an expression of the principle of *aemulatio*.

[86] D. Fowler (forthcoming); cf. A. Fowler (1982) 43f: "Codes often come to a writer indirectly, deviously, remotely, at haphazard, rather than by simple chronological lines of descent"; also 45. Also Jauss (1982) 88 on the "process of the continual founding and altering of horizons" "between the individual text and the series of texts formative of a genre", similarly 23.

variable elements, less essential to the particular genre's identity or even alien to it.[87] Individual elements on this scale of varying import may be introduced from, or shared between, different genres, which are themselves more or less closely related to each other, as well as continued from specific texts of the same genre.[88] This notion of genre seems to suit actual poetic practice better than a strictly normative, classifying approach: thus, the change of secondary elements and even core traits over time can be seen as a direct expression of the practice of individual poets, who shift the boundaries of a genre through, and for, their writings. Martindale (1997a) notes that authors themselves play an important part in the construction and development of genres, and in the canonization of certain texts as exponents of a particular genre: "Authors select their own precursors, by allusion, quotation, imitation, translation, homage, at once creating a canon and making a claim for their own inclusion in it" (2).[89] Closure itself may be considered as one particular element that can be used to distinguish one genre from another.[90]

A Case in Point

The usefulness of a generic framework for the study of closure is perhaps illustrated by Joan Gómez Pallarès (1995). He sets himself the task of looking for recurrent models of beginnings and endings in Latin poetry from Plautus to Ausonius, eschewing generic limitations, and also including infratextual closure (9; 11). I believe that as a result his over-all conclusions remain too general to be especially meaningful, and some of his arguments do little but provide illustrations for closural devices identified by others, for example the 'closural allusions'

[87] Cf. A. Fowler (1982) 18; also Jauss (1982) 81f on the "dominant" shaping a genre, and the concept of primary elements and secondary (thematical) 'topoi' proposed by Cairns (1972) 6, which is however set in the context of his static, largely ahistorical system of generic rules.

[88] Cf. Raible (1980) 346 and Conte (1994) 108f on changing "constellations" of elements over time.

[89] Cf. A. Fowler (1982) 42 on tradition, 88: "Apart from explicit labeling, the most direct form of indication [of genre] is reference to previous writers or representatives of the genre"; Conte (1994) 132: "A text's literary memories do not wander freely but obey a project that calls them to it and makes them relevant."

[90] Cf. A. Fowler (1982) 246ff. Among other elements most commonly mentioned are length, style, subject-matter, characters and settings, though other criteria could also include the provenance and gender of the author; cf. e.g. A. Fowler (1982) 55ff (size and scale; subject; style); Jauss (1982) 83ff (narration including the author; modus dicendi including style; subjects including events, characters and setting; reception); Raible (1980) 342ff ("Kommunikationssituation zwischen Sender und Empfänger; Objektbereich; übergeordnete Ordnungsstruktur; Verhältnis zwischen Text und Wirklichkeit; Medium sprachlicher Darstellungsweise"); Cohan/Shires (1988) 77: "A particular narrative genre can be identified by the kind of events it organizes in sequence, the principles of combination it follows, the functions that actors perform, and the traits it draws upon to delineate characters." Dunn (1996) selects closing anapaests, *dei ex machina*, aetiologies and prophecies for his study of Euripidean closure.

discussed by Smith (1968).[91] For instance, Gómez Pallarès notes that opposites like life and death, light and darkness, activity and repose (the "oxymora" of his title) most readily - and effectively - become metaphors of the beginning and end, unifying the whole (41). Examples from books of epic, elegy and didactic (27ff) are meant to illustrate the use of the last kind of allusive expressions, in which actions of any kind begin and end; these are therefore said to lie on the borderline between a direct thematization of start and end and their metaphorical expression (25). As Gómez Pallarès notes, in drama a festive dinner may stand at its end (perhaps even corresponding to real dinner time?), or the exit of a character (30ff). On the other hand, if an activity begins at the end, there are - he argues - usually good reasons for it in the thematic development of the story (33f).

Beyond Genre

A more flexible understanding of genre, which takes into account the possibility of intertextual relations extending across and beyond traditional generic boundaries, should be particularly helpful with regard to Homeric closure. There may be closer parallels for mythological epics such as the Homeric poems to narrative genres such as drama, but also the novel and historiography, rather than to other subdivisions of ancient epic such as cosmological or didactic.[92] Aristotle already noted the close relations of Attic tragedy to Homeric epic since they share the same subject-matter, most importantly in the form of its mythical and divine characters, and it will often be illuminating to consider tragic and epic endings together.[93] The ancient novel, whose development has long since been brought into connection with the *Odyssey* in particular and whose endings have also received increased attention of late, may also provide interesting parallels.[94] Due to the accidents of transmission, the next mythological epic itself we

---

[91] Smith (1968) 101-10.

[92] Here, we may note how metre as a distinguishing element becomes of secondary importance: for example, the sequence of hexameters is not only used for narrative epic, but also for didactic. These two genres are, however, distinguished by subject-matter and the relation of the narrator to the audience.

[93] Aristotle famously discusses the similarities between dramatic and epic narrative (cf. e.g. *Poet.* 1459b7-12); cf. Rosenmeyer (1985) 79: "...for Aristotle the epic is as much a subcategory of drama as an independent entity"; P. Fowler (1997) 129; below p.61.

[94] Especially helpful is the recent overview by Fusillo (1997), note 214: "...the Greek novel clearly follows the Odyssean pattern, stressing its closed and harmonious ending. Conjugal reunion with Penelope is the archetype, a pattern relived and rewritten on the private level"; cf. Quint (1993) 34: "For Borges and Northrop Frye, the wandering ship of Odysseus is the virtual emblem of *romance*: a narrative that moves through a succession of virtually discrete and unconnected episodes." Yet the Greek novel is just beginning to benefit from renewed attention and critical opinion on endings in particular remains divided; cf. e.g. D. Fowler (1997) 17f; Fusillo (1997) 221-3 on Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.

have is Apollonius' *Argonautica*. It is a special case because of what may be termed its hymnic frame; yet a Homeric reference to the Muses is used for the second start on the catalogue (*Argon*. 1.20-3). Other features of its plotting such as the role of the "bidding of Pelias" (*Argon.* 1.3) in initiating the narrative rather than the "will of Zeus" may also be worth pursuing, even if they contrast rather than compare with the Homeric poems.[95]

Roman Epic

Roman epic, on the other hand, is characterized in particular by its historical and national dimensions. Research on closure in this area has therefore generally concentrated on the issues of politics and power, including gender criticism.[96] The focus has been first on the *Aeneid* (which will also serve to illustrate my own methodology below), perhaps in reaction to the received view of its clear teleological structure just noted. This teleology is generally aligned with the political closure aimed at by Augustus, as described by Barchiesi (1997): "Augustan discourse is naturally directed toward a unifying and totalizing end. If we see closure as the degree to which a work can resolve in a satisfying way the expectations and tensions developed by its growth, then the discourse that motivates the Augustan constitution seems an extreme example of closure. Augustus completes and stabilizes all that was in flux, incomplete, open" (207f). Yet this clear teleology may appear to be put into question in particular by the poem's closure, both in its formal abruptness and its thematical hesitation.[97] Indeed, the ambiguity surrounding the interpretation of the *Aeneid's* closure has become a critical commonplace.[98] Such closural doubts and ambiguities are often seen as an expression of the fact that after all history cannot ever be

[95] On the frame cf. Hunter (1993) 119-28 though he focusses rather on the (largely thematic) echoes from *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Goldhill (1991) 287; also Hardie (1997) 159 on the hymnic close of Silius' *Punica* . On the Muse cf. Goldhill (1991) 292f. On Pelias' will cf. Feeney (1991) 59. Note also Heath (1989) 65: "...it has a *telos*, the winning of the fleece and its return to Greece, which is stated (1. 4) and concisely explained (1. 5-17) at the outset, and which is eventually achieved, the incidents *en route* advancing or obstructing the heroes' progress to that goal."

[96] D. Fowler (1997) 7-10 again offers an informed synthesis.

[97] On the *Aeneid* generally cf. Feeney (1986) 16; Hardie (1997) 143: "The disorientation provoked by the co-presence of a number of 'endings' within the *Aeneid* is aroused in a more intense form by the way that the last scene both stresses its own finality and provocatively fails to meet expectations of a proper ending"; Gransden (1984) 216; Barchiesi (1989) 90, 95 n.43 on Ovid's reaction to the *Aeneid's* teleology in the *Metamorphoses*.

[98] Cf. Hardie (1993) xi; Lyne (1990) 336; Galinsky (1988) 323 notes that the final scene offers a microcosm of the epic, but attempts to (re)introduce certainty into its reading; Clausen (1987) 100; Quint (1989) 50.

closed, and the *Aeneid* cannot but reflect this fact.[99] Critics have also drawn attention to certain potential circularities specifically characteristic of both Roman epic and Roman history.[100] D. Fowler (1997) points out that these concerns remain of importance in later epic, too: "...the endless new beginnings of silver epic are also the endless new beginnings of the Roman empire, the hopeful yet hopeless attempts to ground both closure and continuity in the political sphere" (8).[101] Yet on the other hand, Quint (1993) argues that "[t]he formal completion of the epic plot speaks for the completeness of its vision of history: telling a full story, epic claims to possess *the* full story" (33f). This view is in turn deconstructed by D. Fowler (1997): "'Epic' and 'Romance' are more implicated in each other than he allows, just as power demands continuation as well as the climactic focus on the present: the reign of Augustus is to be an Endzeit, but also *imperium sine fine*, a rule that transgresses the boundaries of Ocean" (9).[102]

D. Fowler (1997) introduces another recent approach to closure in the *Aeneid* with regard to plotting: "the teleological power play of the *Aeneid* is projected onto another opposition that has been central to modern thought about ends, that of gender. ...Juno is forever starting things up again when they are about to come to a premature end, forever opening gates and wounds that should be closed. She is also mad in her attempted proliferation of narratives, setting up counterfates to what we all know is the only possible story, the master narrative that is literally in the mind of God" (9).[103] In this sense, the *Aeneid* may be said implicitly to thematize its own

---

[99] Cf. Feeney (1990) 347, (1991) 147; Hardie (1997) 141f: "Closure is further complicated by the possibility of more than one ending: a legendary or historical narrative has different endings from the point of view of the hero, the city, the race. Latin epic poets play with alternative endings in a way almost reminiscent of some recent fiction", also (1993) 12; Johnson (1976) 133.

[100] Cf. Quint (1993) 79: "And in the killing of Turnus the *Aeneid* concludes with nothing less than *an image of civil war*, an ending that calls its own closure into question"; Quint (1989) 53, note also 11 for a concept of narrative as potentially endless repetitions similar to Brooks (1984) explained above. Cf. Putnam (1995) 218 on circularity in the *Aeneid* in the sense that historical teleology yields to the omnipresence of wrath, also 25, 46; Hardie (1997) 151.

[101] The tension between closure and continuation is also traced to the *Aeneid* by Hardie (1993) 2, also 76.

[102] D. Fowler (1997) also notes: "Using the basic opposition of the 'open' nature of romance and the teleology of epic, he [Quint (1993), e.g. 50] constructs a wide-ranging political dialogue with its roots in the intertextual bifurcation of the simultaneously Iliadic and Odyssean *Aeneid*: ..." (8). Indeed, Quint (1989) 48f appears to associate the *Odyssey* with clemency (forgetting), the *Iliad* with vengeance; the latter seems to supersede the former to form a teleological narrative in the *Aeneid*. I, however, see the Homeric epics as exactly the other way round, as we will see.

[103] Cf. e.g. Hershkowitz (1998) 106-12. D. Fowler (1997) continues, 9f, that "[t]his gendered opposition between masculine truth and closure and feminine error and powerlessness is brilliantly parodied at the end the *Metamorphoses* [by Ovid]"; cf. e.g. Feeney (1991) 150.

concerns about beginnings, middles and ends.[104] Such metanarrative concern with plotting has been discussed especially with reference to Latin silver epic, in which delays loom large.[105] As we will see, this kind of approach is more fruitful for the Homeric epics than a political one. They too are concerned throughout with the continued absence, or deferral, of closure, as Hardie (1997) notes: "Delay had always been an important generator of the epic plot: the *Odyssey* is nothing but the tale of the obstacles that delay the hero's homecoming, and then of the deceptions by which the hero himself defers the final recognition; whereas the *Iliad* narrates an episode toward the end of the ten years' delay between the Achaean arrival at Troy and their taking of the city" (145; cf. 146 on Latin epic).

[104] Cf. Hardie (1997) 145 on the thematization of closure in *Aeneid* 12.

[105] Cf. D. Fowler (1997) 16f, referring to Vessey (1973) 166 and Henderson (1991) 60 on Statius' *Thebais*, Masters (1992) 5 on Lucan's *Bellum Civile*; cf. Hardie (1997) 146 n.30. Cf. D. Fowler (1989) 106-8 on a more localized and explicit form of thematization of the end in the form of references to physical features of the book.

2. Methodology: Epic and Closure

We have now sketched the range of closural studies both with regard to narrative in general, especially the modern novel, and to classical texts. A final methodological section, drawing on these two preliminary overviews, will show in more detail how I believe closure in ancient epic will be best approached. The most interesting and potentially innovatory contribution of classical scholarship to the study of closure has been the consideration of its political aspects, both historical and sexual. As noted, such an approach appears especially suited to Roman epic and perhaps the ancient novel, but in order to take a fresh look at closure in Homeric epic, we need to develop a different methodology. For this purpose, I will turn back from classical scholarship to the studies of closure in a major narrative genre like the novel, while adding elements of recent theories of narrative such as narratology and discourse analysis to add a more systematic framework to what may appear widely differing approaches. The use of narrative theory should be helpful in particular to draw out and highlight the contribution of characters to closure which has not been theorized so far. In order to illustrate the potential of a systematic methodology for closural studies of epic narrative I will regularly refer to the *Aeneid* as an example.

I wish to start by looking at the value of formal analysis, ranging from small-scale devices to larger plot patterns. This discussion already explores the interdependence of form and theme, leading into a more substantial section concerned with categories of investigation based on narratological and discourse analysis.

Formal Devices

While localized formal closural devices are perhaps most easily isolated first in less substantive genres like lyric poetry or the short story, the presentation of the end of *any* text may be scrutinized for the employment of certain stylistic and rhetorical devices: these include the type of language used, the general tone of the passage, its syntax, metrical features, possible sound effects and a whole array of rhetorical figures.[106] In the *Aeneid*, the last verse (*Aen.*

[106] Cf. Smith (1968) 151f, 83f on the interaction of metre and syntax; Bonheim (1982) 148-56 on diction and syntax (normal, inverted, elaborated, fragmentary; 150), rhetoric (including anaphora, epistrophe, symploce, epizeuxis etc., 150f; special use of conjunctions, 151ff); Korte (1985) *passim*.

12.952) is regular in terms of metre with a 'penthemimeres' as in its very first line.[107] Particularly important are what Smith (1968) calls 'closural allusions', special closural imagery, which may be employed regardless of the wider organization of the text in question, though they can of course be integrated into it (101f; 172-82).[108] Again, in the penultimate verse of the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 12.951), the final mention of the coldness of death (frigore), contrasting with Aeneas' ardour (fervidus), the loosening of Turnus' limbs (solvuntur, another closural allusion) and the mention of the shades of the dead at the very end could all be regarded as such. On the other hand, both Aeneas' ire and the mention of Turnus' sigh (gemitu, *Aen.* 12.952) as well as the reluctance of his soul to depart (vita...indignata, *Aen.* 12.952) may be - and have been - perceived as anticlosural, as explained for example by Johnson (1976) in his account of the Harvard School (15).

'Ring-composition'

Another closural strategy often referred to, so-called 'ring-composition', may also be used with regard to larger textual structures. The term covers a wide range of techniques, from the recurrence of sound patterns, the repetition of a sentence or verse used at the beginning, or a more general parallelism of scenes at the beginning and end, to the employment of a similar motif (moving further towards the thematic aspect of an ending).[109] Indeed, the example of 'ring-composition' shows that a strict division of form and theme is impossible, since most levels of textual structure can be investigated from both a formal and a thematic perspective as we will continue to see (including perhaps sound, but certainly words, images and motifs, sentences,

---

[107] Cf. Smith (1968) 160 on metre, 161-3 on "concealed alliteration" which may perhaps be detected in the repeated "f" and "g" sounds of the *Aeneid's* last lines.

[108] These are formal devices in my sense as they are not necessarily specific, or integral, to one particular work and its preoccupations, even if they are thematic according to Smith's definition (1968): "*Thematic* elements were defined earlier as those arising from the symbolic properties of language" (97). Cf. also Mortimer (1985) 19 on symbolic endings; Gómez Pallarès (1995) 39f identifies death, rest and night as common closural metaphors in Latin poetry; also below p.55.

[109] Cf. Bonheim (1982) 140 on "Endings which repeat beginnings", note 145: "Epanalepsis, then, may be verbal, but also scenic, psychological, modal, and so forth"; Torgovnick (1981) 13f on 'circularity' in terms of language, situation, or grouping of characters and on 'parallelism' where the ending "refers not just to the beginning of the work but to a series of points in the text", also 199f. In Classics, there is vast material on lyric, e.g. *CW* 81 (1988) on Catullus; Cairns (1979) 192-213; Williams (1980) 98ff; but also on epic, e.g. N. Richardson (1993) 3-14 on the *Iliad*; Beye (1993) 110ff on Homer. Indeed, D. Fowler (1989) 120 argues against the "unlikely and unhelpfully reductive" practice of detecting 'ring-composition' everywhere; similarly Jones (1997a) 5-10 on Homer in particular.

events or sequences of events).[110] Still, the distinction remains useful for heuristic purposes, and it will be possible to assess function and effect of a particular 'ring-composition' through an analysis of individual texts.

For instance, a 'ring-composition' may consist of a formal frame detached from the narrative; in fact, framing has been much discussed in recent classical criticism.[111] Framing structures such as the invocation and farewell to a god employed in ancient hymns or the Hesiodic poems may thus be regarded as a peculiar instance of 'ring-composition'. Indeed, this type of largely formal closure is particularly useful in a poetic structure which does not suggest any particular stopping-point in itself, such as the unchanging stichic series of hexameters.[112] In such a system an end in fact easily becomes a new beginning; the Hesiodic poems were certainly strung together by such an invocational framework in the course of transmission, if not by the poet himself (cf. for example the *Theogonia* and the *Eoeae*). The repetition of the invocation may in turn result in the loss of its closural force as such; Callimachus in fact exploits this by turning the narrator's relation to his Muses into a narrative of its own in the *Aetia*. It is also telling that he uses metapoetic references instead, both for the beginning and to reinforce closure (cf. below on thematization p.55). Though the Homeric poems too begin with an invocation of the Muse, they do not employ such formal means to mark closure with equal clarity and stop short of the openly self-reflexive references to the singer and singing found in Hesiod and the *Hymni Homerici*.[113] This is true even if we take into account the possible ancient custom of

---

[110] Cf. Smith (1968) 40: "Since the experience of closure is the complex product of both formal and thematic elements, it is difficult to examine the effects of either one independently of the effects of the other in any given poem", after drawing the distinction 5ff.

[111] Cf. Smith (1968) 63-5 on framing. The extent to which the frame controls meaning is linked to more general questions of closural control; cf. e.g. Heath (1989) 56-64 on various Hellenistic and Roman examples and recent discussions of e.g. Theocritus' *Idyll* 11, Vergil's *Eclogue* 2 or Horace's *Epode* 2; in the latter case it may be observed that framing and a closural coda are not quite distinct.

[112] Otterlo (1944) 163f sees so-called "Ritornellkomposition" (thematic 'ring-composition') as a consequence of what Aristotle terms λέξις εἰρομένη (*Rh.* 1409a22-b6), which offers no intrinsic end. Cf. also Hainsworth (1991) 17 on parataxis in epic; Smith (1968) 78-84 on closure in blank verse (above p.15). It is of course true that the ending has to come at the end of a verse; cf. e.g. Kahane (1997) 116f; Mueller (1984) 15.

[113] Cf. Kirk (1985) 51 *ad Il.* 1.1: "An initial invocation to the Muse or Muses is conventional for epic poems and for the literary kind of hymn, as is the request to 'sing of' - that means, through the poet - the main theme which is to be outlined." It is difficult to include the epic cycle in this survey, since it is not clear how much the actual poems read by Proclus, and even more his summaries of them, differ from the songs of Hesiod's and Homer's time; cf. Huxley (1969) 123f. The fragments of the single epics (probably from around the seventh and sixth centuries BC) offer one beginning (*Ilias Parva*), but no ending, which might imply (*ex negativo*) that at least at that stage of the tradition the endings of narrative mythological epic in general were not specifically marked. On Apollonius' *Argonautica* cf. above p.37.

prefacing an epic with a hymn, as no corresponding hymn for closing a performance appears ever to be mentioned.[114] In this the Homeric epics again are closer to the novel and other less formalized narrative genres, as suggested above (p.37). Yet the example of the *Aeneid* illustrates how a looser correspondence of passages integral to the narrative's themes may provide a frame of thematic as much as formal relevance, through the mirroring questions at its beginning and end concerning the motivation of divine action (*Aen.* 1.11; 12.503f).[115]

Plot Patterns

On a larger scale, there have been attempts to formalize the investigation of entire narratives, including their endings, by developing a typology of common plot patterns.[116] The viability of such structuralist analysis relies to a large extent on the availability of a representative number of texts with preferably simple plots;[117] even then the establishment of general typologies is complicated by the undisputed, but difficult connections of literary to wider cultural patterns.[118] We may anticipate that such an approach is not congenial to a reading of only two poems, whose cultural background remains a matter of controversy, nor perhaps would it be to a wider investigation of the relatively few ancient epics written over a period of more than 800 years.

More universal plot patterns based on actions of a certain kind may lend themselves more easily to formal analysis, insofar as they narrow down the options for closure to a significant extent, by carrying in themselves if not a predetermined closure, at least a circumscribed number of ways to end the narrative. Thus Richter (1974) lists the limited possibilities of ending a quest

---

[114] Cf. e.g. M.L. West (1978) *ad* Hes. *Op.* 1-10, mentioning Crates' knowledge of a hymn to the Muses and Apollo as an introduction to the *Iliad*; cf. too R. Parker *OCD*[3] *sub v.* 'Hymn'. But note that *Hym.Hom.* 31 is the only one to mention epic, so there may even be some doubt whether they were indeed intended as epic introductions.

[115] Cf. Johnson (1976) 14f; Gransden (1984) 202ff; Feeney (1991) 154f.

[116] Cf. Chatman (1978) 84, he then discusses the attempts at formalistic analysis by e.g. Propp of Russian folktales and Todorov of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (89-92).

[117] Cf. Chatman (1978) 92, and quoting Propp himself, 90f n.48: "They [the methods proposed] are possible and profitable, whenever one has repeatability on a large scale, as in language or folklore. But when art becomes the sphere of action of an unrepeatable genius, the use of exact methods will give positive results only if the study of the repeatable elements is accompanied by the study of that which is unique, ..."

[118] Cf. Chatman (1978) 95; D. Fowler (1997) 13-16 on 'segmental ontology' and above p.32; Smith (1968) 4f, 116-19 on certain kinds of utterance.

narrative (26).[119] In Classics, we may compare νόστος narratives like the *Argonautica* or the *Odyssey*, in which the protagonist either succeeds in returning home or not.[120] Yet it soon becomes evident that such a formalistic approach to closure too is likely to fall short of the complexities of actual texts, as Smith (1968) notes: "...even when a particular conclusion seems to be implied by the poem's generating principles, the poet might for the sake of certain expressive effects evade that conclusion" (151).[121] For example, recent research has highlighted the complications in, and changes of, the by now traditional use of marriage to provide closure in many contemporary novels.[122]

The Final Event

These examples show that it is not particularly illuminating, especially with reference to an extended narrative, to attempt a classification simply according to the formal nature of its closure, whether perceived as a localized or general structural phenomenon. Chatman (1978) extends this argument to the nature of the final event itself: "For many narratives what is crucial is the tenuous complexity of actual analysis rather than the powerful simplicity of reduction. Culler and others have pointed out that a given event cannot be classified separately from its context, especially the final event. A killing may not be a murder but an act of mercy, or a sacrifice, or a patriotic deed, or an accident, or one or more of a dozen other things" (94).[123] The *Aeneid* offers a case in point, as the death of Turnus has been interpreted in any number of ways (as enraged revenge, a sacrifice or a patriotic deed).[124] The significance the final events have

---

[119] Cf. Mortimer (1985) 17: "Une structure inhérente au roman joue souvent un rôle capital pour sa clôture", with examples on the following pages.

[120] Cf. the story pattern of a return in oral theory, though it is flexible and allows e.g. "differing outcomes to the hero's tests for fidelity" (156f) as summarized by J. Foley (1997); cf. Felson-Rubin (1994) viiif.

[121] Cf. Allan (1997) 34f on Euripides as "playing with the standard form of the *nostos* pattern, misdirecting his audience, and encouraging them to foresee a development (...) which he then frustrates" in the *Andromache*.

[122] Cf. Cohan/Shires (1988) 81f; also Smith (1968) 121 n.17.

[123] Cf. Bonheim (1982) 136-9 "The Ending with Death"; Smith (1968) 78 quoted above p.15. On the definition of an event cf. below p.51.

[124] Bibliography on the *Aeneid's* end is found in Gillis (1983) 85. n.1; cf. Hardie (1993) 20-2 on Girard, e.g. 21: "As 'sacrifice' the death of Turnus represents a reimposition of order; but as uncontrolled rage, revenge pure and simple rather than the judicial retribution envisaged by the terms of the treaty, it retains its potential to repeat itself in fresh outbursts of chaotic anger (the dreary catalogue of vengeance-killings in Roman civil war)" and (1986) 153f on four different readings; D. Fowler (1997) 8 tracing allusions to the gigantomachy, the Homeric duel between Achilles and Hector, Roman against Gaul and the gladiatorial spectacle: "In certain important respects these four work in opposite directions, and this tension is, I believe, largely responsible for the feelings of perplexity that the scene often evokes."

acquired throughout the narrative may be better appreciated by comparing and contrasting them with earlier events, their themes and presentation, thus setting them in the context of the whole narrative.[125] This is true even if the relation of the closure to the pattern of the whole necessarily remains a matter of interpretation.[126] In the *Aeneid* such a comparative approach concerning the killing of Turnus may actually be suggested in the text itself by the repetition of a verse, which had before described the death of Camilla (*Aen*. 12.952=11.831).[127] On the other hand, the penultimate verse recalls the introduction of Aeneas himself in the first book, suggesting yet another parallel (*Aen*. 12.951=1.92).[128]

The Beginning

While not all studies of closure reviewed start at the beginning of the narratives they analyze, I wish to suggest that the beginning is nevertheless of special strategic importance, regardless of whether any expectations raised will be supplemented or revised later in the text (as is indeed to be expected).[129] A comprehensive approach which starts with the beginning offers the opportunity to trace the progress of the plot and to discuss how closure is, or fails to be, integrated into its development thematically as well as structurally. It seems suited to ancient epic in particular, where the proem provides a partial synopsis of the subject as well as a

[125] Cf. e.g. Mortimer (1985) 12. Some of the general results of the linguistic study by Schegloff/Sacks (1973) 324 may be applied to written narrative: "...[closing] must be viewed, as must conversation as a whole, as a set of prospective possibilities opening up at various points in the conversation's course; there are possibilities throughout a closing...for reopening the conversation. Getting to a termination...requires accomplishing. For the analyst, it requires a description of the prospects and possibilities available at various points, how they work, what the resources are, etc., from which the participants produce what turns out to be the finally accomplished closing."

[126] Cf. Hardie (1997) 145: "The question of closure cannot be separated from the analysis of the structure of the whole; my decisions on where to limit my discussions of the endings of epics are of course arbitrary"; Salat (1984) 15f; Kermode (1978) argues that it is inevitable that readers ignore certain parts of any longer narrative when they think of the whole (145) - the importance of the ending is counterbalanced by the fact that its weight can be distributed among so-called *Eindruckspunkte*, or "endeffects", throughout the text (154) and non-crucial terminal endings may be less troubling, if preceded by a number of endeffects in the text (155). As noted by Smith (1968) 118f (cf. above p.15), thematic analysis of a complex narrative poses problems of its own, and the closure may both confirm or adjust how the body of the text is read.

[127] Cf. e.g. the interpretations of Lyne (1987) 137; Salat (1984) 13. Hardie (1997) 144 n.25 lists parallels to other book ends in the poem.

[128] Cf. e.g. Putnam (1995) 214; Gransden (1984) 210; Mackie (1988) 19 n.3.

[129] Cf. Dunn (1996) 7; A. Fowler (1982) 98-105 discusses beginnings in the context of genre. Cohan/Shires (1988) 65f see beginning and closure as paradigmatic events, in which one "(the opening as signifier) [is transformed] into another (the closure as the opening's signified)".

thematic keyword.[130] For example, we will discuss shortly how the theme of the wrath of Achilles, mentioned in the *Iliad's* proem, comes to be developed and finally concluded in a movement of double anger and double resolution, kept separate in terms of plot and contrasting in many ways, yet also able to reinforce each other paradigmatically. The recurrence of the anger displayed by Juno at the *Aeneid's* beginning in Aeneas' final decision to kill Turnus, on the other hand, has been interpreted as working against closure, as Hardie (1993) argues: "This ring-composition is a structural imitation of features in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but executed in such a way as both to affirm and frustrate our sense of an ending" (12f).[131]

Introducing Narratology

We have now begun to turn our attention to plotting and as mentioned above I believe it is possible to build on advances made in understanding the chronological (or syntagmatic) structure of narrative by discourse theory and narratology in order to further the investigation of the thematic (or paradigmatic) aspects of closure.[132] First, the conceptual distinction between 'story' and 'text', or 'discourse', helps draw attention to the choices made in the selection, arrangement and presentation of the plot.[133] In narratological terms, differences between the relative positions of events in 'story' and 'text' are termed 'anachronies' (or 'achronies', if the

---

[130] Cf. Ford (1992) 18-21; A. Fowler (1982) 102 with 295n.4 quoting John of Garland's *Parisiana Poetica* from the middle of the thirteenth century: "...the ancients, ..., observed the artificial beginning by putting before the narration the proposition, the invocation, and the motivation of the plot [*causam historiae*]"; Dunn (1992) 9. Aristotle likens the function of dramatic prologues and epic proems to the use of introductions in oratory; cf. e.g. *Rh.* 1415a12-18. He also emphasizes the need of the audience to be given some 'foreknowledge' of the story in order to be able to follow it: "τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀναγκαιότατον ἔργον τοῦ προοιμίου καὶ ἴδιον τοῦτο, δηλῶσαι τί ἐστιν τὸ τέλος οὗ ἕνεκα ὁ λόγος" (*Rh.* 1415a22-4). Scott (1921) 252 contrasts the proems of the Homeric poems with cyclic epic and Hesiod.

[131] Cf. Putnam (1995) 4f with notes, 218; this interpretation is rejected by Galinsky (1988) 347. The correspondence between the focus on arma virumque at the beginning and the closing scene, in which Aeneas stands over Turnus with his sword drawn might also be investigated; cf. Putnam (1995) 42. Likewise the mirroring use of condere (*Aen.* 1.5; 12.950); cf. Gillis (1983) 107f; Putnam (1995) 204; Quint (1989) 50, who interprets it as an image of Rome turning the sword against herself in the act of foundation.

[132] Modern narratology goes back to Genette (1980) in particular; a useful introduction is offered by Bal (1985); cf. too de Jong (1987) for an application to Homeric epic. The Russian Formalists pioneered the structural analysis of narrative technique; their work has exerted considerable influence on later investigations of narrative structure, and plot in particular; cf. Bal (1985) 50; de Jong (1987) 31f; Brooks (1984) 12ff. Again, however, such formal analysis provides only a start, cf. Chatman (1978) 166; Mortimer (1985) 12.

[133] This is the distinction between the rectilinear temporal sequence of events as it can be extrapolated from the text and their order in the narrative; cf. Chatman (1978) 43-84; he also compares Aristotle's distinction between πρᾶξις, λύσις, μῦθος (19). A more complex distinction of 'fabula' (story in the abstract), 'story' (story as ordered), and 'text' (or 'discourse'; story as narrated) has also been proposed; cf. Cohan/Shires (1988) 178 n.1; Bal (1985) 5.

exact temporal relation remains indefinable).[134] An 'anachrony' in the temporal sequence is either an 'analepsis' (flashback) or a 'prolepsis' (anticipation), which themselves vary in (narrative) 'amplitude' and in (temporal) 'distance' to the main sequence of events. A crucial difference exists between 'anachronies' whose temporal reach extends beyond the limits of the time narrated ('external ana- or prolepsis') and those which remain within them ('internal ana- or prolepsis'). The former will be of especial interest to the study of closure by allowing the aftermath to be included in a narrative (cf. below on prophecies p.49), while 'internal prolepsis' offers a technical description for at least part of what is otherwise known as foreshadowing.[135]

The categories presented may help the investigation of closure in other ways too. Torgovnick (1981), for example, distinguishes between 'overview' and 'close-up' endings according to the (absence of) temporal distance from the body of the text: "In a close-up ending, no temporal distance separates ending from the body of the novel. Readers, like characters, will - at least initially - lack the overview made possible by temporal distance or by authorial glossing of the action" (15).[136] This is perfectly illustrated by the problematic closure of the *Aeneid* which refrains from offering an overview as defined by Torgovnick. A distinction has also been drawn with regard to an event's function in the plot: so-called 'kernel' events have the capacity to alter the course of the narrative, while 'satellite' events do not.[137] The *Aeneid* conspicuously ends on a 'kernel' event, as it neglects to follow through the immediate consequences of Turnus' death.[138] This distinction may be aligned with the perhaps more familiar one of climactic and non-

---

[134] Cf. Genette (1980) 33-85; Chatman (1978) 62-7; Bal (1985) 51-68; Todorov (1981) 29f. On distinctions depending on the voice in which anachronies are narrated (whether by the narrator or characters) cf. further below p.51.

[135] Cf. e.g. W. Booth (1961) 272 on patterns of imagery. The audience's knowledge of events has to be taken into consideration: Bal (1985) 63 notes that often anticipations will only become apparent as such once the outcome is known and, 65f, contrasts announcements with a certain outcome that work against tension with hints at an uncertain one that increase tension; cf. also Chatman (1978) 60 on the fact that foreshadowing does not necessarily involve suspense.

[136] Note also her second definition: "In overview endings, authors often explicitly gloss the ending's relationship to the body of the novel for the reader; ... Author, narrator, and reader may know more facts than the characters do, and hence have an overview based on superior knowledge" (15).

[137] Cf. Chatman (1978) 53-6; Cohan/Shires (1988) 54-7, note 55: "However, while kernels may appear to function as primary events and satellites as secondary ones, satellites are as important as kernels to a story sequence. Furthermore, an event's status as a kernel or satellite depends entirely upon a particular sequence and not on the event itself, ..."

[138] Dunn (1996) 33 notes that *Orestes* is the only one of Euripides' plays to end on a 'kernel' event. Farron (1982) *passim* argues for the unique abruptness of the *Aeneid's* ending; Putnam (1995) 98 n.26 sees Lucretius' *De rerum natura* as the closest parallel.

climactic closure, that is the issue of whether a narrative ends on an event that is central or peripheral to the development of its plot respectively. Finally, the 'frequency' and 'duration' of each particular event may be described in similarly systematic terms, comparing both the relative frequency of events in story and text ('singulary', 'multiple-singulary', 'repetitive', 'iterative') and the possible relations between narrated and narrative time ('summary', 'ellipsis', 'scene', 'stretch', 'pause').[139] The *Aeneid* could be regarded as closing on an ellipsis by failing to narrate the reaction of the remaining characters to Turnus' death, although it would arguably still form an important part of that scene.[140]

The Aftermath

Any narrative, however effective its closure, will have to leave something unsaid, but this absence of a fuller indication of the aftermath in the *Aeneid* is unusual.[141] In the traditional novel an impression of future events is often conveyed by means of an epilogue in the narrator's voice, placed at the end of the narrative.[142] The function, if not always the effect, of incorporating the aftermath in this way is thought to be the removal of any remaining uncertainty about the future in order to strengthen the sense of closure.[143] In ancient epic 'external prolepses' (as defined above) in the form of character speech (prophecies) generally serve to provide a view on subsequent developments rather than authorial comment.[144] Indeed, more than one 'external

---

[139] For these categories cf. Chatman (1978) 67-79; cf. also Bonheim (1982) 43ff (with *Tristram Shandy*-like diagrams); Genette (1980) 86-112 and 113-60; Todorov (1981) 31; Bal (1985) 68-79; Cohan/Shires (1988) 84-9. The exact tense employed at the closure may help in determining the 'frequency' and 'duration' of an event; cf. e.g. Chatman (1978) 68; de Jong (1987) 223 on iterative verbs providing a summary, the pluperfect a pause; D. Fowler (1994) 249 (after Laird) on the imperfect as introducing free direct speech (i.e. a sample of an iterated utterance).

[140] Cf. the second suggestion of Fusillo (1997) 211, who proposes to integrate analytical categories suggested by Torgovnick (1981) with narratological ones for the investigation of closure, mentioning the "*duration* (of a closing scene or summary)". Strictly speaking, there can be no 'ellipsis' at the end of a text because the cessation of the discourse renders impossible any attempt to compare narrated and narrative time; it is therefore a matter of interpretation to claim that a certain scene has not been narrated fully. Further on this scene and on the reaction of characters as providing a guideline to the audience's reaction cf. below p.54.

[141] Henry James, noting that in reality relations stop nowhere, is regularly quoted, e.g. in Roberts (1997a) 255, cf. also her own view, 251; Chatman (1978) 47.

[142] Cf. Roberts (1997a) 253; further on voice below p.55.

[143] Cf. e.g. Dunn (1996) 67f on ancient tragedy.

[144] Cf. Roberts (1997a) 256, who argues that prophecies are "both telling us that we are to bear the aftermath in mind and letting us know what that aftermath will entail", even if the story as such is familiar to the audience; Heinze (1915) 394f. Fusillo (1997) 211 suggests to analyze "*succession*, a proleptic reference to the future of the story beyond the limits of the novel", yet he appears to be referring only to 'prolepses' placed at the end itself. Cf. again on the importance of voice below p.53.

prolepsis', varying in scope and detail as noted, may be placed at any position in the sequence of events. The positioning itself will affect the interpretation of the 'prolepsis' in question; Dunn (1996) generalizes that an anticipation of the future may be expected to generate interest when placed at the beginning, while at the close of the narrative it "helps to bring the plot to an end by containing all that is left over, diverting into an authorial postscript whatever the plot did not include" (106).[145]

Again, however, these are only the two most obvious possibilities, and other factors have to be taken into account. The *Aeneid* does after all include indications of its aftermath: shortly before the final scene Juno anticipates a peace treaty to be sealed with a happy wedding (*Aen*. 12.821f). Yet there may be a question of how accurate a description of what is to happen conubiis...felicibus provides. Moreover, this brief general statement about the immediate future forms only a (subordinate) part of a much wider historical perspective that concerns Juno and Jupiter in their final negotiation (*Aen*. 12.791-842). Thus their dialogue may close the plot with regard to the long-term future of Rome, in particular as it corroborates Jupiter's anticipation to Juno's opponent Venus at the beginning of the narrative (*Aen*. 1.254-96);[146] but it also leaves a potentially unsettling gap between that future and the more immediate personal aftermath of the human characters concerned. This point may be especially relevant with regard to Latin epic with its strong historical dimension.[147] A somewhat similar problem has, however, been identified in the *Odyssey* too, as Roberts (1997a) explains: "Even such relatively clear statements of the aftermath may complicate closure when the predicted ending stands in contrast with the narrated or enacted end. Odysseus's homecoming and Odysseus's renewed travels; Aeneas's slaughter of Turnus and the future of Rome; Orestes' mad plans in Euripides' *Orestes* and Apollo's reconciliatory conclusion - in all these instances, critics have noted what amounts to

[145] He also notes, 82, that a concluding prophecy may pose problems for 'closed' interpretations; again it is obviously important to distinguish between different levels of openness and closure. For examples of an opening prophecy in epic cf. Feeney (1982) on Silius' *Punica* 1.123-39.

[146] Cf. Gransden (1984) 37; Knauer (1964) 32; also Johnson (1976) 171f n.105 on his smile.

[147] For the difference between Greek and Latin epic cf. Feeney (1991) 111: "In Naevius, however, this traditional epic device of prophecy has been vastly expanded. In Greek epic, so far as we can now tell, prophecies reach (like those of Zeus to Athene in the *Odyssey*) only to the time-span of the narrative, or, at least, not beyond the lifetimes of the human characters who are the subject of the prophecy." The large extent has a double effect: historical reality allows external verification of the 'prolepsis' (cf. Gransden (1984) 216; Feeney (1991) 185), but simultaneously complicates the closure of the narrative itself by introducing a wider and potentially controversial context.

a kind of doubling of ends" (256).[148] Consequently, when considering the role of the aftermath in a given narrative, attention should be paid not only to the 'external prolepsis' as such, but its position, its range, its detail and explicitness, its relation to other 'prolepses' and to the narrative's closure itself.[149]

The Role of the Characters

In addition, the voice in which the anticipation is made needs to be considered, and we may now turn from the discussion of plotting in the abstract to the role played in it by the characters, including the narrator. For events do not exist in isolation, but their causal, and even temporal, connections arise from the involvement of characters. Their contribution to the development of the plot is crucial, as the definition by Cohan/Shires (1988) shows: "An *event* depicts some sort of physical or mental activity, an occurrence in time (an action performed by or upon a human agent) or a state of existing in time (such as thinking, feeling, being, or having)" (53f).[150] Once again formalistic approaches have attempted to classify characters according to their function in the plot.[151] Yet actual characters in individual narratives offer a more complex picture, contributing also to its thematic development through their words and actions. Although the function of characters in ancient myth appears to be relatively fixed, recent scholarship seems to have established convincingly that even the portrayal of those characters, which form part of an already known mythical and intertextual world, remained (perhaps surprisingly) flexible and that they can thus on the whole be treated like other fictional

[148] Cf. also Roberts (1997a) 252f on the *Odyssey*; cf. on the *Aeneid* Hardie (1997) 142f and above p.38.

[149] O'Hara (1990) 94 e.g. compares *Aeneid* 1.263 and 6.763f.

[150] Their definition appears more workable than that by Bal (1985) 5, who briefly defines an event as the transition from one state to another. Aristotle sees a narrative's overall unity as primarily dependent upon the action, or story as such (*Poet.* 1450a15-39; e.g. 22f: "ὥστε τὰ πράγματα καὶ ὁ μῦθος τέλος τῆς τραγῳδίας, τὸ δὲ τέλος μέγιστον ἁπάντων"); but Schmitt (1996) *passim* has recently drawn attention to the fact that for him too the plot still develops out of the actions of the characters; Easterling (1977) 126: "We welcome an intimation by the dramatist [Sophocles] that 'character' is not a static thing detachable from people's words and actions, but a dynamic phenomenon not ultimately to be separated from what we say and do." For the link of temporality and causality cf. e.g. Todorov (1981) 41ff, quoting Barthes; Chatman (1978) 45ff.

[151] For various attempts to differentiate characters' functions (such as 'subject', 'object', 'helper', 'opponent' etc.) cf. e.g. Cohan/Shires (1988) 69-72; Chatman (1978) 111-16 "Formalist and Structuralist Conceptions of Character", "Todorov and Barthes on Character"; Bal (1985) 25-37, 79: "... an *actor* is a structural position, while a *character* is a complex semantic unit", 88f on ways in which these two aspects can be linked.

characters.[152] For instance, the anger displayed by Aeneas in the final killing of Turnus adds an important theme to the closure of the *Aeneid*, in continuation of his rage in the later battle narrative.[153] The debate about the justification of his anger also illustrates that wider cultural and literary influences have to be taken into account in the interpretation of a character's behaviour.[154]

Modern narrative theory may also help an understanding of the gods, whose role in ancient narrative has long been considered problematic.[155] Classicists have already begun to argue for a reading of the gods as characters in their own right, albeit endowed with special qualities of a kind unusual in other narratives such as the modern novel.[156] Their special position is in my view to be connected not so much with any particular function but rather with the authority they have in the narrative, both in terms of their influence on and understanding of the plot. Recent shifts in the investigation of the narrator offer a particularly useful if only partial analogy, and a brief discussion of the role of the narrator will allow us eventually to return to the gods. The narrator's activity will always be evident throughout the 'text', selecting and arranging events or choosing a perspective for the narrative, in contrast to the author who remains outside the 'text'.[157] There are, however, degrees of the narrator's involvement in the narrative, most notably in the difference of whether the narrator is part of the same world as the characters or

---

[152] Cf. Laird (1997) 289; D. Fowler (1998) 7f; Bal (1985) 81-3 on familiar characters; Feeney (1991) 40f; S. Richardson (1990) 189f on Homer: "The great likelihood is that the narrator, working within the tradition, has a certain amount of liberty in filling in the outline passed on to him"; Allan (1997) 27 quoting Rutherford (1996) 6; Feeney (1998) 59.

[153] Cf. e.g. Lyne (1990) 330; Potz (1991) 261.

[154] On the debate over the *Aeneid* cf. Galinsky (1988) and Potz (1991) *passim* refuted by D. Fowler in an article entitled 'Epicurean Anger'; Johnson (1976) 174f n.115 and Hardie (1993) 22 see Aeneas as angry with himself; Lyne (1990) 326, 336 sees his anger as a failure of stoicism; Laird (1997) 288 on fervidus (*Aen.* 12.950).

[155] Aristotle's ideal of an organic, internally motivated plot means that he is unhappy with the *deus ex machina* in particular (*Poet.* 1454a37-b8; similarly 1452a18-21); cf. Dunn (1996) 28f, also 44, on the Euripidean *deus ex machina*, although he notes the difference from the continuous divine involvement in Homeric epic.

[156] Cf. Feeney (1991) *passim*, esp. 35f on the gods as a necessary part of epic, 2 on "novelistic prejudice" which "issues almost inevitably in readings which gloss over the gods as a more or less lame short-hand which the poets must perforce employ in order to achieve effects more satisfyingly achieved by novelistic naturalism", also 43f, and 48-53, esp. 53; Clay (1997) 138f notes that gods are "first and foremost...dramatis personae".

[157] Cf. Chatman (1978) 33f , also 146-51. The distinction between 'narrator' and 'author' replaces the traditional one between first and third person narrators with its misleading suggestion of a difference between a subjective and objective narrative style respectively; cf. Stanzel (1984) 4f on the necessary mediation of any report. For another account of the problems with the traditional distinction between first and third person narrator cf. Cohan/Shires (1988) 91-4.

not.[158] The epic narrator is removed from the world of his narrative both in time and place, and has thus traditionally been seen as particularly objective and self-effacing.[159] But de Jong (1987) has already shown how the *Iliad's* narrator is characterized by his relations with the Muses, his audience and the characters (44).[160]

Viewing the narrator in terms of his involvement in and ultimate authority over the narrative also renders the position of the gods in ancient epic (and drama) more easily intelligible: though fully involved in the narrative as characters ('internal' to it), they represent the closest equivalent to the narrator by virtue of their unique power over and (fore)knowledge of events.[161] In fact, there arguably exists a continuum of the authority characters have in epic narrative, ranging from ordinary humans to those with a divine parent and seers, deified humans up to the gods and finally the narrator. There also are important differences in power between the gods themselves and we will pay particular attention to the position of Zeus in our readings of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[162] Indeed, the presence of especially powerful characters like the gods allows the epic poet to include a 'false' closure to an event as a contrast to what will be the actual closure, since divine intervention can always suddenly change or even reverse the outcome.[163] Often such situations take the form of '*if not* situations', which ultimately reflect

[158] Cf. e.g. Stanzel (1984) 5 on 'authorial' *versus* 'figurative narrative situation'; Genette (1980) 244f on 'hetero-' *versus* 'homodiegetic narration' (concerning the narrator's relationship to the story) and 'intra-, extradiegetic narration' (concerning the narrative level); Bal (1985) 122 on 'external' and 'character-bound narrators'.

[159] This view is traced back to Aristotle by de Jong (1987) 14f.

[160] She also, 24, takes up W. Booth (1961) 4f; cf. similarly S. Richardson (1990) 182; cf. Ford (1992) 90-2 on the Homeric invocation of the Muses rather than the poetic tradition. Narrators are most perceptible as such when they address the issue of narration itself: e.g., the invocation of the Muses stresses the poet's authority, but also draws attention to his presence.

[161] Cf. S. Richardson (1990) 195: "Within the poems he [Homer] suggests possible plot lines only to reject them, and he gives us an image of the narrator making plot decisions by showing the gods in council discussing the future course of events and taking actions on their decisions", also 192f, 139; Lamberton (1986) 6; on the poet as god in general D. Fowler (1994) 251.

[162] Cf. e.g. Feeney (1991) 145 noting that Jupiter is the only character in the *Aeneid* powerful enough to impose the end, 156-8 on Hercules as an intermediary character.

[163] Mueller (1984) 34 refers to Reinhardt's "'epic almost', the poet's penchant for momentarily twisting the action towards a resolution that would frustrate his own and his characters' ends", and concludes that afterwards the narrative has "a firmer sense of its true course".

back on the narrator and his role in presenting the plot.[164] Returning to the issue of 'prolepses', prophecies uttered by a god will be accorded a different value than an anticipation made by a human character, with seers taking precedence over ordinary mortals.[165] This is not to say that divine speeches need not be investigated carefully in their own right for evidence of special motivation or partisanship, as this is what a treatment of them as characters calls for.[166]

It will be of interest too to discover which characters are allowed to voice their views on closure and I will return to the subject in the concluding discussion of the thematization of the end.[167] Narratology has drawn attention to the issue of 'focalization', a term used to describe not so much the explicit voicing of views on closure but rather the implicit perspective taken.[168] For example, the closure of the *Aeneid* is mainly presented by the narrator, but it has been argued that it is focalized through the eyes of Turnus.[169] The point of view exhibited in the final events also potentially influences the reaction of an audience or reader: as mentioned, the *Aeneid* closes on two very different scenes, offering a divine and human perspective on the end respectively. The seeming gulf between these has been considered significant, compounding the general difference in the divine and human understanding of events.[170] Thus not only the relative order

---

[164] de Jong (1987) 68f describes '*if not* situations' as a conditional clause following the main clause, with only the main clause as hypothetical. She sees '*if not* situations' as an effective narrative, or rhetorical, device employed to give relevant information or to place an event in a special light (78f), concluding that Homer - in contrast to modern extremely self-conscious narrators - does not use '*if not* situations' to signal the fictionality of his narrative, on the contrary they "confirm his status as a reliable presentator" (80f). I prefer the slightly differently weighted interpretation of S. Richardson (1990), e.g. 189: "Moreover, in showing us the road not taken, he is drawing attention to himself, the one who has had to make the decisions about the plot. ...In Homeric narrative, however, the choice is academic, for the decision is always to yield to tradition." Cf. too Louden (1993) 184 identifying three benefits: a change in the plot direction, added emphasis and comment on a character.

[165] But note O'Hara (1990) 177-83 on the poet as 'vates' in the *Aeneid*, connecting it with what he argues to be an Augustan view of the unreliability of the 'vates'.

[166] Cf. O'Hara (1990) on deceptive prophecies, e.g. 120, and 135, 147, 166 on Jupiter's prophecies; also Lyne (1987) 75-99.

[167] There may be helpful parallels in drama, whose narrative is carried only through the actors; we may compare the distinction made by Torgovnick (1981) 11 between endings on a 'scene' and on an 'epilogue'; also Stanzel (1984) 143f on 'scenic representation'.

[168] Cf. Genette (1980) 185-211 on 'perspective' and 'focalization', also 212-62 (chapter 5) on 'voice'; Bal (1985) 100-15; Cohan/Shires (1988) 94-104; Chatman (1978) 152f distinguishes three different points of view ('perceptual', 'conceptual', 'interested') and their means of expression, i.e. 'narrative voice'.

[169] Johnson (1976) 98f, 131.

[170] Cf. Feeney (1991) 181ff on the lack of human understanding; O'Hara (1990) 122 on the differences between Aeneas' and Achilles' understanding at the closure of their narratives; Johnson (1976) 116f on Turnus' lack of understanding.

of perspectives (especially divine and human), but their con- or divergence, or perhaps complete distinctness, in ancient epic needs to be investigated and interpreted accordingly.[171] In fact, the issue of the acceptance and awareness of the end by all characters concerned is crucial: the lack of it in the *Aeneid* is evident (and it is supplied by Maffeo Vegio in his continuation; cf. for instance [*Aen.*] 13.90). Sophocles' *Electra* offers an example of a conflict of ends in that Electra forbids Aegisthus to speak further (*El.* 1483bf) and Orestes charges him with undue delay (*El.* 1501), perhaps suggesting that this will not be the final closure of the story, perhaps even of a trilogy.

Thematization of Closure

This brings us to the last subject to be considered, the explicit thematization of closure, whether as part of the narrator's text or of character speech.[172] Any character may explicitly refer to the process of closure and voice their resistance to or acceptance of it. But the force and effectiveness of a thematization of closure will depend on the character concerned and vary according to the degree of authority displayed. Metanarrative statements in the voice of the narrator are regularly encountered at the close of texts, be it in the form of explicit references to narration (or publication) as in the *Hymni Homerici* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or more implicit, allusive ones (such as references to memory, monuments) as in Horace *Odes* 3.30 or even simple 'closural allusions' mentioned at the beginning of this section.[173] Character speech too may contain such 'closural allusions'; one might for example wish to consider ulterius as such, used both by Jupiter ("ulterius temptare veto"; *Aen.* 12.806a) and Turnus ("ulterius ne tende odiis"; *Aen.* 12.938a).[174] It is in fact possible to trace the thematization of closure over a whole narrative: Goldhill (1984), for instance, has followed references to its τέλος throughout

[171] The interpretation given to an ending will vary considerably depending on whether a human or divine point of view is taken; cf. Dunn (1996) 42 on different readings of Euripidean tragedy according to whether the human or divine level is privileged. Bal (1985) 228 concludes that the narratee of the *Iliad* is rather encouraged to take the human perspective (cf. below on the *Iliad*).

[172] Cf. e.g. D. Fowler (1997) 16 on Latin silver epic: "One aspect that has been prominent in recent criticism is the interplay between form and content that results from the thematization of notions of beginnings and endings - and indeed middles"; and above p.39.

[173] For references to narrating cf. D. Fowler (1989) 106-8; for more allusive references Lynn-George (1988) 233, 252-76 and below p.114 on the σῆμα of the *Iliad*.

[174] Cf. Mackie (1988) 207.

Aeschylus' *Oresteia,* and such an approach may easily be transferred to the Homeric epics.[175] Temporal adverbs expressing a position with respect to the end may also be usefully considered (for example "already", "not yet", "still"). In the *Aeneid*, Jupiter's last speech to Juno both thematizes the approach of closure ("ventum ad supremum est", *Aen.* 12.803a) and follows it with what is a summary of her plotting throughout the poem ("terris agitare vel undis/ Troianos potuisti, infandum accendere bellum,/ deformare domum et luctu miscere hymenaeos", *Aen.* 12.803b-5), before turning to enforce its closure as just quoted. In fact, an investigation of plotting as a narrative theme in itself, reminiscent of the concept of the 'narratable' suggested by D. Miller (1981), but linked more closely to the role of the characters, will form a large part of my readings of Homeric closure. As D. Fowler (1997) notes, in the end there is "nothing of theoretical interest to say about closure, but many interesting things to say about endings" (13).

[175] Goldhill (1984) *passim*, note e.g. 65 *ad* Aesch. *Ag.*781: "The end, like an origin, becomes a point that by fixing is used to try to control narrative, to control the chain of signification by fixing a *telos*."

ii. Interpretations

1. Views on Homeric Closure so far

Closure, then, can be approached from a variety of angles. I have already laid out how I wish to concentrate on what may be termed narrative closure. My readings will make frequent reference to Homeric scholarship, including a number of recent studies which have a bearing specifically on closure.[176] Yet I will focus on those works that appear to contribute most to an appreciation of the epics as narrative. For this reason it may be helpful first to review in a more general, and of necessity rather summary, fashion how closure in the Homeric poems may be perceived in philosophical, ideological (including feminist), structural as well as more strictly narrative and finally intertextual and metanarrative terms.

Allegoresis

First, the ancient allegorists can be connected with the study of closure insofar as they identify a general, quasi-philosophical meaning implicit in the Homeric poems.[177] This use of allegorical exegesis to extrapolate a thematic τέλος from beyond the surface sense of the narrative was practised by the Pythagoreans and especially Neoplatonists such as Porphyry.[178] It is distinct from its more common, but circumscribed use to diffuse charges of immorality against the Homeric gods, and has even been compared to structuralism or seen as the start of a literary hermeneutics.[179] By attempting to discover certain general myths, or story patterns,

---

[176] E.g. Lynn-George (1988) on the σῆμα; Peradotto (1990) on thematic and structural closure; Katz (1991) and Doherty (1995) on closure from a feminist angle; Murnaghan (1997) on closure and intertextuality.

[177] Cf. Heath (1989) 129 on Proclus on Plato's *Parmenides*: "Just as one ascends from sensible phenomena to the intelligible, he says, so one must ascend from the dialogue's circumstantial detail (...) to its single theme (πρόθεσις) or end (τέλος); time, place, participants - all must have a bearing on that one *skopos* (630. 21-36)."

[178] Cf. Lamberton (1992a) 124 on the Pythagoreans, or "esoteric Platonists" of the second century as the first who read Homer as "tales of the fate of souls" in a holistic way, according to our evidence, 127 on Porphyry: "...[the *Odyssey*] relates the progress of one single soul through the realm of matter (γένεσις), the sublunary realm of coming to be and passing away." In Euclid Odysseus appears to represent διάνοια, whose true goal is a union with νοῦς; cf. Lamberton (1986) 224f.

[179] On the more limited use of allegory cf. e.g. Feeney (1991) 36f; Long (1992) 64, noting that the Stoics were concerned with tracing the origins of divine names and myths in their use of allegory, not with interpreting poems. For the comparison to modern theory cf. on the former Lamberton (1986) 201; on the latter Lamberton (1992a) 133.

looking for a deeper significance behind the surface of the story, these allegorists impose closure on the text through their readings. They tend, however, to discount the narrative presentation of the poems themselves. For example, the *Odyssey* can easily be read as the universal story of a return, but this involves radically telescoping the poem's latter narrative as Clarke (1981) argues: "...for most allegorists the *Odyssey* was completed when Odysseus returned to Ithaca. The wise man had overcome the world's temptations, the soul had returned to its true homeland, and whatever problems still preoccupied Odysseus were strategic and political not moral or mystical" (97). Though the narrative of the *Iliad* is less amenable to such wholesale allegorization, there are similar interpretations of the myth of the Trojan War, attributed to Proclus, Crates and Metrodorus.[180]

This kind of reading has in fact not been restricted to the ancient world, but is also evident for example in Chapman's renaissance translation.[181] Modern attempts at readings of a similar kind, moving towards an anthropological approach by setting the poems' plots in a wider cultural, often ritual, context, may be seen as continuing this tradition. For example, A. Lord's (1960) identification of the same patterns of absence and return, derived from religious

[180] The Pythagoreans may have read it as "the story of the disastrous consequences of the lack of self-control" of Paris ; cf. Lamberton (1986) 35. On Crates cf. Porter (1992) 90: "...there can be little doubt that Crates did intend his *sphairopoiia* to yield, at least in principle, a total interpretation of Homer"; on Metrodorus Lamberton (1992a) 125: "...Metrodorus may have taken the elements of the *Iliad* - specifically, the *characters*, divine and human - and made of them allegorical representations of the constituent parts of the cosmos (fr. A4 D-K)." For the difficulties of allegorical interpretation cf. Lamberton (1986) 223f on the modern view of the *Iliad* as saga in comparison to the *Odyssey's* allegory of man's progress, which appears to resemble general tendencies in late antiquity. Proclus seems atypical in his interpretation of the Trojan War as the fate of souls (Greeks) who - enticed into the tumultuous world (war) by beauty (Helen) - eventually return home across the water; cf. Lamberton (1986) 199f, 223f.

[181] For Chapman cf. G. Lord (1956), e.g. 41f: "Chapman's first note to the *Odyssey* shows his conception of Ulysses as a character evolving toward an ideal of man: 'The information or fashion of an absolute man, and necessarie (or fatal) passage through many afflictions (according with the most sacred Letter) to his naturall haven and countrey is the whole argument and scope of this inimitable and miraculous Poeme.' ...'And therefore is the epithete πολύτροπον given him in the first verse: πολύτροπος signifying *Homo cuius ingenium velut per multas & varias vias, vertitur in veram*.'" A more complete allegory seems proposed today by Finley (1978) vi: "To follow the *Odyssey* is to wander not only with the hero's travels but with the many attitudes that he, his wife, his son, and even minor characters exhibit, yet to reach a clarifying goal. That goal at once describes them and yields a possible understanding of humans' position on earth."

archetypes, in both epics seems to claim a similar universal validity by aligning story patterns with wider patterns in human life (186f).[182]

Ideological Closure Continued

Other critics have investigated thematic closure in the Homeric epics from both a cultural and textual perspective. Here story patterns are seen as the expression of particular historical - political and religious - circumstances; Seaford (1994) for example detects important changes to the endings of both epics in connection with the development of the Greek city states: "...the Homeric narrative is subjected in its transmission to changes which reflect the changing circumstances of its transmission, and in particular the growth of the city-state. ...What from one perspective is complete may from a later perspective require completion" (41).[183] Some such broadly ideological readings, which see a sense of closure conveyed by the establishment or final endorsement of a certain coherent world-view at the end of the poem are less specific about the historical dimension. Again, such interpretations are most easily brought to bear on the *Odyssey*, in which the theme of justice is endowed with a universal validity and forcefully implemented

[182] He does, however, acknowledge significant alterations in Homer of the basic "story pattern of the god who dies, wanders for a period of time in the other world, and then returns" (186f); also Segal (1994) 66: "...both the schema of the ritual [*rites of separation, of transition, of incorporation*] and the structure of the poem share a common perception of a fundamental experience in human life"; Austin (1975) 132: "...[the poem] is a collection of systems that function as paradigms of social and natural order, through which Odysseus and his imitative son pass on their way to the final re-creation of order in Ithaka"; on the *Iliad* cf. Thornton (1984) 120f, who suggests hints at an initiation story behind Achilles' development.

[183] Cf. also Seaford (1994) 146f, 188. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's (1916) analysis of the *Iliad* anticipates such a view, e.g. 71: "Wir wollen...gern anerkennen, daß es [bk.24] für den, der die Ilias als Ganzes im Kopfe hat, einen wohltuenden Abschluß bildet. Das bleibt ja bestehen, auch wenn man sich eingesteht, daß die Ilias so nur schließt und schließen kann, weil die Hellenen mit der Zeit milder geworden sind und daher auch ihren Achilleus milder machten..."; cf. further on the analysts below. Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 98-107 argues that relatively late beliefs about the afterlife inform *Odyssey* 24. We may also mention Falkner (1989a) 52f, who sees Odysseus' proposed inland journey as signifying a passage from the heroic age to a peacable kingdom and agriculture.

as a closural strategy.[184] The closure of the *Iliad*, too, has been seen as expressing a deeper truth about human life.[185]

Recently attention has been paid rather to fissures or ambiguities in the epics' respective moral systems; following on the reassessment of the closure of the *Aeneid*, such interpretations often take the form of an exploration of the different voices included in the epic.[186] The *Odyssey* in particular has been subject to feminist readings, opening the epic, in which women play a more prominent role, up to some extent. Katz (1991) for instance argues: "She [Penelope] is constituted around a persistence of either/or that is drawn toward the unifying power of a monologic *kleos*, yet never comes fully under its sway. In this she is perhaps a better representative of the spirit that animates the *Odyssey* than Odysseus, even - a spirit of indeterminacy affecting both character identity and narrative form, and expressed principally as a refusal of closure, a persistence of uncertainty" (194).[187] On the other hand, more balanced views have also been proposed, foremost by Doherty (1995): "I conclude that the *Odyssey* presents itself primarily as a closed text... At the same time, the existence of conspicuous

---

[184] Cf. e.g. Heubeck (1992) *ad Od.* 24.413 who identifies the replacement of vendetta with justice guarded by the gods as the "essential goal of the narrative"; Stanford (1965) 13; Bertmann (1968) 121f; Erbse (1972) 244; Stößel (1975) 149 sees the final reconciliation as an expression of a world-view set out in the prologue; Rutherford (1986) 160 links it with the hero's moral authority; Hölscher (1989) 309 sees the *Odyssey* as the first epic under a guiding principle (the happy end). The "critical consensus of long standing" of a clear-cut moral is also summarized by Doherty (1995) 13f ; cf. Dimock (1989) 333; and below *ad loc.*.

[185] Cf. Zanker (1994) 73: "Moreover, though the *Iliad* presents Achilles' insight as a unique, temporary thing in the long term of the Trojan War, it is, I suggest, the poem's central gift"; Deichgräber (1972) 8: "Das endlich erreichte gegenseitige Verstehen - kein Verzeihen - bedeutet das Letzte innerhalb der Möglichkeiten irdischen Daseins", also 111 on Kullmann (1960) regarding the closure as a protest against the inhumanity of the *Iliupersis*; Sheppard (1922) 207; Macleod (1983a) e.g. 13; Redfield (1975) 261 n.76 on the ending as "a logical outcome and completion of the dramatized ethical dilemma". Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1916) 71 just quoted sees the same attitude as a strictly historical phenomenon, introduced into the *Iliad* with book 24 at a relatively late stage.

[186] For the *Odyssey* cf. Felson-Rubin (1994) xf: "I see this polyphony as part of a monumental ploy to keep the audience at bay and to preclude premature closure - perhaps my amplification of the traditional notion of suspense"; Schein (1996a) 30f: "Rather, [the *Odyssey's* main values] are to some extent open to criticism and negative evaluation, and the poem itself is correspondingly open-ended, interpretively ambivalent or indeterminate, and irreducible to a single, straightforward, one-dimensional reading"; Peradotto (1990) 4: "In the wake of theoretical movements culminating in deconstructionism, however, this same perplexed and disruptive text becomes a paradigm for a less authoritative, less confident, more dialectical view of text production (writing), and of text reception (reading), and indeed for a more discordant view of the human subject"; on the *Iliad* cf. e.g. Zanker (1994) 42 on the internal ambiguity of the heroic code; similarly Taplin (1992) 6, 50f.

[187] She continues: "For Odysseus as the master of disguises undergoes a series of refigurations of self, but he is 'recognized' in the end, and thus is finally centered on a core of true being. The ambiguities of his identity are displaced onto the aftermath of his narrative history - the prophecy that consigns him to indeterminate wandering." Felson-Rubin (1994) 128 sees Penelope's - and Odysseus' insistent - plotting as opening up the text against Athena's "poetics of closure".

narrative breaks or silences interferes with the text's redundancy" (15). We will revisit this debate in our discussion of the *Odyssey's* plot and in particular of Penelope's role in it.

Plotted Closure

We have already turned towards discussing narrative closure in its more limited sense, and we may return to the *Poetics*, in which Aristotle is concerned with coherence in terms of plot.[188] His view of an organically developed narrative logic means that other poets are mistaken to assume that either pure chronological coincidence (or sequentiality) or the identity of the protagonist would provide a sufficient narrative τέλος. His negative examples are cyclic epics like the *Cypria* and *Ilias Parva* (*Poet.* 1459a17-b7) and poems such as a *Heracleid* or *Thebaid* (*Poet.* 1451a19-22). Instead, the Homeric practice of supplying a single τέλος in order to achieve a unified plot is recommended.[189] In fact, the Homeric epics achieve the highest degree of unity possible in the genre.[190] Yet while acknowledging the striking concentration of the Homeric plots, Aristotle also notes their capacity for the integration of additional material: the *Iliad* is commended for taking up only one part of the whole Trojan War, while incorporating separate episodes like the catalogue (*Poet.* 1459a35-7).[191] Intriguingly, he seems to suggest a link between this inclusiveness and the presence of the narrator in epic (implied by the term διήγησις), as opposed to the different manner of presentation and, accordingly, the different scope of tragedies (*Poet.* 1459b22-31).[192] Aristotle's analysis of the structural coherence, and

---

[188] On his organicism cf. above p.3. Heath (1989) 55 notes that Aristotle is nowhere concerned with thematic unity, note also 39 on plot (μῦθος) as the τέλος of tragedy (*Poet*. 1450a20-35).

[189] Cf. *Poet.* 1451a24-9: Ὀδύσσειαν γὰρ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἅπαντα ὅσα αὐτῷ συνέβη, ..., ὧν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενομένου ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἰκὸς θάτερον γενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ περὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν οἵαν λέγομεν τὴν Ὀδύσσειαν συνέστησεν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα. With regard to the *Iliad*, he remarks that its narrative beginning and closure (τέλος) do not coincide with that of its general - and far too expansive - subject-matter, the Trojan War (*Poet.* 1459a30-4); cf. Horace *Ars P.* 146ff; Beye (1993) 38 and below both on the proem and its closure.

[190] Cf. *Poet*. 1462b8-11: ...ἡ Ἰλιὰς ἔχει πολλὰ τοιαῦτα μέρη καὶ ἡ Ὀδύσσεια <ἃ> καὶ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὰ ἔχει μέγεθος· καίτοι ταῦτα τὰ ποιήματα συνέστηκεν ὡς ἐνδέχεται ἄριστα καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα μιᾶς πράξεως μίμησις.

[191] Cf. his argument that a dramatization of the complete *Iliad* would be deficient through having a multiple plot (*Poet.* 1456a10-9) and his summary of the *Odyssey's* main storyline which implies that most of that epic is nothing but lengthy episodes embellishing a rather meagre over-all plot (*Poet*. 1455b15-24), compared to its praise quoted above (*Poet*. 1451a24-9); note Heath (1989) 54: "Digressions can be seen as helping a poem with a *praxis* of the optimally unified kind achieve the length (and grandeur) proper to epic; therefore digression is not, in Aristotle's view, incompatible with unity."

[192] Another important criterion for the success of a plot is Aristotle's notion of an appropriate, "natural" length of a literary work (*Poet*. 1450b33-51a15); he specifically advocates a structure which can be surveyed as a whole (*Rh.* 1409a24-b25; *Poet.* 1459b17-31). From this point of view, the potentially unlimited timespan of epic holds less appeal for Aristotle than the condensed storytime of (later) tragedy (*Poet.* 1449b12-20; 1451a3-15).

closure, of Homeric epic, then, is finely balanced in that its plotting is set both against less closed epics on the one hand and more closed tragedies on the other.[193] And he is evidently aware of the artificial nature of the narrative τέλος which may be plotted more or less skillfully.[194]

The scholia also include some specific remarks on Homeric plotting.[195] In a manner resembling the narratological analysis of order discussed above, both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are analyzed as beginning to tell their chosen subject-matter ('ὑπόθεσις') in the middle and completing it in inverted order through chronological digressions ('ἐξ ἀναστροφῆς').[196] Concerning the *Iliad*, ΣbT A.1 query: ζητεῖται διὰ τί ἀπὸ τῶν τελευταίων ἤρξατο καὶ μὴ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ὁ ποιητής. They then explain that there was no material for a narrative before Achilles withdrew from the fighting, since the Trojans stayed in the city, concluding: λέγουσι δὲ καὶ ἀρετὴν εἶναι ποιητικὴν τὸ τῶν τελευταίων ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι καὶ περὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνέκαθεν διηγεῖσθαι.[197] However, there is little discussion of the end, with the exception of Aristophanes' and Aristarchus' remark that the 'τέλος' (or, in some versions, 'πέρας') of the *Odyssey* was reached at 23.296.[198] Unfortunately, this statement is in itself controversial and has

---

[193] Cf. also Heath (1989) 50f on such a solution to apparent contradictions, and 55: "It may still be true that the optimally unified tragedy is more unified than the optimally unified epic; but there are compensating factors which Aristotle recognizes elsewhere, but here ignores", also 47 on "the need to defend digressions teleologically, in terms of a generically appropriate end".

[194] Cf. Heath (1989) 42: "There are in fact no such closed causal sequences, cause and effect ramifying indefinitely; if the definition were taken in a strict sense, therefore, a well-ordered plot would be impossible"; and below p.116.

[195] Cf. Kirk (1985) 40-3 and N. Richardson (1980) *passim* on the scholia; N. Richardson (1980) 268 notes that like Aristotle they see the plot as present as a whole in the poet's mind from the beginning, notwithstanding the importance of episodes; he also draws attention to ΣbT Ω.85-6 (ἐπειδὴ μέλλει καταστρέφειν τὸν λόγον εἰς τὰς Ἕκτορος ταφάς, προλαβεῖν τι ἐπιχειρεῖ τῶν ἑξῆς καὶ τὸ κέντρον ἐγκαταλιπεῖν...τοῖς ἀκροωμένοις, ὥστε ποθῆσαί τι καὶ περὶ τῆς Ἀχιλλέως ἀναιρέσεως ἀκοῦσαι... - though this is of course not itself part of the poem). Generally, the scholia offer restricted explanations and individual comments are referred to when appropriate; cf. Mueller (1984) 179.

[196] For this account cf. Heath (1989) 117: "...the core-sequence of the scholiasts' hypothesis corresponds to the Aristotelian *praxis*, while the other parts which, according to Aristotle, Homer uses as episodes correspond to the parts of the hypothesis taken out of order in an inverted narrative", and 115-18, referring especially to Σb B.494-877, also Eustathius 7, 27-42 on the *Iliad* and Theon ii 86.8-17, ΣbT Ω.804 quoted below *ad loc.*.

[197] Cf. Taplin (1992) 83: "The *Iliad* is much too good to begin at the beginning (or to end at the end)"; [Plutarch] *Vit.Hom.* 162: οὐ γὰρ πόρρωθεν ἐμβαλὼν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς Ἰλιάδος ἐποιήσατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ καθ΄ ὃν χρόνον αἱ πράξεις ἐνεργότεραι καὶ ἀκμαιότεραι κατέστησαν.

[198] Rutherford (1992) 93 interestingly notes that the scholia on the *Odyssey* become cursory towards its end.

led to protracted discussion of the exact meaning of these words in the context.[199] For the identification of an event other than the final one as an 'end', in whatever sense, ΣbT Λ.598 may be compared, since they mention Achilles' slaughter on the battlefield as the end of the *Iliad* (cf. ΣAb Y.443; ΣbT Y.376 quoted below).[200] It may also be instructive to compare the (probably contemporary) tragic hypotheses, which often neglect the common dramatic coda: for example, that for Aeschylus' *Septem* ends on the death of the brothers, as opposed to the lamentation and funeral procession which end the drama itself, even if the ending transmitted in the manuscripts is rejected. In the case of the *Prometheus*, however, both endings coincide, telling of thunder and the disappearance of Prometheus; this may perhaps be regarded as an added reason to consider the play spurious.[201]

Comparing Closure

The concern with narrative logic and thus, in the end, with closure recurs in the context of the long-standing debate between analyst and unitarian critics.[202] Their concerns may be seen to represent two different poles of the study of narrative: unitarians tend to build their most pertinent arguments from issues of plot construction and over-all meaning, while analysts often focus on detailed matters of stylistic, grammatical and syntactical import.[203] Without wishing to neglect the stylistics of closure, it remains largely true that for analysts the special problem of closure is often incidental to the pursuit of their analysis (though closural scenes are subject to the same scrutiny as others). In contrast to the Aristotelian acceptance of epic narrative as particularly inclusive, the analytical view of narrative unity can at times be extremely reductive,

---

[199] The reliability of the scholia, and Eustathius, who transmit the comment, has also sometimes been questioned - *pace* Page (1955) 101; for exact references and further discussion cf. below *ad loc*..

[200] Cf. N. Richardson (1980) 268 n.7; Erbse (1972) 175f.

[201] Concerning Sophocles' *Ajax*, it may be noted that Dindorf attributes the section which sees Teucer's burial and lament of Ajax as the play's πέρας to a Byzantine grammarian (as noted in Pearson's *apparatus criticus* to the diegesis); while in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* there is the common divergence of ends.

[202] On the *Iliad* cf. e.g. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1916); Myres (1932); Deichgräber (1972) (with 91f; 114-17 on a number of German analysts); on the *Odyssey* cf. e.g. Page (1955); Erbse (1972); Stößel (1975); Wender (1978); Oswald (1993). The influence of Aristophanes and Aristarchus has contributed to the fact that the *Odyssey* has come under specially close scrutiny; cf. Erbse (1972) 166; Clarke (1981) 202 against Page (1955) 116.

[203] Cf. e.g. Page (1955) 111 on the meeting of Odysseus and Laertes: "The verdict of the Greek language is so clear and emphatic that we are spared much troublesome and inconclusive dispute about general probabilities", also 101f; against Erbse (1972) 189: "Es soll vielmehr gezeigt werden, daß sich die Singularitäten dieses Schlusses mit der Ausdrucksweise des übrigen Epos vereinigen lassen, sobald man die Voraussetzungen der komplizierten Handlung im Blick behält." The nature of most analytical criticism means that often the motivation of characters is questioned when motivation through (or because of) theme and plot may be as, or more, relevant; cf. below p.132.

as evinced by a readiness to athetize passages.[204] It has been argued recently, however, that both groups of scholars rely on the same notion of narrative logic, regarding epic very much as a monolithic, closed entity, whether this coherence is seen as wanting in the Homeric poems or not.[205] In the interpretations I largely steer clear of such debates and focus instead on making my own argument, though my conclusions will also reflect on these issues.

Investigations of Homeric narrative in general have already begun to move away from these entrenched positions, in particular as a consequence of developments concerning orality. Here, too, the emphasis was at first on dissecting the epics, as repetitions on all levels (words, word groups, verses, motifs, scenes) were primarily taken as evidence for certain mnemonic techniques characteristic of 'composition-in-performance' rather than of an intended aesthetic effect.[206] The original 'Parryist' model was of a completely improvised oral performance in which the end of the song could be adjusted at will.[207] Hainsworth (1991), for instance, contends that singers announced their beginning but did not know where they would end, due to the audience's prior knowledge of the saga and the formal problem of the tale of Troy in its inclusiveness (25; on this issue cf. further just below).[208] But recently critics have moved away

---

[204] Cf. e.g. Clarke (1981) 205; Mueller (1984) 148 on analysts: "...the zeal of its predominantly German practitioners has often been singularly devoid of common sense."

[205] Doherty (1995) 34 refers to Katz (1991) 94 for the view that both kinds of reading "postulate a unified subjectivity - of the poet(s), the characters, or both" and are thus closed; cf. Lynn-George (1988) 161: "It is now demonstrable that both schools in the older debate shared an idealised concept of the unity of the work..."

[206] For the similarity to developments of analyst criticism cf. Clarke (1981) 270: "[Parry's and Lord's] insistence on the extent and richness of the oral tradition before Homer...implied that the discrepancies so dear to analysts' hearts might indicate not a multiplicity of authors and editors but a multiplicity of sources and themes..."; Austin (1975) 3: "The new mode was to ascribe the assemblage [of folk lays] to a single composer, but one limited to simple paratactic thoughts and endless repetitions of those simple thoughts, all strung together in simple paratactic metrical units devised through the centuries for the very purpose of being strung together in crude assemblages"; de Jong (1987) ix: "Both issues [analytical-unitarian and oral-formulaic] are concerned with the way in which *Iliad* and *Odyssey* came about, in other words, they approach these texts from a *genetical* point of view."

[207] Cf. Clarke (1981) 279f: "...both Albert Lord and James Notopoulos have expressly called for a poetics of oral verse that would be emancipated from our Aristotelian preoccupation with organic form..."; also A. Lord (1960) 148, who in fact sees two forces pulling against each other, 94: "Although the themes lead naturally from one to another to form a song which exists as a whole in the singer's mind with an Aristotelian beginning, middle, and end, the units within this whole, the themes, have a semi-independent life of their own." Note also Ford (1992) quoted just below. Cf. Parry (1971) lvi on work by G. Lord and Notopoulos: "For Homeric poetry is 'inorganic' and 'paratactic', as is oral verse in general, and must be judged as such", noting the difficulty: "At the end of Notopoulos' article we may wonder what we are left with that could enable us to make an intelligent criticism of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*"; Zumthor (1984) 26: "In the series of declamations of an epic poem, however, the modifications go so far as to blur, at times, the identity of the work."

[208] S. West (1989) 132 too advances the dubious point that previous knowledge of the story by the audience renders narrative closure unnecessary.

from, or beyond, the simple opposition of orality versus literacy, to a more flexible notion of the textual nature of the epics as we have them.[209] The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* - as written texts - are generally accepted to be the subject of all critical readings now, including oralist ones, and it is possible to read the Homeric epics as highly organized texts, for example in the way later events are foreshadowed, without reference to how they came into being. As Mueller (1984) notes: "To say of such a work that it is oral is to make a statement about its dominant mode of production and/or transmission. Such a statement of itself says nothing about the organisation, complexity and spirit of a text so produced or transmitted" (10).[210]

Closure in Context

Openness therefore now tends to be seen again in terms of plotting rather than in terms of the epics' presumed manner of composition. It is generally assumed that there was a pre-existing narrative continuum of stories all linked to one another, which could be begun and ended (or indeed stopped) at will, reflected in a largely paratactic narrative structure.[211] This concept of a narrative continuum has often been seen to preclude closure, as exemplified in the alternative ending of the *Iliad*, linking it to the (an?) *Aethiopis*; in the case of the *Odyssey*, the *Telegony* appears to overlap and in fact disagree with the Homeric narrative, but here an

[209] Cf. Nagy (1996) 109: "But there can be textuality - or better, textualization - without written text"; Oesterreicher (1997) 207: "It is this new concept of *communication-in-performance* - which differs from Parry's and Lord's *composition-in-performance* - that our analysis of oral epics has to start from; ..." (also Nagy (1997) 183f on '*mouvance*' and 'recomposition-in-performance'); less radically Taplin (1992) 8f, esp.: "The division of the oral poem into large-scale parts would also encourage connections, especially between the beginnings and endings -..."; also D. Fowler quoted above p.31. Against 'Parryism' cf. e.g. Rutherford (1985) 133; Taplin (1992) 12; for problems concerning the definition of terms such as 'formulae' and 'themes' cf. e.g. Hainsworth (1969) 19f.

[210] He argues further, 11-13, that "at the level of discourse there is no sharp distinction between 'oral' and 'literate' composition". Cf. e.g. Kahane (1997) 136; already Austin (1975) 22: "As we possess them the poems are not oral but written"; Nagy (1996) 30 (and ff) on "the need to reconcile the comparative insight of Parry and Lord about composition-in-performance with the historical reality of an integral and unified Homeric *text* inherited from the ancient world".

[211] Cf. Ford (1992) 58-89, esp. 83 in connection with the oral tradition: "The point of closure in an oral performance is not a given, and the very form of epic poetry lends itself to infinite continuation: it is composed in short, generally self-contained phrases, paratactically strung along; these often fall into end-stopped hexameters, placidly laid one after another. ...traditional epic poems never actually conclude: the leave off; open-endedness is the law of the genre"; on paratactic structures in general cf. above p.43; Fenik (1974) 137 with n.9f on paratactic composition as precluding a unified structure with beginning and end; Allan (1997) 27 on "the open-endedness of tragic myth" as explored by Euripides, 28 with n.115 more generally on "the fact that the myths comprise a complex, interlocking fictional continuum, in which a story may be modified by a poet and added to the mythical chain, if not quite willy-nilly, certainly with a great measure of freedom".

openness has been found in the prophetic inclusion of the aftermath of the protagonist.[212] I hope to show, however, how in the Homeric epics closure is, on the contrary, instituted in narrative terms precisely in view of the potentially endless subject-matter.[213] I thus align myself rather with those who contrast plotted, unified Homeric with cyclic epic; Aristotle's views have already been discussed.[214]

Indeed, the Homeric epics may be regarded to thematize their own position towards related stories, laying claim to an especially authoritative position and thus striving for closure on a metanarrative level. For the *Iliad* the case for such encompassing intertextuality has been made especially with regard to the proem's reference to the Διὸς βουλή; for the *Odyssey* in connection with the comparison with the story of Agamemnon's return and other νόστοι (but arguably also including the *Iliad*), also prominent from the start.[215] Such an appreciation of Homeric closure may also be helped by neo-analysis, which combines analytical and oralist influences in the attempt to uncover structures and motifs shared with other epic stories. It could feasibly lead to an investigation of how intertextuality can influence perceptions of closure, despite the obvious lack of independent evidence for relevant comparative material for the Homeric epics.[216] The concept of closure as a function of narrative authority and consummate

---

[212] Cf. the interpretations below on all these issues, esp. p.116; also Ford (1992) 44f: "Logically then, the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and all of what we call 'epic' belonged further along on the same continuum [as Hesiod's *Theogony*]."

[213] Cf. Fenik (1974) 138-42; Heath (1989) 119 n.43: "...there is little profit in regarding as peculiarly pre-classical, paratactic (...) or oral, techniques of composition practised throughout antiquity and recommended by the highly literate rhetorical theorists of the Hellenistic period"; similarly Rutherford (1992) 54-7.

[214] Cf. above p.61. Many later scholars too identify 'plotting' as characteristic of Homeric epic in contrast to what may be conjectured concerning the cyclic epics; cf. e.g. Scott (1921) 251, 267f; Stößel (1978) 116; Erbse (1972) 183; Thornton (1984) 46f with n.6; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 217f. On the (presumable) structuring principles of earlier epic (usually seen to lack clear closure) cf. Hainsworth (1991) 17, 25f on the Trojan cycle, 44 on the epic cycle; Otterlo (1944) 165f n.2 (who differs in that he includes the *Iliad*); also M.L. West (1978) on Hesiod.

[215] For the former cf. Murnaghan (1997) *passim*, discussed below; for the latter Slatkin (1996) 228: "My point is...that alternative treatments have been rejected and that the path taken to create *this* song, the one being sung - our *Odyssey* - is the ultimate and preemptive path", also 233; Ford (1992) 127; Tracy (1990) 149f on the *Odyssey's* presentation as the return of all returns (we may also remember the transfer of *Argonautica* material to Odysseus' wanderings, cf. above); Ford (1992) 111; Finley (1978) 195 on the poem as a conclusion to the Trojan Cycle; Goldhill (1991) 106: "Odysseus goes to the Underworld to rewrite the epic tradition" and 107 on the *Odyssey* as redefining, incorporating and contesting the *Iliad*.

[216] The best example is Murnaghan (1997); Seaford (1994) 188 links the choice of closure to historical developments (cf. above), in the case of the *Iliad* set against the endings of the story of Memnon and the *Aethiopis* (e.g. 162; 171; 177), in that of the *Odyssey* against hypothetical other versions of the story (178). Cf. too Slatkin (1996) 226f on the *Odyssey* as set against alternative narrative models such as the story of Agamemnon's return, but a comparison to the *Argonautica* may also be relevant; cf. e.g. Page (1955) 2.

plotting appears also to be seen in positive terms in the narratives themselves as a sign of the Homeric narrator's supreme skill (though commonly deconstructed by Derridean and feminist critics; cf. above p.4). Again, we will see how in the *Odyssey* in particular metapoetic closure in the form of the thematization of the poet's control and authority is all-pervasive.[217]

[217] Cf. Slatkin (1996) 237 on the poem itself as *pan-metis* in contrast to, and in control of, *poly-metis* Odysseus; Goldhill (1991) 68. On the *Iliad* cf. e.g. Lynn-George (1988) 272, linking the issue to epic's function of perpetuating stories: "Self-reflexive, the epic is a self-sufficient totality: performing the position [the offer of *kleos*] it asserts, the poem is complete in itself", though he then qualifies such a view: "In its tale of the past for the future - already belated, after the event, and always ahead of itself, telling of what is still to come - the epic compounds a sense of finitude with a sense of the indefinite. The work of immortal glory was already accomplished and is never yet fully completed"; Bakker (1997a) 4.

"Il senso ultimo a cui rimandano tutti i racconti ha due facce: la continuità della vita, l'inevitabilità della morte."
Italo Calvino *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Torino: 1979) 261

2. The Iliad

The closure of the *Iliad* has not been as controversial as that of the *Odyssey*. The poem may therefore serve as a testcase for the flexible and comprehensive approach to closure I have outlined, in particular in view of recent studies which reflect the suspicion with which closure has lately come to be regarded, such as by Murnaghan (1997) and Lynn-George (1988). This chapter will examine narrative closure in the *Iliad* by looking at the interaction of the poem's thematic and chronological structure, in particular through an analysis of plotting by the characters (including the gods). Beginning with the proem so as to review the way in which it initiates and sets up the narrative, I will proceed with a discussion of selected scenes, both 'kernels' and 'satellites', which are especially relevant to the development of its closure.[218] Following a section detailing a number of more specific closural strategies I end with a summary of the development and role of closure in the *Iliad* as a whole.

2.1 Ends in Dispute

The Proem

As noted in the introduction (above p.43), the Homeric proem fuses the traditional address to the Muse with the beginning of the narrative proper, establishing its subject-matter *in medias res*. The *Iliad's* proem certainly sets a beginning by proposing the anger of Achilles against Agamemnon as its topic to the Muse (1.1-7; note ἐξ οὗ...τὰ πρῶτα, 6). It also appears to give an indication of its over-all plot, proleptically mentioning the suffering and deaths of the Achaeans themselves as the consequence of this quarrel (1.2-5a). But no exact point of closure is envisaged and the proem seems not to be meant to contain an accurate indication of the reach of the plot; indeed the action of the poem itself has been said to go beyond the indications given

[218] I thus follow a traditional tripartite structure of beginning, middle and end which appears to suit the narrative structure of the poem. Cf. Taplin (1992) 19; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 218; Kirk (1985) 45f; a summary is provided in N. Richardson (1993) 2-4.

here.[219] The proem may, however, be regarded as foreshadowing a theme important to the final part of the narrative by including the motif of bodies becoming the prey of dogs and birds (1.4f).[220] On the other hand, the mention of the Διὸς βουλή (1.5) has been interpreted as a general reference to a wider plot of Zeus to punish mankind through a series of wars, thus - allusively - reaching beyond the narrative itself both into its past and future.[221] In such a reading the imperfect ἐτελείετο (1.5) gains particular significance, placing the poem's action into this larger, ongoing plot, and perhaps - Lynn-George (1988) suggests - even implying that the poem itself is "not so much the celebration of an achievement, more a *process*, prolonged and indefinitely open" (38), without either a clear beginning or end.[222] We will return to the concern with the impact of a narrative continuum on closure in relation to the poem's ending itself (p.116), though the issue of Zeus' plotting will be discussed throughout.

Following this general 'prolepsis', the question about the motivation of Achilles' and Agamemnon's quarrel (1.8) leads into an initial 'analepsis' narrating its origins, which then imperceptibly develops into the main narrative (from 1.247bff or 318bff).[223] Indeed, the theme of Achilles' wrath and its containment serves as an introduction to a whole network of subjects explored by the characters, such as the nature of authority and how it should be exercized, the

---

[219] Cf. e.g. S. Richardson (1990) 134, noting that 1.1-7 represent a 'prolepsis', summarily anticipating the action represented in the narrative, though not reaching its end; Thornton (1984) 93; M.L.West (1978) 44, arguing that the epics were composed following a set programme, but with added abbreviations and digressions: "In neither case does the prospect announced at the beginning (*Il.*1.1-5, *Od.*1.1-9) extend as far as the poem eventually does, though in the latter parts of both epics we find the poets looking forward to events which they never reach, the deaths of their central heroes."

[220] The theme is taken up later as Hector's burial is delayed by Achilles who wants to feed his body to wild animals (e.g. 22.354); cf. Segal (1971) 37: "Hector's death is the most tragic of those rendings by dogs and birds foretold in the proem"; N. Richardson (1980) 269; Griffin (1980) 44f. It is interesting that Zenodotus wanted to athetize exactly these verses as noted in the *apparatus criticus*; he either missed the allusion to the final conflict or thought it had no place in a proem.

[221] The half-verse in question also features in the *Cypria* (fr.I.7b); Kullmann (1992) 17 refers to a number of passages in Hesiod as further evidence for such a plan of Zeus. Alternatively, the expression is taken as simply pointing forward to the scene between Zeus and Thetis at the end of bk.1 (thus e.g. Aristarchus in ΣA A.5; Taplin (1992) 129); cf. Murnaghan (1997) 24 with n.2; Lynn-George (1988) 279 n.29.

[222] Cf. Kullmann (1992) 14: "Das Imperfektum ἐτελείετο macht -...- den Zorn und seine Folgen zu einem Moment der Planung des Zeus unter anderen"; Murnaghan (1997) 25, but note her distinction between "ending" and "closure", 26: "As chapters in a story that has a beginning in the coming to power of Zeus but no ending, these narratives find closure not in the definite resolution of any issue, but in the completed institution of an ongoing state of affairs."

[223] Thornton (1984) 109f identifies 1.6-52 as an 'extensive appositional expansion': "The use of appositional expansion here is an ingenious way of stepping immediately onto the main path of events, and yet pre-facing it with a short preview of that very path"; cf. S. Richardson (1990) 34 ('appositive summary').

nature of honour (or recognition) and how it can or cannot be assumed or, if necessary, restored. The debates in the *Iliad* certainly center on a number of key terms, such as μῆνις, ἔρις, χόλος, κότος, and then τιμή, linked to γέρας and ἄριστος.[224] I hope to show more specifically not only how the narrative begins to raise and then develops such thematic disputes and negotiations, but finally provides closure for them. The introductory scene tracing the development of Achilles' anger offers an ideal starting point for analyzing the way in which the characters and their debates open up the narrative; in it the predominance of direct speech is particularly striking.[225] Murnaghan (1997) has already proposed to identify the 'narratable' in the *Iliad* with the heroic code as lived by the humans, in that the continuous questioning of honour leads to an extension of war (29ff).[226] I wish to suggest that her view of the 'narratable' may be extended to take into account the contribution of all characters with different authority and status, motivated by different interests and wishes, including the gods, to its generation. More importantly, unlike Murnaghan I will eventually come to argue for a number of different ways in which the 'narratable' is in the end presented as closed.

Anger Proliferating

The first episode of the *Iliad* establishes the theme of anger as a generating force for further disputes, and continued narrative, by virtue of its easy transference from one character

[224] Cf. Griffin (1986) 44. On μῆνις cf. ΣΑΤ A.1 listing synomyms used by Achilles in bk.1. On τιμή cf. Zanker (1994) 2; Taplin (1992) 50f on an open definition of the 'heroic code'.

[225] There are 214 verses (two thirds) of direct speech until 1.318; the proportion is even higher if reported speech or thoughts are counted (add 1.22-4; 55f; 103; 188-92). On the general prevalence of direct speech cf. e.g. Aristotle *Poet.* 1460a5-11; Scott (1921) 253; for exact proportions cf. S. Richardson (1990) 70; Griffin (1986) 37. Insights of modern semiotics concerning the agency of language users in defining and redefining the relationships of whole clusters of culturally charged terms ('semantic fields'), whose relations are open to question and realignment, (cf. e.g. Lyons (1981) 144 on the social dimension of language use and self-expression) seem to inform recent discussions; cf. Taplin (1992) 63f, referring to a dynamic political and ethical dispute in bk.1 and noting, 52f, that the audience, too, is drawn into this debate; similarly Goldhill (1991) 86 (also 72f, 85f, 93), identifying explorations of power, anger and κλέος respectively as fundamental to the poem; Griffin (1980) 39f.

[226] She sees such debates as in effect advancing Zeus' presumed master plot; they are thus interpreted as basically destructive and endless in nature (35f, 41); on the 'narratable' cf. D. Miller (1981) above p.22. Lynn-George (1988) 160 also stresses the difficulty of securing closure: "The complicated course of the narrative extends in a shifting configuration of those terms of loss, restitution, and recompense, in which a balance is barely [*sic*], if ever, achieved."

to another.[227] Thus the first instance of anger is not Achilles', but stems from Agamemnon's reaction to Chryses' petition concerning the return of his daughter ("μή μ᾽ ἐρέθιζε", 1.32), combined with a refusal of resolution which opens up a space for the narrative ("οὐ λύσω", 1.29). Chryses' own anger is adopted by Apollo (χωόμενος κῆρ; 1.44; cf. 46, 9) who turns it against all Achaeans, as asked (1.42). The fact that Chryses as a priest is able to approach Apollo directly emphasizes that the gods, as characters, are an integral part of the narrative, while Apollo's response shows that the gods too reflect the concerns expressed by the humans.[228] Indeed, a goddess, Hera, attempts to end Apollo's anger and protect the Achaeans by calling an assembly through Achilles (1.58f).[229] Yet the seer Calchas, who is meant to discover the reason of Apollo's μῆνις (1.75), recognizes the danger of repressed anger in particular, since it retains the potential for further action, though perhaps also eventual closure ("εἴ περ γάρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψῃ,/ ἀλλά τε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσσῃ,/ ἐν στήθεσσιν ἑοῖσι", 1.81-3a). Indeed, Agamemnon's anger looks for a new object after the λύσις of Chryseis, putting in jeopardy Hera's end of helping the Achaeans, which had seemingly just been reached (1.116-20).

Over a sequence of increasingly acrimonious dialogues his anger comes to focus on Achilles, who is singled out from a number of people threatened (1.137-9), as he begins to

---

[227] Cf. Hardie (1997) 147 on the end of the *Aeneid*: "An end to anger is an end to a wrath epic. The problem is that the emotion of anger is inherently unbounded; it does not know how or where to stop"; also Putnam (1995) 215-17 on ira as a generating principle in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (esp. *Met.* 1.166; 15.871). - The development of the narrative through anger may be mirrored by the similar growth of the personified Ἔρις in 4.442f (while the dire consequences in 4.444f remind us of the proem). There may be other metapoetic references in this simile describing the beginning of battle: note the phalanxes marching νωλεμέως (4.427f) and those δειδιότες σημάντορας (4.431) progressing (ἐστιχόωντο, 4.432) like verses controlled by those who give them meaning. The personification of Ἔρις in 11.3-12 will be discussed below p.84, but note ἄλληκτον (11.12).

[228] Cf. above p.53; also Griffin (1980) 145-8; Redfield (1975) 76f, 136. (Note that Calchas, himself a seer of Apollo, will be a prominent speaker in the Achaean assembly.) On the shared concerns which allow for an easy transference of anger from humans to the gods cf. e.g. Zanker (1994) 29; Taplin (1992) 129; Feeney (1991) 48 (including ancient objections to this fact). Because the disputed themes are also shared with the Trojans, the *Iliad* can focus first on the Achaeans, who are mainly concerned with their own differences and only incidentally mention their opponents; cf. N. Richardson (1993) 15, who sees the quarrel about Briseis as mirroring the abduction of Helen by Paris and the anger thus created.

[229] Her intervention will, however, eventually lead to the same result as Apollo's wrath, which is the death of many Achaeans. There is a parallel in the *Aeneid*, as Juno's plot to destroy Aeneas ends with the destruction of her own protégé Dido instead. ΣbT A.56 ask: πῶς ἡ τῆς μήνιδος αἰτία γενομένη ἐκήδετο; and offer an explanation according to narrative logic: without Achilles' anger and withdrawal the Trojans would have remained in the city, so μακρὸς ἂν ἐγένετο καὶ ἀτελεύτητος ὁ πόλεμος. We will return to this issue in detail when discussing Athene's intervention below.

challenge Agamemnon's authority.[230] Their confrontation now escalates, turning into a wider discussion of key themes: Achilles identifies conflicting interests between himself and Agamemnon in fighting the Trojans (1.152-60; note "τιμή", 159) and proposes to absent himself in the absence of what he considers a fair (and communally decreed) reward for his efforts (1.149-52; 161-71; note "γέρας", 161, 163, 167).[231] Agamemnon, however, claims that he does not need Achilles' strength and asserts his authority by claiming recognition in his own right, especially by Zeus (1.173-81a). In fact, he seems to regard Achilles' prowess as a liability, indirectly blaming him for the altercation (1.173-8; note "αἰεὶ γάρ τοι ἔρις τε φίλη", 177a), and concludes by elevating their dispute into a precedent in order to justify his own strong action ("..., ἐγὼ δέ κ᾽ ἄγω Βρισηΐδα καλλιπάρῃον/ αὐτὸς ἰὼν κλισίηνδε, τὸ σὸν γέρας, ὄφρ᾽ ἐῢ εἰδῇς/ ὅσσον φέρτερός εἰμι σέθεν, στυγέῃ δὲ καὶ ἄλλος/ ἶσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην", 1.184-7).

Divine and Human Interaction

A violent closure to the quarrel is now suggested, as Achilles deliberates whether to kill Agamemnon for his ὕβρις (1.188-94a; cf. 204f), rejecting a voluntary end to his wrath (note ἦε χόλον παύσειεν ἐρητύσειέ τε θυμόν, 1.192) as well as his earlier plan simply to walk away.[232] It is avoided, however, by a second intervention of Hera and Athene to limit the expression of anger (1.194b-6; cf. ΣbT A.195-6), since their interest lies with both (Achaean) parties. Death as the ultimate limit will only be developed as a theme later. Athene's mission in this 'kernel'

[230] In fact, Agamemnon accurately predicts that an attempt by himself to take away the γέρας of anybody will cause further resentment ("ὁ δέ κεν κεχολώσεται ὅν κεν ἵκωμαι", 1.139). Cf. ΣA A.139: καὶ εὔηθες τὸ προσκείμενον ὁ δέ κεν κεχολώσεται· πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἔμελλε χολοῦσθαι; Calchas had already spelled out the connection of the expression of anger with the issue of power ("κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ", 1.80).

[231] The dialogue also serves to give more background of the Trojan War and hints at their own personal relations so far (1.163-8; 177); cf. Taplin (1992) 63f for indications of a long-standing feud between them. (There is a similar hint concerning Agamemnon and Calchas in 1.108.) - Walking away is in itself a dubious possibility as Achilles will come to see in bk.9; cf. below.

[232] ΣA A.192 are not happy with even the possibility of closure at this point: ὅτι ἐκλύεται τὰ τῆς ὀργῆς· διὸ ἀθετεῖται.

episode to prevent closure makes her function like an inverse *deus ex machina*.[233] Yet the scene illustrates both the possibilities of divine intervention and its potential shortcomings due to differences between human and divine characters and their perspectives, which may prevent a fully consensual and satisfactory resolution of the situation.[234]

Athene's attempt at persuasion is successful in averting Agamemnon's death (which might have led to abandoning the traditional end of the Trojan war), since Achilles is aware of the need to respect divine plots regardless of the strength of his own feelings ("χρὴ μὲν σφωΐτερόν γε, θεά, ἔπος εἰρύσσασθαι/ καὶ μάλα περ θυμῷ κεχολωμένον· ὣς γὰρ ἄμεινον", 1.216f) and stops his hand (σχέθε χεῖρα βαρεῖαν; 1.219b; cf. "σὺ δ᾽ ἴσχεο", 214b).[235] But he only accedes to her request because of her special status as a goddess ("ὅς κε θεοῖς ἐπιπείθηται, μάλα τ΄ ἔκλυον αὐτοῦ", 1.218), and Athene fails to achieve a genuine end to his anger ("λῆγ᾽ ἔριδος", 1.210; cf. 217; οὔ πω λῆγε χόλοιο, 224).[236] Though she expects the debate between Agamemnon and Achilles to continue ("ἀλλ᾽ ἤτοι ἔπεσιν μὲν ὀνείδισον ὡς ἔσεταί περ", 1.211), this may seem to fall short of the actual consequences of their confrontation as indicated in the proem. Yet the anticipation can be read metapoetically as a hint at the continued progress of the narrative which has only just begun (note "ἔπεσιν", 1.211; cf. "ἔπος", 216).[237] Athene does, however, hold out the prospect of an eventual closure in the form of an offer of threescore gifts by Agamemnon

---

[233] The *deus ex machina* is usually employed to bring about or reinforce closure in later tragedy; cf. below p.234. Feeney (1991) 52f points out how the special powers of the gods make it possible for them to turn around the action at moments of crisis; cf. ΣbT A.195-6: εἴωθε δὲ εἰς τοσούτον αὔξειν τὰς περιπετείας ὡς μὴ δύνασθαι ἄνθρωπον αὐτὰς παῦσαι (quoting the πεῖρα; 2.166-82) and above p.53. N. Richardson (1980) 270 notes that the scholia identify a liking for cliff-hanging situations: "Such crises often require the intervention of a god to resolve them, anticipating the later *deus ex machina* resolutions of Greek tragedy"; cf. de Jong (1987) 74 quoting ΣbT B.156.

[234] Cf. above p.54. For the idea that mortality adds profundity to human experience and behaviour cf. e.g. Taplin (1992) 133; Griffin (1980) 93, also 162 and 169 on divine irresponsibility; Mueller (1984) 145: "Because the gods are protected against risk, their experience is finally void, for value is created by risk and the possibility of loss" (though they can lose human protégés); Zanker (1994) 125.

[235] Note the possible metapoetic reference in "ἔπος εἰρύσσασθαι" (1.216); cf. Pucci (1998f) 196: "The only certain success of Athena's bid consists, therefore, in sparing Agamemnon's life and in gaining time; and this is essential for the plot of the poem."

[236] We may contrast Nestor's unsuccessful attempt at persuasion a little later (1.254-74). In contrast to Athene who has too much power, Nestor may be said to have too little; cf. too Calchas' earlier complaint that he lacks the power to intervene effectively (1.78-80). - Cf. Redfield (1975) 78: "However, the higher authority [Athene] which prevents his [Achilles'] act is, at the same time, powerless to resolve his situation", 221 on the arbitrary element in divine limitation.

[237] Cf. Pucci (1998c) 77: "For from the goddess's solution arises the wrath of Achilles, that is, the poem itself."

to repay his ὕβρις (1.212-14; note "τὸ δὲ καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται", 212b), in reply to Achilles' proposed end of killing Agamemnon ("τὸ δὲ καὶ τελέεσθαι ὀΐω", 1.204).[238] We can now see how the thematic disputes of the poem are connected to potential closure. Achilles in turn anticipates a time when the Achaeans' need of him will cause Agamemnon to regret having slighted him (1.240-4). The relation of this moment in the future to the one anticipated by Athene - if any - is as yet unclear; indeed, both are themselves unspecified, as is shown by the indefinite temporal pronoun ("ποτ΄", 1.240; "ποτέ", 213), creating space for the narrative to develop further in search of its end.[239]

The *Iliad's* narrative thus gains its momentum through the interaction of characters with different and often contradictory ends: Hera and Athene wish to foil Apollo, but will find themselves (unexpectedly) foiled by Achilles, who allows his own wrath to be directed against all Achaeans in the attempt to prove his outstanding position amongst them to Agamemnon (e.g. 1.240-4; also 409-12).[240] The gods - like the human characters - cannot plot or act in isolation and thus are not necessarily able either fully to enforce their own ends or to foresee the end to come.[241] The simple fact that some characters are endowed with greater authority than others (the gods, but also, for example, Agamemnon and Achilles himself) does not automatically guarantee the complete success of their plots. Indeed, we need to distinguish between a successful and a satisfactory closure through the intervention of such powerful characters: while they may achieve their immediate aim to bring about certain ends, their very power may mean that they may

---

[238] Note that her anticipation is phrased more confidently than Achilles'; cf. ΣA A.204, 212, ΣbT A.212: ὁ μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος 'ὀΐω' φησίν (A 204), ἡ δὲ ὡς θεὸς διαβεβαιοῦται. N. Richardson (1993) 217 *ad* 23.410 notes that the expression used here by Athene often introduces a threat. Note also the shift from Athene's conditional "παύσουσα τὸ σὸν μένος, αἴ κε πίθηαι" (1.207) to the imperative "σὺ δ' ἴσχεο, πείθεο δ' ἡμῖν" (1.214b) at the end of the speech.

[239] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 163 on the "indefinite certainty" of recompense which he sees as the same as the "indefinite certainty" of death, but as I will show there are crucial differences between the two.

[240] Note that Hector is introduced here; cf. ΣbT A.242: προσυνίστησιν ἡμῖν Ἕκτορα λελη θότως ὁ ποιητής, μέλλων αὐτῷ χρῆσθαι πρὸς τὰ ἐπιφανῆ τῆς Ἰλιάδος ἔργα. The consequences of internal Greek strife for the Trojans are also mentioned by Achilles (1.160) and Nestor (1.254-8). Achilles' attempt to set himself apart from the Achaeans, creating three conflicting parties rather than two, is further discussed below. There may in fact be more extensive similarities between internal and external strife; cf. e.g. 11.3-12 when personified Ἔρις, sent by Zeus, stands in the middle of the Achaean ships between Aias' and Achilles', ostensibly moving the Achaeans to fight the Trojans, but also illustrating how she has divided the Achaeans themselves (and below p.84).

[241] Complete foreknowledge, or omniscience, on the side of the gods might pose problems for the narrative; cf. Redfield (1975) 220: "The gods' knowledge of fate is partial; otherwise they could not participate in the action"; he also argues, 133, that epic is the "story of free actors and their free choices", therefore any prior knowledge of the fated outcome (especially by the gods) is "curiously irrelevant". On the special, though slightly ambiguous position of Zeus cf. further below *passim*. This issue will need to be addressed again with respect to the *Odyssey*.

neglect to take into account the perspective, to change the motivations or to gain the full consent of the characters influenced, and may thus in fact prevent full and satisfactory closure to be reached.[242] It appears that only the convergence of the plots of all characters, whatever their standing, and a general agreement about the end can give rise to a satisfactory as well as successful closure, an issue that will be especially important for securing closure at the end of the epic.

2.2 Plotting

Zeus and the Gods

Achilles' continued anger might still leave Hera's and Athene's end of protecting the Achaeans intact, if he were not able to involve none other than Zeus, the character with the greatest authority, claiming his support for its continuation against them as well as Agamemnon.[243] He dispatches his divine mother to ask for retaliation on his behalf (1.409-12; cf. "ἀλλὰ σύ πέρ μιν τεῖσον, Ὀλύμπιε μητίετα Ζεῦ", 508). But Thetis' petition retains the indeterminacy of Achilles' own words in the assembly: the plot of strengthening the Trojans is suggested to last until such a time when the Achaeans themselves will offer him recompense and the appropriate recognition ("τόφρα δ' ἐπὶ Τρώεσσι τίθει κράτος ὄφρ' ἂν Ἀχαιοὶ/ υἱὸν ἐμὸν τίσωσιν ὀφέλλωσίν τέ ἑ τιμῇ", 1.509f).[244] This basic openness with regard to closure is retained too by Zeus when he eventually agrees, at the same time as its certain fulfillment is stressed: a pronoun encompassing the whole request takes the place of any more specific indication of the timing or exact nature of its closure ("ἐμοὶ δέ κε <u>ταῦτα</u> μελήσεται, ὄφρα <u>τελέσσω</u>", 1.523).[245]

---

[242] Aphrodite's later intervention to unite Helen with Paris (3.383-447) also entails both a superficially successful action (Helen does go to bed with Paris) and a residual degree of dissatisfaction from a human point of view. The perspective of the human characters is presumably shared by the human audience; cf. Bal (1985) 228 above p.54.

[243] Zeus is the highest and most powerful god; cf. above p.53 and e.g. Taplin (1992) 131f: "It is clear that, if it came to it, Zeus would be stronger than all the rest put together: ... Zeus *could* have his own way on everything; he could even annul something long-fated, even perhaps his own *boulē*"; Mueller (1984) 139f; also the remarks of the gods themselves (e.g. 1.562-7; 4.56; 15.104-9, 132-7, 164-7). Achilles too occupies a special position in relation to other humans: for example, μῆνις is only ever used of him and gods; cf. Griffin (1986) 43; Clay (1997) 65-7, esp. 66: "Achilles ascends to an almost divine stature by mimicking and making his own the anger that belongs properly to the gods alone".

[244] Thetis continues the transference of themes by equating Achilles' non-recognition by the Achaeans with her own by Zeus if he does not grant her request (1.515f). Zeus' initial silence is explained by ΣbT A.511 in metanarrative terms: ὅτι περὶ πάσης ἐνθυμεῖται τῆς Ἰλιακῆς περιπετείας, regarding him in the guise of a narrator.

[245] Note too Zeus' closing reference to its fulfillment (1.524-7; esp. "οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον", 527).

As in the opening debate between Achilles and Agamemnon, the end of the plot is expressed in seemingly unambiguous terms by referring to a future time ("ὄφρ(α)", 1.509, 523; cf. "ποτ(έ)", 1.213, 240). But our discussion of the assembly has already illustrated that the identification of the end in thematic terms, of when the proper τιμή and τίσις will have been reached, is open to dispute among the characters.

It is important for an appreciation of the *Iliad* that even the character with the greatest authority over the plot does not reveal its closure. This is emphasized by Zeus' subsequent confrontation with Hera, which also shows how he too is bound into the network of plots both of humans and other gods (1.493-2.6).[246] In fact, the displacement of Achilles' anger onto Zeus becomes a catalyst for latent divine disagreements concerning the direction and ends of the plot, and the scene brings out the multiplicity of interests and the ever-present possibility of a confrontation among the gods, in parallel to the situation in the Achaean camp.[247] This discussion is meant to supplement the more selective picture of the thematization of plot by Murnaghan (1997). Her briefer paper focuses on the relation of the μῆνις Ἀχιλῆος (1.1) and the Διὸς βουλή (1.5), whose initial correspondence turns out to be illusory and results in a repeated deferral of narrative closure (especially 23, 26-8): Achilles comes to see what he thought of as his plot become part of a larger plot of Zeus, involving the deaths of his friend and himself.[248]

The setting indicates the potential for divisions in that Zeus' separate position on Olympus allows Thetis to approach (1.498f); a fact that will be taken up by Hera when she later reproaches him for his secret plotting (1.540-3; note "ἐμεῦ ἀπὸ νόσφιν ἑόντα/ κρυπτάδια φρονέοντα δικαζέμεν", 541bf). Zeus had anticipated conflict with her in particular, since (as he notes) she "always" suspects him of helping the Trojans (1.518-21; note "ἐρέθησιν", 519; "νεικεῖ", 521). Indeed, Hera is aware of his newly agreed plot to strengthen them (1.558f), but Zeus will not reveal the whole story to her - yet. But he recognizes that she is the closest of all characters to him and will be the first to be told when the time has come: "Ἥρη μὴ δὴ πάντας ἐμοὺς ἐπιέλπεο μύθους/ εἰδήσειν: χαλεποί τοι ἔσοντ᾽ ἀλόχῳ περ ἐούσῃ·/ ἀλλ᾽ ὃν μέν κ᾽ ἐπιεικὲς

[246] Cf. Redfield (1975) 247 n.9: "Zeus thus appears not as the high god, source of the plot, but as an actor within the plot - an actor who does not even initiate events but responds to the response of another."

[247] Cf. e.g. Taplin (1992) 130f; Mueller (1984) 7.

[248] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 40 on the poem "tak[ing] shape in an indefinite fluctuation between two possibilities, two diametrically opposed and yet, within the *Iliad*, reciprocal dimensions: the irreconcilable realms of fate [Zeus' plan] and free will [Achilles' anger]".

ἀκουέμεν οὔ τις ἔπειτα/ οὔτε θεῶν πρότερος τὸν εἴσεται οὔτ᾽ ἀνθρώπων·/ ὃν δέ κ᾽ ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε θεῶν ἐθέλωμι νοῆσαι,/ μή τι σὺ ταῦτα ἕκαστα διείρεο μηδὲ μετάλλα" (1.545-50).[249] In metanarrative terms, Zeus can be seen as in the position of the narrator himself who uses his knowledge of events selectively, while the audience - like Hera closest to the person controlling how the plot is to be revealed - have to be content to be led towards the ending as it develops.[250] This speech can therefore be seen to encapsulate the plotting of the *Iliad's* narrative itself, in which the general direction of the story is well-known in advance, but the closure of the narrative only revealed gradually, in particular by Zeus to Hera.

The Wider Perspective

In fact, the divine scene following the duel between Paris and Menelaus explicitly looks out towards the end of the wider story of the Trojan war. It also illustrates further both the preeminence of Zeus as well as his reluctance in the *Iliad* simply to enforce his plot. Thus he institutes a πεῖρα which offers Hera and Athene the opportunity to begin asserting and clarifying their own ends ("ἡμεῖς δὲ φραζώμεθ᾽ ὅπως ἔσται τάδε ἔργα,/ ἢ ῥ᾽ αὖτις πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ φύλοπιν αἰνὴν / ὄρσομεν, ἦ φιλότητα μετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισι βάλωμεν", 4.14-16), as had been the case in the πεῖρα of the Achaeans before.[251] He insinuates that they are not particularly effective as helpers of Menelaus, in contrast to Aphrodite who intervened to save Paris' life (4.7-12). Despite their inaction, he seemingly offers the option of awarding Menelaus victory according to the terms agreed, opening up the possibility of the Achaeans' return to Greece with Helen (4.13-19; cf. 3.253-8 for the terms). Hera and Athena now make it clear that their own plot is concerned not so much with promoting Menelaus as with the destruction of Troy (4.20-8; esp.

---

[249] Hera, on the other hand, has to recognize Zeus' superior position which allows him to do as he pleases, as Hephaestus reminds her (1.573-83; cf. ΣbT A.580-3); he has both the will and the power to see through what is now his plot (1.562a; 565b-7; note "ἐμῷ...μύθῳ", 565b).

[250] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 41: "All is both predetermined and open to choice in a narrative which is fixed forever and constantly refashioned. Everything is distributed between the two realms of already and not yet"; also *mutatis mutandis* S. Richardson (1990) 195: "Like Zeus, the Homeric narrator is all-powerful yet makes himself subservient to tradition. He may hint at alternatives which he is quite capable of implementing, but if he should defy the pre-ordained plot structure, no one will approve" and ΣT O.64, noting that the poet is ἐναγώνιος in providing only the germ of the future as in 11.604.

[251] Cf. αὐτίκ᾽ ἐπειρᾶτο Κρονίδης ἐρεθιζέμεν Ἥρην (4.5). The πεῖρα in bk.2, initiated by Zeus' false dream sent to Agamemnon, serves to clarify the end of the Achaeans (also the fall of Troy), besides making room for the introduction and (further) characterization of the protagonists, and the development of themes. The episode will be discussed further in the context of *Odyssey* bk.2. ΣbT Δ.5 attempt to link Zeus' πεῖρα here with Achilles' plot: ἤθελε μὲν παράβασιν τῶν ὅρκων ποιῆσαι δι΄ Ἀχιλλέα, τὴν δὲ αἰτίαν αὐταῖς περιτιθέναι. Critics have noted that 'kernel' events such as these often seem more appropriate to the beginning of the war; thus Thornton (1984) 54 reads the duel in bk.3 as "a vivid presentation of the cause of the Trojan War".

28b); they do not wish a duel to provide closure in this conflict, regardless of which side wins.[252] It is important to recognize that the ends with which the gods are concerned here are those of the wider story of the Trojan war: they negotiate a satisfactory, consensual closure to it in order to avoid future quarrels (cf. "μὴ τοῦτό γε νεῖκος ὀπίσσω/ σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ μέγ᾽ ἔρισμα μετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισι γένηται", 4.37bf). By granting Hera the eventual destruction of Troy, in exchange for Argus, Sparta and Mycene (4.51-4), Zeus now actively acknowledges her close proximity in status to him as she had acknowledged his supreme authority (4.55-64a).[253] What started as a pretended disagreement (4.5f), ends in a negotiated agreement about the final τέλος between the gods (4.62f; 68ff). This inclusion of (what will turn out to be) the aftermath into the narrative itself will be considered as part of the closural strategy of the *Iliad* in a separate section (cf. below p.116).

By clarifying the ends envisaged by the gods, the scene also draws attention to the fact that in the end they take a different, larger perspective than the human characters: their plots, and ends, (in either sense) become incidental in view of the larger story.[254] The audience's perception of other ends raised in the narrative, including its eventual closure (which is yet left open), will also be coloured by the presentation of the fall of Troy as the ultimate end of this story early on in the narrative.[255] This πεῖρα, like the one in book 2, can be said to (re)present more forcefully than Agamemnon's rescue in book 1 the direction - and end - of the story by rejecting an alternative ending to the war.[256] Here too Athene's powerful divine intervention to start, not to

---

[252] Athene's subsequent mission to break the truce illustrates this fact: since for Hera and herself it is more important that the Trojan war end with the fall of Troy than with the return of Helen, they prefer to help the Trojan Pandarus break the truce rather than help claim it as a Greek victory (4.70ff). The judgement of Paris as a motive, here implicit, recurs explicitly at the end in bk.24; cf. below.

[253] Zeus' endorsement of the fall of Troy as the ultimate end of this story allows Hera to substitute a confident statement in 4.57 ("ἀλλὰ χρὴ καὶ ἐμὸν θέμεναι πόνον οὐκ ἀτέλεστον") for the outraged question in 4.26 ("πῶς ἐθέλεις ἅλιον θεῖναι πόνον ἠδ᾽ ἀτέλεστον...;").

[254] ΣbT Θ.429 capture the tension of divine relations with, or care for, humans: ὅταν εἰς τὴν ἀξίαν ἀτενίσῃ τῶν θεῶν, τότε φησὶν αὐτοὺς μὴ κινεῖσθαι περὶ θνητῶν ὡς οὐδὲ ἂν ἡμεῖς περὶ μυρμήκων. ὅταν δὲ ἐπιλογίσηται τὴν ποιητικήν, ἔπεται τοῖς μύθοις καὶ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐκτραγωδεῖ συμμαχίας καὶ θεομαχίας παράγων.

[255] Cf. de Jong (1987) 90: "...['analepses' and 'prolepses'] create dramatic irony and suspense, incite pathos, elicit pity, signal the importance or symbolical value of objects, recall important information and provide background information necessary for the appreciation of following speeches"; more specifically S. Richardson (1990) 136f (including a comparison to Hitchcock): "Our prior knowledge of the denouement casts the events leading up to it in a more serious light than the events themselves warrant"; Allan (1997) 37 on similar effects of suspense concerning not so much the outcome but the development of the plot engendered by Euripidean prologues.

[256] Cf. S. Richardson (1990) 196: "The Homeric narrator, master of the discourse, is in a sense master of the story as well."

prevent fighting (authorized by Zeus; 4.68-72) stages the refusal of an immediate ending of the war, avoiding what would be a premature closure to the conflict and thus to *Iliad* itself.[257] The decisive nature of divine decision-making about ends is in fact understood by the humans, though they are usually not privy to the preceding divine negotations. Thus both Trojans and Achaeans wonder in response to Athene's sudden appearance after the inconclusive end of the duel: "ἦ ῥ᾽ αὖτις πόλεμός τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνὴ/ ἔσσεται, ἢ φιλότητα μετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισι τίθησι/ Ζεύς, ὅς τ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται" (4.82-4; cf. 4.14-16 quoted above).[258]

Plots in Collision

The direction of Achilles' plot, adopted by an authority such as Zeus, still appears to stand in tension with the overall end of Troy's destruction, because it entails the advance of Hector. Therefore it engenders complications among the gods, and despite Zeus' earlier reassurance concerning the fall of Troy Hera and Athene, who (as we have seen) commonly support all Achaeans including Achilles, proceed once more to intervene (8.350-96).[259] Though there is no renewed negotiation of the end of the larger story as Zeus threatens violence to stop them from acting out their plot (8.399-408), this disagreement rather leads to a further clarification of ends incidental to the narrative.[260] Zeus' irate final reply to Hera now begins to fill in part of the blank provided by the pronoun ταῦτα in his promise to Thetis (1.523). Answering Hera's fears, he specifies the point at which Hector's progress will end; this end reintroduces Achilles into the plot, but (perhaps surprisingly) the turning point identified here is not the release of his anger as such, but his reentry into the battle ("οὐ γὰρ πρὶν πολέμου ἀποπαύσεται ὄβριμος Ἕκτωρ,/ πρὶν ὄρθαι παρὰ ναῦφι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα,/ ἤματι τῷ ὅτ᾽ ἂν

---

[257] Cf. '*if not* situations' explained above p.53 and below p.193; Thornton (1984) 60 sees the duel as one of "[t]hree times the expected forward-movement of the action is stalled by reversals"; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 221 on thrice repeated retardations. Athene's intervention is a mirror image of the truly closural scene of *Odyssey* 24, where Zeus' and her consensus similarly decides the outcome for men (and, crucially, is accepted by them); cf. below p.234.

[258] Cf. e.g. 3.101f, 297-301; note that the narrator has already anticipated the abandonment of the duel (3.302); cf. ΣbT Γ.301-2: κεφαλαιωδῶς τὴν τῶν μελλόντων προαπήγγειλεν ἐπίδειξιν. Note too Hector's speech offering a second duel (7.66-91), especially his acknowledgement that Zeus did not let the first one achieve closure, to the detriment of humans. - Intriguingly, in the scholia ταμιεύειν becomes a critical term denoting the narrator's control over his material (cf. "ταμίης πολέμοιο", 4.84).

[259] Griffin (1980) 170 attributes the complications to Zeus: "The complex plan of Zeus, which involves helping Troy but not actually routing the Achaeans, leads to ambiguities"; cf. Redfield (1975) 137 on a "confusion of purpose among the gods".

[260] Note that Zeus' contention that his threat will be fulfilled ("τὸ δὲ καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται"; 8.401) becomes a counterfactual ("τὸ δέ κεν τετελεσμένον ἦεν"; 8.454), once they have complied.

οἳ μὲν ἐπὶ πρύμνῃσι μάχωνται/ στείνει ἐν αἰνοτάτῳ", 8.473-6a). More surprisingly, Achilles' reappearance (and the implied change of his own plot) is motivated thematically through the death of his friend Patroclus ("περὶ Πατρόκλοιο θανόντος", 8.476b).

This is the first mention of Patroclus since his short appearance in book 1 (1.337; 345ff), and the first intimation either to the internal or external audience of his involvement in Achilles', or the *Iliad's*, plot.[261] On a smaller scale, then, Zeus' 'internal prolepsis' of events here enhances the significance of subsequent episodes (especially in book 9) for the audience, as the 'external prolepsis' in book 4 had afforded it the vantage point of the larger divine perspective for the narrative as a whole. Again, the certain fulfilment of this preview of the future is stressed, as Zeus closes with an assertion of its inevitability ("ὣς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι", 8.477a).[262] Still, it has been noted that his brief vision here contains minor inaccuracies when compared to actual events later.[263] But this kind of criticism assumes that Zeus either could or would want to anticipate fully how the various plots of all characters will come to affect each other. As he had announced in book 1, Zeus does not reveal the whole of the events to follow, leaving an opportunity for the characters - himself included - to interact with each other. Even his 'prolepses' are therefore best read in their context as offering a summary, partial and (arguably to an extent even) a specially

[261] Further on Patroclus' involvement, which again comes about only through the interaction of a number of human and divine characters, below p.86. ΣbT Θ.470-6 note that the prophecy moves the audience, but also ὁρίζων τὸ πέρας παραμυθεῖται τὴν ἀτυχίαν. The beginning of Patroclus' active involvement in the plot will be marked explicitly as such by the narrator in a drastic 'prolepsis', announcing a beginning in the middle (κακοῦ ἀρχή, 11.604). ΣbT Λ.604 well analyze its effect: ἀναπτεροῖ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἡ ἀναφώνησις ἐπειγόμενον μαθεῖν τί τὸ κακὸν ἦν. προσοχὴν δὲ ἐργάζεται, διὰ βραχείας ἐνδείξεως· εἰ γὰρ πλέον ἐπεξειργάσατο, διέφθειρεν ἂν τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον καὶ ἀπήμβλυνε τὴν ποίησιν. S. Richardson (1990) 144f points out that as the longest 'universal truth' in the narrator's own voice the passage 16.688-90 similarly accentuates his involvement with Patroclus' crucial decision to advance further, marking his death and a turning point in the plot.

[262] The concept of fate has often been debated; for different views cf. e.g. Redfield (1975) 133f, also suggesting, 140f, that Patroclus' death only gradually comes to be included in Zeus' plot, as the consequence of "free choices of Achilles, of Nestor, and of Patroclus himself"; Clay (1997) 154f: "The events themselves are fated, but exactly how and when is often left unclear"; S. Richardson (1990) 138 on divine agreement about what is fated, also 194; N. Richardson (1993) 126 *ad* 22.166-87 on Zeus' fear of other gods' disapproval if he were to change the fate of a person; ΣbT Θ.477 argue that Zeus' mention of fate makes him seem less tyrannical. It appears futile to debate how Patroclus' death comes to be included in Zeus' plot; cf. Jones (1997a) 17f on a double strategy: "...first, a fate whose terms are either revealed only gradually to the participants (as in Achilles' case) or not at all (as in Patroclus' and Hector's, ...); and second, an insouciance or forgetfulness on the part of the gods to what is fated, so that even they seem unaware that such-and-such a course of action is inevitable."

[263] Cf. Kirk (1990) 334 *ad* 8.475-6, noting Aristarchus' objections, "for Patroklos is to die on the very next day (whereas ἤματι τῷ suggests a more distant day, cf. 22.359), and not among the ships but in the open plain". ΣA Θ.475-6 athetize these verses as unnecessary and inaccurate (cf. on the prophecy in bk.15 below); cf. Taplin (1992) 142f.

focalized view on the future, taking into account the sympathies of his audience(s), as we will see with regard to book 15.

Negotiation Refused

The following embassy scene develops both Achilles' ends and attendant thematic issues, in a crucial 'kernel' scene connected to that in book 1 and others in books 11, 16 and 18.[264] It begins with the offer of a potential end to Achilles' anger in accordance with Athene's suggestion in book 1 (1.212-14), as Odysseus proposes material reparation on Agamemnon's behalf ("ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι καὶ νῦν/ παύε᾽, ἔα δὲ χόλον θυμαλγέα· σοὶ δ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων/ ἄξια δῶρα δίδωσι μεταλλήξαντι χόλοιο", 9.259b-61). It should be noted that Odysseus' use of temporal adverbs implies that Achilles has already pursued his plot for too long (note "ἔτι καὶ νῦν", 9.259b; cf. "καὶ ὀψέ περ", 247). Indeed, he warns him of potentially reaching a pivotal moment at which the plot of harming his own allies will irrevocably turn against him (9.229-51; esp. 249f); a subject which will be explored further.[265] Odysseus quotes Peleus to reinforce his point that only an end to Achilles' divisive anger will lead to the end of recognition he desires (9.252-9a; note "ληγέμεναι δ΄ ἔριδος κακομηχάνου, ὄφρά σε μᾶλλον/ τίωσ΄ Ἀργείων ἠμὲν νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες", 257f). However, Achilles still refuses to be persuaded and argues that the loss of τιμή he has already suffered instead leaves only death as the end of his fighting for the Achaeans (9.315-45; note "ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι·/ ἐν δὲ ἰῇ τιμῇ ἠμὲν κακὸς ἠδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός·/ κάτθαν᾽ ὁμῶς ὅ τ᾽ ἀεργὸς ἀνὴρ ὅ τε πολλὰ ἐοργώς", 318-20). Death as the only reward available clearly seems unacceptable to him, but it becomes difficult to identify *any* end that might be acceptable in such a paradoxical situation. This is expressed by his insistence on the indeterminate and indeterminable end of "complete reparation" for having been slighted: "οὐδ᾽ εἴ μοι τόσα δοίη ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε,/ οὐδέ κεν ὣς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων/ πρίν γ᾽ ἀπὸ <u>πᾶσαν</u> ἐμοὶ δόμεναι θυμαλγέα λώβην" (9.385-7). But this demand is in itself impossible to fulfill as it suggests no specific way in which to offer reparation; on the contrary, the open-

[264] Thematically, the embassy carries on and develops the debate about status, its (non-)recognition, anger and the proper limits introduced in the very first scenes (cf. above); cf. Goldhill (1991) 80; Zanker (1994) 79. A. Lord (1960) 189f makes clear how various characters take on different roles in similar scenes: "The difference is that whereas up to this point we have seen Achilles playing Chryses to Agamemnon, now we find him playing Agamemnon to Chryses. ...And by slipping into the role of Agamemnon he...prolong[s] the story..."

[265] Cf. too Phoenix (9.496-526); Ajax (9.628b-31). Cf. Taplin (1992) 66-73 for a more detailed discussion of the theme of friendship in this scene; Zanker (1994) 87; also Goldhill (1991) 80-5, esp. 85 voicing the link to the ubiquitous question of agreeing on the appropriate limit.

endedness which was latent in the first announcement of his end in 1.240-4 is now becoming obvious.[266]

Indeed, Achilles begins to revise his concerns by considering how the finality of death radically devalues τιμή as an end (9.401-9; note "ἀνδρὸς δὲ ψυχὴ πάλιν ἐλθεῖν οὔτε λεϊστὴ/ οὔθ᾽ ἑλετή, ἐπεὶ ἄρ κεν ἀμείψεται ἕρκος ὀδόντων", 408f), thus introducing a new thematic strand.[267] Instead of taking the human perspective of achieving τιμή as advised by his mortal father, he focuses on the words of his divine mother, whose approach is crucially different by beginning with the end: "μήτηρ γάρ τέ μέ φησι θεὰ Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα/ διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τέλοσδε" (9.410f).[268] His main concern accordingly moves from τιμή to κλέος, from present towards future recognition; this theme will increasingly come to the fore as the narrative gains momentum in its development towards closure.[269] Though Achilles' life may not be an acceptable price to pay for τιμή, Thetis' picture of the two plots for his life, as he recalls it, implies that it might be a price worth paying for κλέος, which in itself is endless ("εἰ μέν κ᾽ αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι,/ ὤλετο μέν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται", 9.412f). For the end of death as such remains inevitable all the same (cf. 9.414-16); in

[266] The ὅφρα-clause of Thetis' petition had been similarly unspecific (1.509). Cf. A. Parry (1956) 6, who interprets 9.387 as an *adynaton*, which preempts all possibility of achieving closure; Mueller (1984) 47; Zanker (1994) 87f reads it as a wish "to undo what has been done". Taplin (1992) 73 argues that Priam's personal 'embassy' in bk.24 shows how such a demand could have been fulfilled; but at that point Achilles' own concerns have shifted completely to the end of death rather than recognition and his reaction there cannot simply be compared to the one here. Lynn-George (1988) 171f, too, sees the conjunction "not before" as opening up a future possibility, but pays no attention to the content of that clause. Note esp. the substitution of τιμή with its material connotation by λώβη, an abstract concept not open to such easy reparation; cf. Achilles' concern with the *public* humiliation he received from Agamemnon (9.646-8; note "ἐν Ἀργείοισιν").

[267] Cf. Agamemnon's ominous warning to the absent Achilles ("δμηθήτω - Ἀΐδης τοι ἀμείλιχος ἠδ᾽ ἀδάμαστος", 9.158).

[268] The two alternatives for Achilles' life are hinted at in 1.414-18 and explained here, while only one is left in 24.540; cf. e.g. Griffin (1980) 76; Goldhill (1991) 76; Zanker (1994) 78; Redfield (1975) 92, 220. Redfield (1975) 134 notes that the knowledge of their fate "adds a dimension of awareness to [the] characters", but Achilles' knowledge is as yet only partial. - Note that while Thetis plays a prominent role at the beginning and in the middle of the narrative, Peleus only becomes important at its very end (though Thetis appears briefly in a role of lesser thematic impact), illustrating the shift of focus from Achilles' divine to his human inheritance, as he - and the narrative - move towards closure.

[269] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 76-80 on the interdependence of mortality and κλέος; Lynn-George (1988) 215: "Rather, the inextricable relation of loss of life with *kleos* is emphatically stated. The epic juxtaposes death as unmitigated loss with death as *kleos*"; Redfield (1975) 33 on the difference between τιμή and κλέος (we may add that the former becomes irrelevant with death, the latter especially relevant): "...a man's *timē* is a valuation of him, while his *kleos* is a description of him" and below on the σῆμα p.114. The *Odyssey* will radically question this concept by exploring the possibility of reconciling survival and the achievement of κλέος; cf. below esp. on the two scenes in the underworld.

fact, this special quality of death as the ultimate end, the τέλος θανάτοιο (already introduced in the preceding narrative of duels and general battle), will also become relevant for the poem's closure.[270]

Unwilling any more to win τιμή among the Achaeans but also without a motivation yet to win κλέος by fighting the Trojans, Achilles' continuation of his anger (and of the thematic debate begun in book 1) leaves him and his plot at a dead end.[271] This impasse can be seen to be reflected metanarratively in Ajax' eventual conclusion: "ἴομεν· οὐ γάρ μοι δοκέει μύθοιο τελευτὴ/ τῇδέ γ᾽ ὁδῷ κρανέεσθαι" (9.625f). It is this statement of (narrative) frustration which finally prompts Achilles to agree and to move on to a more specific clarification of the end of his plot. A second πρίν-clause draws attention to the contrast with his unfulfillable demand earlier (cf. 9.385-7 quoted above): he now defines the end of his anger with reference to a certain future event, which is the advance of Hector towards his own ships ("οὐ γὰρ πρὶν πολέμοιο μεδήσομαι αἱματόεντος,/ πρίν γ᾽ υἱὸν Πριάμοιο δαΐφρονος Ἕκτορα δῖον,/ Μυρμιδόνων ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθαι / κτείνοντ᾽ Ἀργείους, κατά τε σμῦξαι πυρὶ νῆας./ ἀμφὶ δέ τοι τῇ ἐμῇ κλισίῃ καὶ νηΐ μελαίνῃ/ Ἕκτορα καὶ μεμαῶτα μάχης σχήσεσθαι ὀΐω", 9.650-5). As had been the case in Zeus' 'prolepsis' (8.473-6 quoted above), Achilles sees the end of his anger, his reentry into the battle and the end of Hector's advance coincide.

But in contrast to Zeus' overarching perspective which allows him also to anticipate Patroclus' death, Achilles is unable to foresee it, even if he may be sure of the ultimate end of his own, inevitable death.[272] In this partial knowledge of the plot, in which the over-all closure is certain from the start while incidental ends are revealed only gradually, Achilles' position reflects that of the (internal and external) audience towards the plot of the *Iliad* as a whole (cf. above on Zeus' words; 1.545-50). Indeed, the example of Zeus, who does not exclude himself from dispute and negotiation despite his unique authority, illustrates Achilles' mistake in

---

[270] τέλος θανάτοιο is an expression common in battle narrative (3.309; 5.553; 9.411; 9.416; 11.451; 13.602; 16.502; 16.855; 22.361; *Od.* 5.326; 17.476; 24.124); cf. Ambrose (1965) 51 with n.2; Schein (1996a) 24 n.42 with examples; Taplin (1992) 184 n.5: the phrase is part of the same verse used to describe the deaths of Sarpedon (16.502), Patroclus (16.855) and Hector (22.361).

[271] Indeed, he still seems to think of exiting from the Trojan war altogether and even encourages others to do so (9.417-20). A motivation to fight will be in place in 18.121; cf. below.

[272] Note Diomedes' tellingly vague summary of Achilles' reentry into battle, saying that he will fight "when he decides to" (9.699-703). This contrasts poignantly with the pronounced presence of Patroclus throughout the scene; cf. Taplin (1992) 78f.

expecting to be able to exercize single control over the direction of his plot.[273] Indeed, he appears to believe that he can continue to dissociate himself from the other Achaeans without suffering from his own plot of retaliation. Thus his anticipation of reentering the battle hinges on the danger to his own ships, which are pictured as separate from both the other Achaeans and the Trojans (9.650-5 just quoted).[274] Unlike Zeus, too, Achilles is not prepared to take into account the division of sympathies between Agamemnon and himself on the side of the Achaeans, similar to the disturbed loyalties seen on Olympus (cf. above p.77).[275] Rather than negotiating with his fellow Achaeans, he appears single-mindedly to persist in his own plot, repeatedly attempting to draw others into the quarrel (cf. e.g. 9.369-72a; esp. "ἀμφαδόν, ὄφρα καὶ ἄλλοι ἐπισκύζωνται Ἀχαιοὶ", 370; also 417-20). This forced split into two opposed parties is illustrated symbolically in terms of setting at the end of the embassy, as Phoenix remains with Achilles and Patroclus, while the other two join the other leaders in Agamemnon's tent (9.658-71).[276]

Two Plots Beginning to Merge

The plot is again clarified further by Zeus in response to divine discontent with its current development in book 15. The Διὸς ἀπάτη (14.354-15.235) had introduced Poseidon as another partner in the Olympian debate about the direction of events. Indeed, he gradually turns into an actor who almost achieves an end to Hector's advance that differs from the one envisaged by

[273] He seems to rely on the complete agreement of Zeus' plot with his own in his answer to Phoenix, in which the τιμή shown to him by Zeus imperceptibly turns into an end in itself rather than a means, a seemingly superior substitute to the τιμή from his fellow humans, rather than leading back to it (9.607-10; as opposed to 1.509f).

[274] Cf. his earlier proposition to exclude the fall of Troy as an end altogether (9.417-20) - in his mind Agamemnon and the Achaeans have taken the place of the enemy; cf. e.g. Goldhill (1991) 82 on Achilles' equation of the taking away of Briseis with that of Helen (9.337-43). Indeed, Agamemnon had already recognized that their quarrel would result in "ἀνάβλησις κακοῦ" for the Trojans (2.377-80); cf. also the position of Ἔρις in 11.3-12 in the middle of the ships mentioned above p.71.

[275] This division is voiced by the ambassadors; cf. esp. Odysseus' appeal on behalf of the Achaeans, as opposed to Agamemnon (9.300-3); also again Ajax (9.628b-31); Nestor's earlier speech to Agamemnon (9.106-11; esp. "ἀπούρας/ οὔ τι καθ᾽ ἡμέτερόν γε νόον", 107b-8a).

[276] Achilles demands a clear either/or decision from Phoenix, and implicitly the others (9.611-15; esp. 614f); his additional threat to sail home (9.356-63; cf. 1.169-71 above), reiterated as advice to the other Achaeans (9.417-8a), can be read as the most extreme sign of this split. Cf. ΣbT A.183: οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἤδη ἀποτέθειται τῶν φίλων τὸν Ἀχιλλέα. Cf. Griffin (1986) 53-5 on Achilles' striking (and unique) references to distant places and e.g. the word τηλόθι.

Achilles and Zeus by intervening on behalf of the Achaeans.[277] But after waking from Hera's seduction, Zeus employs her to begin redirecting the action according to Achilles' pro-Trojan plot (15.49-61a).[278] His commands to her (15.54-68) turn into an 'external prolepsis' of events (15.69-71), thus combining the wider perspective evident in their conversation in book 4 and the limited ('internal') one in book 8.[279] This revelation of how Achilles' plot with its incidental ends will fit into the larger story of the Trojan war marks a turn towards closure: Zeus now specifies how Hector's renewed advance will lead the Achaeans to push back to Achilles' ships so that Achilles, who had wished to separate himself from them, sends out his friend ("αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὺς/ αὖτις ἀποστρέψῃσιν ἀνάλκιδα φύζαν ἐνόρσας,/ φεύγοντες δ' ἐν νηυσὶ πολυκλήϊσι πέσωσι/ Πηλεΐδεω Ἀχιλῆος· ὃ δ' ἀνστήσει ὃν ἑταῖρον/ Πάτροκλον", 15.61b-65a). He also summarizes Patroclus' own advance towards Troy, including the death of Zeus' own son Sarpedon; his loss illustrates once more (to Hera and the external audience) that Zeus too has to accommodate himself and his ends when it comes to plotting (15.65b-7).[280]

In terms of thematic development, the proliferating theme of anger is now more clearly brought into (potentially problematic) connection with the end of death: the last death mentioned, that of Hector at Achilles' hands, crucially combines both themes ("τοῦ δὲ

[277] Poseidon was yet refusing such intervention in defiance of Zeus, suggested by Hera, in 8.208-11 because of Zeus' greater strength (contrast his claim to equal status in 15.209f, disagreeing with Zeus' opinion, 15.185f). He begins, at first secretly, to support the Achaeans when Zeus looks away from the battle in 13.1, then openly following the Διὸς ἀπάτη. 13.345-60 is a key passage describing how Zeus' and Poseidon's conflict over ends results in continued war and death: τοὶ δ' ἔριδος κρατερῆς καὶ ὁμοιΐου πτολέμοιο/ πεῖραρ ἐπαλλάξαντες ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροισι τάνυσσαν/ ἄρρηκτόν τ' ἄλυτόν τε, τὸ πολλῶν γούνατ' ἔλυσεν (13.358-60). Poseidon is ready to express his disapproval of Achilles and his plot when exhorting Agamemnon (14.139-42); but for him, too, it is the ultimate goal of Troy's destruction which counts in the end (15.212-7; cf. Hera, 4.26-8).

[278] Murnaghan (1997) 27 n.7 mistakenly argues that Zeus' request for Hera's cooperation at this point means that "the impression he gives in Book 1 that he is acting in opposition to Hera is - ... - here revealed to be false": this is because she does not distinguish between the present plot concerning Achilles, which Hera indeed opposes, and the wider plot concerning the fall of Troy, which she supports.

[279] As with his 'prolepsis' in bk.8, ΣA O.56 raise various queries concerning (un)Homeric usage or language; they also offer narrative reasons for athetizing 15.56-77: ὅτι οὐκ ἀναγκαίως παλιλλογεῖται περὶ τῶν ἐξῆς ἐπεισαχθησομένων καὶ κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν εἰσιν εὐτελεῖς. καὶ ὅτι ὡς ὡς ἐπίπαν πρὸς τὸ δεύτερον πρότερον ἁπαντᾷ, νῦν δὲ πρὸς τὸ πρότερον ἀπήντηκεν, ὅφρ΄ ἡ μὲν μετὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν. Janko (1992) 234f *ad* 15.56-77 refutes such charges against providing summaries and against objections concerning minor imprecisions.

[280] The fact that Zeus has to compromise in complying with Achilles' plot is reinforced by Hera when it comes to Sarpedon's death (16.431-61); her compromise suggestion is to offer him special treatment and honour *after* his death (16.450-7).

χολωσάμενος κτενεῖ Ἕκτορα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς", 15.68).[281] Significantly Achilles' own death is not anticipated at all, instead Zeus concludes (as noted) by once again anticipating the eventual fall of Troy (15.69-71). Indeed, he strongly gives the impression of straight and uninterrupted progress towards it after Hector's death (note "αἰὲν", "διαμπερὲς", 15.70), thus intimating that there is no need to be concerned about the direction of the plot after it. The selection of events in this 'prolepsis' may be seen to be focalized towards both the internal and external audience insofar as the death of Achilles presumably will not be welcome to them.[282] As in other 'prolepses', it may also be influenced to a large extent by the wish to keep crucial events to be revealed (perhaps surprisingly) at a later moment in the narrative, when they can be endowed with special significance (cf. below on book 18). Finally, the discovery here of how Achilles' plot can be integrated with the ultimate goal of Troy's destruction allows Zeus to insist more strongly on its implementation, forbidding further interference by the pro-Trojan gods ("τὸ πρὶν δ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐγὼ παύω χόλον οὔτέ τιν᾽ ἄλλον/ ἀθανάτων Δαναοῖσιν ἀμυνέμεν ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐάσω", 15.72f).[283] While looking back to the beginning of his anger when agreeing to Thetis' petition to gain recognition for Achilles (15.75-7; note "πρῶτον", 75), Zeus now repeats his determination to pursue it to its end: "πρίν γεπ τὸ Πηλεΐδαο τελευτηθῆναι ἐέλδωρ" (15.74). But it is important that the end of the narrative itself is still open at this stage, since it is not yet entirely clear how the specific events anticipated by Zeus (15.59-68) stand in relation to the fulfillment of Achilles' plot (15.72-4). Their unexpected yet poignant relation will only become clearer as the narrative develops further towards the theme of the τέλος θανάτοιο.

As Hector continues to push the Achaeans back to the ships, Achilles is now petitioned by Patroclus himself, who accuses Achilles of not heeding either his father's or mother's words, jeopardizing both his future recognition by later generations and his present standing among the

---

[281] As we will see, Zeus' own anger will continue until Achilles' original plot is fulfilled (15.72-7; note "οὔτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐγὼ παύω χόλον", 72), but then the anger will be taken up again by Achilles (15.68); we will discuss below how the continuation of anger (between Zeus, Achilles and Priam) is finally eschewed in bk.24.

[282] Cf. Janko (1992) 234 *ad* 15.56-77. ΣbT O.56 put a nationalistic spin on reader reception (Greeks need to be assured that the victories of the Trojans are only temporary): πρὸς δὲ τούτοις παραμυθεῖται τὸν ἀκροατήν, τὴν ἅλωσιν Τροίας σκιαγραφῶν αὐτῷ. Note the mention of Athena's advice as instrumental to Troy's destruction (15.71), affirming her involvement in reaching the end desired by her and Hera.

[283] The removal of the divine struggle over the direction of the plot in turn facilitates further thematic development through the human characters in particular, adding to the present outline of the plot (esp. with regard to the newly introduced theme of death as an end). Note, however, the divine interventions during the fight over Patroclus' body: the almost even balance of the fight is mirrored in varying decisions by Zeus and interventions by other gods (cf. e.g. 17.544bff; 582ff; 626f).

Achaeans by continuing his anger (16.30-5; note "τί σευ ἄλλος ὀνήσεται ὀψίγονός περ,/ αἴ κε μὴ Ἀργείοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμύνῃς;", 31f).[284] While Achilles suggests that his anger has been abating ("οὐδ᾽ ἄρα πως ἦν/ ἀσπερχὲς κεχολῶσθαι", 16.60bf), he will not change the point of closure announced in the embassy (16.61b-3; cf. 9.650-5).[285] Still, although he attempts once more to divorce himself from the Achaeans by stressing his (and Patroclus') links to Phthia (16.12-16), he accedes to Patroclus' request to be allowed to fight for them in his stead (16.64f; cf. 38-43). The first mission of Patroclus in book 11 had already hinted that it would be impossible for Achilles completely to separate himself from his allies.[286] Asking Patroclus to protect *all* the ships and not just his own as proposed in 9.650-5, Achilles recognizes at last that he is necessarily linked to the Achaeans ("ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς, Πάτροκλε, νεῶν ἄπο λοιγὸν ἀμύνων/ ἔμπεσ᾽ ἐπικρατέως, μὴ δὴ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο/ νῆας ἐνιπρήσωσι, φίλον δ᾽ ἀπὸ νόστον ἕλωνται", 16.80-2; cf. 44f).[287] In effect, Achilles now devises another, compromise plot by substituting his friend for himself; this he hopes to keep detached from his former plot as he attempts to set a clearly defined end to Patroclus' advance (16.83-96; note "πείθεο δ᾽ ὥς τοι ἐγὼ μύθου τέλος ἐν φρεσὶ θείω,", 83).[288] Yet Zeus had already anticipated a different end to Patroclus' involvement, his death, (cf. 15.65b-7 above) and this is confirmed when he grants only half of Achilles' present plot to be fulfilled (16.233-50).[289] There is no need to trace in detail how Patroclus comes to die; we may just note how Zeus keeps deliberating about the exact limits of his advance (cf.

---

[284] Achilles had hoped for another embassy when he sent out Patroclus to the Achaeans (11.609f; note "χρειὼ γὰρ ἱκάνεται οὐκέτ᾽ ἀνεκτός", 610b). Mueller (1984) 43 notes of Hector's advance on the ships (i.e. Achilles' plot) that it "threatens to undo nine years of war as the narrative returns to its point of departure": "For Hektor, of course, this return to the beginning is the desired end; little does he know that the narrative will recoil from this 'almost' only to move more fiercely towards its eventual goal."

[285] Such unremitting anger will however be attributed to Poseidon in *Odyssey* 1.20. - Note how Achilles stresses his own sorrow ("αἰνὸν ἄχος", 16.52, 55) in contrast to Patroclus' attribution of it to the Achaeans (16.22).

[286] Cf. e.g. Redfield (1975) 106: "Achilles (...) brings the catastrophe upon himself because he is not, after all, as detached from his community as he had supposed"; Mueller (1984) 51f.

[287] Thornton (1984) 123 disregards Achilles' distinction of danger to his own ships (9.650-5; 16.61b-3) from that to the others (who are attacked in 16.122), when she says that at 16.122 the event set as the time for intervention in embassy is reached, though Achilles still refuses to act. Ironically, this very mission of Patroclus will render their particular νόστος impossible (e.g. 18.89f; 101 etc.; cf. below on the aftermath).

[288] Note that Achilles closes with the wish to be able to achieve the fall of Troy, the end of the Trojan war, alone with Patroclus, with both other parties dead (16.97-100; note "λύωμεν", 100). By presenting a stark contrast to eventual events (cf. e.g. 16.698-709), it may be seen to foreshadow the vanity of Achilles' plotting here.

[289] His death had been reinforced by the narrator too (16.46bf). ΣbT Π.46 note: προαναφωνήσεις αὖται τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἐπαίρουσιν...

e.g. 16.644b-58), and thus metanarratively about the extension of the narrative itself, before he finally lets Patroclus forget the end set by Achilles (16.684-93) and lets him die at the hands of Apollo and Hector (16.786-857).[290]

An Unwelcome End

I wish to consider briefly how the closure of Achilles' first anger is thematized, following the news of Patroclus' death, before turning to the beginning of his second one in the next section, though they are intertwined in the narrative itself. Thetis notes that the end of making the Achaeans suffer (for which she petitioned Zeus) has been accomplished (18.74b-7; esp. "τὰ μὲν δή τοι τετέλεσται/ ἐκ Διός", 74bf) and Achilles has to agree ("τὰ μὲν ἄρ μοι Ὀλύμπιος ἐξετέλεσσεν", 18.79).[291] Yet their corresponding use of the particle "μὲν" (18.74; 79) already signals that the fulfillment of Achilles' anger has become linked with another unintended and unwelcome end, Patroclus' death, which forces Achilles to reassess his plot from the vantage point of an end that cannot be disputed or negotiated. He now recognizes the irredeemable damage that the displacements of ἔρις and χόλος among both gods and men have done (18.107-13; note "ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν προτετύχθαι ἐάσομεν ἀχνύμενοί περ", 112=19.65), and is prepared to move from disputing τιμή among his allies to winning κλέος by reentering the fighting (18.121b-6; note "νῦν δὲ κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀροίμην", 121b).[292] The way towards this end had still been uncertain in the embassy scene (cf. above), and we will presently discuss how it will gradually lead to the closure of the *Iliad* itself.

Here, the closure of Achilles' first wrath is also signalled by the restoration of a certain unity on the side of the Achaeans through the active involvement of a number of them in the attempt to retrieve Patroclus' body throughout book 17 (cf. also below on book 19). Indeed, Achilles himself now explicitly equates the deaths of Patroclus and of many Achaeans, overcoming the divisions he had tried to force (18.102-4; also 19.61f). Hera and Athena too reappear as secret but effective supporters of Achilles, allowing him to contribute decisively to

[290] Again, present events to do with Achilles' plot are positioned with regard to the larger story, as Apollo anounces that the plot of the fall of Troy is not meant to include Achilles or Patroclus (16.698-709), containing an early hint at Achilles' own death (on which cf. below on the aftermath p.116).

[291] Cf. Rutherford (1982) 155 n.50 on the significant use of τελεῖν and cognates (1. 523, 526f; 18.4, 74, 79).

[292] Cf. Taplin (1992) 199: "Thus, half-way through a speech, the passions of book 1 are renounced: the *mēnis* poem is over"; ΣbT Σ.112-13: ὅρα μέντοι τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς ὀργῆς.

the rescue of the body (18.165-243).[293] Rather than reproaching Hera for her secret intervention, Zeus himself points out to her that her end of Achilles fighting the Trojans has finally been reached (18.357-9). She responds by reclaiming her divine authority over ends in view of the way in which even humans - presumably Achilles in particular - achieve theirs (18.361-7; esp. 362f). A degree of closure is thus also marked by the fact that the two most authoritative, divine characters can cease quarrelling and agree that Achilles' plot, to which Hera had been objecting, has led to an end she desires after all. We will come to see the importance of a consensus about closure among the characters, and the voluntary end of anger, even more sharply when it comes to the closure of the narrative as a whole (cf. below p.106).

Notwithstanding Zeus' positive reaction, the secrecy of the goddesses' intervention again shows that in contrast to, for example, the *Odyssey* or later plays of Euripides which have been criticized for this very reason (cf. below on the *Odyssey*), in the *Iliad* the plots even of the most powerful characters are not allowed to remain in isolation, but form part of a more complex web of interests and plots which spans divine and also a number of human characters. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Murnaghan has suggested that the 'narratable' could be identified with the heroic code as lived by the humans, even without any reference to divine plotting, as the continuous questioning of honour leads to an extension of war.[294] We can now see how a whole network of divine and human plots constitutes the 'narratable' of the entire narrative, from the early disputes of certain 'semantic fields' that initiated the narrative onwards. In such a dynamic framework any character's ends not only affect those of others, but may in turn be affected in the interaction with them in possibly unforeseen ways, giving rise to the various complications of the overall plot, as Redfield (1975) remarks: "The story of the *Iliad* is not made by any actor, even by Zeus; all are within it, and the story unfolds through the interactions of the choices of gods and men" (142).[295] In fact, the necessary interaction of each plot with others is what affects any character's ability to calculate exactly the consequences of their plans and actions; so closure, its exact timing and nature only gradually reveal themselves (even if anticipated in outline by specially privileged characters

[293] ΣbT Σ.168 explain that their intervention is hidden from Zeus since he had promised Hector victory until dusk (11.192-4), so Achilles is paradoxically helped against his own plot.

[294] Murnaghan (1997) 29ff; cf. above p.70.

[295] Cf. Murnaghan (1997) 23 (though again focusing on the two main plots): "Both the wrath of the central hero and the plotting of the supreme Olympian god turn out to have dimensions that are not exhausted by the enactment of that limited scheme [of Achilles' wrath and Zeus' plot]", 27 on Achilles' recognition of this fact.

such as Zeus). In this the plotting of the *Iliad* resembles the process of reading, or interpretation, itself in which expectations are constantly revised until they can be confirmed by the end itself.[296]

2.3 τέλος θανάτοιο and Beyond

The theme of the τέλος θανάτοιο had already been introduced in the embassy and through Patroclus' death itself. However, it is consequently revealed as more than just another end open to negotiation, but truly closural in the discussion between Achilles and Thetis following the news of Patroclus' death.[297] This scene has already been considered from the perspective of closure to the theme of Achilles' anger against, and separation from, the Achaeans. I now wish to look at its second aspect as offering a new beginning, as well as the seeds of eventual closure, by combining the initiatory theme of anger with the ultimate end of death (cf. above on 15.68).

A Second Plot

Corresponding to the various displacements of anger at the beginning of the narrative, a series of deaths are related both causally and paradigmatically, so that not only does death become an end in terms of the plot, but its thematic significance can be explored. Part of this chain had already been anticipated by Zeus in book 15, ending on the eventual killing of Hector by Achilles (15.68). This is the end which Achilles himself now envisages for his second anger (18.90b-3; cf. also 333-7 discussed below), directed not against the Achaeans but the Trojans (18.122-5).[298] He recognizes that the end of his first plot, harming the Achaeans to win τιμή, has led to the τέλος θανάτοιο in form of the irrevocable loss of his friend (18.80-2; note "τὸν ἀπώλεσα", 82).[299] Plotting Hector's death in turn, however, Achilles still appears to see himself returning to life and human society ("ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἐμὲ θυμὸς ἄνωγε/ ζώειν οὐδ' ἄνδρεσσι μετέμμεναι, αἴ κε μὴ Ἕκτωρ/ πρῶτος ἐμῷ ὑπὸ δουρὶ τυπεὶς ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὀλέσσῃ", 18.91a). Yet

---

[296] Cf. Smith (1968) 119 on 'retrospective patterning'.

[297] Cf. Taplin (1992) 194 noting that the scene "marks his [Achilles'] irrevocable turning towards death" (with n.20 and bibliography).

[298] Taplin (1992) 199 notes that Achilles himself does not explicitly say that he begins a second wrath; but cf. 18.337 to Patroclus' body: "σέθεν κταμένοιο χολωθείς".

[299] Cf. Griffin (1980) 163f n.41 on the meaning of "ἀπώλεσα" ("destroyed", "lost" or "culpably lost"). On Achilles' feelings of guilt towards Patroclus and the Achaeans cf. also his own words later at 21.133-5; Zanker (1994) 18; Mueller (1984) 57: "...Achilles recognises the implications of having asked for the suffering of the Achaeans, whom in retrospect he identifies, together with Patroklos, as his 'companions'"; Rutherford (1982) 155; Goldhill (1991) 87: "His failure to support the other Greeks also now after the death of Patroclus becomes a source of grief and self-reproach" *pace* Redfield (1975) 22.

Thetis immediately corrects him, stressing that killing Hector implies Achilles' own swift death (18.95f; note "αὐτίκα γάρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ' Ἕκτορα πότμος ἑτοῖμος", 96).

So far all major ends, whether narrated in the poem itself or not, have been revealed in advance by Zeus responding to divine concern about the course of the plot. But Achilles' own eventual death is first introduced here - also proleptically - in a different fashion, which also marks a shift in perspective from the divine 'prolepses' earlier in the narrative: he is himself confronted with it by his mother. The importance of Thetis as an intermediary character who can afford her mortal son a perspective, as well as influence, beyond that of most other humans, is again illustrated by her present role in conveying the certainty of his impending death to Achilles. Her insistence on the imminence of the approaching end corresponds to that of Zeus concerning the fall of Troy, also as a consequence of Hector's death, in 15.69-71. Since both events will not form part of the narrative of the *Iliad* itself, though invested with a strong sense of closure, the way in which they are both presented proleptically as imminent is significant (cf. below on the aftermath p.116).

It now also becomes clear, to the external audience, how the end of Achilles' life unexpectedly fills the gap between the fulfillment of his first plot and the ultimate end of Troy's destruction, since both depend on the death of Hector (cf. on 15.59-74 above). Indeed, responding to the revelation of his own death as the ultimate consequence of the first plot he set in motion, Achilles himself spells out the connections between his two plots and their ends: conscious of his own role in Patroclus' death, Achilles holds that his friend's death should have been his own, which he now accepts and indeed desires (18.98-99a; esp. "αὐτίκα τεθναίην", 98a).[300] Thus Patroclus' death not only paradigmatically foreshadows that of Achilles, but becomes its consciously chosen result with Hector's death providing the crucial link, as he enacts the choice between two plots for his own life that had still been open in book 9 (cf. 18.121b-5 quoted above). The fact that he is made to clearly see, and then consciously choose, the closure of his own life means that the subject of the τέλος θανάτοιο can be explored with special

[300] For Patroclus' closeness to Achilles cf. "[Πάτροκλον] τῖον.../ ἶσον ἐμῇ κεφαλῇ" (18.81f). In Menelaus' speech to Antilochus, the death of "the best of the Achaeans" refers to Patroclus but may foreshadow Achilles' own subsequent death (17.688-90). - Neoanalysts regard Thetis' and the Nereids' mourning, Achilles' own death-like posture and the emphasis on the proximity of his death here as evidence for the story of the *Aethiopis* as a model for the *Iliad*; cf. e.g. Kullmann (1960) 36-8, 311. Edwards (1987) concludes, 271: "...the poet, ..., has brilliantly shaded in the future behind the present, the greater sorrows to come behind those of the moment". Seaford (1994) 171 suggests that the transposition of Achilles' story onto his friend produces "that prolonged state of facing inevitable death that is so essential to the pathos of the last quarter of the *Iliad*"; cf. ΣbT Σ.96: περιπαθὲς καὶ τοῦτο τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι προθεσμίαν Ἀχιλλεῖ τῆς τε τοῦ ἐχθροῦ τιμωρίας καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ μεταλλαγς.

vividness, maximizing its thematic impact. Unusually, Achilles is now able to offer his own 'prolepsis', accepting not only his own death as an end beyond dispute, but also recognizing the authority of *all* gods over its timing ("κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι ὁππότε κεν δὴ/ Ζεὺς ἐθέλῃ τελέσαι ἠδ' ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι", 18.115f). His unique awareness of his approaching death through his divine mother thematizes the move towards, and thus also strengthens the sense of, impending closure: as Achilles considers the chain of deaths and accepts his own as its closure, all ends have become clear, non-negotiable and specific.[301]

Beyond the End

Restating the end of Hector's death in front of Patroclus' body (18.333-42), however, Achilles raises another theme of special closural significance, which reaches beyond death itself in introducing the perspective of the survivors. This is the theme of burial, as the death of Hector becomes the precondition for the funeral of Patroclus: "οὔ σε πρὶν κτεριῶ πρίν γ' Ἕκτορος ἐνθάδ' ἐνεῖκαι/ τεύχεα καὶ κεφαλὴν μεγαθύμου σοῖο φονῆος" (18.334f).[302] This addition to the anticipated end of his new plot already ensures the deferral of closure in terms of the plot until after Hector's death. As we will come to see, the πρίν-clause which expresses the end of capturing the armour and Hector's head also once again conceals an end which, in contrast to death itself, is open to dispute. Burial becomes the primary concern of the human characters in the plotting leading up to the eventual closure of the narrative. The role of those opposing Achilles' plot now reverts to the Trojans, thus restoring the expected divisions and allegiances (cf. 19.61-4).[303]

The theme of a proper burial normally arises out of the survivors' concern for their dead, and by focussing on the funeral of Patroclus, Achilles too assumes the role of survivor. Yet we

---

[301] Achilles' continuing awareness of his impending death is proven e.g. by his reply to his immortal horse (19.419-23) and to Lycaon (21.97-113); cf. the list in Zanker (1994) 100 n.42. Though impossible in most cases, it is important for a sense of closure to be able to look back over a completed life, and this becomes possible for Achilles here; cf. e.g. Mueller (1984) 57 and below p.121. The *Odyssey* will take a very different approach to the same problem; cf. below on the two underworld scenes.

[302] The theme had already been prominent throughout the fighting in bk.17: many passages illustrate the importance of the rescue of the body from mutilation and maltreatment and its recovery for mourning and burial, both concerning Sarpedon (17.159-68; note Hera's general statement that burial by the survivors constitutes the γέρας θανόντων, 16.456f; repeated by Zeus, 674f) and in particular Patroclus (17.102-5; 120-7; 240f; 254f; 284-91a; a summary in 384-99; 412-25; 712-61; 18.148b-232); cf. Segal (1971) *passim*; Macleod (1982) 16; Mueller (1984) 106.

[303] Cf. Mueller (1984) 58f: "He has found an answer to the question first asked in Book 1 and repeated in Book 9: What have the Trojans done to me?" This changes Achilles' position as expressed e.g. in bk.9; cf. above. Cf. also Pulydamas' warnings 18.271f which recall the motif of animals eating bodies in the proem, but reverse its application; cf. Segal (1971) 26f.

have noted how he not only already anticipates his own death, but also how he sees the death of his friend, which he feels he has caused, as prefiguring his own.[304] Thus Achilles' second anger can be understood as, ultimately, directed against himself, as he looks back with regret at a death that is irreversible and all the while proceeds to the death(s) that has (have) become inevitable. This circularity too gives the second half of the narrative a more paradoxical and profound quality than the first, intensifying the sense in which death becomes the over-arching end. The assembly of the Achaeans, though it ostensibly closes Achilles' first plot through his public reconciliation with Agamemnon, illustrates that his special 'liminal' position, identifying with the death of his friend, paradoxically sets him apart from the other Achaeans more deeply than before.[305] A sign of Achilles' continuing mourning is his refusal to join in the communal meal (19.209-14; 303-8); by rejecting an end to his fast Achilles also continues to reject closure.[306] While acknowledging the end of his anger against Agamemnon ("νῦν δ' ἤτοι μὲν ἐγὼ παύω χόλον", 19.67; also μῆνιν ἀπειπόντος, 75), Achilles already presses on with his new plot in clearly metanarrative terms (19.68bf; note "θᾶσσον", 68; 148b-50; esp. "ἔτι γὰρ μέγα ἔργον ἄρεκτον", 150b).[307] His eagerness to win κλέος by fighting the Trojans (18.121b-5; cf. above) now renders the restoration of his τιμή by the Achaeans only an incidental end and preserves the momentum of the narrative (19.146-50).[308]

---

[304] Cf. Zanker (1994) 100 n.42; Seaford (1994) 166f; Mueller (1984) 58.

[305] For this expression cf. Seaford (1994) e.g. 171: "And so Achilles in the *Iliad* becomes at once mourner and mourned, with the result that the death-like liminality of the mourner becomes in his case irreversible, an irreversibility which we have seen to cohere poignantly with that inevitability of his own death also consequent on the killing of Patroklos"; following e.g. Redfield (1975) 181: "The time of mourning is the last time together for the dead and the living, who share some condition between life and death." This deeper separation from the Achaeans despite the fact that Achilles is again fighting the Trojans will become important for closure; cf. below p.116.

[306] On the importance of this gesture cf. Taplin (1992) 212; Griffin (1980) 16f; Redfield (1975) 218; Segal (1971) 66; Stanley (1993) 197. The motif of breaking a fast is also utilized for closure; cf. below p.108.

[307] Briseis' focus on the dead Patroclus rather than her return when she reenters Achilles' tent (19.282-302) is also indicative of narrative continuity beyond the end of the first anger; cf. Stanley (1993) 192. Her lament, pointing out in detail the suffering and sorrow resulting from war, in particular for women, also introduces a motif important for closure; cf. below p.111.

[308] Cf. Zanker (1994) 108; Redfield (1975) 107, 218; Rutherford (1982) 159; A. Lord (1960) 193; Macleod (1982) 31; Mueller (1984) 72: "But that resolution [in bk.19] no longer matters, and it establishes no closure because, while bringing to an end one form of Achilles' anger, it only intensifies another." Achilles' expression of Zeus' responsibility for the death of many Achaeans (19.270-4) may allude to the proem (ΣbT T.63 note the similarity to 1.255: the quarrel will please the Trojans), but could also be read as a recognition of the involved nature of plotting in the *Iliad*, in which Zeus has the greatest but not the sole authority and foresight (cf. 19.95-133).

Plotting the End

Again it is unnecessary to trace in any more detail how the encounter of Achilles with Hector is repeatedly deferred, while other themes such as Achilles' anger and his position both with regard to humans and gods, as well as Hector's perspective on events, are explored. One episode in particular, however, illustrates how carefully the moment for the decisive duel will be chosen.[309] It begins with Achilles' announcement that he intends to proceed without deviation or interruption ("οὔ μ᾽ ἔτι φημὶ μεθησέμεν οὐδ᾽ ἠβαιόν,/ ἀλλὰ μάλα στιχὸς εἶμι διαμπερές", 20.361bf). Hector, on the other hand, emphasizes that even Achilles will not be able to achieve all his ends ("οὐδ᾽ Ἀχιλεὺς πάντεσσι τέλος μύθοις ἐπιθήσει,/ ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν τελέει, τὸ δὲ καὶ μεσσηγὺ κολούει", 20.369f), though the question remains exactly which ends will and which will not be fulfilled. The truth of his assertion is first shown shortly afterwards in their first, abortive meeting: disregarding divine warnings to avoid Achilles, Hector nevertheless faces him after the death of his youngest brother Polydorus (20.375-423a). Achilles assumes that his end is now being reached ("οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἔτι δὴν/ ἀλλήλους πτώσσοιμεν ἀνὰ πτολέμοιο γεφύρας", 20.426bf) and attempts actively to speed up its progress ("ἆσσον ἴθ᾽, ὥς κεν θᾶσσον ὀλέθρου πείραθ᾽ ἵκηαι", 20.429). Yet while Achilles is himself protected by Athene, Hector is rescued by Apollo (20.438-46). Achilles has to recognize that he still has to wait for the closure he intends (and the comparative "θᾶσσον" may then be understood as implying "too soon" in narrative terms), although he remains confident that it will eventually be achieved with divine support (20.449-54; note "σ΄ ἐξανύω", 452).[310]

A Second Burial?

The scene of Achilles' and Hector's final meeting is preceded by further elaboration of the theme of burial. Yet here Hector's parents proleptically express their concern for it, thus already hinting at the potential for another deferral of closure even beyond the funeral of

[309] Cf. Redfield (1975) 155 on the following scene: "Hector, who might at this moment have died bravely and thoughtlessly, is saved by the god for another kind of death, less brave and more thoughtful." The scholia seemingly regard bk.22 as the "end" of the narrative; cf. above p.63; ΣAb Y.443: πιθανῶς ἀναρτᾷ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν ἀκροατῶν, εἰς τέλος τῶν ποιήσεων ἑαυτῷ ταμιευόμενος τὴν σφαγὴν Ἕκτορος; ΣbT Y.376: ταμιεύεται ὁ ποιητὴς τὸ πρόσωπον Ἕκτορος εἰς τὰ τελευταῖα.

[310] Achilles' expectation of success when helped by a god himself (20.453) anticipates Athene's intervention in bk.22. The image of the race which is possibly alluded to in this last remark, anticipating the race simile used for the duel itself (22.136-66a; 188-207), is already prominent in the scene in which Apollo, disguised as Agenor, lures Achilles away from Troy (21.595-22.4). The deliberations of the real Agenor whether or how to flee and his decision to face death also afford a preview of how Hector will come to die (21.553-70); cf. Fenik (1974) 101 with n.123.

Patroclus as plotted by Achilles. The paradigmatic connection Priam establishes between Hector's death and the fall of Troy itself also introduces his fears for his own burial (22.54-76).[311] The eventual end of Troy's destruction (though it will not be narrated as such) is thus drawn into the narrative in the last episodes, not in the form of a divine 'prolepsis' as for example in book 4, but through the anxious anticipation of a human character directly concerned. Hecuba, on the other hand, foreshadows events that will be narrated fully in expressing her fears that Achilles may refuse to return her son's body if killed (22.86-9). Yet Hector himself voices his readiness to face a fast resolution of their confrontation, accepting Zeus' final authority in advance (22.99-130; note "βέλτερον αὖτ᾽ ἔριδι ξυνελαυνέμεν ὅττι τάχιστα·/ εἴδομεν ὁπποτέρῳ κεν Ὀλύμπιος εὖχος ὀρέξῃ", 129f). Indeed, while they race around Troy, Zeus seemingly again opens the outcome of this 'kernel' episode up to debate among the gods ("ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετε φράζεσθε, θεοὶ, καὶ μητιάασθε/ ἠέ μιν ἐκ θανάτοιο σαώσομεν, ἦέ μιν ἤδη/ Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ δαμάσσομεν ἐσθλὸν ἐόντα", 22.174-6).[312] Yet Athene, who has reverted to assisting Achilles, regards the possible rescue of Hector as an unravelling rather than the anticipated closure of the plot (22.178-81; note "ἐξαναλῦσαι", 180). In response, Zeus again sanctions her immediate intervention on behalf of Achilles, concluding the divine negotiation of ends (22.183-5; note "μηδ΄ ἔτ᾽ ἐρώει", 185b).[313] Their agreement on the end of Hector's death thus marks, as well as decides, its enactment. Its prior clarification from the divine perspective will also again colour the audience's perception of the human actions and reaction.

The moment of divine approval which Achilles had hoped for in 20.449-54 has finally come (22.214-25). Yet the theme of burial is again debated first, now between the two protagonists themselves: Hector proposes to negotiate in advance the surrender of the body by the victor, invoking the gods as witnesses (22.256-9). Achilles, however, again wishes to impose an absolute division between his opponent and himself (22.261-5), denying even the possibility of any negotiation before the end of death itself has been reached ("οὐδέ τι νῶϊν/ ὅρκια

---

[311] Priam actually wishes non-burial for Achilles instead, but knows that the gods will not allow this (22.41-3a), as illustrated earlier in the Scamander episode; yet his thought may anticipate the similar protection afforded to Hector's body by the gods. - On the importance of Hector to Troy cf. e.g. Segal (1971) 43; ΣbT X.54-5: φησὶ...τὸν δὲ Ἕκτορος θάνατον δημοσίαν ἔσεσθαι συμφοράν.

[312] He also shows his concern for Hector as someone who has shown appropriate concern for the gods (22.168-73); cf. below on bk.24. N. Richardson (1993) 125 *ad* 22.166-87 refers to the debate about Sarpedon's death (16.431-61); cf. also the scene in bk.4 discussed above (cf. Mueller (1984) 66f).

[313] Note that it is only Apollo's support of Hector which makes possible the closural deadlock of their race, in which one character is running towards the end, the other from it (22.202-4; note πύματόν τε καὶ ὕστατον, 203).

ἔσσονται, πρίν γ᾽ ἢ ἕτερόν γε πεσόντα/ αἵματος ἆσαι Ἄρηα", 22.265b-7a). Once more, a πρίν-clause holds out the prospect of a virtually impossible closure (cf. e.g. on 9.385-7).[314] Yet although negotiation with the dead is in fact impossible, Achilles will find himself engaging with Hector's surviving relatives instead. Certain of his divine support just now, however, he concludes on the similar certainty of Hector's death as the τίσις for his role in Achilles' own first plot of harming his allies ("οὔ τοι ἔτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὑπάλυξις, ἄφαρ δέ σε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη/ ἔγχει ἐμῷ δαμάᾳ· νῦν δ᾽ ἀθρόα πάντ᾽ ἀποτίσεις/ κήδε᾽ ἐμῶν ἑτάρων, οὓς ἔκτανες ἔγχεϊ θύων", 22.270-2).[315] Hector initially remains confident too (22.278-88), before realizing that the gods' plot for him now ends in death ("με θεοὶ θανατόνδε κάλεσσαν", 22.297b). Recognizing himself the finality of his present situation ("νῦν δὲ δὴ ἐγγύθι μοι θάνατος κακός, οὐδ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἄνευθεν", 22.300; "νῦν αὖτέ με μοῖρα κιχάνει", 303b), he is thus forced to confront and crucially accept his mortality, as Achilles had been, though in a much briefer period of time. The importance of lasting κλέος in the face of the ultimate end of death had also been evident in Achilles' choice of two lives, and like him Hector now resolves to die in a manner which will ensure future remembrance (note "ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι", 22.305b).[316] The theme of κλέος and its preservation will continue to gain in importance as the narrative itself turns towards closure, reflecting more and more strongly in metapoetic terms on its own concerns as epic.[317]

Closural Deadlock

Hector's death is memorable, however, not for the fighting as such, but for the second exchange of views about ends between the two protagonists (22.329b-66), made possible through Achilles' conscious choice of where to strike the fatal wound (22.328f).[318] First, Achilles points out that his separation from Patroclus (and implicitly the Achaeans) was after all only temporary

---

[314] Cf. ΣA X.266: οὐκ ἔσσεται.

[315] Note the plural ἑτάρων; cf. ΣT X.272: 'τῶν Ἀχαιῶν' οὖν φησιν (not the Myrmidons).

[316] Cf. famously Helen, who is recalled by Hector's reference to the beginning of the war (22.116b), in 6.357f.

[317] Cf. below on κλέος in relation to the σῆμα p.114; Redfield (1975) 34 notes that ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι "is a phrase used also of the gravestone".

[318] Cf. ΣT X.328-9: οἰκονομικὸν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, ἵνα καὶ ἀποθνήσκων μὴ ἀπροσφώνητος εἴη. ἔστι δὲ πρόληψις ὁ τρόπος; similarly Σb which add: εἴωθε δὲ τὰ ἐκ τύχης ὡς ἐκ αἰτίας λέγειν. ΣA give arguments for and against athetizing 22.329 as γελοῖος. N. Richardson (1993) 132 *ad* 22.248-366 notes the effect of allowing the characters speeches: "Throughout [the duel] we are constantly aware of the reactions and emotions of the two contestants, of the issues behind the action, in terms of the future fate of Hektor's body and the fate of Troy itself, and also of the divine hand at work directing the course of events to their inevitable outcome."

(22.332-4; cf. 271bf) and tersely restates his twin ends, poignantly contrasting the opposing treatment of the two bodies (22.335bf; note "σὲ μὲν - τὸν δὲ"). Hector still appeals for his body to be returned for burial in exchange for a ransom, mentioning Achilles' parents corresponding to his own (22.338-43). Though the focus on the survivors will become relevant to the narrative's closure, both this appeal and the idea of a ransom are here angrily rejected by Achilles (22.345; 349-52a).[319] Instead, he expresses the wish to be able to eat Hector's flesh himself rather than leaving it to the dogs and birds (22.346-8; 354). Yet the scene is brought to a conclusion by a second dialogue, which shifts the focus to Achilles' own anticipated death. It is now the dying Hector who is able to offer a more detailed 'prolepsis' of how Achilles will meet his own death (22.359f).[320] As noted with regard to the picture of the fall of Troy offered by Zeus in book 15, the introduction of more specific information can be seen to preempt the need for full narration to some extent. Hector simultaneously warns Achilles not to bring the gods' anger on himself by maltreating his body ("φράζεο νῦν, μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι", 22.358).[321] Achilles, however, simply restates his acceptance of his own death following that of Hector (22.365f≈18.115f).[322]

Once again the narrative now continues beyond the τέλος θανάτοιο, framing the crucial 'kernel' scene of Hector's death by presenting the deadlock of the human characters' contradictory wishes for closure.[323] There is, however, the potential for agreement in the supreme importance Achilles attaches to the burial of Patroclus (cf. below on the theme of the funeral p.121); in fact the importance of this end determines him not to attempt to take Troy on this occasion (22.385-404). The rejection of Troy's destruction as an end to be included in the narrative of the *Iliad*, though strongly anticipated, crucially leaves the Trojans - like Achilles -

---

[319] Cf. Zanker (1994) 108. Ransom is usually paid for living people; cf. e.g. the refusal of Lycaon's entreaty (21.99-113); Priam on Polydorus and Lycaon (22.46-51); cf. Segal (1971) 38f. Turnus leaves the choice open to Aeneas to return either his living self or his dead body to his father, not mentioning a ransom (*Aen.* 12.932b-6a).

[320] Zanker (1994) 107 notes that Hector describes Achilles' death with unprecedented specificity (and thus authority).

[321] Cf. Clay (1997) 67: "By defiling Hector's corpse and refusing it due burial, Achilles changes from a hero of godlike wrath to a potential object of divine anger (cf. XXIV.113-114, 134-135)."

[322] ΣbT X.365-6 contrast his acceptance with Hector's rejection of Patroclus' prediction of his death (16.859). On the other hand, ΣT X.365 note the continuation of his anger (ὑπερβολὴ ὀργῆς).

[323] Cf. Macleod (1982) 20: "Hector's unburied body is thus thrust upon us as a narrative and a moral problem, a problem heightened by the contrast with Patroclus'. As such, it awaits a solution"; Thornton (1984) 62f; Redfield (1975) 175. Taplin (1992) 252 notes "the lack of any clear indication of sunset" at the day of Hector's death (a formal, rather than thematic means of indicating continuation).

(yet) in the position of survivors, able to oppose Achilles' refusal of Hector's burial. Priam's wish to risk his own life in supplicating Achilles anticipates his later action at the close of the narrative (22.416-28; note the reference to Peleus, 420f). Andromache is forced to envisage an incomplete burial, burning only Hector's clothes (22.508-14), also raising a theme later taken up for closure.[324] But as yet, their grief threatens to remain without closure because of Achilles' determination to link inextricably the opposing ends of Patroclus' funeral and the maltreatment of Hector's corpse.

A First Step Towards Closure

In his own way, Achilles himself appears to be still unwilling to face closure: he seems to announce the complete fulfillment of his plot to Patroclus (23.19-23; esp. "πάντα γὰρ ἤδη τοι τελέω τὰ πάροιθεν ὑπέστην", 20), but despite his insistence on the arrival of closure ("ἤδη"), the verb "τελέω" tellingly remains in either the present or even future tense.[325] Achilles also continues to be portrayed as in the same 'liminal' position already discussed, identifying with the dead Patroclus rather than the living Achaeans. Thus his and the Myrmidons' recurrent separation from the others after their meal (23.59-61) presents a mirror image to Patroclus' separation from the other souls entering Hades (23.69-74).[326] Indeed, the description of Achilles, as he lies alone on the beach and sleep 'closes' his worries (23.62-4; note the idea of resolution in λύων), hints at a death-like state very much like that of Patroclus. But Achilles haunts his dead friend as much as Patroclus haunts him, and it is only the dream image of Patroclus himself who finally initiates progress towards his own funeral (23.69-74; note "θάπτε με ὅττι τάχιστα, πύλας Ἀΐδαο περήσω", 71).[327] According to him, the separation of the dead in Hades from the living is finalized by a funeral, which thus enables closure for both ("οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' αὖτις/ νίσομαι

[324] N.b. the juxtaposition of γυμνόν and εἵματα (22.510); more on these clothes below. Taplin (1992) 249 goes one step further: "Her burning of Hektor's clothes will be a symbolic pre-enactment, not so much of his funeral pyre, as of the burning of Troy as a whole." (This is also foreshadowed by the earlier simile likening Troy to a burning city; 21.522-5; 22.410f.)

[325] Cf. N. Richardson (1993) 190 *ad* 23.179-83; contrast the perfect and aorist marking the closure of his first plot in 18.74 and 79 quoted above.

[326] It is not quite clear whether Achilles already breaks his fast here or not (23.48; 55-9), *pace* Thornton (1984) 137; cf. ΣbT Ψ.55-6: ἀποσιωπᾷ δὲ τὴν περὶ τὸ δεῖπνον διάθεσιν· ἐν πένθει γὰρ καὶ κατηφείᾳ τὰ πράγματα. Edwards (1986) 87f points out that the unusual placing of the funeral meal allows Achilles to focus on his grief.

[327] Cf. Taplin (1992) 252: "The dream-spirit of Patroklos heralds a sequence of closures: his irrevocable funeral must be delayed no longer"; Segal (1971) 51: "It is the first major check on Achilles' behavior toward the dead. He has held on to the body [of Patroclus] in a desperately possessive attempt to prolong his remaining contact with his companion." Note the idea of the limit traversed in "περήσω" (23.71).

ἐξ Ἀΐδαο, ἐπήν με πυρὸς λελάχητε", 23.75bf).[328] Yet Patroclus significantly already draws Achilles into the community of the dead by again anticipating his death at Troy;[329] in fact he establishes a special link between both of them by asking for his own σῆμα to serve eventually as that of Achilles too (23.80-92; cf. Achilles himself 126; 245-8).

This shared σῆμα may be regarded, in metanarrative terms, as referring to the *Iliad* itself (cf. below on the σῆμα p.114), reinforced by the subsequent funeral games for Patroclus, which have often been suggested to stand in for those of Achilles himself.[330] The funeral ceremonies themselves also contribute to closure by presenting Achilles as finally reintegrating more fully into the Achaean community.[331] The setting too illustrates this reintegration as it shifts from the repeated changes from the Myrmidons with Achilles to the Achaeans with Agamemnon and *vice versa* in the very first scenes (23.1b-60 or 110a) to their parallel preparations for the funeral (23.110b-28a; 128b-39) to, finally, the meeting of all for the ritual itself (23.154-77; 231-57a).[332] Agamemnon's position in all these scenes becomes increasingly prominent and he eventually appears to be present in such proximity to Achilles that he can be asked explicitly for his help (23.154-65; 233-48). He is also awarded the very last prize in the ensuing games by Achilles without having to compete for it; a gesture which is usually interpreted as signifying their reconciliation and a desire to avoid any possibility of further confrontation (23.886b-97).[333] In fact, Achilles' reversed role in the funeral games in preventing quarrels has often been noted (cf.

---

[328] For the common identification with the dead and eventual release through funeral rituals cf. Seaford (1994) 67; Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 109: "The closure of the grave, completed and sealed with the erection of the mound, marks the final stage in the separation of the deceased from the world of the living and the community: ..."; Redfield (1975) 182: "As the funeral releases the dead to death, so it also releases the living to life (cf. XXIII.52-53)."

[329] Achilles later acknowledges his approaching death in the symbolic action of offering a lock of his hair to Patroclus, meaning that his father's wish to offer it to the river Spercheius at home will remain unfulfilled (23.140-53; note ὣς ἠρᾶθ᾽ ὃ γέρων, σὺ δέ οἱ νόον οὐκ ἐτέλεσσας", 149). Cf. Seaford (1994) 167-70, likening the devotion of the lock to rituals of sacrifice (thence denoting death).

[330] Cf. Edwards (1990) 321f; Kullmann (1960) 333-5. For a closural concern with Achilles' funeral in particular cf. below on *Odyssey* 24.

[331] Cf. e.g. Taplin (1992) 260; Segal (1971) 53 notes that "Achilles displays a renewed respect for the sanctions of civilized society".

[332] Note Achilles' use of the plural both in 23.159 ("πονησόμεθ΄") and 23.239 ("λέγωμεν").

[333] Cf. Zanker (1994) 110; Thornton (1984) 137.

below on 'closural modifications' p.122).[334] The games also offer the opportunity for characteristic curtain calls for the Achaean leaders, corresponding to their introduction in books 1 and 2 (cf. below on 'scenic ring-composition' p.123).[335]

Negotiating Closure: the Divine Perspective

Though Achilles' relations with the Achaeans thus reach a closural settlement, he finds himself still implicated in his own denial of closure to the Trojans, who remain excluded from the release of the funeral.[336] This is illustrated for example by his continued isolation and his inability to sleep remembering his friend (24.2b-13; cf. 23.59-61); in fact, his situation here as he wanders along the shore resembles that of Patroclus' soul itself before, barred from closure (24.11bf; cf. 23.73). Later Thetis will also observe that Achilles "eats his own heart" (24.129a), turning against himself the anger he wished to direct against Hector's body (22.347). Indeed, retaining the body, he continues to vent his anger on it too, revealing this second end of his twin plot as potentially endless. Achilles' repeated action of dragging Hector's body around Patroclus' (and his own) σῆμα is thus symbolic of the stalled narrative (24.11b-21).[337] It is therefore appropriate that it should be described by an 'iterative' scene, aligning narrative form

[334] Cf. Sheppard (1922) 201; Macleod (1982) 30 with n.3 on χόλος, ἔρις; N. Richardson (1993) 219f *ad* 23.448-98, 224f *ad* 23.499-652. - Seaford (1994) 160f sees the quick and happy resolution of conflicts as contrasting with the games after Achilles' funeral in the *Aethiopis*. Indeed, he goes on to note, 162f, in particular the contrast between the amicable end to Ajax' and Odysseus' wrestling bout here (23.700-39) and their tragic fight over the armour there; but cf. the next note for the possibility that their encounter here may still foreshadow the later confrontation.

[335] Taplin (1992) 258f notes that this is "a rather late and lowly 'curtain call'" for Agamemnon (who does not get to speak). The games arguably include some hints of later events in the same way as there had been hints at preceding events in the first episodes; cf. Stanley (1993) 225, 230; Redfield (1975) 209; but note below for their extent p.116). Kullmann (1960) 335 notes Achilles' own words (23.735-7); I find "μηκέτ΄ ἐρείδεσθον" (735a) esp. intriguing.

[336] Cf. Seaford (1994) 163f and 172f: "...Achilles was denying to himself (and to Priam) the normal ritual passage of the mourner and to Hektor the normal ritual passage of the dead"; Redfield (1975) 211: "The two heroes are locked together in an everlasting dance of hatred..."; Stanley (1993) 224.

[337] Critics often note the thematic force of the contrast; cf. e.g. Macleod (1982) 18: "The poetic force...lies in the contrast between the burial accomplished and the burial withheld, which is the more intense because the disrespect for Hector is a kind of tribute to Patroclus"; Taplin (1992) 292f; N. Richardson (1993) 164; Redfield (1975) 210; Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 123.

with content.[338] Yet once again this closural deadlock is enabled to continue only because of Apollo's concern for Hector, who preserves his body despite, and yet also for, Achilles' persistent maltreatment of it (24.18b-21; cf. 23.185-91), parallel to keeping in suspense their race in 22.202-4.[339] Accordingly, the way to bring about closure is first debated by the newly reconstituted pro-Achaean and pro-Trojan parties among the gods, mirroring the human divisions.[340] Importantly, as closure approaches, an explicit reference by the narrator to the judgement of Paris as the origin of Hera's, Poseidon's and Athene's hatred of Troy draws the beginning of the story into the end of the narrative (24.24-30; cf. below on 763-6).[341]

In contrast to the one-sided exchange in book 22, Apollo and Hera now both have a say (24.23-63), and Zeus finally negotiates a double plot to achieve a more balanced, fully consensual closure (24.64-76; 103-19; note "οὐδ᾽ ἀπέλυσεν", 115, followed by "λύσῃ", 116). In particular, he proposes to send out two messengers to restart the action, both to Achilles and Priam (24.112-19). Zeus presents himself, and indeed all the gods, as angry with Achilles for his opposition to releasing the body and ensuring closure (24.113-15); he thus not only employs the theme of anger to initiate closure in a telling reversal, but also for once casts Achilles as the object of an anger potentially more powerful (and destructive) than his own (as Hector had warned; cf. 22.358). In another reversal - now of the scene which initiated the narrative when Achilles had employed his mother to ask Zeus to adopt his plot - Thetis is sent to ask her son to

---

[338] An 'iterative scene' (cf. above p.47) in itself is not unusual in the *Iliad* (cf. e.g. its counterpart in 1.488-92); yet this one is particularly complex according to S. Richardson (1993) 29f: "The passage in 14-30 becomes, with line 31, no longer an ordinary scene but an anomalous summary: it is a time summary with much detail of action and explanation; it is an action summary designed to lead us quickly over eleven days; it marks an ellipsis, while indicating the significant occurrences of the time elided; and, most interestingly, it is an iterative summary disguised as a singulative narrative."

[339] This divine care for Hector's body negates Achilles' contention that noone would defend it (22.348); cf. Segal (1971) 54f; Macleod (1982) 20. Zeus later agrees with Apollo that Hector has a claim to reciprocity for the sacrifices made to the gods (24.68-70; cf. 33f); note the expression "τὸ γὰρ λάχομεν γέρας ἡμεῖς" (24.70b) compared with "τὸ/ὃ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων" for the burial (used e.g. concerning Sarpedon 16.457=675; concerning Patroclus 23.9b).

[340] This is explicitly stated by Zeus in his summary of the situation to Thetis: "ἐννῆμαρ δὴ νεῖκος ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ὄρωρεν/ Ἕκτορος ἀμφὶ νέκυι καὶ Ἀχιλλῆϊ πτολιπόρθῳ" (24.107f). Cf. Macleod (1982) 90 *ad* 24.33-76: "In a sense, then, this is a clash between two partisans, in which they each champion their own man, followed by a compromise."

[341] Cf. Macleod (1982) 88 *ad* 24.25-30, likening this to a technique in Attic tragedians. Note that the judgement of Paris had also featured (implicitly) in the divine discussion negotiating the fall of Troy in bk.4, linking beginning and end of the wider story; cf. above. Davies (1981) 59f sees "the first explicit mention of the Judgement" as "remind[ing] us of grudges and resentments which are not resolved, but linger on relentlessly and inexorably, to issue in the destruction of Troy. The gods continue to provide a foil to the attitudes and actions of the mortal world." For a reference to the beginning of the story near the end of the narrative cf. below on *Odyssey* 23.222-4.

implement the end of Hector's λύσις requested by Zeus (24.74-142; cf. 1.493-596).[342] However, not only is there a reversal of roles contributing to a formal sense of closure, but the sense of closure is enhanced thematically by the reconciliation of Thetis and Hera (24.100-2).[343] The final scene on Olympus ends on universal agreement to the end negotiated, as well as reinforces the importance of the funeral theme even from a divine perspective. It thus concludes the persistent divine conflict over plots and prepares for the human reconciliation between Achilles and Priam.

Negotiating Closure: the Human Perspective

Zeus himself recognizes that the response of the human characters, in particular their willing consent, is crucial to the actual sense of closure conveyed by refusing a purely divine intervention as had been proposed by some of the gods (24.110f; cf. e.g. 24; 109).[344] A truly satisfactory ending is made possible by allowing the two human opponents, Achilles and Priam, to meet face to face, supplementing the λύσις of Hector's body in terms of plot with a deeper thematic resolution which will be discussed in detail presently. Before he is approached by Priam, the grieving father of Hector, Achilles finds himself addressed by his own grieving mother as a first messenger from Zeus.[345] Thetis in fact prepares Achilles for Priam's supplication by stating Zeus' end that he is to accept a ransom and release Hector's body (24.133-7; note "λῦσον", 137; cf. 116). It is significant, however, that she omits to mention the identity of the second messenger (contrast Zeus' speech to her; 24.117-19). This is stressed by Achilles' pronounced indifference as to who will conclude the ransom ("ὃς ἄποινα φέροι καὶ νεκρὸν ἄγοιτο", 24.139b). Indeed, Achilles' acquiescence is expressed as curtly and simply as possible ("τῇδ᾽ εἴῃ", 24.139a); he also phrases Zeus' express will as reported by his mother as

[342] Cf. e.g. Taplin (1992) 263; Macleod (1983) 12f and below on 'scenic ring-composition' p.123.

[343] Cf. Griffin (1980) 17. Though divine, Thetis cannot disregard the end of mortality, the death awaiting her son (24.84b-6); cf. ΣbT Ω.85 which explain that Thetis' mourning is introduced in order to satisfy the audience's desire to be told something of Achilles' death: καὶ ἔστι περιπαθὲς τὸ κλαίειν τὸν ζῶντα, and: ἐπειδὴ μέλλει καταστρέφειν τὸν λόγον εἰς τὰς Ἕκτορος ταφάς, προλαβεῖν τι ἐπιχειρεῖ τῶν ἑξῆς.

[344] Cf. on successful and satisfactory closure respectively above p.74; Taplin (1992) 263: "Zeus finds a way to involve the mortals without divine deceit. ...It is important that it is not a foregone conclusion that Achilleus will take his opportunity..." The focus on the human side is noted by e.g. Zanker (1994) 120f; Segal (1971) 55; Macleod (1982) 100 *ad* 24.119, 105 *ad* 24.198. Note too how Hermes absents himself from the meeting between Achilles and Priam (24.460-7); cf. Macleod (1982) 124 *ad* 24.460-7: "What the god commands is a conventional supplication. What the man does over and above is to appeal as a father to his son's killer."

[345] Cf. Deichgräber (1972) 47. Both have given assurances that they will work with Zeus in achieving the end of Hector's λύσις ("οὐχ ἅλιον ἔπος ἔσσεται", 24.92; 224).

a conditional clause ("εἰ δὴ πρόφρονι θυμῷ Ὀλύμπιος αὐτὸς ἀνώγει", 24.140).[346] His reply recalls the similarly reluctant response to Athene's initial successful, but less than satisfactory intervention to save Agamemnon in book 1 (1.216-18).[347] In this, Thetis' visit offers a telling contrast to that of Priam, which in fact also (largely) turns Achilles' thoughts from his divine mother to his mortal father (cf. above p.82).

As he leaves Troy, Priam's situation and attitude unexpectedly come to resemble that of Achilles himself, in that his exclusive focus on the end of Hector's λύσις renders all other considerations including his own death marginal (24.224b-7; note especially "αὐτίκα", 226; cf. 18.98f).[348] Indeed, although he will return to Troy with his son's body, his journey is described in terms which make it resemble a journey into Hades, prefiguring Priam's eventual death in symbolical terms at the same time as illustrating again Achilles' own 'liminality' (cf. 24.327b-476; note θάνατόνδε, 328).[349] The reconciliation of Achilles with the Achaeans is therefore now followed, and surprisingly overshadowed, by the establishment of more profound similarities between the supposed enemies Achilles and Priam. As we will see, it is significant that the focus in these last scenes is on the two parties which have both lost those most dear to them (Patroclus, Hector) and whose own deaths are strongly foreshadowed (cf. below on the aftermath p.116).[350]

---

[346] Cf. Taplin (1992) 264: "...the real emotional and personal significance of his laconic agreement is saved up." Note also the addition of "πρόφρονι θυμῷ", stressing the degree to which Zeus wishes it. Macleod (1982) 101 *ad* 24.139 argues for a different punctuation and reading of the line (following ΣbT), with εἴῃ from εἰμί, meaning "Let whoever brings the ransom come here (τῇδ᾽ εἴῃ) and take away the corpse"; this would not change my interpretation. Cf. too N. Richardson (1993) 290 *ad* 24.139-40.

[347] ΣT Ω.140 indeed refer to 1.218, in which Achilles accepts divine advice as binding.

[348] Priam reacts more positively to Zeus' message from the start, as its end agrees with his own wishes (24.198f; cf. 22.416-28). The strength of his own end to satisfy to the full his desire for mourning (24.227) means that to him divine assurances of Achilles' placability (24.156-8=185-7) and of his own survival (24.152=181) are unimportant. The parallel extends to Priam's relations with his own people: now his sons and the Trojans in general (24.237b-64), as well as his wife in particular (24.200-27), disagree with Priam's (and Zeus') plot and try to dissuade him, although they are reassured of divine support for Priam's mission, when Zeus sends an eagle in reply to his prayer (24.308-21).

[349] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 235ff, also noting the similarity of Achilles' hut to Hades; cf. Stanley (1993) 237, 244f; Mueller (1984) 74. θάνατόνδε is otherwise used only for Patroclus and Hector, cf. above on 22.297 and Taplin (1992) 265 n.23.

[350] Cf. Griffin (1980) 100: "For both Priam and Achilles the war has become an endless process, unrewarding and meaningless, from which they cannot extricate themselves"; Seaford (1994) 70f on their isolation; Rutherford (1982) 158 on the fact that Achilles has more in common with Priam than the Achaeans. This focus is reflected once more in the setting, as the action is set exclusively in Troy and Achilles' hut, connected by Priam's journey across the plain.

In fact, one of the characteristics of the final scenes is the way in which the λύσις of Hector's body and his funeral are presented so as to allow further anticipation and exploration of ends beyond itself in chronological terms. The fact that the aftermath is thus worked into the end of the narrative itself combines thematic with plotted closure. First, Achilles who had so far identified exclusively with the dead (in the form of Patroclus) is made to take a final step towards identifying also with a survivor (in the form of his own father, mirrored in Priam).[351] But while Priam insists on his own resemblance to Peleus as an old father deprived of his son (24.486-9; 504-6), he also expresses the hope that Peleus will see his son return (24.490-2).[352] These exact terms of his supplication have to be seen not only as triggering a sympathetic emotional (and human) response by Achilles, but as, uniquely, allowing him to move to take the perspective of his own father, stepping beyond the confines of his own life and death (24.511f; 534-42). Indeed, Achilles replies by explaining further the actual extent of the resemblance between the two fathers (though he refrains from actually revealing his own certain death to Priam): taking up Priam's characterization of himself as "πανάποτμος" (24.493) and "ἐλεεινότερος" (24.504), he describes himself in equally hyperbolical terms as "παναώριος" (24.540).[353] Achilles' special perspective from beyond even the ultimate end of death may now

[351] Many critics have written on Achilles' development; cf. e.g. Zanker (1994) 73 on his finally recognizing motifs of affection and fair play; Deichgräber (1972) 110 on him finding the τέλος of his character in a shared humanity; also Macleod (1982) 23-7, on pity 27; Stanley (1993) 395 n.24 on Achilles releasing himself to death in Hector; Segal (1971) 66f - conversely, but also correctly - on Hector's release as a release of Achilles from the "self-centered, desperate clinging to the dead".

[352] We may see this motif of the father hinted at by Hermes, first implicitly (24.370f), then explicitly, though including the whole family (24.465-7); cf. Taplin (1992) 266; Macleod (1982) 117 *ad* 24.362; Mueller (1984) 73; Murnaghan (1997) 39f on "the substitutions - of Priam for Peleus, of Achilles for Hector - that turn the encounter of Achilles and Priam into a simulation of the two reunions of father and son that will now never take place"; cf. Seaford (1994) 173 on the "integrative power of lamentation". Yet it should be noted that they do not, after all, grieve over the same deaths: Achilles for Patroclus and on behalf of Peleus for himself, Priam for Hector (24.509-12); cf. more strongly Lynn-George (1988) 242: "In place of a reunion of father and son, the *Iliad* allows no easy resolution in this encounter of father and slayer-of-the-son; rather it highlights not simply the hope for, but the very horror of, reconciliation: ..."

[353] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 247; Taplin (1992) 271; Macleod (1982) 131 *ad* 24.518-51. Griffin (1986) 41 notes that both adjectives (πανάποτμος, παναώριος) are unique in the *Iliad*, though Priam had already used πανάποτμος in 24.255. Note that such generalizing adjectives are clustered near the end of the narrative; cf. N. Richardson (1993) 160 *ad* 22.490: "M. Pope (*CQ* 35 (1985) 5) notices that out of fifteen παν-compounds in the *Iliad* six occur only in the last four books, 'and this is most easily understood as the result of a temporary inclination of the poet's mind - especially as it is precisely in these examples that the force of the παν- is intensive (...) instead of quantitative (...)'." Cf. Smith (1968) 183: "All such nonqualifying words and phrases [extremities, absolutes, ultimates] tend to have closural effects when they occur as terminal features in an utterance or a poem, for they...are themselves expressions of comprehensiveness, climax, or finality"; Hardie (1986) 245f on the use of hyperbole at beginning and end of the *Aeneid*.

be more truly likened to a divine perspective than the view he had yet been able to take for example in book 9. It also enables Achilles to recognize how his own involvement in the Trojan war has led to the same end of grieving over their sons' loss for both Peleus and Priam (24.540b-2; also 547f); affording a summary insight into the aftermath of the *Iliad* and his own prime role in it.[354] This special awareness of ends in the context of the wider story, of which his own - this - narrative forms only a part, in turn prompts Achilles to consider the nature of human life in general terms. He takes Peleus' and Priam's lives as examples for the - partially if not wholly - painful nature of life, as illustrated by the image of Zeus' two jars holding both good and bad (24.518-51; note "ὡς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι/ ζώειν ἀχνυμένοις· αὐτοὶ δέ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσί", 525f).[355] It is important that this wider perspective can now be taken by the mortal protagonist, Achilles, rather than by the gods as at the beginning of the narrative.

Priam, on the other hand, is still exclusively concerned with his own dead and the end of the λύσις, as illustrated both by his wish to remain in a posture resembling that of his dead son (24.553-4a; cf. above on Achilles and Patroclus p.98) and by his insistence on the immediate fulfilment of his own end (note "τάχιστα/ λῦσον", 24.554bf). Unable fully to see the similarity of Achilles' situation, Priam also repeats his wish for Achilles' survival and eventual return home (24.556b-7a). It is in response to this (human and hopeful) misrepresentation of the closure of his own life combined with the demand for the fulfillment of Hector's λύσις, an end he had opposed so vigorously, that Achilles explicitly thematizes the closeness of his perspective on, and awareness of, ends to that of the gods: he stresses his special knowledge of Zeus' plot through his divine mother (24.561b-7; note "Διόθεν δέ μοι" after "τοι", 561).[356] Though he refuses to be necessarily bound by it (24.568-70), Achilles in this way appears to attempt to

[354] Indeed, if we see Achilles' anger as paradoxically directed against himself in the person of Hector, as responsible for Patroclus' death, and if he has, in effect, killed himself by killing Hector, Priam is 'like' Achilles' father in an even deeper sense (cf. above on bk.18).

[355] Cf. Segal (1971) 64; Taplin (1992) 271f; Macleod (1982) 11, 134 *ad* 24.542; Murnaghan (1997) 42. - More on the significance of generalizations for closure below p.121.

[356] Note the emphasis on himself in the first three verses as shown in four first person personal pronouns ("με", "αὐτὸς", "μοι", "με"). Again, however, Achilles remains silent on the similarly privileged knowledge Thetis has given him of his own near death, which would presumably lay him open to Priam's sympathy and detract from the position of strength he is trying to present.

reclaim the end of the λύσις as his own ("νοέω δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς/ Ἕκτορά τοι λῦσαι", 24.560bf).[357] Achilles' own adoption of it is therefore shown to be motivated by his acceptance of divine, rather than of Priam's plotting and by his ability now to take a wider perspective. He thus crucially comes to use his authority to further rather than oppose closure, adopting Zeus' end of the λύσις with greater readiness than had appeared likely at first.

Thematic, and Formal, λύσις

Importantly for thematic closure, Achilles reasserts his control over ends by forestalling the proliferation of anger: he both refuses to become angry himself ("μηκέτι νῦν μ᾽ ἐρέθιζε", 24.560a; also 568-70) and prevents Priam from being confronted with his own original end, the maltreatment of Hector's body, leading to another quarrel (24.582-6; note "χόλον", 584).[358] This means that Zeus' threatened anger too remains purely hypothetical (24.113-16; 134-7). Since anger had been responsible for initiating, not closing plots as discussed with regard to the very beginning of the narrative, it is crucial that the theme is now laid to rest completely at the end of Achilles' second plot through Priam's successful supplication.[359] We had already noted how renewed quarrels among the Achaeans had been avoided (again by Achilles in particular) in the funeral games. There, Patroclus' funeral had provided a common focus point and the Trojans are at last allowed to share in this concern with burial too (cf. below on the funeral p.121). In fact, Achilles himself actively initiates Hector's funeral by having his body prepared and personally

[357] Murnaghan (1997) 40f correctly notes that "it is necessary to Achilles to deny that Priam's appeal has inspired his own action", though she holds that his focus on his divine mother actually distances Achilles from Priam's earlier appeal to his feelings for his mortal father. She appears to argue, 39-42, that the continuing stress laid on individual distinction (under which she includes Achilles' words to Priam; 24.560-4) works against the closure potentially contained in Hector's λύσις, which does require "the equation of unequal things". Her argument as a whole is marred by taking passages, including the present one, too much out of their context in the narrative and its development. In fact, Achilles here simply reasserts a status which he has been shown to have a claim to all through the epic and its only effect on the λύσις is a positive one as I explain.

[358] Cf. Taplin (1992) 274 on Achilles' control: "His capacity for disobedience (...) make [*sic*] his obedience his own action rather than mere passive acquiescence." ΣAbT Ω.584 have difficulty finding a reason for χόλος on Priam's side and emend to γόος, but the theme is too important to be eliminated in this way.

[359] The motif of supplication is thus another one brought to a successful conclusion here; cf. Seaford (1994) 70: "This final, successful supplication allows the *Iliad* to end in ritual closure, the funeral of Hector celebrated by the Trojans. The sequence of crises set in motion by an unsuccessful ritual at the very beginning of the *Iliad* is concluded by a successful ritual at the very end." Stanley (1993) 392 notes that this is the only successful supplication between mortals in the poem; Rutherford (1982) 159 sees it as a unique display of magnanimity (towards a Trojan); Taplin (1992) 73 conversely as magnanimity on Priam's part (in contrast to Agamemnon's embassy, also 270); Macleod (1982) 15f. It has been argued too that Priam's mission here provides a special counterpoint to the escalation of anger following Chryses' rejected petition to Agamemnon in bk.1, framing the narrative (cf. below on 'scenic ring-composition' p.123).

placing it on the bier in a significant closural gesture (24.589f).[360] He even covers Hector's body with some of the Trojan garments that Priam brought with him (24.580f; 588); they are thus employed as Andromache had wished, yet thought impossible immediately after Hector's death (22.508-14).[361] The fulfillment of her seemingly vain wish symbolizes the breakthrough regarding the previous deadlock of their contrary wishes for closure. Achilles had delayed Patroclus' and refused Hector's funeral over the last episodes of the poem, putting him in opposition to all other characters, including the gods; yet through his action here he takes a last step which turns the theme of the funeral into one of unifying, closural force rather than one of narrative non-resolution.[362]

In fact, Achilles' personal care for Hector's body affords a deeper, thematic sense of closure than the plotted end that he should accept Priam's ransom, which had been emphasized by Zeus (24.104-19; 147=176), as well as mentioned by Priam (24.555b-8). Yet although the motif of the ransom here thus becomes almost as incidental an end as the reparation received from Agamemnon following Patroclus' death (cf. on 19.146-53 above), it contributes to formal closure in that Achilles does accept it when and as it is offered.[363] Achilles also uses it in his last speech to the dead Patroclus as a means of reconciling Zeus' plot of the λύσις and his own original end of retaining Hector's body by offering part of it to Patroclus in the hope of avoiding

[360] Cf. e.g. Edwards (1986) 86; Macleod (1982) 138 *ad* 24.587-9; N. Richardson (1993) 337 *ad* 24.582-90 (also mentioning parallels to Sophocles' *Ajax* 1378-95, Euripides' *Supplices* 765-8, *Troades* 1150-5); cf. Zanker (1994) 70, who notes that Achilles' involvement in the funeral of his former opponent is paralleled by Odysseus' wish to do so in Sophocles' *Ajax*, though it is rejected.

[361] Cf. Taplin (1992) 274: "... Hektor's corpse is shrouded in fine cloth of the house of Priam: and his ashes will be finally wrapped πορφυρέοις πέπλοισι μαλακοῖσιν (in soft purple cloths) in the closing moments of the poem (24.796)"; N. Richardson (1993) 337 *ad* 24.580-1.

[362] Macleod (1982) 28 notes that the two burials at the end are "a planned surprise". ΣbT Ω.589 note the contribution of other characters: οὐκ ἄτοπος δὲ ἡ μεταβολή, Διὸς καὶ μητρὸς καὶ τοῦ ἱκέτου μεταβαλόντων.

[363] Achilles had already shown an indifference to material goods in the assembly (9.378-387), and then even in accepting them in his hurried eagerness to rejoin the fighting (19.146-53); cf. Stanley (1993) 236f; Griffin (1986) 53. Seaford (1994) 70 links this 'closural modification' (cf. below p.122) with the reestablishment of ritual normality.

his anger too for releasing Hector after all (24.591-5).[364] Whereas the end of his first anger against Agamemnon and the acceptance of reparation had been marginalized by the theme of his second anger, driving the narrative forward, and thus also been kept separate from the funeral of Patroclus, the avoidance of anger, the acceptance of the ransom and the initiation of the funeral are all brought together in this scene of supplication. The closure of the λύσις is at last achieved in truly satisfactory terms in a number of ways, and its conclusion is marked explicitly by Achilles ("υἱὸς μὲν δή τοι λέλυται, γέρον, ὡς ἐκέλευες"; 24.599).[365]

Closural Agreement

Their agreement on the λύσις allows further exploration of the significance of the funeral for providing closure from the perspective of survivors as much as from that of the dead; in this it again supplements book 23, as Achilles is at last enabled to take that perspective, though unexpectedly in the context of the funeral of his victim Hector rather than of his friend.[366] Burial thus becomes the final end of the narrative in terms of theme as well as plot. Achilles' - and the narrative's - move towards full closure is pictured through the successful conclusion of the motif of the shared meal.[367] Achilles' earlier unwillingness to share food with the Achaeans had signalled his continuing separation and grief for Patroclus (19.198-214; esp. 303-8). Though the funeral ceremonies for Patroclus marked his reconciliation with the Achaeans, they had not sufficed to release Achilles from his continued concern with the dead and his sharing a meal with either Myrmidons or Achaeans in book 23 is not clearly presented as closural (cf. above on

[364] As mentioned, Murnaghan (1997) 39f sees the ransom as evidence for the final acceptance of unequal bargains necessary in life, holding that "Achilles is willing to treat the ransom as adequate compensation, and he is willing to have his own honor diminished by sharing that ransom with Patroclus"; but her view of the narrative is overly static and does not take into account the development of ends throughout, quite apart from the fact that an acknowledgment of the changed end regarding Hector's body, made to the person on whose behalf the original end had been set, hardly diminishes Achilles' honour. Cf. too Lynn-George (1988) 228: "The refusal of the ransom at the outset is matched by a necessary acceptance of loss at the end. In the return produced by these relations which mark the irreversible, the epic highlights a construction which is not one of a closed circle of reappropriation" (though again I see the special concern with the dead and with loss in this last supplication not so much as an anticlosural element - in narrative terms - than as an expression of the thematic preoccupations of the narrative).

[365] Cf. Macleod (1982) 139 *ad* 24.599: "The perfect denotes, as usual, an achieved state; it thus figures naturally in an expression of willing compliance: ..."; also on "τετέλεσται" (18.74) above.

[366] Cf. Seaford (1994) 72: "The rituals whose final successful performance rounds off the narrative are, so far from being merely domestic, effective in bringing together people from different or even hostile social units: supplication and death ritual."

[367] On the meal as part of the funeral ritual allowing the survivors to continue to live cf. Redfield (1975) 218f; Macleod (1982) 139 *ad* 24.596-620; Segal (1971) 66; Edwards (1986) 88; Taplin (1992) 276.

23.35-60).[368] Once again, this motif is now resolved satisfactorily on Achilles' own initiative as he asks Priam to break his fast and thus to move beyond the closure of death, accepting his status as a survivor (24.600f).[369] His ability to generalize their situation again illustrates that he takes a larger perspective, as he had with the parable of Zeus' twin jars: the example of Niobe shows the necessary institution of closure, pictured in her ending her fast (24.602; 613 contrasted with 617).[370] On the one hand, then, it is precisely the acknowledgement of the continuation of life through the funeral meal that allows for closure; on the other hand, the whole episode of Priam's visit is, as we have seen, replete with hints at their own impending deaths (cf. below on the aftermath p.116). Thus Achilles' emphasis on the community between Priam and himself (24.618f; note the dual "νῶϊ", 618) assumes a special significance, if their shared meal is understood to stand in (symbolically) for a narration of two (or even three) other funeral feasts, both that for Patroclus (and proleptically himself) which Achilles had still eschewed in book 23 and that for Hector which will be briefly summarized at the very end of the narrative (24.802f).[371]

Attention returns to the issue of plotting as Achilles continues to exert his authority to preempt further delay, here by avoiding another confrontation with Agamemnon and the Achaeans, now of himself *and* Priam (24.650-5; note "ἀνάβλησις λύσιος νεκροῖο", 655). His statement can also be read as a metanarrative reassurance about a smooth progress towards the

---

[368] Nor does the brief mention of his solitary meal in the hut at Priam's entry (24.475b-6) provide a satisfactory conclusion of this motif; cf. Edwards (1986) 89. Cf. below on 'closural modifications' p.122.

[369] Achilles had stressed the necessity to move on more than once (24.513f; 522b-6b; 549-51); cf. also above on Patroclus' speech (23.69-79) and below on the funeral theme p.121. Priam agrees to this proposal, and when he once more insists on the immediate fulfillment of a request ("τάχιστα", 24.635; cf. 554), it is only to be allowed to follow the meal with sleep, which is also a sign of concluding grief (24.635-42).

[370] The transformation of Niobe into a rock has been seen as something of a problem in view of her continuing awareness of bereavement, in seeming tension with the closure of the meal; cf. Seaford (1994) 175, who argues that (besides leading back to life) the story also shows "the impossibility of a complete return from the liminality of death-like sorrow that characterizes Achilles and Priam"; Lynn-George (1988) 250: "The story passes into an indefinite structure of openness beyond burial, beyond the meal, in which it closes by suspending its statement of any final determinate meaning", clarified in 252: "In this *sēma*, this sign of never-ending brooding over the buried and on the significance of what has taken place, the story closes with a telling that maintains a silence in place of stated meaning." (ΣA Ω.614-7 athetize the verses because of this tension: καὶ ἡ παραμυθία γελοία· φάγε, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ Νιόβη ἔφαγε καὶ ἀπελιθώθη.) I prefer a metanarrative interpretation in which the fact that Niobe's mourning is after all perpetuated through her transformation into a rock may be read as a veiled reference to the epic function of perpetuating Achilles' and Priam's grief too (cf. below on the σῆμα p.114).

[371] Cf. Edwards (1986) 90 on the two funerals: "The treatment of the corpses of Patroclus and Hector is constantly entwined and juxtaposed, and the rites for the one are used to foreshadow the death of Achilles, those for the other the end of Troy."

approaching closure. Rather than allowing any further deferral of Hector's burial, Achilles affirms the deferral of war for the duration, negotiating a truce so that it can be completed (24.656-8). Recently, Murnaghan (1997) has proposed to read this truce as "a temporary pause that facilitates the continuation of the war - the final manifestation of the pattern of incomplete closure that pervades the poem" (39).[372] Her investigation of the imbalances, or compromises, which in her view paradoxically are necessary to, but also jeopardize closure, is stimulating, but I believe she pays insufficient attention to the difference between closure in terms of the story and of the narrative (formal and especially thematic). We have just seen how the closural force of the funeral depends on the inevitable continuity of life for the survivors, and it is true that a truce also implies the existence of an aftermath. But this aftermath as presented increasingly clearly throughout the narrative will bring Achilles' death and the fall of Troy (cf. below p.116); the potential openness of the story which Murnaghan sees emphasized in the truce may in fact be seen to further closure by hinting at the impending closure of their lives. The intimation of continued war thus qualifies their recent enjoyment of the funeral meal, marking them again as survivors only for a time. Murnaghan's attempt to have the acknowledgement of continuity in terms of the story reflect on thematic closure seems to disregard the skilful plotting of closure, which focusses only on certain aspects of the aftermath.

The truce, limited as it is, also enables Priam, and the Trojans, to reach the particular closure of Hector's funeral which had been their end since his death (24.660f; note "τελέσαι τάφον", 660), and Achilles here gives his final agreement to this end ("ἔσται τοι καὶ ταῦτα, γέρον Πρίαμ᾽, ὡς σὺ κελεύεις·/ σχήσω γὰρ πόλεμον τόσσον χρόνον ὅσσον ἄνωγας", 24.669f). These words again draw attention to his quasi-divine position at the close of the narrative in that he becomes the guarantor for reaching its closure as agreed by all characters including the gods.[373] Indeed, although the Trojans remain wary of the fact that the truce - temporary by nature - might conceivably be broken (24.799b-800; cf. 667, 670, 781), it is equally noteworthy that it is not, confirming Achilles' authority and the general consensus on the need for the funeral. By contrast with, for example, the truce after the duel in book 3, broken through Athene's

[372] Cf. too Lynn-George (1988) on resistance to order and closure, e.g. 232f, 248. Dunn's observation, (1996) 6, that tragedy often does not represent the end of a single action but only a pause in an ongoing state of affairs may appear to offer an attractive comparison for the *Iliad's* closure; in my view, the parallel is rather to Dunn's view, 74, of Euripides' *Supplices* which offers a plot complete in itself while forming part of the Theban cycle.

[373] Cf. N. Richardson (1993) 346 *ad* 24.669-70.

intervention (cf. above p.78), the successful implementation of the truce in itself therefore contributes to closure in yet another way. Achilles' promise of the truce also marks the end of his involvement in the poem, as he proceeds to follow his mother's advice and finally returns to bed with Briseis: simultaneously a sign of restoration, an intimation of loss and an acknowledgement of the continuity of life in the very face of death (24.675f; cf. 130-2).[374]

Returning to the Wider Perspective

As noted, Hector's death had prefigured not only that of Achilles, but also the fall of Troy (cf. above on book 22), and the narrative of his funeral allows a foreshadowing of the aftermath from the perspective of the Trojans.[375] This turn towards the destruction of the city is marked by a turn towards female characters, whose laments are narrated in detail, while the other elements of the funeral ritual are presented in even more summary fashion than Patroclus' had been (24.719-22; 782-804; cf. 23.110b-230).[376] Priam is not given another speech, only short admonitions to his people (24.716f; 778-81); Hector, though he is now significantly returned into the city, is of course dead. Paris is conspicuously absent (but cf. below on Helen's speech); already in book 22 he was present only through the thoughts of Hector, who looked back to him and Helen as having caused the war (22.115f; note "ἥ τ' ἔπλετο νείκεος ἀρχή", 116). In terms of narrative technique, Paris' personal presence appears appropriate for as long as the beginning and development of the war are at issue, while his absence now is a sign of the approaching end of the war (and of the narrative). In contrast to the last appearance of the Achaeans, who compete for distinction in athletic games, the women mainly focus on loss in various forms, the loss of Hector and the future loss of their home, as well as the irrevocable loss of life in general.[377]

---

[374] Cf. e.g. Edwards (1986) 89, who sees Briseis' presence as an indication of the restoration of Achilles' prize and his reconciliation to life on human terms; Taplin (1992) 278f, who sees her as recalling the loss of Patroclus - these views are not mutually exclusive. - Note that Thetis had given her advice to live explicitly because Achilles' death is so near: "τοι ἤδη/ ἄγχι παρέστηκεν θάνατος" (24.131bf).

[375] Deichgräber (1972) 86 notes that the focus on Troy at the end is introduced by a shift in point of view from Priam to Cassandra. There is an opportunity for a curtain call for the Trojan characters, similar to that afforded the Achaeans at Patroclus' funeral.

[376] Cf. N. Richardson (1993) 350 *ad* 24.718-76 on the laments: "It is appropriate that these speeches ['praise poems', encomia] should come at the *end* of the *Iliad*"; Deichgräber (1972) 106f sees them as a "Nachruf auf Hektor und Ilion".

[377] Cf. Easterling (1991) 147: "Their role as singers of the dirge gives the women an important function as potential commentators on events and thus creates an opportunity for them to articulate some of the great issues of the poem." ΣbT X.87 note the appropriateness of female voices on this occasion: φιλοίκτιστον χρῆμα γυνή. καὶ τοῦτο μέγα τοῖς τεθνεώσιν οἴονται.

Intriguingly, Achilles himself had anticipated that the laments of the Trojan women would represent the achievement of his κλέος, when he set out the ends of his second plot (cf. 18.121b-5 quoted above). In fulfilling this anticipation, the following speeches in themselves contribute to the closure of the plot as well as in terms of theme (cf. also below on the σῆμα p.114).

First, Cassandra rouses everybody when Priam returns with the body (24.697b-709), giving prominence to the past as a foil to what has been lost in Hector (24.704-6; note "χαίρετ΄...χάρμα", 706).[378] In view of Cassandra's role in the fall of Troy, her introduction at this juncture may be of special significance, again drawing attention to that event.[379] The speech of Andromache in particular opens up a view of the future beyond the end contained in the burial, by looking back to and contrasting it with the past (24.723-76). This past has been portrayed in the *Iliad* itself through Hector's encounters with her, Hecuba and Helen in book 6 (6.237-502).[380] Though that earlier scene already contained forebodings of later events, it had also served to explore alternative directions to the plot: thus Andromache had then used the image of a possible future, the helplessness of a widow and orphan child (drawing in the whole of Troy in this thought), as a means to plead with Hector in order to influence the course of events (6.407-39).[381] Following Hector's death itself, she could still picture Astyanax growing up in Trojan society, though deprived of his former privileged position (22.484b-507). Yet in her final speech here she already anticipates the death of her son in retaliation for some of the men previously killed

[378] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 240: "Unlike in the *Odyssey*, this will be the homecoming of the dead - for the dead a homeless return, the reception one of lamentation and enduring farewell."

[379] Cf. Taplin (1992) 280f; Deichgräber (1972) 78f; N. Richardson (1993) 348 *ad* 24.699-702 arguing against the assertion of ΣbT Ω.699-700 (οὐ γὰρ οἶδεν αὐτὴν μάντιν ὁ ποιητής.): "...one is inclined to think that the poet knows more than he tells us, and to read the scene in the light of what we ourselves know from later tradition"; also below on the aftermath p.116. Cassandra is also linked with the impossibility of saving Troy in 13.361-82, the only other reference to her in the poem. This may help to focus attention on her role in the destruction of the city more than on her later involvement in Agamemnon's νόστος.

[380] Cf. Macleod (1982) 149 *ad* 24.723-76; Taplin (1992) 125f on Andromache in bk.6, 22; N. Richardson (1993) 154 *ad* 22.437-515 on the relations of Andromache's speeches in bk.22 and here.

[381] The possibility of a positive outcome for the Trojans is raised in the prayers to Athena (6.271-9; 302-12 - though denied by the goddess, 311), in Andromache's advice (6.431-9), Hector's prayer for his son (6.477-81) and his conciliatory speech to Paris (6.522-30). The strongest sense of foreboding is expressed in Hector's anticipation of Troy's capture (6.447-9), his wish to be buried before he can hear Andromache's cries (6.464f) and his acknowledgment that fate will be decisive (6.486-9), followed by the premature laments of his household (6.499b-503). Cf. Taplin (1992) 123: "The scene as a whole contains conflicting hopes and fears which make sense in human terms" - and, we may add, narrative terms.

by Hector himself (24.734b-9).[382] Her fears concerning her own future and that of the other women too arguably foreshadow (perhaps more closely) actual events familiar from the wider story of the Trojan war (24.725-38).[383] She therefore appropriately ends with an image of her continuing grief, unable to find consolation in the memory of Hector's dying action and words (24.742-5; note the future perfect "λελείψεται ἄλγεα λυγρά", 742b; "αἰεὶ", 744).[384]

Hecuba, on the other hand, concentrates on past and present with respect to Achilles' plotting in particular: she points out his limited (human) control over ends in that Patroclus can be returned to life as little as can Hector (24.755f; unwittingly mirroring Achilles' own words to Priam concerning Hector, 551). Instead, she stresses the gods' superior authority as evinced by their care for her son even in death (24.749f; 757-9). Her speech thus sums up, though from a partisan point of view, the themes of the last episodes by stressing the final nature of the τέλος θανάτοιο, and the importance of proper care for the dead from the perspective of the survivors, endorsed by the gods. Helen appropriately concludes the series of speeches by taking the widest perspective of all, explicitly looking back to the origin of the conflict when Paris brought her to Troy (24.763-6; cf. the gods in 24-30), and forward to even greater isolation among the Trojans without Hector to protect her from their hostility (24.762; 767-72; note "πεφρίκασιν", 775). Linking her own fate and Hector's so closely ("τὼ σέ θ' ἅμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ'", 24.773a) may be seen to indicate a fundamental change in her position in Troy that foreshadows her eventual

[382] There has been debate about the exactness of this anticipation; cf. Macleod (1982) 151 *ad* 24.734-8, 736-8 on the conflicting traditions concerning how and especially by whom Astyanax was killed; cf. N. Richardson (1993) 354 *ad* 24.734-9 (Odysseus in the *Iliupersis* and Euripides' *Troades* - though not the *Andromache*, Neoptolemus in the *Ilias Parva*). In the case of Neoptolemus the repetition of the killing of Hector by Achilles in the next generation would be especially striking. ΣT Ω.535 mention a completely different, more positive version: οἱ νεώτεροί φασιν αὐτὸν οἰκιστὴν ὕστερον γεγενῆσθαι Τροίας καὶ ἄλλων πόλεων.

[383] Cf. Macleod (1982) 149 *ad* 24.723-76: "Another distinctive feature of Andromache's lament in this book is its more accurate prevision of the future: ..." For the concern of women with the wider community cf. e.g. Zanker (1994) 147: "To return to the human women of the *Iliad*, their lot as figures on the periphery of the heroes' lives is a potent means of bringing out the true meaning of war for a community"; Taplin (1992) 117 noting that "[t]he city is full of dependent women"; and below on the aftermath p.116.

[384] Ironically, Hector's last speech has formed part of the narrative of the *Iliad* itself and in fact predicts Achilles' death (22.356-60). N. Richardson (1993) 353 *ad* 24.725-45 sees Andromache's regret as illustrating the denial of normal consolations as an underlying theme, similar to her earlier lament concerning the use of Trojan garments for Hector's funeral (22.510-14); as we have seen, however, that particular concern has already found a satisfactory closure.

return to the Achaeans, in particular as her figure of twenty years for the duration of the war also appears to hint at its approaching conclusion (24.765).[385]

At the End: the σῆμα

Finally, the truce promised by Achilles allows the enactment of the full funeral of Hector (24.777-804). In its description, the building of his σῆμα receives the greatest emphasis, though the poem closes on the funeral meal already anticipated by Priam's meal with Achilles.[386] The construction of the σῆμα can be read as an implicit thematization of the construction of closure, as shown by D. Fowler (1989): "The elements of what Smith calls 'closural allusion' could not be stronger; death itself, last rites, the wrapping and putting away of the bones, the burial, the return home" (81).[387] But the significance of the σῆμα here for the closure of the *Iliad* can be approached from an even wider metapoetic perspective: for the very fact that the grave is termed a σῆμα draws attention to its interdependence with the perpetuation of κλέος.[388] As a sign standing in for the dead, its continued meaning is inextricably linked with the continued transmission of the narrative of that person's past life by the living.[389] Again, Murnaghan appears to regard the remarkable shift of focus in the very last scenes from Achilles to Hector and Troy

---

[385] Cf. Kullmann (1992) 226f: "Wieder ist Helena als eine Gestalt geschildert, die der Macht vergangenen Geschehens nicht entrinnen kann und gewissermaßen Symbol des Verhängnisses ist, das durch ihre Entführung über Troja liegt. Indem sie es ist die die Klagen um Hektor beschließt, wird angedeutet, daß das ganze Geschehen um Ilion, auch Hektors Tod, sich unausweichlich aus der Vergangenheit, der Entführung aus Sparta, ergibt." - ΣAbT Ω.765 offer various opinions on the figure of twenty years, discounting it especially when taking into consideration indications of time in the *Odyssey*; cf. Macleod (1982) 154 *ad* 24.765-6 on the issue.

[386] There is a slight difference of the meal's position in the funeral proceedings when they actually take place (24.801-3) from Priam's anticipatory summary (24.665b); cf. Edwards (1986) 84, who argues that the change is made "in order to center the final verses upon the living but doomed Trojans and their king, whereas the building of the pyre would focus only upon the dead Hector".

[387] He refers to Smith (1968) 172-82. Note esp. καλύψαντες (24.796); cf. κάλυψαν of Patroclus' bones, though they are stored in Achilles' hut, not the σῆμα, for the time being (23.254).

[388] Cf. Ford (1992) 143: "To call a tomb a *sêma* is to bring the making of objects as a means of preserving the past very close to the function of epic poetry"; Taplin (1992) 283f on the memorial to Hector's "bravery and kindness" as well as to the poet himself; and the conclusion of Lynn-George (1988) 231-3, tracing the use of πυκ(ι)νόν in bk.24: "As the *epos* gathers itself in the construction of a *sēma* [sealed in one last effort at closure; 24.798] - to a certain extent sign of itself as a monument of memory for all time - its language of lament locates at the same time a lasting lacuna: an *epos* which might be preserved in memory always [24.744f]", but note my earlier contention that the poem itself indeed contains Hector's last, as well as other, words and the following argument.

[389] Cf. Redfield (1975) 34 on κλέος: "...in Homer a man may be conceived as a narrative, may conceive himself as narrative"; Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 118 on the interdependence of the survival of κλέος and the σῆμα, and 122: "Despite the specialization of its meaning to 'grave monument', the *sema* of A. meant not only 'the grave monument', but also 'the sign' of A.", also 112, 139; P. Fowler (1997) 127: "Renown is only ensured when the hero dies nobly and is safely buried with honors that befit his status."

as a destabilizing element by representing "an enactment of equal honor" for Hector and Achilles, in tension with Achilles' allegedly higher status.[390] Yet though the narrative of Achilles' wrath closes on Hector's σῆμα, Hector's hope of achieving lasting κλέος depended on his fight with Achilles (cf. 22.304f). Conversely, Achilles' own κλέος, the end of his second anger, consisted (in his own words) of Trojan laments which we have just seen form part of Hector's funeral (cf. 18.121b-5 and above). In this sense, Hector's σῆμα is also Achilles' σῆμα since the narrative of Hector necessarily involves that of Achilles, the same as the death of Hector will necessarily lead to that of Achilles. Indeed, the κλέος they both wish to achieve - the future narratives of their past (the κλέα ἀνδρων; cf. 9.186-91) - has become one in the particular presence of epic narrative, which is the *Iliad* itself.[391] Yet through this narrative the distinction which Murnaghan seems to find wanting is in fact preserved: for Hector's σῆμα is that of Achilles only to an extent; though Achilles' own death is sealed at the end of the narrative, his σῆμα is incorporated in the narrative only proleptically (and symbolically) through that of Patroclus (cf. 23.80-92; 245-8), and he does survive to see the construction of the grave of his dead opponent. Then again, Achilles' very survival has been interpreted as a sign of "incompleteness" by Lynn-George (1988), since the building of his σῆμα is anticipated in book 23 but not narrated (268). Yet it is important that the construction of both Patroclus' and Hector's σῆμα, each anticipating that of Achilles in its own way, are narrated, thus in fact doubling the σῆμα constructed for Achilles.

To sum up: although the τέλος θανάτοιο, expressed in the σῆμα as tomb, is the same for all humans (a theme which has been explored throughout the poem), κλέος, expressed in the σῆμα as sign, necessarily retains the distinctions between each individual (a theme which has also been explored throughout).[392] In my view, both aspects of the σῆμα (as a sign for the narrative itself as well as a grave monument) are closural in their own way and stand in tension only superficially. In metapoetic terms, the σῆμα is not only a sign of shared death, but also one

---

[390] Murnaghan (1997) 40; cf. above on the ransom.

[391] On the peculiar relations of past, present and future in epic cf. Lynn-George 220, 270ff, esp. 272: "Epic narrative is the plenitude of a present in which past anticipations meet with their future fulfilment"; Bakker (1997a) 5: "...the Greek epic tradition betrays a complex, double vision of epic events as both now and not-now, both near and far"; Ford (1992) *passim* ("vividness"), 127f; also Brooks (1984) 97 noting that in Homeric epic the act of repetition ('I sing of') is initiatory.

[392] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 93 on "Hector's *kleos* as a victim, then, and Achilles' *kleos* as victor"; also Redfield (1975) 222f: "The inner unity of the *Iliad* thus lies in the mirror opposition of the two heroes. In the concluding ceremony they are revealed to us - and to the surviving hero - as contrasting emblems of a single pattern."

of shared (though differentiated) survival through narrative, referring us back to the *Iliad's* own narrative, in which both heroes are present long after their literal deaths.[393] This self-reflexive, metapoetical link to the κλέος perpetuated through its own narrative to my mind also serves to reaffirm, and indeed fix, the presence of meaning and thus strengthens the poem's closure, although critics have recently come to stress that - as a sign - its meaning is perpetually in danger of being lost.[394] Indeed, if the σῆμα here is to be seen as a destabilizing element to the poem's closure, it would be that only insofar as it invites the audience back to an appreciation of the narrative itself, and thus to a second beginning. This second beginning would, however, only lead to the same closure, establishing a perfect though indefinitely extendable circularity as analyzed in general terms by Brooks (1984) 109f who has been quoted in the introduction.

2.4 Special Closural Devices

I now wish briefly to discuss a few specific closural devices that have been noted in passing in the last sections. This discussion also takes us back to the section of the introduction more concerned with formal aspects of closure (cf. above p.41), though as noted on that occasion formal and thematic closure often overlap. Consideration will be given to the presentation of the aftermath, the role and perspective of the characters, the use of generalizations and formal correspondences, in particular so-called 'closural modifications' and 'scenic ring-composition'.

The Aftermath: Inclusion and Exclusion

First, we may look at the role of the aftermath with regard to the *Iliad's* closure (cf. above p.49). Critics at times appear to overemphasize the degree of openness evinced in the *Iliad's* ending, misled presumably by their own familiarity with the wider aftermath (as narrated e.g. in the *Odyssey*), in conjunction with the skilfully contrived linear succession of events across the

[393] Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 228f: "Without defending its world from destruction, the *Iliad* signals finally the irretrievable in retrieval - the recovery of a corpse in an epic concerned with a very mortal immortality. The final fire in the *Iliad* is a towering pyre for the dead, over which a *sēma* is constructed, a monument which, as tomb and sign, affirms both survival and annihilation."

[394] Cf. generally Ford (1992), e.g. 145 on 23.326-34; more specifically on closure Lynn-George (1988) 257: "The *Iliad* constructs a sign of survival and annihilation, the *sēma*, in the awareness of the possibility of the annihilation of all surviving signs." This closural use of the σῆμα may be approaching that of aetiology which becomes very important in later Greek literature; cf. e.g. Dunn (1996) 52. Again, however, the reference to an external reality may be interpreted both as a destabilizing or a stabilizing factor; cf. e.g. Goldhill (1991) 321-33 on Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

narrative.[395] We will return to the way in which the *Iliad* in fact sets clear limits to its inclusion of the aftermath, yet as noted above (p.65), the aftermath itself is potentially endless due to the particular interrelated nature of Greek myth.[396] This potential for continuity in terms of the story has already been exploited in antiquity by those who wished to link the *Iliad's* narrative with those of other poems, establishing a grand compendium of myths encompassing events from the union of Uranus and Gaia to the death of Odysseus in the *Telegony*, the so-called epic cycle.[397] There is evidence for a slightly altered last verse, followed by an additional one which introduces an Amazon, presumably leading into (a version of) the *Aethiopis* which narrates, *inter alia*, Achilles' death: ὣς οἵ γ᾽ ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἕκτορος, ἦλθε δ᾽ Ἀμαζών/ Ἄρηος θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο (24.804+a) substitute Ὣς οἵ γ᾽ ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἕκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο (24.804).[398] The absence of strong formal closure in the ὥς-clause (since expressions similar to the ὥς-sentence summarizing Hector's funeral, 24.804, have frequently been

[395] Cf. esp. Murnaghan (1997) 39 on the truce discussed above; Ford (1992) 83: "...even the end of the *Iliad*, so much praised for its exquisite resolutions, was in one ancient version immediately followed up by a lead-in to the *Aethiopis*. Even after Homer has said his all, there is more that might be said"; N. Richardson (1993) 273 *ad* bk.24: "Of course, as with all endings of great narrative and dramatic works, the resolution which this brings, satisfying and moving though it is, leaves much unresolved: the implacable hostility of Here, Poseidon and Athene to Troy (cf. [24.]25-30), the imminent death of Akhilleus, the city's fall and all the horrors which this will bring, and beyond this, yet more troubles in store for the returning Achaeans" (where "unresolved" might be substituted by "unnarrated"); also below on the *Odyssey's* pretensions to continue the *Iliad*.

[396] Cf. Macleod (1982) 27f: "One could imagine an epic like the *Iliad* which ended with the sack of Troy or the death of Achilles. ...If the *Iliad* had moved in a straight line from Hector's death to Achilles', it would have stopped; as it is, it is completed."

[397] Cf. Proclus *Chrestomathia* 96 l.32-97 l.8, also 98 *passim*; note 97 l.8-11: the value of the epic cycle (as the name implies) relies not on the quality of the poetry but on its relating one narrative's end to the beginning of the next (ἀκολουθία).

[398] The alternative version of the end is transmitted in ΣT Ω.804; cf. a very similar verse in pap.mus.Brit. 1873 (=P^{104}, s.I p.Chr.). Proclus *Chrestomathia* 105 ll.20ff locates the *Iliad* between *Cypria* and *Aethiopis*. The alternative verses (24.804+a) have never been considered authoritative as the connection with the epic cycle makes it virtually certain that they are later than the body of the narrative; cf. Huxley (1969) 129, 147 on the *Iliad* (162, 171 on the *Odyssey*): he argues that the epic cycle as transmitted in Proclus has been composed around the Homeric epics. Note that the continuation also introduces in person Amazons who have been confined to characters' speech in the *Iliad* itself (3.189; 6.186); cf. Griffin (1977) 40f n.14 on the exclusion of the fantastic from the *Iliad*.

employed to conclude episodes *within* the narrative), also seems to have facilitated the addition of such a continuation.[399]

As mentioned, though carefully incorporated into the narrative, the aftermath is astonishingly rigorously limited to Achilles' death and the fall of Troy in its impact on the Trojans.[400] Anticipations of Troy's destruction are present throughout the narrative and thus establish its end without jeopardizing the remarkable temporal unity of the poem.[401] In fact, it had already been clearly established as the ultimate end of the war in the divine negotiations in book 4, if only in outline, preempting much of the audience expectation concerning the eventual direction of the aftermath (cf. above p.77).[402] At the close of the narrative this same event is again incorporated, but (as illustrated by the speeches of Andromache and Helen in particular)

[399] Cf. ΣbT Π.1: ὡς μέλλων δὲ ἑτέρων μεγάλων ἐνάρχεσθαι πραγμάτων, παραγραφὴν ἐνέβαλε τὸν στίχον. ἔστι δὲ τοιαῦτα πολλὰ παρ΄ Ὁμήρῳ· ... (quoting 1.1; 11.596; 12.1; 18.1; *Od.* 6.1; 7.1); Stanley (1993) 249f: "...the most common pattern [of transition] involves a *hos* ('thus') statement that summarizes the previous action..."; S. Richardson (1990) 31: "The backward looking appositive summary is always a sign that the action just told is concluded, that we are to expect a change of some kind, and it is very often the harbinger of a scene switch", also 34 on the proem as a similar appositional summary - he does, however, regard the present verse as "different from the summaries dealt with so far; it does not advance the story but sums up what has just been told". Any closural effect the last verse has must thus result from thematic elements, the particular narrative expression and the position in the context; Deichgräber (1972) 82 reads it as "feierlich"; Scott (1921) 261 as "calm and simple".

[400] Hera's offer of Mycene's, Sparta's, Argos' destructions in 4.51-6 is even further removed from the narrative present, but noticeably the subject is further destruction. This is true too of the destruction of the Achaean wall just after their departure narrated proleptically by the narrator (12.3-35; esp. 16); cf. de Jong (1987) 88f: "This external analepsis [*sic*] is the farthest reaching of all analepses [*sic*], since those by characters reach no further than Achilles' death and the fall of Troy." The only exceptions to this chronological constraint could be Poseidon's prediction of the rule of the Aeneidae in 20.307f and the mention of Cassandra, if it recalls the death of Agamemnon on his return (cf. above p.111).

[401] Cf. e.g. the explicit anticipations of Agamemnon (4.163-5), repeated in Hector's speech (6.447-9), and of Zeus (4.50-68; 15.69-71); of Apollo (7.30-2); Hera (20.313-7); Scamander (21.373b-6); for foreshadowing cf. e.g. 7.350-3 (Antenor's anticipations); 21.520-5 and 22.410f (similes); 24.383-5 and 401-4 (Hermes on the eagerness of the Achaeans), 327bf and 243-6 (Priam on his readiness to die), 728ff (Andromache's anticipations); cf. Schadewaldt (1938) 156f n.4; Lynn-George (1988) 226: "The *Iliad* gives the prolonged tolling of Troy's death knell, not the telling of the actual event of absolute destruction and total loss"; Deichgräber (1972) 105. Cf. Stierle (1996a) 589 on the 'narrative connotation', or 'implicit projection' rather than denotation of the end proper of Flaubert's *Salammbô* (the fall of Carthage).

[402] Cf. N. Richardson (1980) 269 on the scholia's appreciation of Homer's subtle use of anticipations with n.9 on προοικονομία and n.10 προαναφώνησις; more recently Lynn-George (1988) 214: "The imminent end is endlessly immanent throughout an epic structure which has always to this extent at least been inadequately defined as the realm of the pure, living present", also 216.

now the human characters concerned themselves finally offer their perspective on it.[403] Though they are excluded from the certain knowledge of the future available to the gods (and thus the audience), the symbolic connection between the death of Hector and the fate of the city established in the narrative allows them to reflect on an end not in itself narrated.[404] The end of Achilles' own death, similarly linked to that of Hector in terms of plot and theme, is also anticipated more persistently and in more detail in the last third of the poem.[405] The frequent and relatively detailed predictions establish a coherent and definite pattern of expectation for the future concerning both the Trojans and Achilles.[406]

Indeed, the ending as it is may be interpreted as particularly closural since it precisely illustrates the loss of a future in these characters. This is in marked contrast to the treatment of the future of the Achaeans. The theme of the νόστος plays a major part in the Achaeans' debates

[403] Cf. Taplin (1992) 197f, 283: "The look-outs set up a subliminal glimpse of the unfolding future, of the unsung lines: 'And on the twelfth day battle was resumed. And before long Achilleus was killed, and buried along with Patroklos. And not long after that Troy was sacked. Priam was killed, Astyanax thrown from the walls, Andromache taken into slavery...' All these events, insistently foreseen within the *Iliad*, hang over its closure"; Redfield (1975) 124; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 221. Roberts (1997a) 269 stresses the reader's part in constructing the unnarrated aftermath from hints in the text.

[404] Cf. Kullmann (1992) 239: "...im letzten Iliasbuch [spiegelt sich] der ganze weitere tragische Verlauf des Krieges in den Reden der Menschen"; Mueller (1984) 30 notes that it was "fundamental decision" of the poet to equate Hector's death with Troy's fall ; Seaford (1994) 175 with passages in n.114: "Moreover Troy, and with Troy Priam, are no less doomed by the death of Hektor than is Achilles."

[405] Cf. e.g. 1.505 (Thetis calling him shortlived); 9.410-20 (his choice of two lifes); 18.26-72 (Thetis mourning him), 89-126 (his decision to die), 329-32 (his knowledge that he will die in the war); 19.408-23 (his reply to his horse); 21.108-13 (his reply to Lycaon); 22.364-6 (his reply to Hector); 23.80f (Patroclus' prediction of his death); 24.83-6 (Thetis mourning him), 540 (he calling himself shortlived) - cf. Taplin (1992) 193-200, 245 n.70; N. Richardson (1993) 63 *ad* 21.113. For the link to Hector's death cf. Mueller (1984) 30f; more generally Macleod (1982) 149.

[406] Cf. Smith (1968) 120 on narrative generally: "If the conclusion confirms the hypothesis suggested by the work's thematic structure, closure will be to that extent secure; what presumably follows or could follow *in time* will not concern the reader - will not, to be precise, concern his experience of the work in question"; on narrative redundancy in general as a force for 'closing' a text cf. Doherty (1995) 9f. On the *Iliad* Deichgräber (1972) 9: "Wir möchten demgegenüber [der romantischen Vorstellung eines unendlich fortsetzbaren Epos] feststellen, daß zwar der Stoff in der Ilias nicht ausgeschöpft ist, daß aber jedenfalls diesem Buch des Epos [24] nichts mehr folgen konnte, es sei denn ein Poet habe seinen Sinngehalt nicht voll erfaßt"; Clarke (1981) 239 ; Mueller (1984) 31: "The *Iliad* is organised in such a way as to exclude turning-points beyond the death of Hektor. Achilles will die, and Troy will fall: there is no need for the poet to detail the circumstances by which events will take their course towards these inevitable outcomes"; Lynn-George (1988) 255: "The *Iliad* structures its conclusion from a temporary cessation which combines a sense of finality with the awareness of what is still to come"; *pace* Goldhill (1991) 91, esp. n.72, alleging that the narrative technique of anticipating, but not fully narrating the aftermath works against closure.

about their ends in the earlier part of the narrative.[407] Yet no anticipations of the νόστοι, even less any more detailed references, from their perspective are included in the *Iliad* and in particular at its closure, though they converge with the aftermath anticipated by the Trojan women.[408] Though the characters of the Achaean leaders and their preoccupations are important to the beginning of the narrative and its development, their aftermaths beyond the capture of Troy are not relevant to its closure.[409] The perspective on the νόστος of the Achaeans offered at the close of the narrative is that of Achilles on the one hand, whose loss of his νόστος has been a prominent theme, and that of the Trojan women, for whom it will paradoxically be the reverse of homecomings (as exemplified in Andromache's lament, 24.731-4; cf. Hector, 6.454-65).[410] The chronological restrictions observed by the narrative itself therefore strongly contribute to its thematic closure. It is a sign of the thematic preoccupations developed over the course of the narrative that the focus comes to rest at its closure on the two parties who face impending death.[411] The setting too is relevant in illustrating the parallels between Achilles' and Hector's fates, while the Achaeans and the gods on Olympus recede into the background in the last scenes: both Patroclus' (later to become Achilles'; 23.80-92, 245-8) and Hector's σήματα will

[407] The relation of the fall of the city and the νόστοι had already been established at the very beginning (1.18f). The πεῖρα, during which the hero of the *Odyssey* significantly remarks that they cannot be sure whether their νόστος will end badly or well (2.253; cf. the next chapter), reaffirms this connection. The protection of the ships from fire then plays a crucial role in the fighting arising from Achilles' plot (bk.11-16). Taplin (1992) 90 n.15 mentions Odysseus' involvement in "the one and only *nostos*" in the *Iliad*, the return of Chryseis; again this is narrated at the start of the narrative.

[408] All foreshadowing in Patroclus' funeral games also seems to refer either to events related to Achilles' death or the capture of Troy; cf. N. Richardson (1993) 202f *ad* 23.262-897.

[409] A different approach is apparently taken by the fourth century BC historian Menecrates of Xanthus, who proposes that the poet saved up Troy's fall and the νόστοι for inclusion in the *Odyssey*, beefing up its subject-matter; cf. ΣbT Ω.804: Μενεκράτης (FHG II p.345) φησὶν αἰσθόμενον ἑαυτοῦ ἀσθενείας τὸν ποιητὴν καὶ τοῦ μὴ ὁμοίως δύνασθαι φράζειν σιωπῆσαι τὰ μεθ΄ Ἕκτορα. καλῶς δὲ ἐταμιεύσατο τὰ λοιπὰ ἑαυτῷ τῶν †ζητημάτων† εἰς τὴν Ὀδύσσειαν· μικρὰ γὰρ ἦν ἡ ὑπόθεσις περὶ τῆς οἰκίας Ὀδυσσέως μόνον· τὰ γὰρ λείψανα ἐκεῖ ἃ μὲν Ὀδυσσεύς, ἃ δὲ Νέστωρ καὶ Μενέλαος, ἃ δὲ Δημόδοκος κιθαρίζων φασίν. ἄλλως τε πολιορκίαν μακρὰν οὐκ ἄξιον διηγεῖσθαι. Indeed, it might be said that even if relevant, the many individual stories involved in the various νόστοι would threaten the thematic coherence of the poem.

[410] Achilles' loss of his νόστος is ironic, since he sets out as the one among the Achaeans who has least reason to stay at Troy (cf. 1.152-60a; 9.337-9), but ends as the one who is sure to lose his return (cf. e.g. 18.329-32; 24.84-6), taking one path in life rather than the other (9.410-20); cf. Taplin (1992) 197, 205. The female perspective on the sack of Troy is famously taken by Odysseus in reaction to Demodocus' song (*Od.* 8.492-531); cf. Macleod (1982) 4f.

[411] Cf. ΣbT Ω.776: ἐπὶ πλείστῳ δὲ ἐλέῳ καταστρέφει τὴν Ἰλιάδα, comparing this to rhetorical practice in the courts to move the audience.

remain on the Trojan plain, while the Achaeans will leave it, confirming unexpectedly the divisions set up in the proem (cf. on the σῆμα above p.114).

Closural Awareness

In addition, although a character's awareness of events to come is not in itself closural, the acceptance by the characters, the primary agents of both plotting and thematic development in the *Iliad*, of that aftermath works towards closure. There are, however, degrees both of awareness and acceptance: although both Achilles and the Trojans are presented as close to their own ends, Achilles' awareness of his own impending death is rendered unique, and uniquely closural, in that the quasi-divine perspective he comes to acquire means that he knows and accepts rather than predicts and fears his future fate.[412] As we have seen, his unique point of view (due to his divine mother) enhances closure by mediating between the more removed divine perspective of Zeus and the other gods at the beginning and the closely involved perspective of the Trojans at the end of book 24. By stepping beyond even the end of his own death, Achilles is able to offer a general view on human life as exemplified in his two parables told to Priam; such generalization is a useful closural strategy, familiar in particular from lyric poetry.[413]

The story of Niobe also marks Achilles' final acceptance of the end of the funeral not only for Patroclus but also for Hector, on which all plots have come to converge. The funeral as a ritual which releases the survivors from an excessive closeness to their dead (and *vice versa*) is closural in itself.[414] Its use to provide narrative closure has parallels in particular in tragedies like Aeschylus' *Persae*, *Septem, Eumenides*, and Sophocles' *Ajax, Oedipus Tyrannus* and

[412] Cf. Redfield (1975) 222; Clay (1997) 184: "At the end of the poem, Achilles, who in his wrath has approached divinity, accepts the mortality that finally allies him more closely to old Priam and the corpse of Hector than to the gods"; Mueller (1984) 57f notes that Achilles is thus enabled to reflect on his life as completed and below on the first underworld scene in the *Odyssey*. Priam of course also anticipates Troy's fall quite strongly, cf. e.g. 24.243-6; cf. Rutherford (1982) 160: "At the end of the poem there is no more room for illusion: both Achilles and Priam finally know."

[413] Cf. Smith (1968) 157f, 182-6; also e.g. Murnaghan (1997) 26 on the "institution of an ongoing state of affairs" as closural for all narratives concerned with Zeus' alleged plot to lighten the earth of people; Mueller (1984) 72-6, esp. 75: "The final wisdom of the *Iliad* is not the attainment of a new and more human order born out of the destruction of the warrior code, but the temporary and ordered vision of the suffering and contradictions of human life"; Rutherford (1982) 160. Cf. Cohan/Shires (1988) 65f on the paradigmatic as allowing closure of the syntagmatic sequence.

[414] For the importance of burial cf. e.g. Griffin (1980) 160f; Segal (1971) 29.

Antigone.[415] In the *Iliad* the burial is developed into a special closural theme in that the funeral of Patroclus marks the end of Achilles' first anger against Agamemnon and the Achaeans, then that of Hector marks the end of his second anger and includes anticipations of the aftermath of Achilles' own death and Troy's fall. By being doubled in this way, this theme also includes the Achaeans - in contrast to the aftermath with respect to which they remain excluded from closure - so that finally all characters alike, across all divisions of allegiances, (including the gods) become united in their concern with burial.

Thematic Resolution: Closural Modification

While the theme of burial offers an opportunity for closure, both from the point of view of the survivors and the dead, those themes which initiated the plot and assured its development towards the τέλος θανάτοιο and its aftermath, which were discussed in my first two sections, are necessarily closed in a different fashion. Most importantly, this is achieved by following one or more scenes in which the characters unsuccessfully negotiate an issue, unable to contain their disputes over ends, with a similar scene with a more positive outcome, in which agreement is finally reached.[416] In principle this closural technique of illustrating the resolution of a particular theme through its successful and satisfactory negotiation after a number of failed attempts could be related to what Smith calls 'closural modifications' in lyric poetry.[417] In the *Iliad*, the failure of earlier supplications as a consequence of continued anger, such as those by Chryses to Agamemnon, of the Achaean embassy to Achilles, even in a way Patroclus' to Achilles, and Hector's to Achilles, is finally superseded by the successful resolution (λύσις) of Priam's petition

[415] Cf. Redfield (1975) 166: "Ceremonies, which mark beginnings and endings in life, also make themselves useful in the patterns of narrative art, especially at the end; for while the ceremony gives its participants a new standing and a new beginning, the symbolic content of ceremonies is primarily synthetic and retrospective. ...Thus it is no accident that so many comedies end with a wedding, so many tragedies with a funeral"; Rutherford (1982) 146, 158; N. Richardson (1993) 272; P. Fowler (1997) 129; Segal (1971) 71. D. Fowler (1997) 15 mentions the funeral cortège as an ancient 'unit of thought' often employed to provide closure; cf. above p.32.

[416] On the use of repetition cf. e.g. Taplin (1992) 10 noting that "later scenes...accumulate significance in the wake of the earlier narrative"; Segal (1971) 4-8 discussing the repetition of motifs and scenes in the context of oral formulaic theory, though he himself is concerned with how the corpse theme is used "to point up nuances of meaning in the progression of the action"; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 225-7; Sheppard (1922) 12f ; Zanker (1994) 115f on modification of the ransom scene.

[417] Cf. Smith (1968) 59-63.

to Achilles - accepted by all parties concerned - in narrative terms as well as in literally.[418] Other motifs similarly brought to a satisfactory conclusion in this extended final scene with Achilles are the acceptance of reparation as a sign of the cessation of anger as well as of the funeral meal as a sign of the cessation of an identification with the dead ('liminal status'). The resolution of the original themes related to anger, status and material objects (μῆνις, τιμή, γέρας) is thus achieved both by thematic means through the characters' final acceptance of and agreement on their end and by formal means through the series of resembling scenes across the narrative in which only the last is satisfactorily closural.

Scenic Ring-Composition

Another, last closural device depending on the positioning of scenes in the narrative, which has long been noted by scholars, is the formal framing of the *Iliad* through related scenes at the beginning and end.[419] The last scenes of the narrative appear to be arranged in a sequence which broadly mirrors that of scenes at its beginning (a father's supplication, funerals, Achilles confronted by a leader, Apollo's and Zeus' interventions, Thetis' appearance, the two dreams, and the listings of the Greeks), underscored by a remarkable symmetry in terms of narrated time.[420] Though the effectiveness, if not the existence of this formal correspondence has occasionally been questioned, as a 'scenic ring-composition' it arguably contributes to closure, if only subliminally, by establishing a broad framework of mirroring scenes that conveys an impression of coherence and integrity. As Mueller (1984) argues: "To counteract the sprawling

[418] On supplications cf. Taplin (1992) 76f with a table on 'Four Visit-Scenes' (including the ransom of Hector), 205f on the confrontation between Agamemnon and Achilles in bk.1, 9, 19; Sheppard (1922) 208f; N. Richardson (1993) 5; Thornton (1984) 125-42; Zanker (1994) 106 on Achilles' refusal of Hector's supplication as the "culminating moment in the motif of rejected supplications".

[419] Cf. Redfield (1975) 219: "The end of the *Iliad* echoes its beginning. In the beginning a father is refused the ransoming of his child; at the end a ransoming is permitted. In the beginning Achilles quarrels with a king; at the end he is reconciled with a king. Since the persons are different, however, these echoes are purely formal. The *Iliad* comes to a conclusion, not because the action imitated reaches a solution, but because the poet has conferred on the event, in the manner of his telling it, a form and an ending"; N. Richardson (1993) 7: "It is natural that Homer should recapitulate motifs and scenes at the end in such a way as to reflect the opening of his poem and to give a sense of closure, especially in relation to the major themes of quarrel and reconciliation, anger and appeasement, supplication rejected and received. It is possible that the ending of the *Odyssey* (...) is similarly designed to echo some of the leading themes of the opening episodes", cf. 4 with n.4 for further bibliography, noting that 'ring-composition' as such is a familiar technique in Homeric epic; Macleod (1982) 32-5; Stanley (1993) 241-4 on balancing elements in bk.1 and 24.

[420] Cf. the extensive discussion in N. Richardson (1993) 4-13. On the correspondence between the burials of the dead Achaeans affected by the plague and Hector's funeral cf. N. Richardson (1993) *ad* Hector's funeral; on Thetis cf. Redfield (1975) 213 and above on the divine council in bk.24. On the corresponding time scale cf. Taplin (1992) 15-18; Myres (1932) 285; Scott (1921) 250, 262f; Sheppard (1922) 207-9.

tendencies of his epic, the poet designed a narrative frame, an elaborate set of correspondences that relate beginning to end" (175).[421]

2.5 Summary

In conclusion, it may be helpful to recapitulate briefly how the *Iliad* allows its narrative to develop and finally to find closure through the ends plotted by its characters.

We have noted how the initial theme of anger, raised by the characters' concern for appropriate recognition, had been marked by the fact that the various ends envisaged remained yet open to dispute. Indeed, this openness was reflected in the language employed itself, as unspecific temporal references only gave the appearance of offering an exact end to the plot in question. The equal involvement of gods and humans in plotting should be noted too, although the greater authority of the gods in this as in all other respects is made clear from the beginning. The divine perspective is also shown early on to be a broader one (despite their close involvement in the events of the moment), which is able to subsume human short-term ends, including even the plot of Achilles which is the main subject of the narrative. The role of Zeus has been seen to be particularly peculiar in that his understanding of the interaction of the various plots in contention and of their unintended and often surprising consequences appears to be always just one step ahead of all other characters. Yet unlike Zeus in the *Odyssey*, as we will come to see, his anticipations of resulting ends leave a large degree of suspense concerning not only the path towards these ends, but their nature and meaning itself. As a result Zeus' 'prolepses' offer a general and useful indication of the development of the plot at large, even enhancing suspense, while leaving the freedom for himself and all other characters to act and plot, opening space for the 'narratable' to retain and even increase its momentum.

A new and crucially different end which, once reached, is not open to dispute is tentatively introduced in the 'kernel' scene of the embassy. As Achilles continues to refuse to consider negotiating a closure while he can, the greater value of lasting κλέος rather than present τιμή is already suggested though it remains unclear how this new end will be reached. In fact,

[421] Cf. above on 'ring-composition' p.42. As noted there, the subject has to be approached with caution; cf. N. Richardson (1993) 13: "any structural correspondences such as have been suggested between the earlier and later parts of the poem must be seen in counterpoint with the main forward movement of the narrative"; Taplin (1992) 10, warning, 18 with n.16, against attaching too much importance to this symmetry; most recently Jones (1997a) 7-10, who is most sceptical of Whitman (1958) in particular and sees his argument itself as circular, but is ready to agree with N. Richardson (1993).

this happens through the involvement of Patroclus and his eventual death, marking the point at which Achilles realizes the unintended, yet irreversible end of his angry plot of retaliation, finally bringing home the full significance of the τέλος θανάτοιο as the ultimate end. Patroclus' death also serves to establish how other ends, even beyond the confines of the narrative itself, will be reached, including Achilles' own death. By presenting Achilles' death as the consequence of his own decision to exact retribution (τίσις) from Hector, it crucially becomes a conscious choice on the part of Achilles himself. His subsequent awareness of imminent death contributes to affording him an unusual, quasi-divine perspective which characterizes the last part of the *Iliad* and adds to its thematic depth. Yet the theme of anger still remains active, driving the narrative forward; indeed it leads to another disputed end beyond the non-negotiable τέλος θανάτοιο in Achilles' deadlock with the Trojans over Hector's funeral. This prevents the establishment of a fully consensual closure even following the funeral of Patroclus and the final resolution of the first anger against the Achaeans in the funeral games.

Still caught up in the perspective of death, Achilles remains reluctant to agree to the closure of Hector's burial even after Zeus' intervention, which however serves to reconcile (even if only momentarily) the two opposed parties on Olympus. It needs the extended meeting with Priam, in which a number of general yet striking resemblances between the two are established (and recognised by the characters themselves), for Achilles to move beyond the τέλος θανάτοιο himself. Once he has done so, however, the wider perspective on human life in general he can now offer (due to his unique intermediary position through his divine mother) mediates between the more removed perspective of the gods and the still closely involved (and less deeply aware) perspective of the Trojans, which closes the narrative. This focus on a human, if generalized, perspective at the closure of the *Iliad* is noticeable. It agrees with its restricted but thematically relevant focus on the aftermath only of those characters who face impending death. The marginalization of certain characters at closure is therefore not simply a mechanical device to contain the 'narratable', but has a particular thematic relevance.[422] Although the fact that the narrative of the *Iliad* is necessarily placed in the larger context of the story of the Trojan war is acknowledged by the clear indication that the war, like life, will continue, the very acknowledgement of the existence of the aftermath allows for the institution of closure by virtue of its clearly focussed partial inclusion.

[422] Cf. Miller (1981) 28, also 43 on Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, above p.22.

Thematic closure is accompanied by other devices which underscore it: we have already mentioned the inclusion of certain aspects only of the aftermath. The setting is also invested with particular significance, in agreement with the focus on Achilles and the Trojans at the end. Landmarks focussed upon in the final episodes are the σήματα of Patroclus (later to be Achilles') and of Hector on the Trojan plain. The placement of the σῆμα of Hector at the very end of the narrative in particular has been seen to be especially important. It arguably contains implicit metatextual references to the poem itself and its concern with the κλέος of its characters. Small-scale devices more familiar, perhaps, from lyric poetry such as formal correspondences between scenes at beginning and end and significant modifications of particular types of scenes, or motifs, at the closure have also been discussed.

"οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γέ τί φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι
ἢ ὅτ' ἐυφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κάτα δῆμον ἅπαντα,
δαιτυμόνες δ' ἀνὰ δώματ' ἀκουάζωνται ἀοιδοῦ..."
Homer *Odyssey* 9.5-7

3. The Odyssey

Having analysed the *Iliad* and its closure from a number of angles, we may now turn to consider the *Odyssey*. Though it is impossible to arrive at anything more than probable conclusions, most critics subscribe to the view that the *Odyssey* was composed later than (some version of) the *Iliad* and with it in mind, and I too will at times use the *Iliad* as an intertext, while also mentioning later cyclic epic and νόστοι narratives when appropriate.[423] It is a commonplace that the *Odyssey* is very much concerned with narrative as a subject in its own right, be it in the form of epic song or character speech.[424] I hope to show that it is almost obsessively concerned with closure too, with respect to its own narrative, its relation to other narratives, and the words of its characters.

My discussion of closure in the *Odyssey* will again proceed in some detail in order to do justice to the conception of the poem itself. However, I shall discuss more passages than was necessary for the *Iliad* because so much of the *Odyssey* has been athetized, judged irrelevant or contradictory (cf. above p.63). Although it would be cumbersome rather than illuminating to enter regularly into direct engagement with analytical-unitarian arguments, I hope to demonstrate how the study of closure can contribute to the appreciation of the narrative as literature. As with the *Iliad*, I wish to begin by identifying salient points with regard to the poem's themes and structure as indicated in its proem.

---

[423] Cf. esp. Rutherford (1991-3) and (1992) 2, 6; Pucci (1998b) 11f on the proem in particular; Tracy (1990) 149 with n.2; Clay (1997) 243-6, also 184f; Mueller (1984) 180f; Stößel (1975) 152; Korenjak (1998) with an overview 133-5 and his own views 138f, 143. The impossibility of distinguishing with certainty between references to the poetic tradition in general and specific texts is due to the loss of all other narrative epics beside the Homeric poems; but cf. Jones (1997a) 35 on the issue of Odyssean allusion to the *Iliad*: "Allusion-spotting is in fact a highly pragmatic business." Concerning his doubts, 36ff, about the absence of openly competitive passages, I hope my discussion especially of the comparisons between Achilles and Odysseus will be suggestive; cf. Austin (1975) 129: "The *Odyssey* is, after all, a poem, one of the central themes of which is the contrast between those who notice tokens and put together meanings and those who do not - the danger is not of reading too much into Homer, but of reading too little." - Katz (1991) 6f notes that intertextuality extends not just to the *Iliad* but other stories on the Trojan war.

[424] Cf. e.g. Goldhill (1991) 68; S. West (1988) 229 *ad* 4.595-8; Rutherford (1985) 137f; Ford (1992) 127-30, also 168 on the contrast to the *Iliad*.

3.1 Odysseus' μῦθος: the search for the end

3.1.1 Absence

The proem

Concentrating on Achilles' wrath, the *Iliad* asks for its beginning straightaway but also contains a single, clearly focused (though general) end in the many sufferings and deaths it causes (*Il*. 1.2-5; note μυρί[α], 2; πολλάς, 3).[425] The *Odyssey's* proem focuses on its protagonist (ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα; 1.1), followed by a wide-reaching account which spans many aspects of his story (1.1b-4; note πολλά, 1, 4; πολλῶν, 3).[426] While the expansiveness of epic, encapsulated in the root πολ-, is directed towards and ultimately contained in the over-arching thematic end of suffering in the *Iliad* in its proem, it is presented as characteristic of the *Odyssey* and its protagonist as a whole.[427] Mirroring the uncertain direction of Odysseus' wanderings after the fall of Troy, the proem of the *Odyssey* offers even less of an indication of an end to its plot. This lack of clear narrative direction is also illustrated by the impossibility of classifying the proem as either an 'ana-' or 'prolepsis' as in the *Iliad*.

The first verses do, however, contain an indication of an end in a more general sense as expressed in the search for the narrative's wandering and versatile hero.[428] His current absence is mirrored in the narrative itself, as the adjective πολύτροπος stands in for his name (1.1).[429] This correspondence offers a first hint at the important connection of a person's name -

---

[425] As noted in the *Iliad* chapter, this generalized end does not provide an indication of the closure of the plot. In comparison with the *Odyssey's* proem, however, the mention even of a thematic (rather than plotted) end becomes significant.

[426] In this it more closely resembles hymnic introductions in which the divinity to be sung is described in general terms by epithets and characterized through relative clauses, which commonly precede the narrative chosen as the hymn's specific subject. Cf. Janko (1981) 10f. The closest parallel is the *Hymn.Hom.Ven.*: Μοῦσά μοι ἔννεπε ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης/ Κύπριδος, ἥ τε θεοῖσιν ἐπὶ γλυκὺν ἵμερον ὧρσε..., where the narrative proper only begins with v.45.

[427] πολ- could also be said to feature as an epic marker in Penelope's summary narrative of her experience given to Odysseus (23.300-5; note "πολλά", 304; "πολλὸς", 305 - both intriguingly referring to the amount of food consumed by the suitors); cf. also Nestor on the Trojan war in 3.113f.

[428] Cf. Katz (1991) 194 on Odysseus finally being centered on a "core of true being" quoted above p.60.

[429] In fact, the hero's name is not simply suppressed but it is virtually asked of the Muse in the riddling first verses (1.1-5), since ἐννέπειν can mean "name" as well as "tell of". Cf. Pucci (1998b) 28, who sees the audience rather than the Muse as those required to answer the question by activating knowledge from outside the poem. For "name" cf. *LSJ s.v.*4, with examples from Pindar and Euripides; for "tell of" cf. *LSJ s.v.*1, with many examples from the *Iliad*; the latter is commonly used in conjunction with an abstract noun like μῦθος *vel. sim.* (cf. also *Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 1 quoted above), while here a personal object, ἄνδρα, is introduced.

signifying his characteristic identity - and his story (μῦθος).[430] Indeed, the choice of πολύτροπος, in itself polyvalent, is especially significant since it reinforces the impression of a lack of direction in the midst both of his experience and story for Odysseus himself.[431] On the other hand, signifying both the mental and geographical mobility of the "man of many turns", πολύτροπος also holds out the possibility of successfully restarting his narrative. This is pointed out by Peradotto (1990) in his reading of both the adjective and the ensuing mention of the significantly named Calypso: "...these two terms, placed in juxtaposition, give us the raw, almost cleanly abstract prerequisites for narrative as such: the subject capable of many moves is immobilized, the polymorph enveloped, the crosser of borders held in hollow caves, desire kept from its object" (116).

Both the protagonist and his story clearly require an end to provide a focus for their rich yet aimless expansiveness. As we will see, these ends are made to coincide in the over-arching end of the νόστος which guides the plot and which will finally (re)present Odysseus regaining his unique identity (cf. below on 1.16-18). The move towards Ithaca and Odysseus' secure reestablishment there thus serve to provide a narrative direction and potential closure which the focus on a character and his story, in particular such a versatile character with such an expansive story, cannot offer.[432] The proem itself already anticipates this turn towards closure through a return by ending on a participle phrase, which describes the protagonist's own goal of trying to secure both his own survival and the νόστος of his companions (ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων, 1.5).[433] Yet this move towards the νόστος is shown to be precarious from the

---

[430] The absence of Odysseus' name anticipates a prominent feature of the many stories forming part of his journey towards the end of his μῦθος. Cf. Peradotto (1990) 116 and 101f with examples from bk.5 to 8 and 14; Clay (1997) 27; Ford (1992) 102. Benardete (1997) 3 offers a good explanation of the difference to the *Aeneid*, where the initial absence of Aeneas' name can be seen to illustrate the subordination of the man to the city (of the future).

[431] The adjective is used again only once, as Circe identifies Odysseus in 10.330. For its polyvalence, including its metatextual characterization of the narrative itself; cf. Peradotto (1990) 115; Goldhill (1991) 4: "*Polutropon*, in other words, both marks Odysseus' capability to manipulate language's power to conceal and reveal, and, at the same time, *enacts* such a revealing and concealing" (3 with n.3 he gives bibliography on the term from antiquity onwards); such a "textual" reading is also traced back to fifth century rhetoric by Pucci (1998b) 25f. D. Fowler draws my attention to the fact that Livius Andronicus' Latin rendition versutum in turn highlights the act of translation (vertere); cf. Hinds (1998) 61f. (Horace *Ars P.* 141f leaves it out.)

[432] That unity of character is not necessarily a sufficient organizing narrative principle is famously pointed out by Aristotle (*Poet.* 1451a19-29, with reference to the *Odyssey's* excellence; cf. above p.61).

[433] The focus on an end in the form of the νόστος is later mirrored in Odysseus' own narrative, where his name is likewise followed by a chronologically and geographically summarizing account of his wanderings (9.19-36), before he embarks on the sequential narrative of his νόστος (9.37-11.332; 11.378-12.453); cf. below.

start, as the partial failure of Odysseus' end is anticipated through a summary account of the incident with the cattle of Helios (1.6-9; note ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽). A first example of the poem's exploration of ends, their frustration and delays, the abortive end of the νόστος ἑταίρων is still closural by virtue of being emphatically not achieved (αὐτὰρ ὁ [Helios] τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ, 1.9). It thus provides an example *ex negativo* for the crucial nature of the end of the νόστος in directing the narrative, echoing as well as partly rejecting 1.5. The story also introduces, at the very earliest opportunity, the theme of just punishment and - importantly - invests it with specific closural force in that the god's punishment of the crew (identical with the loss of their νόστος) closes the passage.[434]

A Second Start

It is now acknowledged that the narrative has strayed by coming to focus on one particular incident as an end, and a foiled one at that: once more, therefore, the Muse is addressed and now explicitly asked for a beginning (τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν, 1.10), as she had been asked for the protagonist's name before (1.1-5). The prominent use of τῶν ἀμόθεν γε in particular can be interpreted as thematizing the need to find a starting point, no matter where.[435] Significantly for the structure of the *Odyssey* as a whole, the ensuing answer to this question again serves to show that even the choice of a beginning hinges on the end: it is the moment at which the protagonist's story takes a turn towards his νόστος that is identified as crucial (1.16-19; note οἶκόνδε νέεσθαι, 17b), following an expository summary of his current

[434] There has been something of a controversy concerning this incident, in particular whether its portrayal as a clear-cut issue here agrees with that in Odysseus' later more detailed narrative. Thus some critics have seen the crew as left with no choice; cf. e.g. S. West (1988) 68 *ad* 1.1-10, 71 *ad* 1.7-9; more strongly Clay (1997) 230; also Pedrick (1992) 48f; other scholars put a different case, cf. e.g. Fenik (1974) 211ff; Rutherford (1986) 148; D. Fowler points out to me that the crew crucially lack Odyssean endurance, the patience to follow the plot full of delays which is also expected from the audience of the poem. Doubts about the ultimate justification of the men's deaths have also reflected on the wider issue of justice in the poem, especially with regard to the τίσις on the suitors; cf. esp. Nagler (1990) 354 who sees the proem as focussing attention on the central problem of violence against one's own social group. I hope to show how attention to the importance of closure may help understand the problem (below p.142; p.235); cf. also on the potential disjunction between 'motivation' and 'function' in the *Odyssey* (below p.132).

[435] Cf. Pedrick (1992) 42: "But the fact that she [the Muse] not only fulfills the request of verse 10 but also corrects the whole proem makes the artifice more conspicuous - a reflection, in effect, on the difficulty of beginning an innovative epic." Nagy (1997) 256 n.74 considers the change to the first person plural as evidence for a succesion of performers, but the Muses likewise address Hesiod in the plural (*Theo*. 26; cf. 1); cf. M.L. West (1966) 160, who also notes, 169f, a second beginning in Hesiod's narrative in v.36. This *aporia* of the narrator, who himself becomes a more noticeable character as a result, is developed by Apollonius (*Arg*. 4.1-5); on this use of the Muses cf. S. Richardson (1990) 181 and above p.43.

delay on Ogygia (1.12-15).[436] Yet another twist is added to the narrative by an early indication that the return in itself does not mean a complete end to the trials constituting the protagonist's story (τῷ οἱ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ οἶκόνδε νέεσθαι/ εἰς Ἰθάκην, οὐδ᾽ ἔνθα πεφυγμένος ἦεν ἀέθλων,/ καὶ μετὰ οἷσι φίλοισι, 1.17-19a).[437] The return to Ithaca will, however, finally render ineffective Poseidon's dilatory wrath, which shall be considered presently (1.19b-21). The passage as a whole can thus be seen to imply that Odysseus' νόστος will only gain its full significance with subsequent events on Ithaca and that it is the characteristic quality of his particular νόστος which will ultimately supply the closure of the narrative.[438] The development of the narrative as a whole may again be seen to be mirrored in the final disclosure of Odysseus' name only at the very end of the proem, after the establishment of his particular νόστος as a clear focus (1.21). The significant link between the absence of the protagonist's name and the beginning, and its presence and the closure of his narrative is thus reinforced by providing an answer to the question which began the proem (1.1). Together, these two verses frame the virtual summary of Odysseus' move from anonymity to his return home.

The Gods

Odysseus' return to Ithaca accordingly functions as both the initiating force and the goal for one half of the poem, followed by the gradual recognition of his presence as that for the second half. It is adopted as an end by the principal characters, and it is noteworthy that the characters which play a decisive role are the gods. While in the *Iliad* the human characters play a major role in negotiating ends, especially at the beginning (and end) of the narrative, here the gods are shown to be responsible both for previous delays and for the present turn towards the

[436] The continuing deferral of Odysseus' νόστος against his wishes is initially contrasted with the completed return of other Achaean heroes after the Trojan war (1.11f); this comparison can be read as - by implication - raising expectations about the ending of the current poem in parallel with other narratives of νόστοι, a theme soon made explicit and developed throughout (cf. below on 1.32-43); cf. e.g. Slatkin (1996) 226f.

[437] S. West (1988) 74 *ad* 1.18-19 queries whether this passage is the apodosis to the temporal clause or a parenthesis after 1.17 foreshadowing the latter part of the poem (with the second mention of the gods in 1.19 beginning the apodosis). She favours the former since "this isolated allusion to subsequent events is rather awkward". But in either case the relative clause (1.18-19a) must refer to future events on Ithaca and, as we will see, such pervasive references to later events are characteristic of the narrative. That the νόστος represents only the beginning of the turn towards closure may also be implied by the use of the perfect for those who have already achieved their νόστοι (πεφευγότες, 1.12) whereas the same perfect is still negated concerning Odysseus once back home (οὐδ᾽ ἔνθα πεφυγμένος, 1.18).

[438] Cf. Pedrick (1992) 53f.

νόστος.[439] Retaining a degree of suspense, it is established that Poseidon's anger, directed towards preventing Odysseus' return, is bound to continue until the return itself will have made this end impossible (...νόσφι Ποσειδάωνος· ὁ δ' ἀσπερχὲς μενέαινεν / ἀντιθέῳ Ὀδυσῆι πάρος ἣν γαῖαν ἱκέσθαι, 1.20f). The god's temporary absence from Olympus, however, offers the opportunity to begin the move towards Odysseus' νόστος immediately (1.22-7).[440] This is possible because, in contrast to the *Iliad*, the situation on Olympus is characterized by a unanimity of purpose right from the start, since all other gods support the νόστος as an end (1.16-19). Indeed, the lack of dissenting voices is reinforced by the remarkable silence of everyone attending the council on Olympus apart from Zeus and Athene (1.26bf).[441]

In fact, the way in which Zeus' words are introduced makes clear that they represent a virtual monologue (μνήσατο γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν, 1.29a). His apparently misguided choice of subject-matter in discussing Aegisthus' story implicitly introduces the specific contrast with Agamemnon's disastrous νόστος (1.35-7a; note γῆμ' ἄλοχον μνηστήν, τὸν δ' ἔκτανε νοστήσαντα, 36); it will be invested with special significance all through the poem.[442] Characteristically, it is not so much the character's (here Zeus') motivation which appears to be decisive in bringing an issue to the fore as is the thematic thrust of the narrative as a whole, which is established at the outset.[443] This disjunction between 'function' and 'motivation' in turn

[439] Besides Poseidon, the second obstacle preventing the turn towards the νόστος comes in the shape of a divine character in Calypso (1.13-15). Cf. too Helios' prevention of the return home of Odysseus' companions (1.7-9).

[440] Clay (1997) 51-3 notes that "Poseidon's absence in Book 1 is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for putting Odysseus into motion" - Athene's decision to intervene on Odysseus' behalf in the following divine council is decisive; cf. S. West (1988) 61.

[441] Cf. Andreae/Flashar (1977) 246: "Es gibt also in der *Odyssee* keine Götterhandlung, die eine eigene Ebene darstellte und bei Knotenpunkten der Handlung in dramatischer Korrespondenz zu den menschlichen Handlungen stünde"; Burkert (1997) 159: "The many-coloured life of the gods in the *Iliad*, an expression of that infinite freedom, must atrophy under the burden of ethical responsibilities", noting the prevalence of Zeus and Athene, "connected by the same desire [the restoration of justice]".

[442] In order to understand the relevance of a speech such as this, a certain amount of knowledge about subsequent events is required, either through familiarity with the story generally or (more convincingly) with the latter parts of this narrative in particular. Cf. Heubeck (1988a)16f with n.45; S. West (1988) 60: "It [the leitmotif of Agamemnon's return] offers both analogy and antithesis", with n.20 and further bibliography; Katz (1991) 20; also below on bk.3, 4, 11, 13, 24.

[443] Peradotto (1990) 45 helpfully distinguishes between the 'function' of a passage and its 'motivation', following Bremond; he applies, 46f, 60f, the distinction to scenes in the *Odyssey* himself. I will return to the concept intermittently, in particular when discussing Penelope in later books, where the excess of 'function' over 'motivation' seems most marked.

potentially draws greater attention to the role, and skill, of the narrator structuring the poem.[444] Here Zeus' *impromptu* remark explicitly thematizes the issue of justice right at the start, asserting that humans have to take responsibility for their actions and significantly presenting punishment as an appropriate closure (1.32-43). Indeed, Aegisthus' story finds its conclusion in a statement of completed τίσις, offering a model for the institution of closure at the very start ("νῦν δ' ἀθρόα πάντ' ἀπέτισεν", 1.43b; cf. above on 1.9). It should be noted too that the τίσις follows not simply from Aegisthus' disregard of rightful authority, embodied in the divine warning conveyed by Hermes, but crucially from his non-recognition, or non-acceptance, of the end of the particular plot he embarks on, also revealed to him by Hermes (1.37b-41; note "ἐκ γὰρ Ὀρέσταο τίσις ἔσσεται Ἀτρεΐδαο/ ὁππότ' ἂν ἡβήσῃ τε καὶ ἧς ἱμείρεται αἴης", 40f).[445]

Remembering Odysseus

Reinforcing Zeus' conclusions and generalizing from Aegisthus' example (1.45-7), Athene takes the opportunity finally to introduce the subject of Odysseus' νόστος (1.48-62). In terms of structure, Athene's speech usefully sets the scene by filling in in considerable detail the current situation of Odysseus on Ogygia (1.48-59a; cf. 13-15), presenting an 'iterative summary' of the scenario in anticipation of its even fuller description by the narrator in book 5; this technique of summarizing events, whether past, present or future, is commonly employed throughout the poem. It is also noteworthy that she begins by adopting the perspective of the protagonist; consequently, her emphasis on the remoteness of Ogygia and her portrayal of the nymph through her powerful father Atlas may well be regarded as reflecting Odysseus' own focalization (1.49-55).[446] In default of the desired closure of his return, Odysseus is said to prefer the end of death, resisting Calypso's attempt to make him forget Ithaca and to reconcile himself

[444] Cf. Austin (1975) 138, who notes that the timetable for Odysseus' return has been carefully planned from the start. I believe the care taken over plotting and its thematization results in an impression of greater control which the narrator of the *Odyssey* gives in comparison with the *Iliad*, as remarked by Beye (1993) 112.

[445] Cf. Fenik (1974) 160: "The case of Aegisthus is directly relevant, since the suitors are pursuing the same path to a predictable end." Note esp. the emphasis on Orestes' desire to return home (1.41). Aegisthus' rejection of the end in store for him may also explain the expression "ὑπὲρ μόρον" (1.34, 35), recalling the fact that a character's fate may be equivalent to the traditional assignment of a specific "plot" to them in narrative terms; cf. S. Richardson (1990) 194, who equates fate with plot with poetic tradition.

[446] Doherty (1995) 18f notes that the narrator and characters endorsed by him provide a reliable controlling perspective.

to his continued (and in the worst case eternal) absence.[447] Athene's description of Calypso's end as making Odysseus forget the home to which he wishes to return ("ὅπως Ἰθάκης ἐπιλήσεται", 1.57) is picked up by Zeus, who in contrast asserts that he has not forgotten Odysseus ("πῶς ἂν ἔπειτ᾽ Ὀδυσῆος ἐγὼ θείοιο λαθοίμην...;", 1.65).[448]

The dialogue suggests a correspondence between an Odysseus, who would lose his special (hi)story and thus his identity by forgetting his goal of a νόστος, and an Odysseus, whose identity would be lost by (his name and presence) being forgotten by others, in turn jeopardizing his return.[449] The fact that both the protagonist and the gods, especially Zeus, already have in mind, or remember, the same plot affords an early example of the remarkable coincidence of ends between the two parties. In the *Iliad*, by way of contrast, the protagonist's initial decision to withdraw from the plot is at odds with the over-all end of the Achaean victory negotiated between the gods and desired by his human allies. Like Athene's speech, Zeus' reply also functions as an introductory summary as he explains the history of Poseidon's anger against Odysseus in an 'analepsis' reaching back into the past (1.68-75), in anticipation of Odysseus' own version in book 9. Yet he adds an important prediction of the future, anticipating the end of the first half of the narrative (1.76-9): supplementing the proem's picture of the unity of divine opinion (1.19b-21), he gives the assurance that Poseidon's wrath, which alone stands against Odysseus' return, will ultimately be untenable in face of all the other gods' agreement

[447] Odysseus' mortality crucially provides the prospect of an end for him and his story (cf. e.g. below on 7.207-25; 11.100-37), but it also threatens the possibility of a premature, wrong end and thus allows for suspense (cf. e.g. below p.153, and all through the poem's second half).

[448] The wording of his reply is telling since Athene had accused Zeus not of forgetting Odysseus, but of being angry with him ("ὠδύσαο", 1.62). This is the first instance where the meaning of his name is implicitly brought in connection with the plot, linking his absence at the end of the world to Odysseus as a person "hated" by the gods. Although there has been a debate about the active or passive meaning of ὀδύσσομαι (cf. e.g. Peradotto (1990) 124f, 130-4; S. West (1988) 83 *ad* 1.62; Rutherford (1986) 157 n.63a), most scholars assume that both aspects can be present and are utilized in the narrative at various points; thus Goldhill (1991) 26; Peradotto (1990) 146f; Clay (1997) 64f finds the same duality as in πολύτροπος in Odysseus' name, which "refers both to the active Autolycan troublemaker and to the passive victim of divine wrath", adding that as in the *Iliad*, where Achilles brings grief on his own people, "the name of Odysseus sums up and defines the plot of his poem". The passive meaning is clearly implied here; cf. e.g. Rutherford (1992) 185f *ad* 19.406-9 quoting Sophocles fr. 965 Radt, but cf. below on 5.160, 340; also 19.399-412.

[449] Cf. Austin (1975) 139-42 for the connection between memory and survival.

("Ποσειδάων Ποσειδάων δὲ μεθήσει/ ὃν χόλον· οὐ μὲν γὰρ τι δυνήσεται ἀντία πάντων/ ἀθανάτων ἀέκητι θεῶν ἐριδαινέμεν οἷος", 1.77b-9).[450]

Summing Up

We may now sum up the main characteristics of the *Odyssey's* narrative strategy and thematic preoccupations as established in the proem and first scene. The poem acquires a basic coherence through the focus on its protagonist, whose person and story are, however, characterized by an everpresent diversity and epic expansiveness. The narrative is given direction by offering glimpses of the νόστος as a potential end, whether it is foiled, frustrated or actually achieved, establishing a clear teleology. At the same time, the early introduction of the stories of comparable νόστοι and the intimation of future difficulties on Ithaca already alert us to the fact that Odysseus' physical return may not be enough to ensure satisfactory closure. The proem thus offers a structural model for the whole of the *Odyssey*: starting with a question looking for its protagonist among the proliferation of both experience and narratives, its second part begins gradually to offer answers through its focus on the νόστος and subsequent trials as neccessary for establishing Odysseus' characteristic identity.[451]

Over and above the end of the νόστος, the theme of justified punishment for those who are not prepared to recognize authoritative warnings about the end to come is endowed with a strong closural force right from the beginning. The role of the gods as guarantors and especially enforcers of this justice is crucial, as is apparent both from the example of Helios and the crew and of the gods and Aegisthus. They are also instrumental in delaying or supporting the end of Odysseus' own νόστος, and the role of Athene in particular in initiating the narrative has been

[450] There may be a parallel to Thetis' petition in the *Iliad* during which Zeus draws her attention to Hera's perpetual opposition (*Il*. 1.518-21): here it is Poseidon. But as we have seen, in their conversation the exact timing and nature of the end remain open. In the *Aeneid*, both passages are combined (cf. *Aen.* 1.280b-2) and Jupiter is associated with the end from the beginning through his speech to Venus (*Aen*. 1.241; 278f), though the actual closure of the narrative is tellingly obscured by his outlook towards a historical end beyond the closure of poem; cf. Feeney (1991) 137.

[451] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 4: "The rhetorical strategy of gradual revealing (that is also a continuing (re)defining) provides a programmatic model for the narrative of Odysseus' gradual re-establishment on Ithaca..."

noted.[452] The decisive presence of the gods at the *Odyssey's* beginning and its strong orientation towards closure, given from the start and thus in a sense disconnected from the plot, differ from the *Iliad's* exposition of its key themes through all its characters, which are gradually developed by the interaction of often conflicting ends towards a specifically human though generalized end which lies beyond, and transcends, its beginning.[453] As Austin (1975) aptly notes: "We are not put *in medias res*, when the poem opens, but *in ultimas res*" (240). Indeed, some scenes may be included in the *Odyssey's* narrative not so much because they are indispensable to the plot or arise solely from characters' motivations, but because they contribute to the thematic development of closure, be it with regard to the comparisons of νόστοι or to the issue of just punishment. At the danger of oversimplifying, the *Odyssey's* narrative technique seems to reflect to some extent the priority of its thematic preoccupations over its action, while in the *Iliad* conversely it is the action which seems to give rise to its wider themes.

We will soon come to see how the fact that the gods begin not only to debate, but to decide the end also crucially affects the presentation of the human debates in the *Odyssey*, which revolve around the proper recognition of the coming closure rather than any attempts to influence or negotiate it. In general the characters do not propound ends as their own as in the *Iliad*, but rather stake claims on whether *the* end is "not", or "not yet", or "already" reached. Their concern with closure is thus expressed particularly through adverbs such as οὔ πω, (οὐκ) ἔτι, or ἤδη in pertinent relation to the state of the narrative itself. Indeed, any attempt to alter what is in essence a foregone conclusion, is perceived rather as a challenge to (often divine) authority, deserving of just τίσις; as a result, attitudes regarding the closure of the μῦθος even offer the crucial basis for judgement over the characters (cf. below p.142). Since the gods have privileged access to closure as if it were already present, the prevalence of their authority over both events and their evaluation will therefore be important for the interpretation of the narrative as a whole.

---

[452] Cf. S. West (1988) 61: "She [Athene] controls the complex action almost as if the characters were marionettes and she the puppet-master. We have here a clear contrast with the *Iliad*, where the Olympians are collectively involved in the action"; Austin (1975) 202, 240; Peradotto (1990) 170 calls Athene "the embodiment of the narrative impulse itself, for it is she who is the prime mover of the action, the impetus that keeps it going, the frequent internal expedient against the pressures of verisimilitude, and the force that brings it to its counterfeit conclusion." (Though I disagree with his reading of the closure.) Scott (1921) 262 also draws attention to Athene's important interventions in *Iliad* 1, 2, 4 and 22, but her early appearance here could be said to contrast with her partial, and only partially successful, intervention with Achilles in *Iliad* 1.

[453] For differences to the *Iliad* cf. Garvie (1994) 2 with bibliography in n.4.

The Telemachy

I now wish to turn back to the narrative in order to explore further the theme of Odysseus' absence and its consequences. Athene advises that the release of Odysseus from Calypso be engineered through Hermes (1.81-7; note her emphasis on the νόστος, 83 and twice in 87). But without waiting for further confirmation, she herself sets out to Ithaca, in effect giving a brief anticipatory summary of the following Telemachy (1.88-95).[454] While the Telemachy itself (books 1-4) has at times been criticized as sidetracking the narrative, a digression from the plot with which it ought to be concerned, it has also been recognized that it constitutes an integral part of the *Odyssey* as a whole in a number of ways: it introduces and develops Telemachus as an important character in the narrative of his father; it gives an exposition of the difficult situation on Ithaca; it takes up the theme of justice with regard to the suitors, in particular in the assembly; and, finally, the search for an end to the many uncertainties about Odysseus and his μῦθος mirrors the poem's own search for its protagonist, while once more leading to further illuminating comparisons with other νόστοι narratives.[455]

Nevertheless, the turn to the Telemachy is certainly a surprising move.[456] Its oddity is acknowledged in the text: Telemachus himself wonders whether and whence his father will return to disperse the suitors (1.113-17; note ὀσσόμενος πατέρ᾽ ἐσθλὸν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, εἴ ποθεν ἐλθὼν/ μνηστήρων τῶν μὲν σκέδασιν κατὰ δώματα θείη,/ τιμὴν δ᾽ αὐτὸς ἔχοι καὶ δώμασιν οἷσιν ἀνάσσοι, 115-17; cf. his speech 163-5).[457] In fact, the expression εἴ ποθεν ἐλθὼν (1.115b) can be compared to the use of τῶν ἀμόθεν γε in the proem (1.10) in its metanarrative function

---

[454] Attention has been drawn to the resemblance of Athene's departure, together with the proposed one of Hermes, to the double mission of Hermes and Thetis at the end of the *Iliad*; cf. e.g. N. Richardson (1993) 22f; Hölscher (1989) 82. This parallel once again shows the *Odyssey*'s reliance on closure from the start; cf. Rutherford (1991-3) 45f.

[455] On the Telemachy as a digression cf. Heath (1989) 118. For references to the analytical-unitarian debate cf. e.g. S. West (1988) 52f with n.5, 86f *ad* 1.93; Heubeck (1988a) 6, 17f with n.46-8; Katz (1991) 31-3; Page (1955) 53, 72; for the development of Telemachus cf. below p.140; for the assembly and justice below p.142; for the search for Odysseus cf. e.g. Reinhardt (1997) 222; also below p.147. It has also been argued that the confrontation of the suitors with Odysseus' household reaches a crucial stage in terms of the plot, necessitating Athene's intervention at this point; cf. e.g. Hölscher (1989) 45ff; Clay (1997) 232-4; Rutherford (1986) 150; Klingner (1997) 214ff; also Murnaghan (1987) 53f on the importance of the respective ages of the characters in particular; [Plutarch] *Vit.Hom.* 162: τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ὀδυσσείᾳ πεποίηκεν, ἀρξάμενος μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν τελευταίων τῆς πλάνης τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως χρόνων, ἐν οἷς καιρὸς ἦν ἤδη καὶ τὸν Τηλέμαχον εἰσάγειν καὶ τὴν τῶν μνηστήρων ὕβριν ἐμφανίζειν.

[456] Cf. Tracy (1990) 3; Hölscher (1989) 44, who notes that the episode is "pragmatisch überflüssig".

[457] Note how Telemachus' position here, marginalized and longing for a seemingly unattainable end, corresponds to that of Odysseus in 5.151-8.

of drawing attention to narrative structure. Although Telemachus is aware that there is simply no news at all about Odysseus, the desire for closure is so strong that he even wishes to reject the possibility of hope for his father's return, as he explains to the disguised Athene (1.166-8; note his conclusion "τοῦ δ᾽ ὤλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ", 168b). While other characters too regularly state the loss of Odysseus' νόστος, a great difference will be shown to exist between those who welcome it and those who deplore it. That Telemachus belongs to the latter category is made clear by the fact that his assertion of his father's death frames the image of his return, dispersing the suitors (1.159-62; 166-8 - note "νῦν δ᾽", 166).[458]

Athene (disguised as Mentes), however, offers a different version of the end by asserting that Odysseus is alive and - more to the point - that he will eventually achieve his νόστος (1.194-9). The theme of closure already achieved in fact introduces her version of Odysseus' present situation ("δὴ γάρ μιν ἔφαντ᾽ ἐπιδήμιον εἶναι,", 1.194b). Her speech also features some of the adverbial markers of time which regularly express the characters' views on the presence or absence of closure ("οὐ...πω", 1.196; "ἔτι", 197; "οὐ...ἔτι δηρόν", 203). Once again, though, the uncertainty regarding the state of Odysseus' story is related to uncertainty about his character, as Telemachus doubts whether he can be sure about the identity of his father (1.214-18); the only certainty appears to be this father's bad luck (1.219f).[459] Indeed, Telemachus harps on the wide-ranging consequences of the lack of certainty concerning Odysseus which show that his literal absence threatens to become a terminal absence from this narrative itself, since he loses the chance to exert influence over its direction.[460] Again, even the fates of Achilles or Agamemnon (though not named, recognizable by the audience) seem preferable to him in that they offer closure, however terrible in itself (1.237-40). In contrast, Telemachus describes Odysseus as "ἄϊστος" (1.235, 242), "ἀκλειῶς" (1.241), "ἄπυστος" (1.242); through the repeated α privative, Odysseus is almost literally defined as "absence", the absence of a μῦθος (cf. e.g. 3.88, 184;

[458] Note that Austin (1975) 52 identifies the same distinction between different groups of characters in the use of Odysseus' epithets. The various attitudes displayed become a source of irony throughout the poem; cf. Fenik (1974) 24f: "This discrepancy between the truth and persons' false opinions thus becomes the basis for ominous foreshadowing, or for light and humourous banter, or for intense, melancholy irony. ...there emerges a pervasive ironic coloring to all the scenes connected with the subject of Odysseus' return"; Rutherford (1992) 58f.

[459] Note the superlative "ἀποτμότατος" (1.219) which contrasts with the usage of πάν-compounds at the end, not the beginning, of the *Iliad* as a sign of the movement towards absolutes there; cf. above p.104 with Smith (1968) 183. Here we begin at a "worst" critical moment (cf. below p.153), while Odysseus' wretchedness, as described by Eurycleia in 20.140, is only part of his disguise.

[460] Cf. Clay (1997) 211: "Or, to put it another way, Odysseus is constantly threatened by the prospect of being transformed from *metis* back into *outis*"; cf. below p.153.

4.182; 5.456).[461] Finally, he illustrates how the lack of certain closure to Odysseus' narrative threatens the future of his family, belongings and status as the suitors attempt to take over the μῦθος, leaving Penelope unable to impose an end to their unwanted attentions ("ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν/ ποιῆσαι δύναται", 1.249f).[462] In reply, Athene offers not only an early condemnation of the suitors even before they are introduced in any detail and given a voice of their own (1.224-9; note "ὑβρίζοντες, 227), but also offers hope for Odysseus' νόστος by picturing how he would slay the suitors with his poisoned arrows (1.253-66). However, she concludes this part of her speech with an anticipation that success in punishing the suitors will depend on the support of the gods rather than on magic ("ἀλλ' ἦ τοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται,/ ἥ κεν νοστήσας ἀποτίσεται, ἦε καὶ οὐκί..."; 1.267f). This anticipation of the justice of his τίσις as endorsed by the gods links up with the introductory scene on Olympus where both the notion of punishment and the gods' support of Odysseus had been prominent - themes which will be of crucial importance to the closure of the narrative too.[463]

A New Plot

Changing her focus from Odysseus to Telemachus, Athene offers yet another picture of an end to the suitors' story in which Telemachus takes the initiative in an Ithacan assembly and arranges for his mother to remarry, if she so wishes (1.269b-78; note "μῦθον πέφραδε πᾶσι", 273a). Secondly, Athene's plot means sending Telemachus out to gather information about the μῦθος of his father, ostensibly to decide his future course of action by finding out about Odysseus' present and future (1.279-86; cf. 93-5). In terms of the narrative, these moves allow an exploration of Penelope's and the suitors' view of Odysseus' μῦθος and its end, and also to trace this μῦθος from past to present and indeed to include some foreshadowing of the future by focussing on aspects of his character specifically relevant to the narrative. In terms of

---

[461] Cf. Ford (1992) 102f.

[462] For the consequences of Odysseus' absence cf. e.g. Murnaghan (1987) 25. "οὔτε τελευτὴν/ ποιῆσαι δύναται" has also been interpreted differently as meaning the end of marriage (to a suitor), thus S. West (1988) 106 *ad* 1.249-50; Heubeck (1992) 374 *ad* 24.126 ("make an end (by marrying)..."); more vaguely Peradotto (1990) 83f ("bring the matter to a conclusion"); Katz (1991) 31 ("bring things to a conclusion"); also Woodhouse (1930) 81: "That is to say, she cannot decide between 'yes' and 'no'." Finley (1978) 5, on the other hand, translates "nor can [she] be rid of the suitors"; I too would prefer to emphasize Penelope's impossible position with regard to closure rather than seek to internalize her attitude; cf. my analysis of 1.337-44 and below p.185.

[463] Cf. Eustathius 1394, 1f *ad* α.88: οὕτως ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοῦ βιβλίου τὴν μνηστηροκτονίαν ὡς ἔφαμεν προασφαλιξόμενος ὁ ποιητὴς, ῥᾳδιουργεῖ τὰ εἰς αὐτὴν συντείνοντα. S. West (1988) 107f *ad* 1.257ff argues that the image "calls to mind the unscrupulous Odysseus of Attic tragedy"; Clay (1997) 71f indeed takes this first story about Odysseus as evidence for the more disturbing side of his versatile character. I believe that it is rather the shift from magic to divine support which is both important and characteristic.

Telemachus' character, Athene's new scenario focuses on his own ability to take control of the μῦθος and to find a satisfactory end (1.287-97; note the shift from "οἷσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι", 269 to "ἐνὶ μεγάροισι τεοῖσι", 295), while before she had tried to offer him certainty in the form of Odysseus' νόστος (1.194-205). Athene continues to pursue the latter object of further increasing his confidence in the possibility of achieving an end himself through the example of Orestes (1.298-302), spelling out the comparison implied in the proem, in Zeus' first speech and in Telemachus' own words (1.237-40). The character of Telemachus therefore fulfils a double function, resulting in a certain tension between his portrayal in different scenes: on the one hand, he is meant to illustrate the disastrous consequences of the lack of certainty concerning Odysseus; on the other, he functions almost as a double for his father as he is developed from a doubtful, uncertain character to a more assertive, certain one, becoming more like (and thus a potential helper for) Odysseus.[464] Tellingly, Telemachus responds to Athene's offer of a plot to take control of ("ἐμῶν ἐμπάζεο μύθων",1.271b=305b) by describing her as the father figure he has wanted so far: "ξεῖν', ἦ τοι μὲν ταῦτα φίλα φρονέων ἀγορεύεις,/ ὥς τε πατὴρ ᾧ παιδί, καὶ οὔ ποτε λήσομαι αὐτῶν" (1.307f).[465]

The following scene illustrates how Telemachus has already been encouraged to take on more of the role - and indeed some of the characteristics - of Odysseus (1.319-23); indeed the turning point is marked in terms that will become familiar in the second half of the poem (ὑπέμνησέν τέ ἑ πατρὸς/ μᾶλλον ἔτ' ἢ τὸ πάροιθεν, 1.321b-2a). It also introduces Penelope, contrasting their responses to Phemius' song about the νόστος λυγρός from Troy which Athene imposed on the Achaeans (1.325-7), and thus illustrating the difference that a change in perspective on closure can make. The song is tantalizingly summarized in indirect speech without giving any further indication of Odysseus' part in it, or indeed its ending, which may perhaps be taken as a metanarrative indication of the present uncertain situation.[466] Penelope's

[464] Murnaghan (1987) 33-5 stresses Telemachus' own ability to begin filling the void created by Odysseus' absence; cf. Erbse (1972) 132. Cf. S. West (1988) 54f with n.11, also 113 *ad* 1.297 on references to Telemachus growing up; Porphyry (cf. ΣΗ α.284) calls it the παίδευσις of Telemachus; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 247; Erbse (1972) 132. His function as a double is already indicated in Athene's intention to have him give notice to the suitors (1.88-92; note "ἀπείπεμεν", 91). In this sense Odysseus is of course omnipresent (rather than absent) even in these scenes as noted by Klingner (1997) 206.

[465] This agrees well with the close similarity between Athene and Odysseus which is reaffirmed especially in their conversation in bk.13; cf. S. West (1988) 114 *ad* 1.307-8.

[466] Cf. below on Odysseus' reactions in bk.8. Scodel (1998) 185f gives a broad guess at the subject-matter, but believes Odysseus' fate not to be directly involved; she also notes the difference in perspective by Penelope and Telemachus on the same narrative.

attempt to end the song (1.340-4; note "ταύτης δ᾽ ἀποπαύε᾽ ἀοιδῆς/ λυγρῆς", 340f) contrasts with her inability to put an end to the real-life situation, in which she finds herself as a consequence of the νόστος λυγρός (cf. 1.249f quoted above). In fact, she all but points out the futility of ending the song: while this song in particular is "always" painful to her (1.340-2; note "αἰεί", 341), Odysseus' κλέος is ubiquitous and thus ultimately inescapable, so that she remains "always" in a state of longing retrospection ("τοίην γὰρ κεφαλὴν ποθέω μεμνημένη αἰεί/ ἀνδρός, τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος", 1.343f; note "αἰεί", 343).[467] Again, we may note how Odysseus' name is significantly absent from her speech at this stage (cf. below on 4.810-23; 831-4).

Telemachus, on the other hand, can argue that it is necessary to face the song as well as the reality, resisting the displacement of responsibility from agents like Zeus to narrators like Phemius (1.347b-9). His reference to the popularity of "the newest song" may even hint at his emergent hope for a possible sequel to Phemius' song (1.351f), potentially offering a link to other passages which advertise the *Odyssey* itself, in particular its novelty (cf. for example on 11.474; 22.6f). In contrast to Penelope's painful (because seemingly endless) perpetuation of Odysseus' truncated κλέος, he now also sees in his father's absence (and possibly death) an opportunity for taking the continuation of his μῦθος into his own hands: "μῦθος δ᾽ ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει/ πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ᾽ ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ᾽ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ" (1.358bf).[468] That is, he now begins to see the way - or ways - to closure, while she continues not to. Indeed, Telemachus already starts to assert himself in front of the suitors, as his address of them shows ("ὑπέρβιον ὕβριν ἔχοντες", 1.368b), reinforcing the agreement of focalization between the goddess and him

[467] We may tentatively conclude that κλέος by implication refers to past events, at times up to the present moment (cf. e.g. 3.79-85 below), in the sense of isolated episodes, while μῦθος implies a plot with an end which may still lie in the future; cf. Ford (1992) 109f who sees κλέος as the human tradition which does not yet include Odysseus' return - poetry has reached the same stage of his story as the narrative itself at its beginning. Thus the repeated statements throughout these first books about Odysseus' wide-reaching κλέος do not detract from the lack of closure to his μῦθος, on the contrary, they enhance awareness of it as Penelope shows. Murnaghan (1987) 155 interprets Penelope's resistance to the song as resistance to the "possibility that Odysseus' story might be over", but unfinished narratives abound in the first part of the *Odyssey* and Phemius' need not be any different. I also disagree with Katz (1991) 20, who argues that Penelope implies a song about the νόστος λυγρός to be inconsistent with Odysseus' κλέος.

[468] These are the same words as those which close Hector's speech to Andromache (*Il.* 6.492bf), apart from "μῦθος" which here substitutes "πόλεμος". This difference may indeed be seen as symptomatic, yet while speech may appear a task less responsible and powerful than war, the word here only marks Telemachus' assumption of power and he will survive to repeat them, now substituting "τόξον" for "μῦθος" (21.352bf), while Hector will meet his death. (S. West (1988) 120 *ad* 1.356-9 queries the meaning of "μῦθος" which she takes to be "speech" and thus questions the authenticity of the passage, but the regular connection of the word with plotting overcomes any such difficulty.)

(cf. 1.224-9). He now informs them of the assembly he intends to call the next day: "ἵν' ὔμιν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποείπω,/ ἐξιέναι μεγάρων" (1.373f), indicating the direction he would like the μῦθος to take from now on through its combination with ἀποείπω (the latter had been used programmatically by Athene, 1.91). We should also note the introduction in passing of a theme important to the poem's closure as Antinous and Telemachus engage in a dispute over public in addition to private authority. Antinous, noting Telemachus' resemblance to his (fore)fathers, hopes he will not become ruler of Ithaca as they had done (1.386f; note "πατρώϊον", 387). However, the introduction of this theme is as yet premature, and Telemachus claims that his current ambition extends only to Odysseus' - and now his - house and servants (1.397f), though he knows the office to be advantageous in principle (1.391-6).

Warnings of the End

The assembly advances the theme of justice by providing a warning of the closure to come to the suitors in parallel to the Aegisthus paradigm (cf. 1.37b-43).[469] In fact, they are shown to condemn themselves in the way they react to these indications, keeping to their own version of the story regardless. This conclusion is reinforced if we can take the *Iliad*, and in particular the assembly in its second book, as a useful intertext, since both stage critical situations in which characters are faced with an important decision about the future course of events. There, Odysseus (supported by Calchas' prophecy and Nestor's speech) manages to persuade the Achaeans to listen to him to keep to their proposed end. In this instance, Telemachus (supported by Halitherses' prophecy and Mentor's speech) fails to convince the suitors of the injustice of their proposed end.[470] While Telemachus takes his father's former place in the assembly (2.14), he also explains that the absence of Odysseus, a powerful and universal father figure, precludes decisive action by members of his household (2.60-2).[471] Instead, he warns the assembly of the

[469] Cf. e.g. S. West (1988) 128 *ad* bk.2: "...; in order that Odysseus' massive vengeance may appear justified, his victims must be given due warning" (and, we may add, their injustice be shown); Erbse (1972) 131.

[470] Despite the seemingly auspicious start as Aegyptius wishes a happy completion of any public business to be discussed (2.33bf), the Ithacan public only play a role in the debate insofar as they do not contribute to it at all. This situation bears some resemblance to the gods' silence at their council in bk.1.

[471] The use of the scepter may be seen as a specific intertextual link: Odysseus takes up Agamemnon's in *Iliad* 2.185-7, 279a; Telemachus takes one in 2.37bf though he throws it to the ground in 2.80f, unable to completely fulfil his father's role.

gods' anger ("μή τι μεταστρέψωσιν ἀγασσάμενοι κακὰ ἔργα.", 2.67).[472] The explicit judgement through adjectives such as "κακὰ" is another means to distinguish between those who share the perspective of the gods (and the poet), which will come true, and those who do not (cf. above on adverbs p.136).[473] "μεταστρέψωσιν" itself can be read metapoetically as an expression of the critical nature of this moment for the beginning of the *Odyssey*, it anticipates the turn from the suitors' rule in Odysseus' house to his later successful intervention, given the gods' decision to return him. Indeed, Telemachus explicitly warns of change to come (2.62-4a; esp. "οὐ(δ΄) ἔτ(ι)", twice in 63; cf. on 5.286 below).

However, Antinous goes on to give the suitors' view of the story with equal confidence: he challenges Telemachus' μῦθος (2.82f) by drawing attention in particular to Penelope's role. His account of the weaving of Laertes' shroud gives a first indication of her cleverness and in fact trickery (note νόος, 2.92; δόλος, 93, 106), corresponding to an implied link with Athene, indicative of a close relationship between the goddess and the family as a whole (2.115-22; cf. 13.379-81).[474] Yet in her inability to take control of the μῦθος in a positive way the Penelope of Antinous' story resembles the one we have already encountered in the narrative. Because of her particular dilemma Antinous can portray Penelope as responsible for Telemachus' troubles rather than the suitors themselves (2.87f; 123-8): as we have seen, she is able only to influence the story by delaying, not by ending it, because of her refusal to accept the only choice of setting an end to Odysseus' μῦθος open to her, namely siding with the suitors by remarrying (as Clytemnestra did). Antinous then turns this situation against her by alleging that her delaying tactics represent an end in themselves (her own μῦθος, so to speak), namely increased κλέος for herself, conflicting with Telemachus' end in support of Odysseus' (2.125bf). He now tries to turn Telemachus' late assumption of control into a tool for making him send Penelope back to

---

[472] S. West (1988) 134f *ad* 2.67 raises the question whether the verb here is transitive or not; I believe it to be abbreviated with an object like, e.g., νόον to be understood as in Zeus' remark to Hera about Poseidon: "αἶψα μεταστρέψειε νόον μετὰ σὸν καὶ ἐμὸν κῆρ" (*Il.* 15.52).

[473] Griffin (1986) 47 notes the preponderance of such evaluation later on: "It is interesting to have it confirmed that in the second half of the *Odyssey* the heavy moral emphasis of the plot has coloured the language, too; the poet has repeatedly yielded to the temptation of open partiality", but I believe it is already in evidence in these introductory scenes on Ithaca. Cf. Doherty (1995) 13f; S. West (1988) 57 on the many negative judgements of the suitors by right-minded characters.

[474] Cf. Austin (1975) 202. The same story is told by Penelope to Odysseus (19.138-56), and Amphimedon to Agamemnon (24.128-46); cf. below. Peradotto (1990) 72f makes much of a suggested difference in understanding of the clause "εἰς ὅ κε φᾶρος/ ἐκτελέσω" (2.97bf) as representing a goal which will find fulfillment (in the suitors' view) or not (in Penelope's plot).

her own father (2.111-14), asserting that the suitors will continue to consume Telemachus' goods (2.123, note "τεόν") until she marries one of them. Antinous' proposal thus envisages the closure of Penelope's remarriage, literally divorcing her μῦθος from that of Odysseus and Telemachus.[475] Telemachus, however, rejects this suggestion of a plot as thoroughly reprehensible (2.130-7; note "ὣς οὐ τοῦτον ἐγώ ποτε μῦθον ἐνίψω", 137), and we will find the theme picked up at the poem's closure (cf. below on 24.192-202).

Telemachus' repeated prayer for justice to Zeus (2.141-5=1.376-80) opens the way for a stronger warning to the suitors and for the introduction of a divine arbiter to adjudicate between the two narratives (and ends) at variance with each other. An omen sent by the god explicitly draws the characters' attention to the closure which will allow certain judgement (2.146-56; note ὄρμηναν δ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἅ περ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον, 156).[476] As seer, Halitherses is able to interpret Zeus' omen, warning the suitors about the approaching return of Odysseus and their punishment (2.161-6a; note "οὐ...ἀπάνευθε", 163f; "ἐγγύς", 165). He advises them, as well as the Ithacans in general, to end the situation themselves before the anticipated crisis (2.166b-9; note "καταπαύσομεν", 168; "παυέσθων", 169). Halitherses' authority is endorsed not only by the narrator (2.157-9), but reinforced by the seer himself, who refers to a fuller prophecy he claims to have given at Odysseus' departure: already then, at the beginning of his μῦθος, did he predict its end, including the loss of all of Odysseus' companions and an anonymous return to Ithaca after twenty years (2.170-6a; note "καὶ γὰρ κείνῳ φημὶ τελευτηθῆναι ἅπαντα,/ ὥς οἱ ἐμυθεόμην", 171f).

This prophecy is comparable to the one Calchas gave at Aulis about the taking of Troy in the tenth year, recalled by Odysseus in *Iliad* 2.299-332; indeed, both reports conclude with the same confident statement of closure: "τὰ δὲ δὴ νῦν πάντα τελεῖται" (2.176b=*Il*. 2.330b). The *Odyssey* may even be said to employ the present tense more accurately since the anticipation of

[475] The question of who (if anyone) has authority over Penelope has been discussed by critics: Katz (1991) 34-41 argues that the vacuum of authority leaves her position indeterminate, which as a result creates a problem for Telemachus; yet (though I agree in general) there also is more moral clarity here than she allows for: cf. Penelope's later repetition of points made by her son in the assembly, i.e. her abhorrence of the suitors and Odysseus' qualities as a ruler (4.681-95). Rutherford (1992) 27 also sees Penelope as out of control here; while Seaford (1994) 31, and 57, draws attention to her liminal position in a situation where the usual wedding rituals are subverted; cf. S. West (1988) 55f: "The situation is somewhat illogical, but the poet avoids exposing its oddities by simply taking the suitors' presence in Odysseus' palace for granted."

[476] Cf. Felson-Rubin (1994) 5: "Thus Zeus functions, in the poem, as arbiter of plot disputes; each of his arbitrations becomes a plot choice and communicates plot information to the audience as well as to any characters who witness it."

closure, now recalled, will actually come true within its own narrative, whereas the fall of Troy lies beyond the narrative of the *Iliad*, as we have seen.[477] The parallel between the assemblies also underlines the offensiveness of the suitors: the Achaeans strongly approve of Odysseus' μῦθος (*Il*. 2.333-5; note μῦθον ἐπαινήσαντες Ὀδυσσῆος, 335); Eurymachus, on the other hand, even questions the identification of the omen itself (2.178-82), reasserting the belief that Odysseus must be dead (2.182bf; note "τῆλ΄", 183 as opposed to "οὐ...ἀπάνευθε", 163f; "ἐγγύς", 165). A mock prophecy of his own basically repeats Antinous' end of Penelope's eventual remarriage (2.187-207; note "τὸ δὲ καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται", 187), and he explicitly rejects both Telemachus' and Halitherses' μῦθος: "οὔτ᾽ οὖν Τηλέμαχον [δείδιμεν], μάλα περ πολύμυθον ἐόντα·/ οὔτε θεοπροπίης ἐμπαζόμεθ᾽, ..." (2.200-2a), and thus (implicitly) Zeus' ominous warning.[478]

The Question of Justice: I

The assembly well illustrates how the focus on two clearly opposed voices tends to result in repeated confrontations of those same views in the absence of closure, unlike the more diverse plotting in the *Iliad*, which includes unexpected alliances and third parties, driving the action forward. However, while the assembly may not be effective in advancing the action as such, it clearly serves to further the exposition of the important theme of justice, as had Zeus' apparently irrelevant focus on Aegisthus (1.32-43).[479] As in that very first scene, Zeus (here through his interpreter Halitherses) validates one view over the other, and most importantly for our study, this validation of judgement takes place through reference to the end of the μῦθος in question, linking thematic with structural closure. Since only the gods (in the narrative) and the narrator himself have the ability to anticipate this end - and indeed to secure even an unlikely outcome - we can see again how the teleology of the *Odyssey* is interdependent with the prominent role of

[477] If we accept *Iliad* 2 as a significant intertext, it may also help further confirm the truth of the seer's statement, which (characteristically for Odyssean 'analepses' in particular) lacks a corroborative context such as when, where and to whom exactly it was delivered (cf. also *Od*. 18.259f). For in the same speech Odysseus, curiously, expresses doubts whether the Achaeans can be sure of their νόστοι going well ("οὐδέ τί πω σάφα ἴδμεν ὅπως ἔσται τάδε ἔργα/ ἢ εὖ ἦε κακῶς νοστήσομεν...", *Il.* 2.252f), intriguingly emphasizing the quality rather than the fact of their return. - For the present tense as a marker of fulfillment cf. *Od.* 13.178(=176b) below, taking up the potential optative in 8.570f.

[478] Eurymachus' apparent belittling of words is reinforced later by Leocritus, who seals the debate by explicitly arguing for the reality of power over the reality of justice, as he contends that Odysseus would not be able to overcome the greater number of the suitors, even if he were to return after all (2.243-51). He will of course be mistaken.

[479] Cf. esp. Fenik (1974) 151; Klingner (1997) 194-7.

the gods: in contrast to the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey's* greater coherence and one-dimensionality of divine plotting clearly strengthens the gods' function as representatives of the narrator.[480] Yet because of its particular reliance on closure from the start the *Odyssey* is in greater danger of running into a circular argument, which may explain why critics have often felt uncomfortable with the presentation of the case of the suitors, or even more so of Odysseus' companions later on.[481] For in a way the anticipation of the end which will validate one side's version of the story, but not the other's is self-fulfilling: if an authority like Zeus (and with him the narrator) has declared something to be "the end", the only choice left to characters whose end has been rejected is to turn and embrace the "true" narrative or to delay its end for as long as possible. Consequently, the suitors here cannot but delay the end they oppose, intentionally or not, because for them as characters in the *Odyssey* the choice of being untrue to their own end is not a real choice open to them, however much it may be portrayed as such.[482] But though there are perhaps problems with the suitors' position in structural terms, the narrative clearly moves on to supplement their condemnation out of their own and others' mouths with scenes that show them condemned by their own actions too (in particular their plotting against Telemachus). A wider narrative context is thus created to reinforce the primary evaluation, which is reliant on the end as represented by the narrator and those characters closest to him in terms of authority.[483]

---

[480] On the gods cf. above p.53; S. Richardson (1990) 192f; Peradotto (1990) 31: "The experience of the poet, positioned above his story, with power to choose among eventualities and outcomes, and by hints and forecasts to control the access of his audience to his privileged perspective and design, offers a ready model or metaphor for representing the gods in a position above history, knowing the future because they have the power to effect it, allowing through prophecy some limited human access to this knowledge, but little real power to change its design." Cf. Bartsch (1989) 173: "Most of the oracles and oracular dreams he [Heliodorus] describes to us point at the same final and apparently inevitable outcome; together, and along with, the progression of the narrative itself, they form an inexorable movement toward the novel's end."

[481] Cf. above p.130; Doherty (1995) 16 on the *Odyssey* as a relatively closed text since narrator and characters usually agree. But note too a certain similarity to the narrative paradox concerning the inevitability of Achilles' fate, which still is presented as his personal choice in the *Iliad*.

[482] Thus the suitors intriguingly turn out to be placed (in narrative terms) in the same situation in which they place Penelope, since giving up asking for her marriage would mean losing their identity as surely as accepting it would mean her losing hers. Of course, they will not recognize Odysseus and the end he brings, while Penelope will find herself on the "right" side in the end and be given the closure she desires, whereas they will not (cf. below). Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 83f on "the possession of the truth". - The suitors also resemble Juno in *Aeneid* in their determination to delay (without her divine self-awareness); cf. e.g. "at trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus" (*Aen*. 7.315), and on Poseidon below p.153.

[483] Cf. Doherty (1995) 161 on the latter, an "interpretive hierarchy within the poem, as characters who share the epic narrator's judgments or are approved by him appear more authoritative ('reliable') than those who contradict him or are disapproved by him".

However, while Zeus' omen closes down the debate from a thematic perspective by allowing a negative judgement of the suitors and their μῦθος, it does little actually to end the exchange of views, or change the direction of the narrative, because the suitors are not prepared to recognize its meaning. This agrees well with the need for an exposition at the beginning of the narrative before the action proper gets underway. The line with which Telemachus shifts from the topic of justice in fact functions as a metatextual marker of sufficient exposition ("ἤδη γὰρ τὰ ἴσασι θεοὶ καὶ πάντες Ἀχαιοί", 2.211). Yet the suitors also do not act upon Telemachus' request for a ship and crew for his proposed journey (2.209-23). Instead, Athene intervenes to bring about the required turn in the action. Typically, she ensures the eventual enactment of events anticipated both by Zeus and herself and actually affects the characters' actions, whereas Zeus provides certainty about closure at a remove, with particular reference to its thematic implications.[484] Athene sends Telemachus on his way by organizing him a ship and crew and allowing them to board while the suitors are put to sleep (2.382-421); her decisive intervention is marked by the key sentence: ἔνθ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐνόησε θεά, γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (2.382; 393).[485]

Odysseus' Story: Past, Present and Future

The over-arching theme of the scenes in Pylos and Sparta in the next two books is still the μῦθος, that of Odysseus and by extension of Telemachus, but on another level that of the *Odyssey* itself. Closure is crucial to the evaluation of a particular individual and their narrative, and Telemachus' first speech to Nestor is programmatic in that he identifies himself as one whose journey, or end, is directed towards certainty about his father's μῦθος (3.79-101).[486] Comparing Odysseus' situation with that of the other Achaeans, it is not so much the absence of his νόστος as the lack of any closure whatsoever to his story which is unique (3.88-91; note "κείνου δ᾽ αὖ καὶ ὄλεθρον ἀπευθέα θῆκε Κρονίων", 88). By first enacting a search for the μῦθος of Odysseus' present in default of his presence itself the narrative purposefully exploits the

[484] The difference between Zeus and Athene can be expressed in narratological terms by noting that Zeus' anticipation of closure does not affect the nature of what remain in effect 'satellite scenes'; Athene on the other hand clearly turns scenes into 'kernel scenes'.

[485] This key verse appears to be used only of Athene and characters she is influencing (4.795; 5.382; 6.112, 251; 18.187; 23.242, 344), including once of Penelope (16.409). Note again the (at least temporary) exclusion of Penelope from the μῦθος, even if it can be explained to increase Telemachus' safety and lessen her worries (2.373-6). The way in which Eurycleia is singled out as a confidante of the μῦθος (2.412b) also foreshadows later events.

[486] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 157: "He does not search for his father but for the ending to his father's story, the conclusion to the narrative that will at once testify to his father's life and confirm that it is over", though Telemachus' attitude is perhaps more ambivalent as to his father's survival, if we can read between the lines.

delays of his wanderings so as to render its own movement towards the appearance of his protagonist full of suspense. It also builds up to Odysseus' introduction and the later narrative by filling in the past through Nestor's account of the Trojan war and the νόστοι (3.103-200), the present through Menelaus' report of Proteus' information and by foreshadowing the future through Helen's presentation of characteristically Odyssean skills and actions. The theme of comparing the stories of other Achaean heroes also continues to run through these episodes.

The text, then, in many ways draws attention to its own special version of Odysseus' νόστος and thus to its own status as a μῦθος.[487] For instance, Athene's earlier announcement that this journey should become the beginning of Telemachus' own κλέος is restated by the narrator (3.78; cf. 1.95, also 13.417-19); this is also true in a metanarrative sense as this section of the *Odyssey* contributes to, if not invents, Telemachus' fame. Nestor's remarks on Telemachus' mastery of μῦθοι, comparing it with Odysseus', (3.122b-5) too can be seen to refer back to the surprise beginning of the Telemachy by praising the character himself and noting his success as a stand in for the protagonist. Nestor's insistence that one would sooner achieve a νόστος than exhaust the store of narratives available (3.115-17) has an even greater relevance in metatextual terms for the poem by drawing attention to Odysseus' own impending return, although his speech itselfdoes not advance knowledge about the end of Odysseus' μῦθος (note his conclusion "ὣς ἦλθον... ἀπευθής", 3.184; cf. 88 quoted above).[488] His concluding comparison with Orestes' story once more serves as a contrasting paradigm for possible closure and certainty (3.193-98).[489] While Telemachus is still not convinced that the gods will effect Odysseus' νόστος (3.209f), he stresses the magnitude of such an event and the surprise it would occasion (3.226-8; note "οὔ πω τοῦτο ἔπος τελέεσθαι ὀίω", 226). This self-referential, metanarrative use of οὔ πω, drawing attention to the wonderful nature of the event contemplated and soon to be narrated, is related to, but different from its use to mark the characters' acceptance or rejection of closure (cf. above p.136). Encouraging him, Athene (as Mentor) takes the opportunity to point out that the lack of an end to Odysseus' μῦθος in contrast to Agamemnon's may be considered an advantage:

---

[487] Cf. Ford (1992) 103f.

[488] But cf. Murnaghan (1987) 160: "Although Telemachus is frustrated in his search for the definitive conclusion to his father's story, and his journey is in that sense a practical failure, it contributes in another way to the completeness with which the story of Odysseus is told in the *Odyssey*. ...In particular, Nestor's recollections of the return journey leave off at a point very close to where the story Odysseus tells begins."

[489] Note Telemachus' stress on divine involvement (3.205; 208); as well as his mention of the story as subject-matter for song (3.203bf).

notwithstanding the satisfactory eventual closure of Orestes' revenge, his story also involves Agamemnon's own death, the only end from which even the gods cannot return him (3.232-8; cf. below p.169).[490]

In Sparta, Helen explicitly announces that her μῦθος of Odysseus will not be complete: "πάντα μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω" (4.240f); her focus is on events at Troy itself (4.242f). However, her story becomes meaningful especially when read in the light not of that past, but of the future: Odysseus' skill in hiding his identity by appearing as a beggar (4.244-8), his recognition by a woman who has known him before, but whom he forces to conceal this knowledge until his safety is assured (4.250-6) and his subsequent success in killing many of his enemies (4.257f), assisting in the desired return of a wife to her husband (4.259-64), will all find clear parallels in the second half of the poem.[491] Menelaus' first narrative likewise appears to have rather a paradigmatic quality in picturing Odysseus' special characteristics which ensure success: he is able to refrain from identifying himself by not responding to his own name, spoken in Penelope's voice (4.270-84), until the danger is removed - and closure ensured - by Athene (4.289).[492] Thus the emphasis on closure informs even what purport to be stories about the past; it may be significant that these are told by characters closer to the gods than usual (cf. 4.561-9). Finally, Proteus' speech as reported by Menelaus offers the most recent information on Odysseus: Proteus, describing himself as an eye-witness, tells of Odysseus' involuntary stay with Calypso, noting the absence of both ship and crew (4.555-60). This information has already

[490] While Telemachus still takes this rather as a confirmation - by extension - of Odysseus' death (3.241f), he asks Nestor for a more detailed account of Agamemnon's, Aegisthus' and Orestes' μῦθος (3.255-312). His questions offer an interesting picture of those similar questions which have impelled himself on his journey towards certainty about his father's and his own μῦθος (3.247-52).

[491] Cf. S. West (1988) 208f *ad* 4.242ff summarizing the scholia (note e.g. ΣQ δ.245: πρὸς τὴν μνηστηροκτονίαν ταῦτα ᾠκονόμηται, ἵνα μηδὲ τοῖς μνηστῆρσι συνὼν ἐν τοιούτῳ σχήματι ἀπίθανον φαίνοιτο; also Goldhill (1991) 62. But note that the audience are likely to benefit from this kind of implicit foreshadowing as much as the character himself, as evinced by Telemachus' still repeated mention of Odysseus' λυγρὸς ὄλεθρος (4.292f); cf. Peradotto (1990) 118: "The same control that Athena has exercised in directing Telemachus' growing knowledge of his father, the narrator exercises in shaping an identifying description for the audience, with whatever predispositions it brings to the transaction."

[492] S. West (1988) 211f *ad* 4.279 notes that the voice imitation has been queried from the scholia onwards; this objection may be right. On the other hand, the mention of Penelope could be seen as a particular pointer to the interpretation of the story advanced above. There may be another problem with the repeated silencing of other Achaeans (cf. S. West (1988) 212 *ad* 4.285-9), but West also remarks that "[t]he case against 289 is less clear" since "[i]t makes a more impressive end to the story than 284". The above interpretation which relates the two narratives not to each other, but to the *Odyssey* itself may offer a better explanation of the discrepancies between them than do those that try to reconcile them (for bibliography cf. S. West (1988) 208f *ad* 4.242ff), though Goldhill (1991) 63f with n.111 may be right to conclude that there remains an "*irresolvable* uncertainty".

been provided to the external audience in the proem and in Athene's speech in book 1, but its repetition now brings the narrative up to the situation in which it will shortly introduce Odysseus in person at last.[493] Telemachus' acknowledgement of his enjoyment of the μῦθοι appropriately closes these two books concerned foremost with narratives, including the *Odyssey* itself (4.597f).

Before Odysseus' introduction, however, the narrative again returns to Ithaca: the suitors are evidently surprised when they are told that Telemachus has actually realized his journey to Pylos (4.638-40; note "ἦ μέγα ἔργον ὑπερφιάλως ἐτελέσθη/ Τηλεμάχῳ ὁδὸς ἥδε", 663f). The characterization of his achievement as a "great work" may at the same time be transferred to the narrative of the Telemachy itself (cf. below on 11.474). Anticipating this success to be only the beginning of the story, Antinous now wishes actively to advance his own counter-plot of ambushing and killing Telemachus (4.667-72; note "ἄρξει καὶ προτέρω κακὸν ἔμμεναι", 667a).[494] Penelope is finally informed of both their and Telemachus' plots by Medon (4.698-702), and his report is confirmed by Eurycleia (4.744b-57; note 752f on Athene; cf. 2.373-6). Penelope's first reaction is to contrast her son's absence with that of Odysseus insofar as the latter is present at least through his wide-ranging κλέος, while she believes the former to be in danger of altogether losing his name, another key theme (4.707-28; note "ἀκλέα", 728; cf. 814-23). But Athene herself intervenes to set Penelope at ease through a dream-image of her sister (4.795-841; note παύσειε κλαυθμοῖο, 801), which is confident both of Telemachus' return (4.806f; note "νόστιμος", 806) and of the goddess' own effective help (4.826-8a). Penelope, as well as the external audience, are thus reassured about the end of Telemachus' ὁδός, indeed this renewed anticipation of his safe return serves as a preliminary closure to the Telemachy, since the narrative will only return to him in book 15.[495] Once informed by the image that it is telling her Athene's μῦθος (4.828bf), Penelope is also eager to be told the current state of Odysseus' narrative, and whether he is alive or not (4.831-4), but the image defines such information as

[493] S. West (1988) 226 *ad* 4.555ff notes how the extent of Proteus' narrative is determined by its position in the narrative of the *Odyssey*.

[494] Cf. 2.332-6 for the beginning of this plot. Note that Antinous will also advise the suitors to complete their μῦθος in silence rather than to advertise it (4.774-7), which may indicate his awareness of its injustice inspite of his description of Telemachus as "κακὸν". Katz (1991) 30 sees the plot as developing the comparison with Agamemnon, now transferred to Odysseus' double Telemachus.

[495] *Pace* Katz (1991) 47f, who sees the ambush (parallel to Aegisthus' against Agamemnon) as opening up the narrative here.

vain and refuses to give it (4.836f).[496] This unanswered question about Odysseus' situation accurately reflects the current state of the narrative itself; indeed this renewed focus on him prepares for the following final introduction of the protagonist in person. It also gives a valid indication of Penelope's enforced extended ignorance of the μῦθος, which will become crucial in the poem's second half.

3.1.2 Release

A Second Start - Again

The second divine council in which Athene returns to the subject of Odysseus' μῦθος has regularly been criticized as awkward or even unnecessary (5.3-43).[497] She once more gives a summary of the intervening developments (5.7-20), indeed her words have formed part of speeches by other characters in this narrative before and could thus be read as self-conscious references to it (cf. Mentor, 2.230-4; Proteus, 4.557-60).[498] They offer a perfect means of expressing exasperation at the apparent necessity of going over the same ground again, before she adds the recent deterioration in the situation due to the plot against Telemachus in her own words (5.18-20; note "νῦν αὖ", 18a). While Zeus in turn voices surprise at her reopening the debate (5.22-4), he now explicitly sanctions Athene's suggested μῦθος concerning Odysseus, Telemachus and the suitors (5.24-7). He underlines divine agreement and determination to act by endorsing of his own accord her earlier suggestion to send Hermes (5.29-32; cf. 1.82-7).[499]

---

[496] Once more this passage with obvious metanarrative relevance has been questioned by critics; cf. S. West (1988) 244 *ad* 4.830ff, 831, 837: "It is absurd that the dream-figure should thus allege lack of reliable information as grounds for its refusal." However, the motivation ought to be sought not in the character, but in the structure of the narrative itself. Goldhill (1991) 28 notes the telling absence of Odysseus' name in the scene.

[497] Cf. Hainsworth (1988) 251-3 *ad* bk.5, 253f *ad* 5.1-42 with a host of bibliography for a summary of the analyst and unitarian argument.

[498] Cf. Segal (1992) 12, noting that Homer reassures the audience "that he has forgotten neither the main hero nor his own plot line", and that "he anticipates their possible malaise at the postponement of the main narrative and [that he is] also asserting his own overall command of the story's direction"; S. Richardson (1990) 92; Hainsworth (1988) 252 *ad* bk.5: "K. Reinhardt (*Von Werken und Formen* (Godesberg, 1948), 38) tried to defend Athena's speech as being a deliberate allusion to the preceding books, such as would ease the transition", though he dismisses this explanation because of what he calls the passage's "very perfunctory composition".

[499] For the importance of seeing bk.5 as succeeding bk.1 in temporal terms cf. de Jong (1997) 323. The syntax of the first speech can be seen to prepare for the second one: there Athene had phrased her suggestion as a conditional in the first person plural, depending on the will of the gods (1.82-7).

Hermes' mission, following Athene's separate initiative, resembles his mission to Priam following Thetis' to Achilles which together initiate the closure of the *Iliad*.[500] Again it is possible to see the narrative as drawing attention to this intertext, not only by employing an identical description of Hermes' preparations (5.43-9=*Il*. 24.339-45), but more strikingly though Zeus' first words to Hermes: "Ἑρμεία· σὺ γὰρ αὖτε τά τ᾽ ἄλλα περ ἄγγελός ἐσσι" (5.29), which seem to offer an oblique acknowledgment of that precedent. Once more a direct comparison between the λύσις achieved in Achilles' release of Hector's body and that achieved in Calypso's release of Odysseus is possible (cf. 5.394-9). As often with such parallels to an Iliadic intertext there are important differences: the transposition of a scene initiating closure to the beginning of the narrative not so much indicates a transformation in its function, as strongly underlines the thematic changes due to the representation of the closure of Odysseus' μῦθος as guaranteed from the start. Similarly, it is important that the λύσις here is concerned with a living character rather than the dead; the aspect of Hermes' mission of achieving λύσις for the dead will be picked up fully at the narrative's actual closure in book 24 in closer agreement with the Iliadic parallel.

But the end of Odysseus' νόστος remains the focus of this part of the narrative; indeed, Zeus' closing picture of Odysseus' return with more gifts than he had won at Troy, which closes his summary of events to follow (5.33-42; cf. 1.88-95), will be achieved exactly in the middle of the narrative itself (5.38-40≈13.136-8). It is only after the gods have taken the decision about the proposed turn in the action that Odysseus himself is first introduced. Ironically for a narrative built around a νόστος, he is shown to be not yet on the way but grieving for it (5.151-8; note νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ, 153a).[501] Odysseus' inability, in spite of all his qualities, to set out for the end he wishes for in this sense mirrors the introduction of his companions' lost νόστος in the very first verses of the proem, marking the frustration of the end desired (1.1-9). Yet from here on the narrative will offer him many opportunities to display the characteristics hinted at by Athene, or Nestor, Menelaus and Helen, on his way to achieving a spectacularly successful νόστος.

---

[500] Cf. e.g. Hölscher (1989) 82. Frame (1978) 73f notes the appropriateness of Hermes returning an Odysseus who might as well be dead (though it is of crucial importance that he is not; cf. below).

[501] Hainsworth (1988) 249 *ad* bk.5: "...his [the poet's] evident intention is that the restoration of Odysseus to family and kingdom should begin from the lowest possible point." Indeed, again a superlative (ὀΐζυρώτατον, 5.105) is introduced at the beginning of the narrative; cf. above p.138. In fact, this is a key term to describe Odysseus in the narrative, cf. 3.95, 103; 4.35, 152, 197, 325, 812, 932; 5.105, 289; 7.211, 270; 8.529, 540; 11.167, 182, 620; 13.337; 14.415; 15.342; 16.38; 17.563; 20.140, 196; 23.210, 307.

The scene with Calypso re-"presents" Odysseus' rejection of the endless immortality offered by the goddess, at the price of his presence in the world and of his own life and narrative.[502] It brings out Odysseus' own determination to achieve his νόστος ("ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἤματα πάντα/ οἴκαδέ τ᾽ ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι", 5.219f), giving the lie to the many statements of the loss of his νόστιμον ἦμαρ on Ithaca, whether hopeful or despairing.[503] Calypso's first announcement of his release starts with the words "μή μοι ἔτ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ὀδύρεο" (5.160), where "μή... ἔτ΄" marks the welcome turning point in the narrative. Characteristically sceptical, Odysseus is reassured to build a raft as a way of re-starting his story by an oath from Calypso that she means him no harm (5.184-91; note her insistence on non-plotting in "μή...βουλευσέμεν", 187). Yet "ἐνθάδ᾽ ὀδύρεο" (5.160), if stressed differently, in fact leaves open the possibility of a continuation of Odysseus' sufferings at a different location (cf. also οὐδ᾽ ἔνθα, 1.18f).[504] The absence of ship and crew for a proper πομπή (5.16f; 32; 140b-2) will afford the opportunity for Odysseus to be confronted with Poseidon's wrath largely on his own, while leaving room for discreet help by Athene who will likewise make up for the lack of a greater number of human supporters in the poem's second half. Odysseus actually declares himself prepared for further adventures, referring to his comparable past experience in words which can easily be understood as a metanarrative indication of a new beginning (5.221-4; esp. "μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω", 224b; cf. 17.284f).

A Critical Moment

Such hints serve to foreshadow the sudden appearance of Poseidon, who is returning from the Aethiopians just at this juncture (5.282-4a; cf. 1.22-6a). His introduction is surprising too in that Odysseus has already almost reached Scheria (5.279-81). This "false" closure of the land appearing is later followed by its reappearance after Poseidon's intervention; the scene therefore does not advance or turn the action, beginning with Phaeacia close by (ἐφάνη ὄρεα σκιόεντα/ γαίης Φαιήκων, ὅθι τ᾽ ἄγχιστον πέλεν αὐτῷ, 5.279bf) and ending with it in sight again

[502] Cf. for this technique of including choices presumably made at an earlier stage of the story the πεῖρα, duel and teichoscopy at the beginning of the *Iliad*.

[503] Cf. Andreae/Flashar (1977) 248 on the integrity of Odysseus' journey and the course of the narrative: "Gerade durch die Ausschließlichkeit, mit der Odysseus von Anfang an auf dem Heimkehrwunsch insistiert, erhält alles andere Episodencharakter. Es geht in der Tat e i n e Linie von Ogygia über Scheria nach Ithaka."

[504] The possible play on Odysseus' name in "ὀδύρεο" (5.160), supplementing the link with ὀδύσσομαι, would also present him as someone for whom it is characteristic to suffer. Cf. Hainsworth (1988) 249 *ad* bk.5; and above on 1.62.

(ὁ δ᾽ ἄρα σχεδὸν εἴσιδε γαῖαν, 5.392b).[505] Instead it stages the encounter of Poseidon's and Odysseus' directly opposed views on the end of the νόστος and on the direction, or otherwise, of Odysseus' μῦθος right at the beginning of the action (as the assembly had done for the two parties on Ithaca). Unlike the suitors, though, Poseidon (as a god) immediately recognizes that the critical moment at which the story turns against him has been reached. He realizes that the divine consensus against his end (or rather his delaying tactics) has now been put into practice (5.282-7; note "μετεβούλευσαν", 286; cf. 2.67). He correctly identifies Phaeacia as embodying the end of Odysseus' wanderings: "καὶ δὴ Φαιήκων γαίης σχεδόν, ἔνθα οἱ αἶσα/ ἐκφυγέειν μέγα πεῖραρ ὀιζύος, ἥ μιν ἱκάνει" (5.288f).

There has, however, been some discussion of the exact meaning of πεῖραρ.[506] Perhaps the difficulty of interpreting Poseidon's remark can be explained by the fact that he expresses a double perspective on events: he stresses the presence (and magnitude) of grief which is still reaching Odysseus, even while he has to acknowledge the fact that Odysseus will also come to escape it on Scheria. Indeed, it is not so much *on* the island as *from* it that his end (after all another journey, the νόστος) will be reached.[507] πεῖραρ would then specifically express the notion of a limit, or perhaps the turning point, towards an end rather than an end as such (a τέλος), leading to a slight oddity in conjunction with ἐκφυγέειν, since it is meant to express less what he will escape (an end, such as the τέλος θανάτοιο) than what he will escape towards (a

[505] Cf. Fenik (1974) 229f, who notes that Poseidon does not really interfere with Odysseus' return.

[506] Cf. esp. Hainsworth (1988) 280 *ad* 5.289, summarizing Bergren (1975); also Fernández-Galiano (1992) 226 *ad* 22.33; ΣEPV ε.289 simply gloss: τὸ πέρας ἢ τὸ τέλος ἢ τὸ λιπαρὸν καὶ ἀκμάζον. Homeric πεῖραρ, as well as later πέρας (cf. on 23.296 below), is a notoriously difficult term to define. Translations usually proferred are "limit", "bound", "rope", but the matter is complicated by the influence of other words, related either semantically (such as τέλος, esp. as in τέλος θανάτοιο) or in sound (such as πέραω and πείρω, but also πειράομαι). The similarity to the latter is in my view exploited for thematic purposes in the *Odyssey*, not only here but in particular throughout bk.8, so that πεῖραρ is linked both with πέραω, "traverse", πείρω, "pass through" and with πειράομαι, "try" or "test" (cf. below p.160). On the other hand, I believe it to be significant that (perhaps because of these connections) some distinction from τέλος, "completion" or "the end as completed" as in τέλος θανάτοιο, appears to be preserved in the *Odyssey* if not the *Iliad* (though *Il.* 18.501 may be regarded as an exception since πεῖραρ means "decision", perhaps due to the atypical subject matter), with πεῖραρ employed in contexts denoting not an absolute end but rather a "limit to be reached" as in πείρατ΄ ὀλέθρου. Indeed, it may be relevant to the conception of both poems that τέλος θανάτοιο appears regularly in the *Iliad* while πεῖραρ ὀλέθρου, or ἀέθλων, (as well as πειράομαι) are characteristic of the *Odyssey*; cf. my further discussion. This notion of πεῖραρ as a process directed towards a result rather than as an end viewed after completion seems to remain in place even when linked with its other meaning of "rope", as in the expression "πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ᾽ ἐφῆπτο" (22.33=44).

[507] For Scheria as a place of transition cf. e.g. Garvie (1994) 22f with n.75; Rutherford (1986) 154; Segal (1994) 12-64.

change in his fortunes).[508] Such a reading of Poseidon's words as promising an end, while holding that it is not reached quite yet, is in fact reinforced by his more explicit concluding remark: "ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι μέν μίν φημι ἅδην ἐλάαν κακότητος" (5.290; cf. "μή... ἔτ΄", 160).[509] This complex description of an end secure, but not yet achieved simultaneously offers a compelling image for the narrative strategy of the *Odyssey* as a whole.

Odysseus, on the other hand, now confronted with an angry god and a critical situation, recognizes that Calypso's anticipations of a full set of suffering before he will return are coming true (5.299-302; note "τὰ δὲ δὴ νῦν πάντα τελεῖται", 302b). His conclusion that he is certain to die (5.303-5; note "νῦν μοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος", 305b) makes him wish for a heroic death together with Achilles (5.306-12). However, this very assertion of Odysseus' difference from heroes like Achilles will be invested with a positive, not to say triumphant, meaning throughout the poem (cf. especially books 11; 22; 24). The parallel to Achilles' similar wish to avoid death by drowning (*Il*. 21.272-83) is significant: though Achilles too recovers from the critical situation, it is placed close to the end of the narrative and includes an anticipation of his eventual death, while Odysseus' speech is rather placed at the beginning of his narrative.[510] It could be said that Odysseus traverses his "liminal" episode to complete his νόστος, whereas for Achilles it only temporarily delays his death but confirms - in symbolic terms - that he has reached the end. Still, Odysseus' momentary loss of control over the direction of his story as much as his journey is illustrated in the following description: τῆλε δ᾽ ἀπὸ σχεδίης αὐτὸς πέσε, πηδάλιον δὲ/ ἐκ χειρῶν προέηκε... (5.315f; cf. πηδαλίῳ ἰθύνετο τεχνηέντως, 270).[511] Yet although he loses control here, and even disappears temporarily, he still eludes death, the end which would

[508] Interpreting the data from *LSJ* and a search of Homeric usage, with the accusative, ἐκφυγέειν usually means "escaping" some final end (θανάτον, κῆρας), the only other exception being 5.414 (κακότητα) and 19.157 (γάμον); otherwise it rules the genitive (ἀλός).

[509] Cf. his words to Zeus in 13.131-3; below. There is an intriguing parallel to Achilles when he replies to his horse's prediction of his death ("ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔμπης/ οὐ λήξω πρὶν Τρῶας ἅδην ἐλάσαι πολέμοιο", *Il*. 19.422bf): both are aware of the destined end (Achilles of his death, Poseidon of Odysseus' survival), but want to maximize their own, negative, ends in spite as well as because of this awareness (Achilles to bring destruction on the Trojans, Poseidon to make Odysseus suffer).

[510] A similar wish to have died at Troy is placed even earlier in the *Aeneid* where it is the first speech given to Aeneas (*Aen*. 1.94-101). Though for him, like Odysseus, the end is predetermined from the start, he is characterized, unlike Odysseus, by his only gradually developing, never quite complete understanding of it.

[511] Indeed, it is possible to go further in such a metatextual reading and interpret the clothes given by Calypso, which weigh Odysseus down and submerge him for a long time, as images of his long concealment by her (τὸν δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὑπόβρυχα θῆκε πολὺν χρόνον, .../ .../ εἵματα γάρ ῥ᾽ ἐβάρυνε, τά οἱ πόρε δῖα Καλυψώ; 5.319-21).

certainly confound his μῦθος (τέλος θανάτου ἀλεείνων, 5.326b). Leucothea reaffirms the impossibility of Poseidon actually killing Odysseus ("οὐ μὲν δή σε καταφθίσει, μάλα περ μενεαίνων", 5.341). But she also voices a concern as to the reason for Poseidon's great anger ("Κάμμορε, τίπτε τοι ὧδε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων/ ὠδύσατ᾽ ἐκπάγλως, ὅτι τοι κακὰ πολλὰ φυτεύει;", 5.339f), taking up that etymology of his name which implicitly links Odysseus with divine hatred.[512]

While Poseidon is himself aware of what the end will be and accepts it as willed by all other gods (unlike the suitors), rendering any open warning or intervention unnecessary, the delay and critical situations he effects for Odysseus introduce a note of suspense into his narrative. As we have seen before, only the actual achievement of closure, here the νόστος, will offer complete certainty on that account (cf. above on 1.20f). Poseidon's parting words before he leaves the scene appropriately hover between the past, present and future, anticipating another painful delay until Odysseus even reaches Phaeacia ("Οὕτω νῦν κακὰ πολλὰ παθὼν ἀλόω κατὰ πόντον,/ εἰς ὅ κεν ἀνθρώποισι διοτρεφέεσσι μιγήῃς·/ ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὥς σε ἔολπα ὀνόσσεσθαι κακότητος", 5.377-9; cf. 290).[513] The continuance of the threat he poses for the νόστος is also expressed by the fact that at this stage Athene supports Odysseus only secretly. Only after Poseidon has left does she step in to bring about an end to a situation in conflict with Odysseus' νόστος, by "tying down" the paths of all but one of the winds to set him, and the narrative, back on course to Phaeacia (5.382-7; note ἀνέμων κατέδησε κελεύθους,/ παύσασθαι δ΄ ἐκέλευσε, 383bf).[514]

The following passage, however, shows Odysseus overcome still further obstacles before reaching the turning point of Scheria. Although criticized from antiquity onwards, these prolonged trials are typical of the narrative and can be read as parallel in general terms to those difficulties he will later face on Ithaca.[515] Odysseus is seen already to anticipate his λύσις (5.394-

---

[512] Cf. Hainsworth (1988) 283 *ad* 5.340; Goldhill (1991) 25f with n.45; and on 1.62 and 5.160. She also offers another summary preview of subsequent events, providing Odysseus (and the external audience) with confirmation of what to expect, again asserting that Phaeacia will be the place from which he will be able to escape (5.344f; cf. Poseidon's words, 288f).

[513] This is true too of Juno in the *Aeneid* (esp. *Aen.* 7.315); cf. Feeney (1991) 132 with n.7, who also notes Juno's debt to tragic models.

[514] Her temporary absence is explicitly attributed to a desire to avoid confronting her uncle by the narrator (6.329b-31) and Athene herself (13.341-3). Cf. Garvie (1994) 161f *ad* 6.325-7 (with bibliography); Clay (1997) 51. Andreae/Flashar (1977) 246 refer to the avoidance of Iliadic quarrels.

[515] Cf. e.g. Hainsworth (1988) 279 *ad* 5.282-493; ΣHP *ad* ε.401.

9; note ἀσπάσιον δ᾽ ἄρα τόν γε θεοὶ κακότητος ἔλυσαν, 397), before he has to recognize that closure is not reached easily even when it seems close at hand: "...ἐπεὶ δὴ γαῖαν ἀελπέα δῶκεν ἰδέσθαι/ Ζεύς, καὶ δὴ τόδε λαῖτμα διατμήξας ἐτέλεσσα,/ ἔκβασις οὔ πῃ φαίνεθ᾽ ἁλὸς πολιοῖο θύραζε" (5.408-10). His acknowledgment of the lack of an escape in particular echoes Poseidon's last words ("οὔ πως ἔστι.../ ...ἐκφυγέειν κακότητα", 5.413f; cf. 377-9 quoted above). It takes all his ingenuity and determination, as well as the help of Athene's ideas, of Leucothea's veil and of the local river, to find a way out to his promised destination (5.424-63; note the closural imagery: παῦσεν, ἔσχε, 451). Once there, Odysseus is concealed by sleep sent by Athene to end his exhaustion (ἵνα μιν παύσειε τάχιστα/ δυσπονέος καμάτοιο, 5.492bf), again thematizing the arrival of - intermediate - closure (cf. 13.79f, 90-3).[516] The simile which likens Odysseus concealed under a heap of leaves to a firebrand concealed in the ashes (5.488-93; note φύλλοισι καλύψατο, 491a) may also be taken as an indication of his current position in the narrative: his identity is still concealed, but his potential remains ready to be revealed.[517]

Towards the πομπή

For Odysseus and his narrative to proceed to its closure, it is necessary that the Phaeacians offer him the full πομπή which Calypso had been unable to give, and this is what Athene, and Odysseus himself, work towards over the next books. It is not necessary for the purposes of this study to discuss these books - and especially Odysseus' own narrative - in detail; instead I will focus on some aspects that show their place in the narrative's development towards closure.

One of the main characteristics of the Phaeacian episode is its many delays, and again their positive contribution to the narrative is interesting to assess. For example, I wish to suggest that the continuing tension between the ends of Poseidon and Athene underlies the episode, so that a sense of danger to the πομπή informs Odysseus' reception on Scheria despite its actual predetermination. This desire for suspense perhaps helps explain two particular oddities in its

[516] Sleep is often used as a specifically closural theme; cf. e.g. Smith (1968) 175-8 (though its closural force is also dependent on a terminal position).

[517] The manner of his concealment has changed from that he endured on Ogygia; cf. Peradotto (1990) 103. In fact his loss of all possessions (illustrated by his nakedness) has been seen as an indication of a completely new start, like a new birth; cf. G. Lord (1956) 92f (though Odysseus is still situated on the margin - on the wrong shore; cf. ἀγροῦ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχατιῆς, 5.489a). Like fire, both destructive and warming, his eventual appearance potentially has positive and negative consequences; cf. Austin (1975) 282f n.16 on the development of fire imagery in later books.

plotting that have long exercised critics:[518] first, the warnings about the potentially hostile nature of the Phaeacians given to Odysseus both by Nausicaa and, more strongly, Athene (6.274; 7.30-3), which have been thought to be gainsaid by the civilized reception Odysseus will actually receive; second, the particular advice given by both that his best chance of achieving the πομπή involves supplicating the queen rather than the men of the house (6.303-15; 7.53-77, with 313-15=75-7), which also appears to be proved wrong by Arete's prolonged silence while Echeneus and Alcinous take the initiative (7.153-206).[519] On the one hand, all Phaeacians are descended from Poseidon as is stressed by Nausicaa and Athene herself (6.262-74; 7.54-72). But while the seafaring men in particular are under Poseidon's patronage, the Phaeacian women are under Athene's own (7.108-11; cf. the mention of her temple as well as Poseidon's). Therefore Athene appears to be directing Odysseus towards what should be his natural allies in this critical situation, and it is striking how all her covert machinations during this crucial phase work with females, while she tries to instill caution of the men in Odysseus.[520] We will return to this issue below on 11.335-53. At this early stage of the narrative, however, the general silence among the Phaeacians following Odysseus' request for a πομπή is rendered more suspenseful by the previous build-up of caution, as well as reassurance (7.144-54).

Beyond this underlying suspense, the beginning of the Phaeacian episode presents a typically Odyssean situation in which the end is already certain, even apparently imminent, yet will become delayed unexpectedly (cf. above p.153). Thus, although Alcinous proposes for a popular assembly to be convened the next day (7.186-98), Odysseus' judicious choice of words helps him already to elicit general approval for the πομπή (7.226f; note ἐκέλευον/ πεμπέμεναι

[518] As with the Telemachy, a number of considerations seem to have influenced the choice of plot and themes in this episode; another explanation which to me seems helpful are the parallels (to an extent) to the later situation on Ithaca, e.g. the presence of other suitors to Nausicaa as well as Penelope and the parallels between Arete and Penelope; cf. e.g. Garvie (1994) 24 with n.78, 25 with n.84; Murnaghan (1987) 97; Finley (1978) 84f; Fenik (1974) 104. On suspense cf. also Garvie (1994) 174 *ad* 6.56-66.

[519] On the former cf. Garvie (1994) 22 with n.74, 25f with n.85; Fenik (1974) 126f n.159. On the latter cf. Garvie (1994) 22 with n.71; Fenik (1974) 13-18 with additional bibliography.

[520] Athene first approaches Nausicaa in a dream (6.13-47), times Odysseus' waking up and prevents her from panicking (6.110-4; 139f); Nausicaa then takes the first step towards the πομπή by guiding Odysseus to her father (6.255ff). Athene herself appears to Odysseus also disguised as a girl (7.14-81a), taking up Nausicaa's hint (6.300) and acceding to Odysseus' prayer at her temple (6.321-31). It is only after Odysseus has been promised to be conveyed home that she appears as a (presumably male) herald to gather everyone for the assembly (8.7-15). Cf. rather bluntly Benardete (1997) 50: "Odysseus has to beat down male opposition to him and seduce the female."

τὸν ξεῖνον, ἐπεὶ κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπεν, 226bf).[521] The πομπή even appears to be hastened by Alcinous when he speaks to the assembled Phaeacians the next day: "πομπὴν δ᾽ ὀτρύνει, καὶ λίσσεται ἔμπεδον εἶναι./ ἡμεῖς δ᾽, ὡς τὸ πάρος περ, ἐποτρυνώμεθα πομπήν" (8.30f; also 32f). Yet importantly it becomes delayed through narrative and tests which help begin (re)establish the characteristic identity of the poem's protagonist, rather than through any new developments in terms of the action.[522] A sequence of incomplete narratives leads up to the final disclosure of his identity to the Phaeacians in book 9, which will finally conclude the narrative of his past in the lead up to its - and his - return to the present with his eventual νόστος. Demodocus' first epic song introduces a comparison between Odysseus' and Achilles' κλέος (8.73-5), who in this instance quarrel - tellingly - with words (8.76-8). Their explicit comparison is not concluded in the song, but will be taken up again on Odysseus' account of his visit to Hades and closed only in the second underworld scene in book 24 (cf. below). The song instead ends on the explanatory verses: τότε γάρ ῥα κυλίνδετο πήματος ἀρχὴ/ Τρωσί τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς (8.81f).[523] This ending, resembling the beginning of epics like the *Cypria* and in particular the *Iliad* (esp. 8.82b; note also the imperfect in 81), is perfectly suited to the first in the sequence of retrospective narratives mentioned.[524] Odysseus' own distraught reaction to the song can also be seen as the consequence of the present lack of closure, though it paradoxically occasions its further postponement, including the disclosure of his identity (8.83-95; cf. καλυψάμενος, 92).

---

[521] His insistence on his mortality validates (the urgency of) his request to be helped to an end. Indeed we may note how he closes with an appeal to speed up his return, which in itself is hyperbolically closed with the hypothetical acceptance even of death - the end *par excellence* - provided he has seen his home again (7.222-5).

[522] Cf. e.g. Garvie (1994) 26 with n.86; Goldhill (1991) 26-34; Hainsworth (1988) 343 *ad* bk.8; Fenik (1974) 103, also 129. The recognition of the protagonist also only takes place after a lengthy period spent unrecognized, providing a parallel to the later situation on Ithaca; cf. Rutherford (1985) 133, 141-4; Murnaghan (1987) 91f, with emphasis on the theme of guest-friendship.

[523] Cf. generally on their contrast in the Homeric epics Rutherford (1992) 6, 24-7; Scodel (1998) 184 with n.25 mentions that the contrast can be seen in terms of their respective epics too. Here, Agamemnon is said to be able to appreciate the - presumably positive - significance of their quarrel because of a prediction he received from Apollo at Delphi (8.77b-81a); this element of security of interpretation due to divine foreknowledge is typically Odyssean.

[524] Feeney (1991) 58 notes that the will of Zeus usually represents an epic beginning while its fulfillment represents its end; this may explain why Deichgräber (1972) 18 regards 8.82b as an "echter Liedschluß" rather than a beginning. It could be suggested that the song in fact incorporates aspects of both the *Iliad's* beginning and end, by collapsing the will of Zeus with its closural perspective on Trojans *and* Achaeans. - With regard to the question whether πήματος ἀρχὴ refers to the time of the oracle or the time of the quarrel, I favour the former interpretation because of the symmetry of τότε and ὅθ΄ (8.80) and because it seems unlikely that Agamemnon would rejoice over the πήματος ἀρχὴ for the Achaeans as well as Trojans, if he was aware of it.

Further Trials

The games also contribute to advancing - and defining - Odysseus' κλέος through testing him, as Laodamas asks the stranger to participate (8.145-8; note "πείρησαι ἀέθλων", 145b). While Odysseus sees the games as a diversion, of secondary importance, from the νόστος which he desires to succeed his already epic sufferings (8.153-7; note "ὃς πρὶν μὲν μάλα πολλὰ πάθον καὶ πολλὰ μόγησα", 155), he does now take up Euryalus' challenge to prove himself in the games as another trial of his particular character ("ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς, κακὰ πολλὰ παθών, πειρήσομ᾽ ἀέθλων", 8.184), again asserting his familiarity with suffering (8.182f).[525] Indeed, this is what Athene had prepared him for at the beginning of the assembly, when she had rendered him more impressive and stronger in order to win over the Phaeacians (8.18b-22a) and, importantly, to bring to a successful closure the trials of which the games form a part ([ὥς κεν] ἐκτελέσειεν ἀέθλους/ πολλούς, τοὺς Φαίηκες ἐπειρήσαντ᾽ Ὀδυσῆος, 8.22bf). The Phaeacians, Athene and Odysseus clearly define the ἀέθλοι as a πεῖρα for him, and Odysseus' own choice of words implicitly connects them with his earlier sufferings (cf. "ἀνδρῶν τε πτολέμους ἀλεγεινά τε κύματα πείρων", 8.183; "πειρήσομ΄ ἀέθλων", 184).[526] This portrayal of the games as another trial necessary to the achievement of the νόστος (even after the promise of the πομπή) continues the theme of the lengthy process of reaching the desired goal as predicted by Poseidon in an unexpected fashion. The very fact that Odysseus still has to undergo such a πεῖρα rather than setting any himself (a theme that will come to be of paramount importance in the poem's second half) illustrates Poseidon's contention that he has not quite reached the πεῖραρ of his sufferings (5.288-90).[527]

---

[525] The wording implicitly contrasts his special κλέος with that offered by the Phaeacian games in that it clearly recalls the *Odyssey's* own proem. The variety of content foreshadows his later narrative of his wanderings which will keep the Phaeacians spell-bound. His long suffering had already been emphasized in his earlier speeches: forming a frame for his first speech (7.147b, note "πολλά"; 152), then significantly mentioned as a subject for a longer μῦθος in the second one (7.213f).

[526] For Alcinous' and Laodamas' view of the games as a test cf. 8.100; 145; cf. Garvie (1994) 240f *ad* 8.22-3. Cf. Hainsworth (1988) 357 *ad* 8.183: "**πείρων**, piercing (...), hence 'cleaving my way', ..., must be taken also by zeugma with πτολέμους, almost as if it were associated with πειράω"; above p.153 on this group of words. This may also be an instance of an implicit comparison between Odysseus and Achilles (8.183=*Il.* 24.8): while Achilles thinks of his past with Patroclus and then drags Hector's body around the σῆμα of his dead friend, the verse here could be seen to underline Odysseus' success since his σῆμα is soon to be endorsed as one of victory by Athene; cf. below.

[527] In addition to the passage discussed above, it may be relevant to quote later authors for the possible link between πεῖραρ and πεῖρα: Theocritus *Idyll* 15.62a (πείρᾳ θην πάντα τελεῖται); Pindar *Nemean Odes* 3.70 (ἐν δὲ πείρᾳ τέλος/ διαφαίνεται, ὧν τις ἐξοχώτερος γένηται). - For Odysseus as the one tested here, but actively testing back on Ithaca cf. the phrase κακὰ πολλὰ φυτεύει, which is used by Leucothea with Odysseus as the object of Poseidon's wrath (5.340) and with Odysseus as the subject regarding the suitors later (e.g. 15.178; 17.82, 159).

Odysseus' success in the games therefore represents one crucial step in the movement towards the anticipated limit, or turning point, in his μῦθος. This reading is confirmed by the striking reappearance of Athene (now disguised as a man) after Odysseus' winning throw of the discus, publicly proclaiming his excellence to the Phaeacians (8.186-98). Already it is she rather than Poseidon who sets the boundaries for Odysseus (ἔθηκε δὲ τέρματ᾽ Ἀθήνη, 8.193b), marking his special σῆμα which stands out from the crowd of others (8.192b; 195-7a).[528] Her exhortation to be confident about the outcome of his trial ("σὺ δὲ θάρσει τόνδε γ᾽ ἄεθλον", 8.197b) further encourages Odysseus who recognizes her support (8.199f). He feels he can now offer himself to be tried in other competitions too (8.204-14; note "πειρηθήτω", 205; "πειρηθήμεναι", 213); indeed he begins to reveal more of his identity by claiming to have been the best Achaean archer after Philoctetes (8.219-22).[529]

From Past to Future

Leading up to the disclosure of his identity, Odysseus himself suggests another song on the subject of the Trojan war, in particular the Trojan horse, to Demodocus (8.492-5), thus further advancing his story to the point where he himself will shortly take it up.[530] Again the song is summarized in indirect speech, though it is longer and contains more detail than the first (8.499-520). Like it, however, it ends with a reference to divine involvement; here the victory embodied in the recovery of Helen by Odysseus and Menelaus is brought about by Athene (νικῆσαι καὶ ἔπειτα διὰ μεγάθυμον Ἀθήνην, 8.520).[531] Odysseus' grief, compared to that of a woman taken away from her home (8.523-30), offers another indication that for him too this victory only appeared to represent an end, when it in fact was just the beginning of his wanderings from (not towards) his home. Like Penelope's reaction to Phemius' song, Odysseus' pain in listening to Demodocus' narratives of the Trojan war thus reflects the absence of closure

[528] This interpretation would remove the oddity of expression noted by Garvie (1994) 278 *ad* 8.193, exactly because τέρματα "in its more natural sense" means "the point at the far end of the race-course round which the chariots drive" (as in *Il*. 23.333), i.e. a turning point.

[529] This story appears to offer a kind of riddle to the Phaeacians, which needs what may be called "intertextual" knowledge to be solved, resembling the riddling question of the proem. The theme of Odysseus as archer foreshadows its importance at the climactic point in bk.21 and 22.

[530] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 52f; Ford (1992) 111-14.

[531] Cf. the reference to Zeus' decisions in the first song (Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς, 8.82b); markedly, Zeus again appears to offer a direction to follow while Athene is concerned with its enactment (cf. above on the assembly). Note again the presence of closure from the beginning: the entry of the horse into the city already seals the outcome (8.510-13); thus a certain circularity (of what is fated) is once more detectable.

to his own story (cf. 1.340-4).[532] Alcinous' hope to end his grief by stopping the song may be as mistaken as Penelope's was (8.536-45), but his attempt to seek closure by returning to the πομπή as an end will turn out to be helpful, since it is connected with the final return to the question of Odysseus' identity (note the turn from "οὔ πω παύσατ΄ ὀιζυροῖο γόοιο", 8.540 to "τῷ νῦν μηδὲ σὺ κεῦθε", 548a). For the revelation of his name and origin are specifically portrayed as a vital precondition to the fulfillment of Odysseus' νόστος by giving it the right direction (8.555f).[533]

Alcinous' speech also continues the janus-headed nature of this transitional episode by providing both reassurance and suspense about the eventual achievement of the πομπή. On the one hand, he finally explains fully why the Phaeacians can offer Odysseus a special, secure πομπή, since their ships are not only extraordinarily fast and concealed from view by a cloud (8.561f), but do not rely on πηδάλι[α], controlled by men, seemingly guided by thoughts alone (note νοήματα, φρένας, 8.559). Before, Poseidon had been able to cause problems for Odysseus and his narrative by taking away his control over the πηδάλιον of his raft (5.315f). Now, with a Phaeacian ship, guided by νοήματα instead (and Odysseus' particular characteristic lies of course in his νόος, as none other than Zeus had recognized right at the start of the narrative; 1.66a), such interference will be impossible.[534] Yet Alcinous goes on to report a prophecy which contains a warning to the Phaeacians that Poseidon's special patronage of the πομπή they offer may come to an end (8.564-71). The disclosure of the prophecy at this point again illustrates Odysseus' dependence on a people who owe as strong an allegiance to Poseidon as to Athene and thus introduces a renewed degree of tension, or suspense, even if Alcinous himself clearly does not yet understand its present relevance.[535] However, the anticipation of Poseidon's resentment at being deprived of control over this last and crucial sea-journey of Odysseus by his own people also makes it clear that Poseidon's anger will be directed against the Phaeacians rather than Odysseus, simultaneously suggesting a successful end for him.

---

[532] Cf. Finley (1978) 89: "His weeping like a lorn woman states his present position between Troy and home, his position toward the full poem."

[533] The disclosure of his identity is also meant to seal their guest-friendship, for which the knowledge of each others' identity is crucial (8.546-54); cf. Murnaghan (1987) 99-101.

[534] Frame (1978) 78-80 also draws attention to the possibility of deeper links between νόος and νόστος.

[535] ΣT θ.564, ΣQ θ.567, Eustathius 1610, 37 *ad* 8.570 athetize, but they and, e.g., Peradotto (1990) 90f and Bergren (1983) 58 seem to be wrong to see the external audience too closely mirrored by the Phaeacian audience; the irony appears to be meant for the former rather than the latter. The many instances of irony surrounding the disguised Odysseus, due to the superior knowledge of the audience compared to most characters concerned, provide a parallel in the second half of the narrative.

Narrative and Name: A Return to the Proem

This hint at a successful end for Odysseus stands in ironic contrast to his introduction to the disclosure of his identity. He sets the pain inherent in his own particular story (9.12f) against the generally pleasant nature of narrative, suggesting once more the current open-endedness of his narrative and explaining his unexpected reaction to the epics which touch it.[536] Indeed, Odysseus pronounces narrative (and its enjoyment) to be a τέλος to be aspired to (9.3-11; esp. "οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γέ τί φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι/ ἢ ὅτ᾽ ἐυφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κάτα δῆμον ἅπαντα,/ δαιτυμόνες δ᾽ ἀνὰ δώματ᾽ ἀκουάζωνται ἀοιδοῦ", 5-7).[537] These verses, which stand at the beginning of Odysseus' extended narrative of his past (and future; cf. below on book 11), may be read in wider, metatextual terms as advertizing and justifying the *Odyssey's* own preoccupation with narrative, which is especially pronounced in this Phaeacian episode.[538] In fact, Odysseus goes on directly to voice the crucial choice of beginning and end with which every narrator is faced: "τί πρῶτόν τοι ἔπειτα, τί δ᾽ ὑστάτιον καταλέξω;" (9.14). This self-conscious, metanarrative question is comparable to the choice of beginning left to the Muse (1.10).

Odysseus' choice to start with his name reinforces the focus on the protagonist and the programmatic link between his name and narrative: "νῦν δ᾽ ὄνομα πρῶτον μυθήσομαι" (9.16a).[539] Although prefaced by the recognition of the present absence of closure, the final disclosure of Odysseus' identity by stating his name and characteristic trickery (9.19f) can therefore be seen as beginning to provide an answer not only to Alcinous' question, but also to that expressed in the proem itself. It is the μῦθος of himself which, retracing the past before returning to the present and continuing into the future, allows what may be called the first "recognition" of Odysseus, by a people who previously only knew him through narrative (which is true of the external audience as well as the Phaeacians); it is therefore both appropriate and

---

[536] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 153. Odysseus implicitly corrects Alcinous' suggestion that he may be grieving for a relative (8.581-6): in such a case the closural force of death could be expected to have lessened Odysseus' pain after an interval of ten years, yet the fact that his grief is for himself and the lack of closure to his own μῦθος as implied here is an effective response to Alcinous' wonder.

[537] Cf. the usual closure of Asterix cartoons (though their bard is always silenced due to his singular lack of talent), even more so than the endings of Greek New Comedy where the closural feast is - I believe - not necessarily accompanied by song (esp. epic).

[538] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 59; Murnaghan (1987) 101; Ford (1992) 113.

[539] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 31: "To say 'I am Odysseus' is to begin the story that tells what it is to be Odysseus", also 36; for the possibly programmatic nature of the name "Odysseus" itself cf. above on 1.62; 5.160, 340.

significant that Odysseus' name itself now stands at the beginning, in contrast to the proem.[540] In answering the proem's central question, then, the return to the beginning of Odysseus' μῦθος also signals the narrative progress that has been made; the final presentation of the protagonist's character is building up to the approaching end of the first part of the poem (cf. below p.174). In fact, we may compare Odysseus' taking control of the μῦθος now by telling rather than listening with Telemachus' similar strategy (cf. 1.347b-9; 358bf); significantly, both do so after receiving encouragement from Athene. It is therefore important that it is Odysseus' own narrative which is responsible for further deferring action by turning back in time and retarding the πομπή; it is also characteristic for the *Odyssey* that he becomes active again - delaying rather than delayed - through narrating (cf. again 9.5-11).

A Glimpse of the Aftermath

But this as yet unfinished μῦθος, delaying its own development towards the πομπή, contains in it the seeds for future closure in the episode in the underworld, in particular Teiresias' prophecy about the course and outcome of Odysseus' journey (11.99-137). There have been doubts about the motivation of the visit to Teiresias, in particular because in the end Circe offers Odysseus guidance for the direction of his νόστος herself (12.25-7).[541] Like Telemachus' journey to Pylos and Sparta, however, the journey to the seer should not be regarded as a digression, despite its non-advancement of the action, in that it represents a journey towards certainty, as figured in the search for closure.[542] Looking at the wording of the prophecy, it is notable how a series of conditional clauses is employed to answer both the need to offer a sense of closure by predicting the future and the need to acknowledge that the future is by definition still open

---

[540] Goldhill (1991) 26 notes that Odysseus' stories express the present as a function of the past. The metapoetic relevance of Odysseus' narrative to the *Odyssey's* is especially pointed if we can assume that the account of the hero's past in the following books is (to a large degree) original; cf. e.g. Heubeck (1989a) 6: "It is not, however, at all certain that pre-Homeric epic associated any of the adventures related in ix-xii with the figure of Odysseus, so as to provide a direct model for these books. There is much to suggest that the poet of the *Odyssey* was the first to send his returning hero on the route with which we are familiar."

[541] Cf. e.g. Fenik (1974) 120-6. The problem has also been seen to be compounded by the advance summary by Circe (10.506-40), which includes a promise that Teiresias would tell "ὁδὸν καὶ...νόστον" (10.539f). Again, it is helpful to distinguish between a character's 'motivation' (which may not be quite convincing) and narrative motivation, or 'function', (which usually is); cf. Reinhardt (1996) 105; Peradotto (1990) 60ff; above p.132.

[542] Cf. Reinhardt (1996) 121: "A thread is spun that runs through to the end and even beyond the end of the poem"; also Peradotto (1990) 68: "It is both a review and preview from the still, timeless perspective of death, almost outside the plot, as it were"; though it should be noted that it is in fact placed at the very centre of the poem. Cf. also Anchises' revelations about the Roman future in *Aeneid* 6 which have no perceivable effect on Aeneas in the ensuing narrative.

(11.105; 110; 112; 113), thus alleviating the potential problem of an excessive sense of predetermination which might detract from the satisfaction of the eventual closure (cf. above p.146).[543] Through the device of the εἰ-clause, the 'kernel' events in Odysseus' μῦθος still retain a degree of suspense; even his own survival is temporarily portrayed as doubtful (cf. "ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι μέν κε καὶ ὣς κακά περ πάσχοντες ἵκοισθε,/ αἴ κ᾽ ἐθέλῃς σὸν θυμὸν ἐρυκακέειν καὶ ἑταίρων", 11.104f; modified by "αὐτὸς δ᾽ εἴ πέρ κεν ἀλύξῃς,/ ὀψὲ κακῶς νεῖαι, ὀλέσας ἄπο πάντας ἑταίρους", 113bf). Teiresias also notes that the νόστος as such will not be fully closural (11.115b-17), but provides further reassurance by supplementing it with the achievement of τίσις, thus reaching out to the end of the latter part of the narrative (11.118-20; note "ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τοι κείνων γε βίας ἀποτίσεαι ἐλθών", 118). Despite the conditionals, none of these predictions poses a problem, since the remainder of the *Odyssey's* narrative contains their fulfillment and the confirmation of both the νόστος and τίσις.[544]

However, Teiresias follows this part of Odysseus' μῦθος with an anticipation which reaches even beyond the closure of the *Odyssey* itself in chronological terms, and thus differs not only from all other passages in Odysseus' account, but also all other anticipations of closure so frequently encountered. He requires Odysseus to undertake a journey inland after his reestablishment on Ithaca and to make a conciliatory sacrifice to Poseidon before returning home again (11.119-34a); this second νόστος is followed by the prediction of a peaceful death for himself and a community happily settled around him (11.143b-7).[545] There have been queries how far the fulfillment of this final part of the prophecy can be taken for granted, in view of the

---

[543] Cf. Hansen (1977) 36: "...Teiresias is not so much relating a story as giving instructions and making predictions"; Clay (1997) 150f with n.39 on a degree of openness in prophecies; Peradotto (1990) 68 with figure 3 offers a view of the conditionals as offering an inbuilt plot by discarding one alternative each time; cf. ΣbT I.410-16: τὸ ἀμφίβολον τῆς μοίρας καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις οἶδε, δι᾽ ὧν Τειρεσίας φησὶν Ὀδυσσεῖ: '...' (λ 110-2). In the Iliadic passage too there are two conditionals: "εἰ μέν κ᾽", 9.412; "εἰ δέ κεν", 414, opening up Achilles' fate. Bergren (1983) argues, 59: "There can be no final return of time for the truth of the past or future always eludes its only verification, occurrence in a present that never returns." But her argument is true only in a realistic (or postmodern) rather than literary (epic) context in which the gods, seers as well as the narrator have privileged access to the future (and the past).

[544] Indeed, critics are happy to point out the aspect of predetermination in plotting; cf. e.g. Pucci (1998e) 144, arguing that Odysseus and the audience discover "that he is simply repeating a story already 'written'" (a statement that might equally well apply to all of the *Odyssey*); Peradotto (1990) 67: "...: it is the storyteller tipping his hand, showing us where the story can or will go, because he has already determined the end." But Page (1955) 49 n.10 claims that "Teiresias ought to be able to do better than this".

[545] There has been a debate about the meaning of "ἐξ ἁλὸς" (11.134) as meaning either "away from" or "out of the sea"; but cf. Hansen (1977) 45: "The tone and the context require that the hero die a gentle death away from the sea", and 43 noting that the scholia also favour this reading though they are aware of both; further bibliography in Roberts (1997a) 252 n.3.

fact that it is not narrated in the poem itself. Peradotto (1990) in particular attempts to accumulate arguments for questioning Teiresias' credibility in his desire to find ways of "opening up" the text (63-77).[546] The quest for openness also leads him to interpret the final recall of the prophecy by Odysseus himself (23.248-87) as ambivalent, rather than seeing it as providing the desired reassurance through repetition (73).[547] But the suggested need for further corroboration of the truthfulness of the anticipated closure of Odysseus' μῦθος is in itself debatable: as noted, the *Odyssey* often makes use of anticipatory summaries, in particular by gods and seers as characters possessing the necessary foresight; if their special knowledge of the future was open to question, the conception of these characters itself would be undermined. It would be perverse to accept the truth of, for example, Zeus' promise of the fulfillment of Odysseus' νόστος (1.64-79) or Halitherses' and Theoclymenus' predictions of his τίσις (e.g. 2.157-76; 17.151-61), yet to doubt Teiresias' anticipation of the ultimate closure of his life (and μῦθος) as a whole, which also includes both νόστος and τίσις.[548] In particular, it should be noted how the syntax changes from the conditional clauses, which leave a vestige of openness about the plot, to imperatival infinitives, which issue unequivocal instructions to the protagonist on how to secure his repeated return (11.119-34a; note "ἔρχεσθαι", 121; "ἀποστείχειν ἔρδειν θ΄", 132).[549] Indeed, Odysseus' death itself is phrased as a simple future (note "ἐλεύσεται", 11.135;

[546] He also, 62, claims that the suggested lack of clarity regarding the ultimate end is at odds with "the otherwise inviolable penchant of oral poetry to fulfill its forecasts and expectancies"; cf. also Bergren (1983) 59f quoted above.

[547] Though Peradotto (1990) 65 calls for a confirmation of the prophecy through narration, he might argue that a repetition by the same character does not carry the same weight as a full narration of events by the narrator. But cf. below p.179 on Odysseus' own assimilation to a divine character (if not the poet himself) through his unusual foreknowledge, and Doherty (1995) 174f for the coincidence of focalization between him, Athene (and Zeus) and the narrator. I also disagree with Bergren (1983) 59f, who argues that this prophecy is open-ended by likening it to that concerning the Phaeacians; cf. below on bk.13.

[548] There is no reason to believe that these prophecies are different in quality (even if they differ in chronological reach), if Odysseus himself is accepted as a reliable narrator (cf. the last note). The reassuring effect of a prophecy by fixing future events here is discussed by Roberts (1997a) 252; cf. p.49.

[549] I disagree with Peradotto (1990) 71f, who transfers his reading of "εἰς ὅ κε" as potentially referring to an end not to be fulfilled from the description of Penelope's plot (cf. 2.97bf) to Teiresias (11.122a). It is comparable rather to "ὁππότέ κεν" (11.127-9), or the "εἰς ὅ κε" clause of Poseidon (5.378f quoted above).

"ἐσσονται", 137) and enhanced by the concluding assertion of truthfulness ("τὰ δέ τοι νημερτέα εἴρω", 11.137b). [550]

It is, however, notable that a full narration of the end to the theme of Poseidon's anger appears to be precluded by the *Odyssey's* temporal concentration, achieved through its focus on only part of the whole μῦθος, that is on the νόστος and its immediate aftermath on Ithaca. Indeed, the very inclusion of Teiresias' prophecy with its strictly confined thematic function, which has been queried by critics, underscores how important it is to offer a complete overview over the story precisely because of the self-imposed tight limits of the narrative itself. The present passage can therefore be seen as providing a parallel to two techniques noted in the *Iliad*: first, Teiresias' prophecy resembles Zeus' prediction concerning the fall of Troy (*Il.* 15.56-77) in its summary of events represented as the end of the story in question, even if deliberately not of the narrative itself; the resemblance is underlined by the similar positioning of either speech at the centre of the poem as a whole.[551] Secondly, the prediction of the death of the protagonist offers a striking parallel to the crescendo of anticipations of Achilles' death in the *Iliad*.[552] Indeed, both characters are crucially put in the unusual position (for human beings) of being aware of their ends beforehand. The *Odyssey's* seemingly closer relation to hymnic poetry, in which stories about the protagonist may be multiplied at will, may at first suggest that continued adventures also form an indispensable part of Odysseus' identity (cf. his diversity and diverse experience stressed in the proem). But in contrast to hymns, addressed after all to gods who live forever, in Odysseus' case only one specific story is anticipated, indeed a story which itself provides the strongest sense of closure possible in the death of its protagonist. Rather than offering an endless picture of Odyssean diversity, then,

---

[550] Ford (1992) 161-7 offers a different argument in that he rather locates openness in the portrayal and nature of the σῆμα to be set up by Odysseus. His argument appears to illustrate the *Odyssey's* resistance to death for its protagonist, which I hope to show is not necessarily the same as an avoidance of closure in narrative terms. However, I agree with Ford (1992) 161f, 167 that the *Odyssey* can characteristically be seen to play with the notion of death as closural.

[551] Cf. Tracy (1997) 368f; Bergren (1983) 70f n.32: "...Odysseus' *nostos* ends only here, in the center of the poem. That is the point of Teiresias' prophecy and the epic as a whole"; Finley (1978) 114. Similarly the beginnings of the story (not the narrative) are included in both epics: in the *Iliad* the judgement of Paris, Helen's leaving with Paris and the Achaeans' stay at Aulis are all mentioned; in the *Odyssey* the story (characteristically) of Odysseus' naming, not his birth, as told by Eurycleia (19.399-412) could be seen as the equivalent. On the completeness of the characters' lives cf. Reinhardt (1996) 104; Scott (1921) 260.

[552] Clarke (1981) 195 generalizes: "...the 'Underworld's' presence in the poem is an early testimony to the gravitational pull in myth as well as literature that draws heroes beyond the limits of their lives." On the probable debt to the *Iliad* cf. Reinhardt (1996) 113f; Rutherford (1985) 144. Here the contrast between the manner of death between the two heroes assumes some importance; cf. below on the continuation of this episode and later on bk.24.

Teiresias' prophecy should be seen to envisage an end to Odysseus' μῦθος that provides a fixed and inescapable closure, indeed foreclosing any other versions of it than the present one.[553]

The Certainty of Death

The importance of this preview of the eventual closure of Odysseus' μῦθος is underlined in the narrative itself by the break in his tale shortly following that passage. The conversation between the Phaeacians and Odysseus during this break begins both to mark the conclusion of the continued tension first evident in the initial supplication scene and then to branch out to set Odysseus' life (and death) against that of other Achaean heroes, in preparation for the poem's own closure. The fact, then, that it is Arete who now speaks out first, claiming the impressive stranger to be hers (11.335-8), at last taking the initiative rather than the men, signals that Odysseus has now gained her crucial support (cf. above on 6.303-15; 7.53-77). This reading is confirmed by Odysseus' positive reaction to her suggestion to offer additional gifts, even if this means another delay of the νόστος (11.339-41; note "τῷ μὴ ἐπειγόμενοι ἀποπέμπετε", 339a), and to Alcinous' reassurance regarding his eventual πομπή (11.350-3).[554] Odysseus appreciates that he will regain the possessions he had been so conspicuously lacking at the beginning of the episode (11.357-61), having already regained his identity and personal status. His express readiness to wait even for a year to achieve both the πομπή and gifts (11.356f) is a sign of his increased confidence about the closure of (at least this part of) his μῦθος, in agreement with Zeus' prediction at the beginning of his λύσις (5.38-40).[555]

---

[553] The possible attempt to preempt other narratives by including its own version of Odysseus' death is perhaps to be seen in the context of the diverse tradition surrounding Odysseus (in contrast to Achilles), if the evidence of later literature, ancient and modern, is anything to go by: the *Telegony* gives a different version of his story and death; cf. S. West (1989) 130ff; Moulton (1974) 168; Huxley (1969) 171. On the problem of the *carmen perpetuum*, "an old dream of the West", cf. D. Fowler (1997) 20: "But there is always also an overlap between the tales, and its inevitable consequences of rivalry and contestation"; for this overlap cf. too Huxley (1969) 171. Other versions include e.g. Pindar and Servius *ad Aen*. 2.44 according to Katz (1991) 77; Sophocles *Odysseus Acanthoplex* fr.453-61 Radt, Aristotle *Poet*. 14.1453b33, Apollodorus *Epit*. 7.34-40 according to Rutherford (1985) 149 n.52; Aristotle *Ith.Const.* fr.507 R according to S. West (1989) 132 (quoted 142 n.97); while Kullmann (1992) 248f sees the later tradition, mentioning the *Telegony*, Dante, Tennyson and Kazantzakis, as protesting against the idealized ending of *Odyssey*. The unique conception of the *Odyssey* has thus repeatedly been turned into an argument against the present passage.

[554] Note that Alcinous' speech is phrased in the same words as Telemachus' assumption of control of the μῦθος in 1.358bf; here Alcinous takes control of the πομπή, marking a crucial turning point in the action (cf. also 21.352bf below).

[555] The hyperbolical nature of his response perhaps serves to explain Alcinous' following ambiguous denial that Odysseus is a deceiver and trickster (11.363-6) as much as the rest of his narrative. This ambiguity need not be a sign of disapproval; cf. Athene's similar characterization of Odysseus in 13.291; Ford (1992) 124f. Austin (1975) 194-8 argues that the Phaeacian ruling family too excels in *innuendo*.

This confirmation of the anticipated successful achievement of Odysseus' νόστος in addition to the previous clarification of his future now allows for a more direct comparison of his μῦθος with that of other heroes.[556] This comparison is made possible by having Odysseus himself meet these heroes after their deaths in the Underworld. This device allows certain judgement of their relative successes to be made from the vantage point of their stories' closure, in extension of the *Odyssey*'s pervasive portrayal of closure as the basis for certainty. The νέκυια may be the first passage in Greek literature which explicitly shows death to be a precondition for an evaluation of a person's life, a notion which may on reflection be found to be a particularly artificial, "narrative" way of approaching human happiness and success from the outside.[557] Indeed, the νέκυια can itself be said simultaneously to contain two otherwise irreconcilable perspectives on death: on the one hand, Teiresias' prophecy, significantly placed *before* these meetings, emphasizes the inevitability of death even for Odysseus while picturing it in its least threatening form; on the other, Odysseus' introduction instead focuses on the fact that (by definition) the heroes he is going to talk about have died on their νόστος (11.382b-4) and by implication draws attention to his own successful avoidance of the τέλος θανάτου so far (cf. 11.473-6 below; also 5.326b).

The first meeting, with Agamemnon, is concerned especially with closure as providing a basis for judging success (11.387-466), adding to the many comparisons with his νόστος. Thus Odysseus' question to him turns on the manner of his death (11.397-403) and Agamemnon stresses the offensiveness of his murder (11.409-26; note "ὣς θάνον οἰκτίστῳ θανάτῳ", 412a).[558] Although he offers his own end as a warning to Odysseus to keep parts of his plot secret from

---

[556] Cf. e.g. Garvie (1994) 3 with n.8 including bibliography; Macleod (1983a) 2. Note that Alcinous invites Odysseus to talk of the other heroes involved in the Trojan war as well as of himself (11.370-6; note "οὐδέ πω ὥρη/ εὔδειν", 373bf) directly after likening Odysseus to an epic singer (11.367-9; esp. "μῦθον δ' ὡς ὅτ' ἀοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας", 368), hinting at a metanarrative reading.

[557] This is true even if the notion has become a very familiar one; cf. esp. Herodotus 1.32.7f; Torgovnick (1981) 7; Dunn (1996) 3ff; Herzog (1996) 327: "Wenn das Leben zwischen Kontingenz und Telos-Hermeneutik so buchstäblich sein eigenes Überleben ist, ist sein Telos, während man es lebt, Teloslosigkeit: das Aufhören"; Nibbrig (1990) 205: "...das Vollenden [braucht] den Standpunkt außerhalb, der ihm dann doch wieder fehlt, um fertig und ganz zu sein. Kurzum: das Lebensende als Meißel von Totalität ist ein Konstrukt und eine Funktion der Darstellung, die dabei an ihre eigenen Grenzen stößt." Indeed, in the *Iliad* Achilles is situated so that he can appreciate his own life, too, but this does not lead to comparisons, or explicit judgement, as here. Dunn (1996) 96 notes that tragedy too contrives ends to make room for an understanding that would be impossible if the real end were reached; while the same thought appears in a philosophical context e.g. in Aristotle *Eth.Nic.* 11100a10-01b9, as noted by Pelling (1997) 250.

[558] Note that judgement is expressed by an adjective; cf. below on the second νέκυια too.

his wife (11.442f; note "μηδ΄ οἱ μῦθον ἅπαντα πιφαυσκέμεν", 442a; also 455f), Agamemnon already anticipates a more successful closure to Odysseus' story (11.444-51). The anticipation of the outcome coupled with suspense, here resulting from a warning example, again illustrates the basic principle of the *Odyssey's* plot (cf. p.153).[559] The comparison between Achilles and Odysseus, touched on in Demodocus' first song, is developed next (11.467-540); here the emphasis shifts to the view of closure in the form of death as to be avoided. Achilles himself begins by pointing out the exceptional nature of Odysseus' feat of entering Hades while still alive (11.473-6); his amazed wonder can also be read in metapoetic terms as admiration for the conception and execution of the νέκυια itself (note "σχέτλιε, τίπτ᾽ ἔτι μεῖζον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μήσεαι ἔργον;", 11.474).[560] In response, Odysseus contrasts his continuing delays and suffering (11.478-82a; note "οὐ(δέ) πω", 481 twice; "αἰὲν ἔχω κακά", 482) with Achilles' successes both while alive and now after death (11.482b-6). But Achilles famously refutes this evaluation (11.488-91), implicitly judging Odysseus to be more successful in surviving still, a precondition of course of his continued appearance as a character in narrative.[561] Finally, the introduction of Aias, whom he had overcome in another trial with Athene's help, leading to his death (11.545-8), allows a third view of Odysseus' relative success, while Aias' refusal to listen to Odysseus' μῦθος offers the opportunity to close the episode of comparisons (11.561-4).[562] This part of the νέκυια, then, clearly illustrates the importance of closure, here in the form of the τέλος θανάτου, in enabling certain judgement. Odysseus' projected peaceful death means that for him, and his story, a

[559] Also characteristically for the *Odyssey*, Agamemnon wishes to discover the continuation of his narrative as embodied in his son, in default of a satisfactory closure of his own (11.457-61).

[560] This would answer the doubts voiced by Jones (1997a) 37 concerning the explicit display of competitiveness by the narrator; Martin (1989) 238 argues this for the *Iliad*: "The poet of the *Iliad*, as an enacter of a muthos, must by implication be a poet against others, out to obliterate their performances..." We have already mentioned the possible description of the Telemachy as a "μέγα ἔργον" (above on 4.663f); cf. (again in the comparative) the explicitly metatextual description of the second half of the *Aeneid* as maius opus (*Aen.* 7.45). Austin (1975) 52f draws attention to the use of the epithet πολυμήχαν΄ as as "flattering and astonished exclamation" used generally by characters in the Underworld, but also Circe and Eumaeus: "*Polymechanos* is no faded metaphor but one that proclaims that Odysseus is about to contrive, or has just contrived, some new stratagem bordering on the magical."

[561] For narrative as portraying survival cf. Pucci (1998e) 141f. Like Agamemnon, Achilles is shown to be extremely concerned with the story of his son as possibly providing a more satisfactory closure to his narrative than his own death (11.492f). Odysseus has a lengthy μῦθος to tell of Neoptolemus (11.505-37), which provides a happy sequel to the death Achilles resents (11.538-40); cf. Finley (1978) 124: "...; it [the encounter with Achilles] foreshadows the continuity of a son and the longer continuity of poetry." Achilles is also concerned with the story of his father (11.494-503), in continuation of the grief felt for leaving Peleus behind, which is already expressed at the close of the *Iliad*, and foreshadowing the parallel concern with Laertes at the end of the *Odyssey*; cf. below.

[562] The meeting with Heracles may be interpolated (11.565-627; 631); cf. Petzl (1969) 6-43 listing ancient opinions. Nevertheless, Heracles too stresses the magnitude of Odysseus' feat (11.617-26).

successful, satisfactory closure may be anticipated. On a metanarrative level, however, the emphasis is not so much on (the quality of) closure, but rather on Odysseus' continued survival which marks his avoidance of the τέλος θανάτου in literary terms too.

The νόστος

The device of the νέκυια does, however, leave the closure of Odysseus' μῦθος still significantly absent though anticipated. Like the other narratives concerning his story, which punctuate the poem's first half, Odysseus' own tale reflects the current narrative situation by itself remaining without proper closure. Instead, he ends it when he reaches the beginning of the whole episode, his stay with Calypso (12.447-50a). He refers the Phaeacians (and by extension the external audience) back to his first, still anonymous narrative to Alcinous and Arete, which told of his release from the goddess and his encounter with Nausicaa (12.450b-3; cf. 7.241-97).[563] In terms of Odysseus' μῦθος, the final move to Ithaca is now imperative in order to progress further towards closure. Alcinous accordingly again draws attention to the fact that Scheria represents a turning point for this narrative: "..., ἐπεὶ ἵκευ ἐμὸν ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ,/ ὑψερεφές, τῷ σ΄ οὔ τι παλιμπλαγχθέντα γ΄ ὀΐω/ ἂψ ἀπονοστήσειν, εἰ καὶ μάλα πολλὰ πέπονθας" (13.4-6).[564] This remark recalls Poseidon's words to that effect when Scheria first came into sight (5.282-9). Odysseus' wanderings described in the first part of the proem, which is also recalled through "παλιμπλαγχθέντα" and "μάλα πολλὰ πέπονθας", have finally come to an end. The proem's first part is turned around too in the description of the sleeping Odysseus on their magical ship: ὃς πρὶν μὲν μάλα πολλὰ πάθ᾽ ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμὸν/ .../ δὴ τότε γ᾽ ἀτρέμας εὖδε,

---

[563] Bergren (1983) 62f n.13 notes concerning 12.450-3 that "the end curves back to the three 'same but different' points at which the *Odyssey* as the story of Odysseus' *nostos* begins" (i.e. bk.1, 5 and 7.240-97). The fact that this ending only returns us to a beginning reminds us that the narrative of the past has been a delay of future action; cf. Slatkin (1996) 230f. But the fact that it closes in on itself at least saves Odysseus from permanent delay through potentially endless epic narrative as threatened by the Sirens (12.189-91); cf. Finley (1978) 131; Ford (1992) 84: "...the poem they present is open-ended, and because such a poem never comes to an end, it threatens any listener". Pucci (1998a) 8 n.13 mentions the (Greek) etymology of Σειρήν from σειρά (rope, "tie up") and argues, 5f, that listening to the Sirens' song would mean Odysseus' return to the narrative of the *Iliad*, rather than becoming the character of the *Odyssey*; in an Iliadic narrative death as an end would make sense, but unlike Achilles Odysseus passes by death (as just illustrated in the νέκυια). Note too that the notion of death as the consequence of perpetual narrative is quite opposite to that which drives the narrative of *One thousand and One Nights*, cf. e.g. Peradotto (1990) 151 on an adaptation by Borges.

[564] The meaning of "ἀπονοστήσειν" is not quite clear (either "return home" or "off course from home"), depending also on the position of the negative with either the participle or infinitive. The former meaning would fit the second passage in which ἂψ ἀπονοστήσειν is used (24.471 of Eupeithes; cf. below). A stronger parallel to *Iliad* 1.59f may also be noted, where Achilles sarcastically pictures the unsuccessful νόστος of the Achaeans due to the war and plague ("Ἀτρεΐδη, νῦν ἄμμε παλιμπλαγχθέντας ὀΐω/ ἂψ ἀπονοστήσειν, εἴ κεν θάνατόν γε φύγοιμεν,/ ..."); as mentioned, Achilles will not achieve that return but die, unlike Odysseus.

λελασμένος ὅσσ᾽ ἐπεπόνθει (13.90-3). Not only is the emphasis on πρὶν to indicate that his wanderings are now truly past, but his sleep means that those sufferings can now be forgotten (note the pluperfect in ἐπεπόνθει, 13.93).[565] Odysseus' sleep here provides a frame for the whole pivotal Phaeacian episode together with that in book 5 (5.491b-3); but the fact that a major end has been reached in the narrative is now marked by the likening of sleep to death itself (13.79f).[566]

The Question of Justice: II

With the final achievement of Odysseus' νόστος (though itself only providing partial closure) through the agency of Athene (13.113-24; note διὰ μεγάθυμον Ἀθήνην, 121b=8.520b), attention turns to Poseidon as it had at its beginning. Significantly, he does not forget the past like Odysseus but remembers his own concerns clearly: discussing the situation with Zeus, he repeats his recognition of this end as already approved by Zeus and therefore not to be changed (13.131-3; note "πρῶτον", 133; cf. 5.282-7). His statement can also be read as an acceptance of the *Odyssey*'s plot itself and its predetermination of closure. Instead, Poseidon is concerned with the fact that it was his own mortal offspring who conveyed Odysseus home (13.129f; 134-5a) and that they have given him gifts, more than he had ever won at Troy (13.135b-8; note the agreement with Zeus' anticipation in 5.38-40). These facts could perhaps be regarded as going beyond Odysseus' ordained νόστος and thus as falling under Zeus' definition of acts "ὑπὲρ μόρον" which may be punished accordingly (cf. 1.34f).[567] Indeed, Zeus too focuses on the responsibility of the Phaeacians, offering Poseidon full control over any τίσις he might wish to exact (13.143-5; esp. "σοὶ δ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐξοπίσω τίσις αἰεί", 144). As in the many scenes with Athene, Zeus' role appears to be that of an arbiter to whom the other gods refer whenever they wish to intervene decisively in a 'kernel' situation, rather than an actor himself. So Poseidon seeks Zeus' agreement to his twin ends of destroying the returning Phaeacian ship and

---

[565] Cf. Tracy (1990) 81; Rutherford (1985) 138 on 13.89-92 as a "self-conscious reference by the poet to a turning-point in his narrative". Odysseus too recognizes that a closure of sorts has been reached, when he faces the Phaeacians on the day after his narration: "πέμπετέ με...·/ ἤδη γὰρ τετέλεσται, ἅ μοι φίλος ἤθελε θυμός,/ πομπὴ καὶ φίλα δῶρα" (13.39-42a; note the perfect in τετέλεσται).

[566] This sleep has at times been seen as evidence that the Phaeacians represent the ferrymen of the dead; cf. Garvie (1994) 21 with n.67, 68, 23f. Together with the imagery of rebirth at the beginning of the episode the stay on Scheria then would (imaginatively) encompass a whole life span.

[567] As had already been noted on the first divine council and the scene in bk.5, the *Odyssey* portrays a divine community where (at least direct) confrontation about ends is avoided, in contrast to the *Iliad*. Thus Zeus is happy to simply reassure Poseidon of his status among the gods (13.140-2), although the narrative had just reminded us of Athene's agency with reference to the gifts as much as the νόστος (13.120f; cf. 11.335-41).

concealing the city with a mountain notwithstanding this blanket licence (13.147-52). It may be characteristic too that Zeus seems slightly to modify Poseidon's plan in his approval, adjusting it to fit better into a system of justice by turning the first end into a warning sign for the Phaeacians, rather than simply a meaningless display of destruction (13.154-8a).[568]

This warning is in fact understood by Alcinous who recalls Nausithous' prophecy (13.172-8), modifying his earlier agnosticism concerning its fulfilment into recognition of present closure ("τὰ δὲ δὴ νῦν πάντα τελεῖται.", 13.178b; cf. 8.570f above). He immediately resolves to heed the prophecy and to end the habit of offering πομπή ("πομπῆς μὲν παύσασθε βροτῶν", 13.180a). In addition, the Phaeacians try to avert the second end, the concealment of their city, with sacrifices and prayers to Poseidon (13.181b-7b). The god's response is not explicitly narrated, and parallels have been drawn to Teiresias' prediction of the conciliation of Poseidon as part of Odysseus' μῦθος. Peradotto (1990), for example, argues that the narrative remains silent about the outcome of both attempts to pacify Poseidon, which therefore reinforce each other (75-82).[569] Both Zeus and Poseidon, however, explicitly discuss and agree an end to Odysseus' persecution (cf. 1.77b-9; 13.132bf; also 24.482-6). And while there has been no such anticipation of Poseidon's reaction in the Phaeacian case, he is said to have left Scheria even before their sacrifices (ὁ δὲ νόσφι βεβήκει, 13.164; note the pluperfect). This suggests at least the possibility of a reprieve, and may have prompted Aristophanes' reading which transforms the possibility into certainty in Zeus' speech ("μὴ δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι", 13.158 instead of "μέγα δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι").[570] In my view, the situation of the Phaeacians here is better compared to the closure of the *Odyssey's* narrative as a whole, which ends on another instance of τίσις endorsed by Zeus, though Poseidon plays no role in it.[571] Closure in this episode is also marked insofar as the end of the Phaeacians' involvement with

[568] Cf. Benardete (1997) 105, though in general he sees the gods as ruling through terror and threats, and even goes on to see the suitors killed unjustly; on the whole debate about justice cf. below p.235.

[569] Cf. Bergren (1983) 59f: "Neither is confirmed in the text." However, Erbse (1972) 146f holds that the second part of the prophecy will be fulfilled as certainly as the first, while Reinhardt (1996) 131 sees the end left in balance in the manner of the *Iliad*.

[570] Cf. ΣH v.152: "ἡ γὰρ τῶν Φαιάκων σώζεται φα*νερῶς."

[571] It may be relevant that the conciliation on Ithaca, though between humans, is also only sketched broadly. For punishment as closural cf. above on the proem; also Heubeck (1989a) 11.

other people represents the end of the mythical world of Odysseus' adventures.[572] This is vividly pictured in the vignette of their ship frozen into its own stony likeness (13.154-69), recalling the closural (and possibly metapoetic) aspect of the tale of Niobe turned into stone as recounted by Achilles (*Il*. 24.602-17).[573]

Summary: λύσις, πεῖραρ, πομπή, νόστος

As we have seen, the *Odyssey* is a complex poem which is concerned with closure right from the beginning. A deceptively simple picture of closure in terms of the plot is complicated by the fact that closure on a metanarrative, and arguably intertextual, level pervades the narrative through the repeated comparison with the ends of other characters and their narratives.

To recapitulate, the poem begins by presenting a detailed picture of the situation on Ithaca, the repetitive yet steadily worsening confrontation of the opposed ends of Odysseus' household (in particular his son) and of his wife's suitors, which is generated by his absence, or rather the absence of certain closure to his μῦθος. Indeed, the fact that in these scenes Odysseus' name is often withheld illustrates the threat posed to his narrative by the lack of information about him and his νόστος. This absence leaves room for the suitors to assert Odysseus' death and later even to plot that of his son who now acts as his double, rather than see their avowed end frustrated. However, the narrative always already provides (re)assurance about the eventual outcome, in particular through anticipations by the gods (in the form of advance summaries of the plot to each other, of omens or warnings to the humans), who resemble the narrator in their knowledge of future closure.[574] Due to this very awareness of closure there is general agreement about ends on Olympus; it has been noted that Zeus usually appears as the ultimate arbiter while other gods, in particular Athene with regard to Odysseus and his family, act out the decisions agreed and in fact play a crucial role in 'kernel' situations. Telemachus' journey to discover the

[572] Cf. Tracy (1990) 149; Finley (1978) 91: "Like the destruction of the Achaean wall, the Phaeacian ship turned to stone closes an age."

[573] Cf. Peradotto (1990) 167f. Similarly, the use of καλύπτω in this scene, whether actually realized or not, may recall its use concerning the burial of Hector (*Il*. 24.796).

[574] Cf. Beye (1993) 112, contrasting the *Iliad*; on the gods generally de Jong (1997) 315: "The focalization of the gods often has a structuring function. Their plans, presented in speeches, and intentions, presented in embedded focalization (final clauses), help the narratees to grasp the structure of the story." (The summaries can look back- as well as forwards.) Griffin (1977) 48 interestingly sees the use of many of such summaries (oracles, prophecies) as characteristic of the epic cycle, which gives it a strongly deterministic character. The same could be said of the *Odyssey*.

whole of his father's μῦθος is one such event, both conceived and (to be) brought to its conclusion by Athene. While the search for the absent end is the major theme of the Telemachy in terms of the plot, it also begins to prove the *Odyssey's* complexity by embarking on the subject of (favourably) comparing the narrative of its protagonist, and in particular its closure to come, with those of others and by endowing narratives of the past with intimations of the future, which will disclose their full meaning only in retrospect.

The final introduction of Odysseus himself (following these stories about him which combine past, present and future) appropriately begins by staging the conflict between his end (the νόστος) and that of Poseidon (its delay), at a moment which is identified as leading up to a crucial turning point in the narrative. Throughout the Phaeacian episode Odysseus is shown to overcome further trials and to move closer towards his long-delayed return, relying on the resources of his own character together with Athene's support.[575] The episode as a whole thus embodies an intermediate stage in Odysseus' μῦθος as is illustrated in its curious combination of beginnings and endings in terms of theme. That it already represents the beginning of the *Odyssey's* second part is shown in Odysseus' own narrative, which finally provides the answer to the question raised about his identity and μῦθος in the proem and opens the way for future recognitions, when he will actively reassert that identity. In its νέκυια, Teiresias' prophecy of events beyond the *Odyssey's* own temporal scope, ending with the protagonist's peaceful death, already offers reassurance about the aftermath similar to that provided especially in the final part of the *Iliad* concerning Achilles' death and Troy's fall.[576] Odysseus' face to face meeting with other epic characters in Hades develops the idea of their comparison, both with regard to the manner of their deaths as an indicator of the (un)satisfactory nature of their respective narratives' closure (especially regarding Agamemnon) and with regard to Odysseus' avoidance of the τέλος θανάτου as an indicator of his success as a character in narrative.

However, if Odysseus' inset narrative of who he is represents the beginning of the second part of the *Odyssey* itself, the closure of the Phaeacian episode - following the achievement of the νόστος - on the enactment of divine τίσις also represents the end of its first part; Poseidon's punishment of the Phaeacians for offering Odysseus πομπή and gifts mirrors the closure on the τίσις of the suitors and their supporters at the end of the second half. The beginning of the first

[575] This development has been suggested to be signalled especially through the behaviour of Arete as a representative of the goddess among the Phaeacians.

[576] Cf. Hellwig (1964) 18f n.29.

and the end of the second part of the narrative are thus dovetailed and prevent it from falling apart into two wholly separate sections.[577] The continuity of the narrative may also be expressed by considering the ends of the protagonist as an indication of the gradual progression to closure: first, he needs to be released from his concealment by Calypso (λύσις); second, he needs to reach the turning point embodied in Scheria (πεῖραρ); third, he needs to win the Phaeacians' support (πομπή), by means of which he is able to achieve the over-all goal of the νόστος.[578] This leaves only his reestablishment on Ithaca and the τίσις on the suitors to be fulfilled in the second part of the narrative. In contrast to the succession of ends in the *Iliad*, which arise largely from a number of divergent ends pursued by gods and mortals, often resulting in unexpected consequences, the *Odyssey* organizes the ends of its protagonist in an orderly, teleological way in which one needs to follow the other, and in all cases a successful conclusion is achieved with the help of Athene.

3.2 Recognizing Odysseus, Recognizing Closure

3.2.1 Disguise

The second part of the *Odyssey* begins in a way which bears some resemblance to earlier beginnings as its protagonist is left on a beach, soon to be approached by a female whose support he needs (cf. book 5 on Ogygia; book 6 on Scheria).[579] At the same time, the scene also returns to the introductory books on Ithaca in setting and themes. Yet these initial parallels in situation are gradually developed so as to bring out the progress that has been and still is being made towards closure.

Another Critical Moment

Since Odysseus' actions will be of crucial importance to a successful outcome, now that his νόστος is achieved, it is not surprising that Athene too will again have a major share in shaping the course of the narrative. Significantly, it is only at this point, on Ithaca itself, that she

[577] The division into two parts is a critical commonplace; cf. Taplin (1992) 19; Rutherford (1992) 8f; D. Fowler (1989) 95.

[578] Cf. Hellwig (1964) 21f; Andreae/Flashar (1977) 247-51 on the succession of settings as important for narrative structure.

[579] This is again acknowledged in the text as Odysseus repeats his anxious words about the island from bk.6 (13.200-2=6.119-21); cf. Fenik (1974) 55, 153; Rutherford (1985) 141. His position on the shore is in itself a liminal one, a fact which we have seen exploited in *Iliad* 24.11b-13 for Achilles.

finally appears to Odysseus openly.[580] Before she reveals her identity, however, she does disguise both herself and the island to Odysseus; a scene whose motivation has often been questioned.[581] But the passage as a whole may express Athene's wish simultaneously to safeguard Odysseus by concealing him and to render the island unfamiliar in order to test his reaction (13.189b-91a); it is then followed by a dialogue to plot his μῦθος so that he can (now disguised to everyone on Ithaca) complete its closure (13.191b-3).[582] Her action can be interpreted as another πεῖρα of Odysseus to test that he possesses the qualities necessary to reach closure. This test is both comparable to and contrasting with that imposed on him by Poseidon earlier (cf. above); again, the encounter with a god sets the scene for the whole half of the poem.[583] Yet now Odysseus is tested by a god whose end is in agreement with his, in order to confirm that he will able to reach the end of the τίσις on the suitors in the way she intends.[584]

If we briefly look at Athene's πεῖρα, Odysseus' cautious response to her verbal identification of Ithaca with the first of his lying tales already proves his ability to play his role in the μῦθος to follow successfully (13.237-86).[585] That his response is the desired one is confirmed by the goddess's affectionate reaction (13.287-8a) and her assumption of her own

---

[580] Cf. Garvie (1994) 161f *ad* 6.325-7.

[581] Cf. e.g. Fenik (1974) 36f with n.42; he also notes, 37, that Athene's as well as Odysseus' penchant for testing make for a more interesting narrative. Cf. N. Richardson (1983) 231f on this scene, quoting Eustathius 1733, 3ff.

[582] On the difficulty depending on the active or passive force of ἄγνωστον (13.191) and the choice between transmitted αὐτόν and αὐτῷ (13.190) conjectured by Aristophanes cf. Fenik (1974) 36; also Goldhill (1991) 6f with n.11.

[583] For bk.13 as offering a second proem cf. Pucci (1982) 44; also Austin (1975) 66, who notes that the morning star in 13.93f explicitly heralds dawn. The opening of a second half is made explicit in *Aeneid* 7.37-45a.

[584] Goldhill (1991) 8f sees the scene as paradigmatic of "the complex and ironic treatment of recognition as a mutual *process*"; we will see this process repeatedly, and recognition provides another crucial aspect of closure as a counterpart to the τίσις. The meeting of a likeminded man and woman has its own closural aspect, which is still refused for himself by Odysseus in 6.182-5, but cf. below on bk.23; Austin (1975) 203: "The *homophrosyne* that has made Athena stick by Odysseus through thick and thin is the same that is drawing him back to his family in Ithaka."

[585] Again there is an echo of the *Odyssey's* own proem as Athene introduces Odysseus' home in the form of a riddle (note "οὐδέ τι λίην/ οὕτω νώνυμός ἐστιν· ἴσασι δέ μιν μάλα πολλοί...", 13.238bf), rather like that of his own character in the proem, as it builds up to conclude on the name - indeed that of Ithaca is all but linked with that of Odysseus in that its fame is said to have reached Troy (13.248f). - It is even possible to argue that he sees through (but respects) Athene's disguise: even if the text leaves it open whether the focalization of 13.226 and 251f is that of the narrator or Odysseus, his answer (13.322f) to her assertion of her incognito (13.299f) again shows that he already recognized her on Scheria too. Odysseus here displays the characteristics hinted at in particular in the tales by Menelaus and Helen.

identity (288bf), both also expressed in words in her speech (13.291-310). Looking back, she confirms her role in helping Odysseus on Scheria (13.302), but then turns her attention to the future with a brief anticipatory summary (13.303-10). She advises him that patience and concealment are still imperative and that further suffering and delay are to be expected (13.306-10; esp. "πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλά", 310a). Such an explicit discussion of the development of the plot seems well-suited to the beginning of the second part of the narrative.[586] Odysseus likewise looks both back and forward, giving a synopsis of Athene's involvement in his μῦθος from Troy to the present moment, as he asks to be reassured about Ithaca's identity (13.313-28). His repeated expression of distrust even with regard to herself (13.324b-8) further strengthens Athene's approbation (13.330-2) and leads her to anticipate a πεῖρα also of Penelope, portraying it as a natural consequence of his own cautious nature (13.333-8; note "σοὶ δ᾽ οὔ πω φίλον ἐστὶ δαήμεναι οὐδὲ πυθέσθαι,/ πρίν γ᾽ ἔτι σῆς ἀλόχου πειρήσεαι", 335f; cf. 19.45).[587] At the end of his πεῖρα, Odysseus' recognition of the goddess is finally supplemented by that of Ithaca, as she clears away the mist (13.344-54).

Getting Started

In the final part of the scene, Athene and Odysseus turn their thoughts exclusively to the future and the eventual closure of the τίσις is again anticipated (13.372-96). Odysseus closes by praying that Athene may help him to a λύσις comparable to the one which they achieved together when Troy fell (13.389-91; note "Τροίης λύομεν λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα", 388).[588] This closural λύσις readily lends itself to a metapoetic reading, especially if it is remembered that the fall of the city through Athene's and Odysseus' cooperation closed Demodocus' last song on the Trojan war (8.517-20). Athene reassures Odysseus of her support (13.393-6) and finally returns to the concealment of his own identity (13.397-403). Again, the fact that he is now voluntarily

[586] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 4f: "The pivotal episode of Odysseus' encounter with Athena is a highpoint of the *Odyssey*'s self-consciousness as a narrative."

[587] Cf. on this apparently illogical plan Murnaghan (1987) 118-23, who argues that it illustrates the threat of a wife who might take a new husband, and 125f compares Agamemnon's advice in bk.11 as Odysseus himself does in 13.383-5. The πεῖρα theme is of course endemic in the poem; indeed, Penelope herself will eventually test Odysseus who in turn takes on Athene's role here in bk.19 and 23. There is no such 'prolepsis' of the eventual πεῖρα of Laertes, though a meeting with him is anticipated in book 16.

[588] Pucci (1998b) 17f sees this metaphor as the offensive picture of a rape; however, in the context of the *Odyssey* it rather appears as a coded foreshadowing of the λύσις of this narrative: since λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα otherwise only serves to describe Penelope's veil (cf. 1.334; 16.416; 18.210; 21.65), closure will come in the form of their reunion with Athene's help instead of the fall of a city. Note too that this closure was denied to the partnership of Achilles and Patroclus (*Il*. 16.97-100).

concealed by her both recalls and contrasts with those earlier occasions when his concealment had been due to Poseidon, such as his stay with "Calypso", the threat of being drowned (cf. e.g. 5.435b), and the slow progress towards recognition on Scheria. Odysseus is then sent to the faithful swineherd to find out more about the situation on the island (13.404-11), while Athene ensures Telemachus' νόστος now that Odysseus' has been secured (13.412-15).[589] Odysseus' stay with Eumaeus in fact closely resembles that of Athene with Telemachus, which had served as a first introduction to the consequences of Odysseus' continued absence; the approval of his character by Athene thus takes on added significance as he takes over her role.[590] As Odysseus stresses the importance of trust and proceeds to predict his own return in terms as strong as possible (14.149-64), he resembles Athene more than ever, in his disguised identity, his sure foreknowledge of the future and his use of it to encourage others (note "ἦ μέν τοι τάδε πάντα τελείεται ὡς ἀγορεύω", 14.160; cf. e.g. 1.194-205). However, there is now an added sense of irony since Odysseus speaks about himself and since this future is already partly present, insofar as he has already returned.[591]

Returning Telemachus

Meanwhile Athene ensures that Telemachus knows that a turning point has quite literally been reached (15.10; note "οὐκέτι... τῆλ᾽ ἀλάλησαι"). She introduces a greater sense of urgency, even suspense, into his return by claiming that Penelope is being pushed towards a remarriage (15.16-23), comparable to her earlier attempt to render Odysseus cautious of his wife.[592] She also gives advice about the course he is to take, which again functions as an advance summary of the action (15.27-42). Odysseus' return is anticipated too, as Telemachus' hypothetical remark

---

[589] Athene's explanations of the purpose of Telemachus' journey shift from concerns of the plot (the search for Odysseus' μῦθος; 13.415) to metanarrative concerns (Telemachus' own κλέος; 13.422f).

[590] On Odysseus' disguise as enabling him to judge others cf. Reinhardt (1997) 242f; Klingner (1997) 203 n.8; Rutherford (1986) 159; on the divine parallel generally Kearns (1982), e.g. 5; Murnaghan (1987) 11ff with n.16. At the end of the scene, Odysseus turns to the first πεῖρα of his own, which takes the form of testing Eumaeus to discover whether he will provide a coat for his guest for the night (14.459-61; note συβώτεω πειρητίζων, 459b); Eumaeus passes this test (14.507-22), as he will the second one (15.304-6; note συβώτεω πειρητίζων, 304b=14.459b), which tests him not only about the care he takes of his guest, but also about the suitors' opposite behaviour, their ὕβρις (cf. e.g. 15.327-9).

[591] On the irony of the situation and Eumaeus' responses cf. Fenik (1974) 170; Goldhill (1991) 39. Murnaghan (1987) 167 explains: "Those characters are unable to make the temporal transition that would reveal that what is ascribed to past or future is actually occurring in the present."

[592] Hoekstra (1989) 232 *ad* 15.16-17 regards this as (quite likely) a white lie; yet the move towards a remarriage will happen, although Athene does not tell Telemachus (or the audience) yet that it will be sanctioned by himself and his father, secretly advancing their own end.

to that effect when departing is confirmed by an omen (15.156b-65). It is interpreted by Helen, who corrects her prediction of Odysseus' future νόστος and τίσις (the briefest of summaries of the narrative as a whole) to say that he may indeed already be present on Ithaca (15.175-8; note "ἠὲ καὶ ἤδη/ οἴκοι", cf. 16.168; 17.157 below). The end of the Telemachy is speeded up when Telemachus himself asks Peisistratus to help him close his μῦθος (15.195-8; note "τελέσειας/ μῦθον ἐμόν", 195bf), avoiding another lengthy meeting with Nestor (15.199-201; note his conclusion "ἐμὲ δὲ χρεὼ θᾶσσον ἱκέσθαι", 201b).[593] While Athene similarly looks to hasten the conclusion of his journey (15.292-4; note ὄφρα τάχιστα/ νηῦς ἀνύσειε, 293bf), the closure of the Telemachy is still left in some suspense as Telemachus wonders whether the suitors' plot against him will succeed or not (15.300). For Odysseus, however, the return of his son as anticipated by Eumaeus holds the promise that the wandering and suffering anticipated by Poseidon have now actually come to an end ("μ΄ ἔπαυσας ἄλης καὶ ὀϊζύος αἰνῆς", 15.342b; cf. 5.288f). When Telemachus in fact reaches Ithaca, the seer Theoclymenus (who had just been introduced) importantly interprets another omen, now sent in response to Telemachus' wondering question whether the suitors will reach death rather than their end of marriage (15.523f; note "εἴ κέ σφι [Ζεὺς] πρὸ γάμοιο τελευτήσει κακὸν ἦμαρ", 524). He once more provides assurance that Odysseus' family will retain its position on Ithaca (15.533f), responding to a fear just expressed by Eumaeus (14.181f) as well as anticipating the narrative's eventual closure (note "ἀλλ᾽ ὑμεῖς καρτεροὶ αἰεί", 15.534b; cf. 24.483b below).

Recognizing the Father

The reunion of actual father and son is both delayed by and prefigured in that of Eumaeus and Telemachus (16.11-29).[594] Having been reassured that the state of the μῦθος regarding the suitors and Penelope is the same as it was when he left (16.30-9), Telemachus feels he cannot offer Eumaeus' guest the appropriate reception (16.69-89; cf. Theoclymenus' situation 15.508-24; 540-6). He clearly portrays the situation as it had been at the beginning of the narrative, with himself unable to control or direct it in the way he would wish (note e.g. "αὐτὸς μὲν νέος εἰμὶ καὶ οὔ πω χερσὶ πέποιθα/ ἄνδρ᾽ ἀπαμύνασθαι", 16.71f), producing a strong irony just before the

[593] Instead of meeting Nestor, Telemachus encounters the exiled seer Theoclymenus (15.222b-5a; 256-8), who anticipates the figure of the disguised Odysseus in applying to Telemachus for protection after his wanderings (15.272-8). Crucially, too, Theoclymenus is able to speak about the future rather than the past as Nestor had.

[594] This fact is advertised in a simile (16.17-19). Its mention of a reunion of father and son after ten years could be regarded as a hint at the impossible reunion of Achilles and Peleus, which is replaced by that of Achilles and Priam in *Iliad* 24; cf. on Laertes in bk.24 below.

revelation of his father's return. Even in disguise Odysseus begins to point out the need for closure with regard to the endless wrongdoings of the suitors, even at the risk of death (16.105-11; note "αἰὲν ἀεικέα ἔργ'", 107; "ἀτέλεστον", 111). He also already strongly hints at that eventual closure by equating a rejuvenation of his own person with the possible return of a child of Odysseus or Odysseus himself. This would provide sufficient encouragement for the punishment of the suitors (16.99-104; note "ἔτι γὰρ καὶ ἐλπίδος αἶσα", 101b). While Telemachus remains despondent, his insistence on secrecy when sending out Eumaeus to inform Penelope of his νόστος renders him once more a mirror image of his father (16.114-34; cf. 151b-3a; note κρύβδην, 153a).[595]

It is at this point that Athene intervenes to tell Odysseus that he ought to open the μῦθος to his son ("ἤδη νῦν σῷ παιδὶ ἔπος φάο μηδ' ἐπίκευθε", 16.168) in order to progress towards closure; a progress which is then figured in literal terms in their journey towards the town (16.169f). Underlining the parallel to Athene's initial visit, the now undisguised Odysseus is first believed to be a god by Telemachus (16.178b-200; note οὔ πω, 192 once again).[596] He is, however, convinced by Odysseus' words revealing his unique identity through his characteristic suffering and history ("οὐ μὲν γάρ τοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ' Ὀδυσσεύς,/ ἀλλ' ὅδ' ἐγὼ τοιόσδε, παθὼν κακά, πολλὰ δ' ἀληθείς,/ ἦλυθον εἰκοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν", 16.204-6) as well as Athene's vital support (16.207-12).[597] Telemachus' enquiry concerning the manner of Odysseus' νόστος prompts another summary of events, moving from the Phaeacians' πομπή to the present (16.227-34). This present is now clearly focused (by Athene) on the future end of the τίσις ("νῦν αὖ δεῦρ' ἱκόμην ὑποθημοσύνῃσιν Ἀθήνης,/ ὄφρα κε δυσμενέεσσι φόνου πέρι βουλεύσωμεν", 16.233f) and Odysseus suggests they develop a more detailed plan (16.235-9). The question of how one (or two) will be able to achieve this end had already been hinted at in the introductory books 1 and 2 (e.g. by Telemachus to the assembly, 2.40-79); it begins to assume

---

[595] Note that a visit to Laertes now would be a digression (16.142-53); cf. below on bk.24 for a longer discussion of the present passage. Goldhill (1991) 9 argues that the fact that Odysseus is first recognized as a father stresses the importance of that role in the patrilinear οἶκος.

[596] Benardete (1997) 136f points out the same metrical positioning of θεός and τεός in 16.187 and 188, as well as the possibility of reading "οὔ τίς τοι θεός εἰμι" as a reference to Odysseus' notorious pun ("I am, you know, the god Noone"), previously advanced by Goldhill (1991) 10.

[597] This scene notably provides the singular example of a son "recognizing" his father which Telemachus had earlier described as lacking precedent: "οὐ γάρ πώ τις ἐὸν γόνον αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω" (1.216). The span of twenty years is regularly mentioned at the moment of recognition (e.g. 2.175; 6.170; 16.206; 17.327; 19.222, 484; 21.208; 23.102, 170; 24.322). Such expressions of time are common in oracles and similar predictions; cf. the ten years after which Troy is to fall (e.g. 5.107; 14.241; *Il.* 2.329; 12.15).

real importance now. The fact that Telemachus again voices his concern (16.241-57; note "ἀλλὰ λίην μέγα εἶπες· ἄγη μ᾽ ἔχει", 243a) already prepares for the admiration later not only for Odysseus' skill, but also for that displayed in the conception and execution of the *Odyssey's* narrative itself. Odysseus' reassurance concentrates on the divine support he expects, though he retains the option of looking for additional human help (16.260f). He then offers a summary preview of how he hopes to proceed: first, to ensure that both he and Telemachus reach the house and test whether the suitors persist in their own ends (16.270-80); second, to envisage a way in which to monopolize their access to weapons (16.281-98);[598] third, to impress on his son the importance of keeping his own identity concealed (16.299-307).

Encountering the Suitors

The suitors now reappear, as they all realize that the Telemachy has reached a successful end (16.324-57; note "ὦ φίλοι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ὑπερφιάλως τετέλεσται/ Τηλεμάχῳ ὁδὸς ἥδε· φάμεν δέ οἱ οὐ τελέεσθαι", 346f). Antinous even recognizes that this λύσις has been brought about by the gods ("ὢ πόποι, ὡς τόνδ᾽ ἄνδρα θεοὶ κακότητος ἔλυσαν", 16.364), yet he makes it clear that Telemachus' death is still necessary for their end: "οὐ γὰρ ὀΐω/ τούτου γε ζώοντος ἀνύσσεσθαι τάδε ἔργα" (16.372bf). The course of the narrative remains in suspense as Amphinomus responds with a (provisional) disapproval of Telemachus' death (16.400f) and (decisive) reference to the will of the gods (16.402-5). Telemachus' security is further, if precariously, increased by his mother's intervention (presumably prompted by Athene, 16.409; cf. p.147). Her appeal to Antinous in particular to stop dishonouring Odysseus, wooing her and attempting to kill their son (16.418-33; note "ἀλλά σε παύσασθαι κέλομαι", 433a) also shows the duplicity of the suitors, as Eurymachus now ostensibly adapts his ends, protesting he would guard rather than murder Telemachus (16.434-48). In preparation for Odysseus' own return, Penelope also questions Telemachus for information about Odysseus' νόστος (17.104b-47).[599] His account is supplemented by Theoclymenus, who as a seer offers certainty about both the

[598] The resemblance of "ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ᾽ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσιν" (16.281=299) to the expression ἔνθ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐνόησε θεά, γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη· (cf. p.147), together with the explicit mention of Athene in 16.282 may show her continuing influence behind the scenes, as well as Odysseus' similarity to her. The fact that there remains a degree of vagueness about what is going to happen at the end of the dialogue has prompted critics to posit a problem, in particular since not all the details suggested here are realized in this form in bk.19 and 22. Yet such a degree of narrative openness is only reasonable from a narrative point of view to keep up suspense. Cf. also below p.185 on analysts' problems with Penelope's actions and role.

[599] Her first enquiry after the result of his journey (17.44) is only met by a request to pray to Zeus for the τίσις (17.48-51); Telemachus' curtness is explained by Rutherford (1985) 147 n.21 as the result of Athene's misleading statement in 15.7-42.

present and future of the μῦθος (17.153f). He holds that Odysseus has in fact returned ("ὡς ἦ τοι Ὀδυσεὺς ἤδη ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ", 17.157) and that he is planning to act against the suitors ("μνηστῆρσι κακὸν πάντεσσι φυτεύει", 17.159b).

Indeed, Odysseus now sets out into town with Eumaeus (17.182bff); the delay effected by their meeting with the goatherd Melanthius (17.212-57) once more sets one end against the other (cf. 17.243-6a with 251-3). The conflict between two clearly separated parties familiar from the introductory books is now extended to the retainers (cf. also below on Irus).[600] Preparing to enter his own house now crowded by the suitors, Odysseus sees what is to follow as a continuation of the trouble he has already experienced in other contexts: "τολμήεις μοι θυμός, ἐπεὶ κακὰ πολλὰ πέπονθα/ κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ· μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω" (17.284f). This statement takes up Athene's warning at the beginning of the νόστος episode (13.310-16), at the same time as recalling his earlier acceptance of restarting his narrative ("ἤδη γὰρ μάλα πολλὰ πάθον καὶ πολλὰ μόγησα/ κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ· μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω", 5.223f). Another similarly pivotal moment, Odysseus' recrossing of his own threshold, is especially marked by a delay and the meeting with his old dog.[601] Argus not only provides the recognition of Odysseus which confirms the return of the rightful master without jeopardizing his disguise, but in his sorry state he also offers a telling sign of his absence, similar to that displayed by Laertes elsewhere (17.312-21).[602] The fact that Odysseus' entry into his house is not yet complete is then conveyed by his explicit positioning just on the threshold (17.339-41). The threshold itself is briefly but significantly described in these verses; the emphasis on the skill of its builder in particular could be read as a metanarrative indication of the narrator's skill in placing the protagonist on the verge of his completed νόστος in such a literally liminal position.[603]

---

[600] Cf. e.g. Russo (1992a) 27f *ad* 17.212, mentioning both parallel and opposed pairings. The family of Melanthius includes members both supporting Odysseus and the suitors; it will remain important up to bk.24.

[601] Cf. Goldhill (1991) 12 on more instances of "deferral and hesitation at the point of entrance". The "progression of thresholds" has been discussed by Segal (1994) 79-82; based on this, Russo (1992a) 3f and 48f *ad* 17.33 notes the symbolic importance of Odysseus' literally liminal position on the threshold throughout the following scenes; cf. below. Austin (1975) 170 notes the resemblance of 341=5.245≈23.197=21.44: "Isolated objects rather than the whole palace are singled out for their sturdy construction - when Odysseus leans against that carefully finished cypress column, the description signals that the carpenter has returned."

[602] Peradotto (1990) 111-13 comes close to voicing this conclusion. Cf. Austin (1975) 168f, who notes the difference in the description of this approach to a building from others, e.g. the presence of the dung-heap.

[603] Cf. Austin (1975) 177 on Fränkel (1925): "He is a scholar who sees both the emphasis on the creative process behind the various kinds of *techne* and the direct link between the *techne* of building or weaving and that of the *rhapsodos*, who is 'der Meister des Handwerks' (p.5)." Cf. also below on 21.44 (=17.341).

Testing the Suitors

Although Odysseus still experiences suffering, it now forms part of another πεῖρα he himself sets, as Athene impells him to discover which of the suitors are just (17.360b-3). The result of this test will remain without any consequences for the action, since its closure - here the death of all the suitors - is already determined: ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὥς τιν᾽ ἔμελλ᾽ ἀπαλεξήσειν κακότητος (17.364).[604] Yet while this predetermination of closure is typical for Odyssean narrative, it is also typical that both because and despite of it there is a particular need for devices which introduce or increase suspense regarding closure. (One example is the portrayal of the Phaeacians as particularly dangerous, although the πομπή had been assured from early on in the episode.) These double requirements can engender difficulties: thus Odysseus had previously been advised to test both Eumaeus and Penelope, although they are both clearly portrayed as trustworthy. He now tests the suitors as if they might abandon their end, although they will not (if they were to, they - and with them the narrative itself - would lose the predetermined closure; cf. above on book 2). Antinous is shown to care neither for Telemachus' condemnation of his μῦθος ἀναγκαῖος, which calls for Odysseus to be expelled (17.397-9; note "μὴ τοῦτο θεὸς τελέσειε", 399b) nor for Odysseus' wish for his death ("Ἀντίνοον πρὸ γάμοιο τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη", 17.476; cf. 477-80).[605] This wish is in fact reinforced even by the other suitors, who now consider the possibility that Odysseus could be a god in disguise testing humans for their ὕβρις and εὐνομία, which is ironically close to the truth, yet Antinous does not listen to them either (17.483-7; cf. ὁ δ᾽ οὐκ ἐμπάζετο μύθων, 488b).

Crucial Encounters Deferred

Penelope, too, is shown to be drawn into the confrontation about ends, echoing her husband's wish for Antinous' death in particular (17.492-504). She then continues her search for Odysseus' μῦθος by asking Eumaeus to introduce his guest to her (17.506-11). Eumaeus stresses both Odysseus' ability as a narrator and the fact that closure to his narrative is yet delayed (17.514-17; note "ἀλλ᾽ οὔ πω κακότητα διήνυσεν ἣν ἀγορεύων", 517). This remark is true with respect to Odysseus' own narrative rather than to that he told in his character as beggar, and such

[604] The attribution of κακότης not to Odysseus but his opponents signals the reversal mentioned above in the discussion of bk.5. Russo (1992a) 38 *ad* 17.364 sees the fact that a good suitor is looked for but not found as characteristic of the assumed inconsistencies of oral poetry; yet the search may be significant rather than superfluous even in its failure.

[605] Telemachus rejects Antinous as a bad father figure; instead his reaction is the same as that of his real father (17.465=491). We may also see ἀναγκαῖος as carrying overtones of "forced" in the sense of "under somebody else's authority, slavish" which is properly refused by Telemachus.

a metanarrative understanding is also indicated by Eumaeus' comparison of Odysseus to an epic singer (17.518-21). Ignorant of her husband's presence, Penelope responds to Eumaeus' assertion that Odysseus is now close by (17.522-7; note "ἀγχοῦ", 526a) by claiming that no one like him is present (17.537bf). Her own contrary wishes are however illustrated through her own prediction of a successful closure, if Odysseus and Telemachus could be brought together ("εἰ δ' Ὀδυσεὺς ἔλθοι καὶ ἵκοιτ' ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,/ αἶψά κε σὺν ᾧ παιδὶ βίας ἀποτίσεται ἀνδρῶν", 17.539f). Confirmed by Telemachus' sneeze, it functions as another omen which she herself interprets: "τῷ κε καὶ οὐκ ἀτελὴς θάνατος μνηστῆρσι γένοιτο/ πᾶσι μάλ', οὐδέ κέ τις θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξει" (17.546f). Odysseus himself delays their meeting until the evening (17.564-73), while giving another riddling hint at his own identity ("οἶδα γὰρ εὖ περὶ κείνου, ὀμὴν δ' ἀνεδέγμεθ' ὀϊζύν", 17.563).[606]

This delay allows for another, more extended confrontation of ends involving Odysseus; instead of Melanthius (who had in fact rather been opposed by his fellow servant Eumaeus) he is now paired with a second beggar, Irus (18.1ff). Their wrestling match assumes a special significance for the progress of the μῦθος, because Antinous makes victory a precondition of Odysseus' continued if liminal presence in his own house (18.44-9). It also foreshadows the later victory over the suitors themselves, although Odysseus - helped by Athene (18.69bf) - stops yet short of killing his opponent (18.90-4). This is cleverly hinted at in the narrative's pregnant description of the suitors as "dying with laughter" at the sight of the defeated Irus (18.99bf; note ἔκθανον, 100); and the parallel is later spelled out in Telemachus' wish (18.235-42). This (indirect) confirmation of the eventual closure is once again followed by an illustration of its inevitability due to divine action: Amphinomus, earlier described as the most acceptable of the suitors (16.394-8), is especially warned by Odysseus (18.125-50), who predicts his own closely approaching return ("ὃν οὐκέτι φημὶ φίλων καὶ πατρίδος αἴης/ δηρὸν ἀπέσσεσθαι· μάλα δὲ σχεδόν", 18.145f; cf. 2.163-5). But Odysseus' wish that a god may rescue him in time (18.146b-8) is followed by a description of Athene preventing his flight (ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὣς φύγε κῆρα· πέδησε δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀθήνη, 155), thus restating her active role in ensuring the deaths of all suitors.

Recognizing a Turning-Point

Athene also begins the move towards another turning point in the narrative by impelling Penelope to show herself to the suitors (18.158-63). The scene has again been seen as

[606] On ὀϊζύς as a key word cf. above p.152. Goldhill (1991) 15 notes the "signs of deferral, refusal and irony" in the slow process of Penelope's recognition of Odysseus.

problematic, but significantly both compares to and contrasts with her previous appearance in book 1 (note "ἠ πάρος", 18.162; cf. 164) and thus forms part of the repeatedly delayed progress towards closure, leading up to the eventual 'kernel' event proper, the contest of the bow.[607] Following Eurymachus' admiration of Penelope, she now offers a summary of the μῦθος in which its closure is still determined from the beginning, yet in a strikingly new way: when Odysseus left for Troy, he allegedly told her to remarry once Telemachus would be grown up (18.257-70; esp. 269f). This turning point with regard to his own development had just been noted by Telemachus himself (18.228f; note "πάρος δ΄ ἔτι νήπιος ἦα", 229b).[608] Penelope agrees that this anticipated point has indeed been reached (18.271b; cf. 228f, also 19.160f). She thus unexpectedly opens up the prospect of her remarriage rather than the suitors' punishment as closural, although she explicitly says that this would be a painful closure for her (18.274).[609] Odysseus is said to understand that she in fact has in mind another end (18.281-3); this already indicates their closeness both in understanding and personality, though it may also show Odysseus' quasi-divine foreknowledge.[610]

---

[607] Cf. e.g. Woodhouse (1930) 87-91, who sees Penelope as a puppet of the plot and the poet; further references in Fenik (1974) 74f with n.102-4, 116-20; Russo (1992a) 4f with n.2; Katz (1991) 10, 77-113, esp. 85; Rutherford (1992) 29-33, 33-8 on bk.19; Doherty (1995) 32-56. Russo (1992a) 58 *ad* 18.158-303 too terms the problem to be one of the plot ("narratological"), but although he notes, 58f *ad* 18.160-2, the mention of Athene's (not Penelope's) intention, he fails to connect it with Athene's usual paramount role in plotting. In my view it is quite clear that Athene (and the narrator) have a motivation which is clearly stated as such (e.g. 18.158-62) - cf. Murnaghan (1995) 70f; if there is confusion it belongs to Penelope, because she (unlike Telemachus, Odysseus or the external audience) is artificially kept from certain knowledge of the state of the narrative and thus from an understanding of what she is made to do (e.g. 18.187-97); cf. Murnaghan (1987) 48-51, 127-30. Her wish to die (18.201-5; cf. 20.61-90) too is explainable as resulting from her mistake about (or rather at least partial ignorance of) ends. I disagree with the (in my view) rather overstated conclusions of interpretations which may in principle appear similar to mine, e.g. Katz (1991) 10, 88 or Felson-Rubin (1994) 128, who sees Penelope as opening the text to different outcomes while Athene pursues the linear poetics of closure, but does not take account of the different status and power of these characters and their function in the narrative; cf. further below on bk.19.

[608] This is true even if he uses his seeming helplessness as an excuse for his apparent lack of understanding (18.231f), and if Penelope at the same time criticizes his lack of protection of the beggar (18.220-5).

[609] Murnaghan (1987) 50 notes that Odysseus motivates Penelope's action, whether as he used to be (18.251-80) or as he is (18.215-25); Katz (1991) 129f discusses the apparent gap between Penelope's decision and the "*telos*" of the narrative as she defines it (i.e. Odysseus' resumption of authority).

[610] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 132 with n.15: "His interpretation, which echoes Athena's divine perspective, accords well with Penelope's faithful character and with the way events turn out, which he is in a better position than anyone else to foresee." Katz (1991) 89 argues that his understanding may be based on Athene's earlier statement using the same words: "νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοινᾷ" (13.381b=2.92b spoken by Antinous≈νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα, 283b; cf. above p.147), though she also claims, 147-9, 153f that Odysseus should see and judge Penelope as "dissociating" herself from him.

Penelope's speech allows Antinous to reiterate the suitors' end of marriage as he had represented it at the assembly in front of Odysseus himself (18.288f=2.127f). The substitution of "ᾧ κ' ἐθέλῃσι" (2.128) as a description of the successful suitor by "ὅς τις ἄριστος" (18.289), on the other hand, may contain an unwitting, ironic hint at Odysseus' eventual success. Just as Odysseus is mentally preparing for closure (ὥρμαινε φρεσὶν ἦσιν, ἅ ῥ' οὐκ ἀτέλεστα γένοντο, 18.345), Athene once more intervenes to effect further pain and indeed delay before allowing the meeting with Penelope (18.346-8=20.284-6). Yet the episode ends with the suitors' recognition that a turning point of sorts has been reached with the presence of the beggar. But though they wish him dead (18.401f), they are not aware of the true nature of this pivotal moment since they think only in terms of pleasure rather than of life and death (18.403f). Thus they mistakenly believe that "the worse" claims victory (18.404b) rather than the best as had just been more correctly anticipated by Antinous (18.289).

Reassuring Penelope - from Past to Future

The slow progress towards closure continues with the removal of the weapons from the hall, mentioned in Odysseus' plan (19.1-50; cf. 16.281-98), and then finally the direct encounter of Odysseus and Penelope (interspersed with further debate with the servant Melantho; 19.65-95). Penelope's role with regard to closure is still a double one: her decision to set the contest of the bow is crucial; on the other hand, she has intentionally been kept (and still is being kept) from recognizing Odysseus' identity and presence, amounting to a non-recognition of the approaching closure.[611] While this remains true, the following scene both helps clarify Penelope's ends and shows the development towards that crucial decision through her conversation with a seeming stranger. Interestingly, their dialogue itself broadly moves from past to present to future (as so often in the poem), gradually reassuring her of her husband's approaching presence. First turning to the past, Penelope confirms her attempt to hold the progress of time by weaving and unravelling Laertes' shroud, which Antinous had complained of in the assembly (19.138-56; cf.

[611] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 51f; Russo (1992a) 104f *ad* 19.572-81 who summarizes Felson-Rubin (1987): Penelope's motives are necessarily unfathomable because of "her participation in simultaneous multiple marriage-plots, and...a complicity between author and character to keep her from clarifying her motivation by accepting any single plot". But note Felson-Rubin (1994) 128: "Homer ultimately provides provisional closure for his epic by creating two lead characters whose desire for reunion, as a telos, overrides their propensity for exploration or play." Katz (1991) 94 exaggerates, however, in saying that the scene "undermines this notion of a coherent, essential self and presents us with a notion of the person instead as constructed - invented on the spot, as it were - and ultimately brought into being as such by time, place, and circumstance", also 113. My argument agrees with H. Foley (1995) 101-4. - For references to the analytical discussion of bk.19 cf. Austin (1975) 277f n.25; Rutherford (1992) 34 n.28, also n.27 on critics who hold that Penelope does recognize her husband.

2.94-110). However, her account is already embedded in explanations of her wishes and her (apparent) situation. It is preceded by a general picture of Odysseus' absence during which she opposed the suitors' "haste" towards marriage with her own "spinning" of lies (19.124-37; note "οἱ δὲ γάμον σπεύδουσιν· ἐγὼ δὲ δόλους τολυπεύω", 137).[612] Yet she concludes that the discovery of her delaying tactics has forced her to reach an end contrary to her own wishes ("ὣς τὸ μὲν ἐξετέλεσσα, καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσ᾽, ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης", 19.156) and everything, including Telemachus' maturity, seems to conspire to render remarriage unavoidable ("νῦν δ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἐκφυγέειν δύναμαι γάμον οὔτε τιν᾽ ἄλλην/ μῆτιν ἔθ᾽ εὑρίσκω", 19.157-8a). In book 1 Penelope was only unable to impose an end, now the plot has thickened so far that the end of marriage is actually to be imposed on her. This seeming end to her hopes is of course deeply ironic, and Odysseus will help to render the necessary next step in the plot more acceptable to her without completely revealing the irony. He begins by only giving her a brief account of his character as a beggar (19.180f), yet a detailed one of himself, significantly even before he reached Troy, right at the beginning of his narrative (19.186f). But Penelope institutes a πεῖρα herself (19.215-9; note "πειρήσεσθαι", 215b), before she accepts his version of the beginning of Odysseus' μῦθος because she is convinced by the σήματα he offers (19.249f).[613]

As she acknowledges a turning point in her relations with the beggar (19.253f; note "νῦν μὲν...πάρος περ...", 253), their discussion accordingly moves on to the present and future. Odysseus replies to Penelope's repeated despair of his νόστος (19.257b-60) by stressing that she should also anticipate a turning point in the μῦθος towards the end desired by her, which should be marked by ending her grief (19.263-4a; note "μηκέτι νῦν"; also "ἀλλὰ γόου μὲν παῦσαι", 268a). The μῦθος he offers ("ἐμεῖο δὲ σύνθεο μῦθον", 19.268b) reinforces the many omens and prophecies already noted (19.269-72a; note "ἤδη...νόστου.../ ἀγχοῦ...", 270f). He adds conviction to it by giving a true summary of the past from the loss of his crew to the πομπή by the Phaeacians (19.273b-82a), though he then fills the interval up to Odysseus' predicted arrival with guess work

---

[612] The τολυπεύω-metaphor, which takes its origin from spinning, is here both returned to its appropriate context and characteristically linked with δόλους rather than the frequent πόλεμον (e.g. *Il.* 24.7); cf. Rutherford (1992) 150f *ad* 19.137. On spinning and weaving metaphors which are often used metapoetically cf. Slatkin (1996) 234f; Rutherford (1992) 151 *ad* 19.139-56 and specifically on the *Odyssey* Murnaghan (1995) 64. (Note too that a god, presumably Athene, is said to have impelled her to the ruse with the shroud; 19.138f). - Felson-Rubin (1994) 128 sees Penelope's endless inventions as opening up the text, in contrast to Athene's pursuit of a linear narrative; however, Penelope is not consciously resisting Athene's closure, but that of the suitors, opening up the narrative so as to make room for Odysseus' (and Athene's) closure.

[613] Murnaghan (1987) 110f with n.25 notes that this is a recognition scene with regard to Odysseus as he was in the past. This foreshadows the later recognition in the present; cf. Rutherford (1992) 171 *ad* 19.249-50.

and part of the lying tale told to Eumaeus (19.283-95; cf. 14.314-35), since he cannot truthfully account for the apparent delay (note "καί κεν πάλαι ἐνθάδ᾽ Ὀδυσσεὺς/ ἦην", 19.282bf). Still, he concludes with the repeated assurance of his impending return (19.296-307; note the numerous key words), and as so often Penelope wishes for this closure while unable to recognize its fulfillment (19.309-16).[614] Indeed, Athene actively intervenes once Eurycleia's recognition of Odysseus through his scar has taken place, in order to prevent Penelope from a similar recognition (19.478f). The importance of a σῆμα such as the scar for all recognitions should be noted; while the scar is a sign of the past it has the power to "re-present" it, that is to utilize the past to confirm its (and by extension Odysseus') presence.[615] Odysseus too contributes to enforcing the continued concealment of his identity and his μῦθος (19.502; cf. his instructions to Telemachus, 16.299-307).

Yet even if Penelope is denied an outright disclosure of both Odysseus and the end to come, she has been given another strong hint in the dream she now reports. Indeed she introduces it with her impression that a turning point has already been reached (19.524-34; note "ἤδη" and the repetition of "ὅς τις ἄριστος", 528). The dream offers an image of the eventual closure of the τίσις in the slaughter of the geese by an eagle (19.536-51). It is important that the eagle itself already reveals his identity as Odysseus and thus the correct interpretation, stressing both the fulfillment of the dream and Odysseus' own close presence (19.544-50; note "οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ᾽ ὕπαρ ἐσθλόν, ὅ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται", 547; ἐγὼ δέ τοι αἰετὸς ὄρνις/ ἦα πάρος, νῦν αὖτε τεὸς πόσις εἰλήλουθα", 548bf). Thus Penelope asks the beggar for his reading of the dream not so much to confirm its already self-revealed set of equivalences (19.535), as is evident from Odysseus' reaction ("οὔ πως ἔστιν ὑποκρίνασθαι ὄνειρον/ ἄλλῃ ἀποκλίναντ᾽, ἐπεὶ ἦ ῥά τοι αὐτὸς Ὀδυσσεὺς/ πέφραδ᾽ ὅπως τελέει", 19.555-7a), but in order to be reassured about the timing since the eagle's words seem to be belied by present reality (19.552f; cf. "ἦχι πάρος περ", 553 with

[614] Katz (1991) 116f sees this diffidence as contradicting her earlier confidence (cf. e.g. 17.163). (For the questioning of Odysseus' very existence cf. other instances, below on 24.289.) But such behaviour can be explained psychologically as Fenik (1974) 157 does: "Pessimism itself becomes a comfort and refuge not easily put aside when hope might open the door to fresh distress"; this is paralleled elsewhere in the poem (e.g. Telemachus in bk.1, Eumaeus in bk.14); cf. Rutherford (1992) 31: "Thus the characteristic pattern of omens ignored, assurances disregarded, is adapted to the special case of Penelope: her despair is greatest when she has most reason to hope." It is of course characteristic of Penelope not to be convinced easily (cf. bk.23).

[615] For the necessary reference to the past cf. Goldhill (1991) 26; on the importance of the recognition by Eurycleia cf. Murnaghan (1987) 39f; also Peradotto (1990) 118f.

548bf). Odysseus, however, evades the issue in his simple reinforcement of the dream's picture of the future.

Penelope's last speech famously introduces an opposition of dreams to be fulfilled and not to be fulfilled (19.560-7); it shows her still unconvinced that the one she desires, the dream of the geese, is to be seen as the one to come true (19.568f). Rather, she claims that she has to anticipate that her life with Odysseus, even in his house, will itself have to become a dream (19.579b-81).[616] I believe her picture of the two kinds of dreams is best understood as the final part of her πεῖρα as much as an expression of her feelings, connected as it is with her proposal to take the step from reaching a turning point to initiating a decisive move towards closure by setting the contest of the bow (19.570-9a; note "νῦν", 572, 576 and another hint at Athene's involvement, 570).[617] Only at this point does Odysseus offer a clear response which explicitly sanctions Penelope's plan to move on to an end, in words of clear metanarrative relevance that mark an end to previous delays ("μηκέτι νῦν ἀνάβαλλε δόμοις ἔνι τοῦτον ἄεθλον", 19.584; cf. 263f). He also reassures her that the dream of the geese is after all the one to be realized (19.585-7; note "πρὶν γάρ τοι πολύμητις ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ' Ὀδυσσεὺς", 585).[618] Since recognition of Odysseus has been ruled out - by Athene, and by implication the poet - as a means of indisputably reassuring Penelope to set the decisive contest, her reassurance through a discussion with, and πεῖρα of, the stranger, moving from Odysseus' past to the future closure, is both an ingenious and an effective substitute, which also has the advantage of keeping up narrative tension and suspense.[619]

---

[616] Indeed she already sees Odysseus in a dream that night (20.88-90), but because she has not been given full information her reaction is still a wish to die in order to avoid the "τέλος θαλεροῖο γάμοιο" (20.74b; 61-82).

[617] On Penelope's decision cf. Russo (1992a) 10f, also 104f *ad* 19.572-81; Murnaghan (1987) 136-9, reviewing earlier interpretations which posit other versions of the story to explain difficulties of motivation.

[618] Note the contrast of "πολύμητις" with Penelope's lack of present μῆτις (19.157-8a above). Cf. Austin (1975) 230 on 19.585, noting that "the epithet receives emphasis from its unusual position".

[619] My reading has some affinities to Austin (1975) 230-3. Murnaghan (1987) 134, who sees this "exhilarating twist in the narrative" as reliant on chance, disregards the role of Athene in plotting. Katz (1991) 119f, also 145, argues that Penelope's implied meaning has been misread by Odysseus himself and critics who adopt the authoritative perspective of Odysseus and the narrator. She does not appear to take into account that that is indeed the dominant perspective throughout the narrative, and the fact that closure has always already been determined cannot but influence readings of the poem. Indeed, the difficulty of motivating Penelope's action and Athene's additional intervention to prevent her recognizing Odysseus (as Eurycleia had done) show that there clearly is someone behind the scenes writing the script to reach the desired end; cf. Rutherford (1992) 33: "The ironic art of the poet and the self-control of the hero are at their height here." For the slow progress here compare the Phaeacian episode above.

Gearing up towards Closure

The approaching end is marked by Odysseus' decision to let the female servants meet the suitors one last time (20.6a-24a; note ὕστατα καὶ πύματα, 13a).[620] He also again turns his thoughts to the difficulty of how he will be able to kill the suitors (20.24b-30a). The expression of his isolation (μοῦνος ἐὼν πολέσι, 20.30a) is immediately followed by Athene's entrance, who teases him by implying that what he has been in search of (his home, wife and son) has been reached (20.30b-5). But Odysseus points out that the satisfactory closure of his μῦθος is not secured yet, either with respect to the τίσις itself (20.38-40) or, significantly, its aftermath which is now introduced (20.41-3a; note "πρὸς δ' ἔτι καὶ τόδε μεῖζον", 41a; cf. 11.474). Athene's response points out her divine ability to preserve the protagonist in all eventualities, against the odds (20.47-53), and reaffirms the role of the gods in the *Odyssey* in providing reassurance about closure (note "κακῶν δ' ὑποδύσεαι ἤδη", 20.53b).[621] Yet it also retains suspense by not offering any more detailed picture of the future, calling for further patience on the reader's and ingenuity on Odysseus' part.[622] Reassurance of divine support is also provided by an omen from Zeus in reply to Odysseus' prayer in the morning (20.95-121; note "νῦν ὕστατα δειπνήσειαν", 119b; "φάτο γὰρ τίσασθαι ἀλείτας", 121b). With the reappearance of the herdsmen, their respective wishes for closure are recalled (20.162b-225) and Odysseus in turn reassures them about his eventual return (20.229-34).[623]

The suitors too show themselves receptive to divine influence and this results in further delay, though this time it is a delay of their own end, when a bird omen deters them from killing Telemachus (20.240-7; cf. Amphinomus' suggestion; 16.402-5). Antinous acknowledges that they only accept Telemachus' μῦθος (who claims to protect Odysseus; 20.257-67) and defer

---

[620] The expression had formed part of Penelope's wish to see the last of the suitors in 4.685; cf. Rutherford (1992) 204 *ad* 20.13; cf. too the singular in 20.116; *Il.* 22.203.

[621] Note the relatively unusual combination of the adverb with the future (cf. possibly *Il.* 23.20=180 discussed above; also 1.303; 5.161; 22.248).

[622] I disagree with Russo (1992a) 110 *ad* 20.30, who claims that the scene is anomalous "in that it is a deity that brings the decision *how* to act". Athene only reassures Odysseus about the outcome of his narrative, not about the details of its progress; cf. Austin (1975) 240: "But an eleventh-hour crisis holds no threat for Athena. It merely enhances her orchestration of time and persons." - Note that Odysseus already dreams of Penelope as having recognized him in anticipation of the future (20.92-4), parallel to Penelope's own dream (20.88-90); cf. Rutherford (1992) 214 *ad* 20.88-90.

[623] Russo (1992a) 119 *ad* 20.235-9 notes that the reaction of Odysseus' audience to his prediction (cf. also 14.158f; 19.312f) changes from disbelief to belief, concluding that "dramatic tension is heightened as the dénouement approaches".

their own plot because of Zeus' intervention (20.271-4; note "τῷ κέ μιν ἤδη/ παύσαμεν ἐν μεγάροισι", 273bf).[624] Their uncharacteristic acceptance of an omen, which contradicts their own view of the narrative, may recall their contrasting reaction to that which announced Odysseus' return in book 2. While they now correctly estimate their chances of success in the sub-plot against Telemachus, they are as mistaken as ever, if not more so, concerning the main plot. For example, Agelaus offers the suitors' μῦθος to Telemachus and Penelope (20.326f), asserting that delay on their part was acceptable as long as Odysseus'νόστος remained a potential closure (20.328-32; note "μενέμεν τ΄...ἰσχέμεναί τε", 330). But in their view too a turning point in the narrative has been reached: "νῦν δ᾽ ἤδη τόδε δῆλον, ὅ τ᾽ οὐκέτι νόστιμός ἐστιν" (20.333), which means that Penelope's γάμος should now be considered as its closure (20.334-7; note again "ὅς τις ἄριστος", 335a). Telemachus indeed agrees that it is time to stop delaying the end (20.339-42), but again refuses to take part in a "μῦθος ἀναγκαῖος" (20.343f; note "μὴ τοῦτο θεὸς τελέσειεν", 344b; note 344=17.399).

The Beginning of the End

Athene plays a key role in misdirecting the suitors' understanding for the remainder of the scene (20.345bf), in which the sense of foreboding becomes overwhelming (20.347-94). Theoclymenus' first vision of slaughter (20.351-7) is followed by an explicit anticipation (20.367-70), while suspense is created as Telemachus waits for Odysseus' signal to attack (20.384-6) and Penelope, whose action will in fact be decisive, listens in on everyone's μῦθος (20.387-9). The narrative itself at last assures the audience of progress towards the death of the suitors through the cooperation of Athene and Odysseus (20.392-4; note δὴ τάχ΄ ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ, 393), harking back to the introductory dialogue between them (13.389-91). This progress comes as the goddess makes Penelope finally set the bow contest (21.1-4; note the closure on the appositional φόνου ἀρχήν, 4b). This turn to the 'kernel' event proper after a long narrative delay is comparable to the eventual turn towards the πομπή in book 13 in the first part of the poem.[625]

Penelope's journey through the house to fetch the bow can be understood metapoetically as an illustration of the fact that the beginning of the end is reached (21.5-12; 42-57). Thus the

[624] But once more Athene also ruffles (and thus extends) the course of the narrative for Odysseus through the suitors, here Ctesippus (20.284ff).

[625] Although further narrative delay comes in the shape of the external analepsis of the history of Odysseus' bow (21.13-41); interpreted e.g. by Murnaghan (1987) 115f.

chamber where the bow lies is described as the very last (ἔσχατον, 21.9a), while the inceptive aspect of the scene is emphasized in the action of Penelope opening its door (21.42-50; esp. 46, 50).[626] In fact, the repetition of the line picturing the threshold, which had before marked the liminal moment of Odysseus' reentry into his house, underlines the importance of Penelope's move in terms of narrative development (21.44=17.341).[627] While she is herself still mistaken about having to leave the house as a result of the contest (21.73-9), Antinous is shown to be more crucially wrong in believing himself to be comparable to Odysseus, who (as the narrative anticipates) will kill him (21.96-100).[628] Telemachus ironically comments on his mistake by ascribing his own delight at the bow contest to having been bereft of his senses by Zeus (21.102-5), in obvious contrast to Athene's actual influence on the suitors to that effect. Indeed, Telemachus again encourages the suitors not to delay the action (21.111f; note "μηδ΄ ἔτι", 111). In his confidence he almost actually fills his father's place by completing the πεῖρα represented by the bow and winning his mother himself (21.113-17; note "οἷός τ᾽ ἤδη πατρὸς ἀέθλια κάλ᾽ ἀνελέσθαι", 117). But though Odysseus allows him to set up the contest, he holds him back from the fourth try which the narrative claims would have brought - premature - success, both in terms of his and the narrative's development (21.118-29).[629] Leodes is the first suitor to try and fail, as he will be the last to be killed after supplicating Odysseus (21.144-66; cf. 22.310-29). Although Antinous reiterates Telemachus' initial exhortation to complete the ἄεθλος ("τόξου πειρήσασθε,

---

[626] The significance is marked by Austin (1975) 170, though interpreted differently as an entry into the past, but note 171: "Preserved intact, the bow emerges from its hiding place, as its owner does from his, to become the pivotal object, not only memorial of the past order but the fatal instrument by which the old order is renewed." Cf. Hershkowitz (1998) 102-5 on Juno's opening of the temple gates in *Aeneid* 7.620-2 as signifying all sorts of other openings, including narrative.

[627] Penelope's following speech too may contain a statement of metapoetic relevance: she identifies the suitors' perpetual presence in the house as due to Odysseus' absence (21.68-70a) and then states their stance towards the μῦθος: "οὐδέ τιν᾽ ἄλλην/ μύθου ποιήσασθαι ἐπισχεσίην ἐδύνασθε,/ ἀλλ᾽ ἐμὲ ἱέμενοι γῆμαι θέσθαι τε γυναῖκα" (21.70b-2). The meaning of "ἐπισχεσίην" in particular has been debated; it may oscillate between "pretext" (πρόφασις) as glossed by ΣQV φ.71 and "cause for delay", so that Penelope would describe the suitors' wooing of her as causing delay to Odysseus' μῦθος. The word had been used more clearly in the latter meaning in Odysseus' first encounter with the suitors by Antinous, saying there was "no cause for delay or for regret to enjoy another person's belongings" (17.450-3); this notion is about to be disproved.

[628] Katz (1991) 150 is wrong to say that "the marriage with Odysseus is consigned more and more to the realm of dreams", on the contrary, Penelope says she will remember him *even* in her dreams. Peradotto (1990) 84f too sees Penelope as disloyal because he reads her statements (such as 21.75f) in isolation, not in the context of ironies set up by the narrative - or Athene and Odysseus - since his return home in bk.17.

[629] Telemachus deceitfully reuses verses that were still true in 16.71f. Note too the deceit in his claim "not [to be] old enough" (21.131-5) in view of the passages stressing his maturity; cf. Katz (1991) 124f. On the premature attainment of authority by Telemachus cf. Murnaghan (1987) 37. For "*if not* situations" cf. above p.53; p.78. Here it shows how decisions about the plot are made by the protagonist as well as Athene and the gods.

καὶ ἐκτελέωμεν ἄεθλον", 21.135≈180), he and Eurymachus are seen still to delay closure (21.186f; note ἔτ᾽ ἐπεῖχε, 186).

Recognizing the Master

This delay is utilized in narrative terms to insert Odysseus' recognition by his loyal servants just in time before the actual τίσις on the suitors (21.188-244).[630] It is his prior "recognition" of their wishes for closure (21.200-5; 209f) which prompts Odysseus finally to allow their recognition of his own identity. His description of himself through his history (21.207f, with 208=16.206) is supplemented by the tangible σῆμα of the scar (21.217-20), two elements which are combined regularly. While this σῆμα confirms his identity by looking back to the past, it is followed by another one which does the same by looking forward to the future ("ἀτὰρ τόδε σῆμα τετύχθω", 21.231b), instructing the servants how they are to act in the unfolding drama and at last adding detail to the τίσις (21.232-41; cf. below on 380-91). The introduction of a future σῆμα is not surprising given the equivalence of the recognition of the protagonist and recognition of the closure of his μῦθος constructed by the narrative.

The narrative thread is picked up with Eurymachus now taking part in the contest (21.245ff; note ἤδη, 245). When he fails in his attempt (21.246bf), his speech - positioned in the middle of the scene - offers an estimate of the consequences of the suitors' failure, which focuses on its metanarrative importance rather than its importance in the plot: Eurymachus holds that the non-achievement of their end of the γάμος as such would be less distressing than its future representation in narrative (21.249-55). This self-referential passage also contains more echoes of the Iliadic intertext. His negative conclusion ("ἐλεγχείη δὲ καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι", 21.255) recalls Hector's realization of his approaching death, which makes him face Achilles to win at least κλέος ("νῦν αὖτέ με μοῖρα κιχάνει./ μὴ μὰν ἀσπουδί γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην,/ ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι", *Il*. 22.303b-5), rather than Helen's words (*Il*. 6.357f); a parallel that would serve to underline Eurymachus' delusion (cf. on 21.396-403 below). The same expression also forms part of Agamemnon's πεῖρα in *Iliad* 2, in which failure to achieve the end intended - the fall of Troy - becomes the reason to abandon that plot entirely (*Il*. 2.119; note also 2.122b). In that episode, Odysseus and Athene had denied the Achaeans their unintended escape, and they will now deny a similar escape to the suitors.

[630] Murnaghan (1987) 21 notes: "Odysseus' time-defying defeat of the suitors...depends on the reanimation of past relationships."

Though completion is again promised by Antinous, he still proposes to delay it until the next day, rather than try the ἄεθλος himself (21.257-68, with 268=180≈135). The suitors accept his μῦθος (21.269-72), but Odysseus' reinforcement of it marks the end of their part in the contest altogether (21.275-80; note "νῦν μὲν παῦσαι τόξον, ἐπιτρέψαι δὲ θεοῖσιν", 279). He now asks to be himself allowed to test the presence of his former strength ("ἀλλ᾽ ἄγ᾽ ἐμοὶ δότε τόξον ἐΰξοον, ὄφρα μεθ᾽ ὑμῖν/ χειρῶν καὶ σθένεος πειρήσομαι, ἤ μοι ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶν/ ἷς, οἵη πάρος ἔσκεν ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσιν/ ἦ ἤδη μοι ὄλεσσεν ἄλη τ᾽ ἀκομιστίη τε", 21.281-4). Antinous rejects his proposal to become involved in the action, stressing that he already enjoys the unique privilege of listening to the suitors' μῦθοι (21.288-92). Indeed, he blames Odysseus' confidence on the influence of wine in a tale full of irony, since it applies to the suitors themselves rather than Odysseus (21.293-304), and he threatens once more to send him away (21.305-10).[631] At this juncture Penelope herself intervenes, easing the way for Odysseus to be given the bow. She points out that he is unlikely to achieve the same goal as the suitors (21.314-19; cf. 334-42), which can be understood as another reference to the surprising nature of Odysseus' eventual revelation.[632]

It is Telemachus, however, who finally asserts his authority in close parallel to the scene following Athene's visit in book 1; yet now his object is not control of the μῦθος in general, but more specifically the bow which embodies control over this climactic episode: "τόξον τόξον δ᾽ ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει/ πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ᾽ ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ᾽ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ" (21.352bf; cf. 1.358bf, also 11.352bf).[633] Odysseus' instructions to his servants are now being followed through as Eumaeus fetches the bow and orders Eurycleia to lock the women quarters, while Philoetius closes the yard doors (21.359-93a). Indeed, the closing of these doors can also be read as another marker of the approaching narrative closure (note "κληῖσαι", 21.382; ἐπέδησε θύρας, 391). Instead of Eurymachus it is now Odysseus himself who "already" holds the bow and "tests" it (21.393b-5; note ἤδη, 393 and cf. 245). Although the suitors recognize his skill in handling the

[631] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 88.

[632] She also refutes Eurymachus' objection to the beggar's attempt, who again refers to the negative consequences for the suitors' reputation (21.321-9), by noting that they have already actively lost their good fame (21.331-3). It is ironic that he does not draw a link between the "better man", whose wife they are wooing, (21.325) and "some other, begging man who comes having wandered about" (21.327).

[633] This comes closer to the Iliadic passage (6.492bf) quoted *ad* 1.358bf above; cf. Katz (1991) 152. Finley (1978) 162 argues more widely on the replacement of μῦθος by τόξον with respect to Odysseus: "The bow that he tests as a bard strings a lyre replaces his Phaeacian tale"; also Rutherford (1985) 143.

bow, they still do not recognize Odysseus himself (21.396-403); their delusion may be stressed if the intertextual correspondence of their description of Odysseus as "ἐπίκλοπος ἔπλετο τόξων" (21.397b) with Hector's of Achilles as "ἐπίκλοπος ἔπλετο μύθων" (*Il.* 22.281b), just before he recognizes the τέλος θανάτοιο in store for him, is accepted.[634]

A Mark of Achievement

Indeed, as the crucial point of the contest, and of Odysseus' νόστος, is reached, the narrative itself appropriately draws attention to its own artistic achievement as much as to that of its protagonist in explicitly metapoetic terms (21.404-11).[635] The imagery of Odysseus' skill with the bow and of the epic singer's skill with his lyre and song are interwoven in such a way as to render them inextricably linked, one equivalent to - or rather indistinguishable from - the other (cf. esp. δεξιτερῇ ἄρα χειρὶ λαβὼν πειρήσατο νευρῆς·/ ἡ δ᾽ ὑπὸ καλὸν ἄεισε, χελιδόνι εἰκέλη αὐδήν, 21.410f). The emphasis on prior evaluation and complete overview over the material (αὐτίκ᾽ ἐπεὶ μέγα τόξον ἐβάστασε καὶ ἴδε πάντῃ, 21.405), which accompanies the effortless "laying out" of a "chord on a new peg" by a master of epic song (21.406f), should be noted as characteristic of the *Odyssey* itself.[636] In the context of more literal interpretations the description of the new peg in particular has been considered problematic.[637] As part of a self-aware reference to the narrator's own skill it may easily be understood as pointing out the novelty of his own, the present, narrative (also referred to in other passages; cf. e.g. 22.6f). The "stretching" of the bow by Odysseus ἄτερ σπουδῆς (21.409) can also be read as describing both the "effortlessness" of his action and the "lack of haste" in narrative terms, which the *Odyssey*

[634] Their usage of the expression also contrasts with Alcinous' refusal to see Odysseus as an "ἐπίκλοπος" (11.363-6), while Athene (who as a goddess cannot be threatened by his skill in deceit) uses it rather as a compliment (13.292).

[635] Cf. Erbse (1972) 36 for the identification of the climactic point; also Eustathius 1393, 55 *ad* α.88: αὐτὴ μνηστηροφονία γὰρ ἔστι τὸ σκοπιμώτατον τέλος τῆς ποιήσεως ταύτης.

[636] Examples of τανύω ("lay out, stretch out"; 21.407) used in a metapoetic sense are already found in the *Iliad*: there it governs objects such as "battle, trouble, quarrel", signifying the extension of its narrative on these topics (e.g. *Il.* 11.336; 14.389; 17.401 and esp. 13.359 discused above). (The same may be true of the "safe sailing" promised to the Argonauts by Triton (πλόος...τετάνυσται, *Argon.* 4.1582f), anticipating the smooth passage to the imminent end of Apollonius' narrative.)

[637] Cf. e.g. Fernández-Galiano (1992) 201 *ad* 21.407: "νέῳ is difficult; Tyrrell suggests ἑᾷ, Duentzer νέην (corruption due to confusion with the dat. κόλλοπι), Agar νόῳ (cf. vi 320, xvi 197). The MS reading is defensible, however, if we assume that the instrument itself is a new one (...); or that the peg is new in the sense that it is 'new' to the string being fitted to it (...); or, ..., that the glue has had to be replaced to fit the new string...to stretcher and bridge."

so prominently displays. His "testing" of the bow (21.410f) also has its counterpart in the many dilatory tests of the characters, foremost Odysseus himself, in the narrative.

Odysseus' act of placing the first arrow on the bow and his shot through the axes which finally wins the contest (21.416-24a) are, also in typically Odyssean fashion, prompted by signs of Zeus' will (21.413-15; note σήματα, 413). In a speech addressed to Telemachus he then claims victory (21.424-30) and returns to the subject of achievement. The speech may also be read in a more general way as referring to the narrative not less than to his shot, if we can take τόξον to mean the whole episode which develops the bow contest: "οὐδέ τι τοῦ σκοποῦ ἤμβροτον οὐδέ τι τόξον/ δὴν ἔκαμον τανύων· ἔτι μοι μένος ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν" (21.425f).[638] Odysseus' still coded anticipation of what is just about to happen links the feast to be prepared for the suitors with subsequent song (21.428-30; note "νῦν δ' ὥρη", 428a). This combination may recall his own description of the most enjoyable τέλος (song at a feast) which led into the narrative of his past μῦθος (9.5-11); the song anticipated here may in fact be the poem's own account of the suitors' deaths.

The equivalence established between Odysseus' skill with the bow and the singer's with the song is further confirmed by Odysseus' next speech, now directed to the suitors, as he stands free of his disguise on the threshold (22.1-4):[639] affirming the closure of the ἄεθλος (22.5; note the perfect "ἐκτετέλεσται"), he says that he "will hasten to another goal, which no man has yet achieved, [to see] if I will reach it" ("νῦν αὖτε σκοπὸν ἄλλον, ὃν οὔ πώ τις βάλεν ἀνήρ,/ εἴσομαι, αἴ κε τύχωμι", 22.6-7a). This new end - taking up the end reached in 21.425 - is the τίσις (and its aftermath) enacted by Odysseus and told by the narrative; the role of "οὔ πω" in this metapoetic as much as literal context should also be noted (cf. too 1.351f; 11.474).[640] The closing prayer "πόρῃ δέ μοι εὖχος Ἀπόλλων" (22.7b; cf. Penelope's wish in 21.338) can similarly function on both these levels: on the one hand it clearly refers to Apollo as the god of archery, but it could equally well refer to him as the patron of (epic) song, a function most clearly

---

[638] Fernández-Galiano (1992) 204 *ad* 21.426 translates: "I did not tire myself out trying to draw the bow for a long time"; I would suggest: "I did not tire of stretching out the bow [narrative] for a long time".

[639] Murnaghan (1987) 20 notes the resemblance to a divine epiphany, representing a climactic moment in the plot begun with Athene in bk.13. Cf. too Rutherford (1986) 159: "It has been well observed that Odysseus himself, with his superior knowledge and power, is to some degree in the position of a Homeric god, avenging insults and defending his honour." - On the importance of his position on the threshold as an indication of Odysseus still remaining on the margins cf. above p.183.

[640] In this reading "εἴσομαι" poses less of a problem than Fernández-Galiano (1992) 219 *ad* 22.6-7 makes out, carrying its usual meaning.

expressed by Odysseus himself in his praise of Demodocus ("ἦ σέ γε Μοῦσ᾽ ἐδίδαξε, Διὸς πάϊς, ἦ σέ γ᾽ Ἀπόλλων", 8.488). The fact that the τίσις takes place on the day of what appears to be a festival of Apollo perhaps also takes on an added significance.[641]

3.2.2. Presence

The climactic scene of the τίσις, which has been anticipated and worked towards since Odysseus' νόστος at the beginning of this second half of the poem, is thus introduced with explicit references to the narrative. We will now come to see how intertextual parallels play an important role in enhancing the narrative of the τίσις itself and in establishing its full significance, before the poem moves on to trace its consequences and to provide closure.

Beginning the τίσις

Even after Odysseus has shot Antinous (22.8-21), the suitors remain mistaken about the end (cf. 22.31-3): their belief that he will die now is as wrong as it was when Odysseus himself expressed it at the very beginning of his ἄεθλοι as narrated in the *Odyssey* ("νῦν τοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος", 22.28b=5.305b with μοι). Rather, they have themselves now reached the ὀλέθρου πείρατα ("νῦν ὑμῖν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ᾽ ἐφῆπται", 22.41≈33), as Odysseus at last reveals himself and his μῦθος to them, making them recognize its true direction (22.35-41; note "οὔ μ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐφάσκεθ᾽ ὑπότροπον οἴκαδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι/ δήμου ἄπο Τρώων", 35f).[642] Eurymachus actually accepts this judgement of the situation, though guardedly (22.45-7), but asserts that a satisfactory closure has "already" been reached with Antinous' death (22.47f; note "ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἤδη κεῖται, ὃς αἴτιος ἔπλετο πάντων", 47). His promise of additional material reparation is concluded with a call for an immediate end to Odysseus' anger (22.54-9). An Iliadic intertext offers a parallel, which indicates the futility of this appeal for closure. Referring to Agamemnon's offer of numerous gifts, Phoenix tells Achilles in the very same words: "πρὶν δ᾽ οὔ τι νεμεσσητὸν κεχολῶσθαι" (*Il.* 9.523=59), but Achilles nevertheless refuses the offer. Odysseus' answer, too,

---

[641] Though there seem to be no other equally early instances which combine these two aspects of Apollo, the two aspects become important in Roman poetry at the latest; cf. e.g. Propertius book 4 6.69f: bella satis cecini: citharam iam poscit Apollo/ victor et ad placidos exuit arma choros; Horace *Odes* 1.21.9-12, *Odes* 2.10.18-20 - note Nisbet/Hubbard (1970) 259 *ad Odes* 1.21.11: "The statue of Apollo at Delos held a bow in the left hand and in the right carried the three Graces...". For the Apollo festival cf. e.g. 20.156; 21.257-62. Fernández-Galiano (1992) 176 *ad* 21.257-62 offers no evidence for his claim: "The argument that a festival sacred to the archer god (...) would be just the occasion for a contest with bow and arrow is based on an anachronism; ..."

[642] Note that "ὑπότροπος" here is its last occurence, asserting as fact what had been doubted by Agelaus and the disloyal servants before (20.332; 21.211); it also echoes (and significantly changes) Odysseus' initial characterization as πολύτροπος (1.2).

can be seen to echo the same passage in the *Iliad*, further presenting him as a mirror image of Achilles and harking back to their comparison in the underworld (11.467-540) as well as leading up to subsequent parallels in this very episode.[643] He refuses the offer of reparation (22.61-4), setting a complete τίσις as his own end: "οὐδέ κεν ὣς ἔτι χεῖρας ἐμὰς λήξαιμι φόνοιο/ πρὶν πᾶσαν μνηστῆρας ὑπερβασίην ἀποτῖσαι" (22.63f; cf. *Il.* 9.386f above). Although he seemingly leaves the suitors the choice whether to fight or flee, he already anticipates the eventual closure in typically Odyssean fashion, suggesting that none of them will be able to escape (22.65-7).

Eurymachus correctly sees that Odysseus, and the narrative, will not be delayed ("οὐ γὰρ σχήσει ἀνὴρ ὅδε χεῖρας ἀάπτους", 22.70), but still responds with an anticipation which asserts exactly the contrary end ("τῷ κε τάχ᾽ οὗτος ἀνὴρ νῦν ὕστατα τοξάσσαιτο", 22.78).[644] This time, however, he is immediately - and dramatically - proved wrong as he is killed by Odysseus' second shot (22.79-88). Telemachus then kills Amphinomus, and with the three most prominent suitors already dead (22.89-98), the narrative proceeds to set up a more battle-like fight, as both sides arm themselves (22.99-202). This preparatory passage mirrors the main narrative in its outcome by using the servants as doubles: Melanthius' treachery threatens a premature, wrong closure by providing weapons for some of the suitors (cf. καὶ τότ᾽ Ὀδυσσῆος λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ, 22.147).[645] Yet he is successfully confronted by the loyal servants who achieve victory (22.178-202), while the main narrative thread, Odysseus' own fight, is explicitly put on hold by its protagonist ("ἦ τοι ἐγὼ καὶ Τηλέμαχος μνηστῆρας ἀγαυοὺς/ σχήσομεν ἔντοσθεν μεγάρων, μάλα περ μεμαῶτας", 22.170f). Both threads are finally brought together in the martial and striking image of Odysseus, Telemachus and the two herdsmen armed on the threshold, confronting the suitors (22.203f; cf. below on 24.496-9, also 23.366-72).

---

[643] Cf. Finley (1978) 195-7; Korenjak (1998) 138-42 adduces a number of other parallels, all implicitly presenting Odysseus as the superior hero; cf. Rutherford (1991-3) 44f.

[644] His suggestion to try and escape in order to raise support in the town (22.75-8) both proves the importance of Odysseus' closing the doors earlier (cf. 21.359-93a) and implicitly foreshadows the confrontation with the suitors' relatives in bk.24.

[645] This line describes a typically Odyssean moment (cf. e.g. 5.297 and the note above; also 23.205; 24.345f), in which eventual success is enhanced by the fear of failure just before the narrative turns around. The *Aeneid* similarly starts with its protagonist in trouble (extemplo Aeneae solvuntur frigore membra, *Aen.* 1.92), yet it ends with the line transferred to his opponents and indeed intensified to a description of actual death (*Aen.* 12.951f; with vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras, 11.831 added).

An Epic Battle

It is only at this moment, after Odysseus and his supporters have already proved their valour, that Athene appears in the disguise of Mentor (22.205f; cf. below on 24.502ff), marking the beginning of a truly "epic" battle by her divine presence.[646] Recognizing her, Odysseus offers a disguised prayer for support (22.207-10), while the suitors once more prove the justice of the τίσις as Agelaus ignorantly threatens the goddess herself with retribution (22.213-23; note "σῷ δ᾽ αὐτοῦ κράατι τίσεις", 218b) and claims that their own will is to be fulfilled ("ὧδε γὰρ ἡμέτερόν γε νόον τελέεσθαι ὀΐω", 22.215).[647] Athene turns Agelaus' insult into a rebuke to Odysseus (22.224-6) in a taunting, but playful attitude resembling the one she had displayed earlier following the conversation which reassured Penelope to set the contest (20.32-5). As on that occasion, she stresses how much he has already achieved, but uses it now as an incentive for the future (22.231f). Even her claim that Odysseus is not as effective as he used to be can be seen as a veiled encouragement insofar as it refers back to their cooperation in taking Troy, which Odysseus had himself mentioned as a pertinent parallel at the beginning of this part of the poem (22.226-30; cf.13.389-91). She now exclusively focuses on Odysseus himself as achieving the end of Troy (note "σῇ δ᾽ ἥλω βουλῇ Πριάμου πόλις εὐρυάγυια", 22.230), while his prayer had emphasized her crucial support instead. The unusual reference of "βουλῇ" in this context not to the will of a god is especially striking and significantly enhances Odysseus' standing. Indeed, Athene finally turns to reveal her intention to fulfill his initial request, while still preserving her disguise as Mentor ("ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε δεῦρο, πέπον, παρ᾽ ἔμ᾽ ἵστασο καὶ ἴδε ἔργον,/ ὄφρ᾽ εἰδῇς οἷός τοι ἐν ἀνδράσι δυσμενέεσσι/ Μέντωρ Ἀλκιμίδης εὐεργεσίας ἀποτίνειν", 22.233-5; cf. 13.386-91). Her use of "ἀποτίνειν" here, also echoing Odysseus' own former expression (13.386), is doubly significant since the favour which is to be repaid consists precisely in the τίσις for the insulting suitors.

Characteristically, even this divine promise of support is followed not by an immediate victory, briefly narrated; instead Athene's appearance heralds an even more impressive deferral of closure through a further πεῖρα of the protagonist: ...<u>οὔ πω</u> πάγχυ δίδου ἑτεραλκέα νίκην,/ ἀλλ᾽ <u>ἔτ᾽</u> ἄρα σθένεός τε καὶ ἀλκῆς πειρήτιζεν/ ἠμὲν Ὀδυσσῆος ἠδ᾽ υἱοῦ κυδαλίμοιο (22.236-8;

[646] On the echoes of Iliadic battle narrative in the following scenes cf. e.g. Heubeck (1992) 379 *ad* 24.178-85; Finley (1978) 196f. For divine presence as enhancing the action cf. Pucci (1998c) 69; Griffin (1980) 179; Feeney (1991) 52f; also Amphimedon's summary in 24.182-5.

[647] Murnaghan (1987) 89f sees his insult as evidence for the suitors' failure to recognize a god and to recognize the standards of human society, he is therefore doubly guilty.

cf. 18.346-8=20.284-6). The fact that she watches events from the roof (22.239f) should be understood as underlining the importance of the moment.[648] A series of similar scenes in the *Iliad* offers a helpful intertext: there the duel of Hector and Aias is initiated and given added weight by Athene and Apollo, who watch them, disguised as vultures (*Il*. 7.58-62). Also relevant is the parallel climactic scene of Hector's death, which is watched by all gods (*Il*. 22.166a). In fact, Athene's seeming disappearance and the delay she has effected encourage the remaining suitors; thus Agelaus turns around Eurymachus' earlier statement: "ἤδη σχήσει ἀνὴρ ὅδε χεῖρας ἀάπτους" (22.248; cf. 70 quoted above). Still, even during the πεῖρα Athene does not allow Odysseus' life to be put in danger and both charges of the suitors on the whole miss their intended targets (22.255-9; 272-80 with 256=273), while Odysseus and his supporters are emphatically successful (22.260-71; 281-96).

The epic nature of the battle and Odysseus' stature as an epic hero of Achillean proportions are more explicitly advertised in the narrative through Athene's use of the aegis to frighten the suitors (22.297f) as well as through the following series of similes (22.299-309), which lead into the full closure of the episode. Again there is a striking parallel to the *Iliad* where Athene employs the aegis to help Achilles (*Il*. 18.203-38, also including a simile). But it should be noted that his end is the successful retrieval of Patroclus' dead body, whose νόστος Achilles has forfeited (cf. *Il*. 18.238), whereas Odysseus' end is to kill all his enemies and save his allies without exception, as a triumphant conclusion of his νόστος. Again Odysseus appears to be the more successful hero (cf. 11.467-540, 24.15-204). We may add that his τίσις, too, has a more positive and therefore potentially more satisfying aspect to it, since Achilles' end of revenge on the Trojans for Patroclus' death (cf. *Il*. 21.133-5; also 22.271bf to Hector) still will not enable him to regain what he has lost, while Odysseus' τίσις on the suitors will in the end result in the complete restoration of his position on Ithaca (cf. below on book 24).

The Moral

Odysseus also lives up to the model of Achilles through the manner in which he comes to kill the last surviving suitor, Leodes, who had also been the first to try the bow (cf. 21.144-66), adding to the episode's coherence. Leodes' appeal to be spared begins like that of Lycaon to Achilles (22.312≈*Il*. 21.74), and both supplicants point out why they should be dissociated from those who deserve to be killed as offenders against either Achilles or Odysseus, be it Hector's

[648] Austin (1975) 247 draws attention to the swallow's arrival as heralding the beginning of spring.

full brothers or the unjust suitors (22.313-9; *Il*. 21.95f).[649] Like his model, the *Odyssey's* protagonist refuses the appeal (22.325), arguing that Leodes too, in particular as the suitors' sacrificer, must have wished for his τέλος νόστοιο to be far away (22.321-4; note "τηλοῦ ἐμοὶ νόστοιο τέλος γλυκεροῖο γενέσθαι", 323). The fact that a character's attitude towards closure can thus determine their own end underlines its preeminence in the *Odyssey*.

The beginning of the epic battle of the τίσις had been marked by a turn towards the theme of the epic singer and his song (cf. 21.404-22.7); it returns at its closure. This time, however, the subject is not Odysseus himself, likened to a narrator, but the actual singer Phemius. He asks to be spared in exactly the same words as Leodes had (22.344=312), but adds a special argument explaining his skills (22.345-9). It must be a measure of the value of his profession that only he is successful with his request (22.375-8). The herald Medon, on the other hand, has no need for formulating such a request as he is absolved in advance by Telemachus (22.357-60); his case serves Odysseus to draw a concluding moral for the τίσις: "ὡς κακοεργίης εὐεργεσίη μέγ' ἀμείνων" (22.374; cf. also Athene, 235). This moral is reinforced when he stops Eurycleia from expressing her satisfaction at the suitors' death (22.407-12); indeed he rather identifies the gods and the suitors' own actions as responsible for his success (22.413-16; note "τούσδε δὲ μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε θεῶν καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα", 413), before going on also to have the unfaithful servants killed (22.417ff).[650] First removing the bodies from the house and cleaning it, Odysseus defers waking Penelope, whom Eurycleia recognizes to have been purposefully put to sleep by a god (22.428-32; note "μή πω", 431).[651] It is only after the completion of all these tasks and the restoration of order inside the house (22.479f; note τετέλεστο δὲ ἔργον, 479b), that he asks her to go and fetch Penelope (22.482bf).

Doubting Closure

In contrast to the recognition of Odysseus by the female servants (22.498-501), Penelope's second, climactic meeting with Odysseus himself is postponed in typically Odyssean

[649] However, Leodes lacks self-awareness of the refusal and his approaching death as the suitors always do (contrast Lycaon; *Il*. 18.89-93).

[650] Finley (1978) 197 notes that the judgement of Odysseus' crew expressed in the prologue and Zeus' of Aegisthus are repeated here (so the focalization of protagonist and divine judgement coincide); cf. Murnaghan (1987) 77 on 22.414f (=23.65f), seeing Odysseus' triumph as "also an exemplary vindication of the laws of hospitality".

[651] Fenik (1974) 162 sees a doublet of Odysseus' sleep on the Phaeacian ship in that he too awakes to a disbelief of the achievement of the end desired.

fashion by a dispute, which now arises between her and Eurycleia (23.1-87).[652] These delays also serve to underline the importance of the meeting and the eventual recognition. Three speeches by Eurycleia all inform Penelope of the successful closure of Odysseus' μῦθος with the achievement of both νόστος and τίσις (23.7-9; 26-31; 55-7), providing retrospective summaries of the second half of the poem. They, together with her last answer to Penelope's incredulity, also offer increasing, and increasingly personal detail, from a bare statement of fact (23.7-9) to a revelation of Odysseus' disguise and Telemachus' early recognition of his father (23.28-30) to Eurycleia's own involvement, both as a personal witness to the closure of the τίσις (23.40-51) and to Odysseus' identity through her recognition of the σῆμα of the scar (23.73-9). Penelope remains wary to accept this reported closure, even - or especially - the one she has most desired, as the nurse notes (23.5f; also "νῦν δ' ἤδη τόδε μακρὸν ἐέλδωρ ἐκτετέλεσται", 54). Her reaction corresponds to that displayed by Telemachus at the beginning of the first and by Eumaeus at the beginning of the second part of the poem, when they were asked, by Athene and Odysseus respectively, to recognize the true closure of Odysseus' μῦθος. It also mirrors Odysseus' own characteristic caution. Still, a slow and gradual progress towards conviction can be detected in her responses: they change from simple disbelief (23.10-24) to doubts about the practical possibility of achieving the τίσις successfully (23.35-8) to acceptance of its presence through divine agency, but not of the νόστος and Odysseus' identity (23.59-68) to taking the step to personal observation, even if she pointedly mentions only her son and the dead suitors (23.81-4). Significantly, she is reluctant to believe what she is told because of the magnitude of the feat (23.35-8; note also "ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅδε μῦθος ἐτήτυμος, ὡς ἀγορεύεις", 62); this can be understood, by implication, to reflect on the skill of the *Odyssey* itself in conveying such an amazing story.

Penelope's move away from scepticism is confirmed by her thoughts on entering the hall (note once more the mention of the threshold, 23.88; cf. 17.341, 21.44), wondering whether to question or immediately acknowledge her husband (23.85-7).[653] Yet her continuing indecision and silence once she is with Odysseus (23.89-95) cause Telemachus to voice concern at the uniqueness of her reaction (23.100-3) and at the delay of her recognition - and thus of the closure

[652] On the placement of the reunion here cf. Murnaghan (1987) 43f.

[653] Note that the alternative is expressed in terms of closeness versus distance: ἀπάνευθε (23.86), παρστᾶσα (23.87).

of the scene (23.96-9), a concern which has also exercised many critics.[654] As in their previous encounter, it is not so much Odysseus testing Penelope, but her testing him, or perhaps a mutual test. It could be compared, or seen as the counterpart, to Odysseus' and Athene's dialogue in book 13, where both were quite sure about each other's identity and intentions, but still looked for confirmation.[655] In response to her son, Penelope insists on recognizing Odysseus by σήματα of their own (23.107b-10), and he is happy to prove himself through another πεῖρα ("Τηλέμαχ', ἦ τοι μητέρ᾽ ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔασον/ πειράζειν ἐμέθεν· τάχα δὲ φράσεται καὶ ἄρειον", 23.113f), pointing out that his rags are still present and recognition in this sense not yet visibly achieved (23.115f; note "νῦν", "οὔ πώ").[656] He presses on with his μῦθος - presumably intentionally in view of Penelope's delay - as he wonders about the future and, possibly, a repeated departure in consequence of his τίσις (23.117-22). To point out the danger he may still have to face not only effectively prepares for the eventual narration of the aftermath, but may also be understood as implicitly directed at Penelope and her now obsolete delaying tactics.[657] Indeed, Telemachus' inability to reply otherwise than by referring the issue back to his father, and perhaps to Athene, confirms that Odysseus' original speech was aimed at Penelope as much as at him (23.124-8). Thus Odysseus himself offers a summary of what is to happen, in this case a pretended γάμος to conceal the τίσις for the time being from the Ithacans (23.130-8a; realized 141-52), while himself deciding further action in the country (23.138b-40; cf. below 359f).[658] He is now able to take fuller control of his μῦθος, and the narrative; his assumption of a function previously often filled by Athene, summarizing and directing events, illustrates the progress made and corresponds to Achilles' increasingly important and controlling position in the *Iliad*. Odysseus finally restores

---

[654] Cf. Fenik (1974) 64-74; Katz (1991) 166; a selected bibliography is offered by Heubeck (1992) 313f. The reunion is also expected by Eurycleia (23.52f), who is similarly surprised (23.70-3).

[655] On mutuality cf. Goldhill (1991) 17 n.31; Rutherford (1986) 160 with n.77; Austin (1975) 181: "The ideal of harmony between two persons is the keystone of the poem, the *telos* to which it moves." The capacity to wait until reassured by a test makes Penelope like Odysseus in 13.333-8; cf. Katz (1991) 163; Murnaghan (1987) 143: "Penelope's attention to the example of Helen and consequent hesitation to recognize Odysseus corresponds to his attention to the example of Agamemnon and consequent hesitation to identify himself to Penelope."

[656] For clothing as an expression of status cf. Fenik (1974) 61ff, summarizing Schadewaldt (1959) on Nausicaa. Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 141 on the abandonment of disguises as prerequisite.

[657] This anticipation of the aftermath, worked into Penelope's recognition, has often been criticized or athetized; cf. Fenik (1974) 64-74 with references on 23.116-64.

[658] The suitors' fiction of the γάμος as the end is thus ironically utilized by Odysseus himself; cf. Katz (1991) 168.

his own appearance by getting washed and dressed (23.153-5), indeed Athene returns his own looks to him, while enhancing them as she had done during his meeting with Nausicaa (23.156-63 with 157-62=6.230-5). Not only does this parallel frame Odysseus' absence and presence, the beginning and end of his νόστος, but the explicit mention of an artist's skill in the simile perhaps again draws attention to the role of the narrator behind that of Athene (23.159-62; note χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει, 161b).

Recognizing the Husband

Repeating Telemachus' description of Penelope's unique endurance, Odysseus then opens the way for his recognition by asking for his bed to be prepared (23.166-72; with 168-70=100-2).[659] Looking back to her secure knowledge of the past Odysseus (23.174-6), and perhaps implicitly hinting at the πεῖρα which follows, Penelope finally tests Odysseus by setting a trap to reveal his own knowledge of their shared past, the σῆμα of the bed (23.177-81a; note ὣς ἄρ᾽ ἔφη πόσιος πειρωμένη, 181a). Thus provoked, he indeed identifies himself, and provides a secure basis for the recognition by offering a long narrative of how he built this bed (23.181b-201; note "μέγα σῆμα τέτυκται/ ἐν λέχει ἀσκητῷ· τὸ δ᾽ ἐγὼ κάμον οὐδέ τις ἄλλος", 189bf).[660] Odysseus' final doubts about the bed's continued steadfastness (".../ ἤ μοι ἔτ᾽ ἔμπεδόν ἐστι, γύναι, λέχος, ἦέ τις ἤδη/ ἀνδρῶν ἄλλοσε θῆκε, ταμὼν ὕπο πυθμέν᾽ ἐλαίης", 23.202-4) may in a sense be understood as referring to Penelope herself.[661] However, the σήματα he offers ensure recognition and thus λύσις for her (ὣς φάτο, τῆς δ᾽ αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ,/ σήματ᾽ ἀναγνούσῃ, 23.205-6a; cf. 24.345f). Interestingly, this description of physical λύσις has now become a positive sign of resolution rather than threatening premature closure as before, when it referred to Odysseus himself (5.297, 406; 22.147).

---

[659] Odysseus' mention of their bed is described as "surely unconsciously", prompting Penelope's test, by Heubeck (1992) 330f *ad* 23.168-72; however, she has explicitly announced - and he agreed to - a πεῖρα (cf. above).

[660] Peradotto (1990) 47 convincingly argues that the remarkable construction of the bed again draws attention to the poet's construction here (cf. above on Hector's σῆμα at the end of the *Iliad*). Lynn-George (1988) 240 sees the reconstruction of the house symbolized in the σῆμα here as a contrast to the homecoming of the dead in *Iliad* 24. Murnaghan (1987) 115 with n.30 notes the central position occupied by the bed in the house, which may be brought into connection with the final move of the narrative towards the centre from the margins as indicated by the repeated mention of the threshold.

[661] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 116, also 140: "The fixity of the bed can be seen as symbolizing the permanence of marriage in a variety of suggestive ways; for Odysseus it does so specifically because it represents a permanent achievement that cannot be challenged by any rival", while Peradotto (1990) 160 rather too generally sees Odysseus' doubts as a realization of any sign's instability. - The mention of the olive tree (linked with Athene) recalls the opening of the second part of the poem, where Odysseus was landed near it (cf. 13.122, 172). This adds to the links already suggested that establish a correspondence between beginnings and endings inside the poem.

The importance of the sign is also the focus of the conclusion of Penelope's explanatory speech (23.225-30; note "νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ ἤδη σήματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας", 225), in which she holds up her own cautious approach as preferable to the unthinking one of Helen (23.215-21). We have just seen the many implicit, as well as explicit, comparisons of Odysseus with Achilles, and Penelope has been favourably compared to Clytemnestra; so this passage too should be considered carefully for its possible implications about how the character herself, and potentially the narrative of which she forms a part, is to be judged.[662] From the vantage point of closure, Helen's incautious act has achieved little for herself, since she has ended where she began (23.218-21; cf. book 4).[663] Yet from the point of view of Odysseus and Penelope it represents the beginning of their grief (23.222-4; note "πρῶτα", 224); from this perspective, her action has provided the material of which their μῦθος is made ("θεοὶ δ' ὤπαζον ὀϊζύν,/ οἳ νῶϊν ἀγάσαντο παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντε/ ἦβης ταρπῆναι καὶ γήραος οὐδὸν ἱκέσθαι", 23.210b-12). We have seen how the *Iliad* too only explicitly identifies a beginning for its wider story close to its own end (cf. above on 24.24-30; p.101); this technique is thus also applied here. The subsequent simile of sailors, who finally reach land after having been wrecked by Poseidon (23.233-40), similarly refers to a beginning by echoing Odysseus' initial situation in book 5, at the same time as clearly emphasizing full and secure closure (note κακότητα φυγόντες, 23.238b). By retelling a beginning full of despair before turning to the happy end, this simile imaginatively draws in the whole period of grief at its very closure.[664]

Considering the Future

But the narrative not only looks back to the beginning as it approaches its closure, it also turns to consider both intervening events and, crucially, the future. Athene's intervention to lengthen the night may be read on a metanarrative level too, since she delays it on the edge of

---

[662] Katz (1991) 165f sees the fact that Penelope traps Odysseus as marking her as a potential Clytemnestra and "endow[ing] the *anagnōrismos* with ambiguity", concluding, 186: "Thus, Penelope refuses closure to her own *mythos*, and the wide circulation in antiquity of stories depicting a wanton Penelope may have...[to do] with ambiguities inscribed in the text of the *Odyssey* itself." I believe that on the contrary these comparisons, or alternative plots and closures, only serve to point out how different (and how much like her husband) Penelope is.

[663] It seems a typically Odyssean notion to hold that foreknowledge of closure would have led to a different course of action being taken (23.218-21); this is seen as a reason to athetize by ΣV φ.218; cf. Katz (1991) 182-7 with bibliography. Odysseus too had referred to Helen as the "beginning" in 11.438f to Agamemnon.

[664] Note the uncharacteristic use of οὔ πω (23.240), previously a marker of absence, to mark their happy embrace, illustrating the miraculous event of his return. On the present simile cf. Murnaghan (1987) 44-6. There is also a specific parallel to the simile describing Odysseus in 5.394-9; cf. Moulton (1977) 128-30; Austin (1975) 141: "Both sailors [Odysseus and Penelope] are at last home from the sea."

the narrative as much as of the world (23.241-6; note νύκτα μὲν ἐν περάτῃ δολιχὴν σχέθεν, 243).[665] It mirrors the future extension of the μῦθος itself as predicted by Teiresias, which Odysseus now discloses to Penelope (23.248-53; note "ὦ γύναι, οὐ γάρ πω πάντων ἐπὶ πείρατ᾽ ἀέθλων/ ἤλθομεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ὄπισθεν ἀμέτρητος πόνος ἔσται,/ πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπός, τὸν ἐμὲ χρὴ πάντα τελέσσαι", 248-50). The resemblance of theme and wording to both the programmatic proem (esp. 23.249f) and the critical, or rather liminal, situation in book 5 (esp. 23.248) surprisingly seems to suggest the continued absence of closure. This paradox that closure threatens to be postponed once again even near the narrative's own closure is stressed by Odysseus' hyperbolic emphasis on the immeasurable extent of the continuation of his μῦθος (note e.g. "ἀμέτρητος", 23.249).[666]

While this passage in particular has attracted the attention of critics questioning the validity, or more specifically, the closural force of Teiresias' prophecy, I believe the scene needs to be viewed as a whole and set in relation to the whole poem.[667] Penelope resists Odysseus' suggestion of a preliminary substitute closure through sleep (23.254f; note "ἤδη", 254). She points out that this closure of sleep and of their reunion is already secured (23.257-9; note "εὐνή", 257) and may therefore be put off at will in favour of extended narrative (23.260-2; note "εἶπ᾽ ἄγε μοι τὸν ἄεθλον, ἐπεὶ καὶ ὄπισθεν, ὀΐω,/ πεύσομαι, αὐτίκα δ᾽ ἐστὶ δαήμεναι οὔ τι

[665] Heubeck (1992) 340 *ad* 23.243-6 finds περάτῃ difficult and argues it is "better understood in a temporary sense" (cf. ΣV ψ.243), but offers a hint at how it could be read by also noting its derivation from πεῖραρ (cf. Eustathius 1947, 11-18). Oswald (1993) claims 23.245 as the end according to Garvie (1995) 154, athetizing 23.246; but cf. Garvie (1993) 154: "She assumes too readily that the climax of the poem must also be its end"; her suggestion is also rejected by Jones (1997a) 38 n.9. - Odysseus' narrative here contributes to lengthen both their dialogue and the *Odyssey's* own narrative; cf. Murnaghan (1987) 145f: "This conversation acts out on a small scale the postponement of Odysseus' return that is its subject. In winning her acceptance of his return, Odysseus achieves a success that is qualified, but also strengthened, by acknowledgment of the odds against it."

[666] ἀμέτρητον is used in a similar manner to express Penelope's despair in 19.512 "(πένθος ἀμέτρητον"), a despair that has of course been shown to have been premature, *pace* Peradotto (1990) 87 who seems to neglect the progress of the narrative. Odysseus' statement here could be read not only as expressing the character's dislike of another journey, but - on a metanarrative level - as an explanation why it does not form part of the present narrative other than through anticipations (cf. above on the poem's chronological scope p.164).

[667] Felson-Rubin (1994) 5 sees the final resolution of the quarrel with Poseidon as put beyond the reaches of the text, note 5f: "The *Odyssey* refuses to adumbrate these possible plots and new adventures, but it clears space for them in the audience's imagination - through Teiresias' prophecy, which Odysseus repeats to Penelope..." The fact that further travels are anticipated makes S. West (1989) 114 call this "a bitter-sweet ending"; it is interpreted by Goldhill (1991) 23 as signifying that "[t]he social identity of the man formulated by his *nostos*, by the relations contructed in this *nostos*, is, then, not yet completed"; Peradotto (1990) 88f sees the prophecy as unmarked in outcome, blurring the line between uncertainty and certainty; cf. above p.164.

χέρειον", 261f).[668] Her view of the situation echoes that of the Phaeacians in book 11 concerning the πομπή (11.328-76), who had likewise made room for more narrative (the epic comparisons with Agamemnon and Achilles; cf. above p.169). It also encapsulates the narrative strategy of the *Odyssey* as a whole, in which closure is always already secure and may thus always "not yet" be present.[669] In this instance, though, her request significantly opens a way not to rebuild Odysseus' identity through the narrative of his past, but to seal his achievement through the narrative of his future, as he repeats Teiresias' prophecy up to and including his eventual death (23.266-84; cf. 11.119-37). Through its repeated narration, the anticipated aftermath of the protagonist is brought as close as possible to its true position in the chronology of the μῦθος and serves to underline the narrative's own move towards closure.

We have seen how the *Iliad* utilizes the vantage point of closure in a special way, namely by allowing Achilles a unique foreknowledge of his own death which becomes more insistent towards the poem's own closure. The *Odyssey* employs the same strategy here. However, while Achilles generalizes from his own situation which he does not disclose to Priam, the *Odyssey* continues the theme of Odysseus as the narrator of his own μῦθος, including its eventual end.[670] For although Odysseus focuses first on the repeated wanderings involved (23.266f; note "πολλὰ ἄστεα", 267), he moves from this image of the continuation of his story to the promise of an easy death amidst his prosperous people (23.281b-4). This affirmation of a satisfactory closure even beyond the reaches of the narrative implicitly contrasts with Achilles' less happy outlook (note "τὰ δέ μοι φάτο πάντα τελεῖσθαι", 23.284 in contrast to "ἀμέτρητος", 23.249 quoted above).

---

[668] The security of closure as the crucial factor that allows Penelope (and Athene, 23.241-6) to still postpone the reunion has been neglected by those critics who identify her as a general agent for the deferral of closure; cf. e.g. Katz (1991) 187: "[The deferral of closure] figures especially in the closing section of the poem, and Penelope is its particular agent... The ending of the story takes place instead under the sign of its indefinite continuity" (but Odysseus' anticipated death forecloses that possibility; cf. on bk.11 above), also 11; Murnaghan (1987) 146 is more subtle: "Her role in the narrative is a retarding one: she causes a series of delays to the poem's happy ending that correspond to qualifications of it."

[669] Cf. Falkner (1989a) 50f, who argues that the happy end is both secured and postponed, though he concludes that a comfortable closure is eschewed.

[670] Note too the different ways in which Achilles and Odysseus acquire their privileged information: the one mainly through his relationship with his divine mother (but note the predictions by his horse Xanthus and by his enemy Hector); the other has worked for it himself by achieving the νέκυια to consult the dead seer Teiresias. (It is also typical that Odysseus' view is eventually confirmed by the ultimate authority of Zeus, cf. below p.225.) Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 148-52, concluding: "Odysseus' successive experiences of acting as his own poet, ..., are expressions of just how rare and complete his success in the *Odyssey* is. ...The result is a powerful statement of this hero's extraordinary ability to survive, to achieve the evasion of death, the delayed mortality, that is the closest he can come to the direct experience of immortality."

Penelope echoes this last thought and in fact understands the prophecy as a promise of future escape from troubles (23.286f; note "ἐλπωρή τοι ἔπειτα κακῶν ὑπάλυξιν ἔσεσθαι", 287).[671] We should note that her expression of "hope" rather than certainty shows a specifically human perspective on the future, which will finally be confirmed by Zeus' divine knowledge and begun to be realized through Athene's divine action (cf. below).[672] Thus, the scene ends with the reaffirmation of closure, although its beginning appeared to threaten its extended absence.

Blending Past and Present

It is after this clarification, and importantly also acceptance, of the ending of Odysseus' μῦθος beyond the *Odyssey's* own narrative by the main characters themselves that the closure of the εὐνή is at last realized: it reiterates the achievement of their "welcome" reunion and significantly blends past and present (οἱ μὲν ἔπειτα/ ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἵκοντο, 23.295bf; cf. 233-40). It also represents the fulfillment of the suitors' mistaken end of the γάμος in its true meaning, turning the pretended marriage festivities (23.130-8a; 141-52) into a satisfactory, true closure.[673] Indeed, the reunion of husband and wife as an important moment in the narrative has been stressed throughout the poem in that it represented the end most desired by both Odysseus and Penelope.[674] Note also the choice of θεσμός which appears to draw attention to the ritual nature of the reunion and which may in turn be compared to the funeral rituals that contribute to a wider sense of closure in the *Iliad*.[675] Funerals also often offer closure in ancient tragedies, and the wedding as an expression of a happy ending is familiar from later

---

[671] Cf. Falkner (1989a) 50f; Segal (1994) 193f, 224 though he himself sees Odysseus' death as a negative reminder of mortality, 37f; Murnaghan (1987) 174f: "It [Odysseus' tale] is, rather, a story that allows...continued life, at least for a time - the happiest ending a mortal hero's story can have." Peradotto (1990) 86f notes that the reading of this passage is "a microcosmic icon of how one reads the entire poem". His own emphasis is on "ἀμέτρητος πόνος" (23.249), he also sees Penelope's statement as ambivalent, 73. Katz (1991) 190f sees critical doubts about the interpretation of her words as due to her obscure meaning, reflecting on Penelope as "a figure of indeterminacy in the *Odyssey*", but I am not sure that this is a valid or necessary conclusion.

[672] Pucci (1998e) 163 discusses the wider significance of Penelope's mortality. Penelope thus provides closure, an escape from the endlessness threatened by Circe, or e.g. the Sirens. But a note of endlessness will be transferred to the notion of family succession and continued rule; cf. below p.237.

[673] Cf. Heubeck (1992) 345 *ad* 23.297-9 referring to Hölscher (1972) 162.

[674] Odysseus had refused Calypso's offer of immortality in favour of Penelope when he was first introduced in bk.5 and the offer of marriage to Nausicaa in bk.7. We have also noted the parallel to the initial encounter of Odysseus and Athene in bk.13. Odysseus' and Penelope's own first meeting in bk.19 had already been characterized by the same tension (displayed in the scene just discussed) between disguise and recognition and the long, suspenseful deferral of closure (still withheld then).

[675] There has, however, been some doubt about the exact meaning of θεσμός (23.296); cf. e.g. Peradotto (1990) 160f.

literature too.[676] In particular, there have been suggestions that ἀσπάσιοι is significantly alluded to by Apollonius in *Argonautica* 4.1781, though he may be seen to refer to a climactic scene for thematic reasons as much as to an ending proper for structural reasons.[677]

D. Fowler (1989) takes the view that Apollonius may have been influenced by the views of Aristarchus and Aristophanes as well as the *Odyssey* as such in his choice of closure (104 with n.111).[678] Indeed, the end of the εὐνή appears to have assumed particular weight in the readings of these critics, since they are said to have regarded 23.296 as the "πέρας" or "τέλος" of the narrative.[679] Analysts in particular have viewed it as an ancient endorsement of their own method, while unitarians in turn have attempted to disprove or weaken the analysts' arguments one by one.[680] There has therefore been a protracted discussion of the exact meaning and importance of their opinion, compounded by the problem of reported atheteses in the remainder of the text.[681] An interesting parallel is Eucleides' identification of Zeus' plot with a general desire, independent of Achilles' particular story, to punish human injustice, as the (thematic) goal of the *Iliad* (ὅπερ

---

[676] Cf. esp. Fusillo (1997) 214 on the Greek novel quoted above p.37; Schein (1996a) 27 sees the fact that "a harmonious marriage and an *oikos*" are portrayed as worthy of glory as "characteristic of the *Odyssey* and its genre"; Seaford (1994) 37 compares "the pattern of danger and separation eventually concluded by the joy of a wedding" to comedy and the ancient novel, cf. too 73.

[677] Cf. above p.37; the suggestion of a specific closural allusion is similarly rejected by Heubeck (1992) 344 *ad* 23.297; S. West (1989) 135 n.22; Erbse (1972) 170 n.12. It was revived by Rossi (1968) *passim*; cf. also Moulton (1974) 156f on the discussion.

[678] He also refers to P.Oxy. 2883 (?Rhianus; *SH* fr.947.4) as another possible instance of the influence of 23.296. But note the sceptical view expressed by Hunter (1993) 120 n.77. Note too Lloyd-Jones/Parsons (1983) 449 themselves: "coronis finem libri indicat; totius carminis finem haud credideris; sed vocem ἀσπ. hic consulto positam esse optime commonuerunt A.H. Griffiths, M.W. Haslam, cum ultimus *Odysseae* versus (ψ 296, secundum Aristarchum et Aristophanem) ab ἀσπάσιοι incipiat, ultimus *Argonauticorum* ab ἀσπασίως: vid. L.E. Rossi, SIFC 96 (1968) 151, Livrea ad A.R. 4.1781."

[679] This is transmitted in ΣHMQ and ΣMV ψ.296 and Eustathius 1948, 49ff who continues to criticize atheteses of "πολλὰ τῶν καιριωτάτων" (e.g. the scene with Laertes; 1948, 52-1949,2); cf. Heubeck (1992) 342f *ad* 23.297 with bibliography.

[680] That the closure of the *Odyssey* has been questioned more than the *Iliad's* because of the comments of the scholia is argued by Clarke (1981) 202; Erbse (1972) 166. Overviews are offered e.g. by Heubeck (1992) 313f; Rutherford (1986) 161 n.82; Moulton (1974) 153f. Prominent among partisan discussions of bk.24 as well as bk.23 are on the analyst side esp. Page (1955) *passim*; S. West (1989) *passim*; Oswald (1993) *passim* - on the unitarian Erbse (1972) 177-250; Stößel (1975) 7, 153-72 and *passim*; Wender (1978) *passim*; Heubeck (1992) 342-5 *ad* 23.297; further references e.g. in Andreae/Flashar (1977) 243f n.52.

[681] Cf. e.g. Clarke (1981) 202; Heubeck (1992) 344 *ad* 23.297, who quotes ΣQV ψ.310-43 and ΣMV ω.1; Wender (1978) 10-12; Stößel (1975) 11. Erbse (1972) 166-77 discusses the possible meaning of Aristarchus' and Aristophanes' use of "πέρας/τέλος"; Eustathius 1949, 1f *ad* ψ.296 mentions as a possible explanation that they may have thought of καίρια (the end of the main plot), an explanation judged unlikely by a number of critics mentioned in Stößel (1975) 179f n.1. The ancient evidence is regarded as inconclusive by Moulton (1974) 157.

ἔστι τὸ τέλος τῆς Ἰλιάδος; according to ΣbT A.5). But I believe that without further evidence it is impossible to reach any more detailed conclusion than that the Alexandrian critics felt the reunion of husband and wife to be a major element in the closure of Odysseus' νόστος, compared to the scenes that follow (whether athetized or not, in part or completely). Regardless of whether they meant the actual end of the poem or a climactic event, their opinion therefore serves as a valuable indication of where Alexandrian critics could imagine a story to end.[682] Their comment, however, does nothing to invalidate the view that the episodes following this scene are prepared for in, and integral to, the poem.

Enjoying the Past

If we return to a consideration of the narrative itself, the following three lines which return to Telemachus and the servants, describing how they go to sleep, are also rich in closural imagery (23.297-9; note παῦσαν, twice 298; also εὐνάζοντο, 299) and might seem to offer as satisfactory a point for closing the narrative as 23.296. Yet Odysseus and Penelope are excluded from this closure as their lovemaking - characteristically for the *Odyssey* - is instead followed by a similarly enjoyable exchange of μύθοι, which in fact delays sleep and defers narrative closure (23.308f). The *Odyssey'*s closural strategy is once more significantly both similar to and different from the *Iliad*'s: the meeting of Odysseus and Penelope to some extent resembles the concluding meeting between Achilles and Priam, as both pairs weep (23.231f; cf. *Il*. 24.507-12), discuss the future (23.247-87; cf. *Il*. 24.649-72) and finally go to bed (23.289-96; cf. *Il*. 24.673-6).[683] Yet in contrast to the situation in that poem both participants here in the end share the same bed in a fully joyful reunion. This joyful reaction to their narratives stands in contrast to the grief

[682] Most scholars now seem to agree that their opinion is mainly of historical value, *pace* S. West (1989) who holds, 114, that this impression may be due to "the lack of an up-to-date statement of the separatist case of the whole" and who goes on to argue, 118, that Aristophanes and Aristarchus tend to be textual, not literary critics. Cf. e.g. Stanford (1965) 16, who believes that the Alexandrian scholars were misled by the value their own culture attached to romanticism; Wender (1978) 11; generally Garvie (1994) 36 with n.116. Erbse (1972) 175f notes a parallel in the *Iliad* scholia (Λ.598) where the poem is said to end on Achilles' exploits; he links this with Aristotelian notions of dramatic structure where the last *epeisodion* is of less importance in the plot (cf. also the dramatic dihegeses mentioned above p.63). But note that Stanford (1965) 20 n.23 points out that Aristotle seems to contradict Aristarchus, when he paraphrases the end of the *Odyssey* as Odysseus' safety and the death of his enemies (*Poet*. 1455b16); cf. his description of its double structure: ...σύστασις, ἡ διπλῆν τε τὴν σύστασιν ἔχουσα καθάπερ ἡ Ὀδύσσεια καὶ τελευτῶσα ἐξ ἐναντίας τοῖς βελτίοσι καὶ χείροσιν (*Poet.* 1453a31-3).

[683] Cf. Hainsworth (1969) 40.

displayed in response to summaries all through the first part of the poem and may be regarded as an example of 'terminal modification' (23.301; note τερπέσθην μύθοισι).[684]

The enjoyment of Penelope and Odysseus in itself illustrates the fact that closure has been reached, according to an observation made earlier by Eumaeus ("μετὰ γάρ τε καὶ ἄλγεσι τέρπεται ἀνήρ,/ ὅς τις δὴ μάλα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ πόλλ᾽ ἐπαληθῇ", 15.400f). The retrospective direction of their narratives, both summarily rendered in indirect speech, too asserts that these events are indeed past, Penelope telling of the suitors (23.303-5; note πολλά, πολλὸς; cf. above on 1.1-4) and Odysseus of the troubles he both gave and was given (23.306f; note ὀϊζύσας).[685] Odysseus' adventures are then highlighted and recalled in a second, more detailed summary (23.310-43; note τοῦτ᾽ ἄρα δεύτατον εἶπεν ἔπος, 342a). Its structure is simple and clearly signalled, beginning at the chronological beginning (ἄρξατο, 23.310) and finally ending on the λύσις of sleep for Odysseus and Penelope too (23.342f; note λυσιμελὴς, λύων).[686] This corresponds to Achilles' final enjoyment of sleep with Briseis (*Il.* 24.675f).

Handling the Aftermath

Narrative strands such as the reaction of the suitors' relatives (cf. 23.117-40; also 20.41-3a), but also the crucial divine involvement in the μῦθος that had been prominent at the

[684] Described by Smith (1968) 59-63. Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 174: "Because the subject of the story is the same as the person telling it, there is no danger it will end with the unwelcome closure of its hero's death. Odysseus and Penelope have achieved the only conditions under which it is possible to hear a song about someone to whom one is personally tied with rejoicing rather than tears, conditions in which that person is actually and recognizably present." 'Terminal modification' had similarly featured in the *Iliad* with regard to Achilles' final acceptance of material reparation and of a shared meal (cf. p.122).

[685] Cf. de Jong (1997) 311; Erbse (1972) 232. The choice of ὀϊζύσας perhaps echoes the etymology of Odysseus' name as offered by Autolycus (cf. on 1.62), but certainly recalls the frequent use of the root concerning his sufferings (cf. p.152). Note too the change of being able to "tell all" (twice (ἀ)πάντα, 23.308f) after the incomplete narrative of the first half and the closural universality pointed out by Ford (1992) 76 n.34.

[686] This summary (like others) was reportedly athetized by Aristarchus; cf. Heubeck (1992) 346f *ad* 23.310-43 with bibliography; S. West (1989) 119 with n.24. But summaries are common in the *Odyssey*; cf. Wender (1978) 16-18; Garvie (1994) 25 with n.81. S. Richardson (1990) 88 offers an explanation of the unusual indirect speech here by arguing that Odysseus' bardlike voice merges with that of the poet. The chronologically linear and complete summary of Odysseus' wanderings could be interpreted as once more drawing attention to the skill of the *Odyssey's* own narrative structure by implicit comparison. For the principle cf. Callimachus' *Hymnus in Apollinem* 30-5, offering a caricature of the "easy composition" of hymnic poetry; cf. also Goldhill (1991) 49. It also validates Odysseus' first narrative to the Phaeacians according to Murnaghan (1987) 173; but note too his handling of the encounters with Circe, Calypso and Nausicaa as analyzed by Wender (1978) 16.

beginning of the poem are, however, still unresolved after the reunion of husband and wife.[687] Thus, Athene once again moves the narrative foward by finally introducing the new day (23.344-8a; cf. 241-6). The scene now begins to return from the clarification of the ultimate end of Odysseus' death to the preoccupations of the immediate future. It thus functions as a link between the achievement of closure inside Odysseus' house through τίσις and εὐνή to that of public closure, marking the acceptance of the end by all other characters as well.[688] Odysseus' final speech to Penelope encapsulates the movement of the whole episode from (confirming and accepting) the closure of his μῦθος as a whole to the resolution of the last loose ends in the narrative (23.350-65).[689] He begins by restating not simply the closure of their epic troubles, but more specifically the satisfaction with (at least that aspect of) his narrative: "ὦ γύναι, ἤδη μὲν πολέων κεκορήμεθ᾽ ἀέθλων/ ἀμφοτέρω, σὺ μὲν ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐμὸν πολυκηδέα νόστον/ κλαίουσ᾽· αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ Ζεὺς ἄλγεσι καὶ θεοὶ ἄλλοι/ ἱέμενον πεδάασκον ἐμῆς ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἴης" (23.350-3). Referring back to the situation at the beginning of the epic, its protagonist himself thematizes the welcome end of the theme of his trials raised and developed from his first appearance in book 5 onwards (note the perfect "κεκορήμεθ΄", 23.350).

Odysseus' success is then detailed in his description of how he will reach the end of the complete restoration of his property to its former wealth, following the achievement of their reunion (23.354-8; note the closural "νῦν δ᾽ ἐπεὶ ἀμφοτέρω πολυήρατον ἱκόμεθ᾽ εὐνήν", 354). However, he concludes his speech by returning to the potential threat to this happy ending posed by the suitors' supporters, anticipating a speedy response to his τίσις (23.362f; cf. 117-40; 20.41-3a). Again Odysseus' role in controlling the course of the narrative in these last episodes resembles that of Athene previously, as he prevents Penelope from any involvement in this

[687] Wender (1978) 65 sees a reconciliation prepared for by hints in 1.378-80; 2.143-5; 20.41-3; 23.111-40. For the presence of loose ends cf. Tracy (1990) 122; Beye (1993) 145; Rutherford (1992) 14f: "The public themes of the poem also demand resolution; ..." Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 96f argues for a continued narrative by a comparison to the 'prolepsis' of Teiresias' prophecy, which she sees as "articulated by a trend towards resolution and closure (of the problems, and ultimately of Odysseus' life)", but postulates an original continuation different from the present one. Reinhardt (1996) 114 sees it as a mark of epic in contrast to fairy tales to go beyond the reunion.

[688] This may be compared to the shift to the Trojans at the end of the *Iliad*. Seaford (1994) 38-41, also 73, sees the change from an individual to a public perspective in historical rather than narrative terms.

[689] Cf. Heubeck (1992) 349 *ad* 23.350-65, 354-65; a similar movement from the past to the future had been noted e.g. in their conversation in bk.19.

aftermath (23.361; 364f), and instead announces a visit to Laertes in the country (23.359f).[690] Odysseus ends by arming himself as well as Telemachus and the herdsmen, and Athene's help is safely speeding up their progress (23.366-72). These actions already indicate the approach of another epic showdown and the passage also already foreshadows success, in particular by recalling the earlier scene on the threshold of Odysseus' house (22.203f; also below on 24.496-9).

Thematizing Successful Closure

Before the aftermath of the τίσις is narrated, however, Odysseus' achievement is endorsed by two major epic characters in the second νέκυια (24.1-204), a scene regularly criticized but which provides closure to the theme of comparisons already hinted at in the proem (cf. 1.11f).[691] The dead suitors, and with them the audience, are led by Hermes to the underworld (24.1-14), as Priam had been guided by him to Achilles in the *Iliad* (*Il*. 24.331b-469a).[692] Indeed, this time too his journey brings Hermes to Achilles, who is now surrounded by his dead friends, namely Patroclus, Antilochus and Aias (24.15-18), thus already placing the scene *after* the Trojan war. Arguably this posteriority is to be seen not simply in terms of mythical but also narrative chronology, as is perhaps hinted at later in Agamemnon's summary account of Achilles' death and burial (24.76-84; note "χωρὶς δ᾽ Ἀντιλόχοιο, τὸν ἔξοχα τῖες ἁπάντων/ τῶν ἄλλων ἑτάρων

[690] Though he had not mentioned Laertes before, the idea of making further plans on the farm had been raised in 23.138b-40. On the role of Laertes throughout the poem cf. below on the scene itself.

[691] Criticism of the episode (and its rebuttal) begins in antiquity; cf. Petzl (1969) 44-66; Stößel (1975) 15. Prominent among modern critics are S. West (1989) 121-3; Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 94-107 reviving analyst arguments; amongst its defenders Hölscher (1989) 306; Wender (1978) 19-44; Stößel (1975) 15-77. The gods could be regarded as offering a second endorsement, on a different metanarrative (though not intertextual) level; cf. below.

[692] On the parallel in motif to the closing sequence of the *Iliad*, where Hermes appears in a function comparable to that of ψυχοπομπός, cf. Wender (1978) 29; also Deichgräber (1972) 125, who notes that the god guides Priam in stanza four, and souls in the fifth and last stanza of Horace *Odes* 1.10. S. West (1989) 122 and 138 n.49 disagrees on the usefulness of the parallel, but her argument does not gain conviction by her reference in n.48 to Aristarchus' alleged contention that Hermes never appears in the role of ψυχοπομπός in Homer otherwise (also mentioned in Page (1955) 117); cf. Wender (1978) 21-32 on the issue. On ancient discussions regarding the god cf. too Petzl (1969) 47-51. The argument of Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 104-6 is marred, in my view, by her unduly narrow view of what is possible in archaic Greek culture. Intriguingly, it would almost appear as if in this case the *Odyssey* returned the motif of Hermes' mission to its "original" use since the god here has not been sent specifically by Zeus, but seems to follow a standard occupation, whereas his appearance to guide the still living Priam in the *Iliad* looks like a special, symbolic adaptation.

μετὰ Πάτροκλόν γε θανόντα", 78f), which appears to attempt a reconciliation of the *Aethiopis'* version of the funeral with that of Patroclus in the *Iliad*, fusing the two variant endings.[693]

Achilles' ensuing conversation with Agamemnon is motivated, as in other cases, by the needs of the narrative itself rather than the characters': he returns to the evaluation of Agamemnon's μῦθος, which had been an important theme at the very beginning of the poem as well as of the first νέκυια (cf. e.g. 3.247-312; 4.512-37; 11.387-467).[694] Achilles stresses the awful nature of its closure (24.24-34; note the conclusion "νῦν δ' ἄρα σ' οἰκτίστῳ θανάτῳ εἵμαρτο ἁλῶναι", 34), beginning a cluster of strong adjectives (and adverbs) in this episode.[695] Agamemnon then contrasts his own death with Achilles' death and burial (24.36-97), which he regards as a greater achievement than his νόστος for two reasons: first, because of the special divine involvement in the funeral (cf. 24.41f; 47-92); second, because of the manner of his own death at home, which Achilles had already mentioned (24.93-7; cf. ὣς σὺ μὲν οὐδὲ θανὼν ὄνομ' ὤλεσας, ἀλλά τοι αἰεὶ/ πάντας πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους κλέος ἔσσεται ἐσθλόν, Ἀχιλλεῦ", 93f with "ἐν νόστῳ γάρ μοι Ζεὺς μήσατο λυγρὸν ὄλεθρον", 96). On a metatextual and intertextual level, the detailed description of the funeral in particular may also be interpreted as an attempt to emulate the *Iliad* and its closing strategy by including a burial to compare with that of Patroclus (*Il*. 23.127-897). Indeed, the narrative of the death of none other than Achilles in fact regularly supplements that poem's closure.[696] But as noted above, the coincidence with the *Aethiopis'* version of events as summarized by Proclus is striking, so that a wider intertextuality may

---

[693] Cf. Heubeck (1992) 368f *ad* 24.76-9; Kullmann (1960) 42; Hölscher (1989) 307; Stößel (1975) 45; though Eustathius records the opinion of some critics who seem to have thought mostly of a patchwork of Iliadic passages (1953, 43-6) according to Petzl (1969) 64f.

[694] Cf. above p.132. The fact that the souls speak without drinking blood as in bk.11 may also be explained in purely narrative terms: at this juncture it is impossible to again send a living person down to sacrifice, and it is easy enough to imagine a conversation, shadow to shadow, possible even if one with the living needs special provision; cf. Porphyry's Περὶ Στυγός as quoted in Petzl (1969) 62f. I believe this argument is valid too with regard to the timing of this conversation, criticized e.g. in ΣMV ω.1: ἄκαιρος δὲ καὶ ἡ Ἀχιλλέως καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονος ὁμιλία; cf. e.g. S. West (1989) 122f, with 138f n.52-5, who refuses to see the relevance of the scene here and instead postulates a (hypothetical) relevance for it in a lost cyclic νόστοι epic. In fact, ΣMV ω.1 also contain praise of the narrative of Achilles' death and funeral: εὐκαίρως ἀναπληροῖ τὰ ἀλλαχοῦ παραλειφθέντα (cf. Eustathius 1957, 9-11 on the conversation as a means to reveal the end).

[695] The presence of strong judgement had been noted above (p.142). The possibility of a negative judgement of the suitors' actions had been anticipated by Eurymachus (cf. 21.249-55; 321-33 with Penelope's responses); here Amphimedon will talk of "ἡμετέρου θανάτοιο κακὸν τέλος" (24.124).

[696] Cf. Wender (1978) 39: "So - if the epic was to contain a hero's funeral to equal or surpass that of the *Iliad*, it would have to belong to a character peripheral to the story - and what better choice than the very hero of the *Iliad*, whose final end had been foreseen but not described in that epic?"; Tracy (1990) 143.

perhaps be postulated. Generally speaking, the inclusion of the endings of μύθοι different from, yet connected to that of Odysseus can be seen as an attempt to provide a comprehensive closure to the story of the Trojan war as a whole, though from an exclusively Achaean perspective.[697] This inclusiveness contrasts with the *Iliad's* practice of rigorously confining itself to the one episode chosen as its subject-matter, though the *Iliad* is more inclusive in that Achilles comes to share a wider perspective with his enemy.

The judgement of the relative success of Achilles and Agamemnon from, and by means of, the perspective of closure provided by death prepares for the final evaluation of Odysseus' μῦθος too. Through the device of the νέκυια the *Odyssey* manages to offer its own explicit interpretation of its hero's (and thus its own) success; its claim to originality is thus incorporated into the text. Amphimedon's narrative of Penelope's delaying tactics (24.121-48; cf. 2.93-110; also 19.139-56)[698] and his summary of events from Odysseus' arrival on Ithaca to the present (24.149-90)[699] supply news not only of the νόστος, but of the τίσις too. Only after these events

[697] Cf. Heubeck (1992) 357 *ad* 24.1-204, 36-97; Ford (1992) 110: "The *nostoi* is completed by the *Odyssey*: the newest of new songs tells how the last of the heroes came home"; Tracy (1990) 149f. Wender (1978) 39f compares the last bow taken by many characters provided here to Patroclus' funeral games in *Iliad* 23; cf. Stößel (1975) 33: "...: der Odyssee-Dichter möchte das Geschehen seines kurz vor dem Abschluß stehenden Gedichtes noch einmal in den größeren epischen Gesamtzusammenhang stellen"; but note that Nestor, Menelaus and Helen have all taken their bow much earlier. No mention is made of the Trojans, while the Iliadic opponents Agamemnon and Achilles are on friendly terms; cf. Hölscher (1989) 307; Tracy (1990) 143 and 149f. This could be construed as an indication that this is a world in which internal Greek affairs are predominant; it definitely underlines the clear divisions between the two opposed parties in the *Odyssey* itself.

[698] His version of events seem to implicate Penelope in Odysseus' plot (24.167-9); this has been regarded as a contradiction of the earlier narrative and evidence for the spuriousness of the νέκυια by analysts, but has been countered by the obvious λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου by unitarians; cf. e.g. Heubeck (1992) 378 *ad* 24.167-77, 374f *ad* 24.128-46; Wender (1978) 35-7; Rutherford (1992) 35f, including: "...the poet points to his own originality." S. West (1989) 139 n.57 attempts to reject this solution because "this kind of subtlety would hardly be appreciated by a listening audience", even though the poem abounds in concealed or unspoken thoughts. A second objection has been raised to the impression Amphimedon gives that Penelope's ruse had been discovered immediately before Odysseus' return (cf. e.g. S. West (1988) 137 *ad* 2.93-110) and countered by the same argument (cf. Heubeck (1992) 375f *ad* 24.128-9).

[699] This is the last of the substantial summaries, and together with Odysseus' speech (23.310-343) provides a complete summary of the latter part of the *Odyssey's* own narrative; cf. Wender (1978) 34-7, also 17: "If we accept the whole 'continuation,' we will find all three major plots of the *Odyssey* summarized in the course of the poem, the Telemachy in Book xvii, the Sea-tales here [23.306-343], and the Revenge in Book xxiv"; Eusthatius 1954, 32ff *ad* ω.102-119: ἀνακεφαλαίωσι[ς] τῶν κατὰ τοὺς μνηστῆρας, also 1957, 18-21 *ad* ω.201: ὅτι ἐπαναλαμβάνει ὁπόσα τῆς ποιήσεως ταύτης οὐκ ἔφθη ὁ ποιητὴς ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, τὰ κατὰ τὴν Πηνελόπην δηλαδὴ, ..., καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως λαθραίαν ἐπάνοδον.

have become known can the comparison safely be concluded.[700] As in the first νέκυια (11.385-466), Agamemnon focuses on the difference between himself and Odysseus as figured in their wives' attitude to the νόστος: praising Penelope's faithfulness, significantly pictured in terms of memory (24.192-6a; note "ὡς εὖ μέμνητ᾽ Ὀδυσῆος", 195b), he speaks not only of her future κλέος but in clearly metapoetic terms of an ἀοίδη χαρίεσσα, a pleasing epic narrative, in contrast to Clytemnestra's ἀοίδη στυγερή (24.196b-202).[701] Odysseus' success is thus presented as complete since these major epic characters themselves, who had been compared to Odysseus all along (whether im- or explicitly), declare Achilles to have achieved κλέος through his divine connections and impressive burial, Agamemnon to have achieved his νόστος, but acknowledge Odysseus to have achieved both νόστος and κλέος with Penelope's help.[702] In addition, Amphimedon's narrative contains an indication of the necessary continuation of the narrative, insofar as it shows how the suitors are now paradoxically put into what before had been Odysseus' position, in search of closure (24.186-90; note "ὣς ἡμεῖς, Ἀγάμεμνον, ἀπωλόμεθ᾽, ὧν ἔτι καὶ νῦν/ σώματ᾽ ἀκηδέα κεῖται ἐνὶ μεγάροις Ὀδυσῆος·/ οὐ γάρ πω ἴσασι φίλοι κατὰ δώμαθ᾽ ἑκάστου", 186-8). There appears to be a strong parallel to the situation in the *Iliad* following Hector's death, where the desire of his relatives to bury him is plainly opposed by Achilles (cf. above on *Iliad* 22). Yet although Amphimedon also concludes that appropriate care needs to be taken of their bodies (24.189f), we will come to see that this theme is not developed into an end pursued by the suitors' relatives; instead the narrative once more focuses exclusively on Odysseus and his success.

---

[700] Cf. Wender (1978) 41; Heubeck (1992) 357 *ad* 24.1-204; Stößel (1975) 62; Tracy (1990) 143. It is also important that the audience has just been reminded of Teiresias' prophecy again and has been shown through the characters' reaction, especially Penelope's, how it should be interpreted; cf. Hölscher (1989) 310. Note Goldhill (1991) 99: "Odysseus' triumph is a trumping of the achievements of other heroes"; Erbse (1972) 233 sees the main goal ("Hauptziel") of the epic reached here in the glory of its hero.

[701] There has been debate about whether Odysseus or Penelope is referred to by "οἱ" (24.196); cf. Pucci (1998e) 166f n.88 who, referring to other discussions, argues that it is ambiguous. He also claims, 168, that Iliadic κλέος is both recognized and distanced through introducing Penelope here; for similar readings cf. the overview in Katz (1991) 22f. She herself oddly argues, 28: "Agamemnon's words...are also a second-order means of refusing closure to one of the principal questions in the poem, that having to do with Penelope's faithfulness and its paradigmatic force", but continues 29: "...this final example in the poem of *kleos* meaning 'fame,' 'glory,' 'renown,' should be understood as an instance of the poem's reflection upon its own strategies for generating *kleos* in the sense of 'glorious song.'" Cf. Hölscher (1989) 308 on 24.192-8 as self-reflective poetry; S. West (1989) 123.

[702] Cf. Clay (1997) 111f. On the importance of the comparison cf. Stößel (1975) 77: "Diese Synkrisis bildet nicht nur rein äußerlich den Schluß der Nekyia, sondern stellt auch ihr inhaltliches τέλος dar; ..."; Fenik (1974) 79f with n.110, who also refutes Page (1955) 119 in particular; Murnaghan (1987) 125: "The *Odyssey*'s sense of its own story as extraordinary is expressed throughout in its use of the Agamemnon story, ...as a norm from which the story of Odysseus departs."

Recognizing the Son

First, however, the suitors' journey to Hades is complemented by Odysseus' journey to his father's farm, where he leaves the others to prepare a meal while he goes in search for Laertes (24.205-18). This may be regarded as an adaptation of another element of the *Iliad's* closure, where the meeting of a father with the killer of his son takes the place of that of real father and son, which Achilles significantly will never be able to achieve; in this sense, too, the *Odyssey's* closure could be seen to surpass that of the *Iliad* in terms of the success of its protagonist since his whole family, including Laertes, will finally be restored to strength and authority.[703] Laertes' retreat into the country had been mentioned throughout the *Odyssey* itself;[704] Odysseus' reunion with him will complete the series of similar recognition scenes in this part of the narrative (cf. also below on the πεῖρα).[705] The possible connection of the introduction of Laertes with closure had already been intimated in the last major scene concerned with him: Eumaeus had suggested that Telemachus' successful νόστος provided the occasion to restore Laertes (16.137-45). Yet Telemachus described a journey to the farm as a digression at that point (16.150-1a; note "πλάζεσθαι", 151) and gave Odysseus' νόστος priority (16.147-9; note "πρῶτόν κεν τοῦ πατρὸς ἑλοίμεθα νόστιμον ἦμαρ", 149). This verdict may be seen as thematizing the *Odyssey's* choice of narrative arrangement as much as arising from Telemachus' concerns as a character, already advertizing a narrative thread to be picked up later.[706] Only Odysseus' own successful νόστος, including the τίσις, finally warrants the journey to the absent Laertes as it had warranted the reunion with Penelope. Indeed, this is consistent with Laertes' portrayal as the absent head of the family, in terms very similar to Odysseus (cf. esp. "οὐ πώ μίν φασιν φαγέμεν καὶ πιέμεν

---

[703] This has already been suggested by E. Bowie as recorded by Rutherford (1986) 162 n.87; cf. Schein (1996a) 12f; Goldhill (1991) 106; Finley (1978) 207.

[704] Cf. especially Athene's description of Laertes' plight (1.187-93; cf. below) and Anticleia's speech in Hades (11.187b-96); I will shortly discuss Eumaeus' speech (16.137-45). On these passages as preparing for the present scene cf. Stößel (1975) 85f; Finley (1978) 224f *pace* S. West (1989) 116f, who holds that all references to Laertes are later intrusions.

[705] The motif of reunion, intimately connected with that of the hero's return, stretches from that with Telemachus (16.156-320) to the recognition by Eurycleia (19.390-504), by the two herdsmen during the bow contest (21.188-244), finally by the other servants and Penelope after the killing of the suitors (22.498-501; 23.1-240) to this one (and by Dolius below). Cf. Stanford (1965) 12 and *passim*; Erbse (1972) 172; Tracy (1990) 140f; Wender (1978) 70f for this reunion as necessary for the completion of the νόστος; also A. Lord (1960) 177-9.

[706] *Pace* S. West (1989) 117, who sees no purpose in suggesting an action which is immediately rejected (on 4.735-41; 16.137-53); but cf. Fenik (1974) 16 on the need "to weigh the problem of the extent to which inward personal motivation can be compromised by long-range thematic concerns".

αὖτως", 16.143), whose return signals the completed restoration of their family and therefore closure.[707] Laertes is not only a mirror image of the absent Odysseus of the first part of the poem, he resembles the disguised Odysseus of the second half in terms of his neglected outward appearance, offering an image of the deterioration of the household due to his continued absence (24.227b-31; 249-55; cf. 23.115f).[708] In structural terms, the parallel between an absent Odysseus at the beginning of the narrative and an absent Laertes at its close means that Telemachus' initial search for his father now finds a counterpart in Odysseus' journey to find his. This could be regarded as one element in a broad 'scenic ring-composition' similar to that identified in the *Iliad*.[709] On the other hand, the fact that Odysseus discovers his father immediately, in contrast to Telemachus' attempt, could be regarded as another instance of Smith's 'terminal modification' already referred to above (on 23.301); on an intertextual level, it also provides a modification with regard to Achilles' never-to-be-achieved reunion with his father.

A Final Test

As the last in the series of reunions, Odysseus' πεῖρα of Laertes (24.239-317) shows Laertes echoing (in one short scene) everyone else who had wished for, but despaired of the end of Odysseus' νόστος, providing an exemplary reminder of the significance both of its absence and presence. The πεῖρα can be read as an attempt both to prepare Laertes for Odysseus' presence and to be reassured about Laertes' wishes for the end of Odysseus' μῦθος.[710] Moreover, it continues to link beginning and end of the narrative as a whole through establishing a web of correspondences, which draws together the three generations of the family represented by

---

[707] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 25-31 on Laertes' similarity to Odysseus; Austin (1975) 103(f): "..., Laertes is metaphor personified, Laertes is the political and moral dissolution in Ithaka since Odysseus' departure for Troy." S. West (1988) 100f *ad* 1.188-93 wonders about his retirement and austerities and claims that "[t]he reunion in xxiv (205 ff.) exploits this prolongation of Laertes' life, but should not be regarded as motivating it"; but we have persistently seen closure as a (if not the) motivating, and indeed validating, force in the narrative.

[708] Cf. Finley (1978) 204.

[709] Cf. Bertman (1968) 121f; Tracy (1990) 146f; and cf. also below on the assembly and divine scene. The more detailed correspondances listed by Bertman (1968) are, however, regarded with scepticism by Jones (1997a) 6f.

[710] An argument both for the delay of the recognition and for the testing is offered by N. Richardson (1983) 226-9. A review of explanations of the πεῖρα is offered by Clarke (1981) 274. Fenik (1974) 47ff takes Page (1955) 11f, Stanford (1954) 60f as examples; he argues, 48, that interpreters see the scene divorced from the rest of the poem, but that "delay and deception" do not always "serve a purely practical end", without finding a convincing way of explaining the narrative either (he also mistakingly concludes that Odysseus' story implies he is dead because he has not reached Ithaca yet; 49f). The πεῖρα is seen as necessary or appropriate by Stößel (1975) 81; Wender (1978) 56f; and is applauded by Woodhouse (1930) 233; cf. also Goldhill (1991) 18f. S. West (1989) 125f, however, does not see a motive for the testing; Rutherford (1986) 161f holds that it backfires.

Telemachus, Odysseus and Laertes; as such it fulfills a crucial role in the structure of the narrative and contributes to the development of its closure (cf. below). The parallel is again closest to Telemachus' situation in book 1, when he receives encouragement from Athene to begin assuming some authority: Laertes' response to the question of Odysseus' absence or presence (24.262b-4) begins, like Telemachus' to the goddess, with a recognition of the ὕβρις of the suitors (24.281-6; cf. 1.158-65). It is followed by a despairing assertion of Odysseus' death which paradoxically illustrates the strength of their wish for his return (24.287-96; cf. 1.166-8), and concludes with the question concerning the stranger's own identity (24.297-301; cf. 1.169-77 with 297=1.174).[711]

Odysseus' answer in turn has much in common with Athene's to Telemachus, since he presents himself as a guestfriend of the family and encourages hope for Odysseus' future νόστος, though perhaps in more guarded terms, mentioning a favourable omen at his own imagined departure (24.303-14 with 303=1.179, 308=1.185).[712] The end of his response to his father, however, can already be read as a hint at the identity of the stranger he pretends to be with Odysseus, in particular through the use of the dual in conjunction with the singular θυμός ("θυμὸς δ' ἔτι νῶϊν ἐώλπει/ μίξεσθαι ξενίῃ ἠδ' ἀγλαὰ δῶρα διδώσειν", 24.313bf). Confronted with Laertes' strong and painful reaction to his offer of hope (24.315-17),[713] Odysseus now reveals his identity (24.318-22; note "ἤδη", 318) and informs his father of the τίσις, anticipating the acceleration of the narrative as well as of the action itself (24.324-6; "μάλα δὲ χρὴ σπευδέμεν

[711] For disbelief concerning Odysseus' return cf. Fenik (1974) 157, who lists examples throughout the poem. Besides the parallel to Telemachus in bk.1, the scene between Athene and Odysseus in bk.13 is once more a pertinent model; cf. Fenik (1974) 48f. The degree of absence is indicated as Laertes questions Odysseus' very existence (24.289b=19.315b≈15.268; cf. too 1.215-20 and *Il*. 24.426).

[712] Athene's speech in fact had linked Laertes and Odysseus as her guestfriends and gave a first picture of Laertes as absent like his son (1.187-93; note "οὐκέτι", 189; "ἀπάνευθεν", 190). S. West (1989) views Laertes too much like any ordinary old man when she argues, 126: "Our own experience of the tenacity with which the elderly hang on to their initial conception (or misconception) of some new item of information, ignoring supplementary detail, correction, or modification, will suggest that Odysseus risks being unable to establish the old man's belief in his real identity when he decides that his teasing has gone on long enough", or when she expects simply another Cretan story, without attempting to interpret the differences between Odysseus' lies.

[713] The echo of Achilles' reaction to Patroclus' death (24.315-17a=*Il*. 18.22-4a) could be another reference to Achilles' loss, which will lead to the loss of both Hector and himself to their fathers, exactly at the point when Laertes is about to regain his own son. Murnaghan (1987) 31 sees the reaction as a sign that only Odysseus' actual presence can reverse Laertes' decline.

ἔμπης", 324b).[714] A parallel to the similarly important recognition by Penelope is finally added to the parallels with Telemachus' situation: Laertes insists on a σῆμα in addition to Odysseus' self-identification (24.327-9) and the tangible σῆμα of the scar is supplemented by shared knowledge about the past, once more relating to trees planted before his absence (24.331-44; cf. 23.190-8). As in that instance too, a paradoxical λύσις for Laertes follows (here almost in the form of death as he briefly faints), drawing attention to the successful nature of the present closure by contrast to what might have been (24.345-8; with 345f=23.205f).

Reinforcing the Moral

Laertes' response to the τίσις crucially illustrates not only the Odyssean view of closure as a validating force, but also introduces it as proof for the presence of the gods ("Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ ῥα ἔτ᾽ ἔστε θεοὶ κατὰ μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον,/ εἰ ἐτεὸν μνηστῆρες ἀτάσθαλον ὕβριν ἔτισαν", 24.351f; cf. below on 472-548). It therefore explicitly links the achievement of Odysseus' end with a theodicy, a concern which had initially called Zeus (and Athene) into action (cf. 1.32-43).[715] We had mentioned at the beginning how Athene's focalization first coincided with Odysseus' in her reproach to Zeus, then with that of Telemachus in her image of the returning Odysseus punishing the suitors' ὕβρις. At the close of the narrative we now find the reverse happening in that Laertes endorses the justification of the τίσις in which Athene had been prominent (cf. too Odysseus' moral; 22.413); this agreement of judgement contributes to a stable closure by establishing strong thematic coherence. The reference to Zeus also prepares for the important role he, and Athene, will play in the final closure, though Odysseus himself continues to display quasi-divine confidence in the further course of the narrative (note 24.357=13.362).[716] Indeed, the divine support enjoyed by the family and their recognition of it are confirmed by their response to Athene's rejuvenation of Laertes after his bath (24.372-82), parallel to that of

---

[714] This acceleration of the narrative has generally been criticized; cf. e.g. S. West (1989) 127f; Page (1955) 112-14; even Wender (1978) 63f with further bibliography. However, Stößel (1975) 147 sees it as characteristic of this section of the poem and traces it, 150, to the need to resolve many different narrative strands; indeed Moulton (1974) 166 regards the acceleration as having a special closural value. It is also thematized by other characters in the narrative; cf. below on 24.353-5; 432-6. (For a similar reference to the future before full recognition cf. above; 23.117-40.) Odysseus' warning about the speed of further developments is also endorsed by Laertes (24.353-5; note "τάχα", 353).

[715] It is important that Laertes' reaction is this theodicy rather than sentimental discussion of the last twenty years as expected by S. West (1989) 127.

[716] Eurymachus displays the same confidence in a lying speech to Penelope (16.436); we may perhaps say that the suitors are repeatedly shown to use phrases incorrectly, beginning with their use of the language of a seer in the assembly: they pervert language as well as justice and truth and, as D. Fowler put it to me: "They aspire to the state of Odysseus in every sense, and in every sense fall short."

Odysseus earlier (24.365-71; cf. 23.152-63).[717] The servant Dolius too immediately recognizes the connection between Odysseus' desired, but unexpected νόστος and divine involvement, and already looks forward towards future happiness (24.400-2).[718]

Refusal to Recognize Closure

The image of Rumour spreading the narrative of the τίσις serves to turn attention back to the suitors' relatives (24.413f; note ἐνέπουσα, 414).[719] But as already mentioned, in contrast to the *Iliad* the motif of burial is not developed into one with special closural force; on the contrary, the νόστοι of the dead bodies lead seamlessly into the journey of the living Ithacans to the second assembly in the narrative (24.415-20; cf. 2.6-259). The assembly adds another element to the broad 'scenic ring-composition' mentioned, providing a closural counterpart to the scene at the beginning in terms of structure as well as of theme.[720] Both assemblies illustrate the potential perpetuation of the conflict between the suitors and their families and the ends pursued by Odysseus and his family. Antinous' father Eupeithes now takes his place in arguing against Medon and Halitherses (24.421-68), as the suitors had before argued against Mentor and Halitherses. Indeed, this connection is spelled out by Halitherses, who as a seer is able to consider both past and future (24.452): he points out the Ithacans' own responsibility for the τίσις, since they were not prepared to recognize the mistaken nature of the suitors' projection of the end (or to make them recognize it), despite the warnings given on that earlier occasion

[717] The similar prayers of Telemachus (21.132f=16.71f) and Odysseus (21.426) are directed towards future and present strength, as Laertes' is towards past strength, according with their respective ages. - S. West (1989) 127 profers an overly practical objection to the scene based on the time needed to heat up the bath-water.

[718] Following this last reunion with Dolius and his sons (24.391-411), they then sit down to the meal towards which Odysseus had hastened Laertes (24.359f; note "τάχιστα", 360); this may again echo the important meal shared by a father and a son at the *Iliad's* closure, where it is better motivated in terms of the action (though S. West (1989) 125 appears to overstress the difficulties). Indeed, it may be that the supposed oddity of Dolius being the father of the servants Melanthius (and Melantho) killed by Odysseus and Telemachus (cf. Wender (1978) 54-6) would be attributable to the overwhelming influence of the Iliadic intertext.

[719] Note that in the *Iliad* too Rumour calls the Achaeans together for an assembly (*Il*. 2.93bf); the false closure of their meeting is here turned into true closure. S. West (1989) 114 oddly argues that this kind of ending is not original because its focus on the community distracts from Odysseus' anticipated pilgrimage; I see no reason why Odysseus' departure should be seen as more important than the settling of public matters on Ithaca.

[720] Cf. e.g. Heubeck (1992) 405 *ad* 24.413-548; Bertman (1968) 121-3. S. West (1989) 130-2, noting that the *Telegony* starts with the suitors' burial, sees Odysseus' exile there as evidence for a historical development in epic endings at a time, when strong individual rule and retribution could no longer be envisaged; cf. Seaford (1994) 41: "The 'continuation' is an addition, but also a completion - for it settles the public issue", 188. Though general cultural assumptions and changes certainly influence closural conventions, I am not sure I agree with the suggestion that an earlier ending can be speculated to have existed with regard to the *Odyssey*.

(24.454-62).[721] In order to resolve the conflict fully it is clearly necessary that this double of the original opponents should at last accept the proposed end of the μῦθος.[722] In contrast to the *Iliad*, however, where such closural agreement between all parties is reached, the *Odyssey* has set up a different strategy: Eupeithes himself presents τίσις or his own immediate death as the only ends acceptable; characteristically, these ends are conceived as alternatives to a negative portrayal in future narrative (24.432-6; note "τάχιστα θανὼν", 436).[723] As so often, the outcome is already anticipated in the narrative, mentioning his death rather than the achievement of either τίσις or νόστος at the outset of his journey to meet Odysseus (24.469-71; note "ἂψ ἀπονοστήσειν", 471; cf. 528ff).

The Gods Again

The movement towards the actual implementation of closure as Eupeithes and the others set out to meet Odysseus is marked by Athene's final consultation with Zeus (24.472-88). Zeus had also been introduced in person at the beginning of the narrative (1.22-95; 5.3-34); the present dialogue therefore also forms part of the 'scenic ring-composition' mentioned before.[724] Yet it adds a sense of closure in the way that its presentation of the future (through Zeus) and implementation (through Athene) have an immediate closural effect (cf. 24.546-8 below). In this it rather resembles Zeus' similar conversation with Poseidon concerning the closure of the Phaeacians' μῦθος in the middle of the poem (13.125-58), which is followed by Poseidon's action without delay and closes that first part of the poem. There are also strong parallels to the divine council in *Iliad* 4, though there the decision is to defer rather than implement closure by rendering void the agreement about ends reached by the humans (*Il*. 4.15f quoted below; cf. "ἦ

[721] Both Medon's and Halitherses' speeches follow up the theme of justification: it is implied in Medon's account of how he recognized the divine support for Odysseus during the τίσις, reiterating the information given by Amphimedon in the underworld (24.443-9; cf. 180-5). Halitherses' speech contains explicit judgement of both the suitors' action and that of their supporters (note "ὑμετέρῃ κακότητι", 24.455; "ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῇσι", 458; "ἐπίσπαστον κακὸν", 462).

[722] Eupeithes' appearance retrospectively underlines the importance of also introducing Laertes as the father on Odysseus' side. Again a motif from the *Iliad* is doubled in that Odysseus agrees with his own father Laertes on the end, but not with his enemy's father Eupeithes: he does not come to change his ends as Achilles does in negotiating with his enemy's father while his own is absent; this is portrayed as a success.

[723] For a similar concern cf. Eurymachus in 21.249-55; also 21.320-42. As noted on 24.324-6, the acceleration of the narrative has often been remarked upon and generally been criticized, yet it can be understood as a thematization of fast approaching closure; there is thus a deliberate contrast with the repetitions and delays of the first assembly in particular, where closure (though predicted as well as refuted) had yet been significantly absent.

[724] Cf. e.g. Heubeck (1992) 405f *ad* 24.413-548; Bertman (1968) 121-3. He also negotiated in a similar way with Poseidon in bk.13, marking the middle of the narrative.

προτέρω πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ φύλοπιν αἰνὴν/ τεύξεις, ἦ φιλότητα μετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισι τίθησθα;", 24.475f).[725] In turning around that choice, the present scene could be seen to reclaim the motif of the treaty as closural and I will return to the subject in the discussion of the dialogue itself; suffice it to say that the lasting nature of such a formal agreement here is different in important ways from the private and restricted meeting of Priam and Achilles and the truce they agree, which closes the *Iliad* itself though not the war.

A comparison to the last divine council in the *Iliad* (*Il*. 24.31-119), on the other hand, may be misleading, insofar as the humans there are shown to be actively involved in the successful realization of the gods' decisions. The difference in position between the respective divine scenes in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* 24, as well as in book 1, is therefore thematically significant too. Their placement directly at beginning and end of the *Odyssey* (especially in view of the absence of other such scenes in the body of the narrative) illustrates the increased importance of the gods in deciding the course of the narrative and deciding them virtually unanimously. The *Iliad*, as we have seen, is concerned rather with the interaction of conflicting or opposing ends and with exploring liminal situations. Together with the similarly increased importance of closure due to the absence of divine conflict over it, the prominence of divine plotting in the *Odyssey* makes for the narrative's characteristic strong teleology (cf. above p.174). If the gods are singularly prominent throughout in deciding and implementing ends, it is not surprising - as noted - that the closest thematic parallel to the *Iliad* should be to a scene in the body of its narrative (indeed close to its beginning), which is also concerned with the establishment of (wider) ends, even if it reverses the decision taken there. Yet the present scene not only reclaims the treaty rejected in *Iliad* 4 for its closure, but similarly the triumph of one character over the other enacted in *Iliad* 22 (cf. also below): it also parallels the passage in the *Iliad* in which the decision concerning Hector's death is taken (note esp. Athene's mission, 24.487f=*Il*. 4.73f, 22.186f). This scene too is set in the body of the *Iliad's* text, though closer to its own ending.[726] But once again the difference from the Iliadic passage is as significant as the similarity: in the *Iliad* Zeus' words to Athene mark his acceptance of the wishes of the pro-Achaean gods for

[725] Cf. Heubeck (1992) 411 *ad* 24.472-88 with bibliography; on *Iliad* 4 itself above p.77.

[726] For this parallel cf. Moulton (1974) 165; it had already been relevant to the τίσις itself (cf. on 22.239f on Athene's watching), but now also provides the closure for its aftermath. The *Aeneid* seems to follow a similar strategy of ending on the victory of one party over the other following a divinely negotiated settlement, but with strikingly different effect; cf. e.g. Feeney (1991) 142-55, who detects a certain degree of (historical) openness in the divine reconciliation which precedes Aeneas' victory (and a human reconciliation is not narrated); and above p.54.

Hector to reach the τέλος θανάτοιο, despite his own temptation to let him live (*Il*. 22.167-76). The Iliadic scene thus recalls the many divine disagreements and negotiations of ends, while the present one illustrates the ease of judgement between two parties due to general divine agreement. In this way, the scene takes up and reinforces the thematic preoccupations of Zeus in his mirroring first appearance when he had condemned Aegisthus' actions and defended the end of the τίσις achieved by Orestes (1.28-44); indeed it implicitly seals the comparison with Agamemnon as Odysseus consolidates his τίσις (cf. below on the disputed issue of justice and power p.235).[727]

Securing Closure Forever

A more detailed look at the closing scene itself should help to understand this crucial section better. As mentioned, Athene's question to Zeus (24.475f quoted above) appears to echo the choice between continued war and closure through a treaty which Zeus seems to offer in the *Iliad* (cf. "ἡμεῖς δὲ φραζώμεθ᾽ ὅπως ἔσται τάδε ἔργα,/ ἢ ῥ᾽ αὖτις πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ φύλοπιν αἰνὴν/ ὄρσομεν, ἦ φιλότητα μετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισι βάλωμεν", *Il*. 4.14-16). Instead of the open choice between two equal possibilities ("ὄρσομεν", "βάλωμεν", *Il*. 4.16), however, the use of tenses in Athene's question here more clearly draws attention to the difference between either a conflict extended into the future ("τεύξεις", 24.476) or the presence of peaceful closure ("τίθησθα", 24.476). As with his replies in book 5 and 13, Zeus answers the appeal to his authority by referring to the other god's own wishes for the end (24.478-81a), but follows it with a summary anticipation of the future (24.481b-6).[728] Significantly he now goes on to note that the end Athene desired, the τίσις, has already successfully been achieved ("ἐπεὶ δὴ μνηστῆρας ἐτίσατο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς", 24.482). Reaffirming the achievement of the closure of Athene's plot as he had presented it at the beginning of the narrative ("οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον μὲν ἐβούλευσας νόον

[727] S. West (1989) 129 with n.91 supports views criticizing the one-sided nature of the conciliation, but I cannot see any reason to expect anything else; cf. e.g. Rutherford (1992) 15 quoted above on 23.344-8; Erbse (1972) 243(f): "Mit Beendigung des letzten Kampfes ist ein Grundmotiv des ganzen Epos durchgeführt: Der Tod der Freier muß ungesühnt bleiben wie der Aigisths, dessen Schicksal Zeus schon zu Beginn des 1. Buches (vgl. α 32-34) als warnendes Beispiel zitiert hat"; also e.g. Bertman (1968) 121 n.7 on the theological and ethical framework provided for human affairs by Zeus' speeches in 1.28-43 and 24.528-44.

[728] While Zeus' reply here is exclusively concerned with the nature of this conclusion, he will make known his views on the extent of further conflict (and thus the narrative) during Athene's intervention itself (cf. 24.539f below).

αὐτή,/ ὡς ἦ τοι κείνους Ὀδυσεὺς ἀποτίσεται ἐλθών;", 24.479f=5.23f), Zeus goes on to focus on how divine intervention will be able to secure it for the future (24.483-6).[729]

Only the first half line of his speech directly refers back to Athene's original question, confirming the use of a divinely sanctioned treaty as closural ("ὅρκια πιστὰ ταμόντες", 24.483a); its enaction will also come to represent the closure of the *Odyssey's* narrative (cf. 24.546-8 below). The remainder of his 'internal and external prolepsis' adds supplementary detail to explain the exact significance of this treaty *before* it is implemented, clarifying in advance that and how it symbolizes stable closure.[730] This is necessary because the subject does not lend itself easily to direct narrative presentation, even if the poet had wished to include the aftermath of the treaty in his narrative: the peace envisaged extends to a whole community rather than a few individuals, it has a similarly extended chronological reach and is predicated on a general lack of action.[731] In fact, in anticipating a return to a peaceful and prosperous past, Zeus promises to erase the divisions which had overshadowed the community on Ithaca and characterized (if not initiated) the present narrative ("τοὶ δ' ἀλλήλους φιλεόντων/ ὡς τὸ πάρος, πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη ἅλις ἔστω", 24.485bf). In doing so his speech can also be seen to provide a link to the aftermath of Odysseus' μῦθος as predicted by Teiresias (11.119-37) and to give credence, too, to the characters' own provisional views about the eventual end (23.247-287): Teiresias had spoken of a peaceful death among a happy people, while here Odysseus' position as ruler is securely prolonged by Zeus even into eternity ("ὁ μὲν βασιλευέτω αἰεί", 24.483b).[732] Some critics have instead argued that a contradiction exists between the two pictures of Odysseus'

[729] Cf. Kearns (1982) 7 on the killing of the suitors as Athene's vengeance as well as Odysseus'.

[730] Note that Zeus only employs the first person plural or the third person imperative. This focus on all parties (and the future) is introduced with the participial clause "ὅρκια πιστὰ ταμόντες" (24.483a): it cannot be determined whether the plural here refers to either of the three subjects that follow it ("ὁ μὲν", 24.483; "ἡμεῖς δ΄", 484; "τοὶ δ΄", 485) or any combination of them, suggesting a closural inclusivity. (S. West (1989) 129 objects to Athene and Zeus as "swearing" an oath, but ὅρκια τέμνειν may rather mean "to render an oath sacred".)

[731] Zeus' general and extended 'external prolepsis' may therefore be compared to the use of epilogues which give a summary view of the future by presenting only a few 'kernel' events such as marriages and births in the later lives of the characters; cf. p.49.

[732] Zeus' statement here settles the issue already raised between Antinous and Telemachus in 1.400-4; cf. too Theoclymenus in 15.533f. Rutherford (1992) 144f *ad* 19.111 discusses the just rule of Odysseus as pictured in the past, as opposed to "the gloomy condition of Ithaca at present".

future.[733] Though there undoubtedly is a tension between Odysseus' mortality and the eternity of his rule here, I believe it is better understood as the consequence of a narrative strategy that tries to maximize the impact of closure (cf. below on 24.505-15).[734]

To reinforce this argument we may look at the closural aspects of Zeus' short speech in more detail, since it brims over with general closural themes and vocabulary, familiar in particular from lyric poetry (cf. above p.41). By offering the ultimate in stability the adverb "αἰεί" (24.483b), for example, transforms the announcement of Odysseus' rule into a hyperbolical assertion with strong closural implications.[735] The characterization of the suggested treaty itself as "πιστά" (24.483a quoted above) establishes a similar claim to certainty. And the security of Odysseus' rule is further explained by Zeus' promise of erasing the memory of the τίσις which, as we have seen, prompted the continuation of Odysseus' conflict with the suitors into the present ("ἡμεῖς δ᾽ αὖ παίδων τε κασιγνήτων τε φόνοιο/ ἔκλησιν θέωμεν", 24.484-5a; cf. above on the second assembly). The word "ἔκλησις" - crucially restricted to the suitors' relatives, thus safeguarding the wider transmission of Odysseus' κλέος - can be interpreted as closural in that it allows the most complete resolution of conflict possible next to death itself.[736] A mass-slaughter in the present scene would presumably have had a destablizing rather than closural effect in simply repeating the fate of the suitors; as we will see, only Eupeithes reaches the τέλος θανάτοιο (like Hector in the *Iliad*) while the others are conciliated with the treaty and made to forget.[737] The image of resulting "πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη" offers more positive closural

---

[733] Cf. S. West (1989) 129: "The promise of peace and plenty recalls, but goes beyond, Tiresias' forecast of the island's prosperity at Odysseus' death (...)"; yet I do not see the opposition between Teiresias' prophecy and the "Epilogue" as she does, 133. Peradotto (1990) 167f too opposes the closure here with the prophecy, but sees the latter as following the former and thus "opening" it up; cf. above p.164 on similar interpretations.

[734] Cf. e.g. Rutherford (1985) 145, perhaps a little sceptically: "However, although the triumph of Odysseus is neither final for him nor a guarantee for others, it still remains a triumph"; Murnaghan (1987) 178-80 formulates the paradox in a slightly different way, arguing that a "vision of the difficulties and limitations of human life" is answered by another of "fantasy and wish-fulfillment", although the latter remains dependent on the former.

[735] Cf. Smith (1968) 157 on "unqualified assertion" as strengthening a tone of authority, 182-6, esp. 185: "The occurrence of hyperbole at the conclusion of a poem, then, is often a reflection and signal of emotional climax or extremity, a point at which the speaker is apparently striving for the ultimate, consummate, and most comprehensive expression of the motives and emotions that are the occasion of the poem. What is most significant here, of course, is the implication that, having reached that point, he cannot and need not go further."

[736] Cf. 13.79f for the forgetfulness of sleep as closest to death; also Penelope's wish for "κῶμα", and then death in 18.201-5. This forgetfulness should be contrasted with memory: as we have seen, Odysseus' absence had made room for the struggle between those who remember him and those who forget.

[737] Cf. Seaford (1994) 27 noting that a vendetta is excluded from the poem as uncontainable. Cf. Hahn (1996) 172 on the necessity to refrain from thematizing guilt as a basis for peace.

connotations, in particular in combination with the expression of abundance in "ἅλις" (24.486 quoted above). Once again, this anticipation is endowed with a special sense of stability by Zeus' reference back to a former such state of complete satisfaction ("ὡς τὸ πάρος", 24.486). This picture thus reinforces his initial promise to restore and safeguard Odysseus' rule forever (24.483b). Zeus' speech emphatically presents a particularly stable, and inclusive, closure after the divisions of the τίσις by boldly asserting a circular teleology, in which both references to an endless future and a returning past blend into each other. As noted, this almost mythical vision of nostalgic happiness also has the effect of suggesting an utter lack of subsequent action worth narrating.[738]

I believe a reason for this (and the following) passage, which is more forcefully closural than any in the *Iliad*, can be found exactly in the strong teleology that shapes the *Odyssey*, paradoxically complemented by the endless deferral of actual closure. Because the whole poem has been predicated on the end, in which the justification of the gods and the protagonist has been invested, this closure needs to be presented as particularly comprehensive and forceful when it is finally reached. As we have seen, the sequence of ends gradually superseding each other in the first part of the poem has culminated in the τίσις and the recognitions of it and of Odysseus' identity in this part. This very structure of one end following the other calls for a final and stable achievement to serve as its containment. While the focus on the τέλος θανάτοιο and its sealing through the funeral had provided closure in the *Iliad*, the importance of Odysseus' survival precludes the same closural strategy for the *Odyssey*. Still, as I have argued, the *Odyssey* does attempt to make use of the closural force of death by offering an anticipation of a particularly successful closure in Teiresias' picture of Odysseus' peaceful old age and death. In my view, Zeus' speech too is meant to offer a wide-reaching yet convincing closure to the diverse μῦθος of Odysseus, which also includes the future of the community as a whole. Since Zeus occupies the most prominent position both in the hierarchy of characters and in the narrative itself (by standing at its very end), it is not surprising that his portrayal of Odysseus' own future should be more hyperbolical than that offered by the seer.[739] Moreover, Zeus' (and Athene's)

---

[738] Benardete (1997) 141 gives no arguments for his perverse interpretation: "Zeus' wish that the people be as loving as they were before cannot be fulfilled: ...there cannot be any recovery of that time [before the Trojan war]"; instead he talks of divine "terror" but his is "critical terror"!! Cf. also the reenactment of the past in Odysseus' and Penelope's reunion (23.295f).

[739] For the relevance of Zeus' status cf. Feeney (1991) 145 on Jupiter in *Aeneid* 12: "Only Jupiter is powerful enough to achieve the poem's *finis*" and above p.53. An additional reason for his insistence on closure could perhaps be the need to work against the variety of traditions concerning Odysseus; cf. above p.164.

final securing of the complete(d) triumph of the *Odyssey's* protagonist in terms which recall and strengthen Teiresias' prophecy complements the metanarrative, and arguably intertextual, endorsement by other epic characters in the second νέκυια (anticipated in the first one). Its very forcefulness, which has often been regarded with suspicion, in fact serves the poem well by putting a final stop to its sequence of ends.

Epic Battle the Second

The approach of closure is figured in the approach of the suitors' supporters to Odysseus and his men on the farm, who hasten their own arming accordingly (24.489-501; note "σχεδὸν", 491, 493; "θᾶσσον", 495). The picture of how they put on their weapons echoes the similar picture of Odysseus, Telemachus and the two herdsmen arming for the τίσις (24.496-501; cf. 22.201-4), though tellingly Laertes now joins them, while before attention had been drawn only to his decaying shield (24.498f; cf. 22.184-6). The reprise of that earlier scene, which began a narrative of triumph reminiscent of Achilles' victory over Hector in *Iliad* 22, is continued by Athene's appearance in the disguise of Mentor and Odysseus' recognition of her (24.502-4=22.205-7).[740] Odysseus' speech to Telemachus brings out the significance of the replay of that climactic battle, stressing the importance of their family line and the (re)establishment of their former superiority (24.505-9). It is important that his words closely echo and thus reinforce those of Zeus himself (for "τὸ πάρος περ", 24.508 cf. "ὡς τὸ πάρος", 486a, also 483b for Odysseus' rule). Following Telemachus' agreement (24.511f), Laertes again directly addresses the gods, as if underlining the intratextual aspect of their observations, to note the triumph of his family's excellence ("τίς νύ μοι ἡμέρη ἥδε, θεοὶ φίλοι; ἦ μάλα χαίρω·/ υἱός θ' υἱωνός τ' ἀρετῆς πέρι δῆριν ἔχουσιν", 24.514f).[741] Telemachus had been portrayed as a substitute for Odysseus throughout his absence, and the direct comparison with his father now represents the culmination of that theme; this closure had yet been curtailed in the bow contest, since it had served first to reestablish Odysseus' own identity, presence and authority as the key to the restoration of the family as a whole (cf. 21.113-39).

[740] Odysseus' joyful recognition of her presence, however, also takes us back to the beginning of his νόστος when he reached a bed under the trees on Scheria and was rested by Athene (24.504=5.486, 22.207); this continues the integration of beginning and end already noted in the scenes with Penelope and Laertes above.

[741] His remarks again draw attention to the remarkable shared focalization between the gods and Odysseus' family (cf. 24.351f). His pleasure as well as his positive judgement of the present scene could also be interpreted as guiding audience-reaction to this closure.

However, Laertes' praise of Odysseus and Telemachus, who have already played their part in the τίσις (cf. 22.236-8), is significantly passed over by Athene, who instead asks the old man himself to throw his spear (24.516-19). With her help he kills Antinous' father Eupeithes, depriving him of τίσις and νόστος as already predicted in the narrative (24.520-5; cf. 469-71).[742] As the figurehead of the suitors in the closing section, Eupeithes is thus included in the τέλος θανάτοιο to which Odysseus and Telemachus had sent the younger suitors before. In this sense, Laertes' earlier prayer, desiring to participate in his family's τίσις, is fulfilled in this replay with the involvement of the older generation (cf. 24.375-82).[743] We had noted how the three generations of Odysseus' family had been linked in various ways in that recognition scene and it is at the point of closure that these threads are drawn together, with Odysseus and Telemachus too again about to enter the fray (24.526f). Zeus' authoritative speech had already endorsed the rule of Odysseus' family on Ithaca and extended it securely into the future. This fact is now represented in the narrative itself, and the reunion of all male representatives of the family in triumph over their opponents provides a successful, and thus satisfactory, closure to the theme of their absent head and the resulting threat of the obliteration of their name, which had featured prominently throughout.[744] Indeed, it could be seen implicitly to illustrate in yet another way the greater success of Odysseus when compared to Achilles, who achieves neither reunion with his father nor his son.[745]

Implementing Closure

Yet while Laertes' contribution to securing the τίσις is new and welcome, Odysseus' and Telemachus' desire to repeat their former victory is not, and their effort to restart that narrative

[742] Eupeithes' death is in fact in accordance with his own wishes (cf. above on 24.432-6).

[743] Laertes' importance in terms of the family's tradition of a single male in each generation had been pointed out in the passage in bk.16 mentioned above (16.117-20); cf. Goldhill (1991) 20. Indeed, the point is made here by none other than Athene when she addresses Laertes with his patronymic (24.517). For the death of others than the protagonist at endings cf. Pelling (1997) 228 on Plutarch.

[744] The threat of obliteration had been noted e.g. by Eumaeus in 14.180b-2 (note _Αρκεισίου, 182); note too the early discussion about hegemony on Ithaca between Telemachus and Antinous (1.367-404). Stößel (1975) 136 notes that a miniature aristeia is provided for all three men in the closing scene; cf. Erbse (1972) 238. S. West (1989) 115 argues that it is highly unusual for three generations to be active in epic, but she is wrong simply to conclude that the present scene is unHomeric instead of interpreting its novelty. We have noted before that a satisfactory closure should span the generations; cf. Achilles' concern with his father and son in 11.492-540.

[745] The comparison with Agamemnon and Orestes (11.457-61) is less relevant here than it is concerning the role of Penelope and Telemachus; cf. Klingner (1997) 211; Katz (1991) 127: "With the return of Odysseus to Ithaca and his recognition by his son, the second alternative [the Orestes paradigm] has been effectively eliminated."

of triumph through conflict is immediately stopped by Athene (24.526-30; note κατὰ δ΄ ἔσχεθε λαὸν ἅπαντα, 530b).[746] Instead, she offers to complement the closure of Eupeithes' death with the closure of a peaceful treaty to end the conflict in accordance with Zeus' earlier speech ("ἴσχεσθε πτολέμου, Ἰθακήσιοι, ἀργαλέοιο,/ ὥς κεν ἀναιμωτί γε διακρινθῆτε τάχιστα", 24.531f); as noted this reclaims the closure she herself had denied to Menelaus' similarly worded offer of a duel with Paris (24.532b≈*Il*. 3.102b). Her insistence on the speedy approach of the peaceful settlement should be noted ("τάχιστα", 24.532b) and her shout alone now suffices to disperse Odysseus' opponents (24.533-6).[747] However, Zeus' intervention through the thunderbolt means that the exact moment of the closure of both the conflict and its narrative is determined with reference to his - the ultimate - authority, while Athene is left briefly to implement it (24.539-48).[748] She now follows up her earlier stoppage of the conflict in general, including Odysseus and Telemachus (24.531f; note the plural imperative), with a specific appeal to the protagonist: "διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν᾽ Ὀδυσσεῦ,/ ἴσχεο, παῦε δὲ νεῖκος ὁμοιΐου πολέμοιο" (24.542f).[749] Not only does she again repeat the appeal to "hold" the action ("ἴσχεο", 24.543a; cf. 530, 531 above), but she explicitly draws Odysseus' attention to the importance of the

[746] The potential deprivation of all the suitors' supporters of their return (note "ἀνόστους", 24.528) constitutes an ironic reversal of the situation in the poem's first half, when Odysseus was characterized by adjectives featuring the α privative; cf. similarly Amphinomus' words earlier (24.186-90).

[747] Her intervention harks back to her appearance in bk.22, but her shout recalls even more clearly *Iliad* 18. Odysseus' own subsequent shout once again models him on Achilles who shouts with Athene (24.537; cf. *Il*. 18.217-29). The following use of the description of Hector's last attack against the same Achilles may underline the superiority of Odysseus, since he can turn even the defeat of Achilles' opponent into an element of his own success (24.538=*Il*. 22.308). In a sense we see Hector's fame in the *Iliad* absorbed by Odysseus as much as Achilles' fame, claiming all positive elements for only one side.

[748] The parallel here is to Zeus' warning to Diomedes (*Il*. 8.130-6). S. West (1989) 130 judges his intervention to be inappropriate in the Odyssean situation and setting ("a sledge-hammer employed to crack a nut"). However, she herself points out the importance of closure, 114, so bold gestures such as this may be considered especially significant and indeed appropriate. The contrast between the two scenes should be noted too, for example in the *Iliad* the thunderbolt is not followed by direct closural divine intervention as here, but it is left to the humans to interpret. It also serves to make Odysseus himself recognize that his final achievement is to be not that of Iliadic battle, but communal peace.

[749] Peradotto (1990) 168f oddly argues: "Nowhere are the contending Bakhtinian voices more evident than in the closing lines of the poem, where the two epithets are ranged ironically against one another: Odysseus is called *polytlas* (24.537), the epithet suggesting endurance in the face of the inevitable, at the very moment when, active master of the situation, he launches into action; he is called *polymētis* (24.542), suggesting control of the world by infinite cunning, in the context of its curtailment (ἴσχεο, παῦε, 543) as it confronts its limits." The OCT gives no other tradition than the transmitted "πολυμήχαν΄"; as noted above p.169, this adjective rather appears to draw attention to Odysseus' achievements, which is perfectly appropriate here and confirms rather than opens up closure. Cf. rather Pucci (1998b) 24: "...the text suggests that a sort of completeness, a sum and a fulness, emerges from Odysseus' manyness in the form of wisdom - *boulê, noêma, mêtis* - and in the form of a fulfilled victory."

anticipated reconciliation of the Ithacan community by stressing the aspect of possible civil war ("ὁμοιΐου πολέμοιο", 24.543). Her concluding reference to Zeus' potential anger serves explicitly to reinforce closure with his authority ("μή πώς τοι Κρονίδης κεχολώσεται εὐρύοπα Ζεύς", 24.544).[750] Again, it could be said that the *Odyssey* thus unlocks the full closural force of the ultimate authority in the world of epic narrative in contrast to the less forceful use of the motif in the *Iliad* (cf. *Il*. 24.113-16≈134-6).

In addition, Odysseus is explicitly said to be pleased with Athene's imposition of closure which cannot be said of Achilles' curt response to the similar threat of Zeus' anger, though he too agrees to the λύσις proposed (24.545; cf. *Il*. 24.139f). The fact that the protagonist of the μῦθος narrated happily and swiftly embraces a divinely decided and engineered ending contributes to sealing this closure satisfactorily. As noted, even the suitors' supporters are at last drawn into this closural unanimity through the treaty proposed by Zeus; the narrative itself mirrors this all-embracing unity in structural terms as the implementation of the treaty echoes Zeus' own words (cf. 24.546 with 483-6).[751] In contrast to the *Iliad*, where the reconciliation between Achilles and Priam had been temporary and based on their uniquely liminal position facing impending death, the reconciliation here is portrayed as rendered permanent with the crucial help of divine intervention, in particular Zeus' erasure of the memory of the τίσις from the minds of the suitors' relatives (cf. above 24.484-5a).[752] Yet, as in the *Iliad*, the narrative does not end on an obvious climax such as the killing of Hector or the suitors, but goes on to a reconciliation, however differently motivated; indeed, in the *Odyssey* the reconciliation forms a crucial part, even becomes the sign of, Odysseus' climactic triumph.

---

[750] Finley (1978) 208 notes that the threat of Zeus' anger takes up his protest of not being angry with Odysseus in bk.1. Peradotto (1990) 167 also sees a connection to 1.62: "Closure here is achieved not...by the achievement or final frustration of goals generated within the narrative, but by paradigmatic ring-composition: verbally in the synonymy of κεχολώσεται and ὠδύσαο; dramatically in the constraint (ἴσχεο, παῦε) here imposed upon the same *polytropos* 'held back' in Calypso's hollow caves in book 1 (ἔρυκε, 14; ...)." I hope, however, to have also shown that the *Odyssey's* closure is in fact very much about the resolution of ends generated in the narrative itself.

[751] Note also the small 'ring-composition' enclosing the last episode by the repeated line 24.503=548, marking Athene's appearance and departure; cf. Heubeck (1992) 418 *ad* 24.548.

[752] Even if motivated completely differently, the reconciliation here is as necessary as in the *Iliad*; cf. Heubeck (1992) 354 *ad* bk.24; Segal (1994) 224 n.61 argues that the *Iliad's* reconciliation is more firmly grounded in the action and holds a more profoundly tragic sense; generally Seaford (1994) 42 on closure through reconciliation and ritual, also 72 on the oaths as a divinely guaranteed ritual of reconciliation.

3.3 Special Closural Devices

The role of closure in the *Odyssey* as a whole has now been traced, but as in my discussion of the *Iliad* I would like to analyze further a few specific features of its closure before offering a final summary. As in the earlier chapter I will concentrate on the treatment of the aftermath, the final focus on some characters rather than others, the role of the gods, thematic closure and 'scenic ring-composition'.

The Aftermath - Protagonist and Poem

We have seen how the *Iliad* incorporated the aftermath of its story concerning Achilles and the Trojans into its last scenes. In the *Odyssey* the same effect is achieved by means of Odysseus' repeated narrative of Teiresias' prophecy in the underworld, which offers the peaceful unwinding of the narrative of his life including the community on Ithaca. This conclusion is accepted by the main characters themselves, after initial fear that the characteristic story of Odyssean wandering and struggle could never find such an end (23.247-87; cf. the proem). Odysseus' and Penelope's human hope of a secure(d) aftermath is then confirmed from the perspective of divine certainty; indeed, Zeus supplements Teiresias' statement of the death of the individual, albeit in the most satisfactory circumstances, with one of the continued rule of the protagonist's family (24.477-86). While Odysseus' death is included in the picture of the aftermath as necessary for the completion of his life, it is not portrayed as its goal as such. There is thus none of the shadow of death looming over the *Odyssey's* closure as it is in the *Iliad*; instead its language focusses on wholly positive terminology with regard to its protagonist. The emphatic certainty concerning the aftermath displayed by Zeus, however, interestingly stands in marked contrast with variant traditions concerning the character Odysseus; unlike the inclusion of the aftermath in the *Iliad*, the end of Odysseus as predicted in the poem is not consonant with the epic cycle, contradicting and overlapping with the *Telegony*.[753]

That the final focus is not on those who die but on those who live on, again in contrast to the *Iliad*, is strikingly illustrated by the second νέκυια: it revives the dead only so as to enhance the praise of the living, while they themselves offer only a backdrop. Heroes like Agamemnon and Achilles are surpassed by Odysseus and his success and acknowledge as much; the suitors are shown defeated and only provide the information necessary to appreciate

[753] Cf. above p.164. It should be noted, though, that the *Telegony* displays an utterly different atmosphere from the Homeric poems; cf. Moulton (1974) 168.

Odysseus' achievement.[754] Even if the opportunity for the Achaean leaders to take a last bow is reminiscent of the funeral games in *Iliad* 23, the inclusion of the fates of characters not part of the main story nevertheless appears different from Iliadic rigour with respect to the aftermath. It is part of the *Odyssey's* self-consciousness about its own function as narrative, thematizing its bestowal of κλέος through its choice and presentation of Odysseus' μῦθος and its explicit contrast with other (epic) μύθοι. The change of focus to the successful and happy survivors is also evident in the fact that the funeral theme so important in the *Iliad's* last books becomes truly marginal: firstly, there is no such event imminent with regard to Odysseus and his family (note Laertes' restoration); second, even the burial of his victims is not contentious and is passed over in the narrative.

The Prominence of the Gods

Importantly, the focus in the closing scenes of the *Odyssey* is also on the gods, in particular on the highest god and on Odysseus' special patron goddess. The imposing end of their divine intervention is unlike the burial and promise of continued war which ends the *Iliad*. The divine ease which settles the conflict between humans, who seem perfectly prepared to battle it out, has always astonished critics, even among those vigorously defending the authenticity of the last book.[755] The intervention of Athene like a latter-day *deus ex machina* has been seen as especially inappropriate and facile.[756] But such interpretations do not take into account that the crucial role of the gods has been established indeed right from the start:[757] they have not only supported Odysseus and his end but also given warnings of it to the suitors (or, for example, the Phaeacians), so that these characters are shown to be themselves accountable for their choice of ends. In this sense, the use of divine intervention at the *Odyssey's* closure should not be regarded as a sign of desperation on the part of the narrator or as an aesthetic failure, but as a well-chosen

[754] Note the many adjectives and adverbs explicitly expressing value judgements.

[755] Cf. e.g. Wender (1978) 64 - her own preconceptions of appropriate closure are revealed when she doubts that the ancient Greeks would have looked for a grand finale, in contrast to the English of this century; also Segal (1994) 226 on the "abruptness of a divinely imposed ending".

[756] Cf. S. West (1989) 130; cf. the next section on more specific parallels to tragic *dei ex machina*. Felson-Rubin (1994) 179 n.15 interestingly sees Athene's intervention on the contrary as "somewhat tentative and provisional".

[757] Cf. Dunn (1996) 39f, who notes that in contrast to dramatic *dei ex machina*, Athene has been present throughout the narrative; also Porter (1992) 77. Stößel (1975) 129 notes the parallel of her presence here to that at the beginning of bk.1 in particular; also Hellwig (1964) 18; cf. on 'scenic ring-composition' above and below.

and well-prepared gesture of final closure, the perfect marker of the protagonist's triumphant success in ending his μῦθος as well as of the vindication of divine concern for him.[758]

Thematic Closure

The direct involvement of the gods in the *Odyssey's* closure also advances its thematic concerns through a positive (re)affirmation of legitimate fame and authority. The crucial recognition of authority is inextricably linked to that of ends as pronounced by those authorities.[759] It is not so much a matter of justice *per se*, but each character's attitude towards authority and the right end(s) literally determines their own ends. The study of closure thus provides the crucial element which allows the *Odyssey's* particular conception of justice to be appreciated, as it serves as the vital criterion to divide "good" from "bad" characters. It is helpful to shift the focus of the debate from the subject of just punishment or arbitrary divine anger to the need to recognize rightful authority, but this view of the necessity to uphold legitimate authority also needs to be accompanied by an awareness of the partisanship displayed in the *Odyssey*. An overly moralistic view of divine justice can seem to downplay that aspect of the gods' interventions.[760] Those who see in the poem the embodiment of a new kind of universal justice may have been misled to an extent by the parallel to the closure of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which indeed explicitly concerns itself with that issue.[761] On the other hand, those who rather

---

[758] Cf. Murnaghan (1995) 77: "Like the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* ends with the goddess who has initiated the poem's plot bringing it to a close. But in accord with her closer and more comfortable relationship with Zeus, Athena's role at the end of the *Odyssey* is both more prominent and more happily effective than that of Thetis in the *Iliad*."

[759] Cf. e.g. Murnaghan (1987) 23: "Their [Odysseus' loyal supporters'] recognition of his identity is not unlike the modern idea of political recognition, acknowledgment of legitimacy in a position of power"; Goldhill (1991) 6: "Each act of recognition is at one and the same time a perception of identity and an assertion of role."

[760] For the view that justice prevails cf. e.g. Stößel (1975) 149; Kullmann (1992) 246f on bk.1; Griffin (1980) 164; Hainsworth (1991) 42; Mueller (1984) 147 calls the *Odyssey* the "model tale of poetic justice"; Heubeck (1992) 405f *ad* 24.413-548, also 412 *ad* 24.482-5; Erbse (1972) 140; also Dimock (1989) 331(f): "...justice takes precedence over vengeance"; Segal (1994) 200 with n.13. Somewhat modified views are held e.g. by Murnaghan (1987) 66, who notes differences in culpability among the suitors; Fenik (1974) 222 distinguishes three different concepts of justice and, 226f, suggests that Zeus' notion of justice at the beginning and end of the poem is different from the vengefulness displayed with respect to the wraths of Helios and Poseidon in bk.12 and 13; Rutherford (1986) 148 notes divine partisanship and finds, 149, a new concept of justice imposed on recalcitrant material; Finley (1978) 81 argues that what is at issue is the restoration of order rather than morality.

[761] The *Eumenides* does tell of a new justice established, embracing both gods and humans, and again engineered by Athena; cf. Erbse (1972) 141f: "Indem er [Homer] das Blutvergießen mit einem friedlichen Vertrag beendete, gab er einem höheren Recht die Ehre und schuf gleichzeitig das Modell für die aeschyleische Orestie"; Goldhill (1984) 243, 267; but Seaford (1994) xivff thinks the rituals in tragedy are not as wholly positive as those in Homer or comedy and notes, 41f, that the *Oresteia* supplements the ritual administered by Athene with a human court of law; cf. also sceptically Dunn (1996) 37.

see the poem as endorsing a tyranny of the powerful also fall short of the *Odyssey's* actual conception by emphasizing the enforcement of authority over the notion of justice.[762] In the *Odyssey*, there is a clear divide between those characters who both advance and are advanced by the plot, because they are in agreement with its end, and other characters who wittingly or unwittingly put obstacles in its way or even plot a different course for the narrative and are swept away accordingly. Some characters may at first appear to become caught up in the plot and its predetermined closure in a seemingly unfair way; the Phaeacians, for example, unwittingly contribute to Odysseus' end but spoil Poseidon's, despite having been warned through Nausithous' prophecy, and thus become liable to retribution from the god. Likewise, a "good" suitor such as Leodes dies not because of any specific outrage committed, but because he went along with the end of Penelope's remarriage. What is at issue, then, is the question of moral culpability as expressed in particular through a character's attitude to the predetermined closure rather than an abstract concept of justice.

The *Odyssey* also explicitly establishes a clear division between the "good" κλέος of Odysseus and his family endorsed by Zeus and the "bad" one of other characters like the suitors or Clytemnestra, whereas in the *Iliad* Achilles is shown to be mistaken about (the possibility of) divisions as much as ends and κλέος comes to be shared between those who appeared to be irreconcilable enemies.[763] Thematically, then, the *Odyssey* is much less sombre than the *Iliad* which shows both the glory and the vacuity of κλέος in Achilles' (and Priam's) losses. That poem closes in unto a σῆμα of itself, a σῆμα of the doomed and defeated; yet the *Odyssey* ends

[762] The justice of the gods and the protagonist is questioned e.g. by Clay (1997) 235-9; Schein (1996a) 30 sees the poem as questioning its own values, as all suitors are forced to their destruction, concluding, 31: "Rather, they [the values] are to some extent open to criticism and negative evaluation, and the poem itself is correspondingly open-ended, interpretively ambivalent or indeterminate, and irreducible to a single, straightforward, one-dimensional reading"; Benardete (1997) 140f.

[763] This ease of judgement between two parties is (as we have seen) completely alien to the *Iliad* (note Aristotle *Poet.* 1455b16-23: αὐτὸς μὲν ἐσώθη τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς διέφθειρε), and the removal of divine quarrel over plots and ends contributes to the impression that the gods in the *Odyssey* have come to resemble the narrator himself ever more closely in deciding narrative direction and ends (cf. above p.174); cf. Peradotto (1990) 47 on 9.339: "And verisimilitude is circumvented or suspended, as so often in the *Odyssey*, by the poet's activity posing as divine activity."

with a theodicy and a characteristic picture of its protagonist in triumph.[764] The audience is in fact presented with a perfect closing emblem in the picture of the returned Odysseus, restoring his house - as represented by his young son and old father - to preeminence under the protection of the gods.[765] This transference of immortality to the continued rule of the family in addition to poetic immortality is a familiar closural device as analyzed by Kermode (1966): an example is Spenser's *Garden of Adonis* where the created world achieves a quasi-immortality through the succession of the generations (75-81). "[T]he image of endlessness consistent with a temporal end" (74) is also evinced in Shakespeare's tragedies, as "both suffering and the need for patience are perpetual" (82) and as other individuals, and institutions greater than the individuals, survive after the death of the protagonists (for example Fortinbras, Malcolm, Edgar; 88f).

Scenic Ring-Composition

Finally, as in the *Iliad*, we have noted a broad correspondence of scenes at the close of the *Odyssey* with those at its beginning. It consists of the search for a father by Telemachus and Odysseus respectively, the public assemblies of the Ithacans and the plot-decisions made and implemented by Athene and Zeus.[766] While it may be unwarranted to call these few correspondences a 'ring-composition' in its strict sense, it is a strategy worth noting for its closural effect in investing the narrative with a sense of structural cohesion. There have also been other parallels, especially to the initial episodes on Ithaca with Telemachus, Odysseus' journey over the sea and then his arrival on Ithaca, in the concluding scenes in particular with

[764] As the *Iliad* closes on what may be a σῆμα of itself, so the *Odyssey* as whole may be seen to contain the answer to the initial question of "who is the protagonist?" (1.1ff); cf. Peradotto (1990) 168ff. The image of the three men ready to fight may bear some resemblance to the use of closural vignettes; cf. e.g. Tracy (1997) 379 with n.30 concerning architectural parallels generally; Pelling (1997) 232-4 on the summarizing, modifying vignette in Plutarch; Thickstun (1988) 27f on a concluding vision. Note N. Richardson (1983) 233 on the tableau of the Phaeacians round the altar in bk.13, "like the 'still' picture at the end of a film". The use of an almost pictorial tableau is thematized at the end of M. Edgeworth's *Belinda*.

[765] Cf. Tracy (1990) 147: "Homer thus brings all three together at the close: this is the true goal, *telos*, of the poem - the three united, armed, and prepared to do battle"; Wender (1978) 70f; Katz (1991) 126 defines the poem's end or goal as "the reestablishment of Odysseus as *kyrios* of his own *oikos*, and the punishment of the suitors for their transgressions against its integrity"; Murnaghan (1995) 78; Erbse (1972) 233. I think the poem as a whole justifies a symbolic interpretation of the triad of grandfather-father-son rather than a more realistic-biological argument as advocated by S. West (1989) 115. Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 178 on "a form of continued order secured by social institutions rather than by the unending survival of an individual hero"; Erbse (1972) 238: "Hier sind am Ende drei Generationen des königlichen Geschlechtes, das zeitweilig ganz zu erlöschen drohte, in Glück und Gesundheit vereint."

[766] Cf. Andreae/Flashar (1977) 249f on the assemblies and divine councils.

Penelope and Laertes. Structural correspondences are thus utilized in order to reinforce the resolutions achieved in thematic terms.

3.4 Summary

We have seen how the plot of the *Iliad* gradually developed through the interaction of a number of characters and their ends. We may start our synthetizing discussion of the *Odyssey* by summarizing the crucial role of closure from the beginning of the narrative both thematically and structurally, before looking more closely at the development of its plot and finally the various aspects of its actual implementation of closure.

The *Odyssey* is even more strongly characterized by its preoccupation with ends than the *Iliad*, if only because this preoccupation is more openly advertised and its closure itself more clearly focussed. In fact, the narrative begins by centering attention on the end to the μῦθος of its protagonist. Equally characteristically, this end in the form of Odysseus' νόστος is already anticipated by the gods in their opening council, offering an advance summary of the narrative to follow.[767] This announcement of closure right at the start is evidence for its great structural importance, yet it is immediately shown to be of thematic relevance as well: Zeus' mention of Aegisthus links his refusal to heed divinely authorized warnings about the end to come with the justification of his eventual τίσις. This twin aspect of closure in the *Odyssey* means that its structural prominence is backed up by its thematic connection to the exercise and recognition of legitimate authority. It has, crucially, been neglected in particular in recent discussions of the issue of justice and punishment, which seize on the *Odyssey's* clear teleology in order to open up or question the end of the τίσις so important to the poem.[768] There inevitably is a certain degree of tension between the apparent predetermination of ends and the need that the characters appear themselves to choose, and thus deserve, their ends. But the narrative mostly strives to avoid losing the audience's interest and sympathy as it would if characters were simply presented as unfairly "caught up" in the plot. Rather, the division into "good" and "bad" characters is further justified by offering them the chance of an informed choice of ends through warnings of the closure that has been determined. Human characters in the *Odyssey* do not have influence over ends in the way Achilles in particular does in the *Iliad*, even though they are disputed as in the *Iliad*. Yet in the *Odyssey* the dispute is about who will eventually be proved "right" and who "wrong" in, and by means of, the end; the keyword here is the νόστος. Thus the theme of justice is inextricably linked with structural closure in that recognition of the end of the μῦθος becomes

[767] This fact may be pointed out by intertextual means since Athene's and Hermes' journeys are parallel to the double mission following the *last* divine council in *Iliad* 24.

[768] Any predetermination has been regarded as a challenge to the notion of justice; cf. p.130; p.235.

equivalent to recognition of one's legitimate position towards others, in particular authorities like the gods or Odysseus. The suitors, for example, are not innocently negating the end of Odysseus' νόστος, but become liable to appropriate punishment when they reject (in almost blasphemous terms) Halitherses' reading of Zeus' omen that predicts Odysseus' return and go on actively to oppose it, plotting against his double Telemachus.[769]

Turning our attention to the plot itself, we see that Odysseus' return is finally set underway following the clarification of the thematic aspect of characters' views on closure. A clear sequence of ends gradually leads up to the final closure of Odysseus' μῦθος: after the λύσις, the πομπή leading to the νόστος, later to be followed by the τίσις and εὐνή and then the ὅρκια. Again, this structural framework is made to convey thematic concerns too: thus the scene with Poseidon at the beginning of Odysseus' νόστος serves to confirm Zeus' initial contention that the gods are aware of, and indeed accept, the ends determined. This respect for each other's authority (with Zeus as the ultimate arbiter) is similarly shown by Athene, who never confronts Poseidon in the manner of Iliadic divine quarrels or negotiations of closure.[770] Odysseus' confrontation with Poseidon is in fact paradigmatic of the poem's plotting: closure is "always already" secured, but this security paradoxically allows for its ubiquitous deferral, indeed even calls for it in order to keep the narrative going. Thus the "liminal moment" as encapsulated in Odysseus' otherwise pointless struggle with a god already aware of the approaching closure, the πεῖραρ ὀϊζύος, exemplifies the "narratable" of the *Odyssey*.[771] The πομπή, too, is postponed after it has already been agreed to make room for Odysseus' narrative of his past μῦθος. This extended 'analepsis' itself again has a double function: its *raison d' être* is the thematic impulse further to portray the character of Odysseus and further to enjoy his μῦθος as presented by the *Odyssey*, as much as the necessity of filling in the past to clarify the plot. It also prepares for and builds

[769] Murnaghan (1987) 89 suggests the existence of "a human plot that is not a secret conspiracy but a public network of benefits and obligations" which supplements "a divine plot that they [the suitors] can hardly be expected to discern", in order to avoid that "they seem to represent the perpetual disadvantage of all mortals in a world controlled by gods capable of deceiving them"; an argument which is somewhat forced.

[770] We may also note how Athene's absence affords Odysseus the space to prove himself in a positive manner as the suitors have in a negative one, without constant divine interference. The same will be true of his own narrative of his past, which tells of his own failures and achievements at a time when the closure of his μῦθος is still open. In the *Iliad* too Zeus might be able to assume the same over-all authority over the plot as he does here, yet he always negotiates with his fellow gods - here that constant negotiation is replaced with repeated interventions by a single god, usually Athene, after agreement with Zeus.

[771] Cf. Fenik (1974) 98: "Suspense and retardation are employed in the Odyssey on a massive scale", with examples from bk.7-9, 13, 14-23; on the 'narratable' above p.22.

up to the approaching presence of Odysseus on Ithaca. Indeed, the knowledge of his character is crucial to an appreciation of the ironies surrounding Odysseus' disguise of his presence on Ithaca: Penelope's caution and cunning, even if apparently frustrated by the progress of events, already reveal her characteristic similarity to her husband; the suitors' failure to recognize Odysseus for the person he is, on the other hand, corresponds to their non-recognition of the closure awaiting them.

Importantly for this second part of the poem, Odysseus' initial encounter with Athene after his νόστος establishes him as almost an equal of the goddess in terms of cunning. Through his disguise and confident anticipation of the closure he is working towards he also comes to resemble her in the active role he takes in controlling the course of the plot.[772] The many parallels to scenes in the first part of the poem with a different allocation of roles illustrate the complete reversal of his position. For example, Odysseus now takes the role of Athene and Eumaeus that of Telemachus. Besides continuing to assess the characters' respective perspective on the end by a replay of earlier scenes, the plot makes (slow) progress towards closure through a different series of events leading up to the τίσις. Here Penelope plays a crucial role in that she is the one to set the contest of the bow, which will finally serve not only publicly to establish Odysseus' identity, but will also become the instrument of his τίσις. Once more, what may be called structural reasons propelling her towards that decision (such as the growing maturity of Telemachus and the present exhaustion of her μῆτις) are accompanied by thematic motivations. These come in the shape of omens and other reassurances from the gods as well as from the disguised Odysseus, which suggest the approaching closure of his μῦθος without in fact revealing its (and his) actual presence.

When the τίσις at last arrives, its achievement is marked by metanarrative passages at its beginning, but also the end that draw attention to the skill of the narrator as well as of the protagonist at this crucial point. The body of the τίσις narrative itself is laced with implicit comparisons to Achilles, which appear to pit the *Odyssey's* hero and its climactic episode against that of the *Iliad*. Though the τίσις does not represent the poem's closure, it represents an advancement towards, and anticipation of, that closure in several ways. The comparison with Achilles and with his story, for example, will be made explicit and concluded in the second

[772] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 176 on the control of Athene and Odysseus in the second half of the *Odyssey*. Achilles' quasi-divine control over the narrative in the *Iliad* is restricted to the final scenes and significantly concerned with a different thematic issue.

νέκυια (cf. below). In terms of the setting, the τίσις marks the turning-point from Odysseus' "liminal" existence on the margin of his own home, indeed its very threshold, to his eventual return to the bed fixed at its very centre. This artifact firmly secured in the ground, the symbol of their union, becomes the means for securing recognition for Penelope, which seals the reestablishment of Odysseus' presence as the head of the household. The special symbolic significance of the setting thus echoes that discussed with respect to the *Iliad*.

This brings us to the institution of closure itself in the concluding scenes of the narrative. In the *Iliad* a single encounter between Achilles and Priam served to provide resolution in a variety of ways. In the *Odyssey* a series of scenes takes up many of these elements. This change can be seen to be at least partly due to the clear division between those who recognize the end and those who do not, which necessitates a corresponding split in the structure of the narrative. First, with regard to the characters' own awareness and acceptance of the aftermath, Odysseus' reunion with Penelope also contains a recall of Teiresias' prophecy. The prophecy had first formed part of the narrative of his past to the Phaeacians, offering certainty not just about his return, but also about the satisfactory and successful nature of the remainder of his life. The τέλος θανάτοιο is thus rejected as an end for Odysseus in this narrative in its early stages; instead it becomes a peaceful resting place for its aftermath.[773] This measured anticipation of his continued success is now reviewed and accepted by the protagonist himself and his wife. It provides an important background to the second νέκυια, which combines intertextual and metanarrative perspectives to openly proclaim the preeminence of the *Odyssey's* protagonist amongst the Achaean heroes. The judgement by the heroes themselves is again expressed in terms of "good" and "bad" (here with reference to κλέος), based on their stories' closure as its measure. Odysseus' reunion with his father then takes up a second aspect of the Iliadic scene; revitalizing Laertes too is portrayed as an important part of Odysseus' success. A third aspect of the final meeting between Achilles and Priam in the *Iliad* is introduced in the scene of Odysseus' closing encounter with the relatives of his enemies: while the two opponents in the *Iliad* were

[773] The closural force of death is however transferred to Eupeithes, who becomes the symbol of opposition to Odysseus (and to the *Odyssey's* closure) in the last few scenes. The related motif of the funeral is tellingly reserved for Achilles in the νέκυια.

united in their suffering and their awareness of the end, the purpose of the Odyssean scene is to endorse the triumph of its protagonist.[774]

It is left to Zeus to draw together as much as possible these various elements of the *Odyssey's* closure. Beginning right with his anticipation of Odysseus' return in the epic's very first scene, Zeus has proved himself to be the supreme arbiter over the plot. Indeed, his position comes intriguingly close to that of the narrator himself by overseeing and guiding the repeated interventions of Athene in particular, who implements their decisions. As such, he appropriately stands at the end of the narrative, both enforcing and guaranteeing its closure. In fact, Zeus' role here could be understood as part of the clear metanarrative concern evident throughout the *Odyssey*, its self-awareness of narrative as a construct. He unites the two seemingly divergent perspectives on closure expressed, the explicitly metanarrative and indeed intertextual advertisement of the permanent κλέος of Odysseus' μῦθος and the anticipation of the eventual closure of Odysseus' death, by focussing on the quasi-eternal and stable continued rule of Odysseus' family rather than on the death of the individual. In fact, it might be said that such a broader perspective is actually called for, since the future both of Odysseus' individual life and of its narrative has already been foretold and accepted, so that Zeus' final speech needs to surpass all others in its ability to ensure closure.[775]

The fact, and special force, of divine intervention itself at the poem's closure can also be understood thematically with reference to the theodicy, with which the end had been linked right from the start. If this is to be the triumphant closure we have been led to expect, proving the gods and the protagonist right (and validating the plot set forth in the narrative itself), both the ease and speed with which it is brought about only serve to maximize its impact. Clearly advertised by the characters themselves, including Athene, the acceleration of the narrative towards its end is the consequence of the special divine involvement, which enables such an amazingly speedy closure, and should not be regarded as a structural fault. The hyperbolical nature of Zeus' closing words and Athene's brief but effective implementation of his design too become necessary rather than surprising.

---

[774] The *Odyssey's* title is aptly chosen since the focus remains on the success of the individual, while the wider public only present the background to his triumph; thus investigations concerning notions of ethics and justice in society, which take their cue from the appearance of the wider Ithacan community, misunderstand and exaggerate their function as a foil to the key dispute.

[775] Zeus' 'prolepsis' is not necessarily different in kind, even if in degree, from Teiresias' prophecy, and there is no need to question either the appropriateness or reliability of his speech.

In addition, we have been able to identify some more formal elements of the *Odyssey's* closure. In particular, the hyperbolical expressions of Zeus' concluding speech just mentioned have been discussed, likewise the acceleration of the narrative following the τίσις and especially Odysseus' restoration at his own home (also endowed with thematic relevance). As in the *Iliad*, most characters are also afforded a last bow in the final section of the text, ranging from Odysseus' family and household, the suitors and the Ithacan public to the dead heroes in Hades and, ultimately, Zeus and Athene. There also appears to be an attempt to establish a broadly constructed 'scenic ring-composition' comparable to that in the *Iliad*. Yet it is less elaborate with regard to the number of scenes involved (most clearly assembly and divine council): Telemachus' lengthy and unsuccessful search for his father only corresponds to Odysseus' brief and successful one in the broadest thematic sense, although it may still contribute to a sense of closure. Again, the only partial use of 'scenic ring-composition' is arguably due to the fact that the *Odyssey* attempts - largely sucessfully - both to rework closural techniques apparent especially in the *Iliad* and to develop closural strategies appropriate specifically to its own narrative. The latter strategy is exemplified in other correspondences between scenes placed at the beginning, middle and end of the poem which have also been shown to be of interest thematically.

"In the buginning is the woid, in the muddle is the sounddance and thereinofter
you're in the unbewised again, vund vulsy-volsy."
James Joyce *Finnegan's Wake* (London, Faber & Faber: 1971) 378

iii. Conclusion

The foregoing discussions of the Homeric epics have, I hope, demonstrated how the recently popularized study of closure may provide fresh insights into these poems, their narrative structures and preoccupations. Other recent investigations of the subject have attempted to seek out fissures in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, be it of their systems of value, their focalization or plotting.[776] In contrast my readings rather follow the narrative development of closure. Accordingly, the closed aspects of the epics' endings are brought out and several specific strategies have been detailed in each case to illustrate how narrative closure is instituted in the very face of the unavoidable continuity of the epics' subject-matter. I feel that this is a reading appropriate to the poems, while not denying that their open aspects could be stressed more, as has been done by other critics who have noted the continuity of the story of Troy or, in the *Odyssey*, the tension between Odysseus' personal aftermath and the divinely endorsed uneventful peace on Ithaca.

My methodology, arising out of the introductory overviews of closural studies both of the novel and Classics generally, has shown how a number of approaches to closure, ranging from lyric to narrative, could be integrated and how narrative theories like narratology could be made relevant too. As laid out there, the focus on closure has helped to elucidate the coherence of each narrative as a whole rather than the ending *per se*. *Iliad* and *Odyssey* resemble each other in many structural points (including the 'scenic ring-composition' between beginning and ending, a climactic event in book 22, a last curtain call for the major characters afterwards, a reconciliation and an anticipation of the end beyond the end), although the exact order of these may vary. A particular example is the placement of the reconciliation before the general acceleration of the narrative in the *Iliad* and after it in the *Odyssey*. The themes and content of the epics, and with it their closure, are nonetheless very different. This difference is encapsulated in the way in which each poem construes a final lack of the 'narratable' as defined by D. Miller (1981): the *Iliad* offers death for its most prominent protagonists while marginalizing in

[776] Cf. Katz (1994); Clay (1997); Murnaghan (1997); Lynn-George (1988); Peradotto (1990); Doherty (1995).

particular those who will live on to win the war; the *Odyssey* freezes its 'narratable' in an image of the time-defying continuity of the rule of its protagonist's family. In this sense, the *Iliad* may be said to close through Achilles' generalizations by transcending the life of the individual, the *Odyssey* through Zeus' prophecy by transcending the progress of time. In terms of the epics' respective closing images, the closural focus on the σῆμα in the *Iliad* may be seen to acknowledge the precarious nature of human life (especially in view of a larger scheme of things which is offered by a divine perspective), whereas the focus on κλέος in the *Odyssey* is rather a sign of its self-confident assertion of lasting excellence (especially in view of a larger scheme of things which is offered in this case by a perspective from the past - and other stories, as exemplified in the νέκυια).

Surprisingly, the *Odyssey*, whose closure has regularly been questioned, has been shown to be much more emphatically closed than the *Iliad*. In fact, I hope to have shown how closure lies at the root of its composition and already informs its very first scenes, in contrast to the *Iliad*.[777] Therefore, if its closure is found to be particularly objectionable, critics really ought to disagree with the whole conception of the poem itself. It arguably provides a study of closure in slow motion, featuring many scenes and discussions without any direct impact on its plot. Unlike the *Iliad*, where Achilles' choices are portrayed very much as real ones both at the beginning and close of the narrative (though his choice is undertaken with an understanding of the consequences in book 24 but not in book 1 or 9), in the *Odyssey* its closure is predetermined by the gods from the start. In fact, the *Odyssey* is extremely self-conscious and explicit about narrative concerns, including closure. One example we have noted is its recurrent use of adverbs to thematize both the characters' stance on closure and the development of the narrative itself. In fact, part of the poem's self-awareness is also its openness about the predetermination of its closure(s), for instance that of the Telemachy or of Odysseus' νόστος with all incidental ends, including his later death. Paradoxically, although in the *Odyssey* incidents appear to be more varied and perhaps more surprising, there is less true development of the plot because the concern is overwhelmingly only with (dis)proving characters' views on a largely predetermined

[777] Perhaps the *Odyssey* has been regarded to have an affinity to comedy because, through the gods, the audience enjoys superior knowledge of ends than its human characters, which creates a positive irony. In the *Iliad*, the audience like the characters (after a certain point) are aware of much less desired and desirable ends in store, which may account for the sense of tragedy often identified. For the distinction of comic and tragic as distinguished by the end achieved cf. Peradotto (1990) 47-50; on the comparison of the Homeric epics with comedy and tragedy cf. Rutherford (1985) 149. One may wish to contrast the *Aeneid*: according to Feeney (1991) 182f the gulf between divine and human understanding at its end creates a tragic atmosphere and disturbs the audience's judgement of it.

closure. In the *Iliad* there may appear to be less action as Achilles withdraws from the fighting, yet since closure only gradually develops, not according to an already revealed plot but arising from interactions of any number of plots (even Zeus provides commentary rather than predetermines the outcome), its plot shows more signs of developing as it moves on.

Indeed, the slightly but characteristically different role played by Zeus in each epic deserves further comment, since the methodology had also set out to further a better understanding of the gods as characters in epic at the same time as a better understanding of the role of characters generally in the development of narrative closure. Ancient epic could be seen to offer a particularly useful starting point for an analysis of the contribution of characters to closure precisely because of the prominent position of the gods, who closely approach the function of the narrator itself. This is especially clear in the case of prophecies which supply overviews over the direction of the story inside and at times beyond the narrative itself ('internal and external prolepses'), providing special instances of the thematization of plot, including closure. Through our interpretations, we have seen how judging the effect of each such speech crucially depends on the context of the individual work and its exact positioning in it. Criticism in particular of the closure of the *Odyssey* has much to do, in my view, with modern misperceptions of the role of the gods in epic narrative.[778] Perhaps Zeus' prophecies in the *Iliad* have generally been considered less problematic because of their more limited extent and distance from the main plot (noticeably concerning the imminence of Achilles' and the Trojans' fates) and their concentration on a few key characters, underscored by the presumed familiarity of the aftermath as a whole. Yet while modern readers may not be as comfortable with the more assertive Zeus of the *Odyssey*, his sweeping summarizing concluding speech with its heightened closural effect may become less offensive if understood as an ancient counterpart to the closing epilogue of the modern novel.

In fact, it could be argued that divine prophecies (at least in Homeric epic) are a more forceful and reliable version of the epilogue provided by the narrator, since the gods as characters hold the ultimate authority in the world of epic; their word, if nobody else's, commands credibility. The special affinity of the gods to the narrator and his role also is a crucial factor in ensuring that the epics work as narratives regardless of the Homeric question. In a related fashion, I suppose, Homeric epic attempts (utilizing the unique position of the gods as

[778] We may just note how, narratologically, both epics appear to end in the same way on a 'singular summary' with a ὥς-clause; however, one has been criticised but not the other.

characters) to close the gap "between the teleological linearity of a journey - where the *iter* (of ship and text) depends on *praeteritio*, passing by and passing over - and the fluid and intricate possibilities of the *muthoi*, the representations (histories, descriptions, explanations) that delay each stage of the journey" as identified by Goldhill (1991) in his discussion of Apollonius' *Argonautica* (297). As Goldhill notes, Apollonius himself draws attention to this gap by "[t]he highly self-reflexive development of the figure of the narrator within the *Argonautica*" (297).[779] On closer examination, the *Aeneid* would (I believe) be found to differ from either in that Vergil again removes the poet's voice while leaving the gaps; the resulting tension between "*praeteritio*" and "*muthoi*", between future and present, arguably extends to its closure and complicates its interpretation.

The current study of Homeric closure may thus itself be seen to fill a gap in the study of ancient epics and their endings. Much work remains to be done, even on otherwise well-researched narratives like the *Argonautica* and the *Aeneid*. There is less need for extensively revisiting Latin silver epic; indeed, reevaluations of their constant preoccupation with and thematization of closure (and its delays) as part of a post-classical, heightened metanarrative self-consciousness have facilitated appreciation of the *Odyssey* as I have analysed it. As noted in the introduction, there are several possibilities to take the comparative study of closure even further: beyond epic, one might branch out into related ancient genres such as drama and the novel in particular, or one may wish to continue in the epic genre and move on rather to medieval and modern European epics, including of course Milton, and finally proceed to consider prose narrative, in particular the modern novel as suggested earlier. The tools developed for the present investigation of Homeric closure would still be of interest for the study of other and seemingly different narratives by virtue of the comprehensive yet flexible and adaptable nature of my methodology (in particular its view of the gods as approaching the position and function of the narrator).

[779] Apollonius also expands on the *Iliad's* move to stabilize the meaning of the σῆμα by linking it to its own function as poetry in that he employs an explicitly metapoetic self-reference to close his epic, also drawing in elements of the hymnic tradition of epic.

iv. Bibliography

Adams, Robert M. (1958) Strains of Discord: Studies in Literary Openness. Ithaca

Allan, William (1997) *A Study of Euripides' Andromache.* D.Phil. diss. Oxford

Ambrose, Z.P. (1965) 'The Homeric telos' *Glotta* 43 38-62

Andreae, Bernard/Flashar, Hellmut (1977) 'Strukturaequivalenzen zwischen den Homerischen Epen und der Frühgriechischen Vasenkunst' *Poetica* 9, 217-64

Assmann, Jan (1996) 'Denkformen des Endes in der Altägyptischen Welt' in Stierle (1996) 1-31

Austin, N. (1975) *Archery at the Dark of the Moon. Poetic Problems in Homer's Odyssey.* Berkeley

Bakker, E./Kahane, A. (1997) (edd.) *Written Voices, Spoken Signs.* Harvard

- (1997a) 'Introduction' in Bakker (1997) 1-10

Bal, Mieke (1985) *Narratology. An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative.* Toronto

Barchiesi, Alessandro (1989) 'Voci e istanze narrative nelle Metamorfosi di Ovidio' *MD* 23, 55-97

- (1997) 'Endgames: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 15 and *Fasti* 6' in Roberts (1997) 181-208

- (forthcoming) 'The Crossing' in Harrison (forthcoming)

Bartsch, Shadi (1989) *Decoding the Ancient Novel.* Princeton

Bergren, Ann (1975) *The Etymology and Usage of ΠΕΙΡΑΡ in Early Greek Poetry.* American Classical Studies 2. New York

- (1983) 'Odyssean Temporality: Many (Re)turns' in Rubino (1983) 38-73

Benardete, Seth (1997) *The Bow and the Lyre. A Platonic Reading of the* Odyssey. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London

Bertman, Stephen (1968) 'Structural Symmetry at the end of the Odyssey' *GRBS* 9, 115-23

Betts, John H./Hooker, J.T./Green, J.R. (1986) (edd.) *Studies in Honour of T.B.L. Webster.* vol.i Bristol

Beye, Charles Rowan (1993) *Ancient Epic Poetry. Homer, Apollonius, Virgil.* Ithaca/London

Bonheim, Helmut (1982) *The Narrative Modes. Techniques of the Short Story*. Cambridge

Booth, Alison (1993) (ed.) *Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure.* Charlottesville

- (1993a) 'Introduction: the Sense of Few Endings' in A. Booth (1993) 1-32

Booth, Wayne C. (1961) *The Rhetoric of Fiction.* Chicago

- (1989) 'Are Narrative Choices Subject to Ethical Criticism?' in Phelan (1989) 57-78

Bremer, J.M./de Jong, I./Kalff, J. (1987) (edd.) *Homer: Beyond Oral Poetry.* Amsterdam

Brink, C.O. (1971) *Horace on Poetry. The 'Ars Poetica'.* Cambridge

Brooks, Peter (1984) *Reading for the Plot: design and intention in narrative.* New York

Burkert, Walter (1997) 'The Song of Ares and Aphrodite: On the Relationship between the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*' in Jones (1997) 249-62=*RM* 103 (1960) 130-44

Burrow, Colin (1993) *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton.* Oxford

Cairns, Francis (1972) *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry.* Edinburgh

- (1979) *Tibullus. A Hellenistic Poet at Rome*. Cambridge

Cavallo, Guglielmo/Fedeli, Paolo/Giardina, Andrea (1989) (edd.) *Lo spazio letterario di Roma antica. Vol.1: La produzione del testo.* Rome

Chatman, Seymour (1978) *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film.* Ithaca/London

Chesher, R. Donna (1992) *The End. Closing Lines of over 3,000 theatrically released American Films.* McFarland

Clarke, Howard (1981) *Homer's Readers.* Newark/London/Toronto

Clausen, Wendell V. (1987) *Virgil's Aeneid and the Traditions of Hellenistic Poetry.* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London

Clay, Jenny Strauss (1997; first published 1983) *The Wrath of Athena: gods and men in the Odyssey.* Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland

Cohan, Steven/Shires, Linda M. (1988) *Telling Stories. A theoretical analysis of narrative fiction*. London/New York

Cohen, Beth (1995) (ed.) *The Distaff Side.* Oxford

Conte, Gian Biagio (1994) *Genres and Readers. Lucretius. Love Elegy. Pliny's Encyclopedia.* Baltimore/London

Davies, Malcolm (1981) 'The Judgment of Paris and *Iliad* xxiv' *JHS* 101, 56-62

Deichgräber, K. (1972) *Der letzte Gesang der Ilias.* Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur - Abhdlg. der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse Nr.5 Mainz

Derrida, Jacques (1967) *L'écriture et la différence*. Paris

- (1980) 'The Law of Genre' *Glyph* 7, 176-229

Dimock, G.E. (1989) *The Unity of the Odyssey.* Amherst

Doherty, Lillian E. (1995) *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey*. Ann Arbor

Duckworth, Alistair M. (1978) '*Little Dorrit* and the Question of Closure' in Welsh (1978) 110-30

Dunn, Francis M. (1992) 'Introduction: beginning at Colonus' *YCS* 29, 1-12

- (1996) *Tragedy's End. Closure and Innovation in Euripidean Drama*. Oxford

Eagleton, Terry (1983) *Literary Theory. An Introduction.* Oxford

Easterling, Patricia E. (1977) 'Character in Sophocles' *G&R* 24, 121-9

- (1991) 'Men's κλέος and Women's γόος: Female Voices in the *Iliad*' *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 9, 145-51

Eco, Umberto (1979) *The Role of the Reader.* Bloomington/London

- (1989) *The Open Work*. Harvard

- (1992) *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge

Edwards, Mark W. (1986) 'The conventions of a Homeric funeral' in Betts (1986) 84-92

- (1987) *Homer. Poet of the Iliad.* Baltimore/London

- (1990) 'Neoanalysis and Beyond' *ClAnt* 9, 311-25

Eimermacher, K. (1986) (ed.) *Semiotica Sovietica 2. Sowjetische Arbeiten der Moskauer und Tartuer Schule zu sekundären modellbildenden Zeichensystemen (1962-73).* Aachen

Einstein, Carl (1976) *Theorie des Expressionismus.* Stuttgart

Erbse, H. (1972) *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee.* Berlin

Falkner, Thomas M./Judith de Luce (1989) (edd.) *Old Age in Greek and Latin Literature.* New York

- (1989a) 'Ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῷ: Homeric heroism, old age and the end of the Odyssey' in Falkner (1989) 21-67

Farron, S. (1982) 'The abruptness of the end of the Aeneid' *AC* 25, 136-41

Fedeli, Paolo (1989) 'Le intersezioni dei generi e dei modelli' in Cavallo (1989) 375-97

Feeney, Denis C. (1982) *A commentary on Silius Italicus Book 1.* D.Phil. diss. Oxford

- (1986) 'History and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld' *PCPhS* 212, 1-24

- (1990) 'The Reconciliations of Juno' in Harrison (1990) 339-62

- (1991) *The Gods in Epic: poets and critics of the classical tradition*. Oxford

- (1998) *Literature and Religion at Rome: culture, contexts and beliefs.* Cambridge

Felson-Rubin, Nancy (1987) 'Penelope's Perspective: from character to plot' in Bremer (1987) 61-80

- (1994) *Regarding Penelope: from courtship to poetics.* Princeton

Fenik, Bernard (1974) *Studies in the Odyssey.* Hermes Einzelschriften 30 Wiesbaden

Fernández-Galiano, Manuel (1992) 'Odyssey Books XXI-XXII' in Russo (1992) 131-310

Finley, J.H. Jr. (1978) *Homer's Odyssey*. Cambridge/Mass.

Foley, Helene P. (1995) 'Penelope as Moral Agent' in Cohen (1995) 93-116

Foley, John Miles (1997) 'Oral Tradition and its implications' in Powell (1997) 146-73

Ford, Andrew (1992) *Homer: the Poetry of the Past.* Ithaca/London

- (1997a) 'The Inland Ship: Problems in the Performance and Reception of Homeric Epic' in Bakker (1997) 83-109

- (1997b) 'Epic as Genre' in Powell (1997) 396-414

Fowler, Alistair (1982) *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes.* Oxford

Fowler, Don P. (1989) 'First Thoughts on Closure: Problems and Prospects' *MD* 22, 75-122

- (1994) 'Postmodernism, Romantic Irony and Classical Closure' in de Jong (1994) 231-56

- (1997) 'Second Thoughts on Closure' in Roberts (1997) 3-22

- (1998) 'On the Shoulders of Giants: Intertextuality and Classical Studies' *MD* 39, 3-24

- (forthcoming) 'The Didactic Plot' in Obbink (forthcoming)

Fowler, Peta (1997) 'Lucretian Conclusions' in Roberts (1997) 112-38

Fränkel, H. (1925) 'Griechische Wörter' *Glotta* 14, 1-13

Frame, Douglas (1978) *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic.* Yale

Friedman, Alan (1966) *The Turn of the Novel.* New York

Friedman, Susan Stanford (1989) 'Lyric Subversion of Narrative in Women's Writing: Virginia Woolf and the tyranny of plot' in Phelan (1989) 162-85

Fusillo, M. (1997) 'How Novels End: Some Patterns of Closure in Ancient Narrative' in Roberts (1997) 209-27

Galinsky, G.K. (1988) 'The Anger of Aeneas' *AJP* 109, 321-48

Garvie, A.F. (1994) *Homer Odyssey. Books VI-VIII.* Cambridge

- (1995) 'Review of Oswald (1993)' *CR* 45, 154

Genette, Gérard (1980) *Narrative Discourse*. Oxford

Gillis, Daniel (1983) *Eros and Death in the Aeneid.* Rome

Girard, Réné (1965) *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*. Baltimore

Goldhill, Simon (1984) *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: The Oresteia.* Cambridge

- (1991) *The Poet's Voice. Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature*. Cambridge

Gómez Pallarès, Joan (1995) *Per una poètica de l'oxímoron: inicis i finals o el concepte d'unitat en poesia llatina.* Faventia Monografies 11 Barcelona

Gransden, K.W. (1984) *Virgil's Iliad: an essay on epic narrative.* Cambridge

Griffin, Jasper (1977) 'The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer' *JHS* 97, 39-53

- (1980) *Homer on Life and Death.* Oxford

- (1986) 'Homeric Words and Speakers' *JHS* 106, 36-57

Hahn, Alois (1996) 'Unendliches Ende: Höllenvorstellungen in soziologischer Perspektive' in Stierle (1996) 155-82

Hainsworth, J.B. (1969) *Homer.* Greece and Rome New Surveys no.3 Oxford

- (1988) 'Odyssey Books V-VIII' in Heubeck (1988) 249-385

- (1991) *The Idea of Epic*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford

Hamon, Philippe (1975) 'Clausules' *Poétique* 6, 495-526

Hansen, William I. (1977) 'Odysseus' last journey' *QUCC* 24, 27-48

Hardie, Philip (1986) *Vergil's Aeneid. Cosmos and Imperium*. Oxford

- (1993) *The epic successors of Virgil. A study in the dynamics of a tradition.* Cambridge

- (1997) 'Closure in Latin Epic' in Roberts (1997) 139-62

Harrison, Stephen J. (1990) (ed.) *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid.* Oxford

- (forthcoming) (ed.) *Working Together. Scholarship and Theory in Classical Literature*. Oxford

Heath, Malcolm (1989) *Unity in Greek Poetics.* Oxford

Heinze, R. (1915) *Vergil's epische Technik.* Leipzig/Berlin[3]

Hellwig, Brigitte (1964) *Raum und Zeit im homerischen Epos*. Spudasmata 2 Hildesheim

Henderson, John (1991) 'Statius' *Thebaid* / Form Premade' *PCPhS* 37, 30-79

Hershkowitz, Debra (1998) *The Madness of Epic: reading insanity from Homer to Statius.* Oxford

Herzog, Reinhart (1996) 'Vom Aufhören. Darstellungsformen menschlicher Dauer im Ende' in Stierle (1996) 283-329

Heubeck, Alfred/West, Stephanie/Hainsworth, J.B. (1988) (edd.) *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey. vol.I - Introduction and Books I-VIII.* Oxford

- (1988a) 'General Introduction' in Heubeck (1988) 3-23

-/Hoekstra, Arie (1989) (edd.) *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey. vol.II - Books IX-XVI*. Oxford

- (1989a) 'Odyssey Books IX-XII' in Heubeck (1989) 3-143

- (1992) 'Odyssey Books XXIII-XXIV' in Russo (1992) 313-418

Hinds, Stephen (1998) *Allusion and Intertext: dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry.* Cambridge

- (forthcoming) 'Epic *arma* and generic impurity: Macer, Statius and beyond' in Obbink (forthcoming)

Hoekstra, Arie (1989) 'Odyssey Books XIII-XVI' in Heubeck (1989) 147-287

Hölscher, Uvo (1972) 'Erkennungsszene im 23. Buch der Od.' *Römisch & Griechisch in der Schule*, 156-65

- (1989) *Odyssee: Epos zwischen Märchen und Roman.* München[2]

Hult, David F. (1984) (ed.) *Concepts of Closure.* Yale French Studies 67 New Haven/London

Hunter, Richard L. (1993) *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies.* Cambridge

Huxley, G.L. (1969) *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis.* London

Irrlitz, Gerhard (1996) 'Die wesentliche Täuschung vom Ende' in Stierle (1996) 330-58

Iser, Wolfgang (1984) *Der Akt des Lesens.* München[2]

- (1996) 'Die Präsenz des Endens' in Stierle (1996) 359-83

Janko, Richard (1981) 'The Structure of the Homeric Hymns: A Study in Genre' *Hermes* 109, 9-24

- (1992) *The Iliad: A Commentary. Vol. IV: books 13-16.* Cambridge

Japp, Uwe (1990) 'Das Ende der Kunst des Schreibens. Wolfgang Hildesheimer and Sir Andrew Marbot' in Söring (1990) 187-203

Jauss, Hans Robert (1982) *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Brighton/Minnesota

- (1996) 'Das Religionsgespräch oder: The Last Things before the Last' in Stierle (1996) 384-414

Jefferson, Ann/Robey, David (1986) (edd.) *Modern Literary Theory. A comparative introduction.* London[2]

- (1986a) 'Structuralism and post-structuralism' in Jefferson (1986) 92-121

Johnson, W.R. (1976) *Darkness Visible. A study of Vergil's Aeneid.* Berkeley/London

Jones, P.V./Wright, G.M. (1997) *Homer. German Scholarship in Translation.* Oxford

- (1997a) 'Introduction' in Jones (1997) 1-46

de Jong, Irene (1987) *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad*. Amsterdam

-/Sullivan, P.J. (1994) (edd.) *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature.* Mnemosyne Suppl. 130 Brill/Leiden

- (1997) 'Homer and Narratology' in Powell (1997) 305-25

Kahane, Ahuvia (1997) 'Hexameter Progression and the Homeric Hero's Solitary State' in Bakker (1997) 110-37

Katz, M.A. (1991) *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the Odyssey.* Princeton

Kearns, Emily (1982) 'The return of Odysseus. A Homeric Theoxeny' *CQ* 32, 2-8

Kermode, Frank (1966) *The Sense of an Ending.* Oxford

- (1978) 'Sensing Endings' in Welsh (1978) 144-58

Kirk, G.S. (1985) *The Iliad: A Commentary vol.1: books 1-4.* Cambridge

- (1990) *The Iliad: A Commentary vol.2: books 5-8.* Cambridge

Klingner, Friedrich (1997) 'The Fight for Justice and the Departure of Telemachus' in Jones (1997) 192-216=(1944) *Über die ersten vier Bücher der Odyssee*. Leipzig, 15-41

Knauer, Georg Nikolaus (1964) *Die Aeneis und Homer. Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate in der Aeneis.* Hypomnemata 7 Göttingen

Korenjak, Martin (1998) 'Homerische Intertextualität ohne Formeln? Zwei phorminxspielende Helden in Ilias und Odyssee' *MD* 40, 133-43

Korte, Barbara (1985) *Techniken der Schlußgebung im Roman. Eine Untersuchung englisch- und deutschsprachiger Romane.* Frankfurt/Main

Krieger, Murray (1989) *A Re-opening of Closure: Organicism against Itself*. New York

Krueger, Christine L. (1993) '"Speaking like a Woman": How to Have the Last Word on *Sylvia's Lovers*' in A. Booth (1993) 135-53

Kullmann, Wolfgang (1960) *Die Quellen der Ilias.* Wiesbaden

- (1992) *Homerische Motive.* Stuttgart

Laird, Andrew (1997) ‘Approaching characterisation in Virgil’ in Martindale (1997) 282-93

Lamberton, Robert (1986) *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition.* Univ. of Calif. Press

-/Keaney, John J. (1992) (edd.) *Homer’s Ancient Readers.* Princeton

- (1992a) ‘The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer’ in Lamberton (1992) 115-33

Lerner, D. (1963) (ed.) *Parts and Wholes.* New York

Lloyd-Jones, Hugh/Parsons, Peter (1983) *Supplementum Hellenisticum.* Berlin/New York

Long, A.A. (1992) ‘Stoic Readings of Homer’ in Lamberton (1992) 41-66

Lord, Albert (1960) *The Singer of Tales.* Harvard/London

Lord, George deForest (1956) *Homeric Renaissance: the Odyssey of George Chapman* Chatto &Windus

Lotman, Ju.M. (1986) ‘Die modellbildende Bedeutung des Begriffs Anfang und Ende in künstlerischen Texten’ in Eimermacher (1986) 829-34

Louden, Bruce (1993) ‘Pivotal Contrafactuals in Homeric Epic’ *ClAnt* 12.2, 181-9

Lyne, R.O.A.M. (1987) *Further Voices in Vergil’s Aeneid*. Oxford

- (1990) ‘Vergil and the politics of war’ in Harrison (1990) 316-38

Lynn-George, Michael (1988) *Epos: Word, Narrative and the Iliad*. Macmillan/Basingstoke/London

Lyons, John (1981) *Language and Linguuistics. An Introduction.* Cambridge

Mackie, C.J. (1988) *The Characterisation of Aeneas.* Edinburgh

Macleod, Colin (1982) *Homer. Iliad. Book xxiv.* Oxford

- (1983) *Collected Essays*. Oxford

- (1983a) ‘Homer on Poetry and the Poetry of Homer’ in (1983) 1-15

Martin, Richard D.P. (1989) *The Language of Heroes: speech and performance in the Iliad.* Ithaca

Martindale, Charles (1993) *Redeeming the Text. Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception.* Cambridge

- (1997) (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil.* Cambridge

- (1997a) 'The Classic of all Europe' in Martindale (1997) 1-18

Masters, Jamie (1992) *Civil War in Lucan's Bellum Civile.* Cambridge

Miller, D.A. (1981) *Narrative and its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel.* Princeton

- (1984) 'Balzac's Illusions Lost and Found' in Hult (1984) 164-81

Miller, J. Hillis (1978) 'The Problematic of Ending in Narrative' in Welsh (1978) 3-7

Monro, D.B. (1891) *A Grammar of the Homeric Dialect.* Oxford[2]

Montandon, Alain (1984) (ed.) *Le Point Final.* Clermont-Ferrand

Mortimer, Armine Kotin (1985) *La Clôture Narrative*. Paris

Moses, Stéphane (1990) 'Italo Calvino: Die Kunst nicht zu enden' in Söring (1990) 111-24

Moulton, Carroll (1974) 'The End of the Odyssey' *GRBS* 15, 153-69

- (1977) *Similes in the Homeric Poems.* Hypomnemata 49 Göttingen

Mueller, M. (1984) *The Iliad.* London

Murnaghan, Sheila (1987) *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey.* Princeton

- (1995) 'The Plan of Athena' in Cohen (1995) 61-80

- (1997) 'Equal Honor and Future Glory: The Plan of Zeus in the *Iliad*' in Roberts (1997) 23-42

Myres, J.L. (1932) 'The last book of the Iliad: its place in the structure of the poem' *JHS* 52, 264-96

Nagler, Michael N. (1990) 'Odysseus: the proem and the problem' *ClAnt* 9, 335-56

Nagy, Gregory (1996) *Homeric Questions.* Texas

- (1997) 'Ellipsis in Homer' in Bakker (1997) 167-89

Neupert, Richard John (1995) *The end: narration and closure in cinema.* Detroit

Nibbrig, Christiaan L.H. (1990) 'Darstellung des Endes. Ende der Darstellung' in Söring (1990), 205-23

Nisbet, R./Hubbard, M. (1970) *Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I.* Oxford

Obbink, Dirk/Depew, Mary (forthcoming) (edd.) *Matrices of Genre. Authors, Canons, Society.* Harvard

Oesterreicher, Wulf (1997) 'Types of Orality in the Text' in Bakker (1997) 190-214

O'Hara, J.J. (1990) *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil's Aeneid.* Princeton

Oswald, Renate (1993) *Das Ende der Odyssee. Studien zu Strukturen epischen Gestaltens.* diss. Graz

Otterlo, W.A.A. van (1944) 'Untersuchungen über Begriff, Anwendung und Entstehung der griechischen Ringkomposition' *Meddeelingen der Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde* n.s.7,3 Amsterdam

Page, Denys L. (1955) *The Homeric Odyssey.* Oxford

Paltridge, Brian (1984) *Genres, Frames and Writing in Research Settings*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia

Parry, Adam (1956) 'The Language of Achilles' *TAPA* 87, 1-7

- (1971) *The Making of Homeric Verse. The Collected Papers of Milman Parry.* Oxford

Pedrick, Victoria (1992) 'The Opening of the "Odyssey"' *YCS* 29, 39-62

Pelling, Christopher (1997) 'Is Death the End? Closure in Plutarch's *Lives*' in Roberts (1997) 228-50

Peradotto, John (1990) *Man in the Middle Voice.* Princeton

Petzl, Georg (1969) *Antike Diskussionen über die beiden Nekyien* Beiträge zur Klass.Phil. Hain

Phelan, James (1989) (ed.) *Reading Narrative. Form, Ethics, Ideology*. Ohio State

Porter, James I. (1992) ‘Hermeneutic Lines and Circles: Aristarchus and Crates on the Exegesis of Homer’ in Lamberton (1992) 67-114

Potz, Erich (1991) ‘Pius Furor and the death of Turnus’ *Gymnasium* 99, 248-62

Powell, Barry/Morris, Ian (1997) (edd.) *Companion to Homer.* Leiden

Prince, Gerald (1984) ‘*La Nausée* and the Question of Closure’ in Hult (1984) 182-90

Pucci, Pietro (1982) ‘The Proem of the *Odyssey*’ *Arethusa* 15, 39-62

- (1987) *Odysseus Polytropos. Intertextual readings in the Odyssey and the Iliad.* Ithaca

- (1998) *The Song of the Sirens. Essays on Homer.* Lanham/Boulder/New York/Oxford

- (1998a) ‘The Song of the Sirens’ in Pucci (1998) 1-10≈*Arethusa* 12 (1979) 121-32

- (1998b) ‘The Proem of the *Odyssey*’ in Pucci (1998) 11-29≈*Arethusa* 15 (1982) 39-62

- (1998c) ‘Textual Epiphanies in the *Iliad*’ in Pucci (1998) 69-80≈*Studi italiani di filologia classica* 3 (1985) 170-83

- (1998d) ‘Epiphanic Strategy and Intertextuality’ in Pucci (1998) 81-96≈*Studi italiani di filologia classica* 6 (1988) 5-24

- (1998e) ‘Odysseus Narrator: The End of the Heroic Race’ in Pucci (1998) 131-77

- (1998f) ‘Honor and Glory in the *Iliad*’ in Pucci (1998) 179-230

Putnam, Michael C.J. (1995) *Virgil's Aeneid: interpretation and influence.* Chapel Hill/London

Quint, David (1989) ‘Repetition and Ideology in the Aeneid’ *MD* 23, 9-54

- (1993) *Epic and Empire: politics and generic form from Virgil to Milton*. Princeton

Raaflaub, K.A./Toher, M. (1990) (edd.) *Between Republic and Empire*. Berkeley

Rabinowitz, Peter J. (1989) ‘End Sinister: Neat Closure as Disruptive Force’ in Phelan (1989) 120-31

Race, William H. (1992) ‘How Greek poems begin’ *YCS* 29, 13-36

Raible, Wolfgang (1980) 'Was sind Gattungen? Eine Antwort aus semiotischer und textlinguistischer Sicht' *Poetica* 12, 320-49

Redfield, James (1975) *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector.* Chicago

Reinhardt, K. (1996) 'The adventures in the *Odyssey*' in Schein (1996) 63-132=(1948) *Von Werken und Formen.* Godesberg, 52-162

- (1997) 'Homer and the *Telemachy*, Circe and Calypso, The Phaeacians' in Jones (1997) 217-48=(1960) *Tradition und Geist* Göttingen, 37-46, 77-87, 112-24

Richards, I.A. (1925) *Principles of literary criticism.* London

- (1963) 'How does a poem know when it is finished?' in Lerner (1963) 163-74

Richardson, Nicholas (1980) 'Literary Criticism in Exegetical Scholia to *Iliad*: a sketch' *CQ* 30, 265-87

- (1983) 'Recognition Scenes in the Odyssey' *PLLS* 4, 219-35

- (1993) *The Iliad: A Commentary. vol.vi. Books 21-24*. Cambridge

Richardson, Scott (1990) *The Homeric Narrator.* Nashville

Richter, David H. (1974) *Fable's end: completeness and closure in rhetorical fiction.* Chicago

- (1983) 'Closure and the critics' *Modern Philology* 80 (3), 287-92

Roberts, Deborah/Dunn, Francis/Fowler, Don P. (1997) (edd.) *Classical Closure.* Princeton

- (1997a) 'Afterword: Ending and Aftermath, Ancient and Modern' in (1997) 251-73

Rosenmeyer, Thomas G. (1985) 'Ancient Literary Genres: a mirage?' *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 34, 74-84

Rosmarin, Adena (1989) 'The narrativity of interpretive history' in Phelan (1989) 12-26

Rossi, Luigi Enrico (1968) 'La fine alessandrina dell' Odissea e lo ΖΗΛΟΣ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΟΣ di Apollonio Rodio' *RFIC* 96, 151-63

Rubino, Carl/Shelmerdine, Cynthia (1983) (edd.) *Approaches to Homer.* London

Russell, Catherine (1995) *Narrative mortality: death, closure, and new wave cinemas*. Minneapolis

Russo, Joseph/Fernández-Galiano, Manuel/Heubeck, Alfred (1992) (edd.) *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey. vol.III - Books XVII-XXIV.* Oxford

- (1992a) 'Odyssey Books XVII-XX' in Russo (1992) 3-127

Rutherford, Richard B. (1982) 'Tragic form and feeling in the Iliad' *JHS* 102, 145-60

- (1985) 'At home and abroad: aspects of structure of the Odyssey' *PCPS* 31, 133-50

- (1986) 'The philosophy of the *Odyssey*' *JHS* 106, 145-62

- (1992) *Odyssey Books XIX and XX*. Cambridge

- (1991-3) 'From the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*' *BICS* 38, 37-54

- (1996) *Homer.* Greece & Rome: New surveys in the classics 26 Oxford

Salat, Pierre (1984) 'La Fin de l'*Eneide*' in Montandon (1984) 11-18

Schadewaldt, Wolfgang (1938) *Iliasstudien*. Leipzig

- (1959) 'Kleiderdinge' *Hermes* 87, 13-26

Schein, Seth L. (1996) (ed.) *Reading the Odyssey: selected interpretive essays*. Princeton

- (1996a) 'Introduction' in Schein (1996) 3-31

Schlegloff, E./Sacks, H. (1973) 'Opening up closing' *Semiotica* 8, 289-327

Schmitt, Arbogast (1996) 'Teleologie und Geschichte bei Aristoteles' in Stierle (1996) 528-63

Scholes, Robert/Kellogg, Robert (1966) *The Nature of Narrative*. New York

Schulz-Buschhaus, Ulrich (1987) 'Rezension von Barbara Korte: *Techniken der Schlußgebung im Roman*' *Sprachkunst - Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft* xvii, 145-8

Schwab, Gabriele (1984) 'On the Dialectic of Closing and Opening in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*' in Hult (1984) 191-202

Scodel, Ruth (1998) 'Bardic Performance and Oral Tradition in Homer' *AJP* 119, 171-94

Scott, John Adams (1921) *The Unity of Homer.* Berkeley

Seaford, Richard (1994) *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the developing city-state*. Oxford

Segal, Charles (1971) *The theme of the mutilation of the corpse in the Iliad.* Mnemosyne Suppl.17 Leiden

- (1986) *Interpreting Greek Tragedy: myth, poetry, text.* Ithaca/London

- (1992) 'Bard and Audience in Homer' in Lamberton (1992) 3-29

- (1994) *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*. Ithaca/London

Sheppard, J. (1922) *The Pattern of the Iliad.* London

Skutsch, Otto (1985) *The Annals of Q. Ennius.* Oxford

Slatkin, Laura M. (1996) 'Composition by theme and the *Mētis* of the *Odyssey*' in Schein (1996) 223-37

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein (1968) *Poetic Closure. A study of How Poems End.* Chicago

Söring, Jürgen (1990) (ed.) *Die Kunst zu enden.* Frankfurt/Main

- (1990a) 'Einleitung' in Söring (1990) 9-26

Solodow, Joseph B. (1988) *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses.* Chapel Hill/London

Sourvinou-Inwood, Christiane (1995) *Reading Greek Death*. Oxford

Spaemann, Robert (1996) 'Aufhalter und letztes Gefecht' in Stierle (1996) 564-77

Stahl, H.-P. (1990) 'The Death of Turnus. Augustan Vergil and the political rival' in Raaflaub (1990) 174-211

Stanford, W.B. (1954) *The Ulysses Theme*. Oxford

- (1965) ‘The Ending of the *Odyssey*: an ethical approach’ *Hermathena* 100, 5-20

Stanley, Keith (1993) *The Shield of Homer.* Princeton

Stanzel, F.K. (1984) *A Theory of Narrative*. Cambridge

Stierle, Karlheinz/Warning, Rainer (1996) (edd.) *Das Ende. Figuren einer Denkform*. Poetik und Hermeneutik 16 München

- (1996a) ‘Die Wiederkehr des Endens’ in Stierle (1996) 578-99

- (1996b) (ed.) ‘Schlussdiskussion’ in Stierle (1996) 640-67

Stößel, Hans-Achim (1975) *Der letzte Gesang der Odyssee: eine unitarische Gesamtinterpretation*. diss. Erlangen

Taplin, Oliver (1992) *Homeric Soundings. The Shaping of the Iliad*. Oxford

Theodorakopoulos, Elena (1997) ‘Closure: the Book of Virgil’ in Martindale (1997) 155-65

Thickstun, William R. (1988) *Visionary Closure in the Modern Novel.* MacMillan

Thornton, Agathe (1984) *Homer’s Iliad: its composition and the motif of supplication.* Hypomnemata 81 Göttingen

Todorov, Tzvetan (1981) *Introduction to Poetics.* Brighton/Minnesota

Torgovnick, Marianna (1981) *Closure in the Novel.* Princeton

Tracy, Stephen V. (1990) *The Story of the Odyssey.* Princeton

- (1997) ‘The Structures of the *Odyssey*’ in Powell (1997) 360-79

Vessey, D.W.T. (1973) *Statius and the “Thebaid”.* Cambridge

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre (1996) ‘Land and Sacrifice in the *Odyssey*’ in Schein (1996) 33-53

Welsh, Alexander (1978) (ed.) *Narrative Endings.* Nineteenth Century Fiction 33.1

- (1978a) ‘Foreword’ in Welsh (1978) 1f

- (1978b) ‘Opening and Closing Les Misérables’ in Welsh (1978) 8-23

Wender, Dorothea (1978) *The last scenes of the Odyssey*. Mnemosyne Suppl.52 Leiden

West, Martin L. (1966) *Hesiod. Theogony.* Oxford

- (1978) *Hesiod. Works & Days.* Oxford

West, Stephanie (1967) *The Ptolemaic Papyri of Homer.* Köln

- (1988) ‘Odyssey Books I-IV’ in Heubeck (1988) 51-245

- (1989) ‘Laertes Revisited’ *PCPS* 215, 113-43

Whitman, Cedric (1958) *Homer and the Heroic Tradition.* Cambridge

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Ulrich von (1916) *Die Ilias und Homer*. Berlin

Williams, Gordon (1980) *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry.* New Haven/London

Williams, R.D. (1990) ‘The purpose of the Aeneid’ in Harrison (1990) 21-36

Wimmers, Inge Crosman (1988) *Poetics of Reading. Approaches to the Novel.* Princeton

Woodhouse, William John (1930) *The Composition of Homer’s Odyssey*. Oxford

Zanker, Graham (1994) *The Heart of Achilles.* Ann Arbor

Zumthor, P. (1984) ‘The impossible Closure of the Oral Text’ in Hult (1984) 25-42

v. Partial Index [2023]

Term	subterm	p.
Aeschylus	*Eum.* *Sept.* *Prom.* *Oresteia*	121f 63, 121f 63 235 with FN 761
aftermath (see narrative continuum)		233f
analysts	 Neo-	63f, 137 FN 455, 151 FN 497, 185, 187 FN 611, 210, 214 FN 691 66, 91 FN 300
Apollonius Rhodius	*Arg.*	116 FN 394, 196 FN 636, 210 with FNs, 248 with FN 779
Aristotle	*Poetics*, also *Rhet.* in FN [probably more] *Eth. Nic.*	61, 63, 211 FN 682 re *Od.* 169 FN 557
Austen, Jane	*Mansfield Park*	22
Derrida		67
Dios boule (see also Fate, gods)	*Il.*	69, 75 with FN 243, 76 with FN 248, 79 FN 259, 121 FN 413, 197
direct speech	*Il.*	70 FN 225
Edgeworth	*Belinda*	237 FN 764
Eris	*Il.*	71 FN 227, 74 FN240, 84
Euripides	Allan *Androm.* *Supp.* *Troa.*	65 FN 211, 78 FN 255 113 FN 382 107 FN 360, 110 FN 372 107 FN 360, 113 FN 382
Fate (see also *Dios boule*)		80 FN 262
feminist (readings)		4, 60, 67
generalizations	 adj. superlative	121, 227 with FN 735 104 FN 353 138 FN 459, 152 with FN 501, 191, 193, 207 with FN 666, 212 with FN 685
gods (see also *Dios boule*)	 foreknowledge	71, 124f, 131f, 135f, 172 with FN 567, 174 with FN 574, 185, 200, 223ff, 228 with FN 739, 234f, 240f, 243, 247f 74 with FN 241, 165 FN 543, 166 FN 547, 246 with FN 777

Term	subterm	p.
hymns		128 FN 426, 167, 212 FN 686, 248 FN 779
intertextuality (see also metapoetic, -narrative)	*Od.* with *Il.*	66, 137, 198 142 with FN 471, 144f with FN 477, 152, 155 also FN 509, 175, 178 FN 588, 180 FN 594, 192, 194, 195 FN 633, 196, 198f, 200ff, 206, 214 with FN 692, 215 with FN 693, 216, 218f, 222 with FN 718, 719, 223f, 231f with FN 747
lyric poetry		41, 121 with FN 413, 122 with FN 417, 227
metapoetic, -narrative (see also intertextuality)		67, 73, 75 FN 244, 77, 83, 89f, 93, 96, 114ff, 127, 137f, 140-4, 147f, 150f with FN 496, 153, 155 FN 511, 157 with FN 517, 163, 164 FN 540, 169 FN 556, 170 FN 560, 170f, 172 FN 565, 174, 178 with FN 586, 179 FN 589, 182, 183 with FN 603, 184f, 190, 193 FN 627, 195, 196f with FN 636, 205 FN 660, 206f, 212 FN 686, 214 FN 691, 217f, 241ff
modification, closural/terminal		107, 110, 122, 198 FN 642, 206 FN 664, 211f with FN 684, 219, 221
narrative continuum (esp. with epic cycle topics, inc. aftermath)	pre-history	65f, 69, 77, 78 FN 253, 91, 100 FN 334, 101f, 104, 110f, 113 FN 382, 116-21, 132 with FN 442, 137, 159, 168, 175, 206, 207 FN 666, 214ff, 222 FN 720, 233 with FN 753 167 FN 551
narratology	focalization narratable narrator	62, 78 FN 255, 145 FN 477, 147 FN 484 [add], 141f, 166 FN 547, 202 FN 650 22, 70, 89, 125, 204 with FN 771, 240, 245f 133 with FNs, 247f
New Comedy		163 FN 539 (also Asterix)
non-qualification (see generalization)		

Term	**subterm**	**p.**
novel	Greek epilogue	210 FN 676 49, 226 with FN 731
orality		64f, 166 FN 546
Ovid	*Met.*	71 FN 227
Patroclus		80 with FN 261, 83 FN 272, 85ff, 90
peirar, peira, perao etc.		154 FN 506, 160 with FN 526 and 527 (Theoc, Pindar), 190, 193f, 197f, 200f, 204ff, 219f with FN 710, 240
Plutarch		230 FN 743, 237 FN 764
proem	Hom. *Il.* *Il.* and *Od.* *Od.*	43 120f 128 FN 425 128 with FN 426, 137f
ring-composition	general Hom. *Od.* scenic	42 123 FN 419 201, 202, 232 FN 751 101f, 106 FN 359, 123f, 219, 222f, 237f, 244, 245
ritual	*eune* funeral meal supplication/ransom [? general?]	209 with FN 675 111f, 121f with FNs, 209 with FN 675 222 with FN 718, 234 108f [add] 106 FN 359, 122f with FN 418, 201f, 232 FN 752
Scholia (nb many more specific references)	*Il.* *Il., Od.* *Od.* Zenodotus gods	72 FN 232, 73 FN 233, 79 FN 258, 94 FN 309, 117 FN 398, 118 FN 399 and 402, 210f 62, 120 FN 409, 210f, 211 FN 682 162 FN 535, 173 with FN 570, 196 FN 635, 206 FN 663, 210f with FNs, 212 FN 686, 215 FN 694, 216 FN 699 69 FN 220 78 FN 254
sema	*Il.* *Od.* both	99, 100, 114-16 161, 167 FN 550, 188f, 194, 197, 204, 205f 205 FN 660, 236f
Shakespeare		237
Sophocles	*Ajax* *Ant.*	63, 107 FN 360, 121f 121f

Term	**subterm**	**p.**
	Oed. Tyr.	63, 121f
Spenser	*Garden of Adonis*	237
supplication (see ritual)		
tragedy (see indiv. tragedians)		110 FN 372, 169 FN 557, 209
	hypotheses	63
	dea/deus ex machina	73 FN 233, 234 with FNs 756f
unitarians		63f, 137 FN 455, 151 FN 497, 210 with FN 680, 216 FN 698
Vergil	*Aen.*	60, 71 FN 227, 97 FN 319, 104 FN 353, 135 FN 450, 248, 155 FN 509, 156 FN 513, 170 FN 560, 177 FN 583, 193 FN 626, 199 FN 645, 224 FN 726, 228 FN 739
	Juno/Dido	71 FN 228
	suitors/Juno	146 FN 482
	bk.6	164 FN 542
vignette	closural	174, 237 with FN 764