Negotiating Subjectivity: Gender, Communication, and Narrative *telos* in the *Odyssey*

by

Mason D. Barto

Department of Classical Studies
Duke University

Date: April 2, 2024

Approved:

Micaela Janan, Supervisor

José González

Patricia Rosenemeyer

Erika Weiberg

Kathryn Morgan

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

"Negotiating Subjectivity: Gender, Communication, and Narrative *telos* in the *Odyssey*" investigates the relationship between gender and narrative structure in Homeric language. Textual and narrative inconsistencies provide a point of departure for examining how gender relations (i.e. patterns of communication between women and men) contribute to the narrative's complication and resolution. By treating gender in the text as an impetus toward narrative change, this study reveals two alternating currents in Homeric language: first, how heroic male authorities establish boundaries between women and men to achieve a narrative outcome; and second, how male authority is problematized by the inconsistencies which leave such a teleological outcome in question. Illuminating these two trends as evidence for the relationship between gender and narrative, this dissertation advances the interpretation that the language of the *Odyssey* operates as a continuous re-negotiation of appropriate boundaries of propriety in communication between women and men.

Drawing on the writings of Lacan and Freud, I account for repetitive acts of female duplicity and heroic violence as complications to the aims of the narrative and the desires of its characters. With this approach, I observe an authoritative function in Homeric language that negotiates subjectivity by categorizing roles of women and men to establish a gender binary in the act of storytelling. By investigating this relationship between authoritative language and gender roles, I conclude that the anti-teleological elements which trouble the narrative outcome similarly vex the gender ideology established in the text: as the narrative resists completion, the repetitive re-negotiation of gender relations leaves the Homeric model for appropriate roles of women and men in doubt. Building on a series of readings in Homeric scholarship that argue for an overall transfer of female authority to male authority in the *Odyssey* narrative, my dissertation

further demonstrates how the resistance of a teleological outcome exposes the epic's ultimate failure to achieve an ideal of heroic male authority.

Dedication

To Elizabeth, who kept me guessing until St. Elmo's fire—with whom I first learned Greek, without whom it wouldn't have meant so much.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Relationship Between Gender and Narrative telos *in the* Odyssey

Scholars have frequently observed how changes in gender roles follow in the wake of a pattern of narrative change in the *Odyssey*. Broadly speaking, the epic moves from an unstable *oikos* toward the achievement of a power structure dominated by heroic male authority. To reach this endpoint, the proper relations between women and men are repeatedly modeled, questioned, and reconsidered in settings such as the banquet of Helen and Menelaos at Sparta and the hospitality scenes with Arete and Alkinoös at Scheria. Such relationships in the books preceding Odysseus' return, revenge, and reunion with Penelope have been seen as foreshadowing intratexts to build readers' expectations,[1] as well as references to non-Homeric myths that differ from the *Odyssey*'s own treatment of gender relations.[2]

The overall trend of the *Odyssey* to transfer authority from women to men has provoked readers to interpret female authority in the epic as a temporary aberration from the male-dominated social order. Victoria Wohl, for example, reads the rise to power of Odysseus as an ideological model that opposes "the undesirability of the alternatives"—viz. express or implicit female control as exemplified on Phaiakia, Aiaia, Ogygia.[3] Wohl argues convincingly for two gendered spheres of authority in the narrative outcome in which husband and wife take their respective positions as rulers of the external community and the internal domestic space;

[1] For the interpretation that Book 4 foreshadows the hero's return and reunion with Penelope, see Alden (2017, 154-72) and Andersen (1977, 8-9). For patterns of foreshadowing throughout the *Odyssey*, see Wieniewski 1924 and Duckworth 1933.
[2] See, for example, Loney (2019, 53-58), Elmer (2015, 177-79), Marks (2008, 17-35), and Katz (1991, 36-37), who juxtapose elements of the myth of Agamemnon and Klytaimnestra against the *Odyssey*.
[3] Wohl 1993, 19-20. Readers of female authority in the *Odyssey* such as Clayton (2003, 1-20), Doherty (1995, 9-30, esp. 21-23), and Murnaghan (1987, 103-15) resonate with the views of Wohl. Cf. Chaston (2002, 3-19), Winkler (1990, 145-61), and Felson-Rubin (1994, 43-65), who—to varying degrees—read Penelope's character at the end of the epic as a validation of female authority.

meanwhile, strong female figures in the preceding books serve as negative distortions of this idealized power structure.[4] Other scholars also point to narrative change as an impetus toward restructuring gender relations. Barbara Clayton describes the movement from female to male authority in the text as a "failed feminism" and argues that Penelope's subjectivity is ultimately compromised by her contingency to the heroic authority of Odysseus.[5] Within these readings, the *homophrosyne* (like-mindedness) between husband and wife that the narrative reaches in Book 23 implies only a mutual understanding rather than a balance between female and male agency.

At key moments in the plot, such as the climactic revenge against the suitors and the subsequent reunion scene, scholars observe how the desires of men and women oppose each other. Michael Nagler describes Penelope's initial involvement within, and her subsequent exclusion from, the contest of the bow as the control of women for the sake of heroic revenge. For Nagler, the inclusion of Penelope suggests the potential for narrative deflection away from violence.[6] This reading pits female and male motives against each other, underscoring female authority as a threat to the narrative aims of the epic—a threat which male authority seeks to suppress. Nagler's reading links Penelope's retrieval of the bow to the role of women carrying the knife in Greek ritual sacrifice, showing how androcentric cultural institutions incorporate the agency of women into the strategies of men.[7] Penelope's initial proposal of the bow contest is therefore emptied of its female agency and subsumed into the male authority seeking revenge.

Yet, the bow contest which distinguishes the motives of Penelope and Odysseus leads to a contrasting scene of reunion in the following book. After the exclusion of women during the male-dominated contest of the bow, the text moves to unify genders in the reconciliation of

[4] Wohl 1993.
[5] Clayton 2003, 15-16.
[6] Nagler 1993, 252-56.
[7] Nagler 1993, 253-54.

husband and wife. Highlighting the importance of this scene, Felson and Slatkin argue that the central theme of the *Odyssey* is, not the climactic revenge against the suitors, but the idealized *homophrosyne* between Penelope and Odysseus.[8] Their reading underscores the importance of gender relations to the teleological narrative sequence by pointing to re-marriage as the ultimate correction of a series of separations between women and men throughout the epic:

> Odysseus and Penelope…as consummate schemers, overcome every obstacle to reunion – a horde of unruly young suitors (for Penelope) and (for Odysseus) a series of female 'detainers' (along with other threats to his return) as well as the challenge, once home, of ridding his household of the suitors and winning Penelope over.[9]

Arguing that the primary narrative goal of the *Odyssey* is the remarriage of divided spouses, this reading emphasizes the importance of marital *homophrosyne*. Two opposing forms of gender relations are presented here: first, the potentially destructive extra-marital connections between Odysseus and the women/goddesses abroad as well as those between Penelope and the suitors; and second, the epic's model for marital harmony between Odysseus and Penelope, which finally receives its full treatment in Book 23. Wohl's suggestion that female authority functions as an undesirable alternative to male authority resonates with this reading by Felson and Slatkin. The process of separating Odysseus and Penelope from their alternative sexual partners rejects female authority if one considers how Penelope has skillfully managed the younger and less cunning suitors for three years, and how Odysseus' excursions include the immortal and more powerful nymphs (Kirke and Kalypso).[10] To synthesize these views of gender in the *Odyssey*, this series of separations works toward the realization of male authority by precluding the possibility of a

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[8] Felson and Slatkin 2004, 104
[9] Felson and Slatkin 2004, 103.
[10] Relationships of power are often more complex than this sentence would suggest. See especially *Od.* 5.154-55 and 10.299-301 for the nymphs' ability to overpower Odysseus. To be extra cautious about this point, it is not simply that one side of these relationships possesses more power. Admittedly, the suitors impose upon Penelope by occupying her *oikos*, meanwhile Odysseus' sexual exploits with the nymphs show him gaining advantage and challenging the typical immortal/mortal power hierarchy. Despite these complications, my emphasis here on female power in the earlier books illuminates the overall narrative movement from female authority to male authority.

sexually or intellectually dominant female figure in the Greek *oikos*.[11] These readings, however, encounter a problem due to the slippery nature of the epic's teleology. Yes, the opportunities for female authority are continuously thwarted by narrative change of direction, but does this pattern ultimately settle on male authority? Or does it present audiences with an unsatisfying conclusion at the supposed restoration of Odysseus' *oikos*? Building on these readings, I suggest that moments of gender division prepare for a narrative *telos* which favors male authority, yet the foundation of male authority is also problematized by the impossibility of determining a narrative *telos*. Tensions between the return, revenge, and reunion plots complicate the ideological power structure as the epic concludes.[12] I therefore interrogate how gender relations—a term understood in this dissertation to mean "patterns of communication between women and men"—bring about narrative change in the *Odyssey*.[13] The features common to these patterns will become clear through a series of readings. But first, it will be profitable to chart the narrative goals of the *Odyssey*, and to ask even more directly, (where exactly) does this epic end?

1.2 Defining **telos***: Climax, Goal, or Endpoint?*

The observation of remarriage as a narrative *telos* appears already among the Alexandrian scholars in the scholia to verse 23.296. The brevity of two quite similar statements by Aristarchus

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[11] The relationship between Helen and Menelaos complicates this claim, as Helen is described in several passages to exceed Menelaos in persuasion, deception, and divine connection. See, for example, her quicker arrival at the prophecy than Menelaos at *Od.* 15.166-78.
[12] In support of my reading of return, revenge, and reunion as three significant outcomes in the epic, the language of the *Odyssey* also refers to the teleological fulfillment of return (νόστοιο τέλος, 22.323), of revenge against the suitors (τέλος θανάτοιο, 17.476, 24.124), and of marriage (τέλος θαλεροῖο γάμοιο, 20.74).
[13] For this dissertation, when I mention women and men (or else female and male figures in the case of the immortals), I am speaking descriptively of categories represented within Homeric language. For example, in Chapter 4, I interrogate the gender binary in Homeric epic as a reflection of the male/female and limit/limitless binaries in the Pythagorean Table of Opposites.

and Aristophanes of Byzantium has provoked much scholarly attention as to the meaning of the "end" (πέρας/τέλος) of the epic.[14] These two remarks are as follows:

> Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος πέρας τῆς Ὀδυσσείας τοῦτο ποιοῦνται.
>
> Aristophanes and Aristarchus make this [*Od.* 23.296] the limit/boundary (πέρας) of the *Odyssey*.[15]
>
> τοῦτο τέλος τῆς Ὀδυσσείας φησὶν Ἀρίσταρχος καῖ Ἀριστοφάνης.
>
> Aristarchus and Aristophanes say that this [*Od.* 23.296] is the end (τέλος) of the *Odyssey*.[16]

These scholia point to the moment at which Penelope and Odysseus go to bed together after their recognition and reunion scene is complete. Homerists in the analytic camp, who seek to authorize certain sections of the epic over others, use the Alexandrian *telos* as an opportunity to argue that Book 24 is a later addition.[17] Scholars who see the epic as a formal unity have instead produced a multitude of persuasive readings to rescue the final passages from the Alexandrian school's supposed dismissal.[18] A delicious irony exists even amid this entanglement of narrative and textual complications, as the scholia seem inadvertently to disagree with the text itself. The "end" (πέρας/τέλος) of the *Odyssey* as proposed in the scholia to 23.296 happens just after Odysseus recalls that—based on Teiresias' prophecy—this is not the end (23.248-49).

> οὐ γάρ πω πάντων ἐπὶ πείρατ' ἀέθλων
> ἤλθομεν, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ὄπισθεν ἀμέτρητος πόνος ἔσται
>
> Not yet have we come to the limits (πείρατ') of all our trials, but rather, there will still be immeasurable toil hereafter.

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[14] See Loney 2019, 193-98 with discussion and bibliography.
[15] Dindorf 1855, 755.
[16] Dindorf 1855.
[17] See, for example, S. West 1989 (113-43) and Page 1955 (101-36).
[18] See Loney (2019, 193-225), Marks (2008 62-82), Moulton (1974, 153-69), Bertman (1968, 115-23).

Remarkably, the Alexandrian scholars interpret the narrative *telos* precisely where the poetry reminds us that there is more to come. I therefore note a tension not only between Book 24 and the preceding passages, but also between the Alexandrian *telos* and the poem's claim to a narrative extension.

More specifically for the purpose of my discussion of gender and narrative *telos*, Harmut Erbse suggests a different interpretation for τέλος in the scholia.[19] Erbse points to the flexibility of meanings in instances of τέλος in Aristotle and Plato to support his view that the "end" of the epic means more precisely an essential moment or goal (*Ziel*) rather than the final verse.[20] The advantage of this reading is that it condemns neither the scholia nor the importance of Book 24 to the narrative unity. Indeed, the reunion of husband and wife in Book 23 is only one of the primary narrative goals. This reunion scene works as one narrative *telos* alongside the violent revenge plot in the preceding passages. The idealized *homophrosyne* in the reading of Felson and Slatkin finds support in Erbse's interpretation of the scholia, since the remarriage of Odysseus and Penelope functions as a *telos* for Erbse and as the narrative "centre" for Felson and Slatkin.[21] Mark Buchan's decentralized reading of narrative *telos* in the *Odyssey* broadens the interpretation even further. Buchan argues that Penelope appears simultaneously as the *telos* of the hero and his fantasy, as she takes on several characteristics of the women and goddesses he has already encountered.[22] For Buchan, the intratexts linking Penelope to Nausikaä, Arete, Kalypso, and

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[19] Erbse 1972, 166-77.
[20] Erbse 1972, 173. Cf. Eustathius (*Comm.*1948.49-1949.1), who suggests that the Alexandrians did not mean the end of the work, but rather "the critical moment" (τὰ καίρια). Cf. also Alexander Loney's treatment of Erbse's claims (2019, 193-98).
[21] The views of Felson and Slatkin (2004, 103-4) are also treated in the previous section.
[22] Buchan 2004, 206-67 (esp. 207-8). Buchan argues: "The logic that allows Penelope to function as the poem's telos is dependent on a moralizing divide of the category of woman into good and bad: a return to Penelope can only make sense if she is morally differentiated from others, if she is deemed worthy to return to."

Kirke signify the hero's inability to see his wife in all her subjectivity.[23] Observing this conflict between *telos* and fantasy, this reading persuasively shows how the prophecy of Teiresias—that the hero will keep traveling after his return—invalidates the reunion scene as a narrative *telos*.[24] Such a multiplicity of teleological outcomes complicates the frequent scholarly view that the *Odyssey* is structured around one central event, moment, goal. Thus, themes of revenge and reunion work against each other as the hero's impulses toward violence and marital harmony compete for central importance.

Buchan's argument notwithstanding, it is worthwhile to note scholars who argue for revenge instead of reunion as the central theme of the narrative. Alexander Loney, for instance, points to revenge as the central theme and marshals forth a series of passages to show intratextual echoes of the slaughter of the suitors in corresponding events (such as Odysseus' revenge against Polyphemos, Poseidon's revenge on the Phaiakians, and Orestes' revenge against Aigisthos).[25] Michael Nagler similarly posits the hero's revenge against the suitors as the decisive moment in the narrative, the *aition* around which the whole *Odyssey* is constructed.[26] But gender relations are significant to the climactic revenge scene as well. Even if we move our focus from the reunion to the revenge, the proper degree to which women should be included in male-dominated activities is a matter for perpetual reconsideration as the narrative unfolds. Adding to the readings of Loney and Nagler, I suggest that the fraught relationship between reunion and revenge never fades from sight and calls for a synthesized reading to show how gender relations work toward

---

[23] For example, Buchan observes a parallel between Penelope and Arete in the simile in which Odysseus describes Penelope as a king (19.107-14). Here, Arete's power to rule, for example in her ability to resolve quarrels among men (7.74), is echoed.
[24] Buchan 2004, 235 and 267n48. Buchan also suggests (2004, 39-40) that the hero must escape Phaiakia to reach his *telos* at Ithaka. He therefore points to return, reunion, and the trials thereafter as a kind of moving goal-post of narrative teleology depending on the vicissitudes of the hero's desire.
[25] For Loney (2019, 119-70, esp. 119), the "central *tisis* narrative in the *Odyssey* is Odysseus' own revenge against the suitors."
[26] Nagler 1993 and 1990.

both narrative outcomes. By drawing attention to the poem's teleological multiplicity and the gender relations therein, I observe how gender divisions (i.e. the separation of women and men at several stages of the narrative) set in motion a process of narrative complication and resolution.[27] For instance, in contrast with the unity of husband and wife in the reunion scene, a systematic exclusion of women from the contest of the bow makes revenge possible. During the contest, the removal of women proceeds thus: just before the slaughter begins, Odysseus orders the women locked in their chambers and the suitors confined within the courtyard to secure the success of the *mnesterophonia*. Eurykleia locks the maidservants in their chambers, and Philoitios secures the courtyard gates to keep the suitors in the palace grounds (21.234-41, 381-91). This narrative operation provokes questions about the link between gender divisions and narrative *telos*. Why is it necessary to separate women and men to set in motion the decisive conflict of the *Odyssey*? Observing these gender divisions just before the *mnesterophonia* as a precursor to the reunion of spouses in Book 23 illustrates nicely this dissertation's point of departure: here as elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, gender relations set in motion narrative change. By illuminating this pattern, I show how the narrative turns in response to the way men and women communicate with each other, deceive each other, and perpetually re-negotiate cultural models for propriety in the association between genders.

[27] Since this dissertation is designed from a post-structural core of ideas, I view the *Odyssey* as a text that never fully achieves resolution. On the concepts of narrative complication and resolution, cf. Arist. *Poetics* 1455b21-32. Aristotle observes narrative plots as a series of events which undergo complication/knotting (or *desis*) until the moment of reversal to good or to bad fortune (*peripeteia*), at which point the resolution/unknotting (*lusis*) begins. Within this model, the *Odyssey* undergoes complication until the hero's revelation at the bow contest, and then moves toward a resolution. My use of the terms complication and resolution in this dissertation begins from, but also broadens Aristotle's categorical definitions by associating "complication" with textual elements that work anti-teleologically against the resolution and by associating "resolution" with textual elements that prepare teleologically for conclusion.

1.3 Reading the Revenge and Reunion Plots Against Each Other

In what follows, I observe the tension between revenge and reunion as an important textual feature responsible for the epic's movement from complication to resolution. This tension is evident in the fact that revenge and reunion plots frequently change order in passages outside of the primary narrative. Instead of describing the violent removal of enemies (Book 22) as a precursor to marital *homophrosyne* (Book 23), these passages reverse the teleological sequence of events and pose reunion as a precedent to revenge. In the opening verses, for example, the *Odyssey* refers telegraphically to this sequence of revenge and reunion plots (1.11-19):

> ἔνθ’ ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες, ὅσοι φύγον αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον,
> οἴκοι ἔσαν, πόλεμόν τε πεφευγότες ἠδὲ θάλασσαν·
> τὸν δ’ οἶον, νόστου κεχρημένον ἠδὲ γυναικός,
> νύμφη πότνι’ ἔρυκε Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων,
> ἐν σπέεσι γλαφυροῖσι, λιλαιομένη πόσιν εἶναι.
> ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ἔτος ἦλθε περιπλομένων ἐνιαυτῶν,
> τῷ οἱ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ οἶκόνδε νέεσθαι
> εἰς Ἰθάκην, οὐδ’ ἔνθα πεφυγμένος ἦεν ἀέθλων
> καὶ μετὰ οἷσι φίλοισι·
>
> When all the others, how many fled sheer destruction, were at home, having escaped both the war and the sea, this man alone, desiring his homecoming and wife (νόστου κεχρημένον ἠδὲ γυναικός), the queenly nymph Kalypso—shining among goddesses—restrained in her hollow caverns, longing for him to be her husband. But when the time of the turning years came, at which time the gods spun out for him to go home to Ithaka, not even then had he escaped trials even among his loved ones.

Here, the hero's return (νόστου) appears just before the couple's reunion (γυναικός), both functioning as objects of Odysseus' desire as he remains lost at sea. So far, the sequence in the primary narrative has not been changed: the event of homecoming (Book 13) happens prior to the couple's reunion (Book 23). Yet these verses postpone the revenge plot and frame the Book 21 contest of the bow as a final narrative outcome a few verses later (οὐδ’ ἔνθα πεφυγμένος ἦεν ἀέθλων | καὶ μετὰ οἷσι φίλοισι). Several other passages follow suit with this postponement of

revenge. In Book 6, Odysseus wishes marital *homophrosyne* for Nausikaä, all the while foreshadowing his own return to Ithaka and reunion with Penelope (6.180-85).

> σοὶ δὲ θεοὶ τόσα δοῖεν, ὅσα φρεσὶ σῇσι μενοινᾷς,
> ἄνδρα τε καὶ οἶκον, καὶ ὁμοφροσύνην ὀπάσειαν
> ἐσθλήν· οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον,
> ἢ ὅθ’ ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχητον
> ἀνὴρ ἠδὲ γυνή· πόλλ’ ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι,
> χάρματα δ’ εὐμενέτῃσι· μάλιστα δέ τ’ ἔκλυον αὐτοί.

> May the gods grant you as many things as you desire in your heart, a husband and a house (ἄνδρα τε καὶ οἶκον), and may they bestow noble like-mindedness (ὁμοφροσύνην). For nothing is better or nobler than when husband and wife, being of like mind with one another, keep their house. Their enemies have many pains (πόλλ’ ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι) and their well-wishers have many delights. They themselves perceive it most of all.

Odysseus wishes that the gods would grant Nausikaä what he himself aims to achieve: a spouse and a home together with marital harmony (ἄνδρα τε καὶ οἶκον, καὶ ὁμοφροσύνην). His reference to the future home of Nausikaä conceals Odysseus’ own desire for homecoming, while the *homophrosyne* description stands in for his desire to reunite with Penelope. Most importantly, the revenge plot against the suitors is foreshadowed last, within the hero’s claim that many pains befall the enemies (πόλλ’ ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι) of a like-minded husband and wife. Odysseus wishes for Nausikaä what he secretly wants for himself—a stable home and marriage and violent revenge against anyone who would oppose him. In this passage, a pattern emerges in which revenge not only follows reunion, but appears as a consequence thereof. The hero thus constructs for Nausikaä an example of gender relations in which collusion between a woman and man brings danger to their enemies, pointing forward to the revenge and reunion plots while setting a precedent for the link between gender relations and narrative *telos* in the *Odyssey*.

In a corroborating passage, the revenge against the suitors appears again as a teleological endpoint, despite appearing to be completely unnecessary. As Athena advises Telemachos, she asks him to give his mother to a husband in the event that Odysseus does not return. With Penelope’s marriage resolved, the suitors would presumably not be present for a violent act

against them; still, Athena advises the killing of the suitors as a final order of business after Penelope's marriage (1.289-96).

> εἰ δέ κε τεθνηῶτος ἀκούσῃς μηδ' ἔτ' ἐόντος,
> νοστήσας δὴ ἔπειτα φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν
> σῆμά τέ οἱ χεῦαι καὶ ἐπὶ κτέρεα κτερεΐξαι
> πολλὰ μάλ', ὅσσα ἔοικε, καὶ ἀνέρι μητέρα δοῦναι.
> αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν δὴ ταῦτα τελευτήσῃς τε καὶ ἔρξῃς,
> φράζεσθαι δὴ ἔπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,
> ὅππως κε μνηστῆρας ἐνὶ μεγάροισι τεοῖσι
> κτείνῃς ἠὲ δόλῳ ἢ ἀμφαδόν·
>
> If you hear that he has died and he is no more, then after coming home to your dear father-land, pile up a tomb for him and pay him funeral rights with very many possessions, how many are fitting, and give your mother to a husband. Whenever you have accomplished and done these things, consider then in your mind and heart how you may kill the suitors in your great hall, either by deception or openly.

Unlike the primary narrative, this passage suggests that the suitors will perish after the fulfillment of Penelope's marriage. Here, the union of Penelope and her new husband precedes the violent act of revenge, reversing the Book 22 and 23 outcomes. But how would Athena's advice be carried out after the marriage was settled? Should Telemachos invite the suitors back to Ithaka who formerly consumed his property, even after Penelope has departed? Why should the revenge plot remain here in the final position, after the lost homecoming of Odysseus and the fulfilled marriage of Penelope?

This repeated foreshadowing of revenge at the end of the narrative sequence raises eyebrows. But even more astonishing is the incorrect retelling of events in Book 24 after the primary narrative has treated the revenge and reunion passages. At this point, the Homeric audience knows that revenge precedes reunion, but the poem still reverts to this alternate sequence. In Book 24, the ghost of Amphimedon incorrectly represents the killing of the suitors as the final event after the hero's homecoming and reunion with Penelope (24.167-69).

> αὐτὰρ ὁ ἣν ἄλοχον πολυκερδείῃσιν ἄνωγε
> τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον,
> ἡμῖν αἰνομόροισιν ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν.

> He then ordered his wife with shrewdness to set the bow and the grey iron before the suitors as a contest and the beginning of slaughter for us ill-fated ones.

At this moment in his speech, Amphimedon recalls Odysseus as the originator of the bow contest, supposing that he and Penelope prepared for revenge together. The shift between this retrospective account and the primary narrative reverses the cause and effect. Aphimedon re-interprets *homophrosyne* between spouses as the key to—rather than the outcome of—revenge. This inversion shows the mutability of precedent in the narrative sequence. Considering the suitor's account in terms of gender relations, the suspicion of collusion between Penelope and Odysseus reiterates how communication across Homeric gender divisions frequently contributes to shifts in the narrative sequence: the fear of communication between women and men repeatedly brings male authorities to enforce gender divisions as a protective measure. By drawing attention to these moments throughout my dissertation, I demonstrate how Homeric language negotiates gender relations to set in motion the *Odyssey*'s teleological outcomes.

One way to illustrate this pattern of gender relations is to include—with revenge and reunion—the hero's *nostos* as a third significant plot. The arrival of the hero at Ithaka is predicated on his navigation of gender relations in the epic. As noted by Felson and Slatkin, the hero's homecoming depends on his separation from a series of women who detain him and thwart his intention to return.[28] By adding the hero's return to this sequence of significant plots, the full complexity of the relationship between gender and narrative *telos* becomes evident. As shown in the passages above, problems of return, revenge, and reunion vex the hero from the very beginning as he strives toward the fulfillment of his desires and the narrative *telos* simultaneously. My dissertation is especially concerned with how the text works out these plots

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[28] Felson and Slatkin 2004, 103-4. Also discussed above in section 1.1 and 1.2.

through the negotiation of gender relations. The hero's successful achievement of various moments of narrative *telos* depends on his ability to navigate a series of relationships with female figures who are instrumental to his arrival at Ithaka.

But why should narrative hinge on communication between women and men? This pattern suggests that the *Odyssey* conceals a deeper concern with boundaries of propriety between women and men in Homeric society. The epic repeatedly models proper gender relations in the process of re-founding a functional *oikos*. Indeed, scholars have argued that conventional gender ideology emerges at the end of the narrative process as female authority transfers to male authority.[29] My dissertation extends this reading to show how the *Odyssey* does not settle on a single ideological model, but instead perpetuates the search for appropriate gender relations by refusing to arrive at a narrative *telos*. A series of anti-teleological considerations of the return, revenge, and reunion plots shall reveal precisely this self-perpetuating narrative tendency. In each chapter, I illustrate passages which complicate the narrative *telos*, suggesting that the *Odyssey* never settles on the gender relations it seems to model. This approach to the *Odyssey* shows how gender relations set in motion narrative change by establishing communicative boundaries between women and men. Supporting this claim with a series of investigations, I argue for a redefinition of "narrative *telos*" which moves beyond individual moments of the hero's return, revenge, and reunion with his wife to account for the struggle to establish a stable system of gender relations in the (re)foundation of the *oikos*. Citing a series of anti-teleological elements throughout my dissertation, I hold strongly to the view that this narrative *telos* is never achieved. To be sure, the *Odyssey* moves teleologically toward establishing a system of appropriate gender roles as a potential narrative outcome; yet anti-teleological elements in the text continuously

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[29] See especially Clayton 2003, Doherty 1995, Wohl 1993. Also discussed above in section 1.1.

expose this narrative operation as an ideological failure. Taking as a starting point the tension between return, revenge, and reunion plots in the epic, I point to the negotiation of proper gender relations as the narrative goal around which each of these climactic moments turns.

1.4 How Each Chapter Justifies the Dissertation's Main Claims

In Chapter 2, for example, I discuss the formation of Odysseus' heroic identity in two very similar bathing-recognition scenes at Troy and Ithaka. These scenes demonstrate the preparation for return and revenge in moments of communication between women and men. I show how the hero's acts of violence against Trojans and suitors in these matched scenes depend on his ability to persuade/coerce Helen and Eurykleia to conceal his identity. In *Odyssey* 4, Helen recalls bathing Odysseus in a banquet speech at Sparta. She mentions swearing an oath of silence about his identity before he conducts the Trojan horse ambush. Similarly in *Odyssey* 19, Eurykleia bathes Odysseus and recognizes his scar before assisting his ambush of the suitors. In both scenes, the text represents gender relations as negotiations to secure the hero's aims. Noting these two passages as the only bathing-recognition scenes in the epic, I show how narrative repetition serves to complicate the narrative *telos*. In the two scenes, the aims of the hero to restore Ithaka with the same strategy of disguise and ambush that destroyed Ilion calls into question the very stability of the *oikos* toward which he strives. I draw on the Freudian concept of repetition-compulsion in this chapter to question the hero's pattern of violence as a repetition of destructive and restorative strategies. With characteristic violence, Odysseus repeats the war at home and unsettles the teleological outcome in the final books. I further interrogate what scholars have seen as the *telos* of recognition in the hero's step-by-step process toward discovery in the bathing-recognition scenes. I point to the language of resemblance (i.e. εἴκω and its cognates) in the bathing-recognition scenes to show how Homeric language resists such a fulfillment of

recognition by leaving identity in question even after Odysseus is acknowledged. Support for this anti-teleological reading emerges in Book 23, as narrative complications vex the reading that the bathing-recognition scenes prepare teleologically for the reunion between spouses. The readings in this chapter support my dissertation's treatment of gender relations as a narrative complication, which frequently resist narrative *telos* and thereby provide an inconclusive Homeric model for communication between women and men.

Chapter 3 explores gender relations between Helen and Menelaos in the banquet speeches of Book 4, focusing on the fraught characterization of Helen as both ally and traitor. The problem of communication between spouses in the two divergent portraits Helen—which, in Lacan's terms, evidence her "split subjectivity"—reiterates the traditional problem of Helen's marital infidelity as current wife of Menelaos and former wife of Paris and Deïphobos during the war. Scholars very often account for the discrepancy between these views of Helen by reading Helen's own speech with suspicion.[30] In the absence of conclusive evidence for the authenticity of either speech, I offer a new reading of the banquet speeches by observing a series of parallels between Helen and female figures in *Odyssey* 4 such as Eidothea, Eurykleia, and Athena. I argue that these parallels work toward a resolution of Helen's duplicity as both ally and traitor. The text rehabilitates her by repeating her actions in other women/goddesses who use deception paradoxically as an instrument of allegiance, assistance, or loyalty: Athena makes a false image of Iphthime to console Penelope, Eidothea deceives Proteus to assist Menelaos' homecoming, and Eurykleia conceals Telemachos' departure from Penelope to enable his journey. Considering the relationship between gender and narrative *telos*, this pattern shows how the incompatible elements in Helen's and Menelaos' banquet speeches complicate the narrative and thereby call

[30] See S. West in Heubeck et al. (1988, 208-9), Alden (2017, 163), and Olson (1989, 392-3).

out for resolution in subsequent passages, as continued narration furnishes ameliorating parallels. My reading draws on the Lacanian view of woman as a signifier which resists symbolization within an androcentric code of language. Extending this view into the cultural practices of Homeric society, I show how the "patrilocal marriage" custom—i.e. exchanging brides between households for the sake of alliances between families—supports this reading of the split subjectivity of Homeric women. Helen's alternating characterizations in these passages as ally/traitor, Achaean/Trojan, and wife/slave demonstrate the impossibility of a unified representation of woman in the male-dominated banquet discourse at Sparta. The impossibility of characterizing Helen, therefore, instigates further narrative attempts to anchor Helen in other women and goddesses (Eurykleia, Eidothea, Athena). This reading shows how gender relations, especially in the communication between Helen and Menelaos, complicate the narrative by calling out for parallel figures to justify the split subjectivity of Helen as she appears in Homeric language.

Chapter 4 examines gender relations in terms of boundaries of propriety in the guest-host relationship. I focus on the organization of gender around the narrative limit in *Odyssey* 11. I challenge the frequent reading of Odysseus as a master of persuasion by interrogating the catalogues of women and men as a two-fold response to Arete's and Alkinoos' desire to know more, and to detain their storytelling guest. These alternating desires of women and men in Odysseus' audience correspond to the gendered catalogues in Book 11 and support my reading that Odysseus' homecoming relies on the negotiation of proper communication between women and men at Scheria. By establishing gender divisions in his catalogues and in the guest-host relationship, Odysseus prepares for the narrative *telos* of homecoming. Drawing this claim out further, I observe that Odysseus repeatedly reaches the narrative limit in his claim, "I could not tell nor name all," (πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, 11.328, 517), a despairing

phrase that nonetheless frames narrative limit as a boundary of propriety between himself and Arete. He thus seeks the proper limit to his narrative as he divides the domains of gender in language. Drawing on Lacan's views of women and men as positions in language—as opposed to biological or anatomical categories—I illustrate how Homeric gender roles are continuously re-negotiated according to the rules and customs of a given society. For instance, the catalogue of women in *Odyssey* 11 first elicits a response from Arete in the *intermezzo*, before Alkinoös reclaims authority in his subsequent speech. I show how this tension between the powerful women in Odysseus' catalogue and the male-dominated power structure at Scheria first problematizes, but then comes to regulate, gender roles. Scholars tend to describe the (supposed) inability to tell all in epic as a technique of praise poetry, or a *recusatio* of the wider poetic tradition.[31] I supplement their readings with a focus on how Odysseus repeats myths betrayal between women and men to remind himself not to say too much. I therefore suggest that Odysseus' claim operates as a refusal, beyond his supposed inability, to tell all. The possibility of saying too much in communication between women and men works as a narrative complication by frequently stopping the speaker with a reminder that revealing too much could be fatal. I therefore treat Odysseus in these speeches as subject to, rather than agent of, the language of narrative and the desires of women and men therein. This reading advances the interpretation that the gendered catalogues in *Odyssey* 11 are divided according to boundaries of propriety between women and men in communication: just as women and men are divided in the underworld, proper gender relations between Arete, Alkinoos, and Odysseus are thus negotiated and established in view of the hero's homecoming.

[31] See Jong (2001, 102), Ford (1992, 73-82), Race (1982, 33-34), and Curtius (1953, 159-62).

Chapter 5 focuses on a series of contrasting elements between the primary narrative and Amphimedon's retrospective on the events leading up to the suitors' death. I interrogate the gendered spheres of authority in Amphimedon's speech to highlight the strict division of women and men according to the web and bow. Noting Amphimedon's explicit desire for the ritual closure of his own proper burial, I argue that these gender divisions emphasize determinacy to reach narrative closure, reiterating the epic's overall narrative pattern of regulating gender relations to prepare for a narrative *telos*. This chapter's investigation illustrates two tendencies in the *Odyssey*: the use of gender relations as a narrative complication and the regulation of gender relations toward a narrative resolution. For example, Amphimedon reads determinacy into the narrative by recasting the weapons-chamber door as bolted shut during the *mnesterophonia*, even though the suitors received weapons from the chamber in the primary narrative. Further investigating this difference between the two accounts, I point to Odysseus' and Telemachos' discovery that the door is open in Book 22. As Odysseus and Telemachos falsely suspect collusion between the maidservants and suitors, this change between open and closed weapons-chamber doors underscores a repeated concern in the text about collusion between women and men. Gender relations in these passages serve as a narrative complication, while acts of separating women and men prepare for the narrative outcome. In support of this claim, moments in the narrative in which Penelope and the maidservants are physically excluded from the room in which the bow contest takes place similarly prepare for the climactic revenge scene, emphasizing that dividing women from men, and thus effectively regulating gender relations, works toward a conclusion. The narrative *telos* therefore hinges on the negotiation of gender divisions. While chapters 2, 3, and 4 offer a reading of communication patterns between women and men as complications calling out for a narrative resolution, Chapter 5 contrarily illustrates passages where heroic authority divides women and men to bring about narrative change. Both patterns

support my reading of the relationship between gender and narrative structure in the *Odyssey*, a relationship which reveals the ideological failure of gender relations as the epic concludes. Considering this overall approach to the epic, at key moments of my dissertation I have incorporated the writings of Lacan and Freud to show how Homeric language constructs gender by resisting *telos*. It is my hope that the reader will view these theoretical concepts as instruments toward a better understanding of gender identity and communication in the *Odyssey*.

A brief note about the selection of passages in my reading: I focus on moments of communication and deception between women and men (especially between Helen and Menelaos, Arete and Alkinoos, Eurykleia and Odysseus, and Penelope and Odysseus) as exchanges of language around which the narrative turns.[32] The *Odyssey* narrative represents a wealth of communicative exchanges to exemplify gender relations, beyond what is fitting for a single dissertation. I have chosen a set of passages to provide the clearest evidence for the relationship between gender and narrative structure. Expanding this reading with supporting passages would be possible, though it would not substantially alter my argument. For instance, Amphimedon's final speech reconsiders revenge and reunion scenes in Book 22 and 23 in terms of gender relations. An expanded fifth chapter could further support this reading with a more detailed treatment of marital *homophrosyne* in Book 23 addressing more comprehensively the discrepancies in Amphimedon's re-interpretation of the past. Considering my reading of the gendered catalogues in Book 11, elaborations on the hero's delay on the islands of Kalypso and Kirke could also enrich my reading of Arete's role in the *nostos* plot as potential detainer of the hero. Similarly, my analysis of the bathing-recognition scenes and the roles of Helen and Eurykleia demonstrates the link between the silence of women and the achievement of revenge.

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[32] These passages correspond roughly to *Odyssey* 4, 11, 19, and 24.

An extension of this analysis could include the gruesome execution of the maidservants to underscore my views of silencing women as a bid for narrative change. Yet it would exceed a single volume to investigate every interaction between women and men in the epic. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have therefore aimed to provide the set of passages that most clearly and succinctly illustrates the importance of gender relations to narrative *telos*.

2. Repeating the War at Home: Heroic Identity in the Bathing-Recognition Scenes

In this chapter, I show how the two bathing-recognition scenes in *Odyssey* 4 and 19 construct Odysseus' identity by repeating a pattern of heroic violence at war and at home. I investigate the hero's interactions with Helen and Eurykleia as examples of gender relations which complicate the narrative resolution in the epic's final books. In the bathing-recognition scenes, the destruction of Troy and the ambush of the suitors are each enabled by Odysseus' repeated action of silencing women. I therefore argue that textual repetitions between these two scenes highlight the relationship between gender and narrative structure in the *Odyssey*. In the wedding festival at Sparta in Book 4, Helen recounts Odysseus' appearance in disguise at Troy (4.244-64). She bathes the stranger and recognizes him, learns of his plan to ambush Troy, and agrees to silent allegiance. At Ithaka in Book 19, a very similar pattern plays out in which Eurykleia bathes the disguised hero before she too recognizes him, learns of his plan to kill the suitors, and agrees to conceal his identity (19.386-93, 467-507).[1] While bathing and recognition type-scenes have often been treated separately by Homeric scholars,[2] I am concerned with the intersection of bathing and recognition which occurs twice in the *Odyssey*. This event repeats between Troy and Ithaka, revealing the hero's characteristic violence in both military and domestic settings. By repeating the war at home, Odysseus problematizes the narrative resolution. While some scholars read the final books as a transference of authority from women to men for

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[1] This latter bathing-recognition scene is interrupted by the primary narrative flashback detailing the boar-hunt which accounts for Odysseus' scar (19.494-466).

[2] Segal (1967, 330-42) reads the bath as a type-scene in the *Odyssey* which uses formulaic language to narrate ritualized actions. Foley (1990, 248-257) notes, following Arend (1933, 124-26), that bathing scenes almost always consist of washing, anointing, and a change of clothing. Foley (1990, 255) also notes a common sequence in the *Odyssey* in which the bath prepares for feast scenes. See Grethlein (2007, 25-49) for discussion of the bath type-scene in the *Iliad*. For analysis about recognition type-scenes, see Gainsford (2003, 42-43), who divides the process of recognition in the *Odyssey* into four steps: Testing, Deception, Foretelling, and Recognition. Cf. Emlyn-Jones (1984, 6-7) who suggests a more complex series of steps in the recognition process.

the sake of a stable *oikos*,[3] I argue that the hero's violent actions in the bathing-recognition scenes unsettle such teleological readings by suggesting the impossibility of re-integration after homecoming. My reading treats heroic violence instead as a barrier to the ultimate fulfillment of *nostos*.

Before I interrogate the bathing-recognition scene in terms of heroic identity, I first briefly examine how the two scenes reflect each other. As they bathe Odysseus, both Helen and Eurykleia recognize the hero in strikingly similar ways. Nonetheless, several disparities exist between the two women: Helen is a queen, Eurykleia a slave; Helen tells her own story, while Eurykleia appears in the primary narrative; Helen has a history of multiple husbands, while Eurykleia is described as a figure of sexual restraint and loyalty.[4] Yet the two women are linked by their similar patterns of recognition at Troy and Ithaka: both experience a mixture of joy and grief upon discovering the hero (4.259-62, 19.471), both rejoice silently at the subsequent death of Odysseus' enemies (4.260, 22.407-12), and both nearly give away the hero's identity (4.277-89, 19.476-79). In each scene, the success of the hero's upcoming ambush depends on his coercion of Helen and Eurykleia into concealing his identity with silence. The control of female voices thus serves as an extension of the hero's disguise as he prepares for violence against his enemies.

But how do these two scenes relate within the broader narrative structure? Øvind Andersen argues that *Odyssey* 4 points forward to *Odyssey* 19 with the poetic technique of

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[3] See, for example, Clayton (2003, 1-20), Doherty (1995, 9-30, esp. 21-23), Wohl (1993, 19-20), and Murnaghan (1987, 103-15). For discussion of these views, see section 1.1 and 1.2 above.

[4] The primary narrative presents the relationship between Laërtes and Eurykleia as one of sexual prohibition (1.429-34). It should be noted that Eurykleia's agency in the decision to avoid sexual intercourse is complicated by her slave status. Cf. Fletcher (2008, 77-91), for an investigation of Eurykleia's tendency to lock doors as a symbol of sexual restraint.

foreshadowing.[5] He notes that neither the immediate speakers nor audience members in Book 4 know of the repetition between the two events, yet on the level of poetic technique, Helen's bathing of Odysseus prepares the external audience for the return of the hero much later.[6] Similarly, Maureen Alden argues that the parallels between the two scenes create anticipation for Penelope's potential recognition of Odysseus in Book 19.[7] Douglas Olson also reads the bathing scene in Book 4 as a way to prepare the audience for the revenge against the suitors and the reunion between Penelope and Odysseus.[8] These readings interpret the Book 4 encounter between Helen and Odysseus as preparation for the narrative *telos*. Yet there are several elements in both scenes which jeopardize the success of the hero, suggesting in contrast that the bathing-recognition scene serves as a narrative complication. For example, why does the hero put himself in a position to be recognized by Helen and Eurykleia in the first place? His repeated discovery in Troy and Ithaka threatens his ability to execute his strategy against the Trojans and suitors. In Book 4, why does he slaughter a group of Trojans on his way out of the city? After meeting with Helen, this violent action complicates his ability to remain concealed. In Book 19, why does he seize Eurykleia by the throat as she attempts to notify Penelope? This action delays the reunion of husband and wife until after the *mnesterophonia*. This series of textual features shows how Odysseus' actions repeatedly work against the poem's teleological aims.

Focusing on such anti-teleological elements in these passages, I read the bathing-recognition scenes as examples of gender relations which either delay the narrative resolution or threaten to do so. After a set of methodological considerations (Section 2.1), I first examine heroic violence as a threat to the *oikos* at Ithaka (Section 2.2) to show how Odysseus' actions in

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[5] Andersen 1977.
[6] Andersen 1977, 9-10.
[7] Alden 2017, 161-63.
[8] Olson 1989, 391.

the bathing-recognition scenes represent his inability to re-integrate into domestic space. His slaughtering the flower of Ithakan male youth shows how the *telos* of homecoming remains unresolved even as the epic concludes. I then investigate the language of resemblance in the bathing-recognition scenes (Section 2.3) to show how Odysseus is characterized by likeness to himself rather than the fulfillment of recognition. This reading challenges the view that recognition is a step-by-step process that reaches a teleological endpoint. Finally, I suggest that the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus in Book 23 leaves the identity of the hero in doubt (Section 2.4), which problematizes the reunion as an endpoint anticipated by the two bathing-recognition scenes. These three readings support my view that gender relations in the bathing-recognition scenes expose the heroic identity and his characteristic acts of violence as anti-teleological elements in the *Odyssey*.

2.1 Repetition-Compulsion in Narrative Language: Methodological Considerations

To illuminate the relationship between the two representations of heroic identity in the bathing-recognition scenes, I suggest a few considerations on narrative repetition. Peter Brooks has illuminated the way repetition works to create meaning in narratives. He argues that narratives are constructed in view of an endpoint toward which the sequence of events is always directed.[9] With this endpoint in mind, he describes narrative as a fundamentally repetitive act, as a "going over again of a ground already covered."[10] This may seem at first like a teleological reading of narrative structure, until Brooks further notes how the narrative course follows a set of detours, sub-plots, and resistances to avoid ending too soon.[11] He anchors this reading in Freud's

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[9] Brooks 1977, 292.
[10] Brooks 1977, 285.
[11] Brooks 1977, 290-97.

concept of repetition-compulsion to show how the act of storytelling moves in continuous tension between teleological and anti-teleological forces. Freud developed the concept of repetition-compulsion to illuminate patterns of human behavior in which he observed the surprising desire to return to unpleasurable situations—for example, in the tendency of war veterans to return to battle in dreams, and in the behaviors of children who playfully re-enact moments of loss and abandonment.[12] To account for this return to unpleasurable events, Freud posited a fundamental drive toward the restoration of the past observable in the act of repeatedly returning to moments of trauma.[13] In terms of narrative poetry, this concept is compatible with Aristotle's view that the poetic act of imitation brings pleasure to the audience with images that would be distressing to experience in reality.[14] As Brooks shows, this operation in epic narrative can be seen as a sequence of events which repeatedly strives to reconstruct a mythological past. Odysseus's process of returning and re-integrating into the domestic space at Ithaka exemplifies this effort to restore his heroic origins in the process of homecoming, revenge, and reunion. In the two bathing-recognition scenes, specifically, Odysseus uses disguise and ambush as a repeating act toward the restoration of the past. Yet the narrative represents this achievement as an impossibility, showing the need for repetition in the first place. Just as Lacan describes repetition-compulsion in his elaboration of Freud's concept: "insofar as the task is not completed, the subject returns to it."[15] With these concepts in mind, repetition in narrative amounts to an attempt in language to restore the past, which can never be accomplished—at Ithaka, for example, due to the irremediable difference between the pre-war and post-war hero. The *Odyssey* thus struggles ever fruitlessly to restore an original Ithaka by reiterating Odysseus' violent acts at war and at home.

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[12] Freud 1955, 12-17.
[13] Freud 1955, 34-43, 62-64.
[14] Arist. *Poet.* 1448b4-19.
[15] Lacan 1988, 86.

2.2 Repetition-Compulsion and Heroic Violence in the Odyssey

Beginning with these methodological considerations, I now focus on moments of heroic violence in Book 4 and 19 to support my reading of the bathing-recognition scene as an anti-teleological attempt to restore the past. In Book 4, Odysseus follows his encounter with Helen by slaughtering a group of Trojans before returning to the Achaean ships (4.251-61).

> ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἕσσα καὶ ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον,
> μή με πρὶν Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ Τρώεσσ' ἀναφῆναι,
> πρίν γε τὸν ἐς νῆάς τε θοὰς κλισίας τ' ἀφικέσθαι,
> καὶ τότε δή μοι πάντα νόον κατέλεξεν Ἀχαιῶν.
> πολλοὺς δὲ Τρώων κτείνας ταναήκεϊ χαλκῷ
> ἦλθε μετ' Ἀργείους, κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν.
> ἔνθ' ἄλλαι Τρῳαὶ λίγ' ἐκώκυον· αὐτὰρ ἐμὸν κῆρ
> χαῖρ', ἐπεὶ ἤδη μοι κραδίη τέτραπτο νέεσθαι
> ἂψ οἶκόνδ'
>
> I put clothes around him and swore a great oath that I would not reveal Odysseus among the Trojans until he arrived at his swift ships and tents, and then he told me the entire plan of the Achaeans. After killing many of the Trojans with the sharp-edged bronze, he went among the Argives and brought back much information (κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν). At that time, the other Trojan women cried out shrill. I then rejoiced in my heart, since my heart now had been turned to go home.

These verses, immediately following the bathing-recognition scene, recount Helen's joyful reaction to the slaughter of the Trojans. She sees the act of violence just before the hero's departure as a sign that she will soon be returning to Sparta (μοι κραδίη τέτραπτο νέεσθαι | ἂψ οἶκόνδ'). Helen's reaction to the Trojan bodies links heroic violence to her own return to the past. As she sees it, the violent encounter between Odysseus and the Trojans signals the upcoming restoration of her pre-war marriage to Menelaos. In addition to the restoration of the past, Odysseus' departure in this passage introduces anti-teleological elements to the poetry as he jeopardizes the concealment of his identity. This act of violence works against his concealment by potentially giving away his position within the walls of Troy. With these textual elements in mind, the Book 4 passage, which scholars frequently read as preparation for later narrative

events, serves also to resist the narrative resolution. In addition to pointing forward to the final books, the heroic violence in this scene shows how repetition-compulsion in Homeric language links violence to the restoration of origins, as Helen remembers her Spartan past and Odysseus recklessly jeopardizes his Ithakan future.

To explore this pattern further, I turn to the repeated violence of the hero in the second bathing-recognition scene. Just after Eurykleia recognizes the hero in the bath, Odysseus seizes her by the throat to conceal himself. This pattern shows that heroic violence repeatedly follows the sudden discovery of his identity. In conjunction with this moment of physical coercion, the text repeatedly mentions the upcoming violence against the suitors as Odysseus and Eurykleia negotiate the hero's concealment (19.473-498).

> ἁψαμένη δὲ γενείου Ὀδυσσῆα προσέειπεν·
> ἦ μάλ' Ὀδυσσεύς ἐσσι, φίλον τέκος· οὐδέ σ' ἐγώ γε
> πρὶν ἔγνων, πρὶν πάντα ἄνακτ' ἐμὸν ἀμφαφάασθαι.
> ἦ, καὶ Πηνελόπειαν ἐσέδρακεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
> πεφραδέειν ἐθέλουσα φίλον πόσιν ἔνδον ἐόντα.
> ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἀθρῆσαι δύνατ' ἀντίη οὔτε νοῆσαι·
> τῇ γὰρ Ἀθηναίη νόον ἔτραπεν. αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
> χείρ' ἐπιμασσάμενος φάρυγος λάβε δεξιτερῆφι,
> τῇ δ' ἑτέρῃ ἕθεν ἆσσον ἐρύσσατο φώνησέν τε·
> μαῖα, τίη μ' ἐθέλεις ὀλέσαι; σὺ δέ μ' ἔτρεφες αὐτὴ
> τῷ σῷ ἐπὶ μαζῷ· νῦν δ' ἄλγεα πολλὰ μογήσας
> ἤλυθον εἰκοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.
> ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἐφράσθης καί τοι θεὸς ἔμβαλε θυμῷ,
> σίγα, μή τίς τ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισι πύθηται.
> ὧδε γὰρ ἐξερέω, καὶ μὴν τετελεσμένον ἔσται·
> εἴ χ' ὑπ' ἐμοί γε θεὸς δαμάσῃ μνηστῆρας ἀγαυούς,
> οὐδὲ τροφοῦ οὔσης σεῦ ἀφέξομαι, ὁππότ' ἂν ἄλλας
> δμῳὰς ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐμοῖς κτείνωμι γυναῖκας.
> τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε περίφρων Εὐρύκλεια·
> τέκνον ἐμόν, ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων.
> οἶσθα μέν, οἷον ἐμὸν μένος ἔμπεδον οὐδ' ἐπιεικτόν·
> ἕξω δ' ὡς ὅτε τις στερεὴ λίθος ἠὲ σίδηρος.
> ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσιν·
> εἴ χ' ὑπὸ σοί γε θεὸς δαμάσῃ μνηστῆρας ἀγαυούς,
> δὴ τότε τοι καταλέξω ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γυναῖκας,
> αἵ τέ σ' ἀτιμάζουσι καὶ αἳ νηλείτιδές εἰσι.

> Touching his beard, she addressed Odysseus: “In truth, you are Odysseus, dear child. I did not recognize you until I touched my lord all over (πάντα ἄνακτ’ ἐμὸν ἀμφαφάασθαι).” With her eyes, she looked at Penelope wishing to point out that her dear husband was at home. But Penelope was unable to see or perceive, for Athena diverted her mind. Then, Odysseus, grasping, seized her throat with his right hand, and drawing her nearer with the other, he spoke: “O good mother, why do you wish to destroy me? You yourself nursed me on your breast. Now, after enduring many pains, I have come in the twentieth year to my fatherland. But since you observed and a god put it in your mind, be silent, lest someone else in the great hall learn it. For I will tell you thus, and it will indeed be accomplished. If the god overcomes the arrogant suitors by my hands (εἴ χ’ ὑπ’ ἐμοί γε θεὸς δαμάσῃ μνηστῆρας ἀγαυούς), I will not spare you, although you are my nurse, whenever I kill the other maidservants in my great hall.” In turn, prudent Eurykleia addressed him: “My child, what sort of word escaped the barrier of your teeth? You know what sort of strength is within me—unyielding. I will hold as some firm stone or iron. I will tell you another thing; cast it also into your mind. If by your hands the god overcomes the arrogant suitors (εἴ χ’ ὑπὸ σοί γε θεὸς δαμάσῃ μνηστῆρας ἀγαυούς), then I will tell you in the great hall which women dishonor you and which are guiltless.”

Here Eurykleia tries to tell Penelope that the hero is present. To stop her, he coerces the old woman into silence by seizing her throat and threatening to kill her alongside the other maidservants. Bargaining for her life, Eurykleia offers the names of the treacherous maidservants in the house. In their conversation, Odysseus and Eurykleia both use the phrase, “if the god, by my [your] hands, overcomes the arrogant suitors,” (εἴ χ’ ὑπ’ ἐμοί [σοί] γε θεὸς δαμάσῃ μνηστῆρας ἀγαυούς, 488, 496) in reference to the upcoming *mnesterophonia*. Pointing forward to the violence in Book 22, these speeches remind the audience how Eurykleia’s silence enables Odysseus to fulfill his purpose of revenge. Beyond these teleological elements, however, this scene also repeatedly shows Odysseus’ concern with restoring the past. While threatening her life, he reminds her that she originally nursed him (σὺ δέ μ’ ἔτρεφες αὐτὴ); he mentions his return to Ithaka after twenty years of absence (ἤλυθον εἰκοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν); he then promises to kill her despite her role as his nurse (οὐδὲ τροφοῦ οὔσης σεῦ ἀφέξομαι). In these retrospective elements of Odysseus’ speech, the teleological preparation for later events intersects with memories of the hero’s origins, revealing again the connection between heroic violence and the

desire to return to the past.[16] The hero's reaction to Eurykleia's attempt to notify Penelope also illustrates this reading. He uses physical force (φάρυγος λάβε) as a preventative measure just after Eurykleia looks toward Penelope (Πηνελόπειαν ἐσέδρακεν) to indicate her husband's presence (πεφραδέειν ἐθέλουσα φίλον πόσιν ἔνδον ἐόντα). In the silencing of Eurykleia, heroic violence effectively defers the upcoming reunion between Penelope and Odysseus, linking violence to the anti-teleological function of delaying narrative resolution. In the bathing-recognition scenes, therefore, the restoration of the past and the resistance against the future both accompany the recognition of the hero.

This resistance against the narrative resolution is especially evident in the contrast between narrative memory and primary event in the two bathing-recognition scenes. In the shift from Book 4 to Book 19, the two scenes contrast in the development from Helen's spoken narrative about Troy to the primary narrative account at Ithaka, emphasizing the violence of the hero as a transgressive act in domestic space. Even if the heroic violence is fitting to the banquet context as a retelling—as Helen claims in the opening of her own speech (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω)—the physical coercion in the second scene represents a transgression of the boundaries of propriety as the hero introduces violence into the *oikos*. In Book 19, the violence against Eurykleia and the foretold death of the suitors characterizes the hero as one who performs actions in domestic space which are appropriate to the sphere of war.

To clarify this reading of the hero as a threat to the *oikos*, it would be profitable to examine what types of heroic narratives appear as suitable in the domestic setting. What kinds of stories frequently appear and what stories are avoided in the banquet scenes? Indeed, the epic often indicates domestic space as a fitting context for narratives about the war. Phemios sings

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[16] The flashback scene (19.494-466), which accounts for Odysseus' scar by recounting his original wound in the boar-hunt, also serves as evidence for the return to the past in the bathing-recognition scenes.

about the homecoming of the Achaeans in Book 1. Demodokos sings about the Trojan horse ambush in Book 8. Likeswise, Telemachos' visits to Pylos and Sparta set in motion long recollections of the war in Book 3 and 4. The retelling of the Trojan war, despite its potentially adverse emotional effect on the audience,[17] commonly appears as an appropriate social custom in the Homeric banquet scenes. In contrast, the violence of the hero in the bathing-recognition scene of Book 19 performs these familiar war narratives in action rather than speech as Odysseus re-enacts his war-strategy of disguise and ambush in the *oikos*.

Jonathan Shay's comparison between modern war veterans and the Homeric hero sheds light on this narrative shift from banquet retelling to primary event in the two bathing-recognition scenes. Shay reads Odysseus as a man "whose capacity for social trust has been destroyed."[18] The homecoming of Odysseus is fraught with the struggle to return not only to Ithaka, but to the conventions of domestic life. Shay's analysis of the hero's difficulty at home underscores his inability to integrate into society after the war, further supporting my reading that the hero's violence resists the narrative *telos* of return. Even after the hero returns and reunites with Penelope, Teiresias' prophecy foretells that the hero will continue his travels, ultimately thwarting the expectation for domestic stability at Ithaka. Although Shay's optimistic reading of this prophecy supposes that Odysseus will return to Ithaka after one more trip abroad,[19] I interpret the continuing journey of the hero as an indication that re-integration is impossible.[20] The heroic violence which repeats at Troy and Ithaka illuminates this fundamental tension between the hero

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[17] Penelope protests the song of homecoming (1.337-44), Helen uses a drug to prepare her audience for war narratives (4.219-34), and Odysseus weeps when hearing Demodokos sing about the Trojan horse (8.521-31). Such evidence shows that songs and retellings of the war—even if appropriate to the banquet setting—are not universally well received in the epic.

[18] Shay 2002, xv and 120-44.

[19] Teiresias' speech foretells the hero's continuing journey even after the return to Ithaka (11.100-37, 23.266-84).

[20] After the epic ends, Odysseus' continued journeys in the *Telegonia* (to Elis and Thesprotia, returning to Ithaka twice in the process) show that ancient audiences also viewed the return as temporary. See especially Proclos' summary (Severyns 1963, 96-97) in the *Chrestomathia*.

and his home. The restoration of pre-war Ithaka appears in the text as a fantasy rather than a poetic possibility, requiring the hero to continue his journey beyond homecoming. In the bathing-recognition scene, the change from narrative memory at Troy to primary event at Ithaka exposes this repetitive struggle by showing the heroic tendency toward military actions which risk rather than re-establish the *oikos*. Based on these anti-teleological considerations, I suggest that the two bathing-recognition scenes repeatedly attempt, yet ultimately fail, to restore an original mythological past.

2.3 How the Language of Resemblance Problematizes Heroic Identity

I turn now from heroic violence to heroic identity as it appears in the bathing-recognition scenes. In this section, I am concerned specifically with the way Eurykleia and Helen recognize the hero. I point to language which resists the achievement of recognition to show how gender relations in these two scenes problematize the homecoming of the hero. I begin with Helen's promise to tell "fitting things" (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω) as she recalls her recognition of the hero. As mentioned in the previous section, her speech comes to reflect the disguise of Odysseus, as the language of resemblance (i.e. εἴκω and its cognates) repeats throughout this passage to describe both Odysseus' beggar-disguise and Helen's speech.[21] The verb εἴκω carries with it a range of meanings including "to be fitting, to seem likely, to resemble."[22] The repeating descriptions of Odysseus' disguise and Helen's words, shows how recognition in these scenes is based on a fundamental resemblance rather than a teleological confirmation of identity. Helen opens her speech as follows (4.238-43).

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[21] Cf. Bergren (2008, 121) who also observes Helen's speech as an extension of the hero's disguise in this passage. Her argument, however, focuses on the potency of the *pharmakon* in the act of storytelling, while mine is concerned with resemblance as a complication of the heroic identity.
[22] Cunliffe's *Lexicon* s.v. εἴκω[1].

ἦ τοι νῦν δαίνυσθε καθήμενοι ἐν μεγάροισι
καὶ μύθοις τέρπεσθε· ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω.
πάντα μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω
ὅσσοι Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονός εἰσιν ἄεθλοι·
ἀλλ' οἷον τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ
δήμῳ ἔνι Τρώων...

> Now take your dinner while sitting in the great hall, and delight in my words, for I will say fitting things (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω). I could not tell nor name all, how many were the trials of stout-hearted Odysseus, but the following is one sort of thing the brave man did and undertook in the city of the Trojans.

Helen entertains her guests with a story about Odysseus during the Trojan war, meanwhile Telemachos listens for news about his absent father. Homerists often read the phrase "ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω" as an indication that Helen's speech is "fitting," insofar as her words are appropriate to the rules of propriety at the wedding feast. Nancy Worman, for example, elaborates on Helen's use of ἐοικότα by saying:

> Helen herself merely claims before she tells her story that she will speak "suitable things" (ἐοικότα 4.239)—things that, if they are not true, ought to be, by virtue of the extent to which they fit the context in which they are told. *Eoikota* are ethically "true"; they suit character and situation and are thus the mainstay of the rhetorically adept speaker.[23]

Worman rightly observes the unresolved ambiguity in this passage between the truth about the hero and that which is appropriate to say. By shaping her speech to fit the context, Helen adapts to the needs of the moment to demonstrate her skills as a storyteller. A. Doyle likewise observes the ambiguity in Helen's promise to say "fitting things." Doyle suggests that ἐοικότα means "perfect for the occasion," and therefore, "not necessarily true."[24] Anne Bergren, who is also concerned with the degree of truth in Helen's words, interprets ἐοικότα as "things like to the truth, fitting for the occasion, and not hard to believe."[25] Bergen further interprets the term

[23] Worman 2001, 34.
[24] Doyle 2010, 10.
[25] Bergren 2008, 119.

ἐοικότα as evidence for reading Helen as a bard-like figure. Reflecting the Muses, Helen has the power to tell true events or merely "fitting things" to entertain her audience.[26]

For my purposes, it is profitable to expand on Bergren's interpretation by including the later Book 19 scene with Eurykleia, since Helen's bard-like ability points forward to the poetic construction of the second bathing-recognition scene. Even though Helen speaks of a bathing-recognition scene from the past, the second appearance of the hero in disguise appears in the primary narrative and retroactively lends Helen's words authority. Her Muse-like ability to tell truth or falsehood provokes suspicion in Book 4, but proves to be accurate as a foretelling of the hero's actions at Ithaka.[27] The duplication of bathing-recognition scenes represents Helen's words about Odysseus' character as a poetic truth, even as her promise to tell "fitting things" (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω) invites her audience to suspect the accuracy of her words. Aristotle's distinction between poetic and historical language in the *Poetics* underscores this reading of Helen as a bard-figure. He claims that historians narrate particular events (τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον) while poets are concerned with universals (τὰ καθόλου).

> ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. ἔστιν δὲ καθόλου μέν, τῷ ποίῳ τὰ ποῖα ἄττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον
>
> Poetry, rather, tells of universal events (τὰ καθόλου), but history tells events according to particulars (τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον). It is universal for one to tell or act out according to probability or necessity (τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον) whatever happens, in whatever way it happens.[28]

Aristotle indicates the events of poetry as probable (τὸ εἰκὸς), using language which echoes Helen's promise to tell "fitting things" (ἐοικότα). Considering the repeating bathing-recognition

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[26] Cf. Hes. *Theog.* 27-28

[27] This is not the only scene in which Helen's words resonate with future events. She reads the bird sign as a portent of the suitors' death just before Telemachos departs (15.172-78).

[28] Arist. *Poet.* 1451b, 6-9.

scenes in Book 4 and 19, Helen's speech is not only fitting to the immediate context, but also identifies the hero as one who repeats the same actions through time.

The repetition of language between these two scenes develops as Helen continues her speech. She uses the language of resemblance (εἴκω and its cognates) to remark on the hero's pattern of disguise as she recalls his appearance at Troy (4.244-50).

> αὐτόν μιν πληγῇσιν ἀεικελίῃσι δαμάσσας,
> σπεῖρα κάκ' ἀμφ' ὤμοισι βαλών, οἰκῆϊ ἐοικώς,
> ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων κατέδυ πόλιν εὐρυάγυιαν.
> ἄλλῳ δ' αὐτὸν φωτὶ κατακρύπτων ἤϊσκε
> δέκτῃ, ὃς οὐδὲν τοῖος ἔην ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν·
> τῷ ἴκελος κατέδυ Τρώων πόλιν, οἱ δ' ἀβάκησαν
> πάντες· ἐγὼ δέ μιν οἴη ἀνέγνων τοῖον ἐόντα
>
> After overcoming himself with unseemly (ἀεικελίῃσι) blows, casting wretched rags around his shoulders, likening (ἐοικώς) himself to a house slave, he entered the wide-wayed city of hostile men. Concealing himself, he made himself resemble (ἤϊσκε) another man, a beggar, who was not at all the sort (οὐδὲν τοῖος ἔην) who was on the Achaian ships. Resembling (ἴκελος) him, he entered the city of the Trojans, all of whom took no heed, and I alone recognized the sort of man he was.

A connection between speech and disguise as two modes of concealing the hero emerges in this passage. In the same speech, Helen both 1) retells the heroic exploits of Odysseus at Troy and 2) represents his identity to the internal audience at Sparta. As her words reveal the hero to the banquet audience at Sparta, her silence within the story conceals the hero from the Trojans. Helen's silence and speech therefore serve as instruments for controlling the revelation of the hero's identity. This ambiguity of concealment and revelation returns to the text in the form of the hero's disguise as he avoids recognition by making himself like another man (ἄλλῳ…ἤϊσκε). In this characterization of Odysseus, repeated use of terms etymologically related to ἐοικότα such as ἐοικώς, ἤϊσκε, ἀεικελίῃσι, and ἴκελος, echo Helen's opening statement in which she promises to

say “fitting things” (ἐοικότα).[29] Similarly in Book 19, when the hero also appears in ragged clothing, this pattern of resemblance again characterizes him as one who makes use of disguise. The hero in these passages becomes recognizable through repetition, as an imitator of the actions of others rather than as himself. This doubling of the bathing-recognition scene in Book 4 and 19 supports the interpretation of Helen’s words, not only as (ἐοικότα) “fitting things,” but also as “resembling things,” insofar as her speech resembles the poetic account of the hero’s later appearance. I therefore read Helen’s promise to say fitting things (ἐοικότα) as an invitation to the external audience to note the resemblance between the two bathing-recognition scenes in the *Odyssey*.

The reflection between Helen’s speech and Odysseus’ disguise emphasizes the ability of both Eurykleia and Helen to disguise the hero with language. Supporting this claim are the verses in Helen’s banquet speech in which she recognizes the hero and agrees to complicit silence. In conjunction with the disguise, her oath of silence protects the hero’s identity at Troy, until she later characterizes him for the audience at Sparta (4.251-58).

> καί μιν ἀνειρώτευν· ὁ δὲ κερδοσύνῃ ἀλέεινεν.
> ἀλλ’ ὅτε δή μιν ἐγὼ λόεον καὶ χρῖον ἐλαίῳ,
> ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἕσσα καὶ ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον,
> μή με πρὶν Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ Τρώεσσ’ ἀναφῆναι,
> πρίν γε τὸν ἐς νῆάς τε θοὰς κλισίας τ’ ἀφικέσθαι,
> καὶ τότε δή μοι πάντα νόον κατέλεξεν Ἀχαιῶν.
> πολλοὺς δὲ Τρώων κτείνας ταναήκεϊ χαλκῷ
> ἦλθε μετ’ Ἀργείους, κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν.

> And I questioned him, but he in his craftiness eluded me. But when I bathed and anointed him with olive oil and put clothes around him and swore a great oath that I would not reveal Odysseus among the Trojans until he arrived at his swift ships and tents, then he told me the entire plan of the Achaeans. After killing many of the Trojans with the sharp-edged bronze, he went among the Argives and brought back much information.

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[29] Chantraine (1970, 354-55) demonstrates that εἴκω, ἐοικότα, ἔΐσκω, ἀεικέλιος, and ἴκελος are etymologically related.

Once Helen recognizes Odysseus, he compels her to swear an oath of silence (ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον) until he has departed to the Achaean camp. Helen's silence allows Odysseus to kill many Trojans (πολλοὺς δὲ Τρώων κτείνας) and take information to the Argives (κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν). This link between Odysseus' disguise and Helen's speech is corroborated specifically in the verse describing the bath. Immediately after she bathes, anoints, and puts clothes upon Odysseus (ἐγὼ λόεον καὶ χρῖον ἐλαίῳ | ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἕσσα), she swears an oath of silence (ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον). The juxtaposition of oath and clothing (ὅρκον/εἵματα) in verse 253 strengthens the interpretation that disguise and speech operate together to conceal Odysseus. The speech and silence of women in these two scenes thus supplement Odysseus' disguise, suggesting that even when the hero is revealed (i.e. when he is clean and has new clothing, thus looking more like himself) elements of his identity remain masked by the language of women such as Helen and Eurykleia.

I now draw attention to Eurykleia's retelling after the bathing-recognition scene, which leaves out key elements and thereby links speech to disguise as combined modes of concealment. In Book 23, she retells a condensed version of the bathing-recognition scene to Penelope to persuade her that Odysseus has returned. Here Eurykleia palliates the fact that he "seized her by the throat" (φάρυγος λάβε, 19.480) by telling Penelope: "he seized my mouth with his hands" (ἀλλά με κεῖνος ἑλὼν ἐπὶ μάστακα χερσὶν, 23.76). This change from the event to the retelling conceals the violence of the hero. Also missing from her kinder, gentler retelling is the fact that Odysseus threatened to kill her if she told Penelope (19.488-90). These changes invite the interpretation that Helen in Book 4—like Eurykleia in Book 23—also leaves out important details about Odysseus' actions in her own retelling of the bathing-recognition scene at Troy. Was he as

violent and threatening to Helen as to Eurykleia in Book 19?[30] In the repetition from heroic action to retelling, Eurykleia and Helen are inclined to omit the description of violence which would be unfitting to the domestic setting. The repetition in these scenes serves to both characterize the hero and indicate missing elements in his description. These divergent representations of heroic identity, therefore, reveal how speech and silence serve as instruments to avoid transgressing the boundaries of propriety.

Further considering speech and silence as modes of concealment, I suggest that a fundamental indeterminacy vexes the heroic identity in these passages. The following verses illustrate how recognition of the hero is based on the language of resemblance rather than confirmation of identity (4.140-44). First, Helen recognizes Telemachos as one who resembles his father:

> ψεύσομαι ἦ ἔτυμον ἐρέω; κέλεται δέ με θυμός.
> οὐ γάρ πώ τινά φημι ἐοικότα ὧδε ἰδέσθαι
> οὔτ᾽ἄνδρ᾽οὔτε γυναῖκα, σέβας μ᾽ ἔχει εἰσορόωσαν,
> ὡς ὅδ᾽ Ὀδυσσῆος μεγαλήτορος υἷι ἔοικε,
> Τηλεμάχῳ
>
> Shall I speak falsely, or will I tell the truth? The heart commands me. I say that I have never seen someone so similar (ἐοικότα), neither man nor woman. Awe holds me as I look at him, since this man resembles (ἔοικε) Telemachos, the son of great-hearted Odysseus.[31]

In this passage, Helen suspects Telemachos' identity by noting the similarity between him and his father (ἐοικότα ὧδε ἰδέσθαι…Ὀδυσσῆος μεγαλήτορος υἷι ἔοικε). More precisely, she says that

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[30] Indeed, Helen's story of the bathing-recognition scene at Troy has no corroborating evidence as a traditional myth. Unlike Eurykleia, her retelling does not point back to another piece of textual evidence for comparison. While the possibly related reconnaissance mission of Odysseus to retrieve the Palladium from within the walls of Troy appears in Proclos' summary of the *Little Iliad*, scholars such as S. West in Heubeck et al. (1988, 208-9) have seen the bathing-recognition episode in Book 4 as an "*ad hoc* invention" instead of a known myth in the Epic cycle. Compared to Menelaos' subsequent speech which details the Trojan horse, Helen's speech has appeared to scholars as less traditional, even though this is impossible to verify.

[31] Following this passage, Menelaos agrees with Helen's remark by using the language of resemblance (ἐΐσκεις) in response: οὕτω νῦν καὶ ἐγὼ νοέω, γύναι, ὡς σὺ ἐΐσκεις· "Now, in this way, even I recognize [him], O my wife, as you compare them" (4.148).

she never saw anyone so similar (ἐοικότα ὧδε) as her guest to the son of Odysseus (Ὀδυσσῆος…υἷι ἔοικε). Paradoxically, Helen describes Telemachos as one who resembles himself. She first declares that he resembles the son of Odysseus (Ὀδυσσῆος…υἷι ἔοικε), and then discovers that he is in fact the son of Odysseus.[32] The language of resemblance thus marks a tension between suspicion of identity to the moment of acknowledged recognition insofar as "like a thing" and "identical to a thing" are not the same. To be sure, scholars tend to discuss the pattern of recognition in the *Odyssey* as a gradual shift from uncertainty to confirmation, a process which leads to discovery and reunion between separated characters such as Penelope and Odysseus in Book 23. Peter Gainsford observes a sequence of testing, deception, foretelling, and recognition in the epic's recognition scenes, claiming that Odysseus completes the process by "reveal[ing] his true identity" just before a "full reunion takes place."[33] Chris Emlyn-Jones likewise conceives of the recognition scenes teleologically as a movement toward "proof of identity".[34] Alexander Forte also describes in the scenes with Helen and Eurykleia in anticipation of a touch-based *telos* of recognition.[35] My reading suggests, rather, that the identity of the hero is never fully confirmed, and must be pieced together with memory and the hero's resemblance to himself. By beginning with remarks on the suspicion of likeness, the text reminds the audience that recognition is based on acknowledgement instead of teleological confirmation. Helen's indication that Telemachos is like himself is not a logical mistake, but rather an indication in Homeric language that the *telos* of recognition is never achieved. She recognizes Telemachos by

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[32] S. West in Heubeck (1988, 203) suggests that it could have been common knowledge among the Spartan queen and king that Odysseus had only one legitimate son, observing the contrast between Telemachos and Megapenthes, who is the illegitimate child (νόθος) of Menelaos and a slave woman (4.11). Corresponding to Telemachos' "only-son" status, the opening of Book 4 reminds the audience that Helen has only one legitimate child: Hermione.
[33] Gainsford 2003, 42.
[34] Emlyn-Jones 1984, 6-7.
[35] Forte 2020. For Forte (2020, 1), reunion scenes in the *Odyssey* are "fulfilled through the action of mutually desired touch." Cf. Montiglio (2018, 24-25), who also argues that touch is the confirmation of recognition in the scene with Eurykleia.

claiming 1) that he resembles someone she has never seen,[36] and by claiming 2) that he resembles himself. These statements prepare the audience for her retelling the bathing-recognition scene soon after the recognition of Telemachos. Rather than confirming the identities of her guests, Helen's speeches in Book 4 resist the teleological reading of heroic identity by anchoring recognition in the uncertainty of resemblance rather than proof.

Helen's language of resemblance emerges again in Book 19, showing how the tension between identity and resemblance persists through both bathing-recognition scenes. Eurykleia repeats Helen's words to describe Odysseus when he appears in disguise (19.380-81). Like Helen, she also says that he resembles himself:

> ἀλλ' οὔ πώ τινά φημι ἐοικότα ὧδε ἰδέσθαι
> ὡς σὺ δέμας φωνήν τε πόδας τ' Ὀδυσῆϊ ἔοικας.
>
> But I say that I have never seen someone so similar (ἐοικότα), since you resemble Odysseus (Ὀδυσῆϊ ἔοικας) in body, voice, and feet.

But this description presents a problem. The guest does not resemble Odysseus. He is Odysseus. The language of resemblance in both passages allows for the interpretation that likeness and identity are always in tension even after the hero is acknowledged. While these speeches begin with resemblance to set in motion the eventual recognition, they expose the heroic identity as a narrative multiplicity that persistently thwarts the view that recognition is ever fulfilled. In contrast to readings of recognition as a step-by-step fulfillment,[37] I suggest that the suspicion of

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[36] Helen could only know what Telemachus looked like under post-war circumstances, yet they have never been introduced. Either the recognition is based on inference (e.g. the resemblance between Odysseus whom she knows and Telemachos whom she does not), or else this scene represents Helen's strange ability to know what she could not possibly know. Indeed, her knowledge frequently exceeds mortal limitations (as I discuss further in Chapter 4), for example, when she prophetically foretells the suitors' death (15.172-78), after which Telemachos promises to pray to her as a goddess after he returns to Ithaka (15.181).

[37] Gainsford (2003, 42) and Emlyn-Jones (1984, 6-7).

likeness haunts the text beyond the moment when internal audiences acknowledge the hero's presence.

As a final piece of evidence which grounds recognition in the language of resemblance without fully confirming heroic identity, it is worthwhile to note Telemachos' recognition of his father in addition to the bathing-recognition scenes. While recognizing his father (16.199-200), Telemachos expresses suspicion due to Odysseus' sudden change from a beggar to a godlike figure:

> ἦ γάρ τοι νέον ἦσθα γέρων καὶ ἀεικέα ἕσσο·
> νῦν δὲ θεοῖσιν ἔοικας, οἳ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι."
>
> [You are not my father,] for you were just now an old man and wore unseemly clothes (ἀεικέα), but now you resemble (ἔοικας) the gods who hold wide heaven.

Instead of attempting to prove his identity, Odysseus' response surprisingly underscores his multiplicity of appearances (16.202-5) as he appeals to the fitting behavior (οὔ σε ἔοικε) of a son:

> Τηλέμαχ', οὔ σε ἔοικε φίλον πατέρ' ἔνδον ἐόντα
> οὔτε τι θαυμάζειν περιώσιον οὔτ' ἀγάασθαι·
> οὐ μὲν γάρ τοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ' Ὀδυσσεύς,
> ἀλλ' ὅδ' ἐγὼ τοιόσδε, παθὼν κακά, πολλὰ δ' ἀληθείς,
>
> O Telemachos, it is not fitting (ἔοικε) for you to wonder excessively or to marvel at your dear father when he is at home. For another Odysseus will never yet come here to you, but I am this man, having suffered wicked things and wandered far.

Telemachos first noted the sudden change from unseemly (ἀεικέα) to divine resemblance (θεοῖσιν ἔοικας). Yet Odysseus responds by rebuking his son for questioning his identity. He says that the Telemachos' doubt is unfitting (οὔ…ἔοικε). Recall the similar claim of Helen that her speech is "fitting" in the banquet context of Book 4 (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω, 4.239). In both Helen's and Telemachos' description, Odysseus' resemblance to another figure—to an aged beggar in Book 4, to a god in Book 16—prevents his internal audience from confirming his identity with certainty. Furthermore, the rules of propriety in each case enforce what is appropriate to say, rendering the proof of Odysseus' identity impossible. As these passages show,

heroic identity is never confirmed in recognition, but only acknowledged according to what is said to be "fitting" in echoes between the language of resemblance and the boundaries of propriety. Acknowledgement functions in the text as an agreement between characters despite persistent uncertainty as Odysseus assumes the inconsistent identities of beggar, god, hero. As a final point to support this interpretation, consider how the hero does not directly confirm his own identity for his son, but instead says that that no other Odysseus will ever return (οὐ μὲν γάρ τοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάδ' Ὀδυσσεύς). Telemachos thereafter weeps and acknowledges his father (16.213-15), showing that acknowledgement is the final step in recognition even as multiplicity continues to vex the understanding of heroic identity.

2.4 Penelope and the Bed

I turn finally to the reunion scene between Penelope and Odysseus to show how the *telos* of reunion remains incomplete. In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned scholars who read foreshadowing, anticipation, and preparation into Helen's and Eurykleia's recognitions of the hero. Maureen Alden and Douglas Olson, for instance, read these scenes as preparation for the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus. For Olson, Helen's recognition in the bath "prepare[s] the audience for Odysseus' return to Ithaca, and for his confrontation with the suitors and Penelope there."[38] Alden similarly notes that the Book 4 bathing-recognition scene "raises the unfulfilled possibility that Penelope will recognize Odysseus and co-operate with him in destroying the suitors."[39] The anticipated reunion is thus frequently noted in Odysseus' interactions with women in the text. I take this opportunity to show how, even in the final reunion between husband and wife in Book 23, the resolution is left incomplete. This pattern supports the reading that gender

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[38] Olson 1989, 391.
[39] Alden 2017, 162.

relations in the *Odyssey* repeatedly strive toward a teleological endpoint in the narrative, which nevertheless remains unfulfilled as the epic concludes.[40]

To summarize the reunion scene briefly, Penelope and Odysseus face each other at last after the death of the suitors. Eurykleia first informs her of her husband's presence (23.5-9). When she sees Odysseus for herself, she refuses to acknowledge him (94-95). Odysseus indignantly commands Eurykleia to make a bed for him outside of the *thalamos* (166-72). Penelope then tests her husband by commanding Eurykleia to make him the "bed which he himself made" (λέχος…τόν ῥ᾽ αὐτὸς ἐποίει, 177-78). In response, he recalls that the bed should be immobile, since it was built around the trunk of a living olive tree (183-204), at last persuading Penelope of his identity. She then acknowledges him and the two reunite, go to bed together, and exchange stories (209-372). Despite the acknowledgement of heroic identity in this passage, anti-teleological elements persist in 1) Penelope's initial resistance of recognition, 2) Teiresias' prophecy that Odysseus will not stay home, and 3) the contradictory evidence concerning the bed's construction between Penelope's account and the primary narrative. With these three pieces of evidence, my reading illustrates the reunion as another example of gender relations which leaves the narrative resolution in doubt.

I begin by noting Penelope's resistance against the confirmation of Odysseus' identity. This delay retrospectively links the bathing-recognition scenes in Book 4 and 19 to the final reunion, supporting Alden and Olson in their view that reunion is anticipated in Helen's and Eurykleia's initial recognitions—while showing even more importantly that the anticipated *telos*

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[40] Cf. Froma Zeitlin's analysis (1996, 20-52) of the bed as a symbol of fidelity in *Odyssey* 23. Zeitlin does not read the complications within the recognition scene in Book 23 as anti-teleological, yet she does note a fundamental asymmetry in the bed's simultaneous proof of heroic identity and female fidelity. For Zeitlin (1996, 24), the importance of his identity vs. her fidelity gives "each sex its defining terms" which represents wives/women in the epic as finally contingent to the agency of husbands/men.

of reunion is incomplete. At the beginning of their reunion, the text first links Penelope's refusal to acknowledge the hero to his un-bathed appearance after the *mnesterophonia* (23.94-95). The primary narrative thus accounts for her hestitation:

> ὄψει δ' ἄλλοτε μέν μιν ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν,
> ἄλλοτε δ' ἀγνώσασκε κακὰ χροῒ εἵματ' ἔχοντα.
>
> Sometimes, with her vision, she looked at him in the face; sometimes, she did not recognize him wearing wretched clothing on his skin.

Likewise, Odysseus claims that she does not recognize him (23.115-16) for the same reason:

> νῦν δ' ὅττι ῥυπόω, κακὰ δὲ χροῒ εἵματα εἷμαι,
> τοὔνεκ' ἀτιμάζει με καὶ οὔ πώ φησι τὸν εἶναι.
>
> Now, because I am dirty, and I am wearing wretched clothes on my skin, therefore, she dishonors me, and not at all does she say that I am this man.

These verses contrast with the circumstances of the bathing-recognition scenes by connecting the failure of recognition to the unbathed appearance of Odysseus. Indeed, in the final passage of Book 22, Eurykleia had already suggested that Odysseus bathe after the *mnesterophonia* (22.486-89), but he refused (22.491). With Helen and Eurykleia in the previous books, bathing brought about recognition. Now, as a contrasting example, the unbathed hero remains unrecognized by his wife. She then continues to resist recognition even after he is bathed (23.174-80), distinguishing Penelope from the other two women as a figure of resistance beyond the precedent in the previous books. Although Penelope acknowledges the hero finally, after he recites the construction of the bed, these moments of resistance work against the *telos* of reunion between husband and wife.

Beyond the initial resistance of Penelope, additional anti-teleological elements vex the reunion scene. Odysseus mentions the prophecy of Teiresias in Hades to reveal the impermanence of his return to Penelope. Contradicting the reunion as a narrative *telos*, Odysseus claims that this moment is not the end (23.248-53).

> οὐ γάρ πω πάντων ἐπὶ πείρατ' ἀέθλων
> ἤλθομεν, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ὄπισθεν ἀμέτρητος πόνος ἔσται

πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπός, τὸν ἐμὲ χρὴ πάντα τελέσσαι.
ὣς γάρ μοι ψυχὴ μαντεύσατο Τειρεσίαο
ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε δὴ κατέβην δόμον Ἄϊδος εἴσω,
νόστον ἑταίροισιν διζήμενος ἠδ' ἐμοὶ αὐτῷ.

Not yet have we come to the limits (πείρατ') of all our trials, but rather, there will still be immeasurable toil hereafter, both great and difficult, which it is necessary for me to accomplish. For the soul of Teiresias uttered the prophecy to me on that day when I went down to the house of Hades, seeking homecoming for my companions and for myself.

After this statement, Odysseus recites the prophecy of Teiresias to Penelope (23.264-84), which foretells the hero continuing his travels. The hero thus achieves a temporary homecoming between journeys abroad, in a prophecy which indicates a multiplicity of returns rather than extended marital *homophrosyne* and rule over the Ithakan *oikos*. In Book 23, the speech of Teiresias resurfaces after its first appearance in Book 11 to serve as a reminder that the trials of the hero continue beyond the resolution of homecoming, revenge, and reunion.

I have shown how Penelope's initial resistance of recognition and the ongoing travels of Odysseus both present anti-teleological challenges to the achievement of reunion. I now turn to the description of the nuptial bed to show how the identity of the hero and the couple's marital fidelity are both called into question by textual inconsistencies.[41] As noted, after Odysseus describes the immobility of the bed's construction, Penelope acknowledges his identity. She accepts that he is truly her husband, since no other man has seen it. She adds, however, that one maidservant (ἀμφίπολος μία μούνη | Ἀκτορίς) also knows about the nuptial bed (23.225-30).

νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ ἤδη σήματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας
εὐνῆς ἡμετέρης, τὴν οὐ βροτὸς ἄλλος ὀπώπει,
ἀλλ' οἶοι σύ τ' ἐγώ τε καὶ ἀμφίπολος μία μούνη,
Ἀκτορίς, ἥν μοι δῶκε πατὴρ ἔτι δεῦρο κιούσῃ,
ἣ νῶϊν εἴρυτο θύρας πυκινοῦ θαλάμοιο,
πείθεις δή μευ θυμόν, ἀπηνέα περ μάλ' ἐόντα.

[41] See also Froma Zeitlin (1996, 24), who also observes that the identity of the hero and the fidelity of his wife are both implicated in the bed's recognition.

> Now, since you told the accurate proofs of our bed, which no other mortal has seen, but only you and I, as well as one single maidservant, the daughter of Aktor, whom my father gave me when I was still coming to this place, who guards the two doors of the well-built chamber, in fact you persuade my heart, although it is very stubborn.

In support of her fidelity, this explanation seems designed to alleviate Odysseus' fears that another man has knowledge of the nuptial bed. Yet, just before the newly reunited spouses retire to their old ritual, the primary narrator contradicts Penelope by mentioning Eurykleia and Eurynome both making the bed (23.288-89).

> ὥς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον·
> τόφρα δ' ἄρ' Εὐρυνόμη τε ἰδὲ τροφὸς ἔντυον εὐνὴν
>
> So they told such things to each other, meanwhile Eurynome and the nurse were making their bed.

The inconsistency between Penelope's speech and the primary narrative poses a problem for the interpretation of the hero's identity and the couple's fidelity. An ambiguity in Penelope's language suggests two interpretations: either "Aktoris" is the name of the maidservant (ἀμφίπολος μία μούνη | Ἀκτορίς) who has seen the bed, or else she is the daughter of Aktor.[42] The latter allows a reading that Eurynome is the daughter of Aktor, solving half of the conundrum presented in the above verses. In either case, the fact that Eurykleia makes the bed alongside Eurynome at 23.288-89 contradicts Penelope's speech. Importantly for the interpretation of fidelity, the maidservants have been implicated throughout the text as figures whose speech problematizes Penelope's attempts to remain faithful to Odysseus. In the three passages describing Penelope's weaving (2.93-110, 19.137-156, 24.128-148), the maidservants are blamed for leaking the secret of Penelope's weaving stratagem (2.108, 19.154-55, 24.144).[43] The

[42] See Heubeck in Russo et al. (1992, 338) for a bibliography in support of both interpretations of Ἀκτορίς.
[43] Notably, in Book 2 and 24, the suitors say that an individual woman told the secret (τις ἔειπε γυναικῶν, ἣ σάφα ᾔδει), while Penelope says in Book 19 that she was caught on account of a group of maidservants (με διὰ δμωιὰς…εἷλον).

significance of fidelity arises again here: the betrayal of information in these scenes threatens Penelope's reunion to Odysseus, since the suitors force her to finish when they discover her unraveling the web, which in turn hastens the re-marriage. The maidservants are therefore blamed several times for jeopardizing the reunion. In the reunion scene, the inconsistency between the knowledge of the bed in Penelope's speech and the primary narrative again supposes the possibility of maidservants leaking information, again complicating the proof of heroic identity and the fidelity of the marriage. Despite the lack of poetic language which would support Penelope's infidelity or the hero's arrival as a figure other than Odysseus, these textual inconsistencies resist proof of either heroic identity or marital fidelity, vexing the final stages of the narrative with indeterminacy. Penelope's resistance of recognition temporarily resists the *telos* of reunion; the prophecy of Teiresias exposes the impermanence of homecoming; and finally, the contradiction between maidservants who know about the bed unsettles the supposed proofs of fidelity and identity, leaving elements of doubt within the remarriage plot. The Book 23 scene, therefore, does not fully resolve the recognition and remarriage anticipated by the bathing-recognition scenes, suggesting that gender relations in these passages repeatedly prepare for a narrative *telos* that never arrives.

2.5 Conclusion

In sum, the bathing-recognition scenes represent heroic violence and heroic identity as problematic elements in the text which trouble interpretations of recognition as a teleological process that reaches fulfillment. The acknowledgement of Odysseus in these scenes signifies an acceptance of the hero's identity, while the text repeatedly calls into question the achievement of such a resolution. I have aimed to show how the narrative repetition of the Trojan war in the Ithakan *oikos* reveals a split between the hero now and long ago, at home and elsewhere—further

supporting my view that repetition-compulsion manifests in the *Odyssey* as a violent struggle to restore the past. The doubts that these textual and logical contradictions sow in the bathing-recognition scenes and in the final reunion with Penelope expose such teleological aims as inconclusive. I therefore read the repetition of disguise and ambush as a signal of the hero's desire to re-integrate into the domestic setting after the Trojan war. As this chapter has shown, such a desire is sustained by the impossibility of reaching a narrative resolution. In the next chapter, I shall shift the focus from heroic identity to female subjectivity in the bathing-recognition scene and surrounding passages to show how Helen's characterizations and parallels in Book 4 operate as a narrative complication much like the heroic violence treated above.

3. Couple's Therapy: A Reconsideration of Helen's (In)fidelity in Odyssey 4

In this chapter, I examine how female figures in *Odyssey* 4 parallel Helen's characterization in the banquet speeches at Sparta. After introducing textual problems and methodological considerations (Section 3.1-3.3), I draw attention to repetitions between Athena's use of the *eidolon* and Helen's use of the *pharmakon* as two similar acts of deception (Section 3.4), both of which bring consolation to grieving characters. I further note how Eidothea reflects Helen as another figure of deception who assists in Menelaos' homecoming (Section 3.5), in contrast with Helen's near-sabotage of the Trojan horse ambush. I finally remark on the similarity between Helen and Eurykleia as parallel figures whose oaths of silence enable the departures of Telemachos and Odysseus (Section 3.6). I argue that this series of reflections between Helen and subsequent female figures operates to resolve Helen's fraught characterization in the banquet speeches as both ally and traitor.

As scholars have noted, the two incompatible portrayals of Helen in Book 4 leave her characterization unresolved even as the banquet scene concludes.[1] I point to subsequent passages which repeat and reconsider her character to investigate the epic's treatment of female duplicity as a narrative complication. Helen corresponds to later parallel figures who also deceive internal audiences, but with consistently positive outcomes for the epic's chief *dramatis personae*. These later parallels rehabilitate Helen's incompatible portrayal in a strategy that seeks narrative resolution. This pattern supports my overarching claim that communication between women and men consistently jeopardizes the narrative's aims by bringing about moments of crisis—to be resolved, for example, by the subsequent interventions of Athena, Eidothea, and Eurykleia. In

[1] See Alden (2017, 154-72 esp. 167), Bergren (2008, 118-23), Olson (1989), Andersen (1977), and Schmiel (1972). A more detailed discussion of scholarly treatment appears below in section 3.1 below.

Book 4, the text explicitly links the theme of homecoming as a narrative *telos* to moments of communication between women and men: the cooperation between Menelaos and Eidothea sends Menelaos home (4.389-90); the meeting between Odysseus and Helen foretells Helen's future homecoming (4.259-64); and finally, Eurykleia and Telemachos conspire to bring about Telemachos' heroic journey (4.745-49). These passages repeatedly exemplify gender relations as negotiations toward the teleological success of heroes. An investigation of Helen and her parallels thus illuminates the relationship between gender and narrative structure in the *Odyssey*.

3.1 Two Banquet Speeches, Two Helens

Before discussing methodology and scholarly approaches to the two banquet speeches, I will briefly introduce their content.[2] In the first speech, Helen describes meeting Odysseus in his disguise as a beggar and providing him with clothes and a bath (4.240-64).

> πάντα μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,
> ὅσσοι Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονός εἰσιν ἄεθλοι·
> ἀλλ' οἷον τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ
> δήμῳ ἔνι Τρώων, ὅθι πάσχετε πήματ' Ἀχαιοί.
> αὐτόν μιν πληγῇσιν ἀεικελίῃσι δαμάσσας,
> σπεῖρα κάκ' ἀμφ' ὤμοισι βαλών, οἰκῆϊ ἐοικώς,
> ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων κατέδυ πόλιν εὐρυάγυιαν.
> ἄλλῳ δ' αὐτὸν φωτὶ κατακρύπτων ἤϊσκε
> Δέκτῃ, ὃς οὐδὲν τοῖος ἔην ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν·
> τῷ ἴκελος κατέδυ Τρώων πόλιν, οἱ δ' ἀβάκησαν
> πάντες· ἐγὼ δέ μιν οἴη ἀνέγνων τοῖον ἐόντα,
> καί μιν ἀνειρώτευν· ὁ δὲ κερδοσύνῃ ἀλέεινεν.
> ἀλλ' ὅτε δή μιν ἐγὼ λόεον καὶ χρῖον ἐλαίῳ,
> ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἕσσα καὶ ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον,
> μή με πρὶν Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ Τρώεσσ' ἀναφῆναι,
> πρίν γε τὸν ἐς νῆάς τε θοὰς κλισίας τ' ἀφικέσθαι,
> καὶ τότε δή μοι πάντα νόον κατέλεξεν Ἀχαιῶν.
> πολλοὺς δὲ Τρώων κτείνας ταναήκεϊ χαλκῷ
> ἦλθε μετ' Ἀργείους, κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν.
> ἔνθ' ἄλλαι Τρῳαὶ λίγ' ἐκώκυον· αὐτὰρ ἐμὸν κῆρ

[2] I have treated these passages partially in the previous chapter, yet I consider it essential to my argument to reframe the two speeches back-to-back in the following translation and summary to support my subsequent reading of Helen.

χαῖρ’, ἐπεὶ ἤδη μοι κραδίη τέτραπτο νέεσθαι
ἂψ οἶκόνδ’, ἄτην δὲ μετέστενον, ἣν Ἀφροδίτη
δῶχ’, ὅτε μ’ ἤγαγε κεῖσε φίλης ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἴης,
παῖδά τ’ ἐμὴν νοσφισσαμένην θάλαμόν τε πόσιν τε
οὔ τευ δευόμενον, οὔτ’ ἂρ φρένας οὔτε τι εἶδος.”

I cannot tell nor name everything, how many trials there were of stout-hearted Odysseus, but this is one sort of thing the brave man accomplished and undertook in the land of the Trojans, where you Achaeans suffered evils. Overcoming himself with unseemly blows and casting worthless rags around his shoulders, likening himself to a house-slave, he entered the wide-wayed city of foes. Concealing himself, he made himself like another, a beggar, who was not the sort of man on the ships of the Achaeans. Resembling this man, he entered the city of the Trojans, all of whom took no heed, and I alone recognized the sort of man he was, and I questioned him, but he eluded me with craftiness. But when I washed him and anointed him with olive oil, and wrapped him in clothes, and swore a strong oath not to reveal Odysseus among the Trojans until he returned to his swift ships and tents, at that time he told me the whole plan of the Achaeans. After killing many of the Trojans with the sharp bronze, he went among the Argives, and he brought back much information. Then the other Trojan women cried out shrill, but my heart rejoiced, since already my heart was delighting that I would soon go home. I lamented afterwards the madness which Aphrodite bestowed on me, when she led me there away from my dear father-land, departing my child and my bed chamber and my husband who lacks nothing, neither in his mind or appearance.

Here, Helen recalls Odysseus’ preparations for ambush as he enters Troy. She recognizes and bathes the disguised hero (μιν οἴη ἀνέγνων…μιν ἐγὼ λόεον) before swearing to conceal his identity with an oath of silence (ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον). Odysseus then slaughters a group of Trojans and departs to the Achaean camp (ἦλθε μετ’ Ἀργείους, κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν). Helen ends her speech by claiming that her encounter with Odysseus stirred up her desire to return home (μοι κραδίη τέτραπτο νέεσθαι | ἂψ οἶκόνδ’). Menelaos then responds with a speech also in praise of Odysseus (4.266-89).

ναὶ δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα, γύναι, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.
ἤδη μὲν πολέων ἐδάην βουλήν τε νόον τε
ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων, πολλὴν δ’ ἐπελήλυθα γαῖαν·
ἀλλ’ οὔ πω τοιοῦτον ἐγὼν ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν
οἷον Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονος ἔσκε φίλον κῆρ.
οἷον καὶ τόδ’ ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ
ἵππῳ ἔνι ξεστῷ, ἵν’ ἐνήμεθα πάντες ἄριστοι
Ἀργείων, Τρώεσσι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέροντες.
ἦλθες ἔπειτα σὺ κεῖσε· κελευσέμεναι δέ σ’ ἔμελλε
δαίμων, ὃς Τρώεσσιν ἐβούλετο κῦδος ὀρέξαι·

> καί τοι Δηΐφοβος θεοείκελος ἕσπετ’ ἰούσῃ.
> τρὶς δὲ περίστειξας κοῖλον λόχον ἀμφαφόωσα,
> ἐκ δ’ ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους,
> πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ’ ἀλόχοισιν·
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ Τυδεΐδης καὶ δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ἥμενοι ἐν μέσσοισιν ἀκούσαμεν, ὡς ἐβόησας.
> νῶϊ μὲν ἀμφοτέρω μενεήναμεν ὁρμηθέντες
> ἢ ἐξελθέμεναι ἢ ἔνδοθεν αἶψ’ ὑπακοῦσαι·
> ἀλλ’ Ὀδυσεὺς κατέρυκε καὶ ἔσχεθεν ἱεμένω περ.
> ἔνθ’ ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἀκὴν ἔσαν υἷες Ἀχαιῶν,
> Ἄντικλος δὲ σέ γ’ οἶος ἀμείψασθαι ἐπέεσσιν
> ἤθελεν· ἀλλ’ Ὀδυσεὺς ἐπὶ μάστακα χερσὶ πίεζε
> νωλεμέως κρατερῇσι, σάωσε δὲ πάντας Ἀχαιούς·
> τόφρα δ’ ἔχ’, ὄφρα σε νόσφιν ἀπήγαγε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
>
> Yes, in fact all these things, O my wife, you have said according to measure (κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες). Already I have known the counsel and mind of many heroes, and I have traveled much land, but never have I seen with my eyes such a sort of dear heart as that of stout-hearted Odysseus. This is what sort of thing the brave man accomplished and undertook in the well-crafted horse where we all, the best of the Argives, sat bringing destruction and death to the Trojans. At that time, you came, and a divinity was on the point of commanding you, one who wished to offer glory to the Trojans. And indeed, godlike Deïphobos followed you as you went. Three times you stepped around the hollow ambush, touching it, and you called out the names of each of the best of the Danaans, likening your voice to the wives of all the Argives. Then, I and the son of Tydeus and godlike Odysseus heard you while we were sitting in the middle [of the horse], as you cried out. Stirred up, we two [Menelaos and Diomedes] were eager either to go out or to immediately answer from inside, but Odysseus restrained and held us in all our eagerness. Then all the other sons of the Achaeans were silent, and Antiklos alone wished to answer you with words. But Odysseus pressed upon his jaws with his strong hands relentlessly, and he rescued all the Achaeans. He restrained him until Pallas Athena led you away.

Here Menelaos recalls an episode of the war soon after the events in Helen’s speech. He tells how the Achaeans entered the city in the Trojan horse (ἵππῳ ἔνι ξεστῷ, ἵν’ ἐνήμεθα πάντες ἄριστοι). Helen then walks around the horse and calls out the names of the Achaeans, imitating the voices of their wives (πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ’ ἀλόχοισιν). She nearly lures them out until Odysseus restrains his companions to secure the upcoming ambush (Ὀδυσεὺς κατέρυκε καὶ ἔσχεθεν ἱεμένω περ).

In addition to characterizing Helen paradoxically as ally and traitor, these two episodes also allude to Helen's reputation of infidelity.[3] The theme of infidelity emerges in disguise, not as an explicit reference to marital transgression (i.e. Helen's former departure from Menelaos to Paris), but in the form of alternating allegiance in war as the banquet speeches recall Helen changing her support from the Achaeans to the Trojans in quick succession. Helen's duplicity is thus transferred from the domestic sphere to the sphere of war as she becomes entangled in the deeds of men. Instead of acting as a Homeric wife in the domestic space, she exchanges information and participates in Odysseus' spy mission behind the walls of Troy. Recalling Odysseus' heroic exploits at the time of the Trojan horse ambush, Helen and Menelaos shift attention away from their complicated history as husband and wife toward the final moments of the Trojan war. As Robert Schmiel points out, the similarities in these accounts are not as significant as the changing portrayal of Helen.[4] While these two speeches similarly propose to glorify Odysseus' heroic exploits in Troy, they also divide Helen into two seemingly incompatible characters.

Based on the conflicting evidence about Helen's allegiance (to the Achaeans first, to the Trojans next), the text invites varying interpretations of either Helen's or Menelaos' speech as the more reliable account.[5] It is important to note, however, that neither speech has any privileged claim to the truth about the past. Helen's roles in both speeches, as either complicit spy or saboteur, are not corroborated elsewhere in Homeric verse. Both speeches are full of implausible elements. Even if Helen's speech is suspect, even more so is Menelaos' claim that the heroes in the horse all believed the Achaean wives were present in Troy. These two speeches work in

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[3] Cf. Zeitlin 1996, 32.
[4] Schmiel 1972, 468. "Both of the stories ostensibly feature Odysseus…But the differences, the contradictions, are more significant."
[5] For example, Bergren (2008), Olson (1989), and S. West (in Heubeck et al. 1988).

conjunction to illustrate Helen's split subjectivity as a simultaneous sign-maker and sign, as both storyteller and object of narration. Beyond referencing a true event with varying degrees of accuracy, these speeches illustrate an antagonism between multiple, divergent understandings of the Trojan war. The split subjectivity of Helen thus embodies the impossibility of a singular view regarding the traumatic events of the past. Even in repetitions of these events elsewhere, the allegiance and treachery of Helen during the war never repeats in the text to corroborate her characterization in either of the banquet speeches. For example, the Trojan horse narrative repeats throughout the text, not only in the secondhand version of the event Demodokos sings for the Phaiakians (8.500-20), but also in Odysseus' eye-witness account to Achilles' ghost in Hades (11.523-32); neither retelling mentions Helen. The bathing-recognition scene also repeats at Ithaka between Odysseus and Eurykleia (19.386-507), supporting Helen's speech as a true characterization of the hero. Yet, for the reader who seeks to reconstruct the truth of Helen's actions at Troy, the text is notably reticent. The incompatible characterizations of Helen must suffice instead of a unified vision of the heroic past.

Many Homerists, nevertheless, resolve the problem by inferring Helen's lack of integrity. Maureen Alden, for example, reads falsehood into Helen's account, claiming that the story of a wife bathing a hero is "full of logical flaws."[6] She takes issue with Helen's status as a married woman as she bathes Odysseus. Yet, even if the event is unique, the fact that goddesses, slaves, and aristocrats all bathe men in the *Odyssey* supports the event's plausibility.[7] Helen parallels a range of other female figures in the epic, suggesting that the act of bathing is yet another

[6] Alden 2017, 161.
[7] For a range of examples of female figures bathing heroes: goddesses such as Kalypso (5.264) and Kirke (10.449), slaves such as Eurykleia (19.386-505), and aristocrats such as Nestor's daughter, Polykaste (3.466) each perform the bathing ritual. See Foley (1990, 248-257) and Segal (1967, 321-42) for a more in-depth discussion of the language of bathing rituals in the *Odyssey*.

characteristic imitation of Homeric women/goddesses.[8] Stephanie West also reads liability of character in Helen's speech and describes Menelaos' response as an attempt to embarrass her with contradictory evidence.[9] Yet, the embarrassment can be read in another direction. As scholars have noted, the underlying reference to infidelity between Helen and Odysseus in Helen's speech could just as easily have an embarrassing effect on Menelaos.[10] Douglas Olson presents a stark contrast in the credibility of these two accounts by evaluating Menelaos' speech as "right" and Helen's as "wrong." Olson argues that Helen has no alibi, unlike Menelaos' story which includes all the Achaean heroes together.[11] But in the banquet audience during these speeches, no Argives from the Trojan horse are present to corroborate Menelaos' account. Only Helen and Menelaos can authorize these events through experience, which calls both speeches equally into question.[12] Indeed, the readings which suspect Helen's speech as false frequently encounter limitations.

In Telemachos' response, the text itself emphasizes how the praise speeches are equally unsatisfying. Telemachos expresses disappointment after listening to the praise of his father (4.291-5).

> Ἀτρεΐδη Μενέλαε διοτρεφές, ὄρχαμε λαῶν,
> ἄλγιον· οὐ γάρ οἵ τι τό γ' ἤρκεσε λυγρὸν ὄλεθρον,
> οὐδ' εἴ οἱ κραδίη γε σιδηρέη ἔνδοθεν ἦεν.
> ἀλλ' ἄγετ' εἰς εὐνὴν τράπεθ' ἥμεας, ὄφρα καὶ ἤδη
> ὕπνῳ ὕπο γλυκερῷ ταρπώμεθα κοιμηθέντες.

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[8] Indeed, Suzuki (1989) demonstrates that Helen parallels figures not only in Homer, but across the Greek mythological corpus.
[9] S. West in Heubeck et al. 1988, 208-9.
[10] Cf. Goldhill (1988, 21) and Bergren (2008, 121), who suggest that the bathing scene would suggest adultery or be painful for Menelaos in the audience.
[11] Olson 1989, 392-93.
[12] Scholars have even tried to resolve the speeches by noting hierarchy in their order. Doherty (1995, 86), for example, suggests that the second-place position of Menelaos' speech affords his story "greater weight" since Helen is in no position for a rebuttal. Indeed, Weiler (1974, 82n189) notes in reference to Corinna (*PMG* 654) that the poetic representation of song contests very often place victors in the second position. I grant that the internal audiences would take Menelaos' speech as more authoritative in the traditionally male practice of banquet discourse, but beyond the perception of the internal audience (e.g. in scholarly discussion) neither account should be viewed as more credible.

> O Menelaos, son of Atreus, leader of the people, it is all the more grievous, for not at all did this protect him from baneful destruction, not even if the heart within him was iron.

Here Telemachos laments that, for all the heroic versatility of Odysseus, he remains lost at sea. The two praise speeches remain unconvincing to at least one member of the internal audience. This response raises an important question for the interpretation of the two speeches: if the hero is worthy of such praise, why is he unable to overcome the obstacles to homecoming? In the conspicuous absence of their subject for ten years after the Trojan War, Helen and Menelaos inadvertently emphasize the hero's inability to return by showing his contrasting ability to perform other heroic acts. With these considerations, I therefore submit that both speeches are equally questionable, that the two conflicting characterizations of Odysseus cannot be resolved on their own. Instead, they invite the reader to seek a resolution in subsequent passages. Rather than indicating whether Helen or Menelaos presents the more reliable account, the banquet speeches pose female subjectivity as a tension in the text to be resolved by narrative repetition. The disagreement between Helen and Menelaos thus serves as a narrative complication which calls for re-interpretation in intratextual parallels.

Helen's duplicity in Book 4 stands for a heftier problem in Greek myth as the representation of female subjectivity often manifests in divided, duplicitous, and deceptive characters—women who tend to jeopardize the heroic agenda.[13] The frequent male anxiety as expressed by heroes and poets about the dangers of powerful women emerges in such accounts of treacherous women. Within this broader network of female subjectivity in Greek mythology, the *Odyssey* presents a strategy for reconsidering female duplicity. This narrative strategy

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[13] For example, Fletcher (2008, 77-91) examines Eurykleia's silence against textual anxieties in the *Odyssey* about the female voice. Bergren (2008, 13-40) shows more broadly how women in Greek myth are consistently represented as figures of duplicity.

incorporates Helen's reputation—as treacherous and unfaithful—as a narrative complication to be resolved through repetition with subsequent acts of female duplicity. As I shall show, Athena, Eurykleia, and Eidothea repeat Helen's duplicitous actions to bring success to their heroic allies. While resembling Helen, these subsequent female figures cooperate with heroes to bring about the narrative goals of return, revenge, and reunion.[14] I note these repetitions to show how women and men communicate to bring narrative complication, before staging a set of parallels to prepare for a narrative resolution.

3.2 Women as Signs and Sign-Makers: Methodological Considerations

Before I interrogate the intratextual relationship between Helen and her parallels in Book 4, I first turn to anthropological and psychoanalytic theories about the roles of women in male-dominated society. I account for Helen's split subjectivity in the banquet speeches by examining the position of married women in Homeric language. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Claude Lévi-Strauss famously posits that women become objects of exchange in the formation of alliances between social groups.[15] Just as speakers exchange signs as objects of communication, in Lévi-Strauss' account of patriarchal societies, women are also exchanged for the sake of kinship bonds between households. This relocation of brides from paternal to matrimonial homes—often called the "patrilocal" marriage custom—is also typical of the Homeric *oikos*.[16] By moving between her father's and husband's household, a bride symbolically establishes an

[14] These parallels support the argument of Michael Nagler (1993, 253-54) that the *Odyssey* tends to subsume female agency within the strategy of heroic male authority. See also section 1.1 above.
[15] Lévi-Strauss 1969, 495-96.
[16] For a more extensive analysis of patrilocal marriage customs in ancient societies, see Moravec et al. (2018). See also Franco (2012, 54-56), who describes this same process among Homeric women (albeit with the term "virilocal"). Patrilocality is the most common marriage practice in Homeric epic, although counter-examples exist: Priam's twelve sons-in-law live at his estate (*Il.* 6.378); Alkinoös asks Odysseus to remain at Scheria and marry Nausikaä (*Od.* 7.311-14); Helen is said to be from Sparta (in non-Homeric sources), making Menelaos a matrilocal husband in the *Odyssey* (See Gantz 1993, 216 and 317).

alliance between the two. This practice is evident in Greek mythology, as the Achaeans who were originally Helen's suitors swear an oath to protect her marriage vows.[17] The oath of Helen's suitors, which was taken to uphold her marriage to Menelaos, exemplifies such a military alliance based on the exchange of women. Observing this practice historically, Lévi-Strauss notes that—as cultural symbols of communication—women play a conflicting role as both signs and sign-makers, as both objects of exchange and users of language.[18]

In *Odyssey* 4, Helen stands at the crux of these two roles within the economy of kinship bonds, insofar as the banquet speeches characterize her simultaneously as a speaking subject and topic of conversation. Addressing her husband and his young guests and describing an episode from her Trojan past, she acts as a sign-maker and speaker, yet her characterization in the speech of Menelaos shows her as a communicated sign, i.e. a wife subject to a disputed exchange between Achaeans and Trojans.[19] Indeed, Mihoko Suzuki has also drawn on the Lévi-Straussian model to account for Helen and other women in Greek mythology as signs traded within the male-dominated symbolic structure.[20] Suzuki persuasively argues that Homeric women are often incorporated into male power structures as signs or scapegoats.[21] Yet I would add that—especially in *Odyssey* 4—the unresolved duplicity of Helen as both ally and traitor exceeds this Lévi-Straussian economic model. Far from representing a functional economy of exchange, the unresolved characterization of Helen in fact shows the failure of language to account for her and the failure of woman *qua* sign to be incorporated into the male-dominated banquet discourse. In

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[17] The oath of the suitors appears in Hesiod (F 198.1-8), Stesichoros (F 190), and Apollodoros (3.10.9).
[18] Lévi-Strauss 1969, 495-96.
[19] To be precise, Helen is not only a sign to be exchanged in Menelaos' speech. She is also a speaker so skilled that she persuades her listeners that the Argives' wives are present at Troy (4.266-89). The conflict between object and speaking subject therefore persists even in this moment as she becomes a sign to be exchanged in male discourse, i.e. the topic of conversation.
[20] Suzuki 1989, 1-17.
[21] Suzuki 1989, 5-6.

these banquet speeches, Helen persistently breaks free of the categorical boundaries between Achaean/Trojan, ally/traitor, wife/slave. I argue, therefore, that scholars encounter difficulties with the two banquet speeches precisely because Helen is unassimilable into the discourse of men. She cannot be understood except as a parallel, as a representation of other Greek and Trojan wives, as a goddess, a slave, etc. Her characterization always runs into the problem of multiplicity. As the two banquet speeches stumble on a series of contradictions, Helen comes to represent female subjectivity in terms that cannot be incorporated into the symbolic structure of Homeric language.

But what specifically escapes language in the stories about Helen? Why do the banquet speeches struggle to represent her? How does she exceed the economic/structural view of women as signs to be traded between male households? Unlike many of the brides who are exchanged between households in Homeric epic, Helen occupies a relatively privileged position: she originates where she arrives after marriage—in Sparta as the daughter of Tyndareos and the husband of Menelaos.[22] Exceeding the Lévi-Straussian structures of kinship and the patrilocality typical to Homeric marriages, Helen instead exemplifies the matrilocal marriage custom. Even as she participates in an androcentric society, Helen nevertheless complicates the practice of exchanging women as objects. To understand Helen's position as a sign and a sign-maker, I turn to Lacan's elaboration of the concept of kinship bonds. While Lévi-Strauss' analysis accounts for the functional position of women in society, Lacan is concerned rather with the failure of this system where the economy of exchange encounters a functional limit. For Lacan, a glaring problem arises in the moment when language accounts for women in patriarchal societies, since women cannot be incorporated without being split into simultaneous subjects and objects.

[22] Gantz (1993, 216, 317) refers to a series of mythological representations in which Tyndareos is originally from Sparta.

> For her, there's something insurmountable, let us say unacceptable, in the fact of being placed in the position of an object in the symbolic order, to which, on the other hand, she is entirely subjected no less than the man.[23]

Lacan elaborates here on the position of women as they enter the Symbolic Order—i.e. the order of language, institutions, and laws.[24] His work illuminates the problem of female subjectivity in Homeric epic as a subject position within the institutions of men which troubles the distinction between self and other. As a subject, she also sees herself as an object and represents herself according to the codes of language dictated by the male heroic authorities who have established the rules of discourse. To support this reading of Homeric women with textual evidence, I draw attention again to Helen's promise to say "fitting things" (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω, 4.239) in her own speech. Considering her self-representation in the act of storytelling, Helen communicates an identity to the audience based on the expectations of a male-dominated banquet scene. The boundaries of propriety thus construct for her a position as both speaking-subject and object of exchange whose duplicity appears in the conflicting roles of ally and traitor. Rather than interpreting Helen as a liar in the banquet speeches, I therefore suggest that her duplicity is anchored in the androcentric rules of communication and the mythological reputation which dictate her character.

The division in Helen's character can be accounted for even more specifically by focusing on the two scenes of recognition—one successful, one failed—in the banquet speeches at Sparta. In her own speech, she recognizes Odysseus (4.240-64). In Menelaos' speech, the heroes fail to recognize her (4.266-89). They hear her vocal imitation of their wives and believe it. As the heroes desire to depart the horse, they expose their inability to distinguish their wives from Helen, again complicating her subjectivity by blurring the distinction between her own

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[23] Lacan 1988, 262.
[24] Lacan 1988, 259-64.

identity and a multiplicity of other wives. Menelaos' retelling thus accounts for Helen, not as a consistent identity, but as an unstable figure within the codes of language in the androcentric Symbolic Order. The male discourse struggles to assimilate her, portraying her instead as a figure of infidelity, of multiplicity, of incompatible characterizations. This failure to recognize Helen in Menelaos' speech repeats on the narrative level, as female figures such as Athena, Eidothea, and Eurykleia reiterate Helen's acts of deception to show their allegiance. In each passage, Helen's identity is repeatedly anchored in her resemblances to other women and goddesses. The problem of Helen's characterization therefore goes beyond the degree of accuracy in the two banquet speeches, suggesting that a treatment of Helen's parallels shall retrospectively illuminate the inconsistencies of the banquet speeches. Before treating Athena, Eidothea, and Eurykleia (Section 3.4-3.6), however, I first interrogate infidelity and treachery in Helen's characterization (Section 3.3) to show how Helen's split subjectivity first calls out for a series of textual parallels.

3.3 Helen's Infidelity and Split Subjectivity

I now turn to the converging topics of infidelity and alternating allegiance in the banquet speeches to show how Helen's characterization remains unresolved in Book 4. Above I examined Helen's promise to say fitting things (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω, 4.239) within the wedding banquet context.[25] I now expand upon this reading to show how the phrase, "fitting things," connects—not only to resemblance and disguise in the appearance of Odysseus, but also—to the consideration of Helen's infidelity as unfitting to a wedding banquet conversation. With this expanded reading of Helen's promise (ἐοικότα γὰρ καταλέξω), I show how treachery resurfaces to characterize Helen's duplicity even as the speakers struggle to suppress the topic of marital infidelity.

[25] See especially section 2.3 above.

To tease out this meaning in the text, I draw attention to the "unseemly" (ἀεικές) deed of adultery elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, in contrast to the "fitting things" (ἐοικότα) Helen says at the banquet. In Book 23, while discussing her own marital fidelity to Odysseus, Penelope addresses infidelity by explaining that "a god compelled Helen to commit the unseemly deed" (τὴν δ' ἦ τοι ῥέξαι θεὸς ὤρορεν ἔργον ἀεικές). Even in Penelope's speech, the topic of infidelity is represented euphemistically. Helen's marital reputation is so well known that the phrase "unseemly deed" sufficiently communicates her departure from Menelaos to Paris. As Froma Zeitlin remarks, "ἔργον ἀεικές" frequently appears, in this passage and elsewhere in the epic, to signify marital infidelity.[26] The etymological relationship between ἐοικότα and ἀεικές links Helen's retelling of the Trojan war in Book 4 to Penelope's reference to infidelity in Book 23.[27] Amid Helen's promise to say "fitting things," her history of multiple husbands threatens to emerge in moments of storytelling at the banquet. The fact that adultery in Homeric epic is called an "unseemly deed" (ἔργον ἀεικές) intratextually emphasizes Helen's promise to say "fitting things" (ἐοικότα) as avoidance of such a topic. Broadly speaking, the *Odyssey* narrative operates to bring the two separated spouses back together in the Book 23 reunion scene. The topic of infidelity is a counter-current to that operation, "unfitting" not only to the wedding context of Book 4, but to the narrative as a whole. Helen's speech thus serves as a subtle reminder to the audience of the unfitting act of adultery, in contrast to the teleological aims of the narrative to bring about reunion between Penelope and Odysseus. Yet, instead of remarking directly on Helen's infidelity, the content of the banquet speeches represents Helen's alternating allegiance to the Achaeans and

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[26] Zeitlin (1996, 32) observes that this phrase (ἔργον ἀεικές) appears in reference to the extra-marital affairs of Helen (23.222) and Klytaimnestra (3.265, 11.429).

[27] The participle ἐοικότα is a form of εἴκω ("to be fitting, to seem likely, to resemble"), while ἀεικής ("unseemly, shameful") negates the term εἴκω by adding the alpha-privative (α-) in adjectival form. Chantraine (1970, 354-55) notes that these two words are cognates. In section 2.3, I further discuss the "language of resemblance" in the repetition of these and related words.

Trojans. At the wedding banquet, Helen and Menelaos disguise the failure of fidelity in the Trojan war episodes by retelling Helen's allegiance and treachery in quick succession. I therefore additionally interpret Helen's promise to say fitting things as a signal of what is missing in the banquet speeches, insofar as the rules of propriety at the banquet suppress her "unseemly deed."

But how do the banquet speeches reconsider Helen's unseemly deed? The unspoken topic of fidelity appears instead in the theme of allegiance. Helen's fidelity to multiple husbands changes to her allegiance to multiple armies. The couple thus chooses to discuss the heroic exploits of the Achaeans in place of the issues more immediately present in the domestic space.[28] Helen first assists Odysseus in her own speech and longs to return to Meneloas. Yet in the subsequent speech told by Menelaos, she appears next to Deïphobus prepared to sabotage the Achaean ambush. Curiously, this disagreement between the speeches of husband and wife is concealed in a pretext of agreement. Instead of explicitly contradicting his wife, Menelaos opens his speech with a claim that Helen's speech is according to measure (4.266). Similarly, he excuses her treacherous act in his speech by blaming a divinity (4.274-75). In the supposed agreement between husband and wife, marital harmony serves as a pretext to conceal the underlying history of Helen's infidelity.

How, then, does the text work to resolve the discrepancy between these two banquet speeches that characterize Helen? While women commonly appear in Greek mythology as deceivers of men who bring about the downfall of heroes,[29] the *Odyssey* instead frames Helen as a parallel to female figures who exemplify allegiance, who intervene with deception in support of heroic figures. Helen's fraught characterization calls out for a resolution, which the parallel

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[28] The Trojan war is the topic of song (1.337-44, 8.521-31) or banquet conversation (4.219-34) frequently in the *Odyssey*.
[29] Cf. Bergren (2008, 13-40), who discusses the theme of female duplicity in Greek mythology more broadly.

figures of Eidothea, Eurykleia, and Athena embody. Her reflections throughout Book 4 follow this pattern of allegiance to the epic's heroes and protagonists: Eidothea deceives Proteus to assist with Menelaos' homecoming (4.389-90); Eurykleia enables Telemachos' journey with provisions and an oath of silence (4.745-49); Athena fashions an *eidolon* to stop Penelope's grief (4.795-96). Such passages show how parallel figures in Book 4 represent female duplicity as an act of allegiance to the male heroic authority. In the following three sections, I elaborate on these parallels to show how the *Odyssey* rehabilitates Helen's reputation retrospectively. Based on these textual repetitions, I interpret the two banquet speeches at Sparta as an example of gender relations which prepares for the narrative *telos*. As female figures use acts of deception to set in motion return, revenge, and reunion, the *Odyssey* thus establishes a link between gender and narrative structure.

3.4 Athena and Helen: Parallel Figures of Consolation, Imitation, Intervention

In what follows, I show how the text links Athena and Helen and thereby emphasizes Helen's actions as an ally rather than a traitor in the banquet speeches. Athena's deception throughout the epic consistently supports the aims of Telemachos and Odysseus.[30] For example, as a reflection of Helen in Book 4, Athena consoles Penelope as she grieves over the departure of Telemachos (4.795-801). Athena fashions an *eidolon* of Penelope's sister to console her as she sleeps. Similarly, Helen uses the *pharmakon* to make her audience forget all griefs, linking Athena to Helen as two figures of consolation. As I shall show, the two characters also function

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[30] Athena encourages Telemachos' journey to Pylos and Sparta (1.284-85). She also assists in the slaughter of the suitors (22.224-35). It should be noted that Athena sometimes works against the protagonists in the *Odyssey*. Jenny Strauss Clay (1983, 43-53) investigates a set of contradictory passages which expose Athena's wrath after the Trojan war as an underlying cause of the hero's delayed homecoming, beyond the epic's clear depiction of Poseidon's wrath as a narrative complication.

in the text as agents of imitation. Helen imitates the voices of all the Argive wives; meanwhile, Athena's *eidolon* imitates the body of Iphthime. Finally, the text connects the two as figures of intervention as they steer the narrative course away from unwanted events. Due to Athena's repeated support of Odysseus and his family, I point to these parallel acts of consolation, imitation, and intervention as evidence that the text retrospectively emphasizes allegiance in Helen's initially fraught characterization. I argue that Athena's role recasts Helen's duplicity in terms of allegiance rather than treachery to resolve the split in her character.

While deception is characteristic of both goddess and Spartan queen throughout the *Odyssey*, both figures engage in deceptive acts specifically for the sake of consolation in Book 4. At the wedding feast, Telemachos' arrival provokes memories about the Achaean casualties at Troy. First, the retellings of the war cause widespread weeping among the audience, including Helen, Telemachos, Menelaos, and Peisistratos (4.183-86). Helen responds to this lamentation by adding a *pharmakon* to the banquet wine as a remedy for grief (4.219-27).

> ἔνθ’ αὖτ’ ἄλλ’ ἐνόησ’ Ἑλένη Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα·
> αὐτίκ’ ἄρ’ εἰς οἶνον βάλε φάρμακον, ἔνθεν ἔπινον,
> νηπενθές τ’ ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἁπάντων.
> ὃς τὸ καταβρόξειεν, ἐπὴν κρητῆρι μιγείη,
> οὔ κεν ἐφημέριός γε βάλοι κατὰ δάκρυ παρειῶν,
> οὐδ’ εἴ οἱ κατατεθναίη μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε,
> οὐδ’ εἴ οἱ προπάροιθεν ἀδελφεὸν ἢ φίλον υἱὸν
> χαλκῷ δηϊόῳεν, ὁ δ’ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῷτο.
> τοῖα Διὸς θυγάτηρ ἔχε φάρμακα μητιόεντα,
>
> Then the daughter of Zeus, Helen, planned other things. At once she cast a *pharmakon*—grief-banishing and wrath-allaying, making a forgetting of all evils—into the wine from which they were drinking. Whoever swallowed it down, whenever it was mixed in the mixing bowl, for the span of a day would not cast a tear down his cheeks, not even if his mother and father were killed, not even if his brother or dear son in front of him was slayed by the bronze, and he saw it with his eyes. Such crafty *pharmaka* the daughter of Zeus kept.

By stopping their grief, Helen's *pharmakon* enables the audience to listen to more stories about the Trojan war without weeping. The drug is described as both "grief-banishing and wrath-

allaying" (νηπενθές τ' ἄχολόν τε), with a potency which prevents grief even if a loved one dies in plain sight (4.224-25). The *pharmakon* passage reflects Athena's appearance later in the book as she mirrors Helen's actions by similarly stopping Penelope's grief. The *pharmakon* passage also describes Helen as the daughter of Zeus (Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα; Διὸς θυγάτηρ, 4.219, 227), twice solidifying the connection between Helen and Athena. The text thus reiterates the parallel both in the act of consolation and the familial connection to Zeus. Compare Helen's *pharmakon* passage above to the following description of Athena at Ithaka (4.795-801).

> ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη·
> εἴδωλον ποίησε, δέμας δ' ἤϊκτο γυναικί
> Ἰφθίμῃ, κούρῃ μεγαλήτορος Ἰκαρίοιο,
> τὴν Εὔμηλος ὄπυιε Φερῇς ἔνι οἰκία ναίων·
> πέμπε δέ μιν πρὸς δώματ' Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο,
> εἵως Πηνελόπειαν ὀδυρομένην γοόωσαν
> παύσειε κλαυθμοῖο γόοιό τε δακρυόεντος.
>
> Then the grey-eyed goddess, Athena, planned other things. She fashioned a false image and she likened the body to a woman, Iphthime, the daughter of great-hearted Ikarios, whom Eumelos married dwelling in the houses in Pherai. She [Athena] sent her to the chambers of godlike Odysseus, so that she might stop Penelope, grieving and wailing, from weeping and tear-shedding lamentation.

Athena fashions an *eidolon* of Iphthime and sends her into Penelope's bed chamber to stop her grieving (εἵως Πηνελόπειαν ὀδυρομένην γοόωσαν | παύσειε κλαυθμοῖο γόοιό τε δακρυόεντος). In both Helen's and Athena's interventions, consolation results from instruments of deception: the *pharmakon* and the *eidolon*. Helen's passage describes a lack of weeping (οὔ κεν ἐφημέριός γε βάλοι κατὰ δάκρυ παρειῶν) from the effects of the drug, while Athena's passage rather repetitively describes Penelope's weeping with a series of synonymous terms for lamentation (ὀδυρομένην, γοόωσαν, κλαυθμοῖο, γόοιό, δακρυόεντος). Athena's consolation of Penelope at Ithaka reiterates Helen's deceptive—but soothing—drugging of the banquet audience and therefore emphasizes the use of deception as a form of allegiance rather than treachery. The supportive act of deception performed by Athena moves toward a resolution of Helen's

ambiguous characterization as ally and traitor. Despite Menelaos' speech about Helen's treachery, Athena and Helen are both portrayed in the text as characters who mitigate the effects of war and resolve the crises caused by heroes.

Helen and Athena also function in Book 4 as figures of imitation, as the following textual analysis shall reveal. Turning now to another intratextual connection, Athena's creation of the *eidolon* comes to reflect Helen's deception outside the Trojan horse. As shown in Athena's *eidolon* passage above, Athena makes a dream image in the likeness of Iphthime's body (δέμας δ' ἤϊκτο γυναικί). Helen's act of vocal imitation outside of the Trojan horse again echoes Athena's creation of the *eidolon*. In his banquet speech, Menelaos recalls the multiplicity in his wife's voice (4.277-79).

> τρὶς δὲ περίστειξας κοῖλον λόχον ἀμφαφόωσα,
> ἐκ δ' ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους,
> πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν·
>
> Three times you walked around, laying hands upon the hollow ambush, and you called out the best of the Danaans by name, likening your voice to the wives of all the Argives.

In the vocal imitation and the *eidolon* of Iphthime, both Helen and Athena deceive their internal audiences by suggesting the presence of faraway women. In both cases, the internal audiences resist the persuasion of the two female figures: Penelope questions her sister's sudden appearance, while Odysseus is aware of Helen's trick and stops his companions from responding. This intratextual repetition underscores similarity between two deceptive acts. In word order and grammatical structure, Athena and Helen come to reflect each other. Both phrases (φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν vs. δέμας δ' ἤϊκτο γυναικί) which describe the moment of imitation occupy the final position in the line; both use forms of the verb εἴκω as a rendering of likeness (ἴσκουσ', ἤϊκτο); and finally, both repeat the word order of direct object, verb(al adjective), indirect object. These repetitions connect the actions of Helen and Athena and solidify my view that Athena's *eidolon* reiterates Helen's duplicity as a form of allegiance rather than treachery. The

retrospective allusion to Helen's characterization thus represents female deception as help rather than hindrance.

But how can we interpret Helen's supposed attempt to sabotage the Achaeans as anything but treachery? I am about to venture into questionable territory, yet I ask the reader to permit such an excursion for one paragraph only, as I read radically against the text to present a point which is nevertheless crucial to my reading of Helen's allegiance. A deeper investigation of Helen's voice reveals an underlying allegiance to the Achaeans and fidelity to Menelaos even as she seems to act as a saboteur behind enemy lines. Menelaos recalls his desire to leave the horse as Helen calls out the heroes' names (4.283). At this moment in his retelling—which is often read as Helen's attempted betrayal of the Achaean contingent—Menelaos inadvertently represents truth, fidelity, and allegiance within the deceptive lure of Helen's voice. As she takes on the voices of the wives of the all the Argives (πάντων Ἀργείων), Menelaos' desire to respond to her proves that, within her multiplicity, Helen comes to represent truthfully her presence to her former husband (4.277-84).

> τρὶς δὲ περίστειξας κοῖλον λόχον ἀμφαφόωσα,
> ἐκ δ' ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους,
> πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν·
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ Τυδεΐδης καὶ δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ἥμενοι ἐν μέσσοισιν ἀκούσαμεν, ὡς ἐβόησας.
> νῶϊ μὲν ἀμφοτέρω μενεήναμεν ὁρμηθέντες
> ἢ ἐξελθέμεναι ἢ ἔνδοθεν αἶψ' ὑπακοῦσαι·
> ἀλλ' Ὀδυσεὺς κατέρυκε καὶ ἔσχεθεν ἱεμένω περ.
>
> Three times you went around touching the hollow ambush, and you called out by name the best of the Danaans, making your voice resemble the wives (φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν) of all the Argives. Then, I and the son of Tydeos and godlike Odysseus, sitting in the middle, heard you as you were crying out. We both, having been stirred up, were eager either to come out or to answer immediately from inside (ἢ ἐξελθέμεναι ἢ ἔνδοθεν αἶψ' ὑπακοῦσαι), but Odysseus restrained and kept us back although we were eager.

Even as Menelaos' banquet speech represents the alternating allegiance of his wife, his characterization of her as a traitor encounters a problem. His own admitted desire to respond or

else leave the horse suggests the letigimate recognition of his wife within a series of false recognitions by the heroes surrounding him. While she supposedly betrays the Achaeans, Helen simultaneously betrays herself to Menelaos. I draw attention to this textual element within Menelaos' desire to respond to Helen—not as an outright contradiction against, but—as a limitation to Menelaos' characterization of Helen as a traitor. Even within this duplicitous act, her voice communicates herself truthfully. Corresponding to Athena's use of the *eidolon* (δέμας δ' ἤϊκτο γυναικί), Helen's vocal imitation (φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν) also deceives to reveal an underlying truth: just as the *eidolon* deceives Penelope to bring a true message of Telemachos' safety, Helen's imitation outside of the horse deceives the Achaeans to communicate her true presence. I note this repetition as evidence that Helen's characterizations at the banquet resonate with acts of allegiance in other female figures such as Athena.

I now turn to a formulaic repetition to highlight Helen and Athena as figures of intervention in Book 4. The phrase, "then she planned other things" (ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε), appears a total of eight times in the *Odyssey*, almost exclusively with Athena as subject of the verb.

> ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη·
>
> Then the grey-eyed goddess, Athena, planned other things. (2.382, 393, 4.795, 6.112, 18.187, 23.344).

In Book 4, Helen steps into this role most often reserved for Athena:

> ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησ' Ἑλένη Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα·
>
> Then the daughter of Zeus, Helen, planned other things. (4.219).

The following comprehensive list shows a tendency for this textual repetition to indicate acts of deception that bring significant narrative changes by emboldening or else rescuing characters from disaster:

1) Athena takes on the likeness of Telemachos to make preparations for his journey (2.382-83).
2) Athena takes on the likeness of Mentor to embolden Telemachos before his journey (2.393-401).
3) Helen uses a *pharmakon* to allow for continued banquet speeches about the war (4.219).
4) Athena fashions an *eidolon* of Iphthime to console Penelope's grieving (4.795-801).
5) Athena awakens Odysseus to meet Nausikaä (6.112-114).
6) Penelope rebukes the suitors for planning to ambush Telemachos (16.409).
7) Athena lulls Penelope to sleep to make her appearance more alluring to the suitors (18.187-199).
8) Athena intervenes to stop and then restart time, extending the reunion between Odysseus and Penelope (23.344).

In the *Odyssey*, the formula (ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε) most often represents divine intervention as Athena acts deceptively to steer events toward a desirable outcome. The frequency of disguise in these passages is also notable: the goddess alters appearances to influence the course of events in four of her six instances as the subject of the formula (2.382, 393, 4.795, 18.187), revealing her characteristic pattern of ameliorating narrative crises. In Book 4 specifically, the formula appears twice to represent Helen and Athena both intervening—with *pharmakon* and *eidolon*—to deceive internal audiences. The parallel is further emphasized as each event effectively diverts the narrative course: 1) Helen rescues the discussion by stopping widespread grief at the wedding banquet, and 2) Athena reveals the truth about Telemachos to stop Penelope's grief. As both figures take on the same pattern of action in Book 4, these repetitive characterizations underscore Helen's allegiance rather than her treachery during the war. To illustrate once more how the text repeatedly moves toward a resolution of Helen's split subjectivity, I now turn to Eidothea as another figure whose deception supports epic heroes—this time, significantly to assist in Menelaos' homecoming.

3.5 Eidothea and Helen: Parallel Figures of Deception and Ambush

Like Athena, Eidothea reflects Helen in subsequent passages of Book 4, supporting my view that Helen's parallels divert attention from her treachery and emphasize her allegiance.

Eidothea's appearance occurs the following morning, after the banquet speeches about Odysseus. Menelaos and Telemachos meet to discuss the homecoming of the Achaeans, fulfilling Telemachos' mission to hear news of his father. Eidothea appears within Menelaos' retelling as a figure of female duplicity who supports Menelaos by assisting his ambush of Proteus to achieve homecoming. Continuing my analysis of textual parallels in Book 4, I observe how Eidothea reiterates Helen's deception. The two banquet speeches which reveal Helen as both ally and traitor roughly correspond to the two actions of Eidothea as she first meets Menelaos alone, and then assists his companions in ambush. Yet the parallel of Eidothea appears with one crucial difference: unlike Helen, she assists with Menelaos' homecoming as an unambiguous figure of support.[31] Reflecting the first banquet speech, Eidothea arrives to rescue Menelaos and his men, just as they reach the limits of their provisions (4.363-67).

> καί νύ κεν ἤϊα πάντα κατέφθιτο καὶ μένε᾽ ἀνδρῶν,
> εἰ μή τίς με θεῶν ὀλοφύρατο καί μ᾽ ἐλέησε,
> Πρωτέος ἰφθίμου θυγάτηρ ἁλίοιο γέροντος,
> Εἰδοθέη· τῇ γάρ ῥα μάλιστά γε θυμὸν ὄρινα·
> ἥ μ᾽ οἴῳ ἔρροντι συνήντετο νόσφιν ἑταίρων·
>
> And now, all the provisions and strength of the men would have thinned out, if one of the gods—Eidothea, daughter of stalwart Proteus, the old man of the sea—had not felt compassion and pitied me. For I, especially, stirred up her heart. She encountered me going alone, separate from my companions.

Here Eidothea first appears to Menelaos as he wanders alone. Menelaos then receives information from her crucial for achieving homecoming: Menelaos and his companions must ambush Eidothea's father concealed by seal-skins. This encounter represents a thematic link to Helen's bathing-recognition scene as she also encounters Odysseus alone and offers him information

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[31] Froma Zeitlin (1996, 410) also reads Menelaos' story the following morning as a subsequent narrative resolution to Helen's two-fold characterization at the banquet: "The story of mimesis practiced by Helen can never escape the ambiguities of its telling, but the mimetic repertory of Proteus has a limit that will result in the revelation of an absolute truth. Here that truth is the future of Menelaos, his homecoming and his ultimate fate." She does not specifically link Helen to Eidothea, but rather sees the two stories as thematically interconnected.

(κατὰ δὲ φρόνιν ἤγαγε πολλήν, 4.258). Odysseus likewise arrives in Troy as a beggar, concealing his own identity with foul clothing and self-mutilation, a reflection of Menelaos' mission to disguise himself in seal-skins. Another parallel arises in the departure of Menelaos and Odysseus to their ship (ἐς νῆάς; ἐπὶ νῆα, 4.255, 428) after they meet with the two female figures and establish allegiance.

The second banquet speech which characterizes Helen as a traitor to the Achaeans is also reiterated in the character of Eidothea. As the Achaeans bring ambush to the Trojans, so too does Menelaos conduct an ambush against Proteus. Following Eidothea's advice, Menelaos brings three companions to hide in seal-skins and wait for Proteus to fall asleep. Unlike Helen's treacherous attempt to sabotage the Trojan horse, Eidothea attends to the ambush as a figure of complicity. She rescues Menelaos and his companions from the awful smell of seal-skins by applying ambrosia beneath their noses (4.439-46).

> ἡμεῖς δὲ μάλα σχεδὸν ἤλθομεν αὐτῆς·
> ἑξείης δ' εὔνησε, βάλεν δ' ἐπὶ δέρμα ἑκάστῳ.
> ἔνθα κεν αἰνότατος λόχος ἔπλετο· τεῖρε γὰρ αἰνῶς
> φωκάων ἁλιοτρεφέων ὀλοώτατος ὀδμή·
> τίς γάρ κ' εἰναλίῳ παρὰ κήτεϊ κοιμηθείη;
> ἀλλ' αὐτὴ ἐσάωσε καὶ ἐφράσατο μέγ' ὄνειαρ·
> ἀμβροσίην ὑπὸ ῥῖνα ἑκάστῳ θῆκε φέρουσα
> ἡδὺ μάλα πνείουσαν, ὄλεσσε δὲ κήτεος ὀδμήν.
>
> We came near to her, and she laid us down in order and cast a skin upon each of us. Then, the ambush would have been most dreadful, for dreadfully the most baneful smell of the sea-nourished seals afflicted us. For who could lie down with a sea-dwelling monster? But she rescued us and pointed out an advantage. Bringing a sweetly smelling ambrosia, she put it beneath the nose of each man, and it counteracted the smell of the monster.

This storytelling structure of two passages (of collusion between female and male figures and subsequent ambush) repeats and connects the two female figures of Helen and Eidothea. The parallel shows how the *Odyssey* frequently represents women and goddesses as figures of deception who assist the heroes in their mission. As I have shown, Eidothea's first and second

contributions to the text both aid the homecoming of Menelaos, while Helen's first and second characterizations in the banquet speeches shift to vex her characterization. As a parallel of female duplicity, the allegiance of Eidothea downplays the treachery of Helen. The retrospective reading of these parallels allows for the interpretation of female duplicity as an anti-teleological element in the text which calls out for repetitions in search of a narrative *telos*.

3.6 Eurykleia and Helen: Parallel Figures of Silence and Subsequent Retelling

Now that I have examined Athena and Eidothea, each as parallels to Helen, I turn my attention to Eurykleia as a figure whose loyalty also rewrites Helen's treachery in retrospect. When Eurykleia appears in Book 4, she reiterates Helen's actions of swearing an oath of silence and subsequently revealing the oath in confession. Eurykleia first swears an oath to conceal Telemachos' journey from Penelope. Her later confession of this oath connects her to Helen. Helen's passage proceeds as follows (4.252-56).

> ἀλλ' ὅτε δή μιν ἐγὼ λόεον καὶ χρῖον ἐλαίῳ,
> ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἕσσα καὶ ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον,
> μή με πρὶν Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ Τρώεσσ' ἀναφῆναι,
> πρίν γε τὸν ἐς νῆάς τε θοὰς κλισίας τ' ἀφικέσθαι,
> καὶ τότε δή μοι πάντα νόον κατέλεξεν Ἀχαιῶν.
>
> But when I bathed him and anointed him with olive oil, and cast clothes around his shoulders, and swore a mighty oath (ὤμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον) not to reveal Odysseus among the Trojans (μή με πρὶν Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ Τρώεσσ' ἀναφῆναι) until he reached his swift ships and tents (πρίν γε τὸν ἐς νῆάς τε θοὰς κλισίας τ' ἀφικέσθαι), then he told me the entire plan of the Achaeans.

Later in the same book, the suitors plot the ambush of Telemachos after they learn of his departure. As Penelope grieves over the danger to her son, Eurykleia confesses that she assisted his journey by keeping it a secret (4.745-49).

> ᾔδε' ἐγὼ τάδε πάντα, πόρον δέ οἱ, ὅσσ' ἐκέλευσε,
> σῖτον καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ· ἐμεῦ δ' ἕλετο μέγαν ὅρκον
> μὴ πρὶν σοὶ ἐρέειν, πρὶν δωδεκάτην γε γενέσθαι

> ἤ σ᾽ αὐτὴν ποθέσαι καὶ ἀφορμηθέντος ἀκοῦσαι,
> ὡς ἂν μὴ κλαίουσα κατὰ χρόα καλὸν ἰάπτῃς.
>
> I knew all these things, and I brought him as many things as he commanded, bread and sweet wine. He took a great oath (ἕλετο μέγαν ὅρκον) from me not to tell you (μὴ πρὶν σοὶ ἐρέειν) until the twelfth day (πρὶν δωδεκάτην γε γενέσθαι), or until you yourself longed for him and heard that he was gone, so that you would not damage your beautiful skin by grieving.

The reiteration of Helen's oath in Eurykleia's confession links these two characters as female figures whose silence serves to protect their male counterparts. Furthermore, the temporal terms of these agreements resemble each other: both women swear to remain silent until a specified future time. Helen promises silence until Odysseus returns to his ships (πρίν γε τὸν ἐς νῆάς τε θοὰς κλισίας τ᾽ ἀφικέσθαι), while Eurykleia promises silence until the twelfth day (πρὶν δωδεκάτην γε γενέσθαι). This temporal delay of speech links the two characters in Book 4 as each woman confesses her oath to an internal audience only after the terms of silence have been fulfilled. The similarity between these two passages juxtaposes Helen and Eurykleia in their roles to assist Odysseus and Telemachos. Both women set in motion narrative change by enabling departures. By securing silence from the two women, Odysseus and Telemachos ensure the secrecy of their exit from Troy and Ithaka, even as the Trojans and suitors threaten their safety. The intratextual connection between these two women is further supported by the fact that oaths abound in Homeric epic, yet only Eurykleia and Helen swear an oath of silence to be retold later.[32] Helen and Eurykleia therefore become figures of complicity whose actions set in motion the success of heroic figures. Both women, moreover, conceal information from their putative allies with the oath of silence: Eurykleia's silence conceals information from Penelope and Helen conceals information from the Trojans. As a parallel, Eurykleia's assistance of Telemachos

[32] Eurykleia first swears an oath of silence (2.377) and then confesses it later (4.745-49). Yet Helen's original oath falls outside the boundaries of the epic narrative in the retelling of the Trojan war (4.253). Her confession is the only indication that she swore an oath of silence in the first place.

reminds the audience of Helen's helpful complicity with Odysseus rather than her subsequent sabotage attempt at the horse, recasting female duplicity toward a resolution of the conflicting portrayal of Helen. In both cases, deception works in support of the Achaeans, revealing once again how parallels between Helen and other female figures in Book 4 emphasize her allegiance rather than her treachery.

Eurykleia thus works toward a rehabilitation of Helen by repeating acts of deception to assist the heroes in the epic. Although Helen's alternating allegiance for and against the Achaeans during the banquet speeches leaves the Homeric audience with unresolved questions about her duplicity, Eurykleia repeats Helen's oath in terms unequivocally supportive of her Ithakan family. The subsequent passages in Book 4 offers teleological elements toward the resolution of the inconsistencies in Helen's and Menelaos' banquet speeches. To be sure, the alternating allegiance between the Achaeans and Trojans persists in the text, despite the retrospective changes which emerge later. Yet the repeated emphasis on Helen's support of the Achaeans rather than her treachery shows that the text is concerned with rehabilitating Helen by recontextualizing the unseemly deeds in her poetic history.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated Helen's alternating allegiance by showing textual parallels as a narrative operation to resolve her conflicting roles. In the *Odyssey*, Athena and Helen act as figures of consolation, imitation, and intervention, steering the narrative toward a desirable outcome for their heroic allies. Eidothea's reflection of Helen similarly shows how female acts of deception frequently work in favor of the Achaeans. Eurykleia's complicit silence enables Telemachos' journey and reiterates Helen's similar concealment of Odysseus during the war. As I have shown, the fraught communication between Helen and Menelaos in Book 4 serves as a

narrative complication to be resolved in subsequent female figures who reiterate Helen's allegiance to the Achaeans. I conclude that the split subjectivity of Helen in the two banquet speeches calls out for such a narrative resolution, suggesting that the conundrum of Helen's (in)fidelity in the epic creates tension in the androcentric order of epic discourse which subsequently strives toward a teleological endpoint. I read female subjectivity in the *Odyssey* in constant tension with the narrative operation as heroic male authority consistently struggles to incorporate women into its strategy. The conversation between Helen and Menelaos, therefore, not only characterizes Helen, but also contributes to the narrative structure as yet another anti-teleological example of gender relations. After examining heroic identity and female subjectivity in the last two chapters, I now turn to communication between Arete and Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11 to examine how gender relations at Scheria dictate the narrative limits in Hades.

4. Where Poets Fear to Tread: Narrative Limit and Gender Division in Homeric Language

In *Odyssey* 11, Odysseus narrates his underworld journey and recounts his meeting with the shades of women and men. He stops himself in the middle of the book to request conveyance home before being urged to continue the narrative again by Arete and Alkinoös, the queen and king of Scheria.[1] The diptych division of Odysseus' speech organizes the shades of the dead into roughly two groups: a catalogue of women preceding the interruption, and a catalogue of men immediately following. But what are the motivations for dividing the content of *Odyssey* 11 according to gender?

4.1 Homer, Pythagoras, and Lacan: Methodological Considerations

Scholars frequently account for this diptych division in Odysseus' speech by interpreting the catalogue of women leading up to the *intermezzo* as praise poetry for Arete. Lillian Doherty posits an implied historical audience of women based on Arete's participation in the banquet audience. For Doherty, Odysseus' series of encounters with women in the underworld works to compliment the Phaiakian queen.[2] This claim resonates with other scholars who read the first half of the *Nekyia* narrative as Odysseus' intentional provocation of Arete's desire to know more.[3] Elizabeth Minchin, for instance, suggests that the speaker's abrupt ending of the first catalogue sets in motion Arete's request for extended narration (11.336-41).[4] She interprets the hero's self-interruption as a successful attempt to command the interests of the audience.[5] Ruth Scodel

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[1] I refer to this interruption between the two halves of Book 11 as the *intermezzo*. Cf. Gazis (2018), Doherty (1995), and Heubeck et al. (1989), who also use the term.
[2] Doherty 1995, 66-8, 94, 99.
[3] Doherty (1995), Minchin (2007), and Scodel (1999) read Odysseus' storytelling as a way of manipulating the audience's desires, especially Arete's desire to hear more storytelling.
[4] Minchin 2007, 242-44.
[5] Minchin 2007, 242-44.

similarly highlights Odysseus' repeated evasiveness throughout his visit to Scheria (Books 6-12) as a way of teasing and thereby sustaining the expectations of Arete.[6] These views reveal the inclination to read Odysseus' gendered catalogues as a successful act of persuasion—a masterwork of narrative control and audience manipulation.[7]

Yet a few problems emerge from the views that flattery of the queen and command of the audience motivate Odysseus' organization of gender in the *Nekyia* narrative. First, the gifts and homecoming offered by Arete and Alkinoös in the *intermezzo* work as a potential misdirection. The queen and king have already pledged gifts and homecoming prior to Odysseus' speech.[8] As he takes the crucial step of revealing his identity to his hosts, the catalogue of women achieves no further advantage as an appeal to the queen for gifts or conveyance home. Second, the catalogues of women and men document the fact that Odysseus stayed in Hades even after he had fulfilled his mission to hear Teiresias' prophecy.[9] Going beyond the speech of Teiresias, the majority of the *Nekyia* consists of Odysseus acting as internal audience for the shades of the dead. Why should the hero represent himself as staying unnecessarily—in Hades as in Scheria—beyond his appointed departure? In both settings the hero frustrates his mission to return to Ithaka without a clear motive to justify his delay. The desire to know in the internal audiences at Hades and

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[6] Scodel 1999, 81-82. For example, in addition to Odysseus' self-interruption after his catalogue of women, he curiously avoids revealing his identity to the queen (7.237-42).

[7] Indeed, Odysseus' supposed mastery of language appears very frequently in scholarship on the Phaiakian episode. See for example Rose's claim (1969, 405) that "his own mastery of narration" earns Odysseus approval at Scheria. Doherty (1995, 68) likewise characterizes Odysseus as a "master of persuasive speech" based on the audience reaction in the *intermezzo*. Rabel too (2002, 79-81) reads Odysseus' self-interruption before the *intermezzo* as a demonstration of command over his audience. Minchin (2007, 243-44) similarly reads the hero's self-interruption as a sign of dominance. Gazis (2008, 165) sees the *intermezzo* and Odysseus' agreement to continue as evidence that the hero "is now in control of his audience".

[8] An extended gift-giving episode precedes Odysseus' long narrative of wanderings (8.385-445). Alkinoös arranges an assembly to devise the hero's homecoming (7.186-206) and subsequently commands the assembly to prepare it (8.26-45). Strikingly, Alkinoös commissions the homecoming after Odysseus requests it from Arete in supplication (7.146-52).

[9] Kirke first mentions the journey as a mission to hear the prophecy of Teiresias (10.490-95, cf. 562-65). Odysseus also mentions this as his mission in conversation with the shades of Antikleia and Achilles (11.164-65, 479).

Scheria pushes the narrative beyond its original framework only to impede the teleological progress of the narrative. Third, the supposed flattery of Arete in the catalogue of women includes several examples of women who endanger or fatally betray their male counterparts.[10] The final entry, for instance, stands out conspicuously as Eriphyle exchanges her husband's life for gold.[11] With this in mind, Arete's immediate request for Odysseus to continue appears as a surprising rather than fitting response to hearing of Eriphyle. To be precise, the catalogue does not subtly blame women—rather, what begins as praise poetry diverges into an entirely different narrative program.[12]

All three of these problems concern the deviation of storytelling from its initial aims. The transgression of narrative boundaries puts Odysseus' homecoming at risk for the sake of increased gifts and fame at Scheria. Beginning with these considerations, I draw attention to Odysseus' desire to know more in the underworld and his audience's desire to know more at Scheria as the impetus for extending the speeches beyond their limitations.[13] The audience's desire repeatedly pushes the storyteller to exceed his initial endpoint. I draw attention to these narrative features to reconsider the frequent scholarly characterization of Odysseus' speech as a masterwork of persuasion.[14] Rather than viewing the hero in total command of his speech and his audience, I draw on the Lacanian notion that speaking subjects are constituted by language rather

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[10] Doherty notes that Eriphyle contradicts the catalogue as praise poetry, since she is characterized as "hateful" (στυγερὴν) and charged with a crime (1995, 99). Beyond Eriphyle's betrayal, several entries in the catalogue point to women who vex men or gods. Epikaste's suicide brings furies to her son (11.280), Melampous must undergo a year of bondage for courting Pero (292-93), and Iphimedeia's sons nearly destroy Olympos (315) before Zeus' intervention.
[11] Sammons (2010, 90-91) observes that Eriphyle alone receives "a starkly negative epithet, and her entry ends the performance on a dark note." He suggests Eriphyle's betrayal of her husband as an "unsettling paradigm" in contrast to Odysseus' relationship with Penelope. Doherty also notes (also recorded in previous footnote) a divergence from praise for women in Eriphyle's characterization (1995, 99).
[12] Cf. Gazis (2018, 155-56), who interprets omissions in the catalogue as the women eliding "uncomfortable moments" in their past. Doherty (1995, 97-99) also notes the missing elements as emphasis—through absence—of misogynistic myths. For example, she interprets the absence of Klytaimnestra and Helen from the passage about Leda's children (298-304) as conspicuously missing elements of female treachery.
[13] During the *intermezzo* (11.333-77), both Arete and Alkinoös express the desire for extended narration.
[14] See n7 on the previous page.

than the other way around.[15] This reversal has consequences for the interpretation of communication in the *Odyssey*. Noting the catalogues of women and men as a function of the alternating desires of Arete and Alkinoös in the internal audience, I argue that the *Nekyia* narrative exposes Odysseus as subject to—rather than agent of—his audience's desires. In turn, I argue that his speech in its diptych division of gendered catalogues is designed according to the codes of the guest-host relationship instead of the speaker's own persuasive mastery. In response to the requests of his audience, Odysseus appeases his hosts by exchanging this speech for gifts and homecoming. This point becomes most evident in *Odyssey* 11 when the audience and speaker engage in a negotiation of two specific boundaries of propriety in the guest-host relationship: the right time for the narrative to end and the proper communicative divisions between women and men. I highlight these boundaries to show how the epic establishes appropriate codes of communication to model both narrative limit and gender division. I offer with this approach a new account of the gendered catalogues in the *Nekyia* in their relationship to the internal audience's desire to hear more. In my view, Odysseus' interaction with Arete and Alkinoös reveals an intersubjective search for the proper boundaries which serve to sustain guest-host relations. In support of these claims, I highlight moments of injury and death in Odysseus' retelling as examples of impropriety, revealing the consequences of transgressing narrative limits and boundaries between women and men.

Here it serves my argument to provide clarifying examples of what I refer to as the narrative limit. In each gendered catalogue of *Odyssey* 11, the repeating refusal to tell all

[15] Lacan 2006, 708-709. "The effect of language is to introduce the cause into the subject. Through this effect, he is not the cause of himself; he bears within himself the worm of the cause that splits him. For his cause is the signifier, without which there would be no subject in the real."

indicates the self-imposed limits of Odysseus' speech.[16] First, in the final verses of the catalogue of women, the provocation of Arete's desire hinges on Odysseus' abrupt ending.[17] He admits that he "could not tell nor name all" (πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, 11.328) of the shades of women in Hades. This phrase marks the narrative limit by effectively ending Odysseus' first underworld catalogue. Yet at the beginning of this digression, Odysseus teases a more complete narrative by mentioning three times in quick succession the shades of women as a whole. He saw "all who were wives and daughters of heroes" (ὅσσαι ἀριστήων ἄλοχοι ἔσαν ἠδὲ θύγατρες, 11.227), he "did not let them all drink the blood together" (οὐκ εἴων πίνειν ἅμα πάσας αἷμα, 232), and he "questioned them all" (ἐρέεινον ἁπάσας, 234). After this contrast between the promised whole and the subsequent partial account, Arete's immediate request for continuation arises as a response to the speaker's failure to make good on his promise of a complete narrative. This pattern supports my reading that the speaker's explicit gesture toward the narrative limit (πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) effectively triggers the desire in the audience for extended narrative. This organization of passages exposes the tension between the speaker's and the audience's desires in Book 11—between the hero's aim to finish and return home as a heroic male authority in the Ithakan *oikos* and the audience's aim to extend his visit indefinitely.[18] The struggle between these two desires supports my view that Odysseus' speech negotiates the guest-host relationship by seeking an appropriate boundary.

The narrative limit appears once again after the *intermezzo*. Repeating the phrase, Odysseus claims that he "could not tell nor name all" (πάντας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ'

[16] Below I argue that the inability to tell all conceals an underlying refusal in the convergence of two meanings: "I could not tell" and "I shall not tell" (μυθήσομαι).
[17] Cf. Minchin 2007, 242-44.
[18] Below I further discuss the difference between Arete's boundless request for more (11.338-41) and Alkinoos' request which sets a limit (350-52).

ὀνομήνω, 11.517) of Neoptolemos' victims in the Trojan war. The context of this passage once again reveals a link between the narrative limit and the audience's desire. Here, the shade of Achilles first requests news of his living father and son (11.492-503). Odysseus responds with a promise to tell the whole truth (πᾶσαν ἀληθείην μυθήσομαι, 507) about Neoptolemos' heroism, but quickly encounters a limit to this promise in the innumerable catalogue of Trojan casualties (πάντας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, 517).[19] As a feature of praise poetry, Odysseus' gesture beyond the narrative limit supports the heroic depiction of Neoptolemos: he increases the *kleos* of Neoptolemos by showing that his deeds are beyond count and thus beyond words. Yet Odysseus' refusal to tell all even more importantly sustains Achilles' desire to hear news of his living relatives. Not only does Odysseus fail to fulfill Achilles' request for news of his father (11.505), but his speech about Achilles' son promises the whole story (507) and then fails to achieve it (517).[20] Odysseus' repeated encounter with the narrative limit before and after the *intermezzo* connects Arete's and Achilles' desire to know more with Odysseus' repeatedly incomplete accounts. Rather than manipulating his audience, the speaker's refusal to tell all gestures toward the boundary between accountable and unaccountable narrative material in the poetry of praise for women and heroes in Hades. This repetition suggests that the audience's desire and the speaker's limitations work together to establish boundaries of communication. But why does Odysseus repeatedly encounter this limit in the two gendered catalogues in Book 11? Why does the *Nekyia* repeatedly emphasize a concern with the narrative limit on both sides of this diptych division between women and heroes? The answer to these questions lies in the speaker's search for a narrative *telos*: both of these boundaries point forward to Odysseus' desire to end his

[19] Cf. Gazis 2018, 193.
[20] Achilles' desire in this scene is complex. Gazis (2018, 193) rightly notes that Achilles departs rejoicing (11.539-40), which indicates satisfaction in the internal audience. Yet Odysseus' failure to respond with most of the material from Achilles' request allows for the reading that Achilles' satisfaction is incomplete at best.

nostos at Ithaka (narrative limit) and establish order between women and men in his own *oikos* (gender divisions).[21]

I now point to specific examples of culturally constructed binaries in ancient Greek thought to show how gender divisions and narrative limit are both implicated in the act of storytelling. In what follows, I show how the male/female binary comes to represent the difference between concepts of boundness and unboundedness in ancient Greek literature. This frequent association supports my view that gender and narrative limit in Homeric epic coincide at key moments to reflect concerns with the boundaries of propriety. To begin, the Pythagorean Table consists of a series of oppositions conceived as the first principles (ἀρχαί) of the physical universe.[22] The Table organizes mathematical binaries such as limit/limitless, odd/even, and unity/plurality in the same series as cultural notions such as good/evil and male/female.[23] In her illuminating discussion of the Pythagorean Table, Genevieve Lloyd explores the relationship between gender and such mathematical binaries. She shows how the concepts of limit *qua* male and limitless *qua* female resonate throughout Greek philosophy and poetry.[24] Aristotle, for instance, claims that the female (τὸ θῆλυ) is deformed (πεπηρωμένον) in relation to the male, associating woman with lack of form, and man with form itself.[25] Plato similarly discusses a system of reincarnation in which the failed soul (σφαλεὶς) returns to earth in the natural form of a woman (γυναικὸς φύσιν).[26] Ancient Greek authors sustain this notion of binary opposition by

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[21] I treat gender ideology at Ithaka, especially around the *mnesterophonia*, more extensively in Chapter 5.
[22] Arist. *Met.* 986a22-26.
[23] The Pythagorean Table's ten first principles (τὰς ἀρχὰς δέκα) according to Aristotle's summary are as follows: limit/unlimited (πέρας/ἄπειρον), odd/even (περιττὸν/ἄρτιον), one/many (ἓν/πλῆθος), right/left (δεξιὸν/ἀριστερόν), male/female (ἄρρεν/θῆλυ), resting/moving (ἠρεμοῦν/κινούμενον), straight/curved (εὐθὺ/καμπύλον), light/darkness (φῶς/σκότος), good/bad (ἀγαθὸν/κακόν), and square/oblong (τετράγωνον/ἑτερόμηκες).
[24] Lloyd 1993, 3. Cf. Lovibond (1994, 92-94), who also notes the link between gender and limit in the Pythagorean Table and other Greek authors. Lovibond focuses especially on the *Bildung* (i.e. formation) of a Greek man through education.
[25] Arist. *GA* 737a
[26] Plat. *Tim.* 42b. Cf. 90e-91a.

persistently characterizing woman as incomplete, undefined, or unbound, and man as complete, limited, or bound. It is reasonable to suggest that the pattern of gender divisions in Homeric epic reflects this common association between gender and limit in ancient Greek sources. I propose that this ideological link calls for an investigation of narrative limit and gender division in Homeric epic. The binaries in the Table exemplify an impulse in ancient Greek thought to ground the concepts of male and female in highly formalized mathematical principles. Yet, this list of binaries does not fully illuminate the ideological connection between limit and gender.

Beyond ancient Greek philosophy and poetry, it is worthwhile to draw on the Lacanian notion of sexual difference to expose these mathematical principles as instruments toward the authorization of a gender binary.[27] Lacan's view of women and men challenges the gender binary traditional to many patriarchal societies by observing the authoritative function of language, which is frequently called the "phallic function" or "the law of the signifier" in Lacan.[28] In this chapter, when I refer to "the law of the signifier," I mean the authoritative gesture of language which, for example, establishes gender divisions by defining women and men according to binary principles. As a linguistic underpinning to the structures of society, the law of the signifier establishes the order of laws, institutions, customs, and language which Lacan refers to more holistically as "the Symbolic Order."[29] The Symbolic Order embodies the set of rules and codes

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[27] It is important not to overlook the difference between definitions of sex and gender. Lacan's terminology predates the shift in scholarship on gender and sexuality in which gender takes on a meaning quite distinct from sex. Despite the use of "sex" within the term "sexual difference," Lacan's analysis of male and female subjectivity is surprisingly compatible with many contemporary views of gender insofar as women and men are defined as subject positions in language rather than being determined biologically or anatomically. In Homeric epic, the male/female binary both persists and encounters contradictions, calling for a Lacanian reading to clarify how gender operates in the text.

[28] See Lacan 1988, 78-89. For a summary of sexual difference in Lacan, see Fink 2002, 21-46. I choose the phrase "the law of the signifier" in this chapter due to the common confusion between the phallus and the penis which plagues discussions of "the phallic function". Lacan's conception of the phallus refers to an authoritative function in language to institute a prohibition or boundary, explicitly disentangling it with the notion of the penis. This is one of his major contributions beyond the Freudian perspective of penis *qua* phallus.

[29] On the Symbolic Order see Lacan 1991, 220-233. On the Symbolic Order as law and foundation of intersubjective relations see Lacan 1991, 197. See also Evans 1996, 101-102.

which make inter-subjective communication possible. More specifically to the gender binary, the law of the signifier dictates divisions between women and men in any given society by organizing subject positions around the society's linguistic codes of symbolization. Exposing this authoritative gesture in the Symbolic Order, Lacan posits that a woman is not a biologically or anatomically determined entity. Rather, she is a subject position understood according to the pre-established codes of language. A man, likewise, is positioned according to the codes which underwrite a society's cultural customs and institutional laws. By interpreting gender in terms of language, the Lacanian approach unveils the authoritative function governing the gender binary and exposes its logical failures.[30] One such authoritative function is to ground concepts of male and female in concepts such as "limit." In the Pythagorean Table's association between gender and limit, the unboundedness of woman and the boundness of man pose several inconsistencies. For example, how can woman be "defined" as something indefinite? Does man's supposed "boundedness" also give him authoritative claim to the boundary between himself and woman? Does the supposed "boundlessness" of woman complicate her separation from the domain of man? By interpreting women and men in Homeric conversation as positions in language, I follow Lacan in treating the law of the signifier as implicated in the construction of boundaries of propriety such as narrative limit and gender divisions.[31] In the passages I examine here, speakers and internal audiences negotiate the proper limits of communication across gender divisions. I therefore argue that the narrative limit and gender divisions in Homeric epic coincide in the

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[30] Indeed, categories of women and men are problematized by Greek mythological identities which transgress their boundaries. Teiresias, albeit in non-Homeric sources, problematizes gender divisions by experiencing life as both woman and man. See Loraux (1995, 11-12), who interprets the myth of Teiresias as an exchange of sight for knowledge by transgressing gender boundaries.
[31] On the authoritative function of the law of the signifier, see Lacan 2006, 688. See also Evans 1996, 101-102.

Odyssey to reveal concerns with the appropriate codes of communication in the act of storytelling.

Within this framework, I first examine the Homeric speaker's refusal to tell all (Section 4.2) to illustrate a persistent relationship between narrative limit and gender divisions. These examples lead to an analysis of the limits of accountable poetic knowledge in the domains of male and female speakers (Section 4.3). Figures such as Helen, the Muses, and the Sirens occupy a domain of poetic knowledge which exceeds the limits of narrative, meanwhile their male counterparts consistently recognize the danger in transgressing this limit. I then focus on *Odyssey* 11 (Section 4.4) to show how Odysseus' gendered catalogues are organized according to Arete's and Alkinoös' alternating desires and the codes of the guest-host relationship.

4.2 Respecting the Narrative Limit: Inability to Tell All, or Refusal?

The intersection of limit and gender is especially evident in the repeated phrase mentioned above in which Odysseus claims twice that he "could not tell nor name" (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) all of the women and men in his gendered catalogues. This phrase appears a total of four times in Homeric epic (*Il.* 2.488, *Od.* 4.240, 11.328, 517) and never elsewhere aside from Homeric parody and quotation.[32] Crucially, every example of this phrase links narrative limit to gender division by emphasizing the threat of injury or death to those who would cross either boundary. To be clear, the danger of crossing "gender divisions" in these examples amounts to a fear of too freely exchanging information between women and men. Meanwhile, the danger of crossing the "narrative limit" amounts to extending poetic language beyond the proper endpoint. This two-fold fear of transgression reveals the speaker's concern

[32] See, for example, Matron (Fr. 2 and 536) and Eudokia (1.379, 530, 553, 817; 2.312, 580).

with appropriate boundaries in Homeric communication. In the phrase, "I could not tell nor name all," the speaker/poet seeks the limit of narrative so as not to transgress it. This phrase works to sustain the inter-subjective relationships between speakers and audiences. In the examples that follow, I note how the speaker recognizes a beyond of language and refuses to proceed. In turn, the audience desires to know more.

In *Iliad* 2 the poet claims that he "could not tell nor name" (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) the multitude of Achaeans without the help of the Muses (*Il.* 2.488). Here, the Muse/poet relationship models communication between Homeric women and men elsewhere. The danger of transgressing this narrative limit reappears soon after in *Iliad* 2, as the bard Thamyris challenges the Muses to a song contest and sustains injuries as a result (2.594-600). My analysis below takes Thamyris and the *Iliad* poet as contrasting examples of observing and transgressing a narrative limit enforced by the Muses. This violence between female and male characters repeats elsewhere. In the *Odyssey* 4 example of this verse, Helen likewise "could not tell nor name" (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) all of Odysseus' heroic exploits (4.240) as she addresses a male-dominated (e.g. Menelaos, Telemachos, Peisistratos) banquet audience. Within Helen's narrative, violence erupts as she conceals Odysseus' identity and allows him to slaughter a group of Trojans (4.257). Thus, the exchange of information between women and men betrays the Trojans to their deaths, repeating this pattern of violent consequences after saying too much. In the final two examples of this repeated phrase, as noted above (*Od.* 11.328, 517), Odysseus "could not tell nor name all" (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) of the women in Hades or the men Neoptolemos killed. Alongside both of these phrases, violence between women and men arises as Odysseus recalls 1) Eriphyle fatally betraying Amphiaraos (327), and 2) Astyoche similarly betraying Eurypylos (521) at the very moment when this gesture at the

narrative limit (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) appears in the poem.[33] With this summary, I highlight the repetition of the phrase, "I could not tell nor name [all]," as a poetic reference to narrative limit which always coincides with information exchange across gender divisions, and injury or death as a consequence.

In these passages, the dangers of crossing the narrative limit reiterate textual anxieties about going too far in communication between women and men. The limit always appears at a point of division between unaccountable and accountable narrative material which notably corresponds to female and male domains of knowledge in these passages. My observation of the significance of gender to this repeating verse supplements previous scholarship on the speaker's supposed inability to tell all. For instance, Irene de Jong and Andrew Ford describe this repeated phrase (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) as a *recusatio* of untold catalogues.[34] Ford's thought-provoking analysis treats this phrase as a crisis of representation between the poet's selectivity and the greater poetic tradition.[35] For Ford, expediency forces the poet to make concessions in composing his narrative. The poet thus indicates the limit as a way of referring to, instead of fully enumerating, an impossible quantity of names, in the catalogue of ships for example.[36] Without mentioning the importance of gender to this repeated phrase, however, Ford's approach takes the supposed inability to tell all as a sincere admission about the limits of the bard's poetic skill.[37] Yet the danger of information exchange between genders in each example

[33] See Dindorf 1855. The scholia to this passage mention the myth of Astyoche receiving a golden necklace in return for enlisting her son in the Trojan war. An alternative myth appears in the scholia in which Eurypylos' unnamed wife betrays him.
[34] Jong (2001, 102) and Ford (1992, 73).
[35] Ford 1992, 76.
[36] Ford 1992, 73-82. Cf. Race (1982, 33-34), who links the phrase to the "rhetorical posture of having much to say, but needing to limit it." Curtius (1953, 159-62) similarly links this to rhetorical strategies in the later panegyric tradition, referring to it as the "inexpressibility topos".
[37] Sammons (2010, 180-81) offers an approach to this verse which resonates with my own reading, since he takes the *Iliad* 2 example as a posture of piety toward the Muses instead of a sincere limitation.

suggests that this repeated "inability" to tell all conceals a deeper concern with the consequences of going too far. As confrontations between female and male figures repeatedly result in betrayals, injuries, and fatalities, these moments of communication remind the speaker and audience to observe proper boundaries of communication. This "refusal" to tell all—as I read it—illustrates the speaker's search for the "law of the signifier," i.e. the authoritative boundary which establishes proper inter-subjective relations. The respect of the narrative limit, therefore, combines the supposed inability to tell all with a subtle refusal, a gesture which struggles to maintain the poem's ideological boundaries between immortal/mortal, man/woman, and accountable/unaccountable. To clarify this pattern, I point once more to an example which contrasts with the catalogue poet's refusal to tell all (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, *Il.* 2.488). Soon after this initial refusal, Thamyris' challenge to the Muses shows the consequences of impropriety when a poet exceeds this narrative limit (*Il.* 2.594-600).

> ...καὶ Δώριον, ἔνθά τε Μοῦσαι
> ἀντόμεναι Θάμυριν τὸν Θρήϊκα παῦσαν ἀοιδῆς
> Οἰχαλίηθεν ἰόντα παρ' Εὐρύτου Οἰχαλιῆος·
> στεῦτο γὰρ εὐχόμενος νικησέμεν εἴ περ ἂν αὐταὶ
> Μοῦσαι ἀείδοιεν κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο·
> αἳ δὲ χολωσάμεναι πηρὸν θέσαν, αὐτὰρ ἀοιδὴν
> θεσπεσίην ἀφέλοντο καὶ ἐκλέλαθον κιθαριστύν·
>
> And Dorion, where the Muses, after encountering Thamyris the Thracian, made him stop his song, as he was going from Oichalia, [departing] from the side of the Oichalian, Eurytos. For he boasted, declaring that he would overcome them (εὐχόμενος νικησέμεν) if ever the very Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus, should sing. But they grew angry and maimed him (πηρὸν θέσαν), and then deprived him of his divine song and made him forget his lyre-playing (ἐκλέλαθον κιθαριστύν).

In contrast with the catalogue poet, the relationship between Thamyris and the Muses within the catalogue provides an illuminating counter-example of the consequences of impropriety in the Muse/poet relationship. While the catalogue poet respects the narrative limit by admitting he could not tell all (οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, *Il.* 2.488), Thamyris contrarily claims that he will overcome the Muses (εὐχόμενος νικησέμεν). Thamyris is maimed (πηρὸν θέσαν) and

made to forget his song (ἐκλέλαθον κιθαριστύν) due to his audacious boast. As alternating examples of propriety and impropriety, the distinction between the catalogue poet and Thamyris calls for a re-examination of the supposed inability to tell all. The corresponding passages show that the poet imposes rather than encounters a limit. Instead of taking this inability to tell all at face value, these two examples invite the interpretation that the poet in fact recognizes danger and exercises agency in refusing to cross the narrative limit.[38] Contrast Thamyris' transgression with the poet's respect of the Muses (*Il.* 2.484-92).

> Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι·
> ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα,
> ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν·
> οἵ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν·
> πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,
> οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,
> φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη,
> εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
> θυγατέρες μνησαίαθ' ὅσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον·
>
> Tell me, now, O Muses living in Olympian houses—for you are goddesses, and you are present and know all things (ἴστέ τε πάντα), but we only hear about *kleos* (κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν) and we know not at all—who the leaders and chiefs of the Danaans were. I could not tell nor name the multitude, not even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths, and my voice were unbroken and my heart within me were bronze, unless the Olympian Muses should tell me how many there were at Ilion.

The catalogue poet establishes the Muses as the source of his song by representing them as figures of total knowledge (ἴστέ τε πάντα), and himself as the second-hand recipient (κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν). He recognizes a gap between the unaccountable knowledge of female divinities and his own narrative limits. The two passages above reveal a contrast between two poets, not only in their inability to compete with the Muses but in their decision to do so. Ford's analysis therefore

[38] Sammons (2010, 180-81) also notes how Thamyris' episode "recalls the poet's earlier invocation" of the Muses. Supporting my exploration of refusal rather than inability to tell all, Sammons similarly reads the catalogue poet as "an autonomous and responsible agent" in the search for a narrative limit (2010, 136-39).

leaves room for an expanded reading of the poet's veiled refusal to challenge the Muses beyond the actual limits of his ability.

To further clarify this paradox of refusal and inability in the repeated phrase "I could not tell nor name [all]" ([πληθὺν/πάσας/πάντας] δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω), I draw attention to the discrepancy of moods between the phrase's two verbs: μυθήσομαι and ὀνομήνω. The first verb form, strictly speaking, is a future indicative (μυθήσομαι), meaning "I *will* not tell". The second verb is an aorist subjunctive (ὀνομήνω), meaning "I *could* not name". These two different moods represent inability ("could not") and refusal ("will not") simultaneously. A brief look into the Homeric forms of these verbs shows how the phrase ambiguously suggests the speaker's refusal in addition to his inability, strengthening the interpretation that the poet stops himself from challenging the Muses by recognizing a boundary of propriety. Pointing to this phrase, Chantraine explains that the use of κε and ἄν in combination with the Homeric future indicative is characteristic of Homeric syntax.[39] In our received text, vowel shortening (to μυθήσομαι from μυθήσωμαι) comes to erase the distinction between the aorist subjunctive and future indicative, which means that the verb μυθήσομαι in the text alternately represents either future indicative or aorist subjunctive forms. This ambiguity allows both readings at once: "I will not tell" and "I could not tell." Homerists since Chantraine most often resolve the discrepancy of multiple moods by choosing to read μυθήσομαι and ὀνομήνω together as subjunctives, and by translating the phrase as "I could not tell nor name all."[40] Yet the future indicative form haunts the text with a refusal to tell all as danger repeatedly warns the speaker not to say too much.[41]

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[39] Chantraine 1953, 225.
[40] See for instance Heubeck (1988, 208) and Kirk (1985, 167).
[41] In support of my reading, Chantraine (1953, 225) further speculates: *il est possible que de vieilles formes de subjonctif à voyelle brève aient été considérées secondairement comme des futurs.* "It is possible that old forms of the subjunctive with a short vowel were considered secondarily as future tenses."

With this evidence, I suggest more precisely that a confluence of meanings including refusal and inability accompanies the expression “οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ’ ὀνομήνω.” Such a multiplicity enriches the text by emphasizing the speaker’s concern with transgressing the narrative limit in conjunction with his inability to do so.

4.3 Helen, the Muses, and the Sirens: Gender and the Limits of the Accountable

To elaborate further on the frequent coincidence of gender and narrative limit in Homeric epic, I now turn to passages which illuminate this crucial difference between accountable and unaccountable narrative material. I illustrate this pattern to show how the limit/limitless and male/female binaries of the Pythagorean Table are corroborated in Homeric language in the form of boundaries of knowledge between women and men on either side of the narrative limit. For example, in the *Teichoskopeia* of *Iliad* 3, Helen’s all-knowing characterization positions her as a source of information crucial to internal male audiences. Helen stands on the wall of Ilion and names the Achaean host to satisfy Priam’s curiosity. Note the resonance here with the opening of the catalogue of ships (*Il.* 2.484-93), as Helen comes to reflect the all-knowing Muses, while Priam reflects the role of the male, second-hand recipient. In contrast to the preceding catalogue in *Iliad* 2, Helen presents her own catalogue of the Achaean host and exceeds the poet’s claim to limited knowledge (*Il.* 3.234-35).

> νῦν δ’ ἄλλους μὲν πάντας ὁρῶ ἑλίκωπας Ἀχαιούς,
> οὕς κεν ἐῢ γνοίην καί τ’ οὔνομα μυθησαίμην·
>
> Now I see all the other quick-glancing Achaeans, whose names I know well and could tell you.

This juxtaposition of the catalogue poet and Helen reinforces my reading of accountable and unaccountable poetic knowledge in communication between women and men. Helen claims to know all the names of the men she observes from the wall (πάντας...οὕς κεν ἐῢ γνοίην), unlike the

catalogue poet who refuses to cross the narrative limit. But why does she boast knowledge of every soldier in her purview? How does her knowledge correspond to the limits of the poetic content? A comparison between the poet and character illustrates this crucial difference as Helen's speech comes to reflect the catalogue poet in *Iliad* 2. Boasting the ability to tell all (ἄλλους μὲν πάντας...οὔνομα μυθησαίμην, 3.234-35), she teases a potentially complete narrative using the same terms as the poet who could not tell or name the multitude (πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, 2.488). Drawing the two into direct contrast, Helen and the catalogue poet both name the Achaean contingent as the object of the verb μυθέομαι. The etymological relationship between Helen's use of "οὔνομα" and the poet's "ὀνομήνω" further underscores the textual link and contrast between Helen's ability and the poet's supposed inability to account for every name. As a final connecting feature, both passages represent the Achaean host in terms of a multitude (πάντας/πληθὺν) which Helen claims to know and the catalogue poet refuses to attempt. The difference between these two claims to poetic knowledge in the *Iliad* exemplifies the repeated intersection of gender and narrative limit. Here, the division of accountable and unaccountable narrative content corresponds to gender divisions: Helen claims knowledge beyond the poetic account, while the catalogue poet admits to a boundary between himself and the all-knowing Muses. I point to these two moments of communication between Muse and poet, and between Helen and Priam as patterns of gender division at the limits of narration. Further evidence for this reading appears in the verses which follow Helen's claim to know all. After she boasts knowledge of all the present soldiers, she exhibits knowledge beyond the preceding song of the catalogue poet by lamenting the absence of her brothers. With this extension of the names of heroes beyond the catalogue, Helen exceeds the initial narrative limit established in the previous book (*Il.* 3.236-37).

> Δοιὼ δ’ οὐ δύναμαι ἰδέειν κοσμήτορε λαῶν
> Κάστορά θ’ ἱππόδαμον καὶ πὺξ ἀγαθὸν Πολυδεύκεα
> αὐτοκασιγνήτω...
>
> But I cannot see two marshals of the people, my brothers, Kastor tamer of horses and Polydeukes noble in the boxing match.

In this passage, Helen reflects the all-knowing Muses by extending the catalogue of ships with reference to absent Achaeans. With these two gestures beyond the limit, she upstages the virtuosic catalogue poet by first claiming to know every Achaean present in the host (3.234-35), and then naming those who are surprisingly absent from the catalogue of ships (3.236-37). The competing forces between the internal audience’s desire to know and the search for a narrative limit appear in this connection between Helen’s desire to see her brothers and the limits of the preceding catalogue. Moreover, this pattern illustrates the relationship between narrative limit and gender insofar as female figures such as Helen and the Muses possess unaccountable knowledge which goes beyond the narrative limit, while their male counterparts only receive their knowledge second-hand. In these examples, the boundlessness of female knowledge and the boundedness of male knowledge reflect the Pythagorean binaries of gender and limit, suggesting a similar ideological link in Homeric epic between gender divisions and narrative content.

Helen’s claim to unaccountable poetic knowledge persists in the *Odyssey* as well. In a strikingly similar passage to the *Teichoskopeia* in *Iliad* 3, Helen stands outside the Trojan horse in *Odyssey* 4 and calls all the names of the heroes within. She reiterates her role as an all-knowing female figure in her ability to render a complete account. Not even the *Odyssey* poet—who narrates the Trojan horse ambush three times in the epic—matches Helen’s professed ability to

render a full account of the heroes' names.[42] In the *Odyssey* 4 passage (4.278-79), Menelaos recalls:

> ἐκ δ' ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους,
> πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν·
>
> You called out the best of the Danaans by name, making your voice like the wives of all the Argives.

As she circles the horse within the gates of Ilion, Helen tempts the Achaeans to exit the horse and give up their position. By taking on the individual voices of each hero's wife (πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν), Helen once again exhibits the ability to render a complete account of the Achaean soldiers' names, which teases unaccountable poetic knowledge by exceeding the partial accounts of the heroes in the *Odyssey*. The heroes are not all named here, yet Menelaos represents Helen as one who both names everyone and imitates their wives' voices. Helen's ability to tell all refers to—but does not enumerate—an untold catalogue of the Achaean heroes in the horse, again giving her claim to unaccountable narrative content beyond the framework of both epics.

Understandably troubled by Helen's imitation of the Argive wives are the scholia to *Od.* 4.279.[43] Her familiarity with the voice of every wife suggests knowledge beyond the limitations of geographical separation between Greek cities. Realistically speaking, Helen could not have visited every wife and learned to imitate their voices to the point of convincing the heroes that their wives were at Troy. One scholion puzzles over this textual problem by asking, "How did she know all (the wives) so that she might also imitate their voices?" (πόθεν γὰρ ὅλας ᾔδει, ἵνα καὶ τὰς φωνάς αὐτῶν μιμήσηται;)[44] Another scholion attempts to solve the problem by suggesting

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[42] Retellings of the Trojan horse ambush occur at *Od.* 4.271-89 (Menelaos' account), 8.500-20 (Demodokos' account), and 11.523-32 (Odysseus' account).
[43] Dindorf 1855.
[44] Dindorf 1855.

that Helen "imitates the Greek language" (μιμουμένη τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν) rather than each individual woman's voice.[45] Yet that is not what the text says or implies: the poem explicitly states (πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ'). In Helen's comprehensive vocal imitation, the poet seizes on another opportunity to show Helen's ability to exceed his own. The untold names and voices which Helen is said to have spoken generate desire in the audience by highlighting the gap between the account and what lies beyond the narrative limit. In this retelling by Menelaos, the desire to know more emerges in the heroes' attempt to respond to their absent wives (4.280-89), an act which legitimizes Helen's vocal imitation as an example of persuasive *mimesis*. Furthermore, the fact that Odysseus must restrain or else prohibit the heroes from responding (284-87) highlights the knowledge of the male internal audience as limited in relation to Helen's own. This passage sharpens the distinction between female and male figures in Homeric epic as Menelaos characterizes Helen as an all-knowing, Muse-like figure, in contrast to the male internal audience who is susceptible to deception.[46] Helen's poetic knowledge, therefore, exceeds both poet and heroes: her imitation deceives all but one hero in the horse, while her full catalogue of names upstages the *Odyssey* poet's three partial accounts of the Trojan horse.[47] In both Homeric epics, Helen is therefore repeatedly cast as a female figure whose knowledge aligns her with the Muses insofar as she exceeds male internal audiences and the poet himself as one who knows and can enumerate all.

The selection of passages above reveals a pattern of communication organized around two types of poetic knowledge: a feminine knowledge of the unaccountable, and a masculine

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[45] Dindorf 1855.

[46] Cf. Bergren (1983), who—in conjunction with the Muses—discusses female duplicity in Greek poetry more broadly.

[47] Demodokos' second-hand account (8.500-20) contrasts with the first-hand accounts of Menelaos (4.271-89) and Odysseus (11.523-32). Just before Demodokos' rendition, Odysseus compliments the singer by saying that he sings as one who was either present "ὥς τέ που ἢ αὐτὸς παρεὼν" or heard his song from another "ἢ ἄλλου ἀκούσας" (8.491). Yet my argument emphasizes Helen as all-knowing beyond all three of these vivid accounts.

knowledge of accountable narrative material. In a brief final example of this pattern, the Sirens in *Odyssey* 12 claim to know all things as they entice Odysseus on the mast. The Sirens boast unlimited knowledge in two categories: first, they claim to know 1) "all the things the Argives and Trojans suffered" during the war, and 2) even more comprehensively, "all the things which happen on earth" (12.189-91). As scholars have noted, the Sirens' ability to render a complete narrative (ἴδμεν γάρ τοι πάνθ') of the Trojan war gestures beyond the epic framework as Odysseus listens from the mast,[48] further emphasizing the narrative limit as a division between female and male figures in Homeric epic. Since the promised song of the Sirens is never incorporated into the *Odyssey*, their claim to knowledge reflects the Muses and Helen by referring to instead of enumerating the contents of their narrative. The complete story is shown to exceed the boundaries of men's lives as the bones littering the Sirens' beach (ὀστεόφιν…ἀνδρῶν πυθομένων, 12.45-46) signify the danger of going beyond the limit. In these textual patterns, communication across gender divisions persistently reflects the ideological link between gender and narrative limit in the Pythagorean Table.

4.4 Odyssey 11: Gender, Betrayal, and the Boundaries of Propriety

To support my view that gender divisions and narrative limit coincide to represent boundaries of propriety in Homeric communication, I return to *Odyssey* 11 to focus on moments of betrayal and death between women and men at the narrative limit. Each time Odysseus refuses to tell all ([πάσας/πάντας] οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω), he includes references to similar myths of betrayal. These moments in the text demonstrate a concern with the dangers of

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[48] Pucci (1987, 212) observes in this passage an allusion to the rivalry between Homeric epic and the Sirens' version of the same events. Describing their speech as an unfulfilled promise, Pucci interprets the Sirens' song as the "negative, absent song" that allows the *Odyssey* to become its positive replacement. Schur (2014) also persuasively argues that this passage works as an illusion of the song's presence in the text, creating the false perception among audiences that the Sirens' song does in fact appear in the *Odyssey*.

communicating across gender divisions. A side-by-side comparison of both passages reveals a set of mythological reflections. First, Odysseus ends his catalogue of women with Eriphyle exchanging her husband's life for gold (11.326-29).[49]

> Μαῖράν τε κλυμένην τε ἴδον στυγερήν τ' Ἐριφύλην,
> ἣ χρυσὸν φίλου ἀνδρὸς ἐδέξατο τιμήεντα.
> πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,
> ὅσσας ἡρώων ἀλόχους ἴδον ἠδὲ θύγατρας·
>
> I saw famous Maira and loathsome Eriphyle, who received precious gold in exchange for her dear husband. I could not tell nor name all, how many wives and daughters of heroes I saw.

In the second example, Odysseus refers to the innumerable catalogue of Neoptolemos' casualties, while mentioning Eurypylos' betrayal "for the sake of womanly gifts" (11.517-21).

> πάντας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,
> ὅσσον λαὸν ἔπεφνεν ἀμύνων Ἀργείοισιν,
> ἀλλ' οἷον τὸν Τηλεφίδην κατενήρατο χαλκῷ,
> ἥρω' Εὐρύπυλον· πολλοὶ δ' ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἑταῖροι
> Κήτειοι κτείνοντο γυναίων εἵνεκα δώρων.
>
> I could not tell nor name all, how many people [Neoptolemos] killed defending the Argives, but one such man he killed with the bronze was the son of Telephos, the hero Eurypylos. Many Keteian companions around him were killed for the sake of womanly gifts.

In addition to the repeated refusal to tell all, the accompanying betrayals between women and men are also strikingly similar. Reflecting the first example in which Eriphyle explicitly betrays her husband for gold (χρυσὸν), the second example references the exchange of Eurypylos' life "for the sake of womanly gifts" (γυναίων εἵνεκα δώρων). The scholia to this second passage confirm that Eurypylos' mother, Astyoche, was said to have received a golden necklace from Priam for her part in persuading him to join the Trojan contingent.[50] The different phrasing of these two mythological references (χρυσὸν φίλου ἀνδρὸς ἐδέξατο τιμήεντα, 11.327; κτείνοντο

[49] Her unnamed husband in this passage is Amphiaraos.
[50] Dindorf 1855.

γυναίων εἵνεκα δώρων, 11.521) obscures the similarity in the two myths of female betrayal. Despite the different phrasing, a series of corresponding elements links the two passages: both refer to a woman (Eriphyle/Astyoche) betraying a man (Amphiaraos/Eurypylos) to a military death for precious gifts. Crucially, these two myths refer to accounts beyond the scope of the *Odyssey* and arise at the same moment that Odysseus gestures at his limitations ([πάσας/πάντας] οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω). The coincidence of reaching the narrative limit and mentioning betrayal between women and men implicates both concerns—storytelling boundaries and gender divisions—in the Odysseus' negotiation of guest-host relations as he speaks to the Phaiakians. Using these betrayals, the hero reminds himself of the dangers of going too far: of revealing too much to women, and similarly, of allowing the narrative to exceed its appropriate endpoint. In this series of interactions between Odysseus and the Phaiakians, both parties thus negotiate the terms of gender and storytelling. I have already mentioned the fact that Odysseus' desire to find a narrative endpoint reflects his desire to return home. Yet the hero's respect for gender divisions must be examined further to show how the fear of transgressing persists in these moments of communication between women and men.

If we interpret these myths of betrayal as signals of apprehension in the speech of Odysseus, why should the speaker become suddenly trepidatious about his communication with the Phaiakians? In this exchange of narrative for gifts between the hero and his hosts, why does Odysseus repeatedly express the fear of transgressing communicative boundaries? The responses of Arete and Alkinoös in the *intermezzo* work to resolve this question, underscoring the hero's concerns with narrative limit and gender divisions as points of tension in the guest-host relationship. Arete's response to the catalogue of women first offers evidence that the rules of propriety are at stake (11.333-41).

ὣς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ,
κηληθμῷ δ' ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα.

τοῖσιν δ’ Ἀρήτη λευκώλενος ἤρχετο μύθων·
“Φαίηκες, πῶς ὔμμιν ἀνὴρ ὅδε φαίνεται εἶναι
εἶδός τε μέγεθός τε ἰδὲ φρένας ἔνδον ἐΐσας;
ξεῖνος δ’ αὖτ’ ἐμός ἐστιν, ἕκαστος δ’ ἔμμορε τιμῆς.
τῶ μὴ ἐπειγόμενοι ἀποπέμπετε μηδὲ τὰ δῶρα
οὕτω χρηΐζοντι κολούετε· πολλὰ γὰρ ὑμῖν
κτήματ’ ἐνὶ μεγάροισι θεῶν ἰότητι κέονται.”

So [Odysseus] spoke, and everyone was speechless in silence, and they were held by his spell across the shadowy great hall. White armed Arete began speaking to them: “Phaiakians, how does this man appear to you in beauty, greatness, and balanced mind within? He is my guest (ξεῖνος...ἐμός), but each of you has a portion of his honor (ἕκαστος δ’ ἔμμορε τιμῆς). Therefore, do not send him away by pressing him, and when he asks for gifts, do not disappoint him. For many possessions (πολλὰ...κτήματ’) lie in your great halls by the desire of the gods.”

Arete immediately responds to Odysseus’ catalogue of women by claiming possession of the hero (ξεῖνος...ἐμός) and offering a share of his honor to the Phaiakian audience (ἕκαστος δ’ ἔμμορε τιμῆς). In juxtaposition with the final verses of Odysseus’ catalogue of women, this response suggests potential impropriety between Odysseus and Arete. Prior to Arete’s bid for possession of her guest (ξεῖνος...ἐμός), Eriphyle’s betrayal of Amphiaraos appeared in similar language as she exchanged her husband’s life for costly gold (χρυσὸν...τιμήεντα). The motivations of Eriphyle and Arete repeat in the text, suggesting parallel desires: the potential for Arete to make her guest her possession, and thus (like Eriphyle’s spouse) a precious object of exchange. The ambiguity between costliness and honor (τιμήεντα/τιμῆς) between the intentions of Eriphyle and Arete reveals an underlying risk in the queen’s desire for continuous narrative. If Odysseus stays indefinitely, he becomes Arete’s prize rather than her honored guest. By honoring the hero excessively, Arete nearly crosses the boundary between honor and costliness in her speech’s estimation of the hero’s value, suggesting danger to the hero’s homecoming.

Again, Alkinoös’ subsequent praise of Odysseus in the *intermezzo* reveals the negotiation of boundaries of propriety in the guest-host relationship (Od. 11.363-66).

ὦ Ὀδυσεῦ, τὸ μὲν οὔ τί σ’ ἐΐσκομεν εἰσορόωντες
ἠπεροπῆά τ’ ἔμεν καὶ ἐπίκλοπον, οἷά τε πολλοὺς

> βόσκει γαῖα μέλαινα πολυσπερέας ἀνθρώπους
> ψεύδεά τ' ἀρτύνοντας, ὅθεν κέ τις οὐδὲ ἴδοιτο·
>
> O Odysseus, as we behold you, we do not liken you to a cheat or a thief, inasmuch as the black earth nourishes many men, widely dispersed, contriving falsehoods, from whom no one could learn.

Responding to Odysseus' catalogue of women, Alkinoös uses the term ἠπεροπεύς ("cheat, cozener, beguiler"), which calls to mind another guest-host relationship: Paris' seduction of Helen.[51] Paris' reputation as a seducer earns him the title "ἠπεροπευτά" twice in the *Iliad* (3.39, 13.769), emphasizing the rules of propriety and the potential seduction of Arete by Odysseus. Alkinoös' speech explicitly denies Odysseus' role as a beguiler, yet the use of the term "ἠπεροπεύς" hints at the possibility of transgression in the absence of proper boundaries between women and men. Alkinoös' seemingly inadvertent reference to Paris, therefore, reiterates the concern with communicative boundaries between women and men. In light of these textual features in the *intermezzo*, Odysseus' repeated reference to myths of betrayal between women and men in his catalogues shows a concern with appropriate communication. The figures of Eriphyle and Astyoche in the catalogues exemplify impropriety and offer negative examples for the proper guest-host relationship between Odysseus and Arete.

I lastly highlight the difference between the unbound and bound requests of Arete and Alkinoös in the *intermezzo* to show how the text once again links gender to narrative limit. Between Odysseus' catalogue of women and catalogue of heroes, the queen and king each request an extended narrative from their guest. Despite the reiteration between the desire to know more in both figures, a crucial difference arises in the negotiation of narrative limits between the

[51] Cf. Strauss Clay (2021, 8).

requests of Arete and Alkinoös. Arete speaks first and urges her audience not to send the guest on his way, revealing a characteristic boundlessness in her desire to hear more (11.339-41).

> τῶ μὴ ἐπειγόμενοι ἀποπέμπετε μηδὲ τὰ δῶρα
> οὕτω χρηΐζοντι κολούετε· πολλὰ γὰρ ὑμῖν
> κτήματ’ ἐνὶ μεγάροισι θεῶν ἰότητι κέονται.”
>
> Therefore, do not send him away by pressing him, and when he asks for gifts, do not disappoint him. For, you have many possessions in your great halls by the will of the gods.

Arete commissions her audience to exchange more gifts for more narrative without marking a limit in the request. The dangers of unlimited narrative as a transgression of the boundaries of propriety are once again associated with a female figure in the text. After Odysseus reaches his narrative limit at the end of the catalogue of women, Arete thus urges him to continue beyond his own proposed limit. Once again female and male figures occupy positions in the narrative which correspond to accountable and unaccountable narrative content. As her request threatens to keep Odysseus indefinitely, the boundless request for song in Arete’s speech reiterates Thamyris’ fatal attempt to match the all-knowing Muses (*Il.* 2.595-600) and the Sirens’ boundless song which scatters men’s bones on the shore (*Od.* 12.45-46). After Arete’s speech, the narrative endpoint is offered by Alkinoös in his subsequent request for more. The king’s response resembles Arete’s in that he also desires more narrative, yet he additionally proposes a limit by mentioning Odysseus’ departure the next day (11.350-53).

> ξεῖνος δὲ τλήτω, μάλα περ νόστοιο χατίζων,
> ἔμπης οὖν ἐπιμεῖναι ἐς αὔριον, εἰς ὅ κε πᾶσαν
> δωτίνην τελέσω. πομπὴ δ’ ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει
> πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ’ ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ’ ἐνὶ δήμῳ
>
> Let our guest endure, though he desires homecoming very much, nevertheless, to remain until tomorrow, when I will fulfill his whole contribution (πᾶσαν δωτίνην). His conveyance will be a care for all men, especially for me, [for mine] is the power in this land.

Alkinoös' request stipulates that the guest stay until the following day (ἐς αὔριον), at which point he will have completed assembling the full contribution (πᾶσαν δωτίνην) for his homecoming. The difference between Arete's indefinite request (μὴ ἐπειγόμενοι ἀποπέμπετε) and Alkinoös' stipulation of a clear endpoint (ἐς αὔριον) reiterates gender divisions in Homeric epic as frequently associated with limited and unlimited narratives. In terms of narrative organization, this pattern corresponds once more to the Pythagorean Table's link between male/female and limit/limitless binaries. Furthermore, it is the authoritative communication of the hosts' desires for more which exposes the alternating gendered approaches to storytelling. The rules of propriety which govern the guest-host relationship are set in motion by the requests of the queen and king. Likewise, the gendered division between catalogues of women and heroes in *Odyssey* 11 corresponds to the explicit desires of queen and king to hear about specific content in the hero's journey. The authoritative dictates of the powerful queen and king thus determine gender relations, emphasizing the law of the signifier as a negotiated boundary which defines gender and narrative limit in the act of communication. Considering the fatal betrayals between women and men which intersect with Odysseus' repeated refusal to tell all, I conclude that the fatal consequences of Amphiaraos and Eurypylos serve as a personal reminder for Odysseus not to exceed the boundaries of propriety in storytelling. Odysseus repeatedly stops at the point of speaking too long or too seductively to his audience of integrated women and men. In turn, the successful negotiation of these guest-host relations makes the hero's homecoming possible.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored key moments of intersection between gender divisions and narrative limit in Homeric epic. I have assembled a series of passages which reveal the tension between the audience's desire for extended narrative and the boundaries of propriety

which limit storytelling. Rather than reading Odysseus' *Nekyia* as a masterwork of persuasion, I showed how the gendered catalogues in *Odyssey* 11 are shaped by an ongoing negotiation of proper boundaries between hosts and guests, and between women and men. Drawing on the Pythagorean Table of Opposites, I illustrated the ideological link between male/female and limit/limitless binaries as established by moments of communication across Homeric epic. While scholars often describe the repeated refusal to tell all (πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω) as a process of selection or a *recusatio* of the greater poetic tradition, I supplement their readings with a focus on communication between women and men by illuminating the Homeric concern with appropriate gender divisions. By further examining the division between accountable and unaccountable narrative content, I advance the interpretation that the female Muses and the male poet serve as a model for communication between Homeric women and men elsewhere. I now turn from this analysis of Odysseus' search for the proper narrative limit to Amphimedon's similar search for narrative closure as he re-interprets the gender roles of Penelope and Odysseus leading up to his death. Amphimedon's retrospective search for determinacy in Book 24 further illuminates this chapter's concern with the negotiation of gender roles in search of a narrative *telos.*

5. Ghosting Penelope: Amphimedon's Retelling of the Suitors' Death (24.121-90)

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relationship between narrative closure and gender divisions in the final account of the suitors' death (24.121-90). By "narrative closure," I mean the determinacy or inevitability with which the ghost of Amphimedon recounts the climactic revenge scene in Book 22.[1] As Amphimedon summarizes the *mnesterophonia* in the final book, he reorganizes the narrative sequence by attributing new motivations to the characters involved in the bow contest. As he reads inevitability into the narrative outcome, he also divides the actions of Penelope and Odysseus strictly according to the domains of women and men.[2] He first infers Penelope's intention to kill the suitors in her weaving stratagem, endowing her traditionally female work on the loom with a deadly power that was previously absent. Penelope's weaving stratagem appears twice before in the epic as a deferral of marriage rather than a strategy for murder (2.93-110, 19.137-156). By changing Penelope's motivation on the loom, Amphimedon recasts the outcomes of the shroud's completion, the hero's *nostos*, and the revenge plot with a certainty that did not appear before in the text. Another conspicuous change arises in Amphimedon's claim that Odysseus encouraged Penelope to propose the contest of the bow (24.162-3). The primary narrative instead represents the contest as Penelope's own decision (19.572-80) and secondarily as divine inspiration (21.1-2). Here again, he interprets Odysseus'

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[1] For similar readings of narrative closure in relation to determinacy in the *Odyssey* see Doherty (1995, 14-16) Clayton (2003, 47-52), and Katz (1991, 186-95).

[2] Wohl (1993, esp. 42) discusses the gendered spheres of authority in the *Odyssey*, noting how women are repeatedly excluded from "the mainstays of male political life" (*mythoi, toxon,* and *xenia*). There are indeed exceptions to these rules such as Helen and Arete speaking at the banquets of Sparta (Book 4) and Phaiakia (Book 11), as well as Penelope's involvement in the contest of the bow before Telemachos orders her to her chambers (Book 21). As Wohl observes, women are most often relegated "to the loom, the distaff, and serving girls." Cf. Chaston (2002, 3-19), who remarks on the following three categories of authority in the *Odyssey*: speech (*mythos*), heroic violence (*aristeia*), and like-mindedness (*homophrosyne*), noting how Penelope frequently exerts authority in these areas despite the male-dominated power structure in the epic.

decision to kill the suitors as a motivating factor behind the bow contest, which was reportedly devised to bring about marriage (19.568-9). In a further distortion of the primary narrative, Amphimedon claims that Odysseus arrived in Ithaka at the time that (καὶ τότε δή, 24.149) Penelope finished weaving the shroud, despite the separation of approximately one month between the two events.[3]

5.1 Approaching the Ghost: Ignorant Suitor vs. Deceptive Suitor

Scholars have frequently noted the difference between this final retelling of the *mnesterophonia* and the primary narrative, drawing attention most often to two specific changes: the timing of the hero's return and Odysseus' role as inventor of the bow contest.[4] To be more precise, there are seven glaring discrepancies between the two versions of the epic, which call for a comprehensive reading of Amphimedon's speech. In the suitor's account,

1) Penelope plots the destruction of the suitors by unraveling her web (24.127). Yet in Book 2 and 19, the web's purpose appears to be a deferral of re-marriage (2.93-110, 19.137-156).
2) He elides the verse (εἶλον ἐπελθόντες καὶ ὁμόκλησαν ἐπέεσσιν, 19.155) in which the suitors shouted at Penelope to complete the web (24.146).[5]
3) Odysseus arrives at Ithaka when Penelope finishes weaving her shroud (24.148).
4) Odysseus secures the weapons in the storage chamber (24.166). Yet Telemachos inadvertently leaves the door open (22.155-56) in the primary narrative.
5) Odysseus urges Penelope to propose the contest of the bow (24.167), though it was originally Penelope's idea (19.572-80).

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[3] The web was already completed according to Antinoös' speech the morning after the epic narrative begins, (2.93-110), preceding Odysseus' arrival at Ithaka (13.188) by half the epic. Dorothea Wender (1978, 34-5) marks out the days, counting 28 between the web's completion and the hero's return in the primary narrative. She does not mention that an unmeasured amount of time separates the web's completion and the beginning of the epic. How recently was the shroud finished? Since Antinoös does not specify in Book 2, we know only imprecisely that at least 28 days pass between the web's completion and the hero's return. In Book 24, Amphimedon elides this gap of time with his immediate transition (καὶ τότε δή, 24.149) between the two events. Finally, it is worth remarking that Penelope's web shines in the final retelling "like the sun and moon" (ἠελίῳ ἐναλίγκιον ἠὲ σελήνῃ, 24.148), and she is also discovered unraveling the web "as the months are waning" (μηνῶν φθινόντων, 24.143), suggesting resonance between the 28-day period of return and a moon's cycle.

[4] Wender (1978, 35) and Goldhill (1988, 1-8) focus especially on these two discrepancies.

[5] This discrepancy highlights the suitors repeated attempts to coerce Penelope into re-marriage. The suitors are figures who characteristically desire *telos*, closure, confirmation, fulfillment in the narrative: a completed web, a fulfilled re-marriage, and finally—in Amphimedon's speech—the narrative closure of a proper burial.

6) None of the suitors are able to string the bow (24.170). Yet the suitors plan in the primary narrative to continue the contest later (21.256-69). Telemachos also would have strung the bow if his father did not cast him a prohibitive glance (21.128-30).
7) Telemachos alone (Τηλέμαχος…οἶος) encourages Odysseus to participate in the contest (24.175). Yet Penelope also urges the suitors to allow him to participate (21.312-19, 331-42), according to the primary narrative.

With this series of changes, Amphimedon works toward narrative closure by reading determinacy into the narrative sequence. He replaces several moments of uncertainty in the primary narrative with the foregone conclusion of his own death from the beginning. Penelope's shroud changes from a deferral of marriage to an instrument of murder. The suitors' access to weapons during the *mnesterophonia* changes to a bolted weapons-chamber door. No one except Odysseus is able to string the bow, despite the uncertainty about Telemachos' ability and the remaining suitors who had not yet made the attempt. Telemachos and Odysseus claim full authority over the bow, erasing the role of Penelope as inventor and arbiter of the contest. With this series of discrepancies, the suitors' death is retrospectively emptied of all doubt.

But why does Amphimedon reorganize the roles of these characters in contrast to the previous books? Scholars tend to fall into two groups as they account for this speech: either 1) Amphimedon reasons incorrectly based on limited knowledge,[6] or else 2) Amphimedon knowingly connects Penelope to Klytaimnestra to persuade his internal audience (Agamemnon) that he is a victim of female deception.[7] In the group highlighting his limited knowledge, Simon Goldhill observes that the ignorant suitor fails to recognize Odysseus, in stark contrast to the *homophrosyne* of the husband and wife. For Goldhill, Penelope's reunion with Odysseus in Book 23 emphasizes their similarity as recognizers and deceivers, leaving the ignorant suitor, by

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[6] Wender 1978, Goldhill 1988, Felson-Rubin 1996, Lowenstam 2000.
[7] Katz 1991, De Boer 2019, Loney 2019.

contrast, to infer what he cannot know for certain.[8] Dorothea Wender and Steven Lowenstam similarly treat Amphimedon as an unknowing interpreter of events whose story is "reasonable yet incorrect."[9] Scholars in the second group, who link Penelope to Klytaimnestra, focus instead on Amphimedon's persuasion of Agamemnon with a story of collusion and female betrayal. For example, Alexander Loney views Amphimedon's speech as a way of exculpating the suitors by representing them as victims of Penelope.[10] Katherine De Boer holds a similar view, pointing to Agamemnon's response in praise of Penelope as evidence that the speech fails to persuade.[11] Marilyn Katz also reads Amphimedon's speech as an attempt to link Penelope to Klytaimnestra. She further interprets Agamemnon's response (praising Penelope and blaming Klytaimnestra) as resistance to this parallel.[12] Thus the supposed attempt to win over Agamemnon fails as he praises Penelope in response to hearing of the suitors' death. These two trends in scholarly approaches to Amphimedon's underworld speech either frame the storyteller as ignorant of the facts or eager to deceive his internal audience: either Amphimedon believes his own speech, or he unsuccessfully manipulates the facts.[13]

Yet a problem persists in these interpretations of the "ignorant suitor" and the "deceptive suitor." These approaches selectively focus on either Amphimedon's miscalculation of the timing of the revenge plot or his mischaracterization of Penelope's motivations. Complicating the

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[8] Goldhill 1988, 6-7. It should be noted, however, that the *homophrosyne* of the couple does not strengthen the argument that the suitor's story proves his ignorance.
[9] Lowenstam (2000, 340) calls Amphimedon's speech "reasonable yet incorrect." Wender (1978, 34-36) similarly asks, "How could Amphimedon think otherwise?" Cf. Felson-Rubin (1995, 163-64, 182-3), who reads the speeches of Amphimedon and Agamemnon here as equally limited perspectives about Penelope's role in the narrative.
[10] Loney 2019, 178-79.
[11] De Boer 2019, 32-34.
[12] Katz 1991, 27-29.
[13] Less recently, Denys Page and G. S. Kirk have argued that discrepancies in Amphimedon's speech reveal Book 24 as a later addition to the epic. Cf. Moulton (1974, 153-69) Goldhill (1988, 1-8), Katz (1991, 95-100, 110-113), and Felson-Rubin (1996, 164) for persuasive arguments against Page and Kirk, which take Amphimedon's speech and *Odyssey* 24 as a part of the formal unity of the epic.

"ignorant suitor" argument, several events arise in his speech that Amphimedon should not reasonably know. He knows that Odysseus and Telemachos conspired against the suitors together (16.235-307, 24.153); that Eumaios led Odysseus to the palace (17.272-89, 24.156); that Odysseus and Telemachos planned to hide the weapons in the storage closet (19.1-20, 24.165-66). For a figure of ignorance hazarding a series of inferences, Amphimedon possesses a strikingly precise knowledge of events beyond his own experience. Notably, his knowledge of conspiring men is most often corroborated in the primary narrative, yet he diverges from the facts when estimating the intentions of women.[14] The "deceptive suitor" interpretation also tends to focus only on specific elements of his speech: 1) Penelope's weaving as a design of the suitors' death and 2) the collusion of Odysseus and Penelope in the contest of the bow. Scholars frequently point to these elements of the speech as divergent from the primary narrative as evidence that Amphimedon disingenuously attempts to persuade. Yet if Amphimedon seeks to condemn Penelope and appeal to Agamemnon's misogyny, why remove her from the contest of the bow? Why represent Odysseus as the sole inventor of the contest? In Amphimedon's supposed attempt to portray Penelope as Klytaimnestra's parallel, he misses his opportunity to expose the bow as one of her instruments of murder.[15]

Accounting for the evidence more holistically, I take a third position on Amphimedon's speech based on his division of gender roles in the narrative sequence. I point to his retelling as simplifying the roles of women and men in contrast to the primary narrative. This speech appears as a gendered example of blame poetry, insofar as Amphimedon juxtaposes the loom and the bow

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[14] Amphimedon gets Penelope's motives and involvement in the bow contest wrong. See especially numbers 1, 5, and 7 in the list of discrepancies above.

[15] Klytaimnestra's assistance of the murder of Agamemnon appears at *Od.* 11.410, 424, and 24.97. Without precisely stating that she or Aigisthos held the instrument of murder, Agamemnon represents his death as "at the hands" of both (Αἰγίσθου ὑπὸ χερσὶ καὶ οὐλομένης ἀλόχοιο, 24.97). Reflecting Penelope's handling of the bow, Klytaimnestra is also described as holding the sword in the murder of Kassandra (φασγάνῳ, 11.424).

as two instruments of revenge associated with women and men respectively. By excluding information about Penelope's involvement in the bow contest, as well as Odysseus' and Telemachos' mishandling of the weapons, Amphimedon reads increased determinacy into the narrative outcome compared to the preceding books. This reconstruction of the past prepares for narrative closure by separating women and men according to traditional roles in the *oikos*. But what does this reconsideration of gender in Amphimedon's speech ultimately achieve? An answer to this question lies in the final lines of his narrative. He obsessively repeats terms related to death, fulfillment, and completion throughout his speech, before finally expressing the desire for his own proper burial (24.186-90). A link emerges in this pattern between categories of gender and the desire for such ritual closure, as he laments the indeterminacy of his unburied status. By tracking the coincidence between narrative closure and gender divisions in Amphimedon's speech, I show how the separation of women and men frequently prepares for a narrative resolution by eliminating the possibility of collusion against the heroic male strategy. I therefore observe a link between narrative complication and moments of gender relations, which suggests that the heroic male authority establishes boundaries between women and men (for example, in the exclusion of women from the bow contest) in search of a narrative *telos*.

5.2 Domains of Web and Bow: Amphimedon's Re-interpretation of Gender Roles

In this section, I frame the stories of the web and bow as two distinct sections in Amphimedon's speech to investigate the relationship between gender and narrative closure in the suitor's final speech. I presently show that the separation of women and men in Amphimedon's speech coincides with his emphasis on narrative closure, insofar as he splits the domains of web and bow between Penelope and Odysseus to make sense of his own death. In his own retelling, two failed agreements between Penelope and the suitors play out in the narrative sequence

leading to the suitors' death. In both cases, deceptive communication between women and men brings about the climactic *mnesterophonia*. First, the web stratagem delays marriage until the shroud is finished; second, the bow contest offers marriage to the winner. These two events correspond to the first and second half of Amphimedon's speech (24.123-55, 156-87). Both agreements between Penelope and the suitors converge to result in death instead of marriage: first, the weaving and unweaving of the shroud defers marriage, until finally Odysseus appears at the bow contest. These facts persuade Amphimedon to re-interpret the shroud and the bow as a sequence of plots to enable Odysseus' revenge. Yet he diverges from the primary narrative by over-determining the intention of Penelope and Odysseus in connection to this outcome.

My first step in reading the connection between gender divisions and narrative closure is to investigate the teleological concerns in Amphimedon's two-fold speech. Amphimedon's speech represents the web and bow as gendered spheres of authority in the household which work in succession to bring about his death. In the preceding books, Penelope is not excluded from the contest until just before Odysseus strings the bow (21.344-53, 409). Amphimedon further enforces the traditional division of gender roles by removing Penelope from the bow-contest entirely and by construing her work at the loom with new motivations. Despite these changes between the *mnesterophonia* and Amphimedon's retelling, the exclusion of Penelope works toward a narrative resolution in both accounts. In the primary narrative, she both proposes the contest and watches as spectator until the moment before Odysseus strings the bow. Her role in the contest shifts more distinctly from arbiter to prize when Telemachos orders her to leave (21.344-53). The exclusion of Penelope is reiterated in terms of gender by the subsequent exclusion of all women from the contest. Soon after Penelope departs, Philoitios, Eumaios, and Eurykleia work together to divide women from men. They bar two sets of doors, first to keep the maidservants in their chambers, and second so that the suitors cannot escape during the attack

(21.381-91). Thus, even in the primary narrative, the division of women and men sets in motion the climactic revenge. Beyond these moments of separation, Amphimedon in Book 24 further divides women from men—this time, in the organization of his two-fold narrative—by posing separate accounts of Penelope at the loom and Odysseus with the bow. The key difference between Amphimedon and the primary narrative lies in the participation of Penelope and the maidservants in the bow contest until the moment when Telemachos and Odysseus enforce the exclusion of women. This pattern illustrates the connection between gender relations and narrative structure: the fear of betrayal as a result of the communication between women and men provides suspense leading up to the final encounter, provoking male figures in the text to regulate gender divisions toward a narrative outcome. The primary narrative and the suitor's retelling similarly prepare for a resolution by dividing women and men, despite the discrepancies between the two accounts.

I now demonstrate the theme of closure in Amphimedon's speech in connection with the strict division between web- and bow narratives in his retelling. As he juxtaposes the weaving stratagem (24.123-55) and the bow contest (24.156-87), Amphimedon repeatedly reminds his audience of the themes of death and completion as endpoints in his retrospective: he says that Penelope designed the suitors' death with her weaving, that she proposed it as a burial shroud for Laertes, and that she was forced to finish when the suitors discovered her plan. With this series of endpoints in his speech, Amphimedon's version reads intentional murder into Penelope's actions, even though she did not explicitly anticipate Odysseus' return or the revenge that followed. While the shroud narrative appears three times in the epic, only in Amphimedon's speech does the story

of Penelope's web appear as a means of murder.[16] Before treating the second half, I first draw attention to the link between narrative closure and gender division in the first half of Amphimedon's speech as he details Penelope's motives. Amphimedon highlights a series of endpoints to show his concern with narrative closure (24.123-155).

> σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ εὖ μάλα πάντα καὶ ἀτρεκέως καταλέξω,
> ἡμετέρου θανάτοιο κακὸν τέλος, οἷον ἐτύχθη.
> μνώμεθ' Ὀδυσσῆος δὴν οἰχομένοιο δάμαρτα·
> ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἠρνεῖτο στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελεύτα,
> ἡμῖν φραζομένη θάνατον καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν,
> ἀλλὰ δόλον τόνδ' ἄλλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμήριξε·
> στησαμένη μέγαν ἱστὸν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὕφαινε,
> λεπτὸν καὶ περίμετρον· ἄφαρ δ' ἡμῖν μετέειπε·
> κοῦροι, ἐμοὶ μνηστῆρες, ἐπεὶ θάνε δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
> μίμνετ' ἐπειγόμενοι τὸν ἐμὸν γάμον, εἰς ὅ κε φᾶρος
> ἐκτελέσω, μή μοι μεταμώνια νήματ' ὄληται,
> Λαέρτῃ ἥρωϊ ταφήϊον, εἰς ὅτε κέν μιν
> μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καθέλῃσι τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο,
> μή τίς μοι κατὰ δῆμον Ἀχαιϊάδων νεμεσήσῃ,
> αἴ κεν ἄτερ σπείρου κεῖται πολλὰ κτεατίσσας.'
> ὣς ἔφαθ', ἡμῖν δ' αὖτ' ἐπεπείθετο θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ.
> ἔνθα καὶ ἠματίη μὲν ὑφαίνεσκεν μέγαν ἱστόν,
> νύκτας δ' ἀλλύεσκεν, ἐπὴν δαΐδας παραθεῖτο.
> ὣς τρίετες μὲν ἔληθε δόλῳ καὶ ἔπειθεν Ἀχαιούς·
> ἀλλ' ὅτε τέτρατον ἦλθεν ἔτος καὶ ἐπήλυθον ὧραι,
> μηνῶν φθινόντων, περὶ δ' ἤματα πόλλ' ἐτελέσθη,
> καὶ τότε δή τις ἔειπε γυναικῶν, ἣ σάφα ᾔδη,
> καὶ τήν γ' ἀλλύουσαν ἐφεύρομεν ἀγλαὸν ἱστόν.
> ὣς τὸ μὲν ἐξετέλεσσε καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσ', ὑπ' ἀνάγκης.
> εὖθ' ἡ φᾶρος ἔδειξεν, ὑφήνασα μέγαν ἱστόν,
> πλύνασ', ἠελίῳ ἐναλίγκιον ἠὲ σελήνῃ,
> καὶ τότε δή ῥ' Ὀδυσῆα κακός ποθεν ἤγαγε δαίμων
> ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιήν, ὅθι δώματα ναῖε συβώτης.
> ἔνθ' ἦλθεν φίλος υἱὸς Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο,
> ἐκ Πύλου ἠμαθόεντος ἰὼν σὺν νηῒ μελαίνῃ·
> τὼ δὲ μνηστῆρσιν θάνατον κακὸν ἀρτύναντε
> ἵκοντο προτὶ ἄστυ περικλυτόν, ἦ τοι Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ὕστερος, αὐτὰρ Τηλέμαχος πρόσθ' ἡγεμόνευε.

[16] Chaston (2002, 9) observes that Penelope's proposal of the bow contest does not require violence. Her reading shows how the contest works toward a non-violent resolution by dividing men in individual competition rather than pitting Odysseus against the suitors as a group.

> I will tell you all things precisely and very well, the wicked fulfillment of our death (θανάτοιο κακὸν τέλος), how it happened. We were courting the wife of Odysseus when he had been away for a long time. Neither would she refuse nor fulfill (οὔτε τελεύτα) the hateful marriage, because she was plotting our death and black destruction (φραζομένη θάνατον καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν), but she contrived in her mind this other deception. After setting it up, she wove a great web in the hall, fine and very long, and she said to us, "O lords, my suitors, since godlike Odysseus is dead (θάνε δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,), hold off hastening my marriage until I complete (ἐκτελέσω) the shroud, lest my threads perish (ὄληται) in vain, a burial shroud (ταφήϊον) for the hero Laertes, for when the destructive fate of woe-bringing death takes him (μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καθέλῃσι τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο), lest someone of the Achaean women in the land insult me, if he lies without a sheet although he possessed many things." So she spoke, and our manly hearts were persuaded. Then, by day she weaved the great web, and by night she unraveled it when she had set torches beside it. For three years, she escaped notice with the deception, and she persuaded the Achaeans, but when the fourth year came and the seasons had come to pass with the months waning and many days had been accomplished (ἤματα πόλλ' ἐτελέσθη), then one of the women who knew well told us, and we discovered her unraveling the shining web. So, she finished the garment, unwilling, by necessity (ἐξετέλεσσε καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσ', ὑπ' ἀνάγκης). When she displayed the garment, after weaving the great web resembling the sun and the moon, she washed it, and at that time a wicked divinity led Odysseus from somewhere to the edge of the land, where the swineherd inhabits his houses. Then the dear son of godlike Odysseus came from sandy Pylos going with a black ship, and the two of them came to the all-beautiful city contriving an evil death for the suitors (μνηστῆρσιν θάνατον κακὸν ἀρτύναντε), in truth Odysseus [came] after him, Telemachos then going before him.

While his body lies unburied in the house of Odysseus, the ghost of Amphimedon recounts the past by obsessing over a series of conclusions. In this passage, terms related to τέλος, ("end" or "conclusion")[17] appear repeatedly in the suitor's search for closure: the speech mentions the suitors' death (τέλος), the fulfillment of marriage (τελεύτα), the completed shroud (ἐκτελέσω, ἐξετέλεσσε), and the passing of time (ἐτελέσθη). Even in the shroud narrative, Penelope is forced to complete her web by necessity (οὐκ ἐθέλουσ', ὑπ' ἀνάγκης), further emphasizing the end of her work as inevitable. Barbara Clayton has also noted Penelope's act of weaving in terms of completion.[18] She observes how Penelope's web problematizes the very definition of closure, insofar as the web is always already completed in the epic, while the passage repeats to show her

[17] Cunliffe's *Lexicon*, s.v. τέλος.
[18] Clayton 2003, 47-52.

resistance against such completion. Extending Clayton's reading, I suggest that the importance of closure in Amphimedon's speech illuminates another contradiction between complete and incomplete narratives, since his unburied status resists his search for narrative closure in the retelling of his own death. As he laments the injustice of the *mnesterophonia* to Agamemnon, the suitor anticipates the final encounter between Odysseus and the suitors' relatives, who also lament the result of Odysseus' revenge. These narrative elements—despite the successful *mnesterophonia*—work together to unsettle the *telos* of the epic. Thus teleological and anti-teleological elements contend throughout the suitor's retrospective, suggesting that the suitor repeatedly reads determinacy into the narrative due to his unenviable status as the ghost of an unburied corpse.

In further consideration of Amphimedon's bid for narrative closure, I note the deaths of several characters as they appear in the suitor's retelling of the web stratagem. First, the fulfillment of the suitors' deaths is mentioned at the start of Amphimedon's speech (θανάτοιο κακὸν τέλος). Amphimedon then claims that Penelope contrived his death (φραζομένη θάνατον καὶ κῆρα μέλαιναν). A few verses later, Penelope's proposal to weave the shroud follows her admission that Odysseus has died (θάνε δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς). The shroud itself works as a funerary garment (ταφήϊον) for the approaching death of Laertes (εἰς ὅτε κέν μιν…μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καθέλῃσι τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο). The language of death implicates the deaths of a series of men (Odysseus, Laertes, and the suitors) in this single shroud. Even outside of the epic's characters, the shroud itself also metaphorically perishes as Penelope uses the language of death (ὄληται) to describe the web as a waste of fabric (μοι μεταμώνια νήματ' ὄληται). Each of these references to mortality reiterates Amphimedon's concern with his own death and proper burial as he speaks. Highlighting Laërtes' role in this passage, Steven Lowenstam also observes how the shroud

narrative in Book 24 exchanges one death for another.[19] Based on the burial shroud's purpose to wrap the body of Laertes after death, Lowenstam notes that the suitor's speech reminds the audience of his own desire to be buried at this moment in the narrative.[20] His reading illustrates an important change in the epic's repeated references to Penelope's shroud, which began in Book 2 and 19 as preparation for Laërtes' burial and only later became an instrument of Amphimedon's death. The explicit desire for a proper burial in Amphimedon's speech,[21] therefore, re-emerges in his repeated references to moments of narrative closure as he describes Penelope's work on the loom.

Turning now to the last half of Amphimedon's speech, the suitor's death is retold in connection with the contest of the bow. Despite her presence throughout the first half of Amphimedon's speech, Penelope is conspicuously removed from her role as the agent of the contest. I draw attention to this change to show how Amphimedon retrospectively accounts for his death by strictly dividing gender according to the domains of the loom and the bow. In contrast to the first half of Amphimedon's speech, Penelope is reduced from an agent of death to an accomplice of Odysseus (24.167-68). By re-interpreting gender relations during the bow contest, Amphimedon turns his attention to the male heroes as the authorities in the revenge plot (24.156-87).

> τὸν δὲ συβώτης ἦγε κακὰ χροῒ εἵματ' ἔχοντα,
> πτωχῷ λευγαλέῳ ἐναλίγκιον ἠδὲ γέροντι,
> σκηπτόμενον· τὰ δὲ λυγρὰ περὶ χροῒ εἵματα ἕστο·
> οὐδέ τις ἡμείων δύνατο γνῶναι τὸν ἐόντα,
> ἐξαπίνης προφανέντ', οὐδ' οἳ προγενέστεροι ἦσαν,
> ἀλλ' ἔπεσίν τε κακοῖσιν ἐνίσσομεν ἠδὲ βολῇσιν.
> αὐτὰρ ὁ τεῖος ἐτόλμα ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἑοῖσι
> βαλλόμενος καὶ ἐνισσόμενος τετληότι θυμῷ·

[19] Lowenstam 2000, 340.
[20] Lowenstam 2000, 340-44.
[21] Amphimedon ends his speech by saying that the burial ritual is the "privilege of the perished" (ὃ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων, 24.190)

ἀλλ’ ὅτε δή μιν ἔγειρε Διὸς νόος αἰγιόχοιο,
σὺν μὲν Τηλεμάχῳ περικαλλέα τεύχε’ ἀείρας
ἐς θάλαμον κατέθηκε καὶ ἐκλήϊσεν ὀχῆας,
αὐτὰρ ὁ ἣν ἄλοχον πολυκερδείῃσιν ἄνωγε
τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον,
ἡμῖν αἰνομόροισιν ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν.
οὐδέ τις ἡμείων δύνατο κρατεροῖο βιοῖο
νευρὴν ἐντανύσαι, πολλὸν δ’ ἐπιδευέες ἦμεν.
ἀλλ’ ὅτε χεῖρας ἵκανεν Ὀδυσσῆος μέγα τόξον,
ἔνθ’ ἡμεῖς μὲν πάντες ὁμοκλέομεν ἐπέεσσι
τόξον μὴ δόμεναι, μηδ’ εἰ μάλα πόλλ’ ἀγορεύοι,
Τηλέμαχος δέ μιν οἶος ἐποτρύνων ἐκέλευσεν.
αὐτὰρ ὁ δέξατο χειρὶ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
ῥηϊδίως δ’ ἐτάνυσσε βιόν, διὰ δ’ ἧκε σιδήρου·
στῆ δ’ ἄρ’ ἐπ’ οὐδὸν ἰών, ταχέας δ’ ἐκχεύατ’ ὀϊστοὺς
δεινὸν παπταίνων, βάλε δ’ Ἀντίνοον βασιλῆα.
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ ἄλλοισ’ ἐφίει στονόεντα βέλεμνα
ἄντα τιτυσκόμενος· τοὶ δ’ ἀγχιστῖνοι ἔπιπτον.
γνωτὸν δ’ ἦν, ὅ ῥά τίς σφι θεῶν ἐπιτάρροθος ἦεν·
αὐτίκα γὰρ κατὰ δώματ’ ἐπισπόμενοι μένεϊ σφῷ
κτεῖνον ἐπιστροφάδην, τῶν δὲ στόνος ὤρνυτ’ ἀεικὴς
κράτων τυπτομένων, δάπεδον δ’ ἅπαν αἵματι θῦεν.
ὣς ἡμεῖς, Ἀγάμεμνον, ἀπωλόμεθ’, ὧν ἔτι καὶ νῦν
σώματ’ ἀκηδέα κεῖται ἐνὶ μεγάροισ’ Ὀδυσῆος·

The swineherd led him wearing wretched clothes on his skin, resembling a miserable beggar and an old man supported by a staff, and he wore baneful clothes on his skin. Not one of us was able to recognize that he was present, since he appeared so suddenly, not even the ones who were older, but we attacked him with wicked words and missiles. Then meanwhile, he endured in his own halls with a steadfast heart as he was being struck and attacked. But when the mind of aegis-bearing Zeus stirred him, he lifted the all-beautiful weapons with Telemachos, and he put them in the chamber and secured the bolts. He then ordered his wife with shrewdness to set the bow and the grey iron before the suitors as a contest and the beginning of slaughter for us ill-fated ones. None of us was able to stretch the string of the mighty bow, and we were very weak. But when the great bow arrived in the hands of Odysseus, then we all shouted in rebuke not to offer him the bow, not even if he should say many things. Telemachos alone urged and commanded him. Then, much enduring Odysseus received it in hand and easily he stretched the bow and sent [the arrow] through the iron. Going upon the threshhold, he stood, and he poured out swift arrows, glancing around terribly. He struck Antinoös, the king. Then he sent forth groaning missiles aiming straight at those men, and they fell in heaps. It was recognized that someone of the gods was his defender, for immediately pursuing us through the house with their own might they were slaughtering us on every side. The unseemly groaning of these men rose up, their heads being beaten, and the whole floor was flowing with blood. So we perished, Agamemnon, whose bodies still even now lie uncared for in the great hall of Odysseus.

Penelope's only appearance in this half of the speech occurs in Amphimedon's claim that Odysseus urged his wife (ἣν ἄλοχον…ἄνωγε) to put the bow before the suitors (τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν).[22] As noted above, this phrasing marks a shift between Amphimedon's version and the primary narrative's claim that Penelope proposed the contest. Whereas the primary narrative named Penelope as an agent of the suitors' deaths in the contest of the bow, her authority is relegated only to the loom in Amphimedon's speech. Simon Goldhill also notes the discrepancy between this verse and the corresponding primary narrative passage (19.583-87) in which Odysseus urges Penelope to do what she already had planned.[23] He argues, "Although Odysseus encourages Penelope not to delay the proposed bow-contest any longer, he can scarcely to be said to have *ordered* it."[24] Yet the flexibility of meaning in the word ἄνωγε allows for a divergent reading—not that Amphimedon gets the story wrong, but rather that he subtly shifts the emphasis to Odysseus as he divides gender to achieve narrative closure. In Amphimedon's speech, this term (ἄνωγε) has the potential to signify that Odysseus "urged," "bid," or "recommended" that Penelope propose the contest in his comparatively deferential role as a disguised beggar.[25] In Homeric epic, this term describes authoritative commands as well as moments of encouragement between figures of equal status.[26] The ambiguity of meaning in the term ἄνωγε allows for the interpretation that Amphimedon understands the same events in the primary narrative with different emphasis. He does not infer Odysseus' command, but more

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[22] The fact that Penelope appears without a name, as Odysseus' wife (ἣν ἄλοχον), further supports my reading that her role is de-emphasized in the bow contest.
[23] Goldhill 1988, 6. "In this detail…Amphimedon's speech seems to contradict the preceding narrative in a marked manner."
[24] Goldhill 1988, 6-7. Emphasis his.
[25] Cunliffe's *Lexicon*, s.v. ἀνώγω.
[26] Thus Nausikaä can be said to urge Odysseus to bathe himself (6.216), Nestor can be said to urge Telemachos to sit down upon greeting him (3.35), and Telemachos can be said to urge the suitors to stop their abuse of Odysseus (16.278). The usage of this verb in Homeric epic allows for the beggar to encourage Penelope, or else Odysseus to command, urge, or encourage his wife to propose the contest.

subtly turns authority in the bow contest from Penelope to Odysseus. The fact that Odysseus did in fact encourage his wife to set the bow contest (19.583-84) supports the reading that Amphimedon re-interprets Odysseus as the ultimate authority by eliding Penelope's initial proposal (19.572-80). The suitor thus divides gender more distinctly than in the primary narrative according to traditional roles of women at the loom and men at the bow.

Amphimedon's decision to narrate the contest according to strict gender roles reflects the events of the primary narrative at the moment when Telemachos commands Penelope to leave the contest to men (τόξον δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει, 21.352). Like Telemachos' transference of authority from his mother to himself, Amphimedon's speech transfers authority from wife to husband by mentioning Odysseus' encouragement to set the contest in place of Penelope's proposal. But even though he distracts his internal audience from Penelope's agency in the second half, his speech surprisingly reiterates verses in the primary narrative which did in fact cast Penelope as the agent of the contest. As the following three passages demonstrate, the suitor obliquely reminds the external audience of Penelope's initial proposal even as he strives to exclude Penelope. First, note Amphimedon's claim that Odysseus urged his wife to set the contest (24.167-69).

> αὐτὰρ ὁ ἣν ἄλοχον πολυκερδείῃσιν ἄνωγε
> τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον,
> ἡμῖν αἰνομόροισιν ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν.
>
> He then ordered his wife with shrewdness (ὁ ἣν ἄλοχον πολυκερδείῃσιν ἄνωγε) to set the bow and the grey iron before the suitors (τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον) as a contest and the beginning of slaughter (ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν) for us ill-fated ones.

These verses retell the same event from Book 19 as Odysseus urged Penelope to set the contest she already proposed (19.583-84).

> ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος,
> μηκέτι νῦν ἀνάβαλλε δόμοισ' ἔνι τοῦτον ἄεθλον·
>
> O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes, no longer delay this contest in your house.

Yet, the suitor's account borrows language from Book 21 as Penelope prepares for the contest (21.1-4).

> Τῇ δ' ἄρ' ἐπὶ φρεσὶ θῆκε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη,
> κούρῃ Ἰκαρίοιο, περίφρονι Πηνελοπείῃ,
> τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον
> ἐν μεγάροισ' Ὀδυσῆος, ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν.
>
> The goddess, grey-eyed Athena put it in her mind, the daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope, to set the bow and the grey iron before the suitors (τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον) in the great hall of Odysseus as a contest and beginning of slaughter (ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν).

Amphimedon effectively shifts focus from Penelope to Odysseus while using the same language from the primary narrative (τόξον μνηστήρεσσι θέμεν πολιόν τε σίδηρον…ἀέθλια καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν) which characterized Penelope as the source. This change does not simply elide Penelope from the second half of the suitors' speech, but more importantly alerts the external audience to the changes Amphimedon makes to Penelope's role in the primary narrative. The discrepancy between the two accounts changes the gender relations in the poem by reconsidering the spheres of authority between women and men. Whereas before uncertainty and suspense vexed the narrative, the suitor's speech drives a wedge between the roles of women and men to emphasize determinacy in the revenge plot.

5.3 The Weapons-Chamber Door: An Architectural Act of Dividing Gender

Another textual element which emphasizes narrative closure arises in the discrepancy between two divergent accounts of the weapons-chamber door. The difference between the open and closed chamber in the suitor's retelling and primary narrative marks a shift from complication

in the *mnesterophonia* toward resolution in the final book.[27] These two passages serve as evidence for a persistent fear in the *Odyssey*'s male speakers about the cooperation between women and men, which supports my reading that Amphimedon's speech divides gender to achieve certainty and to secure narrative closure.

In Book 19, Odysseus and Telemachos coordinate the storage of weapons to avoid armed conflict with the suitors (19.4-13).[28] Odysseus instructs his son to conceal the weapons in the chamber and to tell the suitors that he is protecting them from smoke (19.9). By indicating to the suitors where the weapons are hidden, Odysseus comes to jeopardize his own plan.[29] In Book 22, Melanthios enters the room and distributes weapons to the suitors during the *mnesterophonia* (22.142-46). It is revealed that the doors have been left open, as Telemachos confesses to his father (22.154-56).

> ὦ πάτερ, αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τόδε γ' ἤμβροτον, —οὐδέ τις ἄλλος
> αἴτιος, —ὃς θαλάμοιο θύρην πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖαν
> κάλλιπον ἀγκλίνας· τῶν δὲ σκοπὸς ἦεν ἀμείνων.
>
> O father, I made this mistake—no other man is responsible—I left leaning open (κάλλιπον ἀγκλίνας) the closely-joined (πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖαν) door of the chamber. One of these men was a better watcher.

This passage represents an architectural change between the primary narrative and Amphimedon's later recollection of the bolted chamber door (ἐκλήϊσεν ὀχῆας), which further illuminates the suitor's desire for narrative closure as he adjusts elements of the primary narrative. Unlike Telemachos, Amphimedon recalls no such opening in the doors (24.164-66).

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[27] Cf. Fulkerson (2002) who examines the killing of the maidservants as a type of closure. For Fulkerson, the issue of Penelope's faithfulness is displaced onto the maidservants. The execution arises because Penelope's chastity is "closed to discussion" (2002, 344-45).
[28] Cf. *Od.* 16.282-294.
[29] In addition to this plan to tell the suitors where the weapons are hidden, the hero's tendency to reveal too much and vex his own plan occurs throughout the *Odyssey*. For example, the revelation of his name to Polyphemos (10.502-505), is an unnecessary boast and complicates the *nostos* plot by drawing the wrath of Poseidon. Odysseus also vexes his own plan to remain concealed by provoking his own discovery in the bath when he requests a female bath-attendant who is just like Eurykleia (19.344-48).

ἀλλ’ ὅτε δή μιν ἔγειρε Διὸς νόος αἰγιόχοιο,
σὺν μὲν Τηλεμάχῳ περικαλλέα τεύχε’ ἀείρας
ἐς θάλαμον κατέθηκε καὶ ἐκλήϊσεν ὀχῆας,

But when the mind of aegis-bearing Zeus awoke [Odysseus], carrying the all-beautiful weapons with Telemachos, he stored them in the chamber and secured the bolts (ἐκλήϊσεν ὀχῆας).

The difference between the open and closed chamber door in the two passages does not serve as evidence for the interpretation of Amphimedon as an ignorant suitor. Indeed, the suitor dies (22.284) after the weapons have been distributed in his sight (22.142-46). He is also said to have wounded Telemachos, proving that the suitor condenses his story to remove all uncertainty leading up to Odysseus' victory (22.277-78), despite his knowledge of the open door.

Ἀμφιμέδων δ’ ἄρα Τηλέμαχον βάλε χεῖρ’ ἐπὶ καρπῷ
λίγδην, ἄκρην δὲ ῥινὸν δηλήσατο χαλκός.

Amphimedon then struck Telemachos on the wrist of his hand[30] with a glancing blow, and the bronze wounded the surface of his skin.

Amphimedon must have seen the weapons distributed to the suitors in the *mnesterophonia*, yet he completely elides this fact to underscore the revenge of Odysseus as a foregone conclusion.

To be even more precise, the tension between simultaneous open and closed doors already appears in Telemachos' original confession to his father in Book 22. As the *mnesterophonia* unfolds, he reports the open door in language which includes contrasting elements of closure and aperture (22.155-56).

ὃς θαλάμοιο θύρην πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖαν
κάλλιπον ἀγκλίνας·

I [who] left leaning open (κάλλιπον ἀγκλίνας) the closely-joined (πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖαν) door of the chamber.

[30] Literally: "Amphimedon struck Telemachos, with respect to his hand, on the wrist".

A straightforward interpretation would take this passage to mean that the door is left leaning open (κάλλιπον ἀγκλίνας), even as the elements of wood in the door's design are closely fit together (πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖαν). Indeed, the door is described as open in this passage in very clear terms. Yet, in Telemachos' haste to communicate his blunder, the description of the open door as "closely-joined" (πυκινῶς ἀραρυῖαν) secondarily highlights, with the contrasting elements of closure and aperture, the uncertainty in the moment of battle as the suitors have gained an advantage over Odysseus.[31] Telemachos' use of the term "closely-joined" in the description of the door also anticipates Amphimedon's later claim that Odysseus secured the bolts (ἐκλήϊσεν ὀχῆας). As combined representations of architectural and narrative closure, the weapons-chamber door in both accounts reflects the level of determinacy in the two narratives: first, the primary narrative reveals that the door is open at a moment of narrative complication, as the suitors gain an advantage in the battle; later, the suitor represents the door as closed as he seeks to eliminate all uncertainty in retrospect.

It remains to be discussed how Amphimedon's adjusted description of the door re-interprets gender relations in the poem.[32] By excluding women, both passages (the primary narrative and the suitor's retelling) set in motion a narrative resolution. Judith Fletcher has noted the frequent connection throughout the *Odyssey* between women's silence and the locking of doors.[33] She observes a pattern, frequently linked to Eurykleia, in which silence and secured doorways come to symbolize female sexual restraint.[34] In step with Fletcher's analysis, I

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[31] In terms of both narrative and architectural forms of closure, Laurel Fulkerson's (2002, 343) poignant and persuasive treatment of the maidservants' execution (22.465-72) notes that the hanging method shuts the women's mouths as a symbolic response to their crime of speaking to the suitors. In light of her observations, Telemachos' conclusive act of hanging the maidservants could be viewed as an over-correction for leaving the weapons-chamber door open.
[32] See Antonaccio (2000, 517-33) for an archaeological treatment of gendered space in the Greek *oikos*. Antonaccio argues for flexibility rather than absolute fixity in gendered domestic spaces, which in my view suggests that the *Odyssey* enforces male and female spaces in the home in a bid to control such indeterminacy.
[33] Fletcher 2008, 77-91.
[34] Fletcher 2008, 89.

additionally note the approach toward narrative resolution which arises from this intersection of gender divisions and locked doors. Evidence for this link between doorways and gender appears in the primary narrative as the text connects the open weapons-chamber door to the collusion between women and men. After seeing the suitors arming themselves, Odysseus laments that the maidservants must be helping them (22.151-52).

> Τηλέμαχ’, ἦ μάλα δή τις ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γυναικῶν
> νῶϊν ἐποτρύνει πόλεμον κακὸν ἠὲ Μελανθεύς.
>
> O Telemachos, surely one of the women in the great hall is stirring up war for us, or else Melanthios.

Telemachos’ attempt to fix the problem again echoes the concern with women assisting the suitors (22.157-59).

> ἀλλ’ ἴθι, δῖ’ Εὔμαιε, θύρην ἐπίθες θαλάμοιο,
> καὶ φράσαι, ἤ τις ἄρ’ ἐστὶ γυναικῶν, ἣ τάδε ῥέζει,
> ἦ υἱὸς Δολίοιο Μελανθεύς
>
> But go, O godlike Eumaios, shut the door of the chamber, and observe if it is one of the women, or if Melanthios, son of Dolios is doing these things.

Despite this fear of cooperation between maidservants and suitors, Melanthios is found to be the intruder in the weapons-chamber (22.164-66). Though immediately invalidated, the suspicion of women in these speeches serves as a false inference based on previous interactions between the suitors and maidservants. Certain women among the maidservants are known throughout the narrative for mixing company with the suitors.[35] Vocalizing this fear of collusion between maidservants and suitors, Odysseus and Telemachos incorrectly guess that women and men have joined forces to exploit the opening in the chamber door. These moments of suspicion in Book 22 mirror Amphimedon’s own incorrect suspicion that Penelope and Odysseus worked together to

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[35] See, for example, *Od.* 18.320-25 and 20.1-8.

bring his death. In both cases the motivations of women are misinterpreted by male speakers. The cooperation between Penelope and Odysseus (24.167-69) and the intervention of the maidservants to help the suitors (22.151-59) both arise in the speeches of men, and both misrepresent the events leading to the suitors' death. The open and closed representations of doors in these passages illuminate this division between women and men in preparation for a narrative resolution. In this pattern, fear of collusion provokes men to exclude women in search of a desired outcome. Based on this connection between the primary narrative and Amphimedon's retelling, I suggest that the *Odyssey* persistently enforces gender divisions as a strategy to achieve a set of teleological aims.

This narrative operation to secure an outcome by dividing gender is also evident in the shift from female to male authority during the contest of the bow. As Telemachos orders Penelope to her loom, he claims that the bow contest is a matter to be resolved by men (21.344-353).[36]

> μῆτερ ἐμή, τόξον μὲν Ἀχαιῶν οὔ τις ἐμεῖο
> κρείσσων, ᾧ κ' ἐθέλω, δόμεναί τε καὶ ἀρνήσασθαι,
> οὔθ' ὅσσοι κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν,
> οὔθ' ὅσσοι νήσοισι πρὸς Ἤλιδος ἱπποβότοιο·
> τῶν οὔ τίς μ' ἀέκοντα βιήσεται, αἴ κ' ἐθέλωμι
> καὶ καθάπαξ ξείνῳ δόμεναι τάδε τόξα φέρεσθαι.
> ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε,
> ἱστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε
> ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι· τόξον δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει
> πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ."

> O my mother, there is no one nobler than I to give or to refuse the bow, to whomever I wish, neither one of the many men who rule in rugged Ithaka, nor how many rule the islands beside horse-pasturing Elis. Not one of these men will force me unwilling if I wish once and for all to give this bow to the stranger to carry off. But go into the house (εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα) and take care of your own work, the loom and the distaff, and command your maidservants to attend to the work, but the bow is an object of care for men and for me especially, for mine is the power in the home (κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ).

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[36] Cf. *Od.* 1.356-59, where Telemachos similarly orders Penelope to her loom.

In an authoritative bid to separate women and men during the bow contest, Telemachos commands Penelope to go into the house (εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα) and claims power over the home (τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ). This speech effectively divides the bow *qua* men's work (τόξον δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει) from the loom *qua* women's work (τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε). Telemachos thus reiterates the link which I have been investigating between gender and narrative. His bid for authority prepares for the narrative event of revenge by strictly dividing women and men within the domestic space. Even if the narrative's subsequent events show how revenge, reunion, and homecoming are fraught with anti-teleological complications, the authoritative bid to regulate gender relations in these passages shows a relationship in the *Odyssey* between the organization of gender roles and the preparation for a narrative *telos*.

Beyond the exclusion of Penelope from the contest, the *mnesterophonia* further elaborates gender divisions as Odysseus removes the remaining women from the contest. Working secretly with Eumaios and Philoitios, Odysseus instructs his allies to separate women from men after he strings the bow. He tells Eumaios and Philoitios to bar the courtyard gates and the women's chambers at the moment when he receives the bow. This bow—an instrument of male authority—is to enter Odysseus' hands (φέρων ἀνὰ δώματα τόξον | ἐν χείρεσσιν) at the same time that the women and men in the house are effectively separated (21.234-41).

> ἀλλὰ σύ, δῖ' Εὔμαιε, φέρων ἀνὰ δώματα τόξον
> ἐν χείρεσσιν ἐμοὶ θέμεναι, εἰπεῖν δὲ γυναιξὶ
> κληῖσαι μεγάροιο θύρας πυκινῶς ἀραρυίας·
> ἢν δέ τις ἢ στοναχῆς ἠὲ κτύπου ἔνδον ἀκούσῃ
> ἀνδρῶν ἡμετέροισιν ἐν ἕρκεσι, μή τι θύραζε
> προβλώσκειν, ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ ἀκὴν ἔμεναι παρὰ ἔργῳ.
> σοὶ δέ, Φιλοίτιε δῖε, θύρας ἐπιτέλλομαι αὐλῆς
> κληῖσαι κληῖδι, θοῶς δ' ἐπὶ δεσμὸν ἰῆλαι."
>
> But you, O godlike Eumaios, bring the bow through the house and put it in my hands, and tell the women (εἰπεῖν δὲ γυναιξὶ) to bar (κληῖσαι) the closely joined doors of the great hall. If anyone hears the groaning or noise of the men (ἀνδρῶν) inside in our walls (ἡμετέροισιν ἐν ἕρκεσι), let her not go through the door, but let her be there beside her

> work in silence. O godlike Philoitios, I bid you to secure the doors of the courtyard with a bolt (κληῖσαι κληῖδι), and swiftly throw on the fastening (δεσμὸν ἰῆλαι).[37]

Here the suitors are locked within the boundaries of the courtyard, while the maidservants are restricted to the interiors of the house. As a simultaneously architectural and narrative boundary, these gender divisions secure the end of the suitors' authority over the *oikos*.[38] The locking of doors in this passage assigns women and men to specific domains in the home (women at the loom in the inner chambers, and men at the bow in the great hall), while also reversing the fortunes of the men: the suitors who once refused to leave the house are now no longer permitted to escape. The *peripeteia* of the epic thus hinges on established boundaries between women and men.[39] Yet this strategy to set in motion the successful battle with the suitors is fraught with complication. As mentioned above, Telemachos leaves the weapons-chamber door open and temporarily thwarts the very resolution that he and his father have tried to achieve. I draw attention to this series of events to show how gender divisions frequently prepare for narrative change, while gender relations (or the fear thereof) tend to complicate the teleological operation of the narrative.

5.4 Amphimedon's Failure to Recognize in Context

In this final section, I briefly point to Amphimedon's failure to recognize Odysseus, in contrast with Helen's and Eurykleia's recognitions of the hero, to support my reading that Amphimedon's speech emphasizes Homeric representations of gender divisions. I note a pattern of intratexts in which Amphimedon reminds the external audience of women who contrast the

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[37] This passage repeats when the plan is executed at *Od.* 21.381-91.
[38] Not to mention the end of their lives.
[39] See Arist. *Poetics* (1452a22-b8) for more on the concept of *peripeteia* as a significant change in the narrative sequence.

suitors as figures of recognition. With this evidence, I suggest that the distinction between female recognition and male ignorance further divides gender as a bid for narrative closure.

As I mentioned above, Barbara Clayton draws attention to the paradox of completion and continuation in Penelope's weaving as it appears in Amphimedon's speech. She reads Penelope's continuous resistance of marriage in contrast to the always-already completed shroud in the *Odyssey*.[40] The narrative about the shroud thus refers to the long delay of marriage even after the shroud's completion signifies the upcoming fulfillment. Clayton shows how the convergence of Penelope's weaving and unweaving reveals antagonism between women and men in the text as the suitors push toward the resolution of marriage and Penelope resists.[41] Simon Goldhill also remarks on the tension between Penelope and the suitors by pointing to Penelope's supposed early recognition of Odysseus (according to Amphimedon's speech), which contrasts with the suitors' failure to recognize him.[42] To extend this reading of antagonism between Homeric women and men even further, I draw attention to Helen's recognition of the hero in Book 4 as it resonates with Amphimedon. As she recounts Odysseus' disguise as a beggar in Troy, Helen recalls an earlier recognition of Odysseus in terms which both reiterate and contradict Amphimedon's speech (4.249-50).

> κατέδυ Τρώων πόλιν, οἱ δ' ἀβάκησαν
> πάντες· ἐγὼ δέ μιν οἴη ἀνέγνων τοῖον ἐόντα
>
> He entered the city of the Trojans, who all were ignorant, but I alone recognized the sort of man he was (ἀνέγνων τοῖον ἐόντα).

Amphimedon uses similar language to describe the suitors' failure to recognize Odysseus (24.159-60).

> οὐδέ τις ἡμείων δύνατο γνῶναι τὸν ἐόντα

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[40] Clayton 2003, 47-52.
[41] Clayton 2003, 47-52.
[42] Goldhill 1988, 7-8.

> ἐξαπίνης προφανέντ', οὐδ' οἳ προγενέστεροι ἦσαν
>
> And not one of us was able to recognize the sort of man he was (γνῶναι τὸν ἐόντα), since he appeared so suddenly, not even those who were older.[43]

The language of recognition between Helen and Amphimedon (ἀνέγνων τοῖον ἐόντα, 4.450; γνῶναι τὸν ἐόντα, 24.159) distinguishes Helen's ability from Amphimedon's inability. Unlike Helen's encounter with the hero in his disguise as beggar, the suitors fail to recognize Odysseus until their deaths have already been determined. This contrast demonstrates how the male failure to recognize Odysseus—as distinct from Helen's own recognition of him—enables the revenge plot.

This distinction between the recognitions of women and men is also evident in Eurykleia. The nurse's unprovoked recognition in Book 19 is linked to her age, which recalls the age of the suitors in Amphimedon's account. He claims that none of the suitors, not even the older ones (οἳ προγενέστεροι ἦσαν), recognized Odysseus (24.159-61).

> οὐδέ τις ἡμείων δύνατο γνῶναι τὸν ἐόντα,
> ἐξαπίνης προφανέντ', οὐδ' οἳ προγενέστεροι ἦσαν,
> ἀλλ' ἔπεσίν τε κακοῖσιν ἐνίσσομεν ἠδὲ βολῇσιν.
>
> None of us was able to recognize the man he was, since he appeared suddenly, not even the ones who were older, but we abused him with words and wretched missiles.

While this claim is indeed true with respect to the suitors, his speech recalls the recognition between Eurykleia and Odysseus in Book 19 as her age appears several times around the moment of discovery. Leading up to this encounter, Odysseus first mentions the importance of age in his request for a woman to bathe him (19.344-48).

[43] This combination of γιγνώσκω and the participle ἐόντα occurs three times in the *Odyssey*, in the above two examples and in Book 11, when Odysseus asks the ghost of Teiresias how to elicit recognition from his mother. Odysseus asks, "Tell me, O king, how could she recognize who I am?" (εἰπέ, ἄναξ, πῶς κέν με ἀναγνοίη τὸν ἐόντα; 11.144). Notably, the phrase changes τοῖον to τὸν in the latter example. Additionally, Odysseus serves as the object of recognition in all three instances.

> οὐδὲ γυνὴ ποδὸς ἅψεται ἡμετέροιο
> τάων, αἵ τοι δῶμα κάτα δρήστειραι ἔασιν,
> εἰ μή τις γρηῦς ἐστι παλαιή, κεδνὰ ἰδυῖα,
> ἥ τις δὴ τέτληκε τόσα φρεσὶν ὅσσα τ' ἐγώ περ·
>
> No woman will touch my foot, of those who are servants throughout your house, unless there is an elder, an old woman (γρηῦς ἐστι παλαιή), knowing noble things, or someone who has endured as many things in her heart as I have.

Odysseus thereby sets in motion his own recognition by asking for a bath from an elder female slave. As the passage continues, Eurykleia is repeatedly referred to as an old woman (γρηῢς) while bathing Odysseus (19.346, 353, 361, 383, 386). The advanced age of Eurykleia thus emerges as a factor in her ability to recognize, while the elder suitors are nevertheless unable to recognize him (οἳ προγενέστεροι ἦσαν). Amphimedon's speech thus intratextually recalls women such as Eurykleia and Helen who discover the hero even as the suitors remain ignorant. While Odysseus conceals himself from his enemies, the text distinguishes Eurykleia and Helen as figures whose ability to recognize exceeds the hero's ability to conceal himself. The difference between Penelope and the suitors, as frequently noted by scholars, extends to other Homeric women who recognize the hero prior to the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus. While Amphimedon incorrectly claims that Penelope and Odysseus cooperated to bring about the *mnesterophonia*, the primary narrative shows Helen and Eurykleia as figures of recognition who step into the cooperative role outlined for Penelope. These repetitions further illustrate how Amphimedon's speech separates women from men, not only according to the gendered domains of web and bow, but also in the ability to recognize Odysseus and assist his plan.

5.5 Conclusion

I have examined a series of passages to show the relationship between gender and narrative closure in Amphimedon's retelling of the suitors' death. I first interpreted the juxtaposition of web and bow narratives in Amphimedon's speech as an attempt to divide

Penelope and Odysseus according to gendered spheres of authority. By emphasizing Penelope and Odysseus as agents of the suitors' death according to the instruments of web and bow, Amphimedon uses gender roles to underscore the inevitability of his death. I also focused on the difference between open and closed doors during the *mnesterophonia* to show how the fear of collusion between women and men and the subsequent exclusion of women both prepare for Odysseus' revenge. I argued that Amphimedon retrospectively secures the weapons-chamber door in his narrative to remove uncertainty from the events leading to his own death. In support of this reading, I noted the suspected collusion between Penelope and Odysseus in Amphimedon's speech as a mirror of the suspected collusion between maidservants and suitors in Book 22. Contrarily, I showed how the separation of women from men in the final books prepares teleologically for moments of narrative resolution. Finally, I investigated textual repetition in the suitors' failure to recognize Odysseus and the successful recognitions of Helen and Eurykleia to show how Amphimedon's retelling represents the suitors in contrast with female figures who are able to recognize and assist the hero. This analysis moves beyond the interpretations of Amphimedon as an ignorant or deceptive suitor in Book 24 to illuminate his search for narrative closure as he re-interprets gender roles in the retelling of his death.

6. Conclusions

How should one conclude a dissertation so intent on the impossibility of conclusion in Homeric language? This book consists of an investigation of gender relations (i.e. patterns of communication between women and men) in the *Odyssey* to reveal how Homeric concerns with gender are implicated in the alternating currents of narrative complication and resolution. I have shown how gender relations serve as complications which thwart the teleological progress of the narrative. I have also shown how heroic male authorities establish gender divisions as a bid to achieve a narrative resolution. By investigating both patterns, I assembled a set of passages to illustrate how the narrative *telos* remains incomplete. The epic works toward moments of return, revenge, and reunion, but resists the fulfillment of each outcome due to 1) the hero's impending departure after his return, 2) the danger of perpetual violence after his revenge, and 3) the impermanence of his reunion with Penelope. Beginning from this evidence which vexes the ultimate arrival at a narrative *telos*, I have organized a series of chapters which argue for gender relations as a narrative complication and the negotiation of gender relations as a primary teleological goal of the epic. I follow the readings of Victoria Wohl, Barbara Clayton, and Lillian Doherty, who have noted the transference of authority from female to male figures as the epic settles on a final restoration of the Ithakan past.[1] My contribution expands on this set of scholarly approaches to show how the refusal to settle on a narrative *telos* also exposes the epic's gender ideology as inconclusive.

Before considering the subsequent expansion of my dissertation into a monograph, I shall first examine more concretely the achievements of this research as it stands. I have treated heroic

[1] See especially Clayton 2003, Doherty 1995, Wohl 1993. See the introduction of this dissertation for more extensive treatment of these readings.

identity and female subjectivity in the first two chapters in moments of communication between women and men to arrive at the conclusion that gender identities—represented within Odysseus' heroic violence and Helen's female duplicity—pose problems for the subsequent narrative to resolve.[2] I showed in Chapter 2 how Odysseus problematizes the narrative resolution through repetitive acts of violence. In Chapter 3, I similarly showed parallels between Helen and subsequent female figures to reveal how her split subjectivity provokes extended narration to reconsider her character. Together, these chapters revealed the way Homeric gender identities problematize the teleological aims of the epic and thereby instigate a series of narrative repetitions. Going beyond individual identities in Chapter 4 and 5, I showed how the communication between female and male figures is similarly fraught with difficulty as misunderstandings vex the exchanges between Odysseus and Arete in *Odyssey* 11 and trouble Amphimedon's incorrect retelling of Penelope's role in his death in *Odyssey* 24. In Chapter 4, I showed how homecoming depends on successful guest-host relations, which in turn, depends on the speaker's refusal to transgress a notional narrative limit. In Chapter 5, I showed how Amphimedon makes a series of changes to the primary narrative to reformulate gender relations as a bid for the narrative closure of a proper burial. With these interpretations, I offer an anti-teleological reading of the *Odyssey* which posits the impossibility of achieving a narrative *telos* based on the similar impossibility of achieving an idealized *homophrosyne* between women and men. As the narrative struggles repeatedly to complete such a task through a series of character parallels, acts of violence, betrayals, and authoritative gender divisions, the *Odyssey* always arrives at a resolution which remains incomplete.

[2] By the phrase "female duplicity," I do not mean that duplicity is exclusively associated with women. I follow Bergren's (2008, 13-40) investigation of women in Greek mythology as figures of duplicity and doubleness based on the suspicion of male speakers, poets, and characters. Female duplicity is therefore often constructed in archaic Greek poetry in gendered terms.

Considering expansion of this project beyond doctoral research, I plan to begin from my claims in Chapter 4 about Homeric storytellers who acknowledge a narrative limit with the refusal to tell all. I show in this chapter how Homeric language searches simultaneously for a narrative limit and a boundary of propriety between women and men in communication. While internal audiences reveal a fear of going too far in the guest-host relationship, the text meanwhile re-negotiates proper gender relations. Even if it is nearly impossible to determine what historical audiences considered "appropriate" in the medium of epic song, I point to the repeated refusal to tell all (πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, 11.328, 517) in the *Nekyia* and elsewhere as an acknowledgement of such boundaries of propriety. My interpretation of this phrase as a subtle refusal, rather than a sincere "inability" to tell all, allows for the reading that the fear of saying too much by crossing a narrative limit is linked to the acknowledgement of proper gender roles. This pattern is evident as the text represents heroes who are concerned with saying too much—specifically to a woman. For instance, echoing Odysseus' two refusals to tell all in Book 11, Antikleia encourages the hero to tell his wife everything when he returns (11.223-24), and Agamemnon advises that he only tell her part of the story (11.441-43). This kernel of ideas from Chapter 4 calls out for an extended investigation in the process of revising my dissertation into a monograph. I would like to illuminate even further how gender identities and patterns of communication put pressure on storytellers and thus instigate the act of storytelling. I would like to show even further how the logic of the gender binary breaks down due to its foundation in authoritative language.

Toward these considerations, I plan to broaden my dissertation's treatment of the gender binary to treat non-Homeric representations of myth and test my interpretation of gender relations as a narrative complication. I am interested especially in how narrative structures come to resist the binary logic of the Pythagorean Table as they grapple with teleological impossibilities.

Including in my research agenda Aristotle's description of plot structures in the *Poetics* could show how narratives are implicated in conceptions of a gender binary. Plot components such as recognition and reversal should be examined—not only as narrative features, but also as features of storytelling which serve (or else struggle) to categorize women and men. I have already begun to explore this textual phenomenon in my dissertation in moments such as the bathing-recognition scene as the hero's identity is (re-)constructed in moments of discovery. Also profitable would be an elaborated approach to complication (*desis*) and resolution (*lusis*) in the Aristotelian sense. With these pursuits in mind, I intend to explore the relationship between plot components and the construction of gender in Homeric language and Greek mythology more generally.

I have shown how complex identities of women and heroes are repeatedly, yet inconclusively, worked out across the epic narrative, and how strategies of communication struggle to resolve these problems of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity throughout the text. Indeed, there is no ultimate resolution to the problems of identity, much less the fraught communication patterns between identities. My dissertation arrives here: at the point of exposing a series of anti-teleological passages which can be seen to resist the narrative's aims. I am not the first to notice that the language of the *Odyssey* is open, indeterminate, unresolved, anti-teleological. Yet—if successful—my elaboration on gender relations as a narrative complication has further illuminated the rich scholarly discussion on the limits of storytelling.

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