

Rough Notes to Homer's Odyssey in Translation

A major part of these notes have been - unashamedly - culled and adapted from W.B. Stanford's edition of the Odyssey (Macmillan). Something is also owed to Howard Clarke's The Art of the Odyssey (Prentice-Hall Inc.). For any other ideas I alone am responsible, and that includes typing errors and, no doubt, a mistake or two.!

For the first few books I was using the Penguin translation (E.V. Rieu); thereafter Lattimore's (Harper & Row).

The notes are not meant to be comprehensive, but merely explanatory and, occasionally, interpretative. It is assumed that the teacher will from time to time stop the reading in order to discuss in depth the major 'topics' that arise: e.g. guest-friendship, the Gods in Homer, the Heroic Code, the Telemachy, Eschatology etc.

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0. was not a voluntary traveller like the pirates, merchants or vagabonds of his time, or the later colonizers and explorers, nor was he a roaming victim of wanderlust or a romantic adventurer - but a weary ex-soldier yearning to reach home, yet with enough curiosity & vitality to take an interest in his enforced travels and encounters.
2. O. had commanded the men in the Wooden Horse.
- 11 'all the others': i.e. Menelaos, Neoptolemos and rest of Gk heroes from Troy.
- 22 'Aithiopians': a visit to this remote people is H.'s regular way of motivating the absence of a god from Olympus.
- 40 'Atreides': i.e. Agamemnon. The use of the patronymic here reminds us that Aegisthus had killed Agamemnon for the crime of Ag.'s father. ATREUS (he served up to his brother Thyestes his own two sons at a banquet: hence Curse on House of Atreus).
- 44 'gray-eyed': trad. epithet of Athene. Others think it should be translated 'owl-eyed' or 'Bright-eyed'. (Was Athene orig. worshipped in form of an owl-headed image?)
- 52 'Mt Atlas': story of Heracles and the golden apples of Hesperides.
- 68 'Earth Encircler': other titles of P. = Earth-Shaker, Blue-maned (the sea). P.'s anger against O. specially shown in V.285ff.
- 75 Poseidon known that O. is not destined to die at sea, but is determined to make things as grim as possible for him.
- 90 'Achaians': commonest name for Gks in H. Also calls them 'Argives' & 'Danaans'.
- 93 'Pylos': vide III.4.
- 105 'Taphians': race of pirates & sea-traders living (prob.) in Corfu.
- 109 'heralds': nobly born attendants, like mediaeval squires, who acted as heralds or envoys in war and as attendants on their lords at sacrifices and feasts.
- 128 'in a rack for spears': note 'foreshadowing'- this supply of spears will be used later in the killing of the Suitors in XXII.
- 136-143. This passage repeated 4 times later in Od. There is no suggestion of gluttony intended here, but rather a delight in ceremonies of hospitality. Here we have, in lines 96-327, the theme of entertaining a guest: arrival, bathing, feasting, questioning, offering of gifts.
- 150 A common formula.
- 154 'because they made him': H. is always careful to safeguard the honour and dignity of his own profession (Bard).
- 170ff. The Questions.
- 179 Note this introduction to what is simply a series of lies. There is no pretence in H. that either gods or heroes always told the truth. O. himself is always 'improvising'.
- 187 GUEST-FRIENDS: i.e. one with whom one has exchanged hospitality.
- 215 Telemachus' scepticism about his paternity is a curious but perhaps conventional attitude.
- 267 'upon the gods' knees': the general notion is of something lying untouched within reach of the god's deciding hand.
- 291 Funeral honours, so highly esteemed in heroic age as a means of prolonging fame after death, as well as a way of pacifying the spirit of the dead. Cf.239 sup.
- 298 ~~ORISTES~~ is to be Telemachus' pattern of filial piety.
- 312 & 316 OFFERING OF GIFTS.
- 334 The veil was not generally worn at home; the fact that Penelope wears it among the suitors probably shows that she regards them as strangers.
- 344 'through Hellas': = in this formula loosely the whole of N. Greece, while Argos here = S. of the Isthmus. First used = whole of Greece by Hesiod.
- 346 Note tone of irritation and rebelliousness in T.'s speech, and Penelope's shocked surprise in 360. Encouraged and inspired by Athene, T. takes the initiative, giving his mother orders and saying he is head of the household. He shows sudden tone of authority and strength; before Athene came he had still seemed only a boy.
- 363 Note how from thinking of her son's new-found manliness she begins to think of his father, Odysseus.
- 381 T. also surprises Suitors by his new decisiveness.
- 383 ANTINOUS: Suitor's ring-leader, usually behaves like a petulant and spoilt child.
- 389ff. T. answers Antinous' rudeness civilly and with subtlety: he says he would like to be king, and that 'it was not a bad thing' to be one. In other words T. supposes or pretends to suppose that Antinous' prayer (386-7) was intended for his good. But in 394ff he concedes that now O. is dead he would be willing to let another Ithacan become King, provided T. is allowed to rule his own household.
- 423ff. The book ends with 2 images 'Black evening' and sleep for the suitors - images connected with death - and 'flaring torches' and light for T. - used to symbolize victory.

429 Note quiet entrance of Eurykleia, a character who plays a notable part later in Od. The fact that both her father & grandfather are named shows she is of good family, though a servant, & emphasises her importance.

All the main characters have been introduced in Bk I.
Telemachus can be supposed to be 20-21, Penelope about 35 or older, Odysseus 37-42, Laertes (his father) 60-65.

ODYSSEY BOOK II

As always in Homer, note the interplay of formulaic passages with sections that advance the course of ~~the~~ action. It is a delicate interaction, for although formulaic passages, which can be anything from a half-line noun-epithet group (eg "rosy-fingered Dawn" II,1) to a passage of several lines (eg Telemachus retiring to bed, I,436-442), are a sort of 'breather' for poet and audience alike, nevertheless it is a part of Homer's technique that a stereotype such as the holding of an assembly (II,1-256) is itself deemed to advance the unfolding of the drama. The assembly outlines to us the policy, suggested to T. by Athene, that holds together the action of the Telemacheia (Bks I-IV), which is itself subservient to the main theme of the Odyssey (nostos Odysseos). It is this careful and artistic subordination of minor themes to the poet's overriding purpose that makes us call Homer a 'monumental poet'.

1-8 A formulaic passage describing the awakening of T. and the summoning of the assembly. Shining feet: i.e. glistening with oil (mocked by Aristophanes as equally apt for a sardine), a compliment in an age when socks were not worn.

11 Dogs get more favourable treatment in the Odyssey (more domestic) than in the Iliad (on a battle-field dogs devour the corpses).

12 Athene's effect on T. begins to make itself felt.

15-24 Digression on Aigyptios' family gets us no further forward, but 'fleshes out' the human background of the drama. His speech (25-34) is the rambling of an old man. For the Cyclops, see IX,288f.

40-79 Telemachus' speech. Homer's charge against the suitors (50-58) is that they transgress the laws of heroic morality: 'scandalised'(64), 'ashamed'(65), 'fear'(66) are imperatives in the Greek, appealing to the three main props of that morality, aides (reverence or shame), nemesis (disgrace, censure, later personified as goddess of divine wrath or vengeance), and fear of the gods. Themis(68) is the goddess of law and order or Justice, a personification of accepted moral practice.

Note that in lines 64ff. the addressees are no longer Aigyptios and the Ithakans but the suitors. Technically, the assembly ought to be composed of Ithakans alone; but dramatically it is used by the poet for the juxtaposition of two opposing views.

81 Telemachus' tears are those of a boy not yet a man. What age do you take T. to be? What is your evidence?

85-127 Antinoos' speech (not unreasonable).

110 Possibly contradicted at 24.146, where the stratagem is discovered just before O's return.

130-145 T's speech indicates his piety/fear of the malignant Furies, who punished offences against blood-relations (of Orestes, at least in Aeschylus). Note the contrast with the more attractive and anthropomorphic Olympian deities.

Do you think T's answer displays an indifference towards his mother?

Zeus sends omens as moral support for T. As that throughout H. the Olympian deities are additional actors in the drama, the same kind of thing as the human actors, only more so (Superman/Batman?). They are therefore also limited; for an amusing presentation of this, see Iliad V, 311-430.

154 The right, i.e. the East, the lucky side. Contrast perhaps Hebrew, where yamin (South) means right, gedem (East) means straight ahead, and 'acharon (West) means behind.

178-207 The speech of Eurymachos, in its impiety and intransigence (hubris), shows that he is riding for a fall (cf Agamemnon at Iliad I, 26-32)

206 Excellence (arete) is often translated by "virtue", in the medieval sense, i.e. not necessarily moral virtue, but the quality of 'being good at what one is for', so that the excellence/virtue of a knife is to cut. Ask yourself with relation to each character you meet whether H. thinks they have their appropriate arete.

209-223 T. emerging as an individual with a definite policy (and the offer of a compromise Lines 215-217 and 218-223 almost = I, 281-3 and 287-92.

Note also, not for the first time, the importance of burial in Homeric morality: a tomb gives fame and glory, the nearest approach to H. to what we understand by immortality.

225-241 NB the affectionate amusement of H's characterization of Mentor and many other old men. The claims of morality, stressed here, is an important theme in the Odyssey.

242ff. Contrast the aggressive and offensive wildness of Leokritos (hubris before a fall)

245 "haughty" is a poor and inappropriate translation for agauli ('illustrious'): id II 209. But in e.g. I, 106 & 144 and II 255, 299 'haughty' translates agenores (correctly).

255-6 Note the veiled threat or perhaps condescension of these lines: the alert reader will prick up his ears (see further the last 200 lines of Bk IV), knowing H's narrative technique of preparing his audience.

260 T's prayer. He is throughout conscious of his dependence on divine assistance. Note that A's speech in reply is in character for Mentor.

302 Antinoos' concluding attempt at reconciliation: 'smiling' (gelasas) should be 'laughing'. Ant. is rejected by T. (310ff.) who is learning to assert himself as an individual. Note that 320 displays bitterness arising out of his awareness of the contrast between what ought to be his as crown prince, now an adult, and the limitations imposed on him by his weakness. Cf. perhaps a schoolboy ready for university and frustrated by what he sees as the irritating pettiness of school rules.

325-330 A further hint of desperate deeds to come.

337-347 Formulaic respite from the drama.

349ff. Preparations for the expedition, taking up lines 289-91. A characteristic instance of H's technique of foreshadowing later activity. It is typical also of the poet's eye for unimportant detail, giving the audience a vivid sense that the drama is not totally remote from their own lives.

351ff. Contrapuntal technique: with true dramatic instinct H. shows us that T's expedition in quest of information and glory has another side to it (cf IV, 700ff); but H. is not a tragedian and therefore tells the alert reader (371) that all will be well. 382-406 Athene is here employed by the poet as little more than lubrication for the (Uninteresting but necessary) mechanics of the action.

388 This evocative (and formulaic) description occurs 7 times in Od., never in the Iliad. "Journeying ways" is not quite right; it should perhaps be "Streets" or "Ways".

416-34 Vivid formulaic passage ending the book, capturing the flavour of a sea-voyage, with an attractive blend of the poetic (eg 420-1, 434) and the mundane (eg 422-6). Note the libations: the gods who must be placated before any dangerous enterprise are much closer to the heart of Gk. religion than the amiable supermen we normally meet in H. (and whom he may have invented).

- 4 Pylos: 3 towns on W. coast of Peloponnese have this name - in Elis, in Triphylia, in Messenia. The first unlikely; Strabo says it is the second and Prof. Stanford agrees with him, strangely enough - despite C.W. Blegen's 1939 discovery of a large Mycenaean palace near Messenian Pylos
- Neleus: came from Iolcos in Thessaly (as did Jason), & therefore a Minyan (prehistoric tribe inhabiting Orchomenus in Boeotia & Iolcos & some families claiming Minyan descent in Laconia) & was reputed ancestor of the kings of Miletus & Colophon, & so specially venerated among the Ionians for whom Homer may have written the Odyssey; also claimed as an ancestor by Peisistratus tyrant of Athens who is said to have concerned himself with the Homeric poems.
- 6 'god of the sable locks': implying chthonic powers? The fact that black (instead of the usual white for supernal gods) bulls are sacrificed to P. may support this. Irony in any case that it is Poseidon, the one god who is against Odysseus.
- SACRIFICE: see also 40 &, for ritual, III 440-463.
- 17 NESTOR: characterization. N. son of Neleus, plays a leading part in Il. as the aged counsellor of the Greeks at Troy. He is represented as having lived through 3 generations (100 years), his prudence & his garrulity being proportionately increased. Note characterization in his fulsome, garrulous & kindly speech to T., beginning 103ff. (Even realizes he may be becoming a bore - 117ff).
- 36 Peisistratus: v. 4 above.
- 42 aegis: usu. represented as a goatskin - attribute of Zeus and Athene. Athene's has gorgon head in centre and bordered with snakes. Athene uses it to disperse enemies and protect friends (cf. Il. XV 229, 307); Zeus shakes it to put terror in hearts of Achaeans (Il. XVII 593ff).
- 52 'nicety': Gk word is dikaiois ('just') which in H. implies observance of custom & social convention, i.e. good manners rather than righteousness. Peisistratus has shown his good manners by his hospitable speech & by giving the cup to the 'older man' (Athene=Mentor) first.
- 62 'made its fulfilment sure': Athene in character of Mentor had pretended to be addressing her prayer to Poseidon, but took care to answer it herself.
- 69 'no breach of manners ...': to ask such a question before guests had been fed would have been contrary to heroic code.
- 73 'like roving pirates': piracy was as common as commerce in Homeric age & was NOT considered dishonourable.
- 91 Amphitrite's waves: in H. a name for the Sea itself; later Gk, a sea-goddess.
- 112 Antilochus: Nestor's son, 'the fastest runner of them all, & what a fighter too'. He was killed by Memnon. His ghost mentioned in Od. XI 463.
- 135 Athene's 'terrible wrath': Ajax, son of Oileus, caused the goddess' anger by assaulting the Trojan princess & prophetess Cassandra in her shrine. The Gks failed to punish this outrage, so Poseidon raised a storm at Athene's request.
- 167 Diomedes: outstanding Gk hero at Troy.
- 169ff 'to sail inside Chios': Normally Gks would have chosen this safer route as they avoided, when they could, voyages out of sight of land. But Zeus' sign made them cut across the open sea to Geraestus, most southerly point of Euboea.
- 190 Philoctetes: son of Poias, joined expedition to Troy. Left behind at Lemnos because his foot had become offensively gangrenous from a snake's bite; but his bow was indispensable (it had belonged to Heracles) for the capture of Troy, hence the embassy described in Sophocles' Philoctetes of Odysseus & Neoptolemus. See also Cd. VIII 219.
- 200 'as brave as Orestes': these lines identical with I 300-2. Orestes is to be T.'s pattern of filial piety, & courage. Note: T. given companion (Peisistratus etc) = O. + Pylades.
- 227 TELEMACHUS's pessimism: re his father's fate & his own future, cf. 240 inf.
- 267 Note emphasis on virtuous part played by the bard/minstrel as propaganda for H.'s own profession. For the story of Aegisthus, cf. Aesch. Creteia.

- 279 'Apollo let fly....': a formula for a man's sudden & painless death.
- 287 Malea: Cape Malea = the Cape Horn of Gk navigators.
- 310 Note oblique reference to Crestes' killing of his mother, perhaps because it did not suit the analogy with T.
- 327 Idea of truthfulness of wise and old (Athene's words to T. re Nestor) echoed here in Nestor's words to T. re Menelaus. Cf. Circe telling Od. to ask Teiresias. To ask Nestor had been some sort of test of daring, & T. passes it.
- 353 GUEST-GIFTS: In this case Athene asks for horses to be lent.
- 374 Nestor recognises Athene & orders a sacrifice (cf. sacrifice to Poseidon, 6sup).
- 464 Polycaste: bathes T. Women or girls regularly washed the men in Il. & Od. The Gks, as their statuary & vase-painting shows, found nothing necessarily immoral or indecent in nakedness.
- NOTE: Peisistratus is to Telemachus as Pylades was to Orestes: deliberate parallel.

OD. IV

- 5 'Son of Achilles': Neoptolemos.
- 29 Eteoneus' inhospitable suggestion evokes strong rebuke from Menelaus.
- 45 cf. Od. VII 84 of palace of Alcinous.
- 52ff cf. VII 172 ff.
- 73 'No mortal can compete.....' M. says this to avoid the phthonos of the gods.
- 121ff HELEN. Note this picture of the repentant, industrious, hospitable, domesticated, and still beautiful, Helen. Even in Iliad she is treated with great sympathy, & never harshly blamed except by herself (Il. III 173) for causing the Trojan War. Here Helen shows great control of the house old: cf. Penelope; shows intelligence in guessing T.'s identity, & also Odysseus', & intuition in sizing up situation and dealing with it.
- 140 Helen wonders whether as a hostess it would be more tactful to be frank or deceptive here. Remember deliberate lies, when not under oath or malicious, were regarded v. lightly in Gk society: of Athene's praise of Odysseus' made up story about himself in Od. XIII 256-295.
- 181 cf. 78 sup.
- 193ff Peisistratus is expressing mixed feelings: he is well-bred & knows it is proper to mourn the dead; but he cannot pretend that he feels deep personal grief for a brother whom he never even saw, & also he does not want the banquet to end in gloom. An example of Homer's gift for characterization.
- 209 More about NESTOR.
- 220 Helen's drug is thought to have been opium.
- 240ff This first story of Odysseus shows him as cunning and much-enduring. Note his beggar's disguise foreshadows his similar disguise at end of Odyssey. This story and the one told about the Trojan Horse by Menelaus (270ff) are both clearly intended to serve as paradigms for Telemachus.
- 261 'infatuation': This is atē = moral blindness sent by the gods. Note Helen tactfully does not mention Paris by name here.
- 292 Telemachus is still pessimistic about his father's fate.
- 306ff. cf. Il. 1 - 5; also 322-331 = III 92-101. More Formulae.
- 312 Telemachus is not asked why he had come till the next day (guest-friendship).

- 335ff This is the first developed simile in the Od. Lions often mentioned in Hom., nearly always in similes and metaphors. Hdt tells us they were still active in N. Greece and Thrace during Persian Wars. The lion is a favourite motif in Mycenaean art (cf. inlaid dagger-blades & Lion Gate at Mycenaean.)
- 351-536 Story of RETURN OF MENELAUS, a theme with 5 elements : cf with Odysseus' encounter with Teiresias and with Telemachus?
- 417ff The wizard's power of assuming many shapes is a commonplace of all fairy lore, esp. of water-magicians e.g. Glaucus, Merlin etc.
- 512 'But your brother....': Agamemnon. M & A. were sons of Atreus ('Atridae').
- 521ff Aeschylus' version of Agamemnon's death is very different.
- 556ff 'on an island, in...Calypso's home': looks forward to the next book.
- 563ff Description of Elysian Fields: v. different from Achaean Hades.
- 590 The guest-gifts. See also 615ff inf.
- 625-end. Abruptly we return to Ithaca. Events at Sparta are not resumed till Bk XV.
The plot against Telemachus; note bravura display of scene changes:-
 625 the Suitors; 675 Penelope; 763 Suitors; 737 Penelope; 842 Suitors.
- 640 'the swineherd': note this casual first mention of Eumaeus.
- 735 Dolion, Penelope's trusted servant who plays a part later in the poem.
- 733 'sit down beside him': note how Hom. vividly suggests in this short phrase the need for a long quiet talk to explain the situation to an old man.
- 750 Euryycleia: note her shrewd sympathy - she does not just say 'Don't cry', but gives her something definite to do.
- 770-1 Note how the self-centred ruthlessness of the Suitors is pithily expressed.
- 791 Another 'lion' simile: cf. 335 sup.
- 836 By leaving Penelope in suspense, Hom. heightens the pathos of her situation. The reader of course knows that Od. is safe and about to return, so he would not be wondering whether, but when and how.
- 847 The suitors' treacherous plot (though we know from V 27 inf. that it will fail) makes their ultimate fate all the more deserving.

OD. V

- 14 CALYPSO: Her description in V much resembles that of Circe in X; also resemblances between Odysseus' conduct in each book. Her name connected with Gk verb kaluptō = to hide. Acc. to Woodhouse this symbolizes Od. being hidden away from life for 7 years; and perhaps also Calypso is preventing Od. from revealing his true self?
- 28 HERMES: appears in Od. as messenger of the gods (usu. IRIS in Il.) and as the escort of departed spirits (psychopompos): cf XI 626 and XXIV 1 ff.
 NOTE Second Divine Assembly as if the first one (in Bk I) had not existed. It had already been agreed to send off Hermes to Ogygia (I 84), but the decision is here repeated. (Homeric recitation made it impossible to picture events taking place simultaneously, but only one after another in time: hence need to repeat Olympus scene at beginning of second quartet).
- 13 'The Giant-killer': traditionally 'Slayer of Argus' but Hom. not likely to have known legend. Lattimore simply transliterates the name.
- 50 Pieria: mountainous district in Macedonia, later considered home of the Muses.
- 55 OGYGIA: attempts to identify it have ranged from Malta (Cozo island) to the island

of Pharos (where Menelaus saw Proteus) - & even to W. of Britain! But more likely an imaginary place, like Scherie (cf. VI 8)

NOTE striking simile of sea-mew (Lattimore, 'shearwater', & descriptive passage as a whole (50-74).

97 'As one immortal to another....' Hermes implies that since gods have omniscience she doesn't really need to ask. Hermes' whole speech shows delicacy in telling her the bad news that Od. must be released.

103 Note how tactfully Hermes implies that the order is final: Calypso appreciates this (see 137ff inf.).

118 Calypso is referring to the jealousy of male deities against female ones. There is a suggestion that the gods like 18th c. aristocrats were prepared to overlook secret liaisons w. inferior beings (in this case men), but not open marriages.

139 Calypso petulantly says that Od. can take himself off if he likes, but that she won't help him: she gives as excuse that she has no facilities to transport him: in fact she doesn't want him to go.

161 Calypso pretends to Od. that she is quite ready to send him off provided he builds his own boat. But in 203ff she obliquely tries to persuade him to stay. Calypso's characterization is both effective and subtle.

181 'Lovely C. smiled....': because she knows there's no one like a trickster for suspecting trickery. (182)

210ff Note Calypso's comparison of herself w. Penelope & Od. tactful reply.

244 The description suggests more a box-like boat than a raft.

NOTE Hermes' intervention was only helping Od. since Od. already had the will to leave,; Hermes not merely magicing away difficulties.

285 POSEIDON shook his head - in anger.

290ff STORM SCENE: power of the elements. Od. seen struggling against odds - 'much-enduring' etc. (polytlas).

309 'over Achilles' corpse': in his extreme danger Od. recalls his previous greatest danger, when he held back the Trojans from ~~the~~ corpse of Achilles (cf. XXIV 37ff.)

333 Ino/Leucothoe's intervention - folktale element. Od's refusal to make use of Ino's veil (scarf) shows his desire for self-sufficiency & his strength of character; it also shows his suspicious nature: cf 181 sup. of Calypso.

368 SIMILES are more frequent in this book than anywhere else in Bks I - XII. All but one (see 432) are taken from home & countryside, to contrast with Od.'s plight on the waves.

432 Octopus is common motif in Minoan/Mycenaean art.

445 When you didn't know the correct name or cult title of the god, formula of 'O lord, whoever you are' was used.

447 'suppliant's rights': protected by Zeus Xenios.

477 Od. curls up under an olivetree, the symbol of Athene & of fertility, rebirth & regeneration: Od. in a way is about to be reborn again.

488 Homely simile illustrates Od.'s efforts to preserve a spark of warmth in himself. NOTE peaceful ending after violence of the Storm.

Bk V remarkably complete in itself, almost an epyllion.

VI.3 Scherie: prob. imaginary place (cf. V.55 on Ogygia). Most favoured identification is w. Corcyra (Corfu), first found in Thucydides I.25 - tho' Homer does not call S. an island. The luxurious living of the Phaeacians may show traces of oriental, Mycenaean or Minoan civilizations.

17 NAUSICAA: W.J.Woodhouse says many resemblances between the conventional fairy-story - in which a stranger arrives at a far-off country, meets a princess, approaches her parents, defeats local suitors in a trial of strength, and finally marries the princess - and the events in Od. VI-VIII. He suggests that Homer deliberately used this ancient theme ('Winning a Wife') just so far as it suited his purpose and then quietly let Nausicaa drop out (VIII.457ff) so that Odysseus might proceed on his way home. This theory does account for several incidents and helps to explain the unique freshness and virginal charm of N., who might have been a very minor character. That N. may be a self-portrait by the 'authoress' of the Odyssey is an ingenious but somewhat far-fetched theory of the writer Samuel Butler.

The innocent, naive N. contrasts with Penelope who is experienced. The attraction of N. & of the dream-like Phaeacia (ideal harbour, gardens etc) are a temptation to Od. - a more subtle attraction than Calypso who offered sex and immortality. She offered a mild threat to Od.'s return: it is difficult to tell whether Od. really falls for N. Are lines 149ff his true feelings, or contrived exaggeration? Prob. the latter. At any rate N. is shown to be a worthy match for Od. as she alone stands her ground (139ff).

57 'Father dear...': characterization - N. shown as child like, unaffected, fond of her father, coaxing him, but by no means candid (she hides all thought of her wedding and pretends to be thinking only of her father and brothers).

107 N. compared to ARTEMIS here and in Od.'s speech (149ff). Large stature was considered by the Gks an essential quality for beauty.

130 NOTE Lion SIMILIE: of IV.335 sup.

142-7 A touch of humour here? It is not that Od. is embarrassed - simply that he fears his motives may be misinterpreted. So he deliberately sacrifices the weapon of supliancy in favour of a brilliant oratorical appeal.

149ff ODYSSEUS' SPEECH: masterly tact. Od. begins w. highest possible compliments to N.'s beauty and politely congratulates her parents; then deftly switches to the topic of her marriage; then slips in some information about himself- he has travelled widely, has suffered much and fears more; he appeals for pity and prays she may be rewarded w. a husband and a harmonious home. NOTE emphasis on N.'s virginity and marriageability. "If any speech," says Howard W. Clarke in the Art of the Odyssey, "at all is possible for a naked hero in front of a young girl, then Od. has made it, and when he goes on to tell her his troubles and beg her assistance, we know that N. knows that this is the kind of man she can bring home to mother. Which is precisely what she does..." Cf. Nausicaa's equally delicate and subtle speech in reply (275ff).

163 N. compared to a young sapling ('palm', Lattimore): appropriate and effective. 197ff. A trace of humour in portrait of the fragile young girl naively lecturing the battered veteran on divine dispensations?

203ff THE PHAEACIANS: a typical fairyland people, or something more? Do they belong to the Heroic Age of Ithaca, Pylos and Sparta? There is no stress in their lives, and there are odd contradictions: they have fine ships and are famous sailors, but they have nothing to do w. other people. They prefer to live in a kind of splendid isolation, a sort of suspended animation where they can avoid contamination w. the rest of the world. Of course it is hard to condemn the Phaeacians after their hospit. lity to Od., but in the superficial attractiveness of their ways they represent fully as much a danger to Od. as do the Cyclopes.

- The Cyclopes may be undercivilized, but the Phaeacians are obviously over-civilized. Their life has no promise, no dynamism: to remain w. them would drain Od. of his heroism by depriving him of any chance or need for action - a spiritual death equal to that Od. would have experienced if he had stayed w. Calypso.
- 231ff SIMILES: Od. curls like the hyacinth petals, his figure enhanced by Athene's magic as is silver by the process of gilding.
- 275ff NAUSICAA'S SPEECH (words put in mouth of a hypothetical Phaeacian): she obliquely gives her name, hints at possibility of Od. marrying her, suggests he might reveal his name, flatters him again, renews her hint of possibilities, implies she loves no one yet, that she is a person much sought after and that she would consider only honourable proposals. Then N. seems to take over as a goddess, giving instructions cf. Calypso.
- 310ff Why is ARETE approached rather than ALCINOUS? More inclined to pity? Or perhaps Arete queen in her own right, and Alcinoos only her consort?

Od. VII

- 20 'My friend and father' (Lattimore): O. was then something over 40, which would seem an advanced age to a child: Athene is acting her part well.
- 33 'do not welcome visitors....': elsewhere Phaeacians described as v. hospitable.
- 36 'swift as a bird or thought itself' (SIMILE): There are only 2 other similes based on a psychological concept in Hom. (Il. XV. 80 & XXII 199). Generally Hom.'s comparisons are specific and concrete.
- 32ff O's wonder at the beauties of the palace resembles that of Telemachus at Menelaus' house (IV 43ff). For possible Minoan or oriental features see GAUNT Surge and the Thunder on VII 78-132.
- 106 'like the tall poplar's leaves' (SIMILE): the comparison is between the continuous movement of the lightly hung leaves and the busy hands of the women.
- 107 'the soft olive-oil drips....': the oil may be the natural sheep's oil in the wool which would be pressed out in the processing, or else (as Rieu and Lattimore both take it) olive oil applied to the wool either to soften it for spinning or to make it cohere in weaving.
- 122ff Note symmetrical arrangement of vineyard: oriental or Minoan influence. Cf. 82
- 225 'Once let me see my own estate, my servants': O. implies that he is a man of property.
- 241 O. answers Arete's last question first, and after a long preamble does not mention her daughter until l. 290. He does not tell his name or country till IX 19ff.
- 301 '.....replied the resourceful O.': this is more here than a stock epithet since O. is about to use a deceptive half-truth in 304 and a full lie in 305-6 below. Nausicaa had told him to follow w. her handmaidens only as far as the city boundary, and it was at her desire that he stayed behind there.
- 317ff 'tomorrow, let us say': it has been observed that Alcinoos talks like Polonius (in Hamlet) at times.
- 323 Rhadamanthus, brother of Minos of Crete, also mentioned in IV 564 sup. They were both judges in the underworld. For Tityos see Od. XI 575ff.

- 41 'sceptred kings': 12 in Phaeacia - perhaps lesser tribal rulers who, after their tribes had been subordinated into a larger political unity, had retained their rank under a High King, here Alcinous.
- 64ff THE BLIND BARD: the legend of Hom.'s own blindness may have been derived from here; or it may have been a fact - cf. Milton. The blindness of bards prob. symbolizes that he is guided more by inner sight (i.e. visual memory and imagination) than by what he sees directly w. his eyes. NOTE that the presence of a bard who was well informed about the Trojan saga ensures that when O. announces his name in Bk IX he will be duly honoured as a man already famous even in Phaeacia.
- 76ff THE QUARREL OF ODYSSEUS AND ACHILLES: Lay I. This may refer to the prophecy by Delphic Oracle (Pytho) that Agamemnon's army wd. destroy Troy when the noblest of the Greeks had quarrelled. After Hector's death, Achilles and O. quarrelled as to whether the city would be taken better by valour or by intelligence, the second being O.'s preference. The oracle in fact referred to the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon but Ag. erroneously understood it of the quarrel between Achilles and O. Demodocus's first LAY prepares the way for Bks XI and XXIV.
- 94 'But the king could not help observing....': Note sensitiveness and tact shown by Alcinous here and in what follows
- 102 PHAECIAN GAMES: for a more elaborate athletic competition see II.XXIII.
- 134 Description of O.'s physique is vague here. In II. III 193 we are told O. is shorter by a head than Agamemnon but broader in the shoulders and chest.
- 147 '.....an athlete, for nothing makes a man so famous for life': Hom. of course meant in time of peace, for wartime valour was always valued more highly. In any case early athletics were originally a training for war as well as a display of skill, strength and beauty.
- 161ff 'some skipper of a merchant crew...': here we have the typically aristocratic and Gk scorn of the man who earns his living by trade.
- 219 Philoctetes and the bow: O.'s boast in his prowess w. the BOW foreshadows what is to happen later in Ithaca.
- 235 Alcinous, again the tactful host, relieves the embarrassed silence.
- 246ff These are the lines that made the Phaeacians proverbial for soft and luxurious living. Note Alcinous ignores his boasts of 102-3.
- 266ff THE BALLAD OF ARES AND APHRODITE: Lay II. This lay has a languour and an irreverence fully in keeping w. the atmosphere of Phaeacia; yet in its account of adultery discovered and deservedly punished - for the moral is good, even if the tone is rather light-hearted, frivolous, witty and amusing - it distils and concentrates the themes of Love and Justice that are central to the Odyssey. The events in the Ballad, like those of the Agamemnon motif, are slanted towards the situation in Ithaca. ARES=Aegisthus=the Suitors. APHRODITE is somewhere between the faithful Penelope and the unfaithful Clytemnestra. Hephaistos is deceived, as is Agamemnon, but he punishes the intruder, as does O. The parallels are not mechanically exact, but in general the scheme holds. What seems at first ornamental turns out to be functional.
- So the experience w. the Phaeacians is in general an important stage in O.'s return to Ithaca. It foreshadows the events of his return. The Phaeacian banquet recalls O.'s past and links it w. his future.
- 282 Cythereia: Aphrodite so called because acc. to the legend she first came ashore at Cythera after her birth from the foam (Gk aphros).
- 301 Lemnos: island on which Hephaistos fell when hurled from heaven (II. I 590ff).
- 351ff The giving and receiving of sureties for a third party was risky in Ancient Greece.
- 457ff Is the parting scene between Nausicaa and O. somewhat of an anti-climax? Certainly there is a certain ruthlessness in Hom.'s treatment of N. But perhaps the gentle fade-out of N. could only be achieved in this minor key.

- 475 O. cuts off the meat himself for the bard - an unparalleled act but one of an exceptional man. WOODHOUSE thinks the act is a vestige of the bridegroom's right at his wedding feast, just as, he claims, O.'s bath was originally a pre-nuptial bath.
- 479ff Note how here Hom., as often in the Od., strives to enhance the prestige of the bard.
- 492ff THE MAKING OF THE WOODEN HORSE: Lay III. Origin of the stratagem of the Horse explained as either a fanciful development from the use of animal-headed battering rams, or as a magical device intended to break the divinely protected ring-wall of holy Troy. Cf hidden O. in Ithaca.
- 517 Deiphobus: after the death of Hector, D. became leader of the Trojans.
- 522 Note how even the bravest and most hard-bitten Homeric heroes will give way to tears; not just Telemachus. Note the rambling half-ornamental SIMILE.
- 569 Nausithous' prophecy comes true in XIII 159ff.
- 548 Even Alcinous' patience is beginning to become a trifle exhausted as he
- 586 asks O. to tell him who he is, once & for all. The device of not letting O. reveal his identity till Bk IX leads to artistic tension & suspense, & foreshadows the appearance of the disguised O. - his identity hidden to the Suitors - in the palace at Ithaca.

NOTE how in Bk VIII unity of structure is achieved by the 3 Lays.

ODYSSEY 1X - X11

1. The world of folktale
2. O.'s intelligence shown in triumphing over his adversaries; not just by strength.

Od. IX

- 19 O names himself (part of hospitality theme). Note Homeric heroes did not suffer from convention by which an eminent person must pretend he is a nobody. Aeneas in Aeneid goes even further: Sum pius Aeneas... fama super aethera notus I.
- 39 Raid on the CICONIANS. O's men stupidly refuse to leave, so suffer: a frequent idea in H.
- 60 12 ships, so 72 of his men lost in all. After this O's men are diminished gradually like the Ten Little Nigger Boys, till in Bk 12 he is left all alone.
- 80 Malea and Cythera are the last clearly identifiable places in O's wanderings. After this he leaves the sphere of geography and enters Wonderland.
- 106 Note the criteria of civilisation which the Cyclops lacked: agriculture, legal assemblies, a communal organisation higher than the family.
- 116 Cyclop's paradisaical island contrasted w. lawlessness of Cyclops. Though O. uses violence himself (killing goats, blinding Polyphemus) he is less violent than they - his behaviour is a mean between contrasting things. Did H. introduce this island as a device for putting O's other 11 ships safely out of the Cyclops' reach?
- 229 Note O's motives - curiosity and acquisitiveness - v. typical of himself and many later Greeks. Again at 267 when O. tells Polyphemus that he hopes ^{he} will receive a gift from him. O. exposes himself and his men to unnecessary danger 3 times: 1 in his decision to go to cave; 2 when he shouts back to provoke Polyph. and stone is thrown; 3 when he persists in shouting again.

- 252- Formula, cf. III 71-4: contrast Nestor's polite postponement of such questions till
 255 after his guests had been made comfortable w. the Cyclops' boorish directness here.
 It bodes ill for his future treatment of his xenoi. In fact in the Cyclops episode we
 see the theme of HOSPITALITY perverted: on O's arrival, there is no host, so O. and
 his men help themselves to food; Polyph. arrives, asks for identification first; he
 then eats O's men, instead of providing food! ; then after the wine etc. given by O.
 to his "host", Polyph. asks O's name and is told a lie - 'Nobody'; he promises O.
 a false xeneion (guest-gift) - that he will eat him last. As O. leaves in his ship
 (after calling on Polyph. twice) Polyph. says he will give him a guest-gift, but none
 is mentioned.
- 391 Note the reference to the iron age in the simile.
- 414 O's resourcefulness, wit and quality of mind (cf. also 422) saves him; Polyph.'s
 stupidity (e.g. over 'Nobody') is the cause of his downfall.
 Note throughout the whole incident how unusually boastful O. is - presumably because
 it is the greatest triumph of his skill over tremendous physical force:
 (cf. also 281, 419, 502ff, 525).
- 504 O. tells him his name now: why? Boastfulness, and also the motif of the fulfilled
 oracle. Perhaps Polyph. must know O's name to curse him effectively.
 P.'s curse causes O. great trouble in the sequel.
- 520 Is it a touch of sympathy for the blinded monster that induces H. to mention the
 possibility of a cure? O., still angry because of his devoured men, feels none, as
 his answer shows.
- 555- Rest of the book is mostly formulaic, a quiet close to the foregoing dangers and
 end anxieties and an interval before the worse dangers to follow.

Od. X

- 1 This imaginary island of Aeolus has been variously located, the favourite site being
 one of the Lipari Is., NW of Sicily.
- 31 O. thwarted by lack of sleep for 9 days, drops off and his men open the Bag. Thus O.
 has been prevented from exercising his qualities of mind.
- 32ff Laestrygonian episode. Similarities to Cyclops story.
- 135 Island of Aeaea: where? Virgil places it at Monte Circeii, N of Naples.
- 136 CIRCE ranks w. Penelope, Nausicaa and Calypso as one of the outstanding female
 characters in the Od. She is a strange mixture of magic, symbolism and realism.
 Much in common w. Calypso, though more potent, and evil, similar situation: palace
 in woods, sings at loom, wants O. to be her husband, both offer life of luxury and
 ease. O. stays a year, then agrees to move on.
 The Circe episode (X 133-XII 150) frames the Underworld Scene (Bk XI).
- 171 O. very proud of the huge stag he had killed. 'The strength of the sun was upon him'
 (stag, 160); Circe was daughter of the Sun (Helios), so stag could be said to
 symbolize Circe's strength. Thus O. in killing stag foreshadows his later victory
 over Circe. It is O's concern for his men that leads him to hunt down stag.
- 205 EURYLOCHUS is the only fully characterized of O's men. He is leader of any opposition
 to O. (cf. 266, 429ff, XII 278): he led the fatal raid on the Oxen of the Sun (XI 339ff):
 he was a close relative of O. by marriage (441); he had one of O's qualities -
 foresight. (cf. 232 he suspected treachery).
- 236 Circe's 'wand' is simply a stick to control her menagerie of animals; she is not a
 northern witch or fairy waving her magic wand, but "a semi-oriental potion-

- enchantress, like Medea" (Stanford). It is her drugs that are magical.
- 239 O's men accept Circe on her terms and are turned into animals, not having exercised their minds; O. on the other hand takes advantage of the offered luxury on his own terms and is not turned into an animal.
- 305 MOLY plant, prob. imaginary though said to suggest (because of its white flower and dark root) garlic, which was widely used in antiquity as a protective charm, especially it seems, against vampires.
- 343-4 = V 178-9 where it refers to Calypso.
- 368ff The familiar formula, even down to the "grave housekeeper".
- 395 When Circe turned them back into men, they "looked younger than they had been and taller for the eye to behold and handsomer by far": presumably a compensation for their suffering.
- 483 'the promise you gave me': H. has not mentioned this before.
- 491 'and reach the house of Hades and of revered Persephone': O. never actually reaches this in a literal sense (see Bk XI), but stays on the shore of Oceanos.
- 528 The command to O. to keep his head turned away from what was happening in a common folklore motif: cf V 350 re Ino's veil.

3 NOTE how the encounter w. Teiresias harks back to the Menelaus /Telemachus story. Cf. Bk IV (Proteus etc) - island, journey, advice of old man, ritual test/sacrifice, information given, return to island, building tomb, setting off. Or rather how the earlier "tests" foreshadow this one.

Od XI THE NEKUIA

A visit to the Land of the Dead is customary for great heroes (cf. Gilgamesh, Orpheus, Heracles, Theseus). Lines 565-627 considered by many to be not genuine.

There are some difficult religious problems in the book. Only here in H. is there clear evidence of a ghost-cult involving trench-digging (25), libations (26), and blood-offerings (36) to the spirits of the dead - a ritual which seems to derive its elements from an age when burial (not cremation as elsewhere in H.) was customary. It is not easy to determine what exactly H. meant by psychai (souls): they are described as being like smoke (Il. XXIII 100) or a shadow or a dream (Od. XI 207): they have no flesh, bones or sinews (XI 219) or strength (XI 29); they are more than mere phantoms, images (XI 213); usually their only utterance is a shrill squeak (Il. XXIII 101, cf. Od. XXIV 7), but they can speak after having drunk blood. They are not simply immaterial souls, for they can be seen and heard; yet they are not substantial enough to be grasped (XI 206ff). They have memories, emotions, feelings. They can be thought of as dim, querulous, ineffective counterparts of the living, neither the powerful malevolent ghosts of later legends nor such purely spiritual souls as Plato conceived. Remember that H. is interested mainly in their poetic uses, not their eschatological significance.

The poetic value of the book has been well assessed by F.M. Stawell (quoted by Stanford):

"Everything is summed up here in this mighty book of the Nekuia, Book XI, placed as a Greek would place it, near the centre of the poem: the care of O. for his comrades and his crew, the intense love of mother, father, wife and child, the magic of the fair women famous in the story, the prowess of the stalwart heroes who had been his mates at Troy, the fallen greatness of Agamemnon brooding over the tragedy of his own

return, the announcement of the struggle that awaits O. himself, and above all the mysterious prophecy of what is to happen when that struggle is over and past...." Note too the sombrely noble scene w. Achilles and the proud silence of Ajax.

- 15 Description of the Cimmerians may be based on travellers' tales of northern regions w. their long winter nights and fogs.
- 25 a pit dug for offerings to the dead, opening, as it were, an entrance to their subterranean dwellings. Seems to imply burial, not cremation which is the regular practice in H. H. never directly refers to burial (pre-hellenic custom) but often uses expressions implying it. In the post-Homeric age, both methods, cremation and burial coexist. The important thing was, it seems, to cover the body, burned or not, with earth. Cf. Il. XXIII 70.
- 36 Stanford quotes Yeats writing of W. Ireland beliefs: "Blood is a great gatherer of evil spirits. To cut your hand going into a (prehistoric) fort is said to be v. dangerous."
- 38- This famous and noble passage imitated twice by Virgil (Geo. IV 475, Aen. VI 306ff)
- 43 And finds echoes in Milton's description of the fallen angels: "Thick as autumnal leaves, that strew the brooks/ In Vallombrosa, where Etrurian shades..."
- 51 For Elpenor's death, see X 552ff. (Virgil imitated this incident in Aen. VI 337ff where Palinurus' ghost meets Aeneas in Hades.) E. came first because he'd so recently died. He could speak without drinking the blood because his corpse was still uncremated.
- 72 A Homeric hero was burnt like a Viking on a funeral pyre in full panoply and with many of his cherished possessions (either in case he might want them in Hades or to prevent his psyche from returning in search of them). Cf. Il. XXIII 161ff.
- 80 O's answer is curt. Cf his answer to the soul of Agamemnon (XI 463-4).
- 35 Autolycus, son of Hermes and grandfather of O. was famous for his skill in thieving. The postponement of O's interview with his mother Anticleia would arouse the audience's interest. His decision to hear Teiresias' prophecy first is typical of an early Greek - the interests of the community or group before those of the individual (cf Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia).
- 90 Teiresias belongs to the pre-Trojan War epoch - the Theban cycle of legends (w. Cadmus, Oedipus, Creon etc).
- 96 Teiresias, being specially privileged, does not have to drink the blood before he can speak, but he wants to do so as a strengthening tonic.
- 121 Note strange end prophesied for O. - the winnowing fan, etc.
- 131 Note the offering of ram, bull and boar (cf. Rom. suovetaurilia) instead of usual black bull (see III 6).
- 144 His mother's shade had merely been attracted to the blood, and could not recognise or speak to anyone till she had drunk of it.
- 198 Note pathos and perhaps a touch of bitterness in Anticleia's repetition of O's cool words in 172-3, and the powerful rhetorical climax in what follows. "In all literature", says Stanford, a mother can rarely have spoken more movingly.
- 206 Cf Achilles' effort to embrace the ghost of Patroclus in Il. XXIII 97ff, imitated by Virgil in Aen. II 792-4 and VI 700-2 where A. tries to embrace ghost of Creusa and Anchises respectively:

Ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum:
Ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago,
Par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.

- 225ff Here begins the mask or pageant of beautiful women.
All the women mentioned here are of Theban or Minyan ancestry (except those in 298ff and 321ff). 298 Leda: 321 Phaidra, Prokris, Ariadne.
- 256 Jason and the Argonauts sailed from Iolcus.
- 269 Megara was Heracles' first wife. Creon: not the brother-in-law of Oedipus.
- 271 Epikaste = Jocasta. Note H. does not mention Sphinx or Oed.'s self-inflicted blindness.

- 220 Erinyes: cf II 135.
- 281 Chloris was wife of Neleus and mother of Nestor. Her father Amphion was a Minyan king of Orchomenos (chief branches of the prehistoric tribe of the Minyans inhabited Orchomenos in Boeotia and Iolcus in Thessaly.)
- 291 Melampus was the most famous prophet of his time. Later legend made him skilled in language of animals and able to appreciate the conversations of woodworms in the timbering of his room.
- 298 Leda, wife of Tyndareos, had 3 children by him, Castor, Polydeukes (Pollux) and Clytaemnestra. By Zeus (disguised as a swan) she had Helen.
- 303 Zeus allowed each of the 'Heavenly Twins' the privilege of being alive in turn on every second day while the other lay in his grave.
- 315 Ossa and Pelion are mountains in Thessaly.
- 321ff Phaidra, daughter of Minos (v.568 inf.) was wife of Theseus and stepmother of Hippolytus. Prokris was daughter of Erechtheus, king of Athens, unfaithful wife of Cephalus who killed her unintentionally. Aradne, Phaidra's sister, helped Theseus in the Cretan labyrinth and set off w. him to Athens, but was deserted by him in Dia (325). There she was killed by Artemis on Dionysos's indictment (acc. to Hom.); but in later legend she became D.'s bride without disaster. Theseus himself was the greatest of Attic legendary heroes, founder of Athens, and proverbially faithful to his friend Perithoos (cf. Horace Odes IV.7). Dionysos, divine son of Zeus and Semele (II. XIV 325), was persecuted by Lycurgus, king of Edones in Thrace (II. VI 130ff): v. also Od. XXIV 74. He is only mentioned these 4 times in H., w. no hint of his importance as a much venerated god.
- 326 Maera, nymph of Artemis, broke her vow of chastity and Artemia killed her. Clymene prob. wife of Phylakus and mother of Iphikles (cf. 290). Eriphyle, wife of Amphiaras great-grandson of Melampus (v. 291^{sup.}). was bribed w. a golden necklace by Polyneikes, son of Oedipus, to join the Seven against Thebes, tho' he knew he was doomed to die on the expedition.
- 333-4 Very striking lines: cf. Virgil Aeneid II 1 Conticuere omnes (but not imitation).
- 335ff. Arete, who has been cautious in her attitude to O. till now, has now decided she likes his appearance and way of thinking, and so sets about treating him generously. She hints that the Phaeacian princes should contribute more, and they do (cf. Od. XIII 1ff. inf.)
- 342 Echeneos: cf. VII 155 sup.
- 356ff Here O. either through greed or tactfulness allows a further postponement of his departure for home, tho' earlier he had wanted to leave as soon as possible.
- 98
- 410ff. Note that in H. Clytaimnestra is represented as only an accomplice to Aegisthus, in contrast w. dominant role given to her by the tragedians; tho' solely responsible for Kassandra's murder (422).
- 441ff. Note Agamemon's characteristic (for a Greek) condemnation of the whole feminine sex here, But he makes an exception of Penelope, thus (for H.'s purpose) emphasizing the nobility of her character.
- 467ff. Patroklos: see Iliad. Antilochus: v. IV 187 sup. Ajax (Aias): v. 543 inf. Note this group of ghosts does not drink the blood, tho' Agamemnon had if 390 is genuine. Did H. adopt this device to spare Ajax the humiliation of drinking the blood in O's presence?
- 474 Achilles implies that O's journey to Hades will be his supreme tour de force. Note the tone of critical familiarity in the phrase: 'O is always up to something'.
- 488ff Note the attitude to existence after death (see note on Eschatology). Stanford contrasts to Milton's Satan - 'Better to reign in hell than serve in Heaven'.
- 492 Achilles' son Neoptolemos: see 506 inf.
- 519 Telephos (king of Mysia)'s wife Astyoche kept her son Eurypylos from fighting w. the Trojans till she was bribed with a golden vine by her father Priam - the 'womanish presents'. There was also a story that the Greeks could not take Troy without aid of Telephos: Achilles therefore who had wounded T. cured him and T. pointed out the road the Gks had to take.

- 522 For Memnon see Od. IV 187 sup: he killed Antilochos. 'This was the finest man...':
i.e. Eurypylos.
- 524 For the Trojan Horse see Od. VIII 492ff. sup.
- 538 Note Achilles' noble exit : 'stalked away in long strides across the meadow of asphodel...'
- 543 Ajax of Salamis, son of Telamon, competed unsuccessfully w. O. for the arms of Achilles. Ajax, when judged inferior to O., killed himself (cf. Sophocles' Ajax).
- 550ff. O. gives a generous tribute to his rival's merits - his words are charged w. genuine regret - but it is too late: Ajax is inflexibly hostile, and 'gave no answer'. The brief picture of his silent withdrawal illustrates H.'s skill in expressing profound emotion with a single touch. Virgil imitates this in his scene between Dido and Aeneas (Aen. VI 469ff.).
- 563-627 This is a much suspected passage. The activities of Minos, Orion and Heracles contrast strongly w. the ineffectiveness of the previous ghosts and imply conditions more like the Elysian Fields (v. Od. IV 563 sup.) where full bodily powers were retained. Up to this O. had been sitting near the shore of the Land of Ghosts; here we find him suddenly viewing inner regions and varied scenes. More significantly, nowhere else does H. show a belief in punishment after death (v. note on Eschatology). Stanford and others believe the passage is an interpolation, perhaps from Orphic sources.
- 568 For Minos, son of Zeus and Hera and brother of Rhadamanthys, see Od. VII 323 sup. He gave his name to the 'Minoan' Age. Thucydides (Bk I 4) considered him a historical figure and many modern historians are inclined to agree.
- 571 'wide-gated house of Hades': i.e. ample to receive the crowds of ghosts flocking in.
- 573 For Orion's killing by Artemis v. Od. V 121-4.
- 576 Tityos suffers same fate as Prometheus.
- 580 Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis: cf. 318 sup. Pytho = Delphi.
- 582 Tantalos, father of Pelops, abused the hospitality of the gods and was fittingly punished.
- 593 Sisyphos, proverbially the most cunning among the pre Homeric legendary figures. H. does not mention the tradition that Odysseus was his son. Cause of punishment is uncertain.
- 610ff. Heracles was the most popular and widely worshipped of Greek heroes. Regarded generally as spurious lines, perhaps inserted to reconcile passage w. later belief in apotheosis of Heracles (cf. Il. XVIII 117ff. for Heracles' normal death and mortality). If he is immortal, what is his ghost doing in Hades anyway?
- 620ff. The one 'far worse than I' was Eurystheus, for whom, owing to Hera's jealousy, Her. had to perform his Twelve Labours, incl. the capturing of Gerberos, watchdog of Hades.
- 631 Perithoös and Theseus : see 321 sup.
- 634 O. is afraid that among the hosts of shades some appalling nightmarish spectre may be thrust out at him. Elsewhere in Bk XI the more fearful aspects of Hades are not emphasised (except in identical line 43 sup.) but chiefly the pathos of being dead.
- 640 Note that they simply sail away from the Land of the Dead: there is no suggestion of any ascent from infernal regions: cf. 568 sup.

NE Teiresias, being specially privileged (cf. X 493), did not have to drink the blood; nevertheless he did so (XI 96): why? It has been suggested he wanted to drink it as a strengthening tonic (cf. stories of vampires). Impossible to be certain on this point. Confusion may be due to H.'s drawing on various sources with resultant inconsistency.

- 10 Does Elpenor serve as a human sacrifice to allow Odysseus to come back from Hades? Quite a plausible theory when taken w. Circe's words (21-22):
'Unhappy men, who went alive to the house of Hades/so dying twice....'
For Elpenor's burial, cf. that of Misenus in Virgil Aen. VI 212ff.
Note again how whole Hades episode is framed by Elpenor's death and burial.
Note again how O. has to return to the place from which he set out, and must bury someone (Elp.) - just as Menelaus had to go back and build a tomb for Agamemnon (IV 584).
- 39 Sirens: as beautiful destructive creatures of the water they resemble the German Lorelei and northern mermaids. They may be a personification of the hidden dangers of the calm sea. They are characterised by their magically attractive song (44) and their superhuman knowledge of the past and the future (183ff.).
- 45 Men died presumably by simply wasting away, being unable to move from the spell of the song.
- 56 Circe offers a choice of equally dangerous alternative routes: either between the Wandering Rocks (59-72) or through Scylla and Charybdis (73-110).
- 59 The Wandering Rocks in the Argonautic saga (the Symplegades) were located at the entrance to the Black Sea, while these in the Od. were thought to be at the Straits of Messina or in the Lipari Islands. But the doves of 62-5 v. reminiscent of dove sent by the Argonauts between the Symplegades, and in 69 H. refers to the Argo. Possibly H. has combined 2 vague accounts.
- 70 Aietes was king of Colchis, father of Medea and brother of Circe.
- 72 Hera protected Jason in the Argonautica, as Athene O. in the Od.
- 85 Skylia, despite puppy-voice here, is described in 89ff. as a kind of giant squid w. long tentacles, or like a hermit-crab w. protruding legs. H. is obviously conflating features of more than one sea-monster.
- 104 Ancient critics located Charybdis on Sicilian side of Messina Straits, skylia on Italian side: but no evidence for this in H.
- 127- Thrinakia = Isle of the Trident (Poseidon's symbol), here imaginary, later - Sicily.
- 143 The last we see of Circe. H. wastes no time on lingering farewells w. minor characters however charming: cf. Calypso - though Nausicaa was given a few words (VIII 457-468)
- 184ff Sirens appeal to 2 of the most dominant feelings of the Greeks: love of music and poetry, and love of information and 'new things'.
- 235ff. The whole of this passage is one of the most powerful pieces of descriptive writing in H.
- 253 'horn of a field-ranging ox': prob. a pipe of horn to protect the line above the hook.
- 257 'reaching out their hands to me...': cf. pathos of Virgil's *tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore* (Aen. VI 314)
- 334 Stanford comments that O's departure to seek the gods in prayer from a solitary place is more in the individualistic manner of a Hebrew prophet than typical of the v. communal and ceremonial religion of the Homeric hero. By an irony of fate it becomes the cause of the final disaster of his companions.
- 369ff. This explanation has been called the 'greatest blemish in the whole narrative art of H.' But some such motivation is necessary since O. cannot be credited w. the same knowledge of happenings in Olympus as we concede to the poet speaking in his own person to his audience. It seems that for once H. owing to the complexities of this narrative within a narrative, has had to extricate himself by a second-rate device. This conversation between Hermes and Calypso is not in fact mentioned in Bk V - but H. often omits such details.

- 419 We see here the last of O.'s companions. He must face the remaining adventures alone.
- 432ff. H. had carefully mentioned this fig tree in 103 sup.
- 443-4 O. falls plump into the water alongside the keel and mast which he had bound together as a makeshift boat in 424. He climbs on to them and, using his hands as paddles, he rows through the perilous straits.
- 453 Stanford comments: 'It is regrettable that whoever divided the Od. into books.... did not continue the book on to O.'s departure from Phaeacia. The best ending perhaps would have been w. O. sleeping quietly as the ships speed toward Ithaca (XIII 92). We do not actually see the last of the Phaeacians till the middle of XIII 187, where they are left standing round the altar of Poseidon in their own country.'

Od. XIII

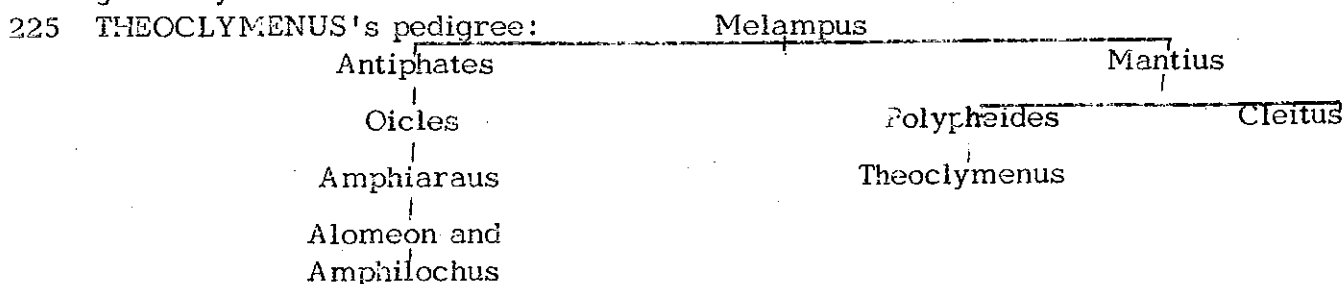
- 1 - 2 - XI 333-4. 2 of H.'s finest lines repeated here.
- 81ff SIMILES: the first emphasises the plunging movement of the ship, the second its speed. The ship as it leaps upwards and forwards over the waves at each thrust of the waves resembles a living creature.
- 90ff. An echo of the exordium (I 1-4)
- 104ff The stone mixing-bowls., jars and looms were prob. stalagmitic formations.
- 135 Note Poseidon did not object to O.'s ultimate homecoming but to his returning laden w. even more wealth than he would have brought back as booty from Troy if he had not been shipwrecked on the way.
- 187 Centres of contemporaneous human action narrow from here to 2 - Ithaca & Telemachus' journey (the other centre had been the scene of O.'s wanderings).
- 209 Stanford comments: "O....feels a little morning-afterish; so he quite unjustifiably blames his hosts (Phaeacians) for untrustworthiness and even prays for their punishment (213).
- 247 Note how actual name of Ithaca has been effectively kept back till end of the speech, keeping O. in suspense from the tantalising phrase in 239.
- 256 Minoan Cretans were renowned as adventurous sailors and raiders.
- 259 The gist of O.'s fictitious story is this: he is a Cretan noble who, declining to serve under Idomeneus the Cretan leader, led his own contingent to Troy. Idomeneus' son Orsilochus to gratify his father wanted to deprive O. of his share in the plunder of Troy. For this O. ambushed and killed him; he then went into exile to escape vengeance. Note that tho' O. says he is a murderer Eumaeus receives him with customary respect due to strangers: cf. on XV 273.
- 333-6 Do these lines exemplify O.'s self-control?
- 383-4 Agamemnon's murder by his wife was a solemn warning to O. since he had heard of it in XI 405ff.
- 417 Why Athene didn't tell Telemachus all, as H. well knew, was that it would spoil part of the story. Athene's reply in 422 implies as much - no adventure, no story (poem); no story, no fame.
- 429 Note that in contrast to X 233 sup. the wand here clearly has magical powers. Note: For Athene's description of O. as "so civilised, gentle and self-possessed (XIII. 332) see J.P. Stanford's 'The Ulysses Theme' pp 31-35.

Od. XIV

- 22ff EUMAEUS, 'leader of men'. Tho' E. had been a servant all his life, the phrase is justified by his royal birth (cf 'noble' swineherd sup.3), his prestige at the Palace (375 inf.), his command over the other herdsmen (cf. 26 inf.) and his fine character. Altogether E. is a man of the most admirable and lovable nature.
- 55 'O swineherd Eumaios': this may be a vestige of a primitive ballad-singer's phrase; it is used 14 times in Books XIV-XVII.
- 39 'some god-sent rumour': a rumour is ascribed to divine agency when no human source is apparent.
- 110 'greedily': prob. not simply a sign of hunger here (as in VI 650ff) but indicating the strength of O.'s suppressed emotion - he is wolfing his food because he wants to give his immediate attention to planning the revenge on the Suitors.
- 144-6 Eumaeus says it was through respect and affection that he avoided naming his master before. But H.'s true reason is obviously a literary one: to make the most of this poignant scene between the long-absent lord and his most loyal servant, and to show how skilfully O. can control and guide another's thoughts. Stanford comments: "the whole episode will seem long, perhaps even tedious, to modern readers unless they discern its subtle characterisation and ingenious handling, and feel the suspense of wondering when O. will reveal himself.
- 187ff Eumaeus has carefully observed the Homeric etiquette that such questions should be postponed until after a stranger has been hospitably entertained: contrast IX 252ff.
- 246 The description of a raid on Egypt may be an echo of actual events.
- 315 Thesprotia was a district on coast of Epirus, between Corcyra to N. and Leukas to the S. containing Dodona (see 327 inf.). For description of the Storm, cf. XII 403ff from where many lines are repeated here.
- 327 Dodona, seat of ancient oracle of Zeus. Oracles received from sacred oak there, perhaps from the rustling of leaves.
- 361ff Tho' E. pities O. for his fictitious sufferings he refuses to believe what he has said about his master, assuming this was only invented to please him.
- 402-5 Heavily ironical. In fact E. would be last person to violate laws of hospitality.
- 422ff Again the ritual of the preliminary sacrifice before a special feast, whose principle was that gods should have a first share of the meat and cereal food
1) cut off some of hair of animal as an offering to be burnt, w. prayer: this formally dedicated the whole animal to the gods; 2) when victim killed and prepared for cooking, the thigh bones were wrapped in fat, covered w. strips of raw flesh from every limb as first offerings, sprinkled w. meal, and burnt. The savour of the burning flesh was thought to rise up to the gods in heaven.
- 435 There was a local cult of the Nymphs and Hermes was the special patron of herdsmen.
- 440ff Stanford comments: "The whole of this scene is remarkable for that mixture of unsophisticated piety, courtesy and humanity...which still survives in traditional country communities, based on a proper valuation of human personality and the knowledge that misfortune is not a proof of wickedness. It contrasts brightly w. the discourtesies O. suffers later in the Palace from the Suitors and their gang. But observe that O. does not scruple, all the same, to try a typical trick of sophisticated roguery later (459ff) on his host. Countryfolk, however, are shrewd as well as kind: Eumaeus sees through the ruse and is more amused than offended at it."

Cd. XV

- 54ff Note the constant harping in Od. on the advantages of extracting guest-gifts from hosts.
- 125 Helen's attitude to Telemachus is motherly; in contrast Menelaus had been prudently treating him as a man (cf 73ff). 160 Omen I.
- 171ff Here, as in IV 140ff, Helen is quicker to take the initiative than her husband.
- 195ff Telemachus' elaborate preamble betrays his embarrassment at having to ask Peisistratus 'I want you to help me to avoid your father'. Remember Nestor's garrulity!



Note Theoclymenus' gift of divination was hereditary: Melampus (a cousin of Neleus, Nestor's father) and Amphiaraus were both famous seers.

- 247 For Eriphyle, Amphiaraus' wife, cf XI 326 sup.
- 273 Cf. XIII 259 sup. In H. murder is still regarded as a private matter to be punished by kinsmen. So Telemachus doesn't scruple to help this fugitive killer.
- 343 Note O.'s attitude to his travels: no romantic adventurer indulging his Wanderlust, but a weary ex-soldier yearning to reach home - yet interest enough in his enforced travels. Now looking back on them he gives his melancholy considered judgement.
- 347 O. already knew the answers from his mother's ghost Anticleia (XI 152ff); but he is prob. being cautious again.
- 363 Ctimene was O.'s sister; later legend made her the wife of Eurylochus (cf. X 205ff).
- 388 'in this man's house': i.e. Laertes'.
- 395-6 Note how thoughtful Eumaeus is - he doesn't want to bore his fellow-herdsmen who will have heard the story before, so he gives them a chance to withdraw without offence.
- 539ff Telemachus, pleased by Theoclymenus' prediction and praise now decides to lodge him w. a trusted companion (Peiraeus; who would prob. treat him more considerately) instead of Eurymachus as he had intended in 519 sup. Omen II.

Od. XVI

- 69 Telemachus finds Eumaeus' entrusting of the stranger to him mortifying because his home is entirely unfit for offering any pleasant hospitality.
- 162 Note dogs reaction to Athene: cf. to O. earlier (latter foreshadows the reception O. has from his own dog Argus).
- 192 T. is unwilling to accept O.'s statement of his identity. But once he is satisfied about the metamorphosis he accepts O. w. surprising facility - perhaps because of the reference to Athene, also his own patron. Recognition would have been impossible as T. was only an infant when O. left home.

- 216ff SIMILE of the birds: resemblance confined only to shrillness and intensity; otherwise rather inept for a reunion of father and son.
- 263 T.'s reply is prob. ironical. He implies they need more than divine patronage.
- 304 A v. necessary precaution re the women-servants, as appears later.
- 309ff T.'s character: discernible is his prudence or discretion and his special loathing for the immorality of some of the palace serving-women. (latter shared by O. cf. XXII 417ff).
- 375ff Antinous realises that their treacherous plot against T.'s life has lost them the favour of the Ithacan people. So he wants to present the Assembly with the fait accompli of T.'s death. The Suitors could then seize his possessions and enjoy them unmolested, as the only surviving male relatives left to avenge him would then be the feeble Laertes if O. were dead. The ruthlessness and boldness of the scheme are typical of Antinous. But he is practical enough to offer a milder scheme (387-92) if the other is too bold for his associates. The temporizing policy of Amphinomus prevails.
- 412 Medon: tho' he seems to have 'collaborated' to some extent with the Suitors, he had kept in touch with Penelope, giving her essential information. He is spared by O. in XXII 357ff.
- 416 Stanford believes the gesture shows she treats the Suitors as unfriendly strangers, veiling her face as she wishes them to see as little as possible of her. He adds: "Those who find coquetry here mistake the Od. for a second-rate novelette."
- 435ff Eurymachus' speech is false, hypocritical and ungrateful. Line 437 betrays his insincerity by over-protestation. It is a vivid vignette of a villain; for the manner of his death see XXII 44ff.
- 477 T. gives his father a significant glance and smile, taking care that Eumaeus doesn't see it. Prob. its primary motive is pride, implying 'See how clever I was, father, to evade all those armed enemies'.

Odyssey XVII:

- This bk brings the protagonists, O., Telemachos & Penelope, together for first time.
- 12f T. pretends to be impatient & impersonal towards the disguised O. so that Eumaeus may not suspect any familiarity between them.
- 37 Artemis was the pattern of chaste, unimpassioned beauty (cf VI 102), Aphrodite, of more voluptuous, sensual beauty.
- 46f T. speaks coldly ~~in~~ & imperiously to Penelope: men must act, women must pray; cf Hector to the Trojan women (II.VI 240). She, mystified, meekly obeys.
- 50f Note bargaining attitude to the gods: do ut des.
- 53 The 'guest' is Theoclymenus.
- 68 Mentor was T.'s most faithful supporter (often impersonated by Athene: cf. XXII 206f). Antiphos had in fact been eaten by the Cyclops (II 19f). Homer prob. meant Aegyptios, Antiphos' father/.
- 76 The gifts had been stored at Peiraios' father Clytius' house (XVI 327).
- 101f The tone is one either of lonely resignation or of pettish annoyance. In any case she extorts what she wants, a statement from T. The strained relations between a just grown-up son & an anxious mother are well depicted.
- 124-141 = IV 333-350; 143-6 = IV 557-560.
- 193 cf 281 inf. The tone seems to be that of an intelligent inferior eager to do what he is told. O adopts it in keeping w. his disguise as a beggar.
- 212 Melanthios, son of Dolios, was O.'s one disloyal servant. His savage punishment is described in XXII 474f. Melanthe, his sister, was as bad, & suffered w. her companions as grim a retribution (XXII 446f.).
- 222 Swords & cauldrons wd be the kind of gifts a well-bred hero wd prefer.
- 261f Phemios, the court bard of O.'s palace, is shown by Hom., always careful of the honour of his own profession, to have associated with the Suitors against his will: cf XXII 330f and 350f.
- 291f The dog Argos. Later Gks did not seem to be animal-lovers, but here & in the yoking of Achilles' horses in II.XIX 392f we have touching pictures of the genuine affection that can grow between man & animal. Apart from being another recognition scene, the dog also serves as a symbol of faithfulness. Note how the dog's actions are carefully portrayed (299, 301).
- 304f To distract attention from his recognition by the dog O. asks Eumaeus a question to which he fully knows the answer.
- 322f References to slavery & slaves are far less common in Hom. than in later Gk. House-servants are much more often mentioned: here they are classed as slaves. But they may not have been in absolute slavery in all cases. douloi (Gk word for slave) were generally foreign captives - in war or piracy. Cf Eumaeus.
- 378f Antinous is being typically sarcastic: he was one of the devourers himself.
- 383f Note the 4 recognised kinds of demiourgoi ('public-workers'), the 'professional' men of the Heroic Age: seers, doctors, bards & skilled workmen (independent craftsmen like metal-workers, potters, masons, carpenters). Heralds are added to the list in XIX 135. They are 'public' workers because they are not attached to one master but work freely for the demos in general.
- 393f T., angry at being ignored, silences Eumaeus & is boldly sarcastic to Antinous. Then in 403f he drops the irony & lashes out. This infuriates A. & moves him to a threat of violence towards O. (409f). In 416f O. deliberately goads A. further & precipitates his act of hybris in 462f inf.
- 407f 'This kind of present' i.e. a blow from his footstool.
- 415f O. embarks on one of his fictitious hard-luck stories, of which in the Od. there are 5 in all: 1 to Athene (XIII 256ff); 2 to Eumaeus (XIV 199-359); 3 to A. here; 4 to Penelope (XIX 172ff); & 5 to Laertes (XXIV 303ff). 2, 3 & 4 vary only in detail.
- 462f This first of 3 incidents in which O. has something thrown at him by a Suitor (cf XVIII 394f & XX 299f). There are subtle variations between the 3. The function of the triple attack is to increase our sympathy for O. and our indignation against the Suitors.
- 484 Note dramatic irony here.
- 495 Eurynome, next to Euryclia in importance as one of the faithful maid-servants.
- 509f P. combines her dominant desire to get news of O. w. her wish to make up for the inhospitality shown to the stranger.
- 518f Hom. misses no opportunity to glorify his profession.

- 522 O. didn't say this in his story to Eumaeus (cf XIV 321f), tho' he does to P. later. Does even Hom. nod or is Eumaeus shown as deliberately embellishing his information, a typical Greek trait?
- 541f Sneezes, being inexplicable, involuntary & sudden actions, were commonly regarded as ominous in antiquity.
- 571 Hom. makes O. postpone this critical interview w. P. partly because he has other incidents to portray in the megaron first, partly to increase his audience's suspense. Perhaps also so that O.'s first meeting w. his wife may take place after the daylight had gone, in case she recognised him too soon?

Od. XVIII

- 19 'Prosperity is in the gods' giving': the conventional consolation of those in trouble in Heroic Age, the belief that prosperity does not ultimately depend on man's deserts but on the will of the gods.
- 29 There was a law of Cyprus that any landowner who caught pigs damaging his crops had the right to pull out their teeth.
- 44 'goat-paunches': cf haggis, black-puddings etc.
- 66f O., we learn from here, VIII 134f, II.III 193f & 209-224, was of medium height, broad-shouldered, deep-chested & muscular.
- 85f Echetos: a cruel ogre king of fairy-tale.
- 89f Cf the description of a boxing match in II.XXIII 651-699. They fight w. bare fists here, while in the Iliad passage the boxers wear leather thongs round their hands, it being a more formal contest there and between heroes. Later these fist-guards developed into the damaging Roman caestus (cf Aeneid V 362f).
- 160f O. plays up to the suitors by making a fool of Iros.
- 112f Note irony: what 'the beggar' specially wants is the destruction of the Suitors.
- 125f Has O. given himself away by his 'being the son of such a father'? Anyhow he quickly covers up his tracks: 'whose excellent fame I have heard of'.
Amphinomos: son of Nisos, the only suitor to appear in a favourable light. He had a sense of humour (XVI 354f), pleased Penelope by his good nature (XVI 397f), argued against the attempted murder of Telemachus (XVI 400f), was kind to the disguised O. (XVIII 119f & 395), appealed to Suitors to restrain themselves (XVIII 414f), & interpreted an omen in favour of Telemachus (XX 245f). He was generally listened to w. respect (see above passages). O. began to like him & tried to warn him off before the general slaughter. (XVIII 153f). He eventually died (as 'doomed'), after a brave attempt to break out, on the spear of Telemachus.
- 128f The note of melancholy in this passage is not unparalleled in Hom. There was little light-heartedness or optimism in the Homeric heroes' view of life: they, or at least Hom. himself, had a deep sense of the inescapable tragic elements in life. They realised that life was hard, while death, or rather the state of ~~death~~ (cf XI 488f) being dead, seemed monotonous & sad. The one supreme reward for life's sufferings & death's darkness was (as we have seen) glory, fame that lasted long after a hero's life.
- 187f Athena sheds a brief sleep over P. to relax her anxieties & to act as an anaesthetic during her beautification (192-6).
- 193 Kythereia: surname of Aphrodite either from the city Cythera in Crete or from the island Cythera where the 'foam-born' goddess first came ashore.
- 194 For the 'Graces' dancing, cf Horace Odes I 4.
- 195f Gks always considered large stature an essential of beauty.
- 196 ivory freshly cut is beautiful white colour, but tends to grow yellow later. Exquisitely worked ivory objects have been found on Mycenaean sites.
- 214f Note characterisation of scene which some scholars have thought an interpolation (because this talk, they feel, shd have been held in secret between T. and P.). P. begins by abusing T. to cover her inner fears & to assert her authority. T. previously had answered her sharply & sent her back to her room rebuffed. But now that his father is back he treats her more considerately & gently.
- 257f Note remarkable realism in this extract from a soldier's farewell before leaving for war. O. calmly recognised the possibility of death & the courage of the enemy. He reminded his wife of her responsibilities to his family & made arrangements for a long absence & his wife's remarriage if necessary.

Obviously this was not all that O. said: P. gives only the part relevant to her intentions here; she wd not mention any intimate & personal memories to the hostile Suitors. Cf the tender description of Hector's parting from Andromache in II.VI 390f where the scene is enacted privately. Or has P. invented the whole speech here?

- 263f 'riders...': riding on horseback is only clearly mentioned by Hom. in similes (cf XIII 81): usually, as here, refers to riding chariots.
- 281f Surprising that this shd be O.'s first reflection on seeing his wife after so many years! But (i) a wise Gk wd concentrate on whatever matter was in hand; (ii) O., like most Gks, was (as we have often noticed) decidedly acquisitive.
- 292f The wooing gifts were an embroidered robe w. 12 gold fastening pins, a necklace w. beads of amber, 2 earrings, & what was perhaps a shorter & wider necklet (cf Thracian treasures).
- 297 E.'s servants were like mediaeval squires, personal attendants on noblemen. Heralds (cf 291 sup.) were apparently similar but seem to have had a more official rank, acting as 'heralds' or envoys in war & as assistants at sacrifices.
- 321 Melantho: see on XVII 212.
- 328 The blacksmith's forge was a favourite resort of the idle & homeless in cool weather in Greece: cf Hesiod Works & Days 493.
- 356 'Sacker of cities': epithet almost confined to O. & Achilles in Hom. Is there some intentional pathos here in its use where the great warrior O. is being treated as an idle vagabond? Or is it accidental from the use of Formula?
- 366f Note technique of this speech (& cf 15f sup: O. to Iros). O. begins mildly enough but works up to a climax of fierce menaces. There is dramatic irony in 384f: 'if O. were to come back to the land of his fathers...'
- 377f Note basic minimum of armament required by a hero = shield, helmet, 2 spears. Sword & greaves are omitted as unessential. Contrast importance of breastplate & sword in hoplite warfare in Classical Age.
- 398 Note significant contrast between collapse of cup-bearer here & O.'s steadiness & good balance when struck by a much more violent blow (XVII 463). O. is superior.
- 410f The Suitors find T.'s speech infuriatingly bold, having had it all their own way in the Palace up to this.
- 412f Note moderating influence of Amphinomus: see note on 125f sup.
- 414-417 = XX 322-325.

Od. XIX

this

- 1-50 Some scholars condemn the similar passage in XVI 281-298 as interpolations. Many of their arguments are only relevant to secondary epic (e.g. like Aeneid), but not to an epic composed mainly by oral technique in which repetition & minor incongruities were easily tolerated. Special exception has been taken to line 13 below (re iron: q.v.). But others believe the passage to be authentic pointing out that it is linked w. XXII 23-25, 140-1 & XXIV 164-6 (re armour on the walls). Note the passage is marked off as a kind of digression by repetition of 1-2 in 51-2; this is an epic convention, cf 465-6 inf almost = 393-4 inf.
- 4 As 8-9 makes clear, these weapons belonged to O., presumably the spoils of war, hung on the walls as trophies. The Suitors if they had any spears would leave them outside the megaron before they entered (cf I 128; XVII 29), retaining only their swords, as always (cf XXI 432; XXII 74).
- 6-7 The reference to smoke is a reminder that the Homeric house had no real chimney, only a hole in the roof: cf on I 320 (Athena departing in bird form through roof).
- 13 This line has been pounced on as a palpable anachronism, for although Hom. refers to iron knives (II.XVIII 34; II.XXIII 30; 826-835), an iron arrowhead (II.IV 123) & iron axes (587 inf.), the ordinary weapons of war are always of bronze. But Hom. himself was familiar w. the general use of iron (cf.XV 329), so the anachronism does not prove post-homeric authorship. Also the phrase is clearly a proverb.
- 22f Eurycloia addresses T. w. familiarity of an old nurse; cf 363 inf.
- 33f Athena is apparently invisible to T.: hence his astonishment at the increase of light (36f) - tho' in 1.40, w. almost a touch of clairvoyance, he remarks "There must be surely a god here". O. either sees her/ or deduces her agency (42f).

- 92 'You will wipe it off on your own head': This striking phrase refers either to the custom at sacrifices of wiping off the blood from the knife on to the victim's head to transfer the sacrificer's guilt to the dead animal, or else to a similar & related custom in which a murderer wiped his sword on his victim to show that the killing was deserved (cf Sophocles, *Electra* 445-6).
- 107 Unfortunately there is no way of translating the daring ambiguity of the Greek word which could mean 'Wife' as well as 'Lady'.
- 109-114 Some scholars suspect the authenticity of these lines, finding them un-Homeric in style & sentiment. Also heroes did not eat fish except when compelled (cf IV 368f) & Hom.'s references to fishing are usually confined to similes (e.g. X 124; XII 251f). But it may be that the common people of the Heroic Age ate fish & it was unfashionable only for the nobles. To later Greeks fish was a delicacy.
- 124-9 almost = XVIII 251-6; 130-3 almost = XVI 122-5.
- 135 'in the public service': cf on XVII 384 sup.
- 139-152 almost = II 94-107; 156 = II 110.
- 137 'weave my own wiles': note appropriateness of metaphor in the context.
- 146 Note powerful influence of public opinion on Homeric (& post-Homeric) Greeks.
- 155 'gave me a scolding': Contrast Antinous' much milder description in II 108.
- 163 This proverbial phrase apparently signifies ancient & obscure ancestry. But here the phrase must mean: 'You must have some relatives, if you're not a freak'.
- 172f Only details of this fictitious autobiography differ from those presented by O. to Eumaeus & Antinous: see note on XVII 415f.
- 177 Hom. never mentions the Dorian invasion of the Peloponnese: is this passage (175-7) therefore suspect? Probably. Pelasgians usually refers to the original inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula, though they are mentioned by Hom. in II. II 840 & X 429 as allies of the Trojans from NW Asia Minor. Hom. also applies the adjective 'Pelasgian' to the Zeus of Dodona & to Argos.
- 179 'nine-year periods': Frazer in his *Golden Bough* finds a reference to this in an eight-year tenure of kingship, fresh kingly power being supposed to be derived from talk w. Zeus at the end of each term. G. Thomson holds that 9 was a sacred number in Minoan-Mycenaean religion, cf III 5-8 & VIII 258. 9 is favourite number w. Hom., in any case. In XI 568f Minos is described as Zeus' son & as a judge in Hades.
- 187 Cape Malcoia: cf IV 514f.
- 188 Amnisos was port of Knossos. Eileithyia was goddess of childbirth.
- 204 'melted': note how the metaphor is explained & developed in the simile.
- 205f Note that W. wind brings the snow. Except in fairyland (Phaeacia) & the Elysian Fields (IV 565), Zephyrus is always regarded as a harsh wind in Hom., which may be an indication that Hom. lived on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor where the westerly winds are often disagreeable & cold in winter.
- 211f cf note on 13 sup. (re iron).
- 228f Evans compares this animal scene w. those frequent on Minoan gems; others believe such Homeric descriptions of works of art are of oriental origin. Nilsson referring to the golden 'pin' (226) concludes it belongs to the 7th cent. BC at earliest. Was this passage therefore not written by Hom., or did Hom. write even later than we think?
- 232f A shrewd touch by O. Penelope wd recognise this superfine cloth at once since care of the household clothes was, of course, the women's special charge. She may even have woven it herself w. the help of her servants: cf XV 104f & VII 233f (where Arete at once recognises clothes woven by herself. O.'s praise of the tunic's workmanship must have pleased P., in a time when weaving was women's chief occupation. The apt comparison with the onion cd refer either to the tight fit of the tunic or to its silky-looking texture.
- 242 'a fringed tunic': the short woollen tunic, like a long rugger vest or jersey, is depicted w. a fringe on the Warrior Stele from Mycenae; it was short enough to be taken off while the wearer was sitting down (cf I 437). Eurybates: cf II. II 183.
- 250 Aristotle observes how cleverly Hom. uses the art of fallacy here: P. assumes, because the description of ~~the~~ O's dress & companion is so accurate, that the rest of).'s story must be equally accurate - a false but common way of reasoning.
- 270f Thesprotians: cf XIV 315f.
- 288-92 almost = XIV 331-5; 293 = XIV 323; 294-9 almost = XIV 325-30; 303-7 alm. = XIV 158-162; 309-11 = XV 536-8.

Od. XIX continued.

- XXX 325f The sentiments here are characteristic of the Gks' love of fame & excellence. Life seemed short & there was no sure hope of immortality (cf XI 488f); but by generosity & kindness one might ensure a lasting & widespread good reputation.
- 344f O. gives an explicit reason why he does not wish to be washed by one of the younger serving women (346-7); another reason may be that he is seeking a trustworthy accomplice among the women: he finds one in Eurycleia. He had apparently forgotten the scar (till 390-1 inf.). Hom. also had his reason: the highly dramatic scene that follows needed some motivation.
- 358-60 The audience's anxiety that O. may be involuntarily discovered is deliberately increased by Hom. here. P. has shown that she has already noticed similarities to her husband. Eurycleia presses the resemblance even further in 380-1. Here the women show themselves more perceptive than the men: cf Helen in IV 149f & Arete in VII 233f.
- 363 By 'my child' she is referring to O. who she thinks is still far away. Her affectionate outburst shows O. that he can rely on her loyalty. The audience at first wd think she was addressing the stranger, which increases the irony.
- 370f There is humour & tenderness in Hom.'s irony here.
- 380f In his transformation by Athene in XIII 430f O.'s flesh, skin, hair, eyes & clothes were changed, but his hands, feet, general build & voice were not.
- 382f The conventional epithet 'resourceful' (polymetis) has relevance here because w. superb adroitness O., instead of denying the resemblances, readily agrees, treating it as an often observed fact.
- 394f Autolycus, husband of Amphythea (416) & father of O.'s mother Anticleia, is referred to as a thief here & in Il. X 267 & later came to be regarded as the prototype of all unscrupulous tricksters. His patron Hermes does not elsewhere in Hom. show this seamy side to his character.
- Many critics feel that this digression, ending in 466 (=394), spoils the dramatic effect by postponing the climax exasperatingly. Some condemn the whole passage as an interpolation. However, the episode is vivid & worthy of Hom.'s style & the Gks tolerated dramatic suspense better than we do. The question must remain a matter of opinion.
- 396 'the art of the oath': not = perjury, but by cleverly framing his oaths so as to leave loopholes for advantageous evasions later. O. himself exploits this ruse in Il. X 382f where without making any positive promise he encourages Dolon to hope for mercy, & then lets Diomedes, his companion, kill him.
- 420f cf on XIV 422f.
- 457f 'incantations over it': this practice of chanting a blood-staunching spell over a wound is known, it seems, in many parts of Europe. Cf Sophocles, Ajax 582, Virgil, Aeneid VII 757 & note that herbs are used by the more skilled Machaon & Apollo in Il. IV 218 & V 900.
- 469f Note Hom.'s skill in giving precise details of this dramatic moment to present it vividly to his audience's mind.
- 471 'Pain & joy...': For her mingled feelings cf Andromache in Il. VI 484, Aeschylus, Agamemnon 270 & Sophocles, Antigone 436.
- 473 To touch a man's beard was a regular gesture of reverence & supplication. Cf Il. I 501 & Il. X 454.
- 518f Many details of this celebrated simile - the first appearance of the poeticised nightingale in European literature - are remarkable: only place in Hom. where bird song (as opp. to cries) is mentioned; it contains a flagrant natural error - female nightingales do not sing. Later sources expand what few details of the legend Hom. gives thus: Aedon, daughter of Pandareos, king of Crete, married Zethus, king of Thebes. She had only 1 son. In jealousy at the large family of her sister-in-law Niobe she planned to kill Niobe's eldest son. In the darkness she mistakenly killed her own son Itylus. Zeus pitying her sorrow changed her into a nightingale & as such she ever mourns Itylus melodiously. The Attic version of the legend (w. Pandion as Philomela's father, Tereus as her husband, & Progne, later the swallow, as her sister) is not mentioned by Hom. The legend figures in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus & T.S. Eliot's Waste Land.
- 521f In these constant changes of direction of the bird's song lies part of the similarity with P.'s condition, whose mind is constantly distracted & changed by the anxieties that beset her. The nightingale & P. also have a similar share of sorrow. The general effect of the comparison is to enhance the dignity of P.'s

~~XXXXX~~ grief.

- 547 Cf 560f inf. where Penelope despondently says that she still considers it was a dream & a deceptive one, despite this & O.'s assurance in 555f.
- 555f 'since O. himself has told you...' Note dramatic irony.
- 562f The gates of horn & ivory: cf Virgil, *Aeneid* VI 893f; Horace, *Odes* III, 27, 41.
- 572f How the 12 axes were arranged & how they were to be shot through have been the subject of much controversy. In XXI 120-2 T. dug 'one long trench for them all, & drawing it true to a chalkline, & stamped down the earth around them.' O. apparently shoots straight through the hole or socket between the double-headed axes. If this is correct then the axeheads were arranged so that the sockets for ~~the~~ their handles made a straight pipe through which an arrow might pass if shot w. sufficient force to ensure an absolutely flat trajectory. They were propped up to give the general effect of a ship's keel as described in 574.
- 587 Hom. refers to axes of iron in Il. IV 485 (a simile).
- 594-6 almost = XVII 101-3; 597 = 260 sup.
- 599 O. chose to bed down on the floor as is implied in XX 2-4.
- 603-4 = XVI 450-1.

Od. XX

- 13f The metaphor of O.'s heart 'growling' within him is v. striking. Hom. then goes on to elaborate the idea in a simile & then repeats the metaphor (16), no doubt to emphasise the terrific strain placed on O.'s self-control by the sight of his disloyal & shameless servants tripping gaily off to meet his deadliest enemies.
- 21f The comparison here between O.'s restless tossing & turning on his bed & the way in which a haggis or black pudding is turned (on a spit) when being roasted over a fire, is vivid and apt.
- 38 The diffidence of the phrase shows O.'s awareness that a certain lack of faith in Athene's power is implied in his anxiety. O.'s slight lack of confidence before the supreme crisis is very human. Note his 2nd anxiety in 41-3.
- 43 What O. fears is the vengeance of the Suitors' kinsmen.
- 45f The fact is, as Athene implies, that O. never fully trusted anyone; his insight into his own & others' characters had rendered him incapable of complete trust.
- 66-82 Many condemn these lines as interpolation, & w. good reason. Particularly anomalous are the references to Artemis in the 3rd pers. (71, 80) in a prayer addressed directly to her (61). For the myth of Pandareos see XIX 518f sup.
- 91 The dawn of the 39th day of the Odyssey, the day of O.'s long-deferred revenge.
- 100f O. at this most critical juncture prays for a double assurance of heaven's favour: of Anchises only being persuaded by a double omen in *Aeneid* II 680f.
- 110 There is much pathos in the glimpse of a servant's hardship in the days before / 'overtime' was conceived.
- 160 'haughty': the epithet may suggest that servants in a noble palace may acquire some of the dignity of their surroundings: cf Jeeves. But metrical reasons may chiefly have suggested it.
- 184=XVII 465. O. shows particular anger at this disloyal servant.
- 210 Kephallenian: the general term for all O.'s subjects, whose realms embraced the islands of Same, Ithaca, Zacynthus, Dulichium & parts of the mainland of Acarnania: cf Il.II 631-4. Hom. never specifically connects the name w. the island later called Kephallenia.
- 217f The metaphor used in the Gk ('whirling around') is strong & is one of the several indications in this speech of the warm-hearted & impulsive nature of this loyal cowherd (Philoiti^s).
- 242 The left was the unlucky side to the Greeks. Contrast XV 160 ('on the right').
- 243 The dove, symbol of helpless fear, represents the Suitors' fate at O.'s hands.
- 245f Note continued sympathetic portrayal of Amphinomos.
- 256 A formula.
- 260-9=XVIII 410-411.
- 277 The 'long-haired Achaeans' are simply the Ithacans here. The Greeks in Hom. are called Achaeans, Danaans or Argives, fairly indiscriminately.
- 278 The day's festival was dedicated to Apollo: G. Thomson believes the festival must have been the Hekatombaia, the killing of the 108 suitors representing a hecatomb.

~~***~~ 284-6=XVIII 346-8.

294f There is an outrage on all decent standards of what is right, just, and due to strangers in Ctesippus' bitter sarcasm here. His guest-gift is a cow's foot hurled at him, a travesty of honoured custom only paralleled by the Cyclop's atrocious 'guest-gift' in IX 369-70. Cf other throwing incidents (XVII 462f & XVIII 394ff. (*'Then I will eat Nobody after his friends...'))

317-19=XVI 107-9; 322-5=XVIII 414-17.

345f This is a v. remarkable & macabre scene: its atmosphere has been compared to that of the Writing on the Wall at Belshazzar's feast & the apparition of Banquo at the Banquet in Macbeth. The suitors had just heard what sounds like the fulfilment of their long-deferred hope: P. is to be married to one of them at last. A gust of exultant laughter, prompted by Athene, greets the announcement. Suddenly the goddess changes this natural glee into an uncontrollable hysteria turning rapidly into weeping. At the same time the meat that they are eating appears as if bedabbled w. blood. Then the prophet Theoclymenos in a moment of clairvoyance perceives the sinister change and sees beyond it to the slaughter of the Suitors. He expresses his vision in sombre & deeply pitiful words. By the time he has finished speaking the mysterious interlude has passed & the Suitors, unconscious of anything eerie, think he is raving. No other incident in Hom. approaches the uncanniness of this. Nearest to it are the showers of blood before a terrible slaughter & at the death of Sarpædon (Il. XI 53f; XVI 459) & the movement & bellowing of the carcasses of the slaughtered cattle of the Sun (Od. XII 394f). In later Greek only the scene where Cassandra prophesies outside the palace in Agamemnon (1072-1177) surpasses it; & Aeschylus very likely derived the conception from Hom. The prophecy is the only clear example of such in Hom. elsewhere in Il. & Od. all foretelling is by omen & interpretation.

352 Cf Virgil Aeneid VI 866.

355-7 The ghosts are those of the Suitors. The actual event is described in XXIV 1f.

358 'happily': their laughter has become normal again.

360f Eurymachos completely fails to appreciate Theoclymenos' warning, blaming his strange words on folly & his foreign origin. Theoc. calmly rebuts the charge of madness & gladly leaves the doomed banqueters. It is the last we see of him.

372f For Peiraios see XV 539f.

374 'teasing T. about his guests': i.e. at his apparent ill-luck ~~xx~~ in choosing his guests, Theoclymenos, the disguised O. & Iros.

383 'Sicilians': the first reference in Hom. to this people - cf XXIV 211, 366, 389. Archaeologists have established that there was considerable traffic & communication between Greece & Italy & Sicily in Mycenaean times. But, as the phrase here implies, Sicily was no doubt still regarded as v. remote (like the Americas in the 17th century). ~~392~~

392 The Suitors never actually have dinner except in the grimly distorted sense expressed in XXI 428.

394 Note the emphasis on the fact that they deserved to die.

- 3 'gray iron': cf. XV 329. It refers to the twelve axes.
- 6 'in her solid hand': an inept description of a beautiful queen's hand? Or is this romantic idealizing more proper to later centuries? Athene has a 'solid' hand in Il. XXI 403, 424. Usually a formulaic epithet of warriors.
- 26f Herakles was the Gk exemplar of heroic strength, usually popular in Gk lit., but flatly censured in 28 inf.
- 41 He carried the bow presumably for hunting.
- 48f A remarkably strong SIMILE, intended no doubt to emphasise the stiffness of the doors through long disuse.
- 102f We must assume from 105 inf that Telemachos has inadvertently betrayed w. a laugh or a joyful look his amusement at Antinoos' words & his delight at the approach of the crisis. He tries to pass it off as being connected w. Penelope's impending departure, & continues to concentrate attention on her.
- 119 i.e. slipped off the baldric on which the sword hung.
- 153f Leodes speaks in prophecy, but does not realise its full meaning. He refers only to the intense grief that failure to string the bow will cause the Suitors; but his words more truly (and ironically) refer to O.'s approaching vengeance.
- 167f Antinoos, always quick to sarcasm, derides Leodes' prophecy as being merely a subterfuge for his own softness.
- 189 Antinoos had told them to go out, if they couldn't stop crying, in 89f.
- 221 For how he got the scar see on XIX 391f.
- 256f Antinoos alarmed at the failure of all the others adroitly postpones his own attempt w. a pious pretext. He decides that feats of arms are unsuitable for a feast-day to Apollo. There may be unintentional irony here, since Apollo was the Archer god (cf 267), a v. apt patron for O.'s later feats w. the bow. A. never has a chance of bending the bow later.
- 270f Formulaic lines for a formal libation to a god.
- 295f Here we have the 3rd & longest reference in H. (cf Il. I 268; II 743f) to the famous brawl between the Lapiths, a Thessalian tribe of which Peirithoos (Theseus' bosom friend) was king, & the Centaurs - the incident portrayed on the w. pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia as well as on some of the metopes of the Parthenon.
- 297f There is some unconscious irony in the high moral tone of A.'s remarks. himself a victim of atē (blind folly) & soon to meet his nemesis.
- 319 Irony again. P. little suspects that the beggar is her husband.
- 336f 336 almost = 281 sup; 337 almost = XIX 487; 339 = XVI 79; & XVII 550; 340 almost = XIV 531; 341-2 almost = XVI 80-1. Is H. resting before soaring to the height of his climax?
- 350f almost = I 356f. Telemachos, tense at the imminent approach of the crisis, speaks w. unusual imperiousness, even harshness to his mother, as he did before in Bk I when Athene had come to urge him to action. For P.'s relationship w. her son see esp. XIX 160, 533 & XX 131.
- 356-8 = XIX 602-4. Her weeping for O. was prob. prompted here as in I 363 by something in T.'s manner reminiscent of, or contrasting w., her husband's.
- 398 No doubt deliberately ironical, as addressed to an apparent beggar.
- 402-3 Unconscious irony.
- 420 O. shoots from his chair to show his complete mastery. Mycenaean remains show that the warriors of that period shot from a crouching posture.
- 428f On O.'s grim equation of the imminent massacre w. a supper, cf image already used by H. in XX 392f.
- 434 The ominous flash of bronze in this last line lights up the scene for O.'s coup de theatre at the beginning of Bk XXII.

Od. XXII

As in the 22nd book of the Iliad H. brings Achilles to his triumph over Hector, so in this 22nd book of the Odyssey he allows O. to achieve his long-deferred revenge. Modern technique tends to place the denouement of a dramatic story at the very end. Ancient writers (cf also tragedians) preferred a gradual diminishing of intensity in the final scenes, a cadence, a falling close. Not that the last 2 bks of either the Od. or the Il. are deficient in interest or incident: O. has still to be accepted by Penelope (Bk XXIII) & still to cope w. the avenger.

Od. XXII continued

kinsmen of the slain Suitors (Bk XXIV).

This was the favourite bk of the Odyssey in Alexandrian times, and before then - Plato in Ion 535B cites the leap of O. armed on to the threshold as one of the most arresting scenes in H.; as Stanford comments, "once visualized, it is unforgettable."

- 2 O.'s table & stool had been set close to the 'great threshold' by T. (XX 257f).
- 8f O. kills Antinoos, the ringleader of the Suitors, first. But w. a touch of tenderness & pity even for a villain - which is perhaps typical of the whole Od. - H. brings out the pathos of his dying just as he was raising the feast cup to drink, unaware of imminent doom. H. retains an equanimity & humaneness above the passions of his characters: O. hates Antinoos, H. feels compassion for him. Herein, perhaps, lies the essential art of Homer.
- 12f Note rhetorical question to enhance the pathos - H. v. rarely uses this device in his narrative (as opp. to speeches of characters). There is another rhet. qu. in Il. XXII 202f, before Hector is lured by Athene to his death. Can the parallels involved be accidental?
- 24f They look for shields & spears & don't immediately use their swords because it wd be dangerous to go w. swords alone v. a skilled archer. Spears from a distance needed. The shields & spears had been removed from the walls on the previous night (XIX 4f), & they had presumably left their own outside, as customary, retaining only their swords like mediaeval knights.
- 30 This savage threat (of being eaten by vultures) involved deprivation of the burial rites so highly valued by Gks (cf theme of Sophocles' Antigone).
- 44f Typically it is the pliant Eurymachos who tries appeasement, coolly blaming Antinoos for all their crimes.
- 57 What were 20 oxen worth? Eurycleia was bought as a slave for 20 oxen; 100 oxen wd buy a male prisoner (Il. XXI 79) or a suit of golden armour (Il. VI 236), 12 a large tripod (Il. XXIII 703), 9 a suit of bronze armour (Il. VI 236), 4 a skilled female slave (Il. XXIII 705) - the high price of Eurycleia was exceptional.
- 83f Gks of all epochs enjoyed such vivid & sensational details of violent deaths.
- 154 Note Telemachos' mistake & his acknowledgment of it.
- 195f No one is so hard on an unfaithful servant (Melanthios) as a faithful servant.
- 233f Athene turns from her exaggerated taunts (or was it just banter as in XIII 291f?) in 226-232 to affectionate encouragement. O. needs all possible stimulus: the Suitors are just about to make their last desperate attacks.
- 237 Note Athene tests O., just as O. himself constantly 'tries' even his best friends. For 'likening herself to a swallow' cf I 320.
- 285f Philoitios strikes down Ktesippos: poetic justice, as H. emphasises in 290-1, for it was Ktesippos who hurled the foot of an ox - thereby abusing the cowherd's products - at O.'s head: cf note on XX 294.
- 297 The aegis (wielded only by Athene & Zeus) is described in Il. V 738f as a breastplate of v. terrible appearance, but it may originally have been some sort of offensive weapon. It is difficult to see how Athene wields it here, if she is like a swallow (see 240 sup.).
- 299f Note the 2 developed (or 'expanded') SIMILES to give imaginative & emotional depth to the climax.
- 302 'The other men': i.e. O. & his supporters.
- 332 'under compulsion': H. thus makes it clear that Phemios had associated w. the Suitors against his will. He is of course honourably spared by O.
- 345f As before, H. emphasises the respect due to the bard & reminds us that a poet has a duty to God as well as to men. For ref. to divine inspiration cf VIII 499. 'As to a god' in 349 seems to be flattery.
- 362f The incident w. Medon, the herald, provides a piece of humorous relief.
- 371 Except for his sardonic humourless grimace in XX 301, this first time O. has smiled in the whole story. Cf XXIII 111.
- 384f For the SIMILE comparing slaughtered men to helpless fish cf on X 124. Note how in 'needing the restless sea water' H. adds a touch of pathos.
- 411f 'It is not piety to glory so over slain men': this sentiment is remarkably lofty for a Homeric hero, far above the tone of victorious champions in the Iliad. 413 shows that O. regards himself more as the instrument of heaven than as his own avenger. It is in keeping w. this that in Il. XI 450f when O. speaks over the body of Socus his words are as much compassionate as exultant.

Od. XXII continued

- 418 cf XVI 317.
- 431 'Do not waken her yet': O. wishes to spare P. the terrible sight of the corpse-filled hall, & H. wishes to delay the great Recognition Scene.
- 438 'the women to help': i.e. the 12 guilty ones mentioned in 424.
- 462f In 443 O. had ordered them to be killed by the sword. Here T. inflicts a less 'clean death' upon them & has them hanged (hanging always regarded a dishonourable & shameful death by the Greeks).
- 465f The SIMILE, once again, adds a touch of pathos to their death & the vivid glimpse of their writhing feet emphasises the horror of their agony.
- 474f 'They took Melanthios...' : presumably the swineherd, the cowherd & perhaps - one hopes not - Telemachos. O. himself was inside the house (cf 479) & had no part in the following barbarities, which can best be explained as the revenge of servants on a traitorous servant: cf note on 195 sup.
- 481f In later times brimstone was regularly used for religious purifications (as it is used nowadays for medical fumigations). Whether any religious intention is meant here is unclear; but the use of the phrase 'the cure of evils' & the use of fire seem to imply it, & in any case no sharp distinction between material & spiritual cleansing wd be observed in the heroic age or in H.'s time.
- 491 Contrast O.'s curt command w. Eurycleia's fussy suggestions in 486-9.
- 497 A formulaic line: cf IV 300 & VII 339.
- 501 'And tears took hold of him': for the first time since his arrival at home O. can give full play to his feelings.

Od. XXIII

- 18 Athene had sent Penelope this sleep in XXI 358.
- 32f This fluctuation in P.'s feelings - a momentary outburst here of joy which fades in 59 inf - seems highly natural, & makes her disbelief, till the final token is given, far more touching than mere stagnant incredulity.
- 65-6 = XXII 414-5.
- 70f Eurycleia here & Telemachos inf (97f) blame Penelope for her slowness in believing in her husband's return; but they had not borne the full strain of 20 years' waiting, as she had; "a heart long frozen", as Stanford comments, "must be slow to thaw". P.'s reluctance may be surprising but is prob. v. true to life. Moreover H. wants to prolong still further the supreme Recognition.
- 74 = XIX 393: see note there.
- 81-2 P. becomes a little sarcastic w. Eurycleia, & still thinks it may be some divinity in disguise who has killed the Suitors (cf 63-4 sup).
- 86 'her dear husband': it is not easy to decide whether H. is simply referring to the fact already well known to his audience that the stranger is O., or else wishes to imply that P. despite her recent doubts has inwardly decided that the avenger must be her husband after all. Prob. the former?
- 97f The characterization of Telemachos is very lifelike here: being just over 20 he has little experience or understanding of adult emotions & impatiently thinks his mother's caution is unreasonable & stupid. There is a marked contrast w. his father's sympathetic understanding in 111 inf.
- 108f 'We shall find other ways...': this gently puts T. in his place. O.'s smile in 111 may have been partly at this no doubt familiar technique of his wife, as well as in appreciation of her caution, which he is confident of overcoming.
- 117f Leaving P. to watch him silently for a while, O. turns to consider the one serious danger that still threatens him - the vengeance of 'the Suitors' kinsmen: see on 296f inf. Meanwhile he - & we the audience - are conscious of P.'s tense presence: this is the technique of dramatic silence.
- 120 For an example of this see the case of Theoclymenos in XV 223ff.
- 127-8 = II.XIII 785-6; the lines anticipate the scene in XXIV 496ff.
- 136 The Ithacans had long been expecting P.'s remarriage.
- 150-1 Dramatic irony. For similarly acid comments by townspeople, cf VI 275ff.
- 157-62 almost = VI 230-5. Cf note on XVIII 195.
- 166 'You are so strange':). conscious of his increased attractiveness is puzzled or piqued by his wife's irresponsiveness.

Od. XXII continued

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Od. XXIII continued

168-70 = 100-2. sup.

174f Penelope repeats O.'s words to express her own astonishment at the change in O.'s appearance from that of a bedraggled vagabond to that of her own husband when he embarked for Troy. There is subtle characterization of P. here: H. is portraying the conflict between P.'s hopeful heart & her caution.

177f BUT P. still demands a conclusive proof from O. Very subtly she does not question him directly but gives Eurykleia in his hearing a command that, if he really is O., he must know to be impossible since the bed he had made was fixed almost immovably to the ground.

182 For the first time in the whole of the Odyssey (says Stanford) O. is mastered by a sudden impulse ('he spoke in anger') & speaks without seeing the implication of his wife's words. His sharp-witted & long-experienced wife is testing him. This is P.'s triumph. "It is not the least of H.'s 4 great tributes to women", observes Stanford, "to Helen for her compelling beauty, to Andromache for her tragic nobility, to Nausikaa for her freshness & charm, & to Penelope for her heroic patience & her spirited, unconceited, but v. human, exercise of the subtlest feminine arts of self-defence."

189 'I myself...made it': Note O.'s manual versatility. He is a ship-builder in V 243f, agricultural labourer in XVIII 366f (if that is not a mere invention), athlete (Il. XXIII 700f; Od. VIII 186f), builder & joiner (here), as well as warrior, archer & inventor of the Trojan Horse.

190f The bed was unique in that it was firmly joined to the trunk of an olive tree that had been growing on the site where O. chose to build his new bedroom. So, unless one broke up the framework, the bed could not be moved without undercutting the stump of the tree.

205 The tension of P.'s long waiting is relieved at last: 'her knees & the heart within her went slack...'

209 P.'s repeated deprecation of O.'s anger (cf 213) is partly because she knows his pride may be hurt by the trick she has played successfully on him.

218-224 Are the 6 lines an interpolation as many critics think? If they are defended as genuine, then one must notice that P.'s reasoning is obscured by conflicting motives: she wants to cite Helen as an example of the disastrous consequences of trusting a stranger, but she does not want to condemn her as a person. Cf comparison between P. & Clytemnestra in XXIV 192f & XI 444f. The difficulty here is that it is P. herself who is making the comparison.

228 If 'Aktor's daughter' were dead P. cd be quite sure that the secret of the bed cd not have been told to the Stranger by her.

231f The SIMILE of the safe landing after a storm is very apt here; cf the reverse situation in V 388f where O.'s actual deliverance from a storm is compared to a father's recovery from sickness.

232 The 3rd time O. weeps since his arrival in Ithaca: 1 when he first embraced Telemachos in XVI 191; 2 for his dog in XVII 304; & here in his wife's arms.

261f Already there is a cool assurance in P.'s words to her husband. O. expresses a certain surprise at her request w. (again) 'you are so strange' (cf 174f), but accedes to it.

268-84 almost = XI 121-37, where see notes.

286-7 P.'s last words in the Od. They speak of hope & peace & she finds comfort in O.'s reference to a 'sleek old age' compared to the waste of their youth (cf 211-12)

296f Many scholars (including Page in his Homeric Odyssey) believe the Od. ended here, & that 297 to the end of Bk XXIV (particularly XXIV 1 - 204) is a later spurious addition. Others (including Stanford) point out that if the poem ended at this point (a) we wd never have any satisfactory outcome to the many earlier references to Laertes, (b) we wd be left wondering what will ~~xxxx~~ happen when the Suitors' kinsmen discover O.'s deed, (c) we wd lose the final eulogy of P. which is effectively voiced by Agamemnon's ghost in XXIV 192f. Also, to end the poem w. a Pepysian 'AND SO TO BED' wd be more fitting for an Alexandrian or Victorian novelette than an early epic. On the other hand there is a certain slackening in the style from here on; but the great crisis of the poem is past & H. may have rounded off the story more out of a sense of duty than anything else. However, to Plato & Aristotle, the rest of Bk XXIII & Bk XXIV were 'Homer'.

Od. XXIII continued

- /310-41 is a summary of O.'s adventures as recounted in Bks V - XIII. Such a brief recapitulation may seem otiose to us but wd prob. have delighted H.'s audiences as much as Penelope. It has been suggested that in the original saga O. related his adventures in full at this point, & that H., preferring to have him do so earlier in the story, retained this vestige here. The passage comprises the longest piece of continuous indirect (reported) speech in Il. & Od.; H. much prefers direct speech: almost $\frac{1}{2}$ the Il. & over $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Od. consists in direct speech spoken by the characters in the story, the rest is nearly all narrative.
- 320 prob. spurious line: O. wd hardly refer to himself by name like this,
- 324 i.e. Agamemnon, Achilles, Patroclus, Ajax etc.
- 355 The 'possessions' are those normally attached to his household, not his recent acquisitions which he had hidden in XIII 367f - & of which we hear no more.
- 361-5 This is the last direct contact w. P. in the poem, a rather humbling exit for one who has played so dominant a part in this bk. But she has still to receive her finest eulogy (XXIV 194f).

Od. XXIV

- 1 'Kyllene', mountain in Arcadia where Hermes is believed to have been born.
- 'The souls of the Suitors': see notes on Bk XI on 'shades'.
- 6f SIMILE of the bats: there was a common belief in antiquity that bats were the souls of the wicked dead, as in legends of vampires.
- 12 'The gates of Helios': denotes the extreme west, where the sun was thought to descend into a subterranean passage leading back to the east.
- 13 'meadow of asphodel': see XI 539.
- 15-18 almost = XI 467-70; 20-22 almost = XI 387-9.
- 23f This dialogue is irrelevant to the story of the Od., & if any parts of Bks XXIII & XXIV are an interpolation this is the likeliest.
- 34 For Agamemnon's 'most pitiful' death, see 97 inf.
- 39-40 For Achilles' death see V 309-10 & Il. XXI 110f; XXII 359-60.
- 67f These are prob. vestiges of the method of embalming to preserve dead bodies of distinguished persons customary in Mycenaean times before the coming of the Achaeans w. their cremation rite. Hdt records (I 198) that the Babylonians buried their dead in honey. Cf also 417.
- 72 The bones were afterwards buried, as was the custom.
- 77 The fulfilment of the wishes of Achilles (Il. XXIII 243f) & Patroclus (XXIII 91).
- 81 'grave-mounds': cf our 'barrows'
- 97 See XI 409f & cf 199-202 inf. re Agamemnon's murder.
- 109-13 almost = XI 399-403.
- 103 Amphimedon, one of the less distinguished suitors: see XXII 242, 277 & 284.
- 147f There is no suggestion of this incident anywhere else in Od., & no hint of it in the account given by Antinoos in II 92-110. Older version of the story?
- 167-9 Not as told in XIX 572f where P. proposes the Stringing of the Bow of her own accord. Amphimedon has made a natural but incorrect surmise.
- 177= XXI 328; 184-5 almost = XXII 308-9.
- 193-202 This eulogy of P. & flattering comparison w. Clytemnestra, the type of all faithless & treacherous wives, is prob. main reason for this episode.
- 205 'The others': i.e. O., T., Eumaios & Philoitios.
- 216-18 O. takes pleasure, it seems, in this further (but unnecessary) test - this time of his father; also allows H. a craftily delayed Recognition scene.
- 222 Dolios: presumably the father of Melanthios & Melantho, who has taken pity on Laertes. See also 387f.
- 235f Again the conflict between love & craftiness in O.'s heart (latter wins).
- 441 Presumably because Medon & Phemios had survived the massacre of their associates.
- 472-88 Athene completes last episode just as she made first move in the poem.
- 517 Athene, disguised as Mentor, is speaking in character.
- 522 Laertes kills the one man among the Suitors' kinsmen who fully deserved to die. Eucithes owed a special debt of gratitude to O. & his house (see XVI 424-30), but failed to restrain the outrageous conduct of his son Antinoos.
- 537f O. makes his exit like an Iliadic hero. Only direct intervention of Zeus restrains him from another massacre. Way is clear for philia, ploutos & eirene.