

A Narratological Commentary on the
ODYSSEY

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BOOK ONE

At the beginning of the story the narrator announces the subject (Odysseus), the starting point (Odysseus detained by Calypso), and – vaguely – the ending (Odysseus will come home), and sets the action in motion in the form of a divine council in which Odysseus' return is decided. At this point, however, he launches a major retardation †: the *Telemachy*, Telemachus' meeting with Athena, private and public confrontations with the Suitors, and visits to Nestor in Pylos and Menelaus in Sparta (Books 1–4). Not until Book 5 will he return to his main hero, Odysseus. The briefing on Odysseus provides the narratees with more knowledge than Telemachus has; not until 4.556–60 will he learn what they knew all along, namely that Odysseus is with Calypso.

Deemed suspect by Analysts, the *Telemachy* is in fact well motivated.¹ In the first place there is the actorial motivation † of Athena, the goddess who involves Telemachus in the story: she wants him to win *kleos* (94–5n.). Telemachus' trip abroad is comparable to the youthful exploits of Nestor (*Il.* 11.670–762) and Odysseus (*Od.* 19.393–466 and 21.13–38), and indeed to Odysseus' own Wanderings.² Both father and son visit impressive palaces, converse for some time with their hosts before identifying themselves (cf. Introduction to 4), and meet with overzealous hosts (cf. Introduction to 15); cf. also 2.332–3 (the fates of father and son are explicitly compared) and 16.17–21 (in a simile Telemachus is cast in the role of a wanderer like

¹ Scott (1917–18), Calhoun (1934), Reinhardt (1960b), Clarke (1963, 1967: 30–44), Allione (1963: 9–59), Klingner (1964), Rose (1967), Sternberg (1978: 56–128), Jones (1988b), Hölscher (1989: 87–93), Patzer (1991), and Olson (1995: 65–90).

² Scholion *ad* 1.93, Hölscher (1939: 66), Clarke (1967: 40–3), Rüter (1969: 238–40), Powell (1970: 50–4), Hansen (1972: 48–57), Fenik (1974: 21–8), Austin (1975: 182–91), Apthorp (1980: 12–20), Thalmann (1984: 37–8), Rutherford (1985: 138), and Reece (1993: 74–83).

Odysseus). His search for news about his father is also a search for confirmation of his identity as Odysseus' son; various characters will remark upon his resemblance to his father (cf. 206–12n.). When he returns, *Telemachus has matured and is ready to assist his father in the revenge scheme.

The first narratorial motivation † is to introduce the Ithacan cast, which is to occupy the stage in the second half of the story: Telemachus, the Suitors, Penelope, Laertes, Phemius, and Euryclea. The only important figure not yet mentioned is Eumaeus. With the exception of the Suitors, these are the people Odysseus is longing to return to, and, having made their acquaintance, the narratees can well understand that longing. They also learn of the deplorable situation on Ithaca (a host of Suitors wooing Penelope, consuming Odysseus' property, and threatening the life of his son, while the Ithacan population does not dare to stop them), which makes them share Athena's desire to get Odysseus home; cf. 5.1–42n.

A second narratorial motivation is to introduce a theme † which runs through the whole *Odyssey*, viz. the comparison of Odysseus' *nostos* with that of the other Greek heroes who fought before Troy, especially Agamemnon (32–43n.), Nestor (3.103–200n.), Menelaus (4.351–586n.), Ajax (4.499–511n.), and Achilles (11.482–91n.).³ When the story begins, it looks as if Odysseus' *nostos* is the worst: he is the only one not yet to have returned. By the end, however, it will have become clear that his is the best: he at least has a *nostos* (unlike Achilles, who dies in Troy, and Ajax, who dies by drowning on his way home), which, because of its adventurous nature (unlike Nestor's swift but uninteresting return) and the riches which he assembles (like Menelaus), brings him *kleos* (which Achilles himself proclaims better than his own martial *kleos*); he has a faithful wife (unlike Agamemnon and Menelaus); he is not killed in his own palace by the suitor of his wife (like Agamemnon), but rather kills her suitors; he finds his adult son at home and fights with him shoulder to shoulder against the Suitors (Achilles dies before he can see Neoptolemus in action on the battlefield, Menelaus has no son by Helen, and Agamemnon is killed before he can greet Orestes).

A third narratorial motivation is to initiate the characterization of *Odysseus: people talk about him and recount anecdotes about him,

³ Klingner (1964: 74–5), Lord (1960: 165–9), Powell (1970), Thornton (1970: 1–15), Thalmann (1984: 163–4), Rutherford (1985: 139–40), and Hölscher (1989: 94–102).

notably Athena (1.257–64), Nestor (3.118–29), Helen (4.240–64), and Menelaus (4.266–89).

Book 1 covers the first day of the *Odyssey* (cf. Appendix A), which brings a divine council (26–95), Athena’s meeting with Telemachus (96–324), and a scene in which Telemachus first asserts himself as the young master of the house in meetings with his mother and the Suitors (325–444).

1–10 The opening of the *Odyssey*⁴ is marked explicitly (in contrast to its implicit ending, 23.296n.), in a way which is typical of oral narratives, viz. by calling attention to the act of storytelling and thereby marking the transition from the real world to the story world.⁵ It takes the form of an invocation of the Muse, which is marked off by ring-composition †: μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα ≈ θεᾶ . . . εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν. The structure of the proem resembles that of the *Iliad* (and cf. 326–7; 8.492–5; 9.37–8; 11.382–4): substantive in the accusative, which indicates the subject of the story; verb of speaking; vocative; adjective and relative clause, which further define the subject; δέ-clauses, which give some idea of the action to come; and an indication of the starting point. On closer inspection, however, there are also striking differences: the indication of the subject is vague (‘the man’ instead of ‘the anger of Achilles’); the starting point is unspecified (‘from some point onwards’ instead of the precise indication ‘from the very moment when the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon started’); and mention is made of a specific episode, the ‘Helios’ incident (6–9n.). In addition, the events mentioned in the proem of the *Iliad* have yet to take place when the story begins, whereas those of the *Odyssey* already belong to the past.

The proem also introduces the agents involved in the presentation of the story: the narrator (μοι), the narratees (present, together with the narrator, in ἡμῖν; cf. *Il.* 2.486), and the Muse. The Odyssean narrator †⁶ is (i) external, i.e., he does not himself play a role in the story he is recounting; (ii) omniscient, i.e., he knows how his story will end and has access to the inner thoughts of his characters; (iii) omnipresent; (iv) undramatized, i.e., we hear nothing about his personality; and (v) covert, i.e., apart from the proem, he does not refer to his own activities as a narrator and focalizer and rarely – but more often than the Iliadic narrator – openly expresses judgements (*narratorial interventions). Despite his invisibility, his influence is great:

⁴ Bassett (1923a), van Groningen (1946), Rüter (1969: 34–52), Clay (1976, 1983: 1–53), Lenz (1980: 49–64), Pucci (1982), Nagler (1990), Ford (1992: 18–31), Pedrick (1992), and Walsh (1995: 392–403). ⁵ Morhange (1995). ⁶ De Jong (1987a) and Richardson (1990).

we move through the story with the narrator ‘constantly at our elbow, controlling rigorously our beliefs, our interests, and our sympathies’.⁷ The narratees † likewise are undramatized and nowhere explicitly addressed by the narrator; yet they are indispensable as the narrator’s silent partners, the object of narrative devices such as misdirection † or dramatic irony †.

His invocation of the Muse⁸ characterizes the narrator as a professional singer, comparable to Phemius and Demodocus. Singers are said to be ‘taught/loved’ by the Muses (cf. 8.63–4n.) and they claim that the Muses are actively involved in their singing (cf. 1.1: ‘Muse, tell me about the man’). The relation between narrator and Muse is best understood in terms of double motivation †: both god and mortal are involved (cf. 22.347–8n.). Rather than turning the narrator into the mouthpiece of the Muse, the invocation of the Muse subtly enhances his status; the gods assist only those who, by their own merits, deserve to be assisted. The Muse’s cooperation guarantees the ‘truth’ of his story, which in fact contains a great deal of invention (cf. 8.487–91n.), and her teaching/gift of song camouflages the tradition and training which must in fact be the basis for his song.⁹ After the proem the Muses will no longer be invoked (as they are in the *Iliad*). In comparison to the *Iliad*, the narrator of the *Odyssey* is more self-conscious,¹⁰ advertising his own profession and song in various subtle ways: of the many ‘*nostos*’ songs (cf. 325–7n.), he offers the ‘latest’ (8.74n.), which is always liked best (351–2n.); he presents an idealized picture of his profession in the singers Phemius and Demodocus (Introduction to 8); and compares his main hero to a singer (11.363–9n.).

1–5 The stress put on the magnitude of the subject (thrice repeated πολλ-) is typical of openings (cf. 7.241–3; 9.3–15; 14.192–8; and *Il.* 1.2–3); it serves to win the attention of the narratees. The fact that Odysseus has wandered and suffered much will be stressed throughout the *Odyssey*, and, when voiced by Odysseus, it will serve as a form of self-identification; cf. 16.205–6n.

1 The opening with ἄνδρα indicates that the *Odyssey* is not just a story about the individual Odysseus and his *nostos*, but about Odysseus as ‘man’, i.e., leader, husband, father, son, master, and king.¹¹

⁷ Booth (1961: 4).

⁸ Minton (1960), Klotz (1965), Barmeyer (1968: 34–48), Harriott (1969: 41–5), Häußler (1973), Svenbro (1976: 11–45), Pucci (1978), Murray (1981), Thalmann (1984: 134–56), de Jong (1987a: 45–53), and Ford (1992: 57–89). ⁹ Ford (1992: 90–101).

¹⁰ Maehler (1963: 21–34). ¹¹ Goldhill (1991: 1–5).

Whenever we find verse-initial ἄνδρα,¹² it refers anaphorically to Odysseus (here; 8.139; 10.74; 13.89; 24.266) or else he is invoked, even though the reference is general or concerns another person.

The epithet πολύτροπος,¹³ which combines an active ('with many turns of the mind') and a passive ('much tossed about') sense, is used (here and in 10.330) only for Odysseus, who, in general, has many πολυ-epithets (πολύαινος, 'of many tales', πολυάρητος, 'much prayed for', πολύμητις, 'of many devices', πολυμήχανος, 'of many resources', πολύτλας, 'much enduring', πολύφρων, 'highly ingenious'). It therefore immediately identifies 'the man' as Odysseus, while the information provided in the sequel (long wanderings, Helios' cattle, Calypso, Ithaca, and Poseidon's wrath) also points to him. Nevertheless, his name will not be mentioned until 21. The **suppression of Odysseus' name** is a common Odyssean motif: cf. 96–324n. (Telemachus speaking); 5.43–148n. (Hermes and Calypso); Introduction to 14 (Eumaeus); and 24.216–349n. ('the stranger' and Laertes).¹⁴ By inserting this motif into his proem, the narrator signals his story's preoccupation with (the concealing of) names; cf. also the *'delayed recognition' story-pattern.

6 Concern for his men is characteristic of *Odysseus.

6–9 The narrator mentions the episode of Helios' cattle¹⁵ (told in full in 12.260–425), because (i) it is of thematic relevance (the ἀτασθαλίησιν, 'reckless behaviour', of Odysseus' companions connects them to Aegisthus and the Suitors; cf. 32–43n.), and (ii) it is the adventure in which Odysseus loses his last companions, after which he is alone. The narrator will begin his story after this major caesura.

This is one of the places where the narrator authenticates Odysseus' *Apologue*; cf. Introduction to 9.

10 The suggestion of an arbitrary beginning ('from some point onwards') is a rhetorical ploy. In general, the starting point of songs is a conscious choice (cf. 8.73–82n.), and in the specific case of the *Odyssey* the point of attack, i.e., the starting point of the main story † as opposed to the fabula †, is chosen very carefully. The story begins *in medias res*;¹⁶ compare the *Iliad*

¹² Kahane (1992).

¹³ Stanford (1950), Rüter (1969: 35–7), Clay (1983: 25–34), Pucci (1987: 24–5), and Peradotto (1990: 115–17).

¹⁴ Austin (1972), Clay (1983: 26–9), Peradotto (1990: 114–16), and Olson (1992b).

¹⁵ Andersen (1973), Rijksbaron (1993), and Walsh (1995).

¹⁶ Sternberg (1978: 36–41), Meijering (1987: 146–7), and Hölscher (1989: 42–8).

and Demodocus' song of the Wooden Horse (8.499–520) and contrast the *ab ovo* life stories of Eumaeus (15.403–84) and 'the stranger'/Odysseus (14.192–359). Thus it begins when Odysseus is destined to return home at last (16–18), in the twentieth year of his absence (2.175), the third year of the Suitors' 'siege' of his palace (2.89–90), at the moment Telemachus has come of age (296–7). All that precedes this starting point will be presented in the form of embedded stories, above all Odysseus' long *Apologue* (Books 9–12).

For the fabula of the *Odyssey*, cf. Appendix A.

11–26 The transition to the opening scene of the story is different from that in the *Iliad* (1.8–16). There the narrator spirals *back* in time (starting from Achilles' wrath mentioned in the proem until he reaches the start of the sequence of events leading up to it); here he moves *forward* in time (continuing from where he left off in the proem, the moment when Odysseus lost all his companions): Odysseus is with *Calypso – the year has come for him to return, but though the other gods pity him, he has still not returned because of Poseidon's wrath – now Poseidon is away and the other gods are assembled (in other words, an ideal situation for the stalemate around Odysseus' return to be broken and the action to begin).

11–15 An instance of the '(all) the others . . . , but X (alone) . . . ' motif; cf. 2.82–4; 4.285–7; 5.110–11 = 133–4; 6.138–40; 7.251–3; 8.93–4 = 532–3, 234–5; 11.526–30, 541–6; 14.478–82; 16.393–8; 17.503–4; 20.109–10; 22.42–4; 24.173–5 (and the variant in 17.411–12). This motif serves to focus pathetically (here) or negatively (in most of the other instances) on the situation or activity of one person. In the case of Odysseus, οἶον, 'alone', has a two-fold significance: he is the only Trojan war veteran who has not yet returned and the only survivor of the 'Helios' incident (cf. 5.131; 7.249). On Ithaca he will again be 'alone' (μοῦνος), one man facing a multitude of Suitors; cf. 16.117–21n.

13 Odysseus' desire to return home is specified in several places, the emphasis depending on the situation:¹⁷ longing for Penelope (here, to contrast with Calypso's longing to make him her husband: 15; 5.209–10), Ithaca (57–9; 9.27–36), his palace (7.225), his servants (7.225), or his parents (9.34–6).

16–18 The first of *many prolepses of Odysseus' return. The Homeric narrator tends to disclose beforehand the outcome of his story or part of it,

¹⁷ Stanford (1965).

an outcome which is often known to the narratees anyway, because the core – but no more than that – of the story was part of the tradition. This does not, however, mean that there is no **suspense**:¹⁸ (i) the how and when of the *dénouement* are not disclosed (in the present instance, the narratees are not told how Odysseus is going to come home); (ii) the narratees can temporarily ‘forget’ their prior knowledge and identify with one of the characters, who have a much more restricted vision (e.g., when in Book 5 the shipwrecked Odysseus is convinced that he is going to drown); (iii) the narrator can create false expectations (misdirection †, e.g., concerning Arete’s rôle in Book 7); (iv) the expected outcome can be delayed (retardation †, e.g., in Book 19, when the narratees expect to see husband and wife reunited); and (v) even real surprises are not excluded (e.g., when in Book 22 Odysseus uses the bow of the shooting contest to kill the Suitors).

It is **Odysseus’ fate** (ἐπεκλώσαντο) to return home; cf. 5.41–2, 113–15; 9.532–5; 11.139; and 13.132–3; and cf. also 2.174–6 (Halitherses’ prophecy at the moment of his departure); 11.113–15 (Tiresias’ conditional prophecy); and 13.339–40 (Athena’s remark that she always knew he would come home). His Wanderings are also fated; cf. 9.507–12 (meeting with Polyphemus); 10.330–2 (meeting with Circe); and 5.288–9 (stay with the Phaeacians). In a sense, Homeric fate is the tradition, the elements of the ‘Odysseus’ story which are given.¹⁹ In part Odysseus incurs his fate himself (not by committing a ‘sin’, but by making the mistake of blinding Polyphemus and thereby incurring the wrath of Poseidon; cf. 9.551–5n.), and in part he shares in the misery brought on by others (the wraths of Athena and of Helios; cf. 1.19–21n.); but above all he must simply endure his allotted portion of suffering (cf. 9.37–8: ‘Zeus made my *nostos* full of sorrows from the very moment I left Troy’). In the council of the gods which opens the story Athena will advance the argument that he has now suffered enough and is in danger of exceeding his allotted portion, something which Aegisthus deserves but not Odysseus.

19 φίλος, ‘dear’, ‘friend’, belongs to the character-language †: 132 times in speech, twice in embedded focalization (13.192; *Il.* 19.378), and twice in simple narrator-text (here; *Il.* 24.327). The word adds to the pathos with which the narrator describes Odysseus’ plight: all the others are *at home*,

¹⁸ Duckworth (1933), Hellwig (1964: 54–8), Hölscher (1989: 235–42), Richardson (1990: 132–9), Reichel (1990), Morrison (1992), and Schmitz (1994). No suspense according to Auerbach (1953: 4) and Schwinge (1991: 18–19). ¹⁹ Eberhard (1923).

free from the toils of war and travel, but Odysseus, when the year has come for him to come *home*, even then is not *free from* toils and back among his *philoî*.²⁰

19–21 In the *Odyssey* there are several instances of the ‘divine anger’ motif †:²¹ the wrath of Athena, striking all the Greeks on their return home from Troy (cf. 325–7n.); of Helios, striking Odysseus’ companions in the third year of their return home (cf. 12.260–425n.); and of Poseidon (*bis*), hitting Locrian Ajax (4.499–511) and Odysseus.

Poseidon’s wrath against Odysseus originates from the latter’s blinding of his son Polyphemus (9.526–36 and 11.101–3); it prevents him from returning home (1.19–21, 68–75); and when the ban on his return is finally lifted, it postpones that return once again by shipwrecking him before the coast of Scheria (5.279–387). In 6.329–31 the narratees are reminded that Poseidon is still angry, and indeed in 13.125–87 he punishes the Phaeacians for bringing Odysseus home. The wrath comes to its prescribed end, when Odysseus has come home (cf. 1.20–1; 6.330–1; 9.532–5). It has an epilogue in the form of Odysseus’ ‘pilgrimage’ after his return to Ithaca (11.119–31).

22–6 The Ethiopians offer a conventional means of motivating a god’s absence (cf. *Il.* 1.423–4). It is only when Poseidon is ‘far away’ – the detailed description of the Ethiopians’ location, which occurs only here, stresses this crucial fact twice: τηλόθ’, ἔσχατοι – that Athena dares to bring up Odysseus’ case. For her circumspection towards her uncle Poseidon, cf. 6.323–31n.

26–95 The first council of the gods. In the *Iliad* divine scenes abound; the *Odyssey* has only five instances: three plenary sessions (here, 5.1–42, and 12.376–90) and two dialogues between Zeus and one other god (13.125–58 and 24.472–88). This council has three functions: (i) practical: it starts off the action, by breaking the stalemate around Odysseus’ return (cf. 11–26n.); (ii) structuring: it informs the narratees about the first stages of the story to follow (cf. 81–95n.); and (iii) expositional: it amplifies the narrator’s earlier brief remarks on Odysseus’ stay with *Calypso (14–15), and Poseidon’s anger (20–1).

The dialogue displays the domino form †, which allows for the introduction of an unexpected topic at the end:

²⁰ In this interpretation the semicolon after ἀέθλων should be removed.

²¹ Woodhouse (1930: 29–40), Irmscher (1950: 52–64), Fenik (1974: 208–30), Segal (1992a), and Yamagata (1994: 93–101).

- Zeus A (*general proposition*) Mortals incur more suffering than is meted out to them, because of their own reckless behaviour (32–4).
- B (*example*) Take Aegisthus (35–43).
- Athena B' You are right about Aegisthus (45–7),
- C but I feel sorry for Odysseus, whose prolonged suffering is not justified (48–62).
- Zeus C' This is not my doing but Poseidon's (64–75).
- D But let us arrange for Odysseus' return (76–9).
- Athena D' If everyone agrees that Odysseus should return, let us send Hermes to Calypso (81–7).
- E And I will go to Ithaca, to stir up Telemachus (88–95).

Athena's plans (D'–E) will be executed in reverse order †: first, she goes to Telemachus and sets in motion a chain of actions (Books 1–4), and then, after a new divine council, Hermes visits Calypso (Book 5); for the effectiveness of this order, cf. 5.1–42n.

This scene shows us **Athena**²² for the first time in her role of Odysseus' helper. Whereas in the *Iliad* many of the gods regularly intervene in the action, in the *Odyssey* only this goddess is active. Athena earlier supported Odysseus during the Trojan war (3.218–24, 13.300–1, 314–15, 387–91; 20.47–8) and, as she herself explains, she helps him because of his intelligence and shrewdness (cf. 13.221–440). During his Wanderings she did not help him, for her own private reasons; cf. 6.323–31n.

So much for the actorial motivation † of Athena's constant support. But there are also narratorial motivations †. (i) Athena's interventions turn her into an instrument of the narrator in the orchestration of his story.²³ (ii) The repeated revelation of her plans and intentions in the form of embedded focalization †, informs the narratees about the course which the story is going to take; cf. 3.77–8n. (iii) Her unfailing support encourages the narratees to sympathize with Odysseus (even at the moment he takes his bloody revenge) and to side with him against the Suitors; cf. 224–9n.

29–31 Zeus's opening speech is preceded by embedded focalization † (shifter: 'he recalled'), which informs the narratees in advance about its topic; cf. 4.187–9; 5.5–6; 10.35–6; 14.51–2. Zeus *recalls* the demise of Aegisthus, because it took place three years ago; cf. Appendix A.

²² Stanford (1963: 25–42), Müller (1966), Clay (1983), Doherty (1991a), Yamagata (1994: 35–9), and Murnaghan (1995). ²³ Richardson (1990: 192–4) and Olson (1995: 142).

32–43 The narrator springs a surprise on his narratees. Aegisthus is the subject of the opening speech by Zeus, not Odysseus. Only Athena, exploiting Poseidon's absence and deftly seizing on the opening offered by Zeus, will change the subject to Odysseus. However, Zeus's general statement about reckless behaviour and the 'Oresteia' story are also of prime relevance to Odysseus.

The root ἀτασθαλ-,²⁴ which belongs to the character-language † (twenty-eight times in direct speech, once in simple narrator-text: 1.7, and once in embedded focalization: 21.146), is used in the *Odyssey* mainly of Odysseus' companions (7; 12.300), Aegisthus (here), and the Suitors (fifteen times). It indicates outrageous or reckless behaviour, which breaks social or religious rules, and which people pursue *despite specific warnings*: the companions slaughter Helios' cattle, although they have been warned by Odysseus (who is himself warned by Circe and Tiresias); Aegisthus seduces Clytemnestra, although warned by Hermes; and the Suitors woo Penelope, although warned by several people, including two seers. Their own behaviour brings them more suffering than is their portion. This marks a departure from the 'random apportioning of luck and disaster' principle, which governs the lives of most people; cf., e.g., 348–9; 4.236–7; 6.188–9; 14.444–5; and *Il.* 24.527–33. The narrator has Zeus introduce this selective moralism for narrative purposes: it is one of the strategies he uses to make Odysseus' bloody revenge on the Suitors acceptable; cf. 224–9n.²⁵

The '**Oresteia**' story²⁶ is an embedded story †, which is referred to repeatedly in the *Odyssey*, by different characters, to different addressees, and for different reasons: Zeus to the assembled gods (here), 'Mentes'/Athena to Telemachus (298–302n.), Nestor to Telemachus (3.193–200 and 254–316nn.), 'Mentor'/Athena to Telemachus (3.232–5n.), Menelaus to Telemachus (4.91–2n.), Proteus to Menelaus (4.512–49n.), Agamemnon to Odysseus (11.409–56n.), Odysseus to Athena (13.383–5n.), Agamemnon to Achilles (24.95–7n.), and Agamemnon apostrophizing Odysseus (24.191–202n.). The story of Agamemnon's *nostos*, which is one of many '*nostos*' stories, is the most important foil for Odysseus' *nostos*; cf. Introduction. As a rule, Agamemnon

²⁴ Jones (1954) and Olson (1995: 208–13).

²⁵ Fenik (1974: 209–18), Rüter (1969: 64–82), Yamagata (1994: 32–9), Olson (1995: 205–23), and Van Erp Taalman Kip (1997).

²⁶ D'Arms and Hulley (1946), Hommel (1955), Hölscher (1967a, 1989: 297–310), Clarke (1967: 10–12), Friedrich (1975: 86–7), Sternberg (1978: 68–73), Felson-Rubin (1994: 95–107), Katz (1991: 29–53), and Olson (1990, 1995: 24–42).

parallels Odysseus, Clytemnestra Penelope, Orestes Telemachus, and Aegisthus the Suitors; the story is ‘a warning to Odysseus, an inspiration for Telemachus, and a vindication of Penelope’.²⁷

The main elements of the Odyssean ‘Oresteia’ story are as follows: Aegisthus marries Clytemnestra during Agamemnon’s absence, Agamemnon is killed by the two lovers upon his return, after seven years Orestes returns and kills Aegisthus. In comparison with later versions outside the *Odyssey*, there are omissions (the Atreus–Thyestes feud, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aulis, Orestes’ pursuit by the Erinyes); additions (Hermes’ warning to Aegisthus); shifts of accent (Orestes’ matricide is nowhere mentioned explicitly, once hinted at: 3.309–10); and variants (Agamemnon killed during a feast, not in bath), which all serve to tailor this embedded story to the particular context of the *Odyssey*.

Zeus tells the ‘Oresteia’ story to illustrate his general proposition in 32–4 (‘argument’ function †). The most space is taken up by the warning of Hermes, whose words are even quoted directly from 40 onwards, so as to give them more emphasis. This – unique – detail serves Zeus’s argument (Aegisthus might have escaped his excessive suffering, if he had heeded the warning), but also suggests the story’s ‘key’ function †: Aegisthus’ fate foreshadows that of the Suitors, who will likewise receive warnings which they disregard, and who in the end will fall victim to revenge. The connection with the Suitors is underscored by a reference to Aegisthus’ seduction of Clytemnestra as ‘wooing’ (μνάσθαι: 39 and cf. μνηστήν in 36). Although the Suitors have not been mentioned yet, their wooing of Penelope in Odysseus’ absence may be regarded as part of the core of the ‘Odysseus’ story and thereby part of the narratees’ prior knowledge; one indication of this is the fact that we hear of ‘the Suitors’ *tout court* many times (from the narrator: 114, 116, 118, 133, 144, 151, 154, and Athena: 91) before Telemachus tells who they are (245–51). The link with the Suitors also explains why Zeus focuses on Aegisthus, paying no attention to Clytemnestra. The figure of Orestes, who in all other instances of the ‘Oresteia’ story is linked to Telemachus, here has an ambiguous status: his coming of age and the unique epithet τηλεκλυτός, ‘far-famed’ (30), recall Telemachus (cf. 296–7n.); his longing for his own country, however, recalls homesick Odysseus (cf. 57–9, 5.153, and 209). The ambiguity may reflect

²⁷ Clarke (1967: 10).

the fact that Odysseus and Telemachus will *together* carry out the act of revenge.

46–7 Athena's threatening words 'may everyone die who does things like that' may be interpreted by the narratees as directed at the Suitors;²⁸ cf. her exhortation of Telemachus in 295–302, which explicitly links the murders of Aegisthus and the Suitors. This is the first – veiled – *prolepsis † of Odysseus' revenge.

48–62 In describing Odysseus' unhappiness Athena uses words which echo his name and in the *Odyssey* refer mainly to him: *δυσμῶρ*, 'unlucky' (49; five out of six Odyssean instances concern Odysseus), **δύστηνον*, 'miserable' (55; fifteen out of seventeen instances), *ἔδυρόμενον*, 'weep' (55; twenty-seven out of thirty-nine instances),²⁹ and **ὠδύσσο*, 'are angry' (62; all five instances): the '*nomen est omen*' principle.

51 The description of Calypso's island as 'rich in trees' (51) is a seed †: later Odysseus will use these trees to build a raft (5.238–40).

57 *Calypso tries to make Odysseus 'forget' Ithaca. The '**forgetting/remembering**' motif is of prime importance in the *Odyssey*, since these are the determining factors of Odysseus' return:³⁰ Odysseus must remember his home and wife, when the Lotus-Eaters (9.96–7), Circe (10.236, 472), the Sirens (12.41–5), and Calypso try to make him forget them; the gods must not forget Odysseus (65; 5.5–6), the Ithacans their king (2.233–4; 4.687–95; 5.11–12), and Penelope her husband (343–4; 24.195); cf. also the (ironic) variant in 21.94–5.

57–9 Here Odysseus' desire to return focuses on Ithaca; cf. 13n. *Smoke regularly is the first sign of human habitation seen by a traveller.

59 For Odysseus becoming so despondent as to wish to die, cf. 10.49–52 and 496–9.

59–62 Athena's three final questions³¹ are an indirect reproach: Zeus is not behaving justly towards pious Odysseus. At the same time, her questions are a rhetorical trick: of course, she knows that it is Poseidon, not Zeus, who is responsible for Odysseus' plight. But her feigned ignorance forces Zeus to articulate and thereby rethink his position.³² Other instances of suggestive questions are 206–12, 224–9; and 16.95–8.

²⁸ Scholion *ad* 47. ²⁹ Rank (1951: 51–2).

³⁰ Austin (1975: 138–9), Apthorp (1980: 12–13), Rutherford (1986: 146, n. 6), and Crane (1988: 42–4).

³¹ In view of the similar structure of the three cola, it seems better to read a question mark after 'Ὀλύμπιε in 60 (with Von der Mühl and Van Thiel) instead of a full stop (Allen).

³² Sternberg (1978: 59–60).

64–75 In the first part of his speech Zeus mirrors the structure of the last part of Athena’s speech:

Athena	48–62	Odysseus marooned on the island of Calypso (<i>digression</i>) Calypso’s pedigree Odysseus marooned Don’t you remember his sacrifices?
Zeus	64–75	How could I forget his sacrifices? (‘catch-word’ technique †: ἱερά in 66 picking up ἱερά in 61) Poseidon is angry at him because of Polyphemus (<i>digression</i>) Polyphemus’ pedigree Poseidon is angry at him

In this way Zeus emphasizes that he is countering Athena’s reproach, placing even his *digression* in answer to hers: if Calypso’s connection to ‘malign’ Atlas adds to the bleak picture Athena paints of Odysseus’ situation, Polyphemus’ connection to Poseidon justifies the latter’s anger towards Odysseus. Zeus here claims to have clean hands, but in fact he has actively supported *Poseidon’s wrath; cf. 9.551–5n.

68–75 The ‘Cyclops’ episode will be told in full in 9.106–566. This is one of the places where Odysseus’ *Apologue* is authenticated; cf. Introduction to 9.

77–9 Zeus’s confident announcement that Poseidon will give up his wrath is an instance of misdirection †: it leads the narratees to expect that the god will now not intervene, whereas in fact he does; cf. 19–21n. His shipwrecking of Odysseus in Book 5 will bring about a retardation † of Odysseus’ *nostos*, announced so emphatically at the opening of the story (cf. νόστων: 5, 13, 77, 87, 94; νόστιμον: 9; νέεσθαι/ηται: 17, 87; νοστήσαντα/-σαι: 36, 83).

81–95 In the Homeric epics we regularly find ‘**table of contents’ speeches**, which inform the narratees about what to expect next, e.g., Zeus’s speech in 5.29–42 (which delineates Books 5–12) and Athena’s speech in 13.393–415 (Books 14–15).³³ Here, Athena’s speech delineates the events of Books 1–5: the encouragement of Telemachus in Book 1; the Ithacan assembly in Book 2; Telemachus’ visit to Nestor in Pylos and to Menelaus in Sparta in Books 3–4; Hermes’ mission in Book 5.

³³ Rothe (1914: 157–8) and Rüter (1969: 106–10).

Athena's speech introduces a new storyline: from now on there is an 'Odysseus' storyline and a 'Telemachus–Ithaca' storyline; cf. Appendix B. After her speech the 'Odysseus' storyline will be dropped until Book 5. We leave it while it is in a state of suspense: Odysseus' return has been decided, but not carried out. By the time we return to the 'Odysseus' storyline, so much text-time has elapsed that a new divine council is needed; cf. 5.1–42n. The narratees will be reminded of the 'Odysseus' storyline in the background through numerous references to 'absent Odysseus': characters speculate about his whereabouts, whether he is alive or not, and his impending return.³⁴

94–5 Athena reveals her intentions in sending Telemachus on his trip (cf. Introduction): he is to collect information about his father and gain **kleos*, 'fame' (95).³⁵ In effect, however, the second purpose is the more important one, as becomes clear in 13.417–28, when Odysseus asks Athena the obvious question – why she did not simply tell Telemachus where his father was – and she answers that making the trip brings him *kleos*. The reactions of Euryclea (2.361–70), the Suitors (4.638–40, 663–4), Penelope (4.703–67), Odysseus (13.416–9), and Eumaeus (14.178–82) make clear that Telemachus' trip is indeed a heroic enterprise; it takes courage to face the dangers of the sea and to address famous heroes. Athena will also predict *kleos* for Telemachus when he kills the Suitors (298–305). This promise is all the more welcome since Telemachus complains that due to the unheroic death of his father, he is deprived of *kleos* (237–41; cf. Eumaeus in 14.67–71).

96–324 The arrival of a 'stranger' is a common motif to set the action into motion; cf. the arrival of Chryses in *Il.* 1.12ff.³⁶

Athena's meeting with Telemachus is an instance of a '**god meets mortal**' scene: a god talks to a mortal, usually assuming a mortal disguise, and sometimes reveals at the end of the meeting his/her divine identity, in words or through a supernatural departure (epiphany); cf. 2.267–97, 382–7; 3.1–485; 7.18–81; 8.193–200; 10.277–308; 13.221–440, 16.155–77; 22.205–40; and 24.502–48.³⁷ For gods conversing with mortals in their dreams, cf. 4.795–841n. For gods appearing directly to mortals, cf. 13.312–13n. 'God meets mortal' scenes are usually full of ambiguity † on the part of the god in disguise, and dramatic irony † on the part of the unsuspecting mortal. The

³⁴ Hellwig (1964: 109–12). ³⁵ Jones (1988b) and Katz (1991: 63–72).

³⁶ Bowra (1952: 287–91).

³⁷ Rose (1956), Lavoie (1970), Clay (1974), Fauth (1975), Dietrich (1983), and Smith (1988).

present instance bears some resemblance to the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern: Telemachus spontaneously starts talking about something which is relevant to the unrecognized guest (158–77) and the unrecognized guest tells a lying tale (179–212).

The ‘masks’ put on by Homeric gods when dealing with human beings are always carefully chosen. Here Athena adopts the identity of the Taphian Mentès,³⁸ an old guest-friend of Odysseus (hence sympathetic to his cause, and able to recount to Telemachus a youthful exploit of his father and to note the son’s likeness to his father), and a member of a nation of pirates, cf. 15.427; 16.426 (hence able to produce a likely hypothesis as to why Odysseus has not yet returned), who lives sufficiently far away from Ithaca to look at the situation with fresh eyes (his shocked reaction will form an effective stimulus to bring Telemachus into action).

‘Mentès’/Athena is the first in a series of helpers who assist Telemachus: he is replaced in Book 2 by ‘Mentor’/Athena, who leaves the youth in 3.371–3, to be succeeded by Nestor’s son Pisistratus in 3.482, who takes his leave in 15.215–16. After this, Telemachus is reunited with his father.

The meeting takes the form of a **‘visit’ type-scene**:³⁹ a visitor (i) sets off (96–102; here expanded by a ‘dressing’ type-scene); (ii) arrives at his destination (103–5); (iii) finds the person(s) he is looking for (106–12); (iv) is received by his host (113–35); (v) is given a meal (136–50); (vi) converses with his host (151–318); (in the case of an overnight stay) (vii) is bathed; is given (viii) a bed, (ix) a guest-gift (309–18n.), and sometimes also (x) an escort to the next destination, *pompe* (cf. 3.317–28). Other instances are 3.4–469 (Telemachus: Nestor); 4.1–624 + 15.1–182 (Telemachus: Menelaus); 5.49–148 (Hermes: Calypso); 7.14–13.69 (Odysseus: Phaeacians); 9.195–542 (Odysseus: Cyclops); 10.1–79 (Odysseus: Aeolus); 208–466 (Odysseus: Circe); 14.1–533 (Odysseus: Eumaeus); 16.1–155 (Telemachus: Eumaeus); Introduction to 17 (Odysseus: Suitors); and 24.205–412nn. (Odysseus: Laertes). Hospitality is a matter of prime importance in the *Odyssey* and the ‘visit’ scenes are to this story what the ‘battle’ scenes are to the *Iliad*. They feature good hosts (Nestor, Eumaeus), ambivalent hosts (the Phaeacians), bad hosts (the Cyclops and the Suitors), over-zealous hosts (Calypso and Menelaus), and frustrated hosts (Telemachus). Athena’s visit in Book 1⁴⁰

³⁸ Rüter (1969: 124–70).

³⁹ Arend (1933: 34–53), Bowra (1952: 179–83), Edwards (1975), Thalmann (1984: 54–6), and Reece (1993). ⁴⁰ Rüter (1969: 113–203).

displays a number of anomalous features (pointed out *ad locc.*), which are the result of her divine status and the presence of the Suitors in Odysseus' palace.

Throughout the conversation with 'Mentes'/Athena, Telemachus will not once refer to his father by his proper name or 'father', but only by 'him' (*κεῖνος: 163, 235, 243; ὁ: 166, 168, 215, 220, 239; μιν: 241) or 'a/that man' (161, 233). In Telemachus' case the *'suppression of Odysseus' name' motif reflects his uncertainty about himself and his father. Contrast 'Mentes'/Athena's lavish use of 'Odysseus' (196, 207, 212, 253, 260, 265) and 'your father' (195, 281, 287), which brings home to him that there really is a man called Odysseus and that he really is Telemachus' father. One of the effects of her visit will be that Telemachus does speak of 'Odysseus' (354, 396, 398) and 'my father' (413).

96–101 Athena's departure on this important mission is given extra weight through the insertion of a *'dressing' type-scene (cf. Hermes in 5.44–8). She does not dress like a female, but puts on the same 'magic' sandals as Hermes (cf. 5.44–6) and, just as Hermes takes along his magic wand, she takes with her her spear. This is her attribute when she arms herself in martial contexts (cf. *Il.* 5.745–7 = 8.389–91). In the present, peaceful context it suits the male character she will be impersonating; cf. the explicit mention in 104, 121, and 127–9. The ominous overtones of the description of the spear also alert the narratees to the fact that her rousing of Telemachus is the first step on the road towards Odysseus' revenge, which will take the form of a battle; cf. also 126–9n.

102–4 The change of scene †, from Olympus to Odysseus' palace on Ithaca, takes the form of the narrator following in the footsteps of Athena.

103–4 Noting that Athena arrived 'at Odysseus' doors' the narrator reminds us that despite Odysseus' absence and the noisy presence of the Suitors, this is still Odysseus' palace. Though there is only one Ithacan palace in the *Odyssey* and a reference to 'the palace' would suffice, the narrator seldom foregoes an opportunity to speak of 'Odysseus' palace': 2.259, 394; 4.625, 674, 715, 799; 16.328; 17.167; 20.122, 248; 21.4; 22.143, 495; 24.416, and 440; and cf. 21.5–62n.

In typical Homeric manner, the scenery †, Odysseus' palace,⁴¹ is not described systematically (and any attempt at exact reconstruction is

⁴¹ Kullmann (1992: 305–16).

therefore doomed to failure). Certain parts are mentioned when required by the story: the courtyard (in which the Suitors amuse themselves), the *megaron* (in which the main confrontations take place), Telemachus' bedroom, Penelope's upper room (to which she has retired so as to associate as little as possible with the Suitors), storerooms (e.g., the one where Odysseus' bow lies: 21.5–62), the doors of the *megaron* (preventing the Suitors from escaping during the massacre; cf. Introduction to 22), and the threshold of the *megaron* (Odysseus' station both as a beggar and as an avenger; cf. 17.339–41n.). The closest we get to an overall impression is in 17.260–73n., where the disguised Odysseus himself describes his palace.

106–12 Arriving at his destination, the Homeric visitor finds – and focalizes (cf. 5.63–75n.) – the person(s) he is looking for while they are engaged in some activity.⁴² Here we have a – unique – variant (Athena finds not Telemachus, but the Suitors), which immediately brings home what is wrong in Odysseus' household: the Suitors are in a place where Telemachus should be.

The activities engaged in by the persons found often characterize them or are contextually significant; cf. 3.4–67; 14.5–28nn. Here the Suitors are playing a game, while servants prepare a meal; throughout the story they will be seen amusing themselves with dance and sport (cf. 421–2 = 18.304–5; 4.625–7 = 17.167–9), and eating (cf. 144–9; 2.299–300, 322, 396; 17.170–82, 260–71; 20.122–62, 250–83, 390). The repeated picture of the Suitors eating⁴³ makes visible one of their *crimes; they are literally consuming Odysseus' property (cf. 245–51n.). It is only fitting that they will ultimately be killed during a meal. This event is prepared for in the **'disturbed meal' motif**: conscious or unconscious anticipations of or stories about people being killed during a meal;⁴⁴ cf. 2.244–51; 17.219–20; 18.400–4; 20.392–4; 21.295–304, and 428–30nn. Cf. also Odysseus' foil Agamemnon being killed during a banquet (4.512–49n.). Against this background, the detail that the Suitors were seated on the hides of oxen 'which they themselves slaughtered' (108) becomes a negatively charged piece of information.

106 ἀγῆνωρ, 'manly', 'arrogant', belongs to the character-language †: thirty-one times in direct speech, four times in embedded focalization

⁴² Rothe (1914: 256–7), Arend (1933: 28), Thornton (1970: 6), de Jong (1987a: 107–10), and Richardson (1990: 51–7). ⁴³ Clarke (1967: 17–18). ⁴⁴ Davies (1997: 104–7).

(here; 2.299; 18.346 = 20.284), seven times in simple narrator-text. In the *Odyssey* the word is used with one exception of the Suitors.

113–35 This is a fairly regular version of the **reception of a guest**: the guest (a) waits at the door (cf. 103–4), (b) is seen by his host (113–18, here expanded with a description of the host's state of mind), (c) who rises from his/her seat and/or hurries towards him (119–20a), (d) gives him a hand (120b–121a), takes his spear (121b; an addition), (e) speaks words of welcome (122–4), (f) leads him in (125), stores his spear (126–9; an addition), and (g) offers him a seat (130–5). Nevertheless, it displays one anomaly: Athena is seen by Telemachus, not – as is customary – by the persons she 'found' in 106–12, the Suitors. This is the first indication that the Suitors, who are too busy with themselves to notice the stranger at the door, are bad hosts;⁴⁵ a second indication will follow in 136–51n.

113–18 The first impression we get of Telemachus is of him sitting amongst the Suitors and daydreaming about his father's return. This is not only typical of this character in the early stages of the story, it also makes clear that the youth is in a receptive mood for Athena's message; cf. 15.7–8.

The characterization † of **Telemachus**⁴⁶ is largely implicit; only one character trait, his being 'shrewd', is explicitly revealed by the narrator's constant use of the epithet *πεινυμένος*. He is the only Homeric character who develops in the course of the story. Throughout he is polite (he is angry when the stranger has to stand at the door for a long time: 119–20, and takes care to remove him from the noise caused by the Suitors, which might spoil his meal: 133–4), clever (he does not reveal the true identity of 'Mentes'/Athena to the Suitors: 412–20), but has little sympathy for his enigmatic mother (cf. 345–59n.). However, at the beginning of the story he is still far removed from the heroic ideal of 'a doer of deeds and speaker of words' (*Il.* 9.443); thus he is inert (he merely dreams of a revenge on the Suitors: 115–17) and shy when approaching venerable men like Nestor and Menelaus (3.22–4; 4.158–60). However, just as Achilles had Phoenix, Telemachus meets with a series of helpers (cf. 96–324n.) and gradually develops his heroic potential. When the narratees meet him again after the

⁴⁵ Scholion *ad* 1.113.

⁴⁶ Miller and Carmichael (1954), Clarke (1963: 130–5), Allione (1963: 9–60), Austin (1969), Thornton (1970: 68–77), Alden (1987), Besslich (1981), Murnaghan (1987: 33–8), Krischer (1988), Felson-Rubin (1991: 74–91), Katz (1991: 125–6), Race (1993: 80–3), and Roisman (1994).

Telemachy, it will appear that his trip abroad has matured him; cf. Introduction to 15. For similarities with Nausicaa, cf. Introduction to 6.

This is the first time that Odysseus' revenge on the Suitors⁴⁷ is mentioned explicitly (after indirect allusions in 46–7 and 99–101). The first four books of the *Odyssey* abound with **prolepses † of Odysseus' revenge** (*tisis*) on the Suitors (often in conjunction with *prolepses of his return): 253–69, 378–80; 2.143–207, 283–4; 3.205–9, 216–24; and 4.333–46nn. The cumulative effect of these anticipations, as voiced by Athena and venerable heroes like Nestor and Menelaus amongst others, is to bring home the fact that the Suitors' fate is sealed and divinely authorized from the beginning. Thus the device of repeated prolepsis is one of the narrator's strategies designed to make the bloody outcome of his story acceptable; cf. 224–9n. However, the prolepses often are no more than wishes, and the exact form of the revenge is left unspecified (cf. 1.296 = 11.120: 'whether through a trick or openly'; 3.217: 'whether alone or with many Greeks'). Only in the second half of the story will the narratees be informed gradually about the 'how' of Odysseus' revenge; cf. 13.372–439n.

118 When he says that Telemachus saw 'Athena', the narrator intrudes into Telemachus' focalization (paralepsis †); Telemachus himself thinks he is dealing with a stranger (cf. the use of ξείνος in his speeches: 123, 158, 176, 214, and embedded focalization: 120, 133). The Homeric narrator always refers to characters in disguise (gods in human form, Odysseus in the guise of a beggar) by their own names: cf. in this scene the repeated 'Athena' in 125, 156, 178, 221, 252, 314, and 319.⁴⁸ His main objective is to avoid confusion for the narratees (in a written text the adopted name can be put in inverted commas, as is done in this commentary); as a secondary effect, the dramatic irony of a situation is underscored (cf., e.g., 3.41–50n.).

120 Telemachus' focalization triggers the use of ξείνος, which belongs to the character-language †: 197 times in speech, seven times in embedded focalization (here, 133; 3.34; 7.227; 13.48; 20.374), and only thirteen times in simple narrator-text.

123–4 A 'welcome' speech; cf. 4.60–4; 5.87–91; 14.37–47; 16.23–9; and 17.41–4 (and cf. the variants in 13.356–60 and 24.386–411). Its typical elements are: greeting (χαῖρε), invitation to enter, promise of a meal, and announcement (of the topic) of the after-dinner conversation.

⁴⁷ Jones (1941) and Matsumoko (1981).

⁴⁸ Besslich (1966: 98, n. 23) and De Jong (1987a: 104).

126–9 We hear again of a spear being placed against the wall in 17.29, but only here of a rack for spears. This detail allows the narrator to remind us once again of the rightful owner of the palace (cf. 103–4n.). The narratees may also see the symbolism of Telemachus placing the stranger's spear – which from 99–101 they know to be Athena's spear 'with which she is wont to kill the men she is angry at' – next to those of Odysseus; in Book 22 goddess and hero will fight side by side against the Suitors.

130–5 The typical element of offering a guest a seat is given an individual twist: Telemachus seats 'Mentes' at a distance from the Suitors, both out of embarrassed hospitality (he does not want his guest's meal to be spoiled) and shrewdness (he wants to ask him about his father and keep any information for himself; cf. his whispering in 156–7 and dissimulation in 412–20).

Seating arrangements are always significant in the *Odyssey*: guests are given the place of honour next to the host (3.39, 469; 4.51; 7.169–71; and cf. 15.285–6); speakers about to embark on an intimate conversation sit opposite each other (5.198; 14.79; 16.53; 17.96; 23.89, 165); Telemachus, about to claim his position as Odysseus' successor, takes the seat of his father in the Ithacan assembly (2.14), and sits next to his father's friends in the marketplace (17.67–70); 'the beggar'/Odysseus offers his own seat to Telemachus, who courteously declines (16.42–8); the bad servant Melanthius sits opposite Eurymachus (17.256–7), and the good servant Eumaeus next to Telemachus (17.328–35).

134 Telemachus' focalization triggers the use of ὑπερφίαλος, 'overbearing', which belongs to the character-language †: twenty-two times in direct speech, five times in embedded focalization (here; 4.790; 13.373; 14.27; 20.12), once in simple narrator-text (20.291). In the *Odyssey* it is used mainly (sixteen times out of a total of nineteen occurrences) in reference to the Suitors.

136–51 The element of the meal displays another anomaly of Athena's visit: instead of one, we find two separate meals: one of Telemachus and 'the stranger' (136–43) and one of the Suitors (144–51).⁴⁹ The doubling is the logical result of the fact that Telemachus is keeping his guest at a distance from the Suitors (130–5), but at the same time it reveals their poor hospitality: they are too self-centred to bother about the guest (whom, as will be clear from 405–11, they *did* notice).

Telemachus offers the stranger a typical *festive meal: (i) preparation (136–8) and (ii) serving (139–43). For the Suitors, the narrator turns to an

⁴⁹ Arend (1933: 71–2), Scott (1971), and Reece (1993: 24–5, 51).