OXFORD

HOMERIC VOICES

Discourse, Memory, Gender

ELIZABETH MINCHIN

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For Tony

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Preface

By contrast with the considerable interest shown in the composition of narrative sections of the Homeric epics—type-scenes and similes, in particular—there have been very few studies, from a compositional point of view, of the substantial speeches and exchanges of speech that Homer depicts in his songs. This volume is an attempt to redress the balance. In the ten individual studies that make up *Homeric Voices* I consider the words that Homer attributes to his characters from two perspectives, as cognitive and as social phenomena. I shall be asking in the first place how the poet worked with memory to generate the speech forms that he represents: can we discern models for these units of speech? what is the relationship between Homeric voices and the speech of the everyday world of the poet? And I shall ask how Homeric speech constructs and reveals the social hierarchies that are bound up with age, status, and gender—with particular interest in gender—in the world of the poems.

In Part I, Discourse and Memory, I study the way in which the poet formats speech acts, such as rebukes and refusals of invitations; and I study the regularities which underpin questions and the patterns which we observe in the responses to them. My aim in these chapters is to identify some of the habits which a poet in an oral tradition developed and the techniques on which he relied in order to generate works of such a kind and on such a scale. In Part II, Discourse and Gender, I study the speech of Homer's characters as a social phenomenon, as language in use. My main concern is to identify differences between the speech of men and the speech of women, using as my points of reference a number of observations on men's and women's talk in Western cultures in our own time. In our own world certain speech acts and certain conversational strategies are said to be associated with the competitive discourse patterns of men; others are associated with the co-operative discourse style of women. Rebukes, information-questions, directives, and interruptions are, it is claimed, marks of dominant discourse patterns. Homer's representation of these elements runs, for the most part, in parallel with

observations of our own world as I demonstrate. There is, however, one exception. Directives, as we shall see, do not accord entirely with our expectations. As a final test of Homer's representation of gender in speech I examine the stories that his characters tell. Again I find differences—sometimes significant differences, both in content and in presentation—in the stories told by men and by women.

My studies have drawn heavily on research in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and cognitive psychology. In bringing research of this kind to bear on the Homeric epics I hope to throw further light on an oral poet's practice as he composed his tales, as well as on the interactions that he represents within them; and to encourage others to follow these fruitful lines of enquiry.

I have often in the following pages drawn comparisons of a social and cultural kind between Homer's world and the twenty-first century 'Western' world. I shall use this latter term as a convenient shorthand expression to encompass both the contemporary anglophone cultures of the northern and southern hemispheres of our world and the cultures of Europe—that is, not entirely coincidentally, those cultures that still look back to the ancient Greek world and its traditions. My purpose in making these comparisons is to provide a possible, even a likely, context that might help us better understand what Homer's characters are saying and the intentions that lie behind their words.

Some of the material within this volume has been published elsewhere, in many cases in a slightly different form. Chapter 1, on the rebuke-format, was first published in a collection of papers from the fourth Orality and Literacy Conference, edited by Ian Worthington and John Miles Foley and published in 2002 by E. J. Brill, *Epea and Grammata*; Chapter 2, on declining invitations, was first published in *Antichthon* 35; Chapter 3, on the regularity of question forms, appeared in the collection of papers edited by Chris Mackie and published in 2004 by E. J. Brill, *Oral Performance and its Context*, from the fifth Orality and Literacy Conference; Chapter 4 was published in *Mnemosyne* 54; Chapter 5 appeared in *Classical Quarterly* 52; and Chapter 10 is to appear in the collected papers of the sixth Orality and Literacy Conference, *The Politics of Orality*, edited by Craig Cooper and published by E. J. Brill. I thank the editors of these volumes for allowing me to draw on this material.

It was Hilary O'Shea who encouraged me to think about a monograph on aspects of speech in Homer. I am very grateful to her for

showing me how this might be achieved; to the readers appointed by Oxford University Press for their engagement with my proposal and their very helpful suggestions on how I might improve my argument; to Dorothy McCarthy at the Press for answering so promptly all my last-minute enquiries; to Kathleen McLaughlin, who oversaw the production process; and to Richard Ashdowne, who read the proofs.

A number of people have been caught up in this project over the last six years. I thank participants in the ANU Classical World Seminar, who have heard two papers on women's speech and offered me valuable feedback. I also acknowledge the support and friendship of the participants in the biennial Homer Seminar, which is held at the ANU; colleagues at conferences of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies; and at the series of Orality and Literacy Conferences, which began so memorably in Hobart in 1994. Johanna Rendle-Short, along with other members of the Linguistics Program at the ANU, has been a great resource; I have many times drawn on her knowledge of relevant literature in Applied Linguistics. Judy Slee, now a Visiting Fellow in the Psychology Department at the ANU, has on occasion helped me with issues in cognitive psychology. And I thank Ann Cleary, who allowed me to record the rebukes she addressed to her daughter Aislinn.

This volume falls into two distinct parts. The first of these was shaped during a period of study leave spent very happily at Clare Hall, Cambridge. The second took shape during study leave spent just as happily at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. I thank my colleagues at both centres for their friendship, their kindness, and their interest in and support of my research. While I was in Oxford Oliver Taplin put me in touch with Jennifer Coates. I am very grateful to Jennifer for giving up her own research time to answer my string of questions about men's and women's speech and, especially, their stories.

Many others—family, friends, colleagues, and students—have given me all kinds of assistance of a more practical kind, especially in recent months as I have tried to continue working despite several broken bones. I thank every one of these people for their kindness. But most of all I thank my husband, to whom this book is dedicated.

Canberra
22 November 2005 E. M.

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Abbreviations

AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CW	*Classical World*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*

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PART I

DISCOURSE AND MEMORY

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Introduction

Whether readers of or listeners to Homer's epic songs,[1] we have all observed the frequency with which Homer's characters speak in their own voices, the sustained nature of their speaking turns, and the liveliness of their presentation.[2] Long after we have put the book aside, long after the performance is over, the words of Achilleus, Priam, Andromache, Hektor, Odysseus, Penelope, and Helen ring in our ears and linger in our memories. And yet, until recently, this body of character-text,[3] for all its power, has not received the same focused scholarly attention that has been accorded to Homer's formulaic language or, especially, his typical scenes, in the years that have elapsed since Milman Parry and Albert Lord persuaded us that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have their origins in an oral tradition.[4]

In the last twenty years interest in the character-text of the epics has been stirred by developments at both a scholarly and a popular

[1] Throughout this volume I use the name Homer to refer to the poet of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, without necessarily claiming that the same individual was the ultimate composer of both epics.

[2] These qualities, and others, of Homeric speeches have been enumerated and briefly discussed in a fine essay by Jasper Griffin: see J. Griffin, 'The Speeches', in R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 156–67.

[3] I adopt the term made familiar to Classicists by I. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the* Iliad (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1987), p. xiv.

[4] For this observation from an earlier decade see J. Latacz, 'Zur Forschungsarbeit an den direkten Reden bei Homer (1850–1970): ein kritischer Literatur-Überblick', *Grazer Beiträge*, 3 (1975), 395–422, at 395 and 420–2. Dieter Lohmann (who made a similar comment) was one of very few in that period (the 1970s) to attend to Homer's character-text: see D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der* Ilias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 1 and *passim*. For the work of Milman Parry, see most conveniently *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); Lord's groundbreaking work is A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

level in a number of disciplines outside Classics: a surge of interest in ethnography, a new interest amongst sociologists in the performative nature of everyday communication, the development of new fields within linguistics (discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and conversation analysis), the rise of gender studies, and the renewed concern of narratologists with the narrator and his or her modes of narration. Significant figures in this multi-disciplinary advance have been the sociologist Erving Goffman, the conversation analyst Harvey Sacks, and the linguistic philosophers, J. L. Austin and John Searle.[5]

My own approach to the character-text of Homer has been informed by this same cluster of disciplines; I have adopted discourse analysis as my principal path of access. This strategy is linked to four general observations about the poems. First, a substantial portion of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is represented as actual discourse, as the spoken words of one or another of its principal characters.[6] From early times Homer has been noted and, generally, commended for his use of a mixed mode of narration and dramatization: Aristotle remarks favourably on this at *Poetics* 1448a and again, in a slightly different context, at 1460a.[7] Homer's readiness to let his characters

[5] See, for example, E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972); H. Sacks; *Lectures on Conversation*, ed. G. Jefferson, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962); and J. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a discussion for Classicists on the performative nature of spoken communication, see R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 4–10.

[6] Jasper Griffin reminds us of the proportions of direct speech and indirect speech in the epics: see 'The Speeches', at 156. Of the *Iliad*, 45 per cent is rendered as direct speech; of the *Odyssey*, 67 per cent. Speeches in the two poems together amount to nearly 55 per cent of the whole.

[7] *ὁ δὲ ὀλίγα φροιμιασάμενος εὐθὺς εἰσάγει ἄνδρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄλλο τι ἦθος* . . . (But he [Homer], after a brief proem, at once brings a man or a woman or some other character on the stage). I follow de Jong's translation—and reading—of the passage from which the above quotation is drawn (*Poet.* 1460a5–11): see de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers*, 5–8, at 7. Plato, on the other hand, condemns, even as he recognizes, the vividness of Homer's dramatic representation: Plato, *Resp.* 3.392c–398b.

speak in their own voices, as Aristotle recognizes, is sound storytelling practice. For we, as members of the audience, prefer to observe action (even in our mind's eye) rather than to hear a report of it.[8] Second, in the world which Homer describes, all actors share a strong sense of propriety with regard to spoken interaction. This is a world in which each hero speaks in the knowledge that he will not be interrupted, or obliged to give up the floor, until he has completed the expression of his thought.[9] We never find the hesitant or fragmented discourse which is typical of normal conversation in the real world; nor do we find brief interjections and comments from other participants, which are so much a part of everyday talk.[10] Rather, every hero speaks out fluently and coherently: he is performing.[11] Thus, in traditional epic, we are able to see complete and uninterrupted speech events, as conceived by the poet for each of his actors. Third, despite the meeting-like completeness of speeches that I have described above, there is a recognizable authenticity in the direct discourse of the epics: we find many of our own speech preferences and speech habits in the rebukes, the protests, the questions asked, and the answers given. Fourth, it is clear, possibly even to the casual observer, that many of the utterances made in the course of each epic bear a structural resemblance to others which appear to be serving the same purpose. Just as there are typical scenes in Homer, in which the same sequence of micro-events is narrated at

[8] By 'action' I refer here to what actors say, whether to themselves or others. Information about physical action will also be of significance to the audience. But since this is generally relayed by an observer it does not have the apparent immediacy of actual speech. For excellent discussion on the subject of Plato's version of the encounter between Chryses and Agamemnon (*Resp.* 3.393c–394b), see Griffin, 'The Speeches', 156–9. For brief discussion of Homer's preference for direct speech, see S. Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1990), ch. 3 ('Speech'), at 82 ('if the scene is built around a speech or if the words are integral to a full appreciation of the scene, anything short of a direct quotation would be deficient').

[9] I make this observation despite Agamemnon's peevish remarks at *Il.* 19. 78–82 (for further discussion of interruptions, see Chapter 9). Note that not even Thersites, whom the Achaians so despise (*Il.* 2. 222–3), is interrupted when he abuses his leader (*Il.* 2. 225–42).

[10] For an early discussion of 'back-channel' cues, see E. Goffman, *Forms of Talk* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 12, 28–9. For some commentary on back-channel cues and their near-absence from Homer, see Chapters 9 and 10.

[11] Cf. Martin, *Language of Heroes*, 43–4.

different points of the epic, so, as I shall demonstrate, there are recurrent speech types;[12] and, likewise, there are observable—and aurally pleasing—regularities in the asking of questions and the giving of answers.

DISCOURSE

A relatively new discipline, discourse analysis studies the ways in which people use language to communicate. It investigates how—and why—speakers (and writers) construct messages for their audiences and how listeners (and readers) work on them to find their sense. It enables us to establish the crucial links between social motivation, communicative strategy, and linguistic choice. Discourse analysis therefore operates at the intersection of a number of other disciplines. Those that are important to my enquiry are sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and philosophical linguistics. Where discourse analysis intersects with sociolinguistics it is concerned with the way that language is used to establish and maintain social relationships; at its intersection with psycholinguistics it is concerned with the processing of language; and, crossing paths with philosophical linguistics, it looks at expression and meaning, at the relationship between statements, their truth-value, and the world.[13]

More narrowly focused than discourse analysis, but equally important to my project, is its subdiscipline, conversation analysis. Conversation analysis, too, is concerned with the verbal behaviour of individuals. It is concerned with the structures that underpin

[12] On typical scenes see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4–5 (and bibliography thereto) and ch. 1; for discussions of a limited number of speech types see B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the* Iliad: *Studies in the Narrative Techniques of Homeric Battle Description* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1968), 67–8 (deliberation), 206 (rebuke), 213 (threat); Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, *passim*; J. M. Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 187–99 (on the lament only).

[13] For discussion, see G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. viii–ix.

everyday spontaneous talk-in-interaction, whether in our own world or in the worlds created by storytellers.[14] It offers us the framework within which to study, for example, the ways individuals use language to negotiate role-relationships or peer-solidarity, or the ways in which speakers attend to their own and others' psycho-social needs.

For the Homerist whose interests lie in the spoken exchanges and the verbal behaviour of the heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, discourse analysis and conversation analysis are valuable tools. On the one hand, a close study of the speeches which the poet attributes to his heroes can help us 'read' the poem, since character-text can be probed to reveal the intentions of the speakers and to trace their developing relationships. Thus, through our connection of linguistic choices with the multiple aspects of social context, these forms of analysis can illuminate the action. On the other hand, a study of individual forms of discourse (whether individual speech acts or questions and their answers), as mind-based rather than textual phenomena, may throw light on the poetic activity of 'singing', by revealing something of the role which memory plays in the comprehension and the generation of character-text. Albert Lord looked ahead to this very exercise when he asked 'how does the oral poet meet . . . the requirements of rapid composition without the aid of writing and without memorizing a fixed form?'[15] Lord himself has advanced our knowledge of the composition of the *narrative* stretches of the epics through his study of typical scenes, or themes.[16] One of my tasks in this volume will be to investigate the composition of some of the *spoken* elements, which likewise reveal typical structures.

It is useful at this point to note the connection between the routines of everyday talk and the 'special' speech of Homer. Egbert Bakker has argued that Homeric speech (at the level of word or

[14] For discussion, see Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 3; and see also E. Schegloff, 'Introduction', in H. Sacks: *Lectures on Conversation*, ed. G. Jefferson, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), vol. i, pp. ix–lxii, esp. at lviii (on Sacks' goal, 'to lay bare the methodicity of ordinary activities').

[15] Lord, *Singer of Tales*, 22.

[16] Lord, *Singer of Tales*, ch. 4 ('The Theme'); and see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, ch. 1.

phrase) is a stylization of everyday discourse, 'departing from it and yet retaining, or even highlighting, its most characteristic forms'.[17] It is the distinctive nature of this speech that reminds us of the special nature of the performance and of the events it is celebrating. And yet close study of those speech forms which Homer attributes to each of his characters reveals elements that are familiar and routine in those very forms that we identify, in Bakker's terms, as poetic and 'special'. In examining Homer's representations of speech in the series of chapters that follows and in identifying what comes from 'real life' and how it has been stylized for practical and poetic purposes, we shall come closer to understanding the processes of composition.[18]

DISCOURSE AND MEMORY

In everyday contexts we are accustomed to speak of memory as though it were a single entity. This is inaccurate. Memory comprises a range of complementary systems, all of which are capable of storing information. Our visual, auditory, spatial, haptic, and olfactory memories store information—as soon as it is encountered and processed—in the relevant systems of short-term memory.[19] Subsequently, it is possible that this information will be laid down also in the long-term memory system, where it is stored for future

[17] On 'special' speech see the important discussion in E. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 7–17, esp. at 17. Bakker's insights into the nature of the language of oral poetry are further developed by Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art*, at 6, who demonstrates how this special language can function as an 'expressive instrument'; see also J. M. Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 127–8.

[18] This continues to be one of the principal goals within the broad field of Homeric Studies. Albert Lord wrote in his introduction to *The Singer of Tales* that in the 1930s 'what was needed most in Homeric scholarship was a more exact knowledge of the way in which oral epic poets learn and compose their songs' (Lord, *Singer of Tales*, 3); he went on (ibid.) to observe that at the time of writing (late 1950s) 'the student of epic still lacks a precise idea of the actual technique of *poiesis* in its literal meaning'. This claim retains some validity, despite many advances in research in the intervening forty-five years.

[19] For discussions of these systems, see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 8–15, 24–8.

reference.[20] In addition to information collected by our senses we also gather and store what we might call 'world knowledge': that is, information about the physical environment, the social world, and appropriate survival skills for these contexts. One aspect of this complex web of world knowledge that we construct for ourselves is information about the mundane events and actions that we normally perform in the course of every day. This aspect of memory has been the focus of a considerable amount of research in the field of cognitive psychology and has been analysed most persuasively by Roger Schank and Robert Abelson. According to Schank and Abelson, information about routine events is stored in sequential form as a series of entities which they have termed 'scripts'.[21] The collective repository of scripts, encapsulating these routines of everyday life, has been called 'episodic memory'. By referring to the relevant script and using it as a prompt, we are able, without elaborate forethought, to make a cup of tea, use public libraries, check in at airports, eat at restaurants, and use public transport. Because these action sequences are almost automatic our minds are freed to concentrate on the more demanding aspects of a situation. The economy of our memory storage system promotes our efficiency.

How does scripted knowledge support the poet? As I have demonstrated elsewhere, those very scripts for everyday routines that the poet had stored away in memory came to his aid when he began his apprenticeship as a singer. It was episodic memory that prompted him as he described in song the preparation of meals, the harnessing of horses, the making of beds, the healing of wounds, or the departure of a guest, in the same way that it prompted him in everyday circumstances.[22] Because he knew the relevant script from

[20] Short-term memory contributes to the functions of working memory, that system which is designed to cope with the immediate situation. Working memory, because it operates from moment to moment, has a limited capacity; hence the need for a separate storage facility for information needed for the long term.

[21] See R. Schank and R. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1977), ch. 3.

[22] Hence our recognition of the authenticity of Homer's narrative art: cf. J. Russo, 'Sicilian Folktales, Cognitive Psychology, and Oral Theory', in T. Falkner, N. Felson, and D. Konstan (eds.), *Contextualizing Classics: Ideology, Performance, Dialogue* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 151–71, at 167–8. As Russo observes, it is the 'strong presence' of the familiar which is responsible for the 'distinctive flavor' of traditional narrative art.

everyday life, perhaps from early childhood, he was not obliged to learn it afresh. What he was obliged to learn and recall was the formal stylization of its presentation and the poetic language through which he expressed it.[23] The underlying regularity and the resultant rhythm of Homer's scripts promote efficient retrieval in memory, as one element cues the next; thus the nature and structure of his memorized routines facilitate composition.[24]

Schank and Abelson limit themselves to a study of physical action sequences, such as those that I have been discussing. But what about verbal action? What about the so-called 'speech acts' that have been the subject of so much discussion in the last few decades: commands, entreaties, rebukes, speeches of defiance, for example?[25] Speech-act theory, according to John Searle, starts from the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not the sentence but the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as describing, explaining, apologizing, and thanking.[26] Some speech acts may be expressed quite economically, in a few words (for example, 'I congratulate you.'); others may require a sequence of sentences to achieve their illocutionary function—that is, to fulfil the intention of the speaker. It has been argued that verbal phenomena of this kind must be prompted by a system akin to the structures of script-based memory. David Rubin introduces us to the concepts of implicit and explicit knowledge, as understood by experimental psychology.[27] Through these concepts we are able to appreciate the difference between *knowing that* (the function of explicit memory, which relates to past events) and *knowing how* (implicit memory, which shows the effects of past experience, but not in an intentional, declarative way). Knowledge of verbal 'scripts' falls into the category of implicit or procedural knowledge: the knowledge of how to go about something

[23] See Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 39–42, 70–2.

[24] For discussion, see D. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 304–7.

[25] On verbal behaviour see, in particular, Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*; Searle, *Speech Acts*, 16–17.

[26] On the speech act as the minimal unit of linguistic communication, see Searle, *Speech Acts*, 16; on illocutionary acts, ibid., at 23.

[27] See Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions*, 190–2; and see Chapter 1 for further discussion.

in the absence of explicit prompts. Mikhail Bakhtin, on the other hand, offers us another perspective on verbal action. A self-described 'philosophical anthropologist', Bakhtin writes from observation.[28] He proposes that, as we develop, we accumulate stored patterns to which we can refer in order to refuse an invitation with ease, rebuke a child, apologize to a friend, book a theatre ticket, or, in today's world, leave a message on an answering machine. Thus our responses to any of these situations tend to be stereotyped: we rebuke a child, or respond to an answering machine, in much the same way each time we are called upon to perform one of these actions. Bakhtin uses the term 'speech genre' to identify these stable patterns for verbal behaviour.[29] What is the purpose of such speech genres? It all comes back to memory. As Bakhtin puts it:

> We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and when hearing others' speech we guess its genre from the very first words.... If speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible.[30]

Bakhtin argues that speech genres, or, as I prefer, speech formats, enable us to perform routine tasks automatically.[31] Do we observe the same patterns of predictability in Homer? I shall argue that we do; and that as a consequence we may infer that Homer, or any apprentice poet in this tradition, was not obliged to learn these patterns from a master-singer. He already had laid them down in memory, through his experience of the world. The burden of learning this new material was considerably reduced by the very fact that many of the speech formats which he had already learned would form the basis for the speeches he would compose in performance, whether he was singing, for example, a rebuke, a protest, or the refusal of an invitation. These speech formats, as

[28] See M. Holquist, 'Introduction', in *M. Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, trans. V. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. ix–xxiii, at xiv.

[29] See M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *M. Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 60–102, esp. at 78–9.

[30] Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', 78–9.

[31] I will use the term 'speech format' to describe this phenomenon, since, as I shall argue (Chapter 1), it better describes the mental structure that we are considering.

they are presented in the oral epic tradition, are stylized, in the same way that typical scenes are stylized, and for the same reasons. The regularity and the rhythm of Homer's scripts for event-sequences *and* his formats for units of speech promote easy retrieval in memory; their structures facilitate composition in performance.

I shall propose that in the oral tradition in which poets such as Homer worked singers drew on their experience of speech genres in everyday talk as the basis for many of the speech types that we observe in the epics. This leads me to ask whether there are echoes of the everyday in other speech forms as well. With this question in mind I turn to questions and answers in Homer, to look for patterns which might indicate a standardization of question forms in epic and to seek echoes of the practices which we in the Western world adopt today in the posing of questions and the articulation of responses.[32] My analysis of this sequence so fundamental to any conversation begins with some discussion of what conversation analysis refers to as an 'adjacency pair'.[33]

The adjacency pair comprises two speaking turns, that of the initial speaker (the first pair part) and that of the respondent (the second pair part). In most conversations the first pair part is designed in such a way that it invites a prompt response: the response comprises the second pair part. This descriptive framework accounts for what we expect and what generally occurs in conversation when comments are made or greetings are issued, when invitations are offered, or questions are asked. The structure itself makes minimal demands on memory. If a prompt response is offered, the short-term memory of both speaker and listener is not taxed. If a response is delayed for whatever reason, both parties are required to store the first pair part in memory so that the second pair part, when eventually expressed, has meaning. My discussion of the structural aspects of questions and answers in Homer will be conducted in the light of these observations. It should be clear even at this point that

[32] I shall make comparisons of this kind in order to note similarities to and differences from Western discourse practices amongst middle-class adults. I am not aiming to trace diachronic links.

[33] For discussion, see E. Schegloff and H. Sacks, 'Opening up Closings', *Semiotica*, 8 (1973), 289–327, esp. at 295–9.

memory plays a critical role not only in the generation of individual speech acts but also in the shaping of extended discourse.

GENDER AND DISCOURSE

Since the mid-1970s there has been considerable interest both at a scholarly and at a popular level in the ways in which the discourse of men and women in various cultures in our own world differs. Early research on this topic in the field of linguistics focused on what were seen as the core features of language: phonetics and phonology, syntax, and morphology; there was interest at that time in the ways in which men's and women's speech varied in terms of pronunciation and grammar.[34] But it has been the broader aspects of talk amongst male and female speakers, namely, their conversational strategies, that have been the subject of more recent studies. Through sociolinguistic and ethnographic research carried out in a number of different cultures we are now far more aware of the ways in which men and women interact through talk and of the ways in which their patterns of talk differ.[35] I shall draw on Penelope Brown's useful

[34] See, for example, P. Trudgill, 'Sex and Covert Prestige', in J. Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 21–8; J. Cheshire, 'Linguistic Variation and Social Function', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender*, 29–41. These are two amongst six papers included in Part I, Gender Differences: Pronunciation and Grammar, in Jennifer Coates' reader cited above.

[35] The remaining sections (Parts II–VIII) of Coates' reader, *Language and Gender*, cover these broader issues. Discussion of the contrasting modes of men's and women's speech received much attention also in the wider world through Deborah Tannen's books, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Morrow, 1990) and *That's Not What I Meant! How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Your Relations with Others* (London: Dent, 1987). On the other hand, P. Eckert and S. McConnell-Ginet, *Language and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 122–3, have reservations about the emphasis that we find in books such as Tannen's on the differences between men's and women's speech. They make two points: first, that data on men's conversation is sparse and, second, that through our insistence on the differences between these conversational styles we may fail to notice the far greater proportion of similarities. Indeed, there are many similarities. But in my view the differences, although perhaps relatively few, are significant when observed against the backdrop of sameness: we might consider, for example, a journalist's commentary on the marked differences between the discourse of male and female Labour politicians in Britain in their speeches to the electorate

summary of this research to introduce my study of gendered talk in Homer.[36]

Brown enunciates three important observations on the subject of language and gender. First, she observes that although there are fairly minimal gender-based differences in language *structure*, there are pervasive gender-based differences in language *use*. Clusters of linguistic features differentiate men's and women's communicative styles. Second, she notes that for the most part gender is not marked directly, but is indexed indirectly through other kinds of connections between gender and habitual uses of language (speech acts, speech events, social activities, interactional goals, and discourse strategies). And, third, she makes the point that gender-indexing is *context*-dependent. The crucial observation which emerges from the studies that Brown refers to is that men and women in many cultures make 'differential use' of the linguistic resources that are available to them.[37] There is evidence, for example, that suggests that English-speaking, middle-class males are socialized into a competitive, or adversarial, style of discourse.[38] This, Jennifer Coates suggests, is marked by conversational strategies such as information-questions, directives, and interruptions. In public and professional life it is the discourse patterns of male speakers, the dominant group, which have become the established norm.[39] Women's talk, on the other hand, has been developed for the private sphere. It is more co-operative and more affiliative in style, being focused not on

(H. Simpson, 'Who is Labour Woman?', *The Guardian* G2, (2 October 2003), 14–15). She observes differences in language, content, theme, and, particularly, presentation.

[36] See P. Brown, 'Gender, Politeness, and Confrontation in Tenejapa', in D. Tannen (ed.), *Gender and Conversational Interaction* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1993), 144–62, at 145–6 (with references). For an excellent survey of the literature on this broad topic, see also A. Sheldon, 'Pickle Fights: Gendered Talk in Preschool Disputes', in Tannen (ed.), *Gender and Conversational Interaction*, 83–109, at 83–90.

[37] See J. Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', in S. Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 13–30, at 13.

[38] For an important discussion see D. Maltz and R. Borker, 'A Cultural Approach to Male–Female Miscommunication', in J. Gumperz (ed.), *Language and Social Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 196–216.

[39] Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', 13, 16–21.

dominance but on interaction.[40] The strategies that women use tend to emphasize solidarity and empathy rather than status.[41] This style is reflected also in women's preference for certain story themes, and their presentation of stories.[42]

As I noted above, it has been argued that information-questions, directives, and interruptions embody, in our world, a pattern of dominance.[43] Individual speech acts, or, to use Bakhtin's term, speech genres may have the same effect.[44] As Senta Troemel-Ploetz suggests, there appears to be an asymmetrical distribution of speech-act use across our Western middle-class world: men and women know from their early years who may use speech acts which perform dominance (speech acts such as commands, contradictions, advice, criticism, attacks, challenges, accusations, and reproaches), and who is required to use speech acts that we associate with lower status, diminished power, and dependence (speech acts such as apologies, asking for favours or for permission, begging, agreement, and support).[45] The former speech genres, according to Troemel-Ploetz, are more characteristic of the conversational culture of men; the latter are more characteristic of that of women.[46]

During this same period scholars have been examining men's and women's words as they have been recorded by the ancient world.[47] Although there has been considerable interest in the language of

[40] Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', 13, 22–3.

[41] See, for example, S. Troemel-Ploetz, '"Let me put it this way, John": Conversational Strategies of Women in Leadership Positions', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22 (1994), 199–209; J. Pilkington, '"Don't try and make out that I'm nice!" The Different Strategies Women and Men Use When Gossiping', in Coates, *Language and Gender*, 254–69.

[42] See J. Coates, *Men Talk: Stories in the Making of Masculinities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), ch. 5.

[43] Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', 13, 22–3.

[44] Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres': for discussion, see above.

[45] See S. Troemel-Ploetz, 'Selling the Apolitical', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender*, 446–58, at 447.

[46] Troemel-Ploetz, 'Selling the Apolitical', 447–8: 'By using these speech acts to a large extent asymmetrically, a conversational reality is being constructed in which men claim more authority and autonomy for themselves, and women become more dependent and non-autonomous.'

[47] See, for example, M. Gilleland, 'Female Speech in Greek and Latin', *AJP*, 101 (1980), 180–3; D. Bain, 'Female Speech in Menander', *Antichthon*, 18 (1984), 24–42; K. Derderian, *Leaving Words to Remember: Greek Mourning and the Advent of Literacy*

women in tragedy, in particular, it is remarkable that there has not been much commentary on the language of heroines in the Homeric epics, by contrast with the language of men.[48] I suggest that this may be because scholars are wary of the oral traditional origins of the songs. They suspect that men's and, in particular, women's naturally occurring and possibly distinctive speaking patterns have been evened out or distorted in the course of oral performance.[49] They are constrained because the proportion of women's talk in Homer, in comparison with the sample of men's talk, is not high.[50] And, finally, they are hampered by a lack of comparative material: it is not possible for us to make direct comparisons between talk in Homer and talk in the everyday world of his time. But none of these reservations should significantly affect my own study, which aims quite simply to observe

(Leiden: Brill, 2001); P. Easterling, 'Men's *κλέος* and Women's *γόος*: Female Voices in the *Iliad*', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 9 (1991), 145–51; E. Dickey, 'Forms of Address and Conversational Language in Aristophanes and Menander', *Mnemosyne*, 48 (1995), 257–71; L. McClure, *Spoken like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); A. Lardinois and L. McClure (eds.), *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001); J. Mossman, 'Women's Speech in Greek Tragedy: The Case of Electra and Clytemnestra in Euripides' *Electra*', *CQ*, 51 (2001), 374–84; M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 2nd edn., rev. D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos (Lanham, Md., and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); A. Willi, *The Languages of Aristophanes: Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 6; Y. Duhoux, 'Langage de femmes et d'hommes en grec ancien: l'exemple de *Lysistrata*', in J. Penney (ed.), *Indo-European Perspectives: Studies in Honour of Anna Morpurgo Davies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 131–45.

[48] On women's voices in tragedy, see especially McLure, *Spoken Like Woman*. With respect to women's voices in Homeric epic, I must cite as exceptions the body of work on lament (see above) and N. Worman, 'The Voice Which is Not One: Helen's Verbal Guises', in Lardinois and McClure (eds.), *Making Silence Speak*, 19–37.

[49] Cf. Willi's comment on women's speech in Athenian comedy: '[*s*]*ome* realism there must have been in Lysistrata's language. Exactly how much we cannot tell' (*Languages of Aristophanes*, 197). See also Bain, 'Female Speech in Menander', who expresses his reservations (at 27) about efforts to identify female speech or female syntax in Homer.

[50] The overall quantity of text which is devoted to direct discourse is, I calculate, 15,386 lines (of a total of 27,803 lines). Of all the direct discourse in the *Iliad* 13.9 per cent of it is allocated to women (gods and mortal women); in the *Odyssey* women (gods and mortal women) are allocated 19.6 per cent of the total quantity of speech. The sample is sufficiently large to enable us to draw tentative conclusions about women's speech in Homer. It is somewhat larger than Bain's Menander sample of 346 lines (8.48 per cent) in 4,080 lines in total: 'Female Speech in Menander', 31.

whether the women who are represented in the oral tradition that we associate with Homer speak differently from male characters.[51] If there are observable differences in the world of epic between speech habits of men and women, I shall go on to propose, first, that it is highly likely that there were differences in the talk of men and women in the everyday world of the time and that the poets in this tradition were aware of these;[52] and, second, that the resources of the oral traditional repertoire allowed its storytellers to realize at least some of these differences in song.

COMMUNICATING NON-VERBALLY

Although our culture sets greater store by verbal than non-verbal communication, spoken language and communication more generally are in fact highly dependent on non-verbal signals: facial expression, gaze, gesture, bodily movements, position, and stance. We are told, indeed, that non-verbal communication can carry 4.3 times the weight of the verbal message.[53] In many respects, therefore, body language is more powerful than spoken language.[54] Homer, it is clear, is not unaware of the communicative power of the body.[55] He frequently makes reference to non-verbal communication in his prefaces to character-speech. His descriptions of the so-called body language of women, as an accompaniment to their words, are

[51] Cf. Duhoux, 'Langage de femmes et d'hommes en grec ancien', 135: 'le but poursuivi est bien plus limité (et plus réaliste): savoir si Aristophane distinguait le langage des femmes et des hommes, et, si oui, comment'.

[52] By 'talk' I mean the language of everyday communication: both the kind of talk one would hear between friends and families in informal settings and the kind of talk one would hear in public settings (meetings, assemblies, and the like). Cf. Dickey, 'Forms of Address', 258–9.

[53] See N. Henley, 'Power, Sex, and Non-Verbal Communication', in B. Thorne and N. Henley (eds.), *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975), 184–203, at 186.

[54] For an important early account of non-verbal communication and its importance, see Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 5–45 ('On Face-Work'); and 47–95 ('The Nature of Deference and Demeanour').

[55] On this point see D. Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile: Nonverbal Behavior in Homeric Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), esp. at 58–61.

generally more detailed than his prefaces to men's speeches, as we shall observe.[56] This may be because the speeches that women make are in themselves highly important to the plot. It may also be because the poet recognizes the greater expressiveness of women in the everyday world and attempts, for authenticity's sake, to represent this in his tale.

Let us take a cluster of examples: Michael Argyle observes that in our own world we communicate liking and interpersonal attraction by our posture.[57] He lists five behaviours which convey immediacy: leaning towards the other person, touching, proximity, gaze, and direct orientation. This cluster of behaviours is used—by women more than men—towards people to whom the speaker is well disposed. And these are the very behaviours that Homer describes when Thetis approaches Zeus at *Il.* 1. 500–2 with a request from her son. She sits beside Zeus (the behaviour of close friends, a mark of intimacy);[58] she embraces his knees (the signal of supplication in the Greek world);[59] she takes his chin in her right hand (touch indicates warmth; gaze indicates positive engagement);[60] and she speaks. Likewise, when Andromache addresses Hektor (*Il.* 6. 405–6), she stands close beside him (intimacy); she weeps (a cue to her emotional state); she clings to his hand (touch indicates warmth). Nausikaa stands very close (*Od.* 6. 56) to her father (intimacy) when she puts her request to him; but when she later makes her request of Odysseus she gazes upon him ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶσα 'with all her eyes'

[56] The best-known amongst male behaviours is the facial expression 'looking darkly' (used, e.g., at *Il.* 24. 559), a formula which indicates, in Lateiner's phrase, a 'breach in acknowledged manners': see Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile*, 77.

[57] M. Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 209. Although we must allow for cultural differences in some behaviours, Argyle observes that others are innate (60–1).

[58] Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 173.

[59] Touching the knee is found exclusively in the act of supplication in Greek literature: see J. Gould, 'Hiketeia', in *Myth, Ritual Memory, and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 22–77, at 26; and note Gould's conclusion in his Addendum (2000), at 77: for Gould supplication is an act of assertion. Cf. V. Pedrick, 'Supplication in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*', *TAPA*, 112 (1982), 125–40, for useful discussion of Homer's different presentation of this ritual in each epic.

[60] On gaze, see Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 162: gaze indicates an anticipation of positive reaction; it is also a behaviour that is used by people lower in the hierarchy towards those higher (164).

(*Od.* 8. 459), indicating her expectation of a positive reaction. By contrast, when Penelope addresses the suitors (*Od.* 18. 209–10), she holds her veil before her eyes (expressing both modesty and distance).

I shall not attempt a complete account of non-verbal behaviour in relation to the speech genres and discourse strategies that I examine in the chapters that follow. But on occasion, especially in Part II, I shall draw attention to this second, non-verbal, channel of communication, which conveys at least as much information as the spoken word, and which may emphasize, mitigate, or even contradict what is being said.

*

Since it would be beyond the scope of a single volume to provide a comprehensive account of the composition and function of the full repertoire of speech forms within the Homeric epics, I present an indicative selection of topics, grouped under two broad headings. My goal is to illuminate Homer's understanding of, and deployment of, certain verbal behaviours and to investigate the composition of a selection of speech forms in the epics. The subject of the first four chapters in Part I is the relationship of discourse and memory. In the first two of these chapters I identify models for two of the speech acts that we encounter in the epics: uttering a rebuke and declining an invitation.[61] Since I find a strong resemblance between these Homeric speech acts and the expressions of those same speech acts in everyday middle-class talk in the Western world today,[62] I propose that Homer's mimesis of speech acts is an echo of everyday discourse from his own world.[63] This hypothesis, should it be borne out, would

[61] See Searle, *Speech Acts*, at 23. For the most part I prefer, for uniformity's sake, to use the more general term 'speech act' in the course of this volume (even for illocutionary acts). I apply my own term for Homeric verbal phenomena, 'speech format', when I refer to precise aspects of speech act generation.

[62] I am basing my argument at this point on the notion of cultural universals rather than cultural continuity: for further discussion of the question of universality of speech act performance, see Chapter 1. Just as, as Bakker argues, formulas 'derive from the very nature of spoken language, as a regularization of its basic segment, the cognitively determined intonation unit', so, I argue, the Homeric speech format is a regularization of the everyday language of the oral poet in this tradition: for Bakker's conclusions, see E. Bakker, 'The Study of Homeric Discourse', in I. Morris and B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 284–304, at 304.

[63] As does Martin: see *Language of Heroes*, 44–6.

have important consequences. We would be able to identify models on which the oral tradition based its speech forms, and we could understand where the apprentice singer concentrated his energies, and what he needed to work on, in preparing for performance.

My observations of this similarity between contemporary everyday expression and the somewhat stylized forms of illocutionary acts designed for the purpose of song have led me, as I have noted above, to examine other speech acts.[64] I turn therefore to questions. Chapters 3 and 4 approach Homeric questions (and their answers) from the perspective of discourse analysis. In these chapters I document the poet's presentation of a range of question (and answer) types; I relate what I find (for example, the well-known device *hysteron proteron*) to observable habits and patterns in everyday talk in the Western world; and I conclude that the poet, with the demands of composition in performance in mind, has narrowed his options for the generation of questions to a limited number of forms that have been refined and regularized. In Chapter 5 I demonstrate how social context and social relationships shape our talk. Now using a sociolinguistic approach, I discuss verbal behaviour (in this case a range of question-types) and social strategy (how each question-type registers differences in power and status and how each is intended to function in talk). This chapter represents a transition between the studies of Part I and those of Part II.

In Part II, Discourse and Gender, I attempt to formulate a series of responses to the question whether the epic poet reveals consistent differences in his representation of men's and women's talk. The course I have chosen, a study of some of the indirect means by which gender is marked today in our own culture and in others, has been suggested to me by the research in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis that I have described above. These studies offer possible paths to answers in the Homeric context, since the phenomena they describe (aspects of language use such as certain speech acts, speech events, and conversational strategies) are known to mark gender in other cultural contexts. I recognize that those features that mark gender in one

[64] This is not a new exercise in itself: see Bakker, 'Discourse and Performance: Involvement, Visualization and "Presence" in Homeric Poetry', *Classical Antiquity*, 12 (1993), 1–29, who focuses his attention for the most part on smaller units of speech (particles) than those which I have chosen to examine.

culture may not operate in the same way in the world that Homer describes. But, whatever the outcomes of these studies, it will be useful to have examined the data.

I begin, therefore, with a discussion, in Chapter 6, of a pair of complementary speech acts (rebukes and protests);[65] and I follow this with analyses of individual speech strategies associated with dominance in an English-speaking society (a study of information-questions in Chapter 7, of directives in Chapter 8, and of interruptions in Chapter 9). In each case I assess whether these particular forms, both in the text and perhaps also in the everyday experience of the traditional poet and his audience, are characteristic of the conversational culture of men *or* of women, or of both men *and* women. Some of my findings are not as uniformly clearcut as they are claimed to be for men's and women's talk in a middle-class English-speaking world. This lack of clarity may in some cases be related to the unevenness of the Homeric evidence; in some to over-generalizations in sociolinguistic studies; and in others (particularly in the case of directives) we may actually have evidence of a practice different from our own in the linguistic culture which is described in oral epic. I conclude Part II with a study of storytelling, in Chapter 10. Here I examine the kinds of stories that men and women choose to tell and the manner of their telling. Both content and presentation will be important to this discussion.

Throughout this volume my method has been, first, to allow Homer to speak for himself. I have documented as accurately as I can a selection of speech forms. This has involved, in some cases, keeping tallies—of question forms, for example, or of individual speech acts, such as rebukes and protests, or stories, or instances of interruption. I have analysed the component elements of selected speech acts. I have identified patterns in speech (in the sequence of answers to multiple questions, for example). And, where relevant, I have set speech forms into context: identifying speaker and addressee and noting the circumstances in which they communicate and the non-verbal behaviour which accompanies their words. Second,

[65] Whereas in Chapter 1 I study the rebuke *as* discourse, from a compositional point of view, in Chapter 6 I study its function *within* discourse, in order to observe the contexts in which the rebuke is used and to determine whether the rebuke, by contrast with the protest, is a speech form used more often by men than by women.

in my search for explanatory tools, I have drawn upon relevant discussions in discourse analysis and related fields (sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, and cognitive psychology). Since we lack informants contemporary with Homer and since we lack other sociolinguistic data from Homer's own world, I am to some extent constrained when it comes to drawing firm conclusions about a language, and a poetic language at that, that was used in limited circumstances down to the eighth century BCE and perhaps beyond. But with these deficiencies in mind I have selected material which offers comparative evidence, whether from Greek writers in later periods or from other cultures. I have drawn them into my discussion as a supplementary resource that might be helpful in interpreting the evidence.[66]

Let me summarize. In the following chapters I shall be addressing a range of questions. How could a poet within an oral culture have generated works of such a kind and on such a scale? More precisely, how did he compose the speeches which he attributes to his characters? Can we discern models for the speech forms (such as speech acts or question and answer practices) that we observe in the epics? What is their relationship with those of the everyday world of the poet? How does verbal behaviour illuminate social relationships—and *vice versa*? Does Homeric speech, as does our own, construct—as well as reveal—status and gender? I return, too, to that pair of interlinked themes that have been addressed also by Bakker and by Foley: *why* did the oral traditional poet make the choices he made? *what* are the qualities that make Homeric speech 'special'? It is my aim that the range of analytical methods which I have adopted will illustrate some new approaches to character-text within the epics and will encourage others to explore these great texts further, along similar—or complementary—lines. However we do it, it should be *pour mieux connaître Homère*.[67]

[66] This by no means implies that I neglect Homeric scholarship. Other Homeric scholars have reached many of the conclusions that I reach in the following chapters, by other paths. It is satisfying to be able to confirm their judgments or intuitions from an external, often empirical, perspective.

[67] I borrow the phrase from the title of a book now nearly a century old, which reminds us of the important early contributions of French scholars to the theory of oral composition: M. Bréal, *Pour mieux connaître Homère*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Hachette, 1911).

1

Speech Acts in Homer: The Rebuke as a Case Study

Few attentive readers of, or listeners to, the Homeric epics fail to observe what have been called the poet's 'typical scenes': action sequences that are regularly expressed in stereotypical form.[1] In Homer's accounts of procedures such as dressing, preparing a meal, or harnessing horses we notice recurrent ideas or events, some or all of which are expressed each time that Homer refers to that scene. It is clear also that many of the utterances made in the course of each epic bear a structural resemblance to others which appear to be serving the same purpose. Just as there are 'typical' *scenes* in Homer, in which the same sequence of micro-events is narrated again and again, so there are recurrent *speech types*.[2]

[1] On typical scenes, later termed 'themes' in Albert Lord's studies, see W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin: Weidmannische Buchhandlung, 1933); M. Parry, 'On Typical Scenes in Homer', in *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 404–7; A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), ch. 4 ('The Theme'); and, for sustained discussion of thematic structures, see B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the* Iliad: *Studies in the Narrative Techniques of Homeric Battle Description* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1968); S. Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), ch. 1. In all the above works it is assumed that the typical scenes which have been identified by scholars are phenomena of oral epic song. On the other hand, I have argued that the typical scenes of Arend or Reece, or the themes of Lord, should be equated with the scripts of cognitive science: see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), at 11–15. For a summary see Introduction, above. I take up this discussion again below and in Chapter 2.

[2] I introduce the notion that speech acts are prepatterned in *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 32–3, 38. The present chapter is a detailed exploration of such patterns and their significance.

Despite observable similarities of structure in a range of speech acts in the Homeric epics, there have been few attempts at establishing a typology or giving a structural account of the spoken discourse in the poems. The work of Anton Fingerle is a unique attempt at the first task.[3] Bernard Fenik undertook, to a limited extent, the second. In his discussion of typical scenes in the *Iliad*, he has identified in passing the structural patterns which underpin a number of speeches in Homer.[4] Dieter Lohmann, by contrast, devotes his whole work to the speeches of the *Iliad*; but, rather than examining the structures common to one speech act or another, his principal concern has been to find evidence for a pattern which does not recognize distinctions of genre. This is the pattern which has been called ring-composition and which, he claims, shapes so many Homeric speeches.[5] Although Lohmann's demonstrations have contributed in a number of peripheral ways to our understanding of oral epic composition, they have not succeeded in illuminating how the poet conceived of, and composed, the variety of speeches he includes in his epic tales.[6] More promising, however, is Martin's study of the language of Homer's heroes.[7] Following the linguistic philosophers, J. L. Austin and John

[3] See A. Fingerle, 'Typik der homerischen Reden' (diss. Munich, 1939), who distinguishes speech-types such as threats, requests, rebukes, greeting, and farewells. Since Fingerle's dissertation cannot now be obtained from its holding library, I rely on a brief summary in J. Latacz, 'Zur Forschungsarbeit an den direkten Reden bei Homer (1850–1970): ein kritischer Literatur-Überblick', *Grazer Beiträge*, 3 (1975), 393–422, at 411–13.

[4] See Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes*, where he identifies a pattern for 'rebukes' (see below); he discusses in more general terms at a number of points 'speeches of triumph' (134–5) and 'deliberation' (67–8).

[5] D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der* Ilias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970). The concept of ring-composition was first enunciated by W. van Otterlo, *De Ringcompositie als Opbouwprincipe in de epische Gedichten van Homerus* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1948). According to van Otterlo, when the same element appears at the beginning and at the end of a unit of discourse, this repetition is identified as a ring; when a number of elements within that unit are handled individually in a certain sequence (A, B, C . . .) and then rehandled in the reverse order (. . . C, B, A), the outcome is a number of rings. He refers to the pattern so created as 'ring-composition'. For further discussion, see below.

[6] Latacz describes Lohmann's work as 'nützlich, aber er bedarf der Ergänzung': see Latacz, 'Zur Forschungsarbeit an den direckten Reden bei Homer', at 417.

[7] R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), proposes (at 10) to 'look at the very notion of speech within the poems to discover the parameters of this very basic sort

Searle, Martin reads the speeches of the heroes as behaviour.[8] He works from the premise that the poet, in attributing speech to his heroes, draws on a number of speech genres familiar to his audience, such as commands, boasts, and rebukes. Martin considers the speech events which we observe in Homer to be akin to speech acts as defined by Searle.[9] In his analysis of speakers and speeches in the *Iliad*, Martin points out what Homer's representations of speech acts can tell us about the intentions of his speakers in each case; and he shows us how the poet individualizes his heroes through the speech genres which he attributes to each one.

Martin's study, however, is founded on an unexamined notion: that the speeches of the *Iliad* are mimetic. He claims that they are 'without question stylized poetic versions of reality'; and that the 'rhetorical repertoire of the heroes must be rooted in the actual range of speaking strategies available to any Greek speaker'.[10] We should not accept Martin's assertions without a pause. Can we be sure that the speech acts realized by Homer in his epics were indeed 'versions of reality'? Is it possible today to demonstrate that they were mimetic, despite our lack of access to native speakers from Homer's own time? Furthermore, what light might this demonstration, if it can be achieved, throw on a singer's memory for and composition of character-text in the oral epic tradition?

of performance'. He suggests (47) that the 'performances' embedded in the poem can tell us about 'the parameters of Homer's own performance'.

[8] See Martin, *Language of Heroes*, ch. 1 ('Performance, Speech-Act, and Utterance'). Here he examines Homeric speech events and distinguishes *muthos* (authoritative speech) from *epos* (which designates any utterance). He focusses his attention on those speech events which might be considered to be *muthoi*. On the 'inextricable bond between words and deeds', see also D. Roochink, 'Homeric Speech Acts: Word and Deed in the Epics', *CJ*, 85 (1989–90), 289–99, at 290–1, who, like Martin, makes the point that the Homeric poems conceived of language in a way that makes them similar to the speech-act theories of Austin or Searle. And cf. also M. Clark, 'Chryses' Supplication: Speech Act and Mythological Allusion', *Classical Antiquity*, 17 (1998), 5–24, at 7–10 for a lucid discussion of speech-act theory in the context of the spoken discourse recreated by Homer.

[9] See, for example, J. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[10] Martin, *Language of Heroes*, at 45; see also 225. This notion was briefly canvassed in an earlier period by Marcel Delaunois: see M. Delaunois, 'Comment parlent les héros d'Homère', *Les études classiques*, 20 (1952), 80–92, at 82.

In the discussion which follows I shall examine a limited set of speeches from the Homeric epics that we recognize as belonging to the one genre, on the basis of the introductory language of the narrator and the intention that we read into the words of the speaker and the structure of the speech itself. The speeches in question are those which we might classify as rebukes. I shall go on to compare the Homeric data with samples of everyday rebukes from our own world. If indeed there are similarities between the two classes of rebuke (the Homeric rebukes and the real-world rebukes of today), we can begin to evaluate Martin's claim.[11] This comparison will also open the way to a discussion of the role of memory in the composition of the speech acts that we identify both in Homeric discourse and in our own everyday talk. I shall argue, with Martin, that the rebukes of the Homeric heroes, as well as many other of their speech acts (but not necessarily all of them), are stylized and complete versions of everyday talk; I shall explain, in cognitive terms, why rebukes are expressed in so similar a fashion in both contexts; and I shall show how this

[11] Why compare speech acts from such different periods and from different cultures? I am doing so because English forms are readily available to me and to many others amongst my readers. It would be possible to find parallels in other languages as well. To make a comparison of two speech forms so far apart in time is feasible because I am persuaded that *in general* speech acts which serve the same purposes, although they derive from different cultures, exhibit the same primary features as each other. Of course, they may differ in some secondary features, resulting, perhaps, from the culture's preference for a more or less direct (or indirect) speech style. For a discussion of the cultural variability of interactional styles and 'universalistic' claims, see S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, and G. Kasper, 'Investigating Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: An Introductory Overview', in S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, and G. Kasper (eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1989), 1–34, and for their conclusions, see 24–5; and see also E. Olshtain, 'Apologies across Languages', in Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics*, 155–73 (for a study of apologies in French, German, Hebrew, and Australian English; for her conclusions ('given the same social factors, the same contextual features, and the same level of offence, different languages will realize apologies in very similar ways'), see 171–2, at 171. For an opposing view (that differences between Polish and English in the area of speech acts are due to deep-seated cultural norms and values; and that any claims to universality in the politeness of speech act performance are nothing but ethnocentric Anglo-Saxon claims), see A. Wierzbicka, 'Different Cultures, Different Languages, Different Speech Acts', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9 (1985), 145–78.

knowledge can contribute to our understanding of oral traditional composition.[12]

HOMER'S REBUKES

Homer's characters are remarkably free with their rebukes. Their reproofs may be addressed to an audience of one, or more than one; the speaker may censure an action, or want of action, on the part of another (for example, from the *Iliad*, the rebuke which Odysseus addresses to Thersites, at 2. 246–64, the rebuke which Andromache envisages for Astyanax, at 22. 498, or the stinging rebuke which Sarpedon addresses to Hektor, at 5. 472–92). The speaker may be ironic, as is Apollo when he rebukes Aineias, at 17. 327–32; he can express his rebuke humorously, as does Diomedes in his response to Nestor, who has woken him from sleep (10. 164–7); or mildly, as does Odysseus to his peers (2. 190–7); or he may be both misguided in his judgment and abrupt in his manner, as is Agamemnon (4. 338–48, 370–400). A rebuke will often serve the purpose of a challenge, or a rallying cry, when the speaker condemns, for example, a lack of fighting spirit (see 15. 502–13); it may metamorphose into a threat, when the speaker decides that a rebuke alone will not gain him or her the result s/he wishes (as at 2. 225–42). But the rebuke, in all its variety, remains recognizable as a rebuke. What, then, are its signs?

The first common, but not unfailing, signal of a rebuke in the Homeric context is the presence of a characteristic introductory word or phrase. So, for example, a rebuke may be introduced by the narrator through the verbs *νεικέω* (upbraid), *ἐνίπτω* (reprove), or *ὁμοκλέω* (chide); or through descriptive phrases that give some information about its manner of delivery: *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* (fiercely), or *μέγ᾽ ὀχθήσας* (greatly vexed), or *αἰσχροῖς*, *χολωτοῖσιν*, or *κερτομίοισι*

[12] This chapter looks ahead to Chapter 6 in which I consider whether women's speech in Homer is distinctive by comparison with that of men. There I compare the rebuke, which today is thought to be a speech form preferred by men, with the protest, a speech form which we associate with diminished power, and which is, in Homer, frequently attributed to women.

ἐπέεσσι (with shaming, or angry, or taunting words), or χαλεπῷ μύθῳ (speaking angrily). It is introductory words like these that help the audience evaluate the tone and the force of the rebuke. As Martin observes, however, it is not necessary that this speech type be sign-posted, because the context will provide many of the cues we need for interpretation;[13] as will, I propose, the recognizable structure and the language of the reproof itself. This is the point to which I now turn.

When Fenik states that no two rebukes in the *Iliad* are exactly alike, he can only be referring to their surface features.[14] For he subsequently identifies a 'familiar structure' which underlies the Homeric rebuke: (1) criticism; (2) description of the bad situation; and (3) call to action.[15] My own study of the rebukes of the *Iliad* leads me to propose a slightly different format, of four elements:

(1) address/emotional reaction/words of reproach.[16]
(2) an account of the problem (in which the speaker alludes to the undesirable behaviour at issue: this element is situation-specific). This may be couched as a statement, a rhetorical question, or a negative command ('don't . . .'), which, anticipating element (4), incorporates an initial proposal for changed behaviour. This last form, the negative command, conveys the urgency of the rebuke.
(3) a generalization about appropriate action/or a view of the undesirable action from a broader perspective; and
(4) a proposal for amends: new action on the part of the addressee.

Not all Homeric rebukes, as we shall see, will manifest each of these elements; but it is interesting in itself that most of them do. Let us

[13] Martin, *Language of Heroes*, at 68. For examples of rebukes which are not sign-posted, see the rebuke which Dream addresses to Agamemnon, *Il.* 2. 23–34; the rebuke which Nestor addresses to the Achaians, 2. 337–68; the rebuke of Athene to Diomedes, 5. 800–13.

[14] Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes*, at 176. I shall take up this point later in this discussion.

[15] Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes*, at 206.

[16] Sometimes the person addressed is named, sometimes not. Naming the individual singles out the addressee and commands his or her attention. For further discussion of naming, see below.

consider a number of examples from the *Iliad* which illustrate the 'full' rebuke.[17]

At 1. 254–84, Nestor upbraids Agamemnon and Achilleus, who have quarrelled over Agamemnon's right to a replacement for Chryseis, whom he has been forced to return to her father. His speech is not introduced by any of the words which might signal a rebuke; indeed, it is made clear that what Nestor is to say is intended as placatory rather than an expression of anger: note Homer's use of ἐϋφρονέων (wisely), at 253, to indicate the tone of what is to follow;[18] and Nestor's use of ὢ πόποι (for shame, 254), to express his distress at the turn of events. Nestor's speech, nevertheless, takes the form of a rebuke, but in the course of element (4)—from 269—it moves into an *exemplum* which is to reinforce his first proposal (259) and then—from 274—into an attempted reconciliation.

As far as the structure of the rebuke is concerned, observe the presence of a generalizing expression to render element (3): here preceding element (2). The generalizing element is almost uniform throughout Homeric rebukes.[19] And note Nestor's use of ἀλλά (but) at 259, to introduce the command contained in his proposal. This combination of ἀλλά and an imperative form is used in each one of the rebukes cited below; it appears regularly as a cue in all others in which a proposal, element (4), is included.[20] The shape of the speech follows the pattern which I set out above:[21]

[17] For analysis in these terms of a larger sample of rebukes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see Table 1.

[18] For the translation of ἐφρονέων, I follow Lardinois' proposal: see A. Lardinois, 'Characterization through Gnomai in Homer's *Iliad*', *Mnemosyne*, 53 (2000), 641–61, at 650; cf. Delaunois, 'Comment parlent les héros', at 89, who describes Nestor's manner as 'calme et raisonnée'.

[19] In the examples which I cite, only the rebuke of Athene to Nausikaa (*Od*. 6. 25–40) uses the indicative mood to express this third element. In all others the speaker generalizes in hypothetical terms.

[20] Cf. J. M. Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pa.: Pennyslvania State University Press, 1999), at 224, on the use of a phrase such as this as a 'rhetorical fulcrum' within a speech act.

[21] I use throughout this volume, unless otherwise indicated, the translations of Richmond Lattimore: *The* Iliad *of Homer* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951); *The* Odyssey *of Homer* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

Table 1. A sample of rebukes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*[1]

Location	Context	Address/reproach	Problem	Generalization/ broader perspective	Proposal
Iliad					
2. 173–81	Athene to Odysseus	173	174–5	176–8	179–81
2. 200–6	Odysseus to a common soldier	200, 201–2[2]	203	204–6	200–1
5. 889–98	Zeus to Ares	889	889, 890–1	892–4	895–8
6. 407–39	Andromache to Hektor	407	407–10	410–30	431–9[3]
7. 109–19	Agamemnon to Menelaos	109	109–12	113–14	100–12, 115–19
10. 159–61	Nestor to Diomedes	159	159	160–1	159
12. 409–12	Sarpedon to the Lykians	409	409	410–11	412
14. 83–102	Odysseus to Agamemnon	83–7, 95	88–9, 96–7	90–4, 97–102[4]	90
15. 128–41	Athene to Ares	128–9	130–7	139–41	138
16. 422–5	Sarpedon to Lykians	422	422	423–5	422[5]
17. 142–68	Glaukos to Hektor	142	143	146–8	144–5
		150	149–53	154–65	—
			166–8		
17. 556–9	Athene to Menelaos	556–7	557–8	—	559
21. 472–7	Artemis to Apollo	472, 474	472–3	473–4	475–7
23. 69–92	Patroklos to Achilleus	69	69–70	72–4, 75–81	71, 75, 82–92

Odyssey

2. 243–56	Leokritos to Mentor	243–4, 251	243–4, 251	244–51	252–6
6. 199–210	Nausikaa to her handmaids	199	199	200–8	199, 209–10
7. 159–66	Echeneos to Alkinoös	159	159–60	161	162–6
13. 330–51	Athene to Odysseus	330–2	333–8	339–43	344–51
15. 10–42	Athene to Telemachos	10	10–12	12–13	14–42
15. 326–39	Eumaios to Odysseus	326–7	327–9	330–4	335–9
17. 46–51	Telemachos to Penelope	46	46–7	47	48–51
18. 215–25	Penelope to Telemachos	215	215–24	225	—
21. 85–95	Antinoös to Eumaios and Philoitios	85–6	86–7	87–8	89–95
22. 226–35	Athene to Odysseus	226–30	231–2	—	233–5

[1] For a complete listing of rebukes in the epics, see Table 4, below.

[2] The reproach here is administered physically also (the blows at 199). The implied problem is the man's shouting, hence the instruction 'Sit still and listen!' (200).

[3] Foley identifies Andromache's speech (6. 407–39) as a lament (J. M. Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), at 188–98). Although it looks ahead to Hektor's death with sorrow, it is structured as a rebuke, as demonstrated here (on the speech as a 'reproach', see also M. B. Arthur, 'The Divided World of *Iliad* VI', in H. Foley (ed.), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York and London: Gordon and Breach, 1981), 19–44, esp. at 33). For further discussion see Chapter 6, below.

[4] Note that longer rebukes may repeat the rebuke pattern, as in this instance and at *Il.* 17. 142–68 below.

[5] Sarpedon's proposal is unusual since it is not an instruction directed to the Lykians but is an undertaking for action on his own part, as befits a commander.

(1) emotional response (1. 254)

ὢ πόποι, ἦ μέγα πένθος Ἀχαιΐδα γαῖαν ἱκάνει·

Oh, for shame. Great sorrow comes on the land of Achaia

(2) problem (257–8)

εἰ σφῶϊν τάδε πάντα πυθοίατο μαρναμένοιϊν
οἳ περὶ μὲν βουλὴν Δαναῶν, περὶ δ' ἐστὲ μάχεσθαι.

were they to hear all this wherein you two are quarrelling,
you, who surpass all Danaans in council, in fighting.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective (255–6)

ἦ κεν γηθήσαι Πρίαμος Πριάμοιό τε παῖδες
ἄλλοι τε Τρῶες μέγα κεν κεχαροίατο θυμῷ

Now might Priam and the sons of Priam in truth be happy,
and all the rest of the Trojans be visited in their hearts with gladness

(4) proposal (259–84)

ἀλλὰ πίθεσθ'· . . .

Yet be persuaded . . .

Lohmann notes a series of internal correspondences in this last element, the proposal, which is the segment of reconciliation; they are not present in the speech as a whole;[22] Martin also notes these, which he refers to as Nestor's 'binary stuctures'; they are clearly intended to indicate Nestor's even-handedness in his treatment of the two heroes.[23] Indeed, Agamemnon praises this at 1. 286. The balance which Lohmann notes in 275–84 or the binary structures

[22] Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, at 224, n. 18, analyses the composition of this speech:

I.	254–58	Klage über die Situation.
II.	259–74	Appell an die beiden Streitenden, zu gehorchen.
III.	275–84	Wechselseitiger Appell zur Versöhnung.

Lohmann detects ring-composition in the *exemplum* of II: a 259, b 260–1, c 262–8, b′ 269–73, a′ 274; and in the alternations of III: a 275–6 (to Agamemnon), b 277–81 (to Achilles), a′ 282–4 (to Agamemnon). His analysis, preoccupied as it is with internal parallels within this particular rebuke, does not further our understanding of the composition of rebukes in general.

[23] Martin, *Language of Heroes*, at 101, notes that '[b]inary structures abound, presenting a rhetorical model, or icon, for two-sidedness'. And yet, as Muellner observes, nothing here actually addresses the situation from Achilleus' point of

which Martin observes are not a component of rebukes in general, as we shall observe in the examples below. They are an outcome of the rhetorical strategy which Nestor has adopted on this occasion, as he attempts to deal with two strong-willed people who are at odds.

My second example is the rebuke which Hektor addresses to his brother, Paris (6. 326–31). Hektor has returned to Troy to accomplish two tasks: to fetch his brother back to battle and to speak with Andromache, his wife. Hektor finds Paris in his apartment. He is busying himself with his armour. Helen is sitting by, overseeing work on her great tapestry. Hektor, fresh from the battle, comes in upon this scene of domestic peace and rebukes (*νείκεσσεν*, 325) his brother 'in words of shame' (*αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσσι*). His words, however, are not as bitter as his rebuke at 3. 39–57, in which he all but threatens Paris with a stoning. Nor are they as bitter as we might have expected from his comment to his mother about Paris (6. 279–85), when Hektor says that he wishes his brother dead. On arriving at Paris' apartment, Hektor's words are softened. Is it the presence of a lady—or is it the presence of Helen herself, for whom he always demonstrates a protective affection—which takes the sting from his rebuke?[24] Note again the structure of the speech:

(1) words of reproach (6. 326)

δαιμόνι',[25] *οὐ μὲν καλὰ . . .*

Strange man! It is not fair . . .

(2) problem (326–9)

χόλον τόνδ' ἔνθεο θυμῷ.
λαοὶ μὲν φθινύθουσι περὶ πτόλιν αἰπύ τε τεῖχος
μαρνάμενοι· σέο δ' εἵνεκ' ἀϋτή τε πτόλεμός τε
ἄστυ τόδ' ἀμφιδέδηε·

view: L. Muellner, *The Anger of Achilles: Mênis in Greek Epic* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 112.

[24] See, for example, his gentle words at 6. 360–8; and note Helen's account of Hektor's kindness to her and of her love for him at 24. 762–75.

[25] Kirk notes that this term has different nuances of meaning in different contexts; whereas he reads it as 'affectionate remonstrance' in 1. 561, he notes that it marks a stronger rebuke elsewhere (e.g., 4. 31): see G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), at 111 (on 1. 561). On the other hand, Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art*, at 193, notes that 'this single sêma serves throughout Homer as a signal implying verbal contest and urging some kind of change . . .'.

(It is not fair) to keep in your heart this coldness.
The people are dying around the city and around the steep wall
as they fight hard; and it is for you that this war with its clamour
has flared up about our city.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective (329–30)

σὺ δ' ἂν μαχέσαιο καὶ ἄλλῳ
ὅν τινά που μεθιέντα ἴδοις στυγεροῦ πολέμοιο.

You yourself would fight with another
whom you saw anywhere hanging back from the hateful encounter.

(4) proposal (331)

ἀλλ' ἄνα, μὴ τάχα ἄστυ πυρὸς δηΐοιο θέρηται.

Up then, to keep our town from burning at once in the hot fire.

A third example is a brief rebuke. Apollo in the likeness of Asios, son of Dymas, rebukes Hektor for hesitating, just at the moment when the Achaians, led by Patroklos, are about to overpower Troy. His rebuke (16. 721–5) is brief, but to the point:

(1) address (16. 721)

Ἕκτορ,
Hektor,

(2) problem (721)

τίπτε μάχης ἀποπαύεαι; οὐδέ τί σε χρή.

why have you stopped fighting? You should not do it.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective (722–3)

αἴθ' ὅσον ἥσσων εἰμί, τόσον σέο φέρτερος εἴην;
τῶ κε τάχα στυγερῶς πολέμου ἀπερωήσειας.

If I were as much stronger than you as I am now weaker!
So might you, in this evil way, hold back from the fighting.

(4) proposal (724–5)

ἀλλ' ἄγε, Πατρόκλῳ ἔφεπε κρατερώνυχας ἵππους,
αἴ κέν πώς μιν ἕλῃς, δώῃ δέ τοι εὖχος Ἀπόλλων.

But come! Hold straight against Patroklos your strong-footed horses.
You might be able to kill him. Apollo might give you such glory.

A fourth example is the rebuke which Achilleus utters when he seeks to settle the dispute which arises in the course of the chariot-race in the Funeral Games for Patroklos. Here (23. 492–8) he addresses Aias, son of Oïleus, and Idomeneus, who disagree about the identity of the driver who appears to be in the lead. Again, all four elements are used to express the rebuke.

(1) address (23. 493)

Αἶαν Ἰδομενεῦ τε,

Aias and Idomeneus,

(2) problem (492–3)

μηκέτι νῦν χαλεποῖσιν ἀμείβεσθον ἐπέεσσιν,
. . . κακοῖς, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ἔοικε.

No longer now, Aias and Idomeneus, continue
to exchange this bitter and evil talk. It is not becoming.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective (494)

καὶ δ' ἄλλῳ νεμεσᾶτον, ὅτις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι.

If another acted so, you yourselves would be angry.

(4) proposal (495–8)

ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς ἐν ἀγῶνι καθήμενοι εἰσοράασθε
ἵππους· οἳ δὲ τάχ' αὐτοὶ ἐπειγόμενοι περὶ νίκης
ἐνθάδ' ἐλεύσονται· τότε δὲ γνώσεσθε ἕκαστος
ἵππους Ἀργείων, οἳ δεύτεροι οἵ τε πάροιθεν.

Rather sit down again among those assembled and watch for
the horses, and they in their strain for victory will before long
be here. Then you each can see for himself, and learn which
of the Argive horses have run first and which have run second.

Note that the binary structures which we observed in the first example, above, are not recreated here. Achilleus has not attempted to judge between Aias and Idomeneus or to instruct them separately. Rather, he has considered them equally guilty (for their dispute is spoiling the other spectators' pleasure) and disciplines them both.

In a fifth example, at 23. 570–85, Menelaos publicly rebukes Antilochos for his tactics during the chariot-race; and he proposes a solution to what he regards as an unjust outcome. Note the use of a

reproach in this first element. Through evaluative language of this kind a speaker is able to adjust the affective force of his rebuke. In this case, by conveying to Antilochos his earlier high esteem, Menelaos is able to catch his attention (we all respond to praise) and to convey disappointment as well as anger. This is a communicative strategy which is familiar to us from everyday talk.[26] Menelaos' rebuke follows the predictable course, with one omission:

(1) address/words of reproach (23. 570)

Ἀντίλοχε, πρόσθεν πεπνυμένε, . . .

Antilochos, you had good sense once.

(2) problem (570–2)

ποῖον ἔρεξας.
ᾔσχυνας μὲν ἐμὴν ἀρετήν, βλάψας δέ μοι ἵππους,
τοὺς σοὺς πρόσθε βαλών, οἵ τοι πολὺ χείρονες ἦσαν.

See what you have done.
You have defiled my horsemanship, you have fouled my horses
by throwing your horses in their way, though yours were far slower.

(4) proposal (573–85)

ἀλλ' ἄγετ', Ἀργείων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες,
ἐς μέσον ἀμφοτέροισι δικάσσατε, μηδ' ἐπ' ἀρωγῇ . . .

Come then, o leaders of the Argives and their men of counsel:
judge between the two of us now; and without favour...

Notice that Menelaos does not offer any broader comment on the young man's behaviour. Indeed, he has already shared his indignation at Antilochos' tactics in the protests he uttered during the race (23. 426–8, 439–41). We know already that these tactics were perhaps questionable and certainly dangerous.

Let us consider also two rebukes from the *Odyssey*. Both exhibit the same structural characteristics that we have noticed in rebukes from the *Iliad*. My first example is the rebuke which Athene offers

[26] For illuminating discussion of Antilochos' relationship with Menelaos (and the possibility that this is an Homeric invention), see M. Willcock, 'Antilochos in the *Iliad*', in C. Froidefond (ed.), *Mélanges Edouard Delebecque* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1983), 477–85, esp. at 481.

to Nausikaa, over the state of her own and her brothers' clothing (6. 25–40). Note in element (4) the dual proposals: *ἀλλ' ἴομεν*... (but let us go, at 31); *ἀλλ' ἄγ'*... (but come on, at 36).

(1) words of reproach (*Od.* 6. 25)

Ναυσικάα, τί νύ σ' ὧδε μεθήμονα γείνατο μήτηρ;

Nausikaa, how could your mother have a child so careless?

(2) problem (26)

εἵματα μέν τοι κεῖται ἀκηδέα σιγαλόεντα,

The shining clothes are lying away uncared for,

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective (27–8, 29–30, 34–5)

σοὶ δὲ γάμος σχεδόν ἐστιν, ἵνα χρὴ καλὰ μὲν αὐτὴν
ἕννυσθαι, τὰ δὲ τοῖσι παρασχεῖν οἵ κέ σ' ἄγωνται.

while your
marriage is not far off, when you should be in your glory
for clothes to wear, and provide too for those who attend you.

ἐκ γάρ τοι τούτων φάτις ἀνθρώπους ἀναβαίνει
ἐσθλή, χαίρουσιν δὲ πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ.

It is from such things that a good reputation among people
springs up, giving pleasure to your father and the lady your mother.

ἤδη γάρ σε μνῶνται ἀριστῆες κατὰ δῆμον
πάντων Φαιήκων, ὅθι τοι γένος ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτῇ.

For already you are being courted by all the best men
of the Phaiakians hereabouts, and you too are a Phaiakian.

(4) proposal (31–3, 36–40)

ἀλλ' ἴομεν πλυνέουσαι ἅμ' ἠοῖ φαινομένηφι·
καί τοι ἐγὼ συνέριθος ἅμ' ἕψομαι, ὄφρα τάχιστα
ἐντύνεαι, ἐπεὶ οὔ τοι ἔτι δὴν παρθένος ἔσσεαι·

So let us go on a washing tomorrow when dawn shows. I too
will go along with you and help you, so you can have all
done most quickly, since you will not long stay unmarried.

αλλ' ἄγ' ἐπότρυνον πατέρα κλυτὸν ἠῶθι πρὸ
ἡμιόνους καὶ ἄμαξαν ἐφοπλίσαι, ἥ κεν ἄγῃσι
ζῶστρά τε καὶ πέπλους καὶ ῥήγεα σιγαλόεντα . . .

So come, urge your famous father early in the morning
to harness the mules and wagon for you, and it shall carry
the sashes and dresses and shining coverlets for you . . .

Finally, at 23. 166–72, Odysseus is driven to rebuke his wife, Penelope, for the apparent coolness of her reception—despite the earlier rebuke from her son (23. 97–103):

(1) words of reproach (23. 166)

δαιμονίη, . . .[27]

You are so strange, . . .

(2) problem (166–7)

. . . περὶ σοί γε γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων
κῆρ ἀτέραμνον ἔθηκαν ᾿Ολύμπια δώματ᾿ ἔχοντες·

. . . The gods, who have their homes on Olympos,
have made your heart more stubborn than for the rest of womankind.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective (168–70)

οὐ μέν κ᾿ ἄλλη γ᾿ ὧδε γυνὴ τετληότι θυμῷ
ἀνδρὸς ἀφεσταίη, ὅς οἱ κακὰ πολλὰ μογήσας
ἔλθοι ἐεικοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

No other woman, with spirit as stubborn as yours, would keep back
as you are doing from her husband who, after much suffering,
came at last in the twentieth year back to his own country.

(4) proposal (171–2)

ἀλλ᾿ ἄγε μοι, μαῖα, στόρεσον λέχος, ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὸς
λέξομαι· ἦ γὰρ τῇ γε σιδήρεον ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ.

Come then, nurse, make me up a bed, so that I can use it
here; for this woman has a heart of iron within her.

THE REBUKE IN SPOKEN DISCOURSE TODAY

In surveying the expression of rebukes in today's world, I observe that the most common occurrences of this form of speech act are in the

[27] See above for comment on this word and its use in Homer as a signal of verbal contest. And see Chapter 6 on the interplay of Odysseus' rebuke with Penelope's protest.

relationship between parents and their young children or between teachers and their students. As adults—in English-speaking cultures, at least—we do not issue rebukes to our peers with the same frequency as we do to our children. Certainly, we do not issue rebukes to our peers with the same frequency with which they are uttered in Homer's *Iliad*, or his *Odyssey*: if we wish to modify the behaviour of our colleagues and friends we try to find less confronting modes of speech.[28]

Over a period of weeks in September 1999 I noted several rebukes uttered in a number of contexts by Ann to her two-year-old daughter Aislinn.[29] Because a certain real-world urgency underlay each of Ann's rebukes, she was far more concise in expression than most Homeric speakers. Nevertheless, Ann's 'speeches' follow the same format as those which I have discussed above. To contextualize the first two examples below, I am in a garden which has just been landscaped with Ann and Aislinn; Aislinn has begun to wander across the newly planted area. Ann calls her back:

(1) address (simply an address by name)[30]
Aislinn . . .

(2) problem
. . . come off the grass. There are tiny seeds there, trying to grow.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective
Tess will be very sorry, if you hurt them.

[28] Society's (or, at least, English-speaking society's) norms for directness today preclude this kind of overt criticism of another's behaviour (and the associated imperatives), when the other is an adult of the same status—or of higher status. As Susan Ervin-Tripp observes, imperatives are used in adult speech 'whenever cooperation can be assumed': that is, when the addressee is of similar or lower status. On this see S. Ervin-Tripp, 'Ask and It Shall be Given Unto You', *Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1982), 235–45, at 238. For discussion of power and directness (and lack of power and indirectness), see Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 'Investigating Cross-Cultural Pragmatics', 3–9; and see also S. Blum-Kulka, 'Playing it Safe: The Role of Conventionality in Indirectness', in Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics*, 37–70. For further discussion of directives in the English-speaking world and in Homer, see Chapter 8.

[29] I thank Ann Cleary for her permission to use her words for the purposes of this discussion.

[30] The naming of names is a strategy to ensure that the addressee is actually attending. This is crucial in rebukes addressed to children, who, because of memory limitations, egocentrism, absorption in another activity, or uncooperativeness, may not otherwise hear an utterance such as a rebuke. For commentary and illustrations

(4) proposal
Come on! Over here!

Minutes later Ann is obliged to repeat her rebuke:

(1) address
Aislinn . . .

(2) problem
Don't walk on the garden.

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective
You're walking on the new plants.

(4) proposal
Come back here!

Of course, it is not necessary that element (1) be used, if the speaker feels that lines of communication between her and her child are already open. On another occasion, Ann is trying to prevent Aislinn from tearing up a receipt from a recent shopping expedition:

(2) problem
Don't rip the paper! . . . No! No!

(3) action viewed from a broader perspective
That's the docket for Daddy's jacket.[31]

In this rebuke the words 'No! No!' may be considered to be an intensive repetition of the negative command of (2), since there was a greater degree of urgency at this point. Aislinn had continued to tear the paper she held in her hand despite Ann's initial instruction.

In these instances of everyday discourse, we note that the speech act format is not at all rigid; it allows the speaker to respond to a fluid situation. In everyday circumstances certain elements of the speech

of strategies used to catch the attention of children see E. Ochs Keenan, B. Schieffelin, and M. Platt, 'Questions of Immediate Concern', in E. Ochs and B. Schieffelin (eds.), *Acquiring Conversational Competence* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 114–26, at 117–19. Note that Ann does not use words of reproach to Aislinn in any of the examples which I have collected. This may reflect current child-rearing practice, according to which a parent or carer should not express negative evaluations of a child: one may criticize the child's behaviour; one should not criticize the child.

[31] What is *assumed* here is a certain amount of cultural knowledge: that a docket, which documents a business transaction, is an important piece of paper; and (the generalization) that one does not discard or destroy such papers.

act may be expressed by non-verbal means: for example, in the incident cited above, instead of expressing element (4): proposal, through words such as 'Give it to me!', Ann has approached Aislinn gently and has taken the docket from her. There had been no time for further verbal negotiation. There will be occasions, too, when the person being rebuked responds promptly to the first or second elements of the rebuke; in these cases there is no need for the speaker to pursue the full structure.[32] On the other hand, when addressees indicate that they are reluctant to change their behaviour, speakers are obliged to expand their rebukes in an effort to distract them from the undesirable activity, trying by reason and persuasion—that is, through element (3)—to effect a change of intention.[33] In the real world context, therefore, the speaker's formulation of a rebuke is flexible: more so than in the Homeric world. Prior circumstances, and the changing situation, will influence its development; actions may replace words; and urgency will exert its influence on the expression of the whole.[34] We might, however, (after some thought) verbalize the format for a rebuke in this way: (1) catch X's attention and indicate our dissatisfaction with or distress about his or her behaviour; (2) explain the problem and the immediate difficulty; (3) explain why this behaviour is not appropriate; (4) tell X what should be done instead.[35]

[32] The naming of a person—particularly in a certain admonitory tone—often in itself functions as a full rebuke.

[33] Or the speaker may move from rebuke to a stronger form, such as a threat. I have drawn attention to an example of this progression above, in the Homeric context, at *Il.* 2. 225–42. Here Thersites begins by addressing Agamemnon, rebuking him, but (at 235) he turns to the Achaians and makes a proposal to them (to leave Troy). This, indirectly, represents a threat to Agamemnon.

[34] Dickinson and Givón have criticized cognitive studies of discourse for ignoring its interactional aspects: see C. Dickinson and T. Givón, 'Memory and Conversation: Towards an Experimental Paradigm', in T. Givón (ed.), *Conversation: Cognitive, Communicative and Social Perspectives* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1997), 91–132, at 92–3. The model I propose here takes into account both face-to-face interaction and informational aspects in the shaping of this particular speech act, the rebuke.

[35] The four-part format which I set out above in my discussion of the Homeric rebuke, a modification of Fenik's rebuke-pattern, corresponds to this in each detail. In literature, too, we find the same format. In search of a sample of rebukes I turned to the works of Jane Austen. Certainly, Austen does not count as a contemporary author; but her keen ear for other aspects of everyday dialogue persuaded me that this speech act, if it appeared at all in Austen's work, would appear in appropriate contexts

THE PRAGMATICS OF REBUKES: REPETITION AND RING-COMPOSITION

I have noted already that in an emergency a speaker, whether in the real world or in Homer, may begin his or her rebuke with a negative command, as part of element (2): problem. It is possible that s/he will reuse this expression which has already been formulated, now as part of element (4): proposal, which cues a command.[36] Lohmann might read such reuse as ring-composition.[37] I regard repetition of this kind as a pragmatic move, crisis-driven, rather than as a structural or an aesthetic choice.[38] The reuse or reshaping of an element of discourse which has been uttered just a moment before enables a speaker to produce language more efficiently, more fluently, and with less expenditure of effort.[39] Repetition, therefore, is in the first instance an

and would be true-to-life. I found the richest store of rebukes in *Mansfield Park*, on the lips of the bossy Aunt Norris (addressing her timid niece Fanny) and of Sir Thomas (addressing his wayward son Tom): see *Mansfield Park* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1962), at, for example, 18, 59, 123. Mrs Bennet, for her part, is capable of the occasional peevish rebuke: *Pride and Prejudice* (London: McDonald, 1951), at 5, for example (to a daughter). She stands in contrast with Mrs Morland in *Northanger Abbey*, whose rebuke of Catherine (her daughter) is affectionate and gentle (*Northanger Abbey* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1985), at 237). In each of these cases note that Austen has observed the 'guidelines': an adult addresses a child; and the rebuke in each case is a 'full' rebuke—like one of Homer's.

[36] That is, the negative command of element (2) (e.g., 'Don't do that!') may be repeated at element (4). On the other hand, element (4) may incorporate a positive suggestion, proposing a new course of action (e.g., 'Come over here!'). Repetition in rebukes is, therefore, possible, but not inevitable. The first of Ann's rebukes to Aislinn contains repetition—the repetition of 'come' in elements (2) and (4); the others do not.

[37] See above; and see Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, at 5–8. He regards ring-composition in the Homeric context as an internal linking device and as a structural principle, a 'Bau-Elemente' (7), in composition. For sceptical comment on the principle of ring-composition as a structural element in stories, see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, ch. 6; and cf. P. V. Jones' discussion in his 'Introduction' in G. M. Wright and P. V. Jones, *Homer: German Scholarship in Translation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1–41, at 5–10.

[38] This is in line with research into repetition (see below), which has begun to examine cognitive and interactional motivation for repetition, whether same-speaker repetition, as here, or second-speaker repetition.

[39] See D. Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation: Towards a Poetics of Talk', *Language*, 63 (1987), 574–605, at 581. Tannen describes neurolinguistic research which supports the notion that automatic language production is in all ways more

economical response. But it has other advantages, also of a pragmatic nature. The repetition of a command conveys the speaker's insistence; it signals the need for compliance.[40] And, since repetition gives the addressee a second opportunity to hear the instruction and to take it in, the repeated command promotes comprehension.[41]

All conversation is marked by repetitions of the kind I have described above, which, according to Tannen, are 'spontaneous, pervasive, and relatively automatic'.[42] She describes conversation as a 'system of pervasive parallelism', without the rigidity of poetry.[43] As we have observed, repetition serves a number of communicative functions which relate to interpersonal involvement: its functions are in the main pragmatic. But, as Tannen observes, in today's world, which holds the written word and literature in high esteem, we are inclined to think of repetition first as a literary trope. She shows, however, that it is a spontaneous device, a strategy familiar to us from everyday conversation, which has been 'artfully developed and intensified' for literary discourse.[44] When scholars such as Lohmann identify so-called ring-composition in Homer's speeches, they are reading the natural strategies of everyday rhetoric as formal devices for 'literary' ends. In the light of Tannen's observations, we should revise their claims.

economical than novel language production. She cites a paper by Harry Whitaker, 'Automaticity', presented at the Conference on Formulaicity, Linguistic Institute, University of Maryland, 1982, which is unfortunately unavailable to me.

[40] These are the functions which Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation', 583–4, describes as 'connection' and 'interaction'. Here she describes how repetition, even as it acts as a tying device, gives information to the listener about a speaker's attitude; and how repetition functions on an interactional level, accomplishing social goals (probably, in the case of rebuke, the goal of persuasion).

[41] As Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation', at 582, puts it: 'The automatic nature of repetition and variation facilitates comprehension by providing semantically less dense discourse.' The listener benefits from redundancy as it gives him or her the opportunity to absorb all that is being said.

[42] Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation', at 580–1 (and see also 601).

[43] Ibid., at 601.

[44] Ibid., at 580–1.

MEMORY FOR 'SCRIPTS' AND 'FORMATS': EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEMORY

The structure of the rebukes which we express today has much in common with the rebukes which Homer attributes to his actors. These parallels are not coincidental. Just as Martin suggested, when Homer was composing a rebuke for one of his characters, he referred to the rebuke-format with which he was familiar from the everyday world.[45] Although the *language* in which Homer's rebukes are cast is something apart—it is special speech, a stylization of ordinary discourse—the recurrent *pattern* which shapes each rebuke is familiar to us all.[46] On the other hand Homeric speech acts do not have the flexibility that we observe in everyday talk. Their stylized forms unfailingly highlight the characteristic structure of the full speech act.

We find support for such conclusions in recent work in cognitive psychology. I have shown elsewhere that there was no need for the apprentice-singer to learn Homer's typical scenes, for they were already part of his knowledge store, as situational scripts stored in episodic memory.[47] Once he mastered the special language of epic song, these scripts would point him, as he performed, to the words and phrases he needed.[48] Cognitive psychology offers us a more plausible and more realistic view of a poet who composes as he sings—with reference to the narrative portions of his song, at least.

Can speech acts such as the rebuke also be accommodated in this structure? Our instincts tell us that this might be so; and that knowledge about verbal behaviour is also stored in memory. Recent work, again in cognitive psychology, offers a firmer basis for discussion. David Rubin, in his valuable compendium of research that has application to oral traditions, draws our attention to two complementary processes identified by a number of scholars: explicit and

[45] Ibid.

[46] For discussion of what makes Homeric poetry special, see E. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), ch. 1, 'The Construction of Orality'; and see Introduction. On the ritualized nature of repeated speech acts, see Bakker, *Poetry in Speech*, at 159.

[47] Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, ch. 1; and see Introduction.

[48] Ibid., 41–2.

implicit memory.[49] Explicit memory is the type of declarative, script-based memory I alluded to above, which encapsulates knowledge that has been acquired unconsciously over time about events; this kind of knowledge may be readily communicated in words. Implicit memory, which is more abstract, encapsulates knowledge about tasks. This knowledge, which has likewise been acquired over time and has been practised in a variety of contexts, is stored in memory as a number of standardized sets of procedures.[50] The resulting patterns, each of which prescribes the set of steps prescribed to accomplish any one task, are retained as 'tables' or 'formats'.[51] Such formats may be accessed in the same way as the more explicit sequences which we store in memory—our scripts or schemas. As I have shown above in my analysis of everyday rebukes we regularly produce, almost without forethought, certain predictable sequences of ideas that may be identified with the tables or formats described by Broadbent et al. Because we have heard and practised these sequences of ideas on many occasions, they have acquired script-like status in our memories. As a consequence of their implicit, rather than explicit, nature, these formats do not lend themselves so readily to verbalization. This is the reason why we can go through life unaware of the patterns which underlie our discourse.[52]

Each speech act format, therefore, is a schematic representation of a particular pattern of organization, a way to proceed when we wish

[49] For a discussion of these distinctions, see D. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-Out Rhymes* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 190–1.

[50] See D. Rubin, W. Wallace, and B. Houston, 'The Beginnings of Expertise for Ballads', *Cognitive Science*, 17 (1993), 435–62, at 436–8, 452–7. For a relevant experimental study, see A. Reber, 'Implicit Learning and Tacit Knowledge', *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 118 (1989), 219–35, who notes, at 222, the 'unconscious' and 'nonreflective' nature of implicit learning.

[51] For the analogy of the 'table', see D. Broadbent, P. Fitzgerald, and M. Broadbent, 'Implicit and Explicit Knowledge in the Control of Complex Systems', *British Journal of Psychology*, 77 (1986), 35–50, at 48–9.

[52] For comment on the intuitive nature of this kind of knowledge, see N. Wolfson, L. D'Amico-Reisner, and L. Huber, 'How to Arrange for Social Commitments in American English: The Invitation', in N. Wolfson and E. Judd (eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1983), 116–28, at 116–17: 'although native speakers are able to recognize intuitively and respond appropriately to speech acts such as invitations, they are not in a position to describe how such interactions are patterned' (117).

to express, for example, a rebuke, an apology, an invitation, a threat, words of consolation or reassurance, or, as we shall observe in Chapter 2, the refusal of an invitation. I have observed in this chapter the underlying format of the rebuke. I have documented elsewhere the format for descriptions of personal possessions and the format for stories.[53] By conceiving of such formats we are able to account for the structural similarities which underpin individual examples of rebukes, refusals of invitations, descriptions, or stories. A speaker, as he prepares to express one of these units of discourse, refers to the appropriate abstract knowledge structure. This will guide him, as it were automatically, through this speech act.[54]

Unlike the situational script, the speech act format is not a store of prearranged events or actions, but a sequence of marked slots, or of constraints. Each time such a format is activated, it generates a series of verbal tasks which must be performed. When we rebuke a child, for example, we use our scripted rebuke format to trigger a particular series of moves. The format does not supply the words which will complete those tasks; but it will point the speaker towards the ideas he or she will use. Some of these verbal tasks may be expressed in an identical way across a variety of contexts; this is a reflection of individuals' reliance on a limited range of speech formulas to express certain notions. But, with respect to the other elements, the speaker is left to find the words and phrases which will give expression to the ideas generated by the format. Fenik's observation, reported above, that no two rebukes in Homer are alike is, therefore, in one sense accurate.[55] On the *surface*, in terms of word-for-word expression, the rebukes we find in Homer may not have much in common with each

[53] For the role played by memory in formulating a description and in shaping a story, particularly, but not exclusively, in the Homeric context: see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, chs. 3 and 6.

[54] This is in line with the important—but untested—observations of Mikhail Bakhtin, which I noted in the Introduction, above, on stable generic forms (M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *M. Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, trans. V. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 60–102, esp. at 78–9).

[55] Cf. Griffin, who comments on the phenomenon more generally: see in 'Homeric Words and Speakers', *JHS*, 106 (1986), 36–57 (Homer's speeches are 'more innovative' in comparison with narrative scenes and passages, which in their verbal detail are more traditional (37)).

other. But, as we have observed, they share a common *structure*. This concept of prefabricated or, more accurately, prepatterned speech is, in general terms, supported by studies in linguistics. Tannen, for example, claims that '[a]ll discourse . . . is more or less prepatterned', whether at the level of word, phrase, and larger unit;[56] it has 'more to do with repetition and memory than with generation'.[57]

PREPATTERNING AND THE CONSTRAINTS OF PERFORMANCE

Although Tannen and others have consistently drawn attention to instances of repetition and prepatterning at the level of the word or the phrase, little attention has been paid to prepatterning in larger units of discourse. One recent study, however, which is relevant to my enquiry is Tony Liddicoat's examination of answering machine messages, in which he studies the form of the messages which telephone subscribers leave on their machines when they are not available to answer a call and the messages which callers leave in response.[58]

[56] See D. Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation as Spontaneous Formulaicity', *Text*, 7 (1987), 215–43, at 223. There has been some discussion in recent years in the world of theatre studies about how actors learn their scripts: see, for example, H. Noice, 'The Role of Explanations and Plan Recognition in the Learning of Theatrical Scripts', *Cognitive Science*, 15 (1991), 425–60. I propose that actors learn to refer to the formats which they already hold in memory to supply them with the *structure* of the speech acts which have been scripted for them by the playwright (that is, the structure provides them with the steps they would take in a rebuke, or an apology, for example); the precise words through which the playwright has expressed those steps must, however, be rehearsed.

[57] Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation as Spontaneous Formulaicity', at 238. See also Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation', at 601.

[58] See A. Liddicoat, 'Discourse Routines in Answering Machine Communication in Australia', *Discourse Processes*, 17 (1994), 283–309. Liddicoat (290) identifies three moves in the subscriber's talk, that is, the machine-contribution: (1) greeting and self-identification; (2) a warrant (indicating why the answering machine was used); (3) an instruction; and (4) an undertaking. He identifies the three phases of the caller's message: (1) opening phase; (2) message phase; and (3) closing phase. Of these the opening phase includes a greeting and self-identification; the message phase covers three types of message (simple, informational, and social), all of which have predictable formats; the closing phase may follow one of three or four patterns; but it is notably briefer than the normal farewells of everyday telephone talk (299–305).

He observes that, despite the variation in content of the messages, callers' contributions still have 'a readily identifiable structure which contains a limited number of moves that occur in a predictable sequence'.[59] And he concludes that talk on answering machines is 'highly structured and highly routinized', each contribution having its own protocol and its own internal structure.[60] We observe a similar kind of prepatterned discourse in stock-auction speech, studied by Koenraad Kuiper and Douglas Haggo; in apologies in everyday situations, as documented by Olshtain and Cohen and others; and in invitations.[61]

What is important for my discussion is that Liddicoat also notes that answering machine talk draws on the same 'pool of strategies' that participants draw on in everyday telephone conversations.[62] He explains this in terms of the constraints of performance which, he argues, lead to a certain 'systematic modification of the available stock of conversational routines'.[63] Indeed, a performative context, whatever it may be, places constraints on the participating speakers: on the answerer and the caller in communication through an answering machine; on one friend making an apology to another; on the person who administers a rebuke in everyday talk; on the storyteller

[59] See Liddicoat, 'Discourse Routines', at 305.

[60] Ibid., at 305.

[61] See K. Kuiper and D. Haggo, 'Livestock Auctions, Oral Poetry, and Ordinary Language', *Language in Society*, 13 (1984), 205–34. Kuiper and Haggo describe the discourse structure of auctioneers in terms of 'context-free rewrite rules' or 'discourse structure rules' (208–10, 219–20); and they argue that the structures they use are akin to the structures used by the Yugoslav poets studied by Parry and Lord. See also E. Olshtain and A. Cohen, 'Apology: A Speech-Act Set', in Wolfson and Judd (eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition*, 18–35, at 18–23; Olshtain, 'Apologies across Languages': the model proposed here (at 157) has been empirically developed and demonstrates its universal applicability across languages: (1) illocutionary force indicating device (e.g., 'I'm sorry!'); (2) explanation or account; (3) taking on responsibility; (4) concern for the addressee; (5) offer of repair; (6) promise of forbearance. An apology will comprise element (1) and a set of elements (2)–(6), depending on the context. For some comments on the universality of this model, see M. Suszczyńska, 'Apologizing in English, Polish and Hungarian: Different Languages, Different Strategies', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31 (1999), 1053–65. On invitations, see P. Drew, 'Speakers' Reportings in Invitation Sequences', in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 129–51.

[62] See Liddicoat, 'Discourse Routines', at 308.

[63] Ibid., at 308.

telling stories in conversation; and on the storyteller in an oral epic tradition who puts a rebuke on the lips of one of his actors. Such constraints result in the kinds of standardization that we have observed in Ann's rebukes from the everyday world—and in Homer's. Furthermore, when the speaker is conscious of the performative context, he feels obliged to express his or her speech act in full, so to speak. Just as a message on a telephone answering machine strives for completeness (in that each of the archetypal moves is addressed), so do apologies in the real world. Bruce Fraser observes, indeed, that the more formal the occasion, the longer and more elaborate is the apology; he observes that apologies in formal situations indicate that the speaker feels a need 'to play out his role'.[64] When we are obliged to speak in an unfamiliar or formal context, in which we sense that the adequacy of our performance is being measured by our audience, we become anxious. In response to such anxiety, we are careful not only to observe the scripted format; but we also exhibit a tendency to elaboration. I observe the same behaviour when I look at the rebukes in Homer. Not only are they complete (that is, they address all the steps of the format), but they are often elaborate. These rebukes often mark serious moments in the narrative, as I discussed above.[65] Furthermore, in accordance with the conventions of social interaction which hold in the Homeric world, the speaker can be confident that his listeners will not interrupt him—or undertake action of any kind—while he speaks. The world has, as it were, come to a halt. This gives the speaker the opportunity to follow the speech act format to its end. Homer regularly chooses to include in his representations of rebukes that element which is more often omitted in everyday rebukes: generalization (element (3)). This segment is critical in the Homeric context, in which the singer is performing for his audience and in which each actor within his song is himself or herself performing for the audience of the storyworld. For here generalization serves a broader evaluative purpose. In the epics it conveys the moral and ethical background against which the actions of the story

[64] See B. Fraser, 'On Apologizing', in F. Coulmas (ed.), *Conversational Routine: Explorations in Standardized Communication Situations and Prepatterned Speech* (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), 259–71, at 268.

[65] Or, at least, they indicate that the speaker takes this moment seriously.

are carried out. Even as the words of the speaker are designed to remind his addressee of his duties and obligations, they also assist us, the audience, in assessing what is appropriate behaviour in this world.[66] The completeness of the rebuke, therefore, reflects the formality and the gravity of these parallel performative contexts; but it is important to the poet in another way, which relates to the pragmatics of storytelling: it allows him to offer us material which evaluates the ongoing tale.

*

By relating Homer's formats to cognitive psychology's account of the storage of implicit knowledge, we can draw some conclusions about the mind-based resources on which the poet drew as he sang and on which we draw as we speak. In our own world we are readily able to construct a rebuke, or an apology, or consoling words, without having to devise an appropriate form afresh on each occasion. This is a demonstration of the economy of our memory-store and the efficiency of our retrieval system. We already have a format 'in mind', as we say. The format for rebukes which we observe in Homer appears to correspond to the rebuke format which we ourselves follow in everyday conversation. We may conclude, as Martin did, that the poet did not learn this format by listening to a master-singer and imitating his practice. Rather, the rebuke which he sang was a rhetorical—but authentic—version of everyday discourse from his own world; it was cued by that same rebuke format which he had acquired unconsciously, early in life, through listening to the discourse of others and through his own first experiences of rebuking his friends. The format for the rebuke was already part of his memory store, as it is part of ours. It is a timeless form, fixed by its own internal logic, and reinforced by the mutual understanding of speaker and listener. It should not surprise us, however, to observe

[66] Since this information is passed on to us indirectly, not by the poet himself but by one of his actors, it is both subtle and powerful. For discussion of implicit and explicit evaluation and the greater force of the former, see D. Tannen, 'Oral and Literate Strategies in Spoken and Written Narrative', *Language*, 58 (1982), 1–21, at 4; 'The Oral/Literate Continuum in Discourse', in D. Tannen (ed.), *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1982), 1–16, at 8–9. For discussion in the Homeric context, see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 123–7.

that Homer's versions of rebukes are a stylization of the format which he heard and used in his own everyday world. Whereas rebukes in everyday talk may be abbreviated, abrupt, or sustained, the rebuke of oral epic is always a complete and often elaborate performance, in which every step of the format is addressed. This, indeed, is what the apprentice singer learned from his master: the special formulation of the rebuke for the purposes of oral song.

2

On Declining an Invitation: Context, Form, and Function

In Chapter 1 I examined a single set of speech acts recorded in the epics: the rebukes which Homer's characters address to one another in the course of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* I demonstrated that all speeches in Homer which we identify as rebukes share a common structure, or format, and that this format is remarkably similar to the format to which we ourselves—in middle-class communities in the Western world—refer when, for example, we chastise a child. I traced the relationship between the kind of patterning that we observe in speech act formats and the structures of memory. I proposed that this notion of format-based speech may be extended to a wider range of speech acts observable both in this everyday world and in the Homeric epics, such as apologies, or words of consolation, or refusals of invitations.[1]

As a further test of the hypothesis I examine in this chapter a second speech act, declining an invitation, of which we see five examples in the *Iliad* and seven in the *Odyssey.*[2] I shall study this

[1] On words of consolation see M. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition: A Study in the Oral Art of Homer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 188–96: Nagler here foreshadows in his discussion of the repeated elements of the *consolatio* my arguments for a format which underlies each of Homer's—and our own—speech acts.

[2] This is a study of invitations declined. But we should remember that invitations are frequently accepted: this is made clear when the rituals of hospitality unfold. Thus Charis offers Thetis hospitality (*Il.* 18. 385–7) and Thetis is led in to be seated (388–90). At *Od.* 5. 87–91, Calypso offers hospitality to Hermes. He is seated and offered food (92–3). Eumaios offers hospitality to Odysseus in disguise (*Od.* 14. 45–7). Odysseus accompanies him inside, is settled comfortably (48–51) and in due course eats with his host (72–114).

speech act as one would study any form of discourse: first, setting it in its context, particularly its social and interactional context, and, second, analysing how speakers structure their speaking turn so as to respond to their addressees' needs, as well as their own. I then consider the speech act in the context of the epic; and I ask how the poet generates and deploys this particular speech act in the construction of character and the development of epic action. This discussion will not only test my conclusions about the poet's—and our own—memory for, and composition of, speech acts; it will also extend our understanding of the poet's broader compositional practice, with respect to the relationship between this particular speech act and the construction of his narrative.[3]

CONTEXT

The refusal of an invitation presupposes an invitation. The refusal, that is, occurs in a context.[4] What are the circumstances, in the epics and in the everyday world, which generate an invitation that is to be declined? In the world of the *Iliad* the backdrop to an invitation is unfailingly a scene of relative ease and relaxation: envisage the scene of comfortable domesticity against which Paris and Helen are engaged in their tasks before Hektor comes to their door (6. 321–4); or the relative serenity in which Nestor and Machaon are able to converse, as they drink and eat after Machaon has been brought out of battle (11. 642–4). A visitor will break in on this scene, and, in the course of things, will be invited to take a drink with his host, to sit and eat, or to sit and converse. On the other hand it may simply be the *prospect* of such a scene—a tempting vision of a moment's relaxation—which is implied in the invitation. Hekabe's invitation to Hektor (6. 258–62) holds the attraction of both a welcome drink

[3] That is, my discussion of the refusal of an invitation will not duplicate but will complement and extend my findings in Chapter 1.

[4] On the importance of the 'contextedness' of talk, see J. Atkinson and J. Heritage, 'Introduction', in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage, *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1–15, at 5–7.

and the solicitous attentions of a mother. It represents a brief respite from the battlefield.

We should note at this point that Homeric visitors never make calls on an idle whim: when people come to visit they come with a purpose, with a task to complete. But this is not the only matter that is on their minds. They have other responsibilities as well. What stands between them and the fulfilment of these latter duties is the invitation that is being extended.[5] By succumbing to the temptations of eating, drinking, and conversation, the visitor would be neglecting those other duties. So, in the five instances in the *Iliad*, the visitor balances urgency against temptation—and refuses the invitation. Hektor refuses the invitations of Hekabe and Helen (6. 264–85, 360–8); Patroklos refuses the invitation of Nestor (11. 648–54);[6] Iris refuses the invitations of her fellow gods (23. 205–11); and Priam resists Achilleus' first invitation to him to eat (24. 553–8).

We all recognize this situation: it is played out in our own world also. A friend calls by. We are delighted to see her and promptly ask her to come in and have a cup of coffee with us. Such an invitation is a social reflex.[7] And it is a social reflex to respond immediately,

[5] One notable surprise visit which does not generate an invitation as such is the visit of the Embassy to Achilleus (9. 182–668, esp. at 196–224). Observe that Achilleus does not *invite* his visitors to eat and drink with him. It is, however, assumed by both parties that this is what will happen: the members of the Embassy realize that their offer can be made only in the context of the quiet relaxation and goodwill of a shared meal. And Achilleus must suspect that his visitors—Odysseus is amongst them!—have come with a purpose and that the rituals of hospitality which he initiates will be the appropriate prelude.

[6] Patroklos refuses the invitation because he must hasten back to Achilleus; but Nestor brushes aside his refusal and detains him while he says what he wants to say. The urgency of the situation pushes him to claim his prerogative as an elder and to ignore Patroklos' plea. On Nestor's strategy, see E. Minchin, 'Speaker and Listener, Text and Context: Some Notes on the Encounter of Nestor and Patroklos in *Iliad* 11', *CW*, 84 (1991), 273–85, at 276–8 (with notes); K. Dickson, 'Nestor Among the Sirens', *Oral Tradition*, 8 (1993), 21–58, at 39–41, 46–53.

[7] In our culture this is an automatic response to a surprise visit. This also appears to be the case in the world which Homer describes. Here we note the importance of *xenia*, a code of hospitality which ensures that a visitor on the doorstep is the responsibility of the householders. To fail to welcome any guests who present themselves at the door would be to transgress the laws of Zeus, who keeps watch to see that all visitors are treated with respect (*Od.* 9. 269–71). Eumaios, therefore, offers hospitality to Odysseus in disguise as a beggar (*Od.* 14. 45–7). For commentary on this moment in the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus is set upon by Eumaios' dogs, see

whether one accepts the invitation or declines it.[8] Should our friend refuse, as happens in our busy world, she will offer as a reason a particular mission: her need to pick up the children, to reach the shops before closing time, or to get back to her work. She is anxious that we should recognize that to accept is not possible for her. She will explain, however, the reason for her unexpected visit: she has called in with a message to pass on, a small task to perform (a book to collect, or to return, for example). She will complete this task and, perhaps after some further hurried exchanges, leave.

If we were to survey a series of such exchanges we would note that in our world it is not sufficient simply to decline an invitation. It is necessary at least to give the appearance that one values the invitation by taking pains to explain why one cannot accept. To fail to offer explanations of this kind would strain the bonds of friendship: in our English-speaking world it would be offensive to offer a bald refusal.[9] Our practice of offering such explanations has been noted and discussed by Paul Drew, who uses the term 'reporting' to describe

E. Cook, '"Active" and "Passive" Heroics in the *Odyssey*', *CW*, 93 (1999–2000), 149–67, at 163–4. It is important to note that the sequence of actions which is set in train by the arrival of a visitor is as true of life in many societies in the real world as it is in the world of Homer. I shall take up this point in discussion below.

[8] See E. Goffman, 'Replies and Responses', in *Forms of Talk* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 5–77, at 73–4; and see above, Introduction, for discussion of the 'adjacency pair'. In the context of the present discussion, an invitation is a 'first pair part', the response is the 'second pair part'. A prompt response (the second pair part) is required if the exchange of talk is to be readily comprehensible. When an invitation is to be refused, however, it is notable in our culture that although the speaker of the second pair part begins his or her response promptly his actual rejection will often be prefaced by a certain amount of 'hedging'. See below, for further discussion of hedging.

[9] See C. Goodwin and J. Heritage, 'Conversation Analysis', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19 (1990), 283–307, at 297. Not every society is so concerned about softening the pain of rejection: Anna Wierzbicka (personal communication) points out to me that Polish speakers are quite prompt in refusing an invitation and are ready to offer as a reason their simple unwillingness or lack of interest. By contrast, Japanese speakers are more concerned than native English speakers to mitigate any perceived injury from such a refusal. So, although the *primary* features of the speech act is essentially the same (the invitation is refused; a report is offered), there are differences in its *secondary* features, resulting from one culture's preference for a more direct style (in the case of Polish speakers) and the other's for a less direct style (in the case of Japanese speakers). For discussion of the universality of speech acts, see Chapter 1, above.

the phenomenon.[10] We observe the same concern for courtesy in Homeric refusals. Each is marked by elaborate explanations in which the speaker sets out why he or she cannot linger. For example, Hektor indicates his appreciation of the invitation which Hekabe offers him in both his careful address to his mother (*πότνια μῆτερ*, honoured mother, 6. 264) and especially in his reference to *οἶνον . . . μελίφρονα* (the kindly sweet wine, 264); he explains why he cannot accept (265–8); and he sets out what he must do instead (280–5). Iris, who refuses the invitation of the winds to join them in their feast, prefers to attend a grand sacrifice (23. 205–6); nevertheless, she couches her refusal in terms of the role that she is to play at the ceremony (207). Priam is the exception that proves the rule. The pain in his heart is such that he forgets the courtesies which are part of any refusal. His reply to Achilleus, who has just invited him to sit and join him in grief (24. 522–3), is anything but appeasing (553–8). It is direct and to the point.[11] And Achilleus is resentful of his guest's neglect of the usual phrases which indicate appreciation of a host's offer of hospitality.[12] I propose that what Achilleus reads as brusqueness is, in reality, the desperation of an old man.

[10] For comment on this, see P. Drew, 'Speakers' Reportings in Invitation Sequences', in Atkinson and Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action*, 129–51, esp. at 146. For examples, see discussion below. Drew comments (146) that: '[i]n providing for the circumstances that prevent recipients from accepting, reportings go toward absolving their consequences from being the outcomes of personal preference, choice, unwillingness, and the like. Though certainly another's (un)willingness, (dis)preference, or (dis)inclination may be detected from the reporting, what gets treated officially is the recipient's (lack of) freedom/availability to do something.' See also Goodwin and Heritage, 'Conversation Analysis', at 297, who use the term 'account'.

[11] As Taplin comments, '[t]his impatience is not diplomatic': see brief discussion of the scene in O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of the* Iliad (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 272–3. Muellner sees Priam's impatience as a 'breach of etiquette': L. Muellner, *The Anger of Achilles: Mễnis in the Greek Epic* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 173. Richardson also considers the dynamics of the relationship between the two men. He refers to Achilleus' 'precarious state of tension' and observes that this particular refusal could precipitate a crisis (given what we know about Achilleus: cf. the words of Patroklos at 11. 649, 653–4): see N. Richardson, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. vi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 334.

[12] Van Wees defends Achilleus' touchiness as a natural outcome of the Homeric concept of honour and sensitivity to a lack of deference (Achilleus feels that Priam is failing to defer to him): see H. van Wees, *Status Warriors: War, Violence and Society in Homer and History* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1992), 109–10.

What is the situation in the *Odyssey*? Here the context in which an invitation is offered and refused is different. Visitors, in most cases, are already receiving hospitality; they have had ample opportunity to enjoy the comfort of their new environment. But the invitation, when it is made, either jogs their memory (they remember that they are on a mission) or allows them more easily to make an apology and to leave. Thus, when Kalypso—after Odysseus has lived with her for seven years (7. 259)—invites the hero to stay on, as lord in her house, he carefully frames a refusal (5. 215–24). He is prudent in his response, because she is a goddess, and because, if he can retain her sympathy and support, she can assist him in the next stage of his journey. He explains that, although she is far more attractive than Penelope, his wife, he still longs to go home. Likewise, Telemachos twice, in parallel scenes, refuses the further hospitality of Menelaos (4. 594–608, 15. 87–91).[13] Athene, as Mentes, refuses the invitation of Telemachos (1. 315–18), when he offers her a brief respite from shipboard life (1. 307–13), and that of Nestor (3. 357–70), when he presses Telemachos (and his companion, Athene/Mentor) to stay overnight in his palace. But Odysseus breaks the pattern, on two separate occasions. At 10. 251–60 Odysseus learns from Eurylochos that his companions on the reconnoitring mission on Aiaia have disappeared. Eurylochos suspects treachery. He is suspicious of the motives of the lady whom we know to be Kirke. Odysseus promptly decides to go to their rescue (273). In his encounter with Kirke, Odysseus responds warily to her invitation that he go to bed with her (333–5). She is detaining several of his companions in the form of pigs; and he himself does not wish to be castrated (339–41).[14] So he

[13] His refusal of Menelaos' first invitation (4. 594–608) appears to be blandly ignored by his host. On the ambiguity of Telemachos' reply at this point (is it an outright refusal?), see S. West in A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), at 229; and see further below. For discussion of the time that elapses before Telemachos is reminded by Athene that he must leave Menelaos' palace, see A. Hoekstra on 15. 1–3 in A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 231. For one important reason why the poet does not hasten Telemachos away after 4. 594–608, see B. Fenik, *Studies in the* Odyssey (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), 58 ('his return must be synchronized with that of Odysseus'): the poet *requires* Telemachos to remain.

[14] On this latter point see M. Nagler, 'Dread Goddess Revisited', in S. Schein, *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretive Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 141–61, at 145–9.

negotiates. His response takes the form of a protest (note his words of indignation, *πῶς γάρ...*, at 337), which, at 342–4, shifts in tone to a conditional acceptance. Afterwards, Odysseus is bathed and a meal is set before him and Kirke. But he cannot eat. She asks him why he touches neither food nor drink (378–9). She reassures him: he has nothing to fear (*οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ δειδίμεν*, 380–1). Odysseus reads these words too, as we do, as an invitation (386); and he offers what Drew would call a 'reporting', in which he explains why he cannot eat, without actually refusing Kirke's invitation. He explains, through a rhetorical question at 383–5, that eating is impossible for him while his men are still imprisoned in the bodies of pigs:

> *ὦ Κίρκη, τίς γάρ κεν ἀνήρ, ὃς ἐναίσιμος εἴη,*
> *πρὶν τλαίη πάσσασθαι ἐδητύος ἠδὲ ποτῆτος,*
> *πρὶν λύσασθ' ἑτάρους καὶ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι;*
>
> O Circe, how could any man right in his mind ever
> endure to taste of the food and drink that are set before him,
> until with his eyes he saw his companions set free?

He assures Kirke that not until she has set them free will he be able to eat at her table (386–7):[15]

> *ἀλλ' εἰ δὴ πρόφρασσα πιεῖν φαγέμεν τε κελεύεις,*
> *λῦσον, ἵν' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδω ἐρίηρας ἑταίρους.*
>
> So then,
> if you are sincerely telling me to eat and drink, set them
> free, so my eyes can again behold my eager companions.

This is, again, the response of a negotiator. Later in the epic, Odysseus refuses Penelope's offer (19. 317–22) of a bath, a comfortable bed, and a meal with Telemachos in the hall. He cannot plead, however, that he has to be somewhere else. For he is precisely where he wants to be, although he has not yet shed his disguise. His reasons for declining Penelope's remarkable offer (for she treats him

[15] Odysseus' request to Kirke at this point reminds us of Priam's to Achilleus (*Il.* 24. 553–8): the visitor uses his response to his host's invitation to negotiate with him or her. The instructions of *Il.* 24. 554–5 and *Od.* 10. 386–7 are not elements of a refusal of an invitation. The speaker has moved to a different speech act.

as a guest despite his disguise as a beggar) might appear rather ungracious: I am used to sleeping rough, he says (19. 337–42); I don't want to have my feet bathed by an ignorant young girl (343–5). His only concession to Penelope is that if an old woman might be found, she could wash his feet for him (346–8):[16]

> *εἰ μή τις γρηῦς ἐστι παλαιή, κεδνὰ ἰδυῖα,*
> *ἥ τις δὴ τέτληκε τόσα φρεσὶν ὅσσα τ' ἐγώ περ·*
> *τῇ δ' οὐκ ἂν φθονέοιμι ποδῶν ἅψασθαι ἐμεῖο.*

> not unless there is some aged and virtuous woman
> whose heart has had to endure as many troubles as mine has.
> If such a one were to touch my feet, I should not be angry.

As I have observed, the context in which refusals of hospitality are offered differs between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Here in the *Odyssey*—for the most part—we hear the kinds of refusals one offers when one has already been enjoying another's hospitality for some time.[17] Homer's sequences are, here too, an echo of everyday life. Like Telemachos, we enjoy the company of others. We too find ourselves in circumstances of comfort which we are reluctant to leave. But we have a job to do, a mission to complete. So, after having enjoyed the company of our host for a period, we resolve to take our leave. We cannot accept an invitation to linger, whether it is to have another cup of coffee, to go for a quick walk, or, as happened to Telemachos, to be taken on a guided tour of Hellas and central Argos (15. 80–5). We recognize these patterns of behaviour, including the invitation-and-refusal sequence, as typical not only of Homer, but also of life.

[16] In his reply Odysseus sounds gruff and ungrateful. As I have noted, we expect our guests to refer with gratitude to what has been offered, whether they accept it or not; and so do hosts in Homer's world. The beggar's concession at 346–8, however, softens his initial refusal and allows the story to move forward, admitting Eurykleia to the secret of his disguise. For discussion of why Odysseus persists in declining these comforts, see Joseph Russo's comments in J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano, and A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 93.

[17] As Dickson notes, in 'Nestor Among the Sirens', at 41. The exceptions, as noted above, are the refusals of Odysseus, to Kirke and to Penelope.

FORM

When we decline an invitation in everyday discourse we express ourselves carefully, because we are aware that, as a general principle, offers of hospitality are intended to build or to maintain social bonds between individuals. To reject an invitation *tout court* could be interpreted as an attempt to weaken or to set aside the bond.[18] A refusal, therefore, must be couched in a tactful way, if goodwill is to be maintained. The key to this is the 'reporting' described by Drew. The statements that we make about pressing engagements and onerous responsibilities are intended to indicate to our potential host that we are obliged by circumstances beyond our control to be somewhere else, doing something else. Because of these burdens we cannot accept the present invitation. Often this element, reporting, is expressed in terms of a 'mission'. Drew observes that in many cases the reporting of tasks and duties is sufficient in itself as a refusal.[19] It may, however, be preceded by some words indicating non-acceptance ('I won't be able to make it'; or even, quite simply, 'No, I can't').[20] A further element, which is rendered when the recipient is anxious to appease his or her host, or to present himself or herself in a good light, is what we might call 'words of appreciation'. Examples of such an element are 'It is really kind of you to ask me', 'I would love to come, but . . .'. It is not the formality or informality of the occasion which generate this further element; it is the decision of the speaker, based on his or her awareness of the needs of the addressee—and of their relationship. We might expect, therefore, to find three elements

[18] Children are taught at an early age that one does not simply refuse an offer of hospitality made in friendship; the information that one builds into one's refusal, by way of an explanation, is *essential* to the expression of the speech act—in an English-speaking society, at least. Cf. Drew, 'Speakers' Reportings'.

[19] Ibid., 146.

[20] On the other hand, since speakers may feel that their rejection of an invitation leaves the way open to social discomfort and the risk of offence, they will often hedge, in order to avoid an outright refusal. Such hedging may take the form of hesitant speech (which we do not observe in refusals of invitations in Homer); or it may be represented as part of the reporting. For a parallel situation, see A. Pomerantz, 'Agreeing and Disagreeing with Assessments: Some Features of Preferred/Dispreferred Turn Shapes', in Atkinson and Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action*, 57–101, at 75–7.

in a 'complete' refusal of an invitation, of which (1) non-acceptance itself and (2) words of appreciation are *optional*; but (3) a reporting, or a statement of mission, is *essential*—for the social reasons which I have noted. Drew records and transcribes from everyday talk a number of refusals of this kind.[21] There is, however, the possibility of a further, peripheral, element. When the host extends an invitation to an individual who has arrived unexpectedly at his or her door, the visitor in turn responds to this offer of hospitality and, as I noted above, explains why he or she has made the call. I shall identify this element as 'reason for visit'. This is not, strictly speaking, part of a refusal (or an acceptance) of an invitation. But since this element points to the context in which the visit was made, I shall note it, where relevant, in my discussion.

I have observed above that spoken interaction in the world of Homer is characterized by a certain *politesse*.[22] In this ideal world men and women speak—for the most part—without hesitation, fluently and coherently, if not expansively.[23] Homer delights in recreating for us the small ceremony in which one speaker extends an invitation and a second, as carefully as possible, declines it. And there is a further factor to bear in mind. In the Homeric epics we are dealing with discourse of a particular kind: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are stories composed in performance. The context itself requires the singer to adjust his telling to the needs and expectations of his audience. When he speaks in the voice of one of his characters, whether he is uttering a rebuke, offering consolation, or refusing an invitation, he will aim for completeness and clarity rather than fragmentation and incoherence. It is not surprising, therefore, that

[21] See Drew, 'Speakers' Reportings', 135, for the following example (which I reproduce without Drew's transcript notation and with my own comments in italics): E. Wanna come down and have a bite of lunch with me? I've got some beer and stuff. (invitation); N. Well, you're real sweet, hon, I have . . . (words of appreciation); E. Or do you have something else . . . ? N. No. I have to call Rol's mother. I told her I'd call this morning. I got a letter from her . . . (mission). As Drew explains (136), 'a declining of the invitation or any other upshot is not explicitly stated in the reporting; it is left to E. to determine what it implicates for getting together at lunch'. We conclude that the telephone call to Rol's mother (as reported) is likely to interfere with arrangements for a lunchtime meeting.

[22] See Introduction, above.

[23] When any of Homer's characters speaks hesitantly, or incoherently, it is remarkable. Cf. Achilleus at *Il.* 9. 308–429; Telemachos at *Od.* 3. 79–101.

Table 2. Declining an invitation in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Location	Speaker	Non-acceptance	Words of appreciation	Reporting (mission)
Iliad				
6. 264–85[1]	Hektor	264	264	265–8, 280–5
6. 360–8	Hektor	360	360	361–2, 365–8
11. 648–54	Patroklos	648	—	649–54
23. 205–11	Iris	205	—	205–7
24. 553–8	Priam	553	—	553–5
Odyssey				
1. 315–18[2]	Athene	315	—	315
3. 357–70[3]	Athene	—	357	360–8
4. 594–608[4]	Telemachos	594	595–8	598–9
5. 215–24	Odysseus	215	215–18	219–24
10. 383–7[5]	Odysseus	—	—	383–5
15. 87–91	Telemachos	—	—	87–91
19. 336–48[6]	Odysseus	—	337–9, 343–5	340–2, 346–8

[1] I have included in the format only those elements which are intrinsic to the speech act, refusal of an invitation. The element, reason for visit, which occurs in the Iliadic, but not the Odyssean, context, does not, therefore, appear. For examples of this element in the refusal of the *Iliad*, see 6. 269–80, 363–4; 11. 649–50; 23. 208–11; 24. 553–6.
[2] In this segment, 316–18 are devoted to a gift which Telemachos offers. Athene will not refuse this; she simply postpones the moment of giving.
[3] At 359–60 and 368–70 we have instructions to Nestor regarding Telemachos' visit. This is separate from Athene's own refusal of Nestor's invitation. We could read these words of Athene as 'reason for visit'.
[4] In this refusal, as at *Od.* 1. 316–18, the speaker responds also to the offer of a guest gift (600–8). As before, it is not refused.
[5] At 386–7 Odysseus negotiates with Kirke. He tells her that if she is sincere in the invitation she has offered to him, she should, as a token of her sincerity, set free his companions.
[6] Odysseus' refusal extends from 336–45. In 346–8 he negotiates, as he did in his encounter with Kirke (10. 383–7). He will allow his feet to be washed, if an old woman (i.e., Eurykleia) will do it.

we find in Homer's refusals of invitations a charming ritualized courtesy. The standardized nature of the refusal is revealed in the following examples, two of which will be drawn from the *Iliad* and two from the *Odyssey*.[24]

In the Homeric world, once an invitation has been extended, there is a prompt response, as in our own world.[25] When the recipient responds with the intention of refusing he or she begins with element (1),

[24] See also Table 2, in which are tabulated all the refusals of invitations in the epics.
[25] Lohmann notes this also: see D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der* Ilias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 102. It is disappointing that although he discusses Hektor's conversations with Hekabe and Helen (101–2), in which he rightly observes structural similarities, he pays no attention to the structure of the speech act at their heart.

non-acceptance: Hektor, in his refusal at *Il.* 6. 360–8, says to his sister-in-law who has invited him to come into her apartment and sit with her: *μή με κάθιζ', Ἑλένη* (Do not, Helen, make me sit with you, 360). To indicate his firmness of purpose, he confirms his non-acceptance with the words *οὐδέ με πείσεις* (you will not persuade me, 360).[26] And he expresses element (2), words of appreciation: *φιλέουσά περ* (though you love me, 360). He then explains why he cannot accept. He speaks first of all in terms of his own duty: rather than sitting and talking with Helen, he should be on the battlefield, defending his fellow Trojans (361–2). This is an example of element (3), reporting. In this case Hektor offers a second reporting. He mentions the mission which he has imposed on himself, to go home to see his wife and child (365–8):

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν οἶκόνδε ἐλεύσομαι, ὄφρα ἴδωμαι
οἰκῆας ἄλοχόν τε φίλην καὶ νήπιον υἱόν.
οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' εἰ ἔτι σφιν ὑπότροπος ἵξομαι αὖτις
ἦ ἤδη μ' ὑπὸ χερσὶ θεοὶ δαμόωσιν Ἀχαιῶν.

For I am going first to my own house, so I can visit
my own people, my beloved wife and my son, who is little,
since I do not know if ever again I shall come back this way,
or whether the gods will strike me down at the hands of the Achaians.

Before he explains where he is going, however, Hektor tells Helen why he has called in to see her (363–4). This is the reason for his visit:

ἀλλὰ σύ γ' ὄρνυθι τοῦτον, ἐπειγέσθω δὲ καὶ αὐτός,
ὥς κεν ἔμ' ἔντοσθεν πόλιος καταμάρψῃ ἐόντα.

Rather rouse this man, and let himself also be swift to action
So he may overtake me while I am still in the city.

In this first example we see a carefully developed refusal, which refers to the three elements that we ourselves use when we decline an invitation as well as to the element that any unexpected visitor will use to explain his presence: non-acceptance, words of appreciation, reporting (mission)—as well as reason for visit. For comparison's

[26] Homer uses this device elsewhere within a refusal of an invitation: see also *Il.* 11. 648, Patroklos to Nestor. It is also used in Homer to indicate resistance to persuasion: *Il.* 1. 132; 18. 126; 24. 219; *Od.* 14. 363.

sake, we might look to the comedies of Aristophanes, where we find the same elements used in spoken exchanges, although not in the same fully developed form; the result is a special kind of 'rapid-fire' talk.[27]

Patroklos, at *Il.* 11. 648–54, declines Nestor's invitation and, through his words of address, indicates his respect for Nestor (and, thus, the invitation): *οὐχ ἕδος ἐστί, γεραιὲ διοτρεφές* (no sitting for me, aged sir beloved of Zeus, 648).[28] To indicate his firmness of purpose, he, like Hektor, reasserts his non-acceptance: *οὐδέ με πείσεις* (you will not persuade me, 648). He then moves immediately to explain why he has come (reason for visit, 649–50) and why he cannot stay. His reporting at 649–54 sets out his mission:

> *αἰδοῖος νεμεσητὸς ὅ με προέηκε πυθέσθαι*
> *ὅν τινα τοῦτον ἄγεις βεβλημένον· ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς*
> *γιγνώσκω, ὁρόω δὲ Μαχάονα, ποιμένα λαῶν.*
> *νῦν δὲ ἔπος ἐρέων πάλιν ἄγγελος εἶμ' Ἀχιλῆϊ.*
> *εὖ δὲ σὺ οἶσθα, γεραιὲ διοτρεφές, οἷος ἐκεῖνος*
> *δεινὸς ἀνήρ· τάχα κεν καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτιόῳτο.*
>
> Honoured, and quick to blame, is the man who sent me to find out
> who was this wounded man you were bringing. Now I myself
> know, and I see it is Machaon, the shepherd of the people.
> Now I go back as messenger to Achilleus, to tell him.
> You know yourself, aged sir beloved of Zeus, how *he* is;
> a dangerous man; he might even be angry with one who is guiltless.

Patroklos has performed each of the moves which we associate with such a speech act in our own world. He has given in this case a firm non-acceptance (648), he has implied an appreciation of the invitation (648), and he has reported (three times! at 649, 651–2, and at 653–4) why he must leave at once (mission).[29]

[27] Here I draw attention to Aristophanes' representation of everyday talk in a later world, that of Classical Athens. For an example of non-acceptance along with words of appreciation, see Aristophanes, *Ra.* 507 (invitation) and 508 (non-acceptance with words of appreciation); and cf. also 512. For reporting see *Ec.* 1058 (invitation) and 1059–62 (reporting (mission)).

[28] I use Leaf and Bayfield's proposal for translation at this point: see W. Leaf and M. Bayfield, *The* Iliad *of Homer*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1895), vol. i, p. 520.

[29] See also G. Zanker, *The Heart of Achilles: Characterization and Personal Ethics in the* Iliad (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 138, for comment on Patroklos' 'conciliatory' words; and see van Wees, *Status Warriors*, 76–7, who

As we have observed, the contexts in which invitations are refused in the *Odyssey* are different from those of the *Iliad*. The recipient is, in most cases, already a guest in the home of his host. The host issues a fresh invitation to bring the guest to the point where he reconsiders his position; and he will decline this new offer. So Athene, as Mentes, says to Telemachos, who invites her to stay and refresh herself before she returns to her ship: *μή μ' ἔτι νῦν κατέρυκε* (do not detain me longer, 1. 315).[30] This is her non-acceptance. She then explains quite crisply that she wants to be on the road (*λιλαιόμενόν περ ὁδοῖο*, 315): her reporting of her mission is perfunctory (as a goddess she has no need to give an account of her movements to anyone). Her postponement (316–18) of the guest-gift which he has offered (311–13) is only slightly gentler.[31] Her rather brusque reporting is promptly undermined by her departure like a bird (*ὄρνις δ' ὣς*, 320). And Telemachos realizes that he has been talking with a divinity (323). By contrast, when Athene/Mentor indicates to Nestor, at (3. 360–8) that she cannot stay with him, she does not actually express non-acceptance; but she gives a reporting of Nestorian completeness, which will serve the same purpose.

remarks, astutely, that fear plays a part 'even in the friendliest of relationships'; and see above, for comment on Nestor's overriding of Patroklos' clearly expressed desire. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, at 71, finds, without demonstration, that Patroklos' speech is 'ringförmig strukturiert'. I am not persuaded. For a discussion of the presence of so-called 'ring-composition' in Homer, see Chapter. 1.

[30] Contrast the goddess' direct approach with Telemachos' apparent refusal of Menelaos' invitation, at 4. 594–608. Menelaos is a man of seniority and of rank. To decline his invitation is a delicate matter. So Telemachos, who perhaps wishes to express a similar sentiment to that of Athene at 1. 315, compromises. Hence his inclusion of the phrase which generates ambiguity, *πολὺν χρόνον* : *μὴ δή με πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἔρυκε* (do not keep me here with you *for a long time*, 594). And he will add words of appreciation (595–8) to soften what has amounted to a refusal. For a comment on the ambiguity of the speech, see above. Compromises such as these are familiar in our world, as well. We often frame a 'refusal' in this way, 'I can't stay—well, five minutes, then.' Note also the compromise built into Odysseus' gruff refusal of Penelope's invitation (19. 336–48), while he is still in the guise of a beggar: on this see above.

[31] Athene says, at 316–18, that he should keep aside until she returns whatever it is that he chooses as a gift for her, and that she will take it with her at that time. Compare Telemachos' subsequent graceful handling of Menelaos' offer (4. 589–90) of three horses and a chariot: he proposes, after a lengthy comparison of Ithaka and Sparta, that Menelaos keep the horses for his own delight (601–2). In neither case is the gift actually refused. The code of guest-friendship would not allow that.

When Odysseus refuses Kalypso's invitation to stay with her (forever, that is), he does not refuse outright. Rather he begins apologetically, *πότνα θεά, μή μοι τόδε χώεο* (my lady goddess, do not be angry at what I am about to say, 5. 215),[32] and refers to an otherwise unspoken non-acceptance in *τόδε*. Prudently, he includes words of appreciation, at 215–17, in addition to his respectful address:

οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς
πάντα μάλ', οὕνεκα σεῖο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρη μέγεθός τ' εἰσάντα ἰδέσθαι·

I myself know
that all you say is true and that circumspect Penelope
can never match the impression you make for beauty and stature.

His reporting, however, will be detailed, touching on his great longing for his homeland (making no mention of Penelope) and his determination to overcome all obstacles to reach it. Through this statement of mission he hopes to demonstrate to Kalypso that *he* cannot stay and that *she* must let him go (5. 219–24):

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἤματα πάντα
οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι.
εἰ δ' αὖ τις ῥαίῃσι θεῶν ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ,
τλήσομαι ἐν στήθεσσιν ἔχων ταλαπενθέα θυμόν·
ἤδη γὰρ μάλα πολλὰ πάθον καὶ πολλὰ μόγησα
κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ· μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω.

But even so, what I want and all my days I pine for
is to go back to my house and see my day of homecoming.
And if some god batters me far out on the wine-blue water,
I will endure it, keeping a stubborn spirit inside me,
for already I have suffered much and done much hard work
on the waves and in the fighting. So let this adventure follow.

What we have observed in the refusals of invitations which I have set out above is that the three elements present in Homeric refusals (non-acceptance, words of appreciation, and reporting (mission)) are elements of our own everyday refusals. This similarity

[32] I use the translation here of E. V. Rieu, *Homer: The* Odyssey, rev. D. C. H. Rieu (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991).

of form—across time and across cultures—reflects a similarity of response to the demands of the moment: namely, the need to decline an invitation without offending a potential host and harming one's relationship with him or her. The principal differences between the two classes of refusal lie in the desire for completeness in and the exemplary coherence of the Homeric examples by contrast with those we observe in our everyday discourse. These differences, as I noted above, may be traced to the special formality of the Homeric world as it is created by the poetic tradition and to the context in which these refusals are uttered: the performative context.[33]

What light do these similarities throw on Homeric composition? Since we find the same pattern in informal everyday talk (which happens to be our own) and in Homer, I argue that it is most likely that the way in which Homer's characters refused invitations reflects the way the Greeks of Homer's own time performed the same speech act.[34] An oral poet like Homer finds it relatively easy to sing a refusal of an invitation, drawing on his knowledge of everyday behaviour, and everyday speech acts, to prompt him as he seeks the words he needs. All he needs to learn is the special formulation of the format for the purposes of epic poetry.

In Chapter 1 I observed that the rebuke-format stored in memory does not supply the words through which a rebuke is expressed. Given the great variety of contexts in which any speech act may be used, it is not surprising that a format does not function at this level of specificity. Rather, the format simply cues each move in that sequence of verbal tasks which the speaker is to address, as he or she works through the speech act in question. This distinction is well illustrated in the Homeric refusals which we are at present considering. We find in the *Iliad* a number of occasions on which a visitor is invited to take a seat but does not accept the invitation. Let us consider what he or she says at this point and compare these

[33] Further differences may be noted along the directness–indirectness continuum. Differences in directness of speaking style result in differences of emphasis within and between both classes of refusals (that is, between refusals of invitations expressed in Homer and in our everyday world).

[34] See also Chapter 1. It is most unlikely that singers in an oral tradition would invent a different format for the purposes of song from the format that they drew on (probably unconsciously) for everyday purposes.

expressions. Note that the theme of each is the same in each case: 'I can't sit down.' But the formula selected is in most cases different.

To his sister-in-law, Helen, who has asked him to sit with her for a while, Hektor says, at 6. 360, *μή με κάθιζ', Ἑλένη* (do not make me sit with you, Helen). In somewhat similar vein, Priam for all his vulnerability refuses the invitation which Achilleus puts to him, to take a seat: *μή πώ μ' ἐς θρόνον ἵζε* (do not make me sit on a chair, 24. 553). We see a new expression of the same idea in Patroklos' words to Nestor: *οὐχ ἕδος ἐστί* (no sitting for me, 11. 648). Iris is crisper again, but uses the same formula, in her response to the winds, who invite her in, for she has come in haste and this is a pressing matter: *οὐχ ἕδος*, she says (no chair, 23. 205). The format, therefore, has supplied the *idea* which is to be rendered; but it has not supplied the *words* or the *formula*.[35]

FUNCTION

Why does the poet value extensive repetitions of scripted social interactions? What are his reasons for spelling out type-scenes and speech-act formats in the way that he does? I propose a number of reasons, of which the first is authenticity. The poet uses these scenes because they are echoes of everyday life. For us, Homer's practice of spelling out these small-scale rituals is delightful, because they are recognizable both in their completeness and in their trueness-to-life. We see actors behaving in ways in which we ourselves would behave, for motives that we ourselves understand. The poet has Patroklos and Hektor (twice) decline invitations in order to indicate the pressure under which they are working to achieve their allotted tasks.[36] In

[35] Dickson observes that these cola are used nowhere else in the poems: 'Nestor Among the Sirens', at 37. Thus it appears that these phrases are tied to this one speech act format. For parallel examples from the *Odyssey*, compare 1. 315, *μή μ' ἔτι νῦν κατέρυκε* (do not detain me longer) with 4. 594, *μὴ δή με πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἔρυκε* (do not keep me [with you] here for a long time). In each case the underlying idea is 'Don't keep me here', or 'Let me go.' The poet does not have a single formulaic expression for the one idea.

[36] Iris' claim, however, that she must visit the Aithiopes, seems to be manufactured for the occasion. Her mission is not important to the story. Her refusal, although it is formulated according to the standards we would set for mortals, reflects a certain

making Priam refuse Achilleus' invitation to sit with him and grieve the poet shows us the extremity of the old man's emotional state: the old man's desire to complete the task for which he came, to recover the body of his son, overrides all other considerations—no matter how sensitive his host may be to being rejected. None of the refusals in the *Iliad* is critical to the plot, except insofar as they allow us to speculate for a moment about a narrative path not pursued. But they are important to the story, since they draw our attention to the urgency of the moment, as the actors perceive it; and, as we shall see, Homer uses them to assist in fleshing out the characters of his actors.

In the *Odyssey*, the poet has Telemachos and Odysseus decline invitations in order that they can escape their hosts and proceed on their respective return journeys to their homeland. The invitation–refusal sequence here not only reflects the difficulties one experiences as the guest of an over-enthusiastic host, but it is a device which, on many occasions, allows the storyteller to move the story to its next stage.[37] That Homer uses the device in connection with the Odysseus-story as well as the Telemachos-story is intended to mark the parallel natures of their journeys: Telemachos is trying to cope with life on his short expedition across Hellas, just as his father has been tested on his ten-year voyage.[38]

divine insouciance. Only a god can plead preference as a compelling reason for refusing an invitation. See also discussion above. For relevant commentary on the Aithiopes as a favoured destination of the gods, see West's comment in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i, at p. 75.

[37] This, however, does not happen in *Od.* 4, when Telemachos apparently is unable to make Menelaos take him seriously when he refuses his invitation (on this point see my discussions above). Homer uses the sequence to make particular points about the protagonist—and the action—at this point. He comments, first, on Telemachos' present ineffectualness in the face of an elder (see further discussion below), and, second, on the problems which may face any guest in dealing with his or her host. Homer lets us see that hosts who are too kind can be as difficult for guests as 'hosts' who are inhospitable: see S. Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 34–5; J. Redfield, 'The Economic Man', in C. Rubino and C. Shelmerdine (eds.), *Approaches to Homer* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 218–47, at 237–9.

[38] See on this point M. Apthorp, 'The Obstacles to Telemachos' Return', *CQ*, 30 (1980), 1–22, esp. at 22. The young man is obliged to carry out a range of social rituals, as an adult, a task which is clearly unnerving for him. Cf. his hesitations at 3. 79–101.

The refusal is also a means of characterization. Hektor, at *Il.* 6. 264–85 and 360–8, is cast as the responsible leader and family man, by virtue of his refusals of Hekabe's and Helen's invitations to linger in the city. His refusal of Hekabe's invitation shows us a pious leader and a son who is firm, but gentle, with his mother.[39] His refusal of Helen's invitation shows us a courteous man; his explanation, that he must see Andromache and his son before he returns to the battlefield, shows us a properly attentive and loving husband and father. This account of his proposed movements comes as no surprise, although neither Hektor as actor nor Homer as narrator has given us prior notice of the third call which Hektor will make while he is in Troy. The conventions of oral storytelling lead us to expect a third encounter, with someone dearer again to the hero. This third person must be Andromache.[40] Nevertheless, what does his silence on this point, until he speaks with Helen, tell us about Hektor? We discover a man who can be discreet; who does not betray himself unless it is necessary. He is a man who has a private self, which he does not share with his fellow-Trojans or with his mother. Patroklos, likewise, is characterized as the responsible lieutenant of Achilleus. As his emissary he attempts, conscientiously, to perform the task he

[39] Kirk describes Hektor's reply at *Il.* 6. 264–85, as 'practical, harsh at times rather than filial' (G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. ii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 196). His reply is, indeed, practical, because a refusal of an invitation must include a reporting of things to be done; and because Hektor explains (reason for visit) why he has returned to Troy: to pass on a message (269–78). It is harsh, but this harshness is not directed to Hekabe. Hektor is the exasperated brother, who talks to his mother about Paris in terms that he might not use if he were talking to someone from outside the family (281–5). Hektor, however, shows himself to be filial. I have noted above his respectful address to his mother (*πότνια μῆτερ*, 264), his recognition of the charms of the wine she has offered him (*οἶνον μελίφρονα*, 264), and his patient explanation of the reasons why he cannot do as she proposes (265–8). As for the qualities of a pious leader, to which I refer above, these are revealed in Hektor's anxiety that he should not offend Zeus (266–8) and his eagerness to return to battle with his courage undiminished (264–5). Indeed, I read the commands he addresses to his mother (*μή μοι οἶνον ἄειρε* (264) . . . *ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν* . . . *ἔρχεο* (269–70)) as a reminder to us that he has just come back from the field. We see most clearly here the conflicts that Hektor's dual roles (as commander of the forces and as son-husband-brother-father) impose on him.

[40] See J. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches*, reprint edn. (New York and London: Garland, 1987), 50–3, on the ranking of kinsfolk and 'the ascending scale' of affection; and M. Arthur, 'The Divided World of *Iliad* VI', in H. Foley (ed.), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1981), 19–44, at 26–30.

has been given. It is his respect for Nestor, an older man, which obliges him to stay to listen to him, although it will soon become apparent that what Nestor says is important in itself. And, in a third example, not only is Priam's venture to the Argive encampment and to Achilleus' tent a courageous undertaking, his refusal of Achilleus' invitation is a mark of that same courage. This expedition is, indeed, Priam's *aristeia*.

In the *Odyssey*, Telemachos' careful refusal at 4. 594–608 indicates his respect for Menelaos' age; his disarmingly enthusiastic words of appreciation (595–8) suggest a hunger for experience and for knowledge of the wider world. We note the inexperience of youth again later in the epic, at 15. 87–91, when Telemachos refuses, rather brusquely on this occasion, Menelaos' new invitation to spend time with him in a leisurely return journey to Ithaka. Having been rebuked by Athene for his absence from home, the young man insists on his wish to return to Ithaka directly (88). To justify his urgency he gives a cogent reason (his anxiety about the security of his property), which persuades his host that he should be allowed to go on his way (89–91). Hoekstra comments on Telemachos' terse expression at this point and suggests that this is a reflection of his youth.[41] This is so: it is a person inexperienced in social intercourse who expresses so directly his own *unwillingness* rather than his *inability* to accept an invitation.[42] By contrast, his father's refusals of both Kalypso's and Kirke's invitations mark his great experience of the world and his adaptability to circumstance. Note the gentle, diplomatic nature of Odysseus' words to Kalypso;[43] and his challenging forthrightness when he speaks to Kirke.[44] It is as a beggar that Odysseus speaks to Penelope at 19. 336–48. But, despite his apparently lowly station, he shows the same qualities which characterized his words to Kirke.

[41] See Hoekstra's comments on this point in Heubeck and Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii, at p. 237.

[42] I am judging Telemachos here against other individuals who decline invitations in the epics. Cf. Drew, 'Speakers' Reportings', at 129 and 146. Some of Telemachos' abruptness may, however, have been softened by his respectful address to Menelaos, at 87.

[43] Hainsworth in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i, at p. 268, discusses Odysseus' 'superb discretion' at this point.

[44] See above. Odysseus wisely does not refuse Kirke outright. His speech incorporates reluctance and negotiation.

His confidence may well remind Penelope of Odysseus—a possibility which delights the audience, who know who the beggar is. As for Athene's/Mentor's refusal of Nestor's invitation, it is expressed in that wealth of detail that we have come to expect of an old man.[45] Homer is inviting us to enjoy a joke. His Athene here adopts a mode of speech characteristic of an elder. Her speech is comically reminiscent of Nestor's own speaking style.

*

When the poet has one of his characters decline an invitation, he makes this choice with a number of aims in mind. The refusal may indicate urgency; it may function at the level of motivation, to move the narrative to its next stage; and it functions also, within both epics, as a means of characterization, as direct speech in narrative so often does—this is in line with Aristotle's observation at *Poetics* 1460a—in order to give us greater insight into the nature of the person speaking. And it lends authenticity to the tale, since the poet has drawn on everyday discourse patterns to shape the words of his characters. Their speech may appear to be over-formal and stylized, by contrast with the somewhat abbreviated and fragmented modes of every day, but it is nevertheless familiar, as I have demonstrated.

The sequence of events which comprise the hospitality sequence in the Homeric epics includes the paired speech acts, invitation and refusal of an invitation. The sequence itself is not simply a template developed to guide a singer as he composes oral epic. In our culture we all know it as a script which guides our behaviour in daily life. It is, indeed, an abstraction; this reflects its principal method of acquisition, from the input of countless everyday experiences, and its mode of storage, as a standardized sequence held in memory. As for the individual actions or speech acts within the larger framework of the visit-scene, they also are standardized. The format which generates the refusal of an invitation, the subject of this study, is stored in memory as implicit knowledge, the kind of knowledge which is task-oriented. The format cues three verbal moves which, taken together, will enable the speaker to decline an invitation in a courteous manner. We might set out these moves as follows: first,

[45] On Mentor's age, see *Od.* 2. 224–7.

I must decline the offer; second, I should express my appreciation; finally, I should explain why acceptance is not possible. This may be set out in more formal terms: (1) non-acceptance; (2) words of appreciation; and (3) reporting (mission). Although we may not immediately recognize the standardized nature of the refusals we offer, because the language we use varies from context to context, this is the format to which we refer in casual talk today and to which Homer refers in the performance of his epics. In its recreation of everyday speech from his own time Homer's format is recognizable to us also, in another culture and another era.[46]

[46] Homer's *narrative* appears authentic by virtue of the familiarity of his scripts for everyday action, as Russo observes; I argue that Homer's representations of *talk* seem equally authentic, since his formats for speech acts are in many cases equally familiar to us: on the resonance of Homer's narrative art, see J. Russo, 'Sicilian Folktales, Cognitive Psychology, and Oral Theory', in T. Falkner, N. Felson, and D. Konstan (eds.), *Contextualizing Classics: Ideology, Performance, Dialogue* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 151–71, at 167–8. As Russo observes, Homer's words 'resonate especially well with what *we already carry within us* and bring to the listening experience' (my emphasis).

3

Questions in the *Odyssey*: Rhythm and Regularity

In earlier chapters I examined the format which underlies the production of a rebuke and the declining of an invitation in Homer. The concept of the format is relevant to speech acts of that programmatic kind, which are rendered by a linked series of verbal tasks, or moves: rebukes, apologies, and refusals of invitations all fall into this category. It is not relevant to speech acts carried out through questions, for example, which appear so frequently in exchanges of talk in our own world and in the world which Homer creates.[1] It is this category which I now explore in three separate exercises: in this present chapter a more general account of the observable regularities in question forms; in the following chapter a special study of the device which has been termed *hysteron proteron* in the question and answer adjacency pair; and, in Chapter 5, a sociolinguistic study of three samples of questions in the 'spoken' discourse of the epics. My task in the first two exercises is to try to identify some of the habits which a poet within an oral tradition developed and techniques on which he relied in order to generate works of such a kind and on such a scale; in the third, I consider the multiple ways in which questions may be used in conversation and how the poet may have intended them.

In the conversations represented in the *Odyssey* I have identified 176 questions (counting strings of questions as one unit), along with

[1] See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). Some speech acts are indeed questions. But questions as a class do not fall into any one category of speech act.

their answers, for an exploratory study.[2] Although these sequences lack the regularities which we see in Homer's narrative segments or even in his speech acts, I propose to examine them to determine whether they manifest regularities of some other kind or kinds, which facilitate oral composition in performance. I shall consider the exchange structure of question and answer; the inclusion of explanatory material; repetitive rhythms in double and alternate (either/or) questions and in question-strings; and the generation of answers. In surveying Homer's discourse habits in relation to questions and answers I shall include some commentary, where I think it appropriate, on comparable habits in the spontaneous conversational discourse of English-speakers in the twenty-first century. (I am here again assuming that it is fruitful to compare Homer's mimesis of speech with that of speakers of everyday discourse.[3]) And for a comparison closer in time to Homer's world, I shall look also at Plato's 'Socratic' and middle dialogues, each of which is introduced by a prolonged exchange which mimics casual conversation. We must bear in mind that these prefaces, which give us a lively impression of patterns of everyday talk in the Greek world of their time, perhaps three centuries after Homer himself performed, were composed in writing; indeed, they were, we assume, written at leisure. That is, Plato has had the time to introduce special effects and variety into the repeated scenes, descriptions of chance encounters, that introduce so many of his dialogues. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to compare Plato's choices with those of Homer, who composes as he performs.

[2] For the listing see Table 3. These questions comprise both direct and indirect forms (but only where the indirect form is included within direct speech and is preceded by a second person imperative: e.g., *μοι εἰπέ* ... tell me ..., 4. 379); single questions; and double questions and strings of questions (each cluster of which I have counted as one unit in reaching my tally of 176). I here restrict my enquiry to the *Odyssey*, in order to give some coherence to my account of questions and answers. All references in the text are to the *Odyssey*.

[3] I make comparisons of this kind in order to note instructive similarities to and differences from Western discourse practices amongst middle-class speakers. I am not aiming to trace diachronic links. For further discussion of speech acts across cultures, see Chapter 1.

Table 3. Questions and question-strings in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Passage	Speaker and addressee
1. 60–2	Athene to Zeus
1. 64–7	Zeus to Athene
1. 158	Telemachos to 'Mentes'
1. 170–7	Telemachos to 'Mentes'
1. 206–7	'Mentes' to Telemachos
1. 224–6	'Mentes' to Telemachos
1. 298–300	'Mentes' to Telemachos
1. 346–7	Telemachos to Penelope
1. 391	Telemachos to Antinoös
1. 405–9	Eurymachos to Telemachos
2. 28–32	Aigyptios to men of Ithaka
2. 312–13	Telemachos to Antinoös
2. 332–3	one suitor to another
2. 363–5	Eurykleia to Telemachos
3. 22	Telemachos to 'Mentor'
3. 71–4	Nestor to Telemachos & 'Mentor'
3. 214–17	Nestor to Telemachos
3. 230	'Mentor' to Telemachos
3. 248–52	Telemachos to Nestor
4. 28–9	Eteoneus to Menelaos
4. 116–19	Menelaos to himself
4. 138–40	Helen to Menelaos
4. 312–14	Menelaos to Telemachos
4. 316–31	Telemachos to Menelaos
4. 371–2	Eidothea to Menelaos
4. 379–81	Menelaos to Eidothea
4. 395–6	Menelaos to Eidothea
4. 443	Menelaos to Telemachos & Peisistratos
4. 462–3	Proteus to Menelaos
4. 465–70	Menelaos to Proteus
4. 486–90	Menelaos to Proteus
4. 492	Proteus to Menelaos
4. 551–3	Menelaos to Proteus
4. 632–3	Noëmon to Antinoös
4. 642–7	Antinoös to Noëmon
4. 649–51	Noëmon to Antinoös
4. 681–3	Penelope to Medon
4. 707 & 710	Penelope to Medon
4. 804	'Iphthime' to Penelope
4. 810	Penelope to 'Iphthime'
4. 832–4	Penelope to 'Iphthime'
5. 22–4	Zeus to Athene
5. 87–8	Kalypso to Hermes
5. 100–1	Hermes to Kalypso
5. 204–5	Kalypso to Odysseus
5. 299	Odysseus to himself
5. 339–40	Leukothea to Odysseus
5. 465	Odysseus to himself
6. 25	Athene to Nausikaa
6. 57–9	Nausikaa to Alkinoös
6. 119–21	Odysseus to himself
6. 149	Odysseus to Nausikaa
6. 199–200	Nausikaa to handmaidens
6. 276–7	Nausikaa (as a Phaiakian) to Odysseus
7. 22–3	Odysseus to child/Athene
7. 237–9	Arete to Odysseus
8. 153	Odysseus to Laodamas
8. 208	Odysseus to Phaiakians
8. 335–7	Apollo to Hermes
8. 352–3	Hephaistos to Poseidon
8. 572–86	Alkinoös to Odysseus
9. 14	Odysseus to Alkinoös
9. 252–5	Kyklops to Odysseus & men
9. 279–80	Kyklops to Odysseus
9. 351–2	Odysseus to Kyklops
9. 403–6	Kyklopes to Kyklops
9. 447–8	Kyklops to ram
9. 494	companions to Odysseus
10. 64	Aiolos to Odysseus
10. 281–4	Hermes to Odysseus
10. 325	Kirke to Odysseus
10. 337–41	Odysseus to Kirke
10. 378–80	Kirke to Odysseus
10. 383–5	Odysseus to Kirke
10. 431–6	Eurylochos to Odysseus' men
10. 501	Odysseus to Kirke
10. 573–4	Odysseus to audience
11. 57	Odysseus to Elpenor
11. 92–4	Teiresias to Odysseus
11. 144	Odysseus to Teiresias
11. 155–62	Antikleia to Odysseus
11. 170–9	Odysseus to Antikleia
11. 210–14	Odysseus to Antikleia
11. 336–7	Arete to Phaiakians
11. 370–2	Alkinoös to Odysseus
11. 397–403	Odysseus to Agamemnon
11. 457–61	Agamemnon to Odysseus
11. 463	Odysseus to Agamemnon
11. 473–6	Achilleus to Odysseus
11. 553–5	Odysseus to Aias

12. 112–14	Odysseus to Kirke
12. 117	Kirke to Odysseus
12. 287–90	Eurylochos to Odysseus
12. 450	Odysseus to Alkinoös
13. 168–9	Phaiakians to each other
13. 200–4	Odysseus to himself
13. 232–5	Odysseus to Athene
13. 328	Odysseus to Athene
13. 417–19	Odysseus to Athene
14. 115–16	Odysseus to Eumaios
14. 186–9	Eumaios to Odysseus
14. 364–5	Eumaios to Odysseus
14. 496–8	'Odysseus' to companions
15. 167–8	Peisistratos to Menelaos
15. 195–6	Telemachos to Peisistratos
15. 263–4	Theoklymenos to Telemachos
15. 326–7	Eumaios to Odysseus
15. 347–50	Odysseus to Eumaios
15. 383–8	Odysseus to Eumaios
15. 431–3	Phoinikian man to Phoinikian woman
15. 509–11	Theoklymenos to Telemachos
16. 57–8	Telemachos to Eumaios
16. 70	Telemachos to Eumaios
16. 95–8	Odysseus to Telemachos
16. 137–41	Eumaios to Telemachos
16. 187	Odysseus to Telemachos
16. 222–3	Telemachos to Odysseus
16. 421–5	Penelope to Antinoös
16. 461–3	Telemachos to Eumaios
17. 44	Penelope to Telemachos
17. 219–20	Melanthios to Eumaios
17. 375–9	Antinoös to Eumaios
17. 382–5	Eumaios to Antinoös
17. 446	Antinoös to Odysseus
17. 545	Penelope to Eumaios
17. 576–8	Penelope to Eumaios
18. 31	Iros to Penelope
18. 223–4	Penelope to Telemachos
18. 333	Melantho to Odysseus
18. 357–9	Eurymachos to Odysseus
18. 393	Eurymachos to Odysseus
19. 24	Eurykleia to Telemachos
19. 66–7	Melantho to Odysseus
19. 71–3	Odysseus to Melantho
19. 104–5	Penelope to Odysseus
19. 162	Penelope to Odysseus
19. 165–6	Odysseus to Penelope
19. 325–8	Penelope to Odysseus
19. 482	Odysseus to Eurykleia
19. 492	Eurykleia to Odysseus
19. 500	Odysseus to Eurykleia
19. 525–9	Penelope to Odysseus
20. 33	Athene to Odysseus
20. 42–3	Odysseus to Athene
20. 129–30	Telemachos to Eurykleia
20. 166–7	Eumaios to Odysseus
20. 178–9	Melanthios to Odysseus
20. 191–3	Philoitios to Eumaios
20. 351	Theoklymenos to suitors
21. 85–7	Antinoös to Eumaios & Philoitios
21. 110	Telemachos to Penelope
21. 168	Antinoös to Leodes
21. 193–8	Odysseus to Eumaios & Philoitios
21. 259	Antinoös to Odysseus
21. 289–91	Antinoös to Odysseus
21. 314–16	Penelope to Eurymachos
21. 333	Penelope to Eurymachos
21. 362–3	suitors to Eumaios
22. 12–14	Narrator to audience
22. 132–3	Agelaos to suitors
22. 231–2	Athene to Odysseus
23. 15–17	Penelope to Eurykleia
23. 70	Eurykelia to Penelope
23. 97–9	Telemachos to Penelope
23. 184	Odysseus to Penelope
23. 264–5	Odysseus to Penelope
24. 95	Agamemnon to Achilleus
24. 106–14	Agamemnon to Amphimedon
24. 256–60	Odysseus to Laertes
24. 287–90	Laertes to Odysseus
24. 297–301	Laertes to Odysseus
24. 403–5	Dolios to Odysseus
24. 407	Odysseus to Laertes
24. 473–6	Athene to Zeus
24. 478–80	Zeus to Athene
24. 514	Laertes to gods

THE EXCHANGE STRUCTURE OF QUESTION AND ANSWER

I noted above that the basic sequence in conversation is said to be a two-unit sequence, or 'adjacency pair'.[4] The adjacency pair, as we have observed, comprises two speaking turns, that of the initial speaker (the first pair part) and that of the respondent (the second pair part). In most conversational contexts the first turn—an invitation or a question, for example—is designed in such a way that it invites a prompt response from the addressee. This, at least, is the theory. If it were always the case in practice, our conversations would proceed in highly predictable patterns of alternation. But, as Malcolm Coulthard and David Brazil point out, it is not at all difficult to discover instances in which a question is not followed by an answer. Coulthard and Brazil argue that the kind of analysis proposed by Schegloff and Sacks, which stresses the inevitably sequential nature of the exchange structure, is 'deceptively attractive'.[5] Their observations indicate that a response to a question may equally be another question, an elliptical response (strictly speaking, a response to another, suppressed, question), or a response which is irrelevant or in some other way unhelpful or inappropriate. As they describe it, real conversation is rather untidy. Only in the 'artful dialogue' of novels and theatre do we find responses that are consistently well-phrased replies.[6] Nevertheless, despite our apparent disregard in everyday discourse for the structure of the adjacency pair, it remains an organizing principle in conversation. If we have asked a question, we generally *expect* a reply or an acknowledgment of some kind. And our addressee is himself or herself aware of that expectation, even if he or she decides not to meet it immediately. This awareness of conversational protocols is part of our cultural

[4] See Introduction and Chapter 2; and see E. Schegloff and H. Sacks, 'Opening up Closings', *Semiotica*, 8 (1973), 289–327.

[5] M. Coulthard and D. Brazil, 'Exchange Structure', in M. Coulthard (ed.), *Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 50–78, at 52.

[6] See E. Goffman, 'Replies and Responses', *Language in Society*, 5 (1976), 257–313, at 280.

knowledge.[7] The sequence of the adjacency pair, therefore, represents an understanding between speaker and listener about the way in which a conversational exchange should progress—in an ideal world, at least. It is, as Coulthard and Brazil conclude (despite their reservations), an overall descriptive framework which accounts for what generally occurs.

There is a limited range of interrogative strategies available to us as speakers.[8] We can distinguish questions expressed directly, that is, in interrogative form ('Who is your master?') from indirect questions ('Tell me who your master is.').[9] Within the category of direct questions we distinguish open questions (the 'who', 'which', 'how', 'why', and 'when' questions, which require a piece of information to complete the thought) from closed questions, which require nothing more than confirmation or denial. Disjunctive, or alternate, questions ('Are you here for the first time or are you a friend of my father from abroad?') are a sub-group of this last category; as are those questions in which the expectations of the speaker are expressed through the use of a tag (such as 'didn't he?' or 'aren't we?' in English) or words or phrases serving a similar function in other languages.[10] Question

[7] Thus we occasionally hear remarks in mid-conversation such as: 'But you haven't answered my question.' Or: 'So, to answer your question.' Such remarks acknowledge the need for a response (in the first example) and the expectation of adjacency (in that the question referred to in the second example has been revived in order to link it with its response).

[8] That is, specific interrogative *forms* are limited. But it is possible that in everyday speech, or representations of everyday speech, other speech forms (such as statements) may serve as questions (in that they attract a 'reply'). For example, a sentence such as 'It's getting late, John', may, in certain contexts, be interpreted as a question ('Do you think we should be leaving now?'). For relevant discussion, see J. Mey, *Pragmatics: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 249–52, esp. at 252.

[9] The indirect form is often discounted as a question: see W. Robinson and S. Rackstraw, *A Question of Answers*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), vol. i, at pp. 3–5. But, although the form is indirect, a question is indeed being asked. On this see E. Schegloff, 'On Questions and Ambiguities in Conversation', in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 28–52, at 31, who concludes, at 49–50, that we are able to recognize questions, even if they do not correspond to the regular formats. See also Mey, *Pragmatics*, 249–51.

[10] For a similar account of questions, again as a syntactic phenomenon, see R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartnik, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (London and New York: Longman, 1985), 806–25. We shall encounter questions of all these types in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

forms are fixed by clear prescriptions that we acquire as we learn a language. The explicitness of these forms can be useful to us: on those occasions when we are genuinely seeking information we wish our questions to be recognizable as questions and to be as unambiguous as possible.

As for the second pair part, the range of response forms appears to be unlimited. In everyday conversational exchanges responses may be verbal or non-verbal—a nod, a grimace, or a shrug may serve as a reply. If verbal, a response may be expressed as a statement; but a question, a command, or a wish may count as an answer. An answer may be expressed in appropriate, informative talk, or it may be rendered elliptically.[11] We should bear in mind that most responses are intended to be satisfactory to the first speaker. In conversation we generally aim at being co-operative, and our responses, whatever their nature, to some extent at least fulfil this goal.[12]

THE EXCHANGE STRUCTURE IN HOMER

How, we might ask, does Homer stand with regard to questions and answers? Does the structure of his sequences indicate the stylized neatness which Goffman suggests we might find in 'literary' discourse in the Western tradition? Or do we find that Homer realizes the sequence in the same loose way that we observe in exchanges in everyday conversation? We certainly find in Homer a number of exchanges in which the structure of the adjacency pair is exemplary. Consider the following passages:

Ἑρμεία, Διὸς υἱέ, διάκτορε, δῶτορ ἑάων,
ἦ ῥά κεν ἐν δεσμοῖς ἐθέλοις κρατεροῖσι πιεσθεὶς

[11] Elliptical speech *assumes* certain moves in the exchange: observe, for example, the ellipse in the following 'sequence': 'Do you sell coffee?' 'Here's the menu.' For further discussion, see below, and see Mey, *Pragmatics*, 245–8.

[12] See H. P. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), *Speech Acts, Syntax and Semantics*, vol. iii (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 41–58, at 48. Because of the observable variations in the expression of the second pair part, there are different accounts in discourse analysis of the question–answer sequence: see, e.g., Coulthard and Brazil, 'Exchange Structure', 50–78.

εὕδειν ἐν λέκτροισι παρὰ χρυσέῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ;
Τὸν δ᾽ ἠμείβετ᾽ ἔπειτα διάκτορος ἀργειφόντης·
αἲ γὰρ τοῦτο γένοιτο, ἄναξ ἑκατηβόλ᾽ Ἄπολλον.

(8. 335–9)

Hermes, son of Zeus, guide and giver of good things, tell me,
would you, caught tight in these strong fastenings, be willing
to sleep in bed by the side of Aphrodite the golden?
Then in turn the courier Argeïphontes answered:
'Lord who strike from afar, Apollo, I wish it could only
be...'

Τὸν δ᾽ αὖτε προσέειπε φίλη τροφὸς Εὐρύκλεια·
αἲ γὰρ δή ποτε, τέκνον, ἐπιφροσύνας ἀνέλοιο
οἴκου κήδεσθαι καὶ κτήματα πάντα φυλάσσειν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε, τίς τοι ἔπειτα μετοιχομένη φάος οἴσει;
δμῳὰς δ᾽ οὐκ εἴας προβλωσκέμεν, αἵ κεν ἔφαινον.
Τὴν δ᾽ αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ηὔδα·
ξεῖνος ὅδ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἀεργὸν ἀνέξομαι ὅς κεν ἐμῆς γε
χοίνικος ἅπτηται, καὶ τηλόθεν εἰληλουθώς.

(19. 21–8)

Then in turn Eurykleia his dear nurse said to him:
'I only hope, my child, that you will assume such foresight
in taking care of the house and protecting all our possessions.
But tell me, who is it who will go with you and hold the light for you?
The maids would have given you light, but you would not let them come out.'
Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:
'This stranger will. I will not suffer a man who feeds from
our stores, and does not work, even though he comes from far off.'

In the above cases, when a speaker has asked a question, his or her question is addressed immediately.[13] This, in fact, is the most common practice in Homer. In some cases, however, a response is delayed. For example, when Menelaos is asked by Telemachos to tell him what he knows about Odyssseus (4. 316–31), he begins his response with a long reflection on the wrongs of the suitors and

[13] For other examples amongst many: when Odysseus asks Elpenor how he has come to be amongst the shades of the dead (11. 57), Elpenor replies promptly with his tale (11. 60–5); when Odysseus at 15. 347–50 asks Eumaios whether his mother or his father are still alive, the swineherd replies at once (352–60).

the retribution which awaits them at Odysseus' hands (333–46) before he turns to the question (specifically recalling it at 347 after his digression) and introduces his detailed response. The expectations associated with the adjacency pair are fulfilled—but at the second speaker's leisure. A third category of questions includes those which are not taken up at all by the addressee. Of my pool of 176 questions from the *Odyssey* approximately 30 per cent receive no response, by which I mean that they do not receive an informative answer. Of these many are rhetorical questions—for example, the question of Telemachos to Antinoös at 1. 391:

> *ἦ φῂς τοῦτο κάκιστον ἐν ἀνθρώποισι τετύχθαι;*
>
> Do you think that is the worst thing that could happen to anyone?[14]

The rhetorical question is heard frequently in conversation today.[15] The listener is barely aware that a question has been put; and certainly does not feel that there is any need to reply. Another sub-category of questions in this third group includes those intended to silence the addressee. Consider, for example, the question which introduces Telemachos' reproof to his mother at 1. 346–7:

> *μῆτερ ἐμή, τί τ' ἄρα φθονέεις ἐρίηρον ἀοιδὸν*
> *τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται;*
>
> Why, my mother, do you begrudge this excellent singer
> his pleasing himself as the thought drives him?[16]

Finally, there are also questions to which, for one reason or another, the listener chooses not to respond. In Homer we can find only a small number of questions which are deliberately not answered by the addressee, as happens, for example, at 20. 178–82, when Melanthios challenges Odysseus with a series of hostile questions and Odysseus refrains from speech, simply shaking his head in silence (184) by way of response.

If we look now to questions which occur in the second pair part rather than the first, we find questions which are framed as a protest

[14] See also 2. 312–3 (Telemachos to Antinoös); 9. 351–2 (Odysseus to the Kyklops); 11. 336–7 (Arete to the Phaiakians); 16. 421–3 (Penelope to Antinoös).

[15] For example, questions such as 'What could I do?' 'Who would have expected it?' 'Did you ever see such a storm?'

[16] For further discussion of this particular interaction, see below.

of some kind or as counter-questions.[17] They too are asked without expectation of a reply. I identify twenty protest-questions in the *Odyssey.* For examples of such questions, see 19. 482 (Odysseus to Eurykleia); 23. 70–2 (Eurykleia to Penelope); 23. 264–5 (Odysseus to Penelope):[18]

> *δαιμονίη, τί τ᾽ ἄρ᾽ αὖ με μάλ᾽ ὀτρύνουσα κελεύεις*
> *εἰπέμεν;*
>
> You are so strange. Why do you urge me on and tell me
> to speak of it?

This figure is relatively high; it suggests an environment in which there is considerable tension. For counter-questions, which reflect this same tension but are used more rarely, see, for example, 19. 71–3, Odysseus' brusque counter-questions to Melantho's question, at 66–7, when she had asked the hero, rather sharply, whether he would be hanging around the house all night:

> *δαιμονίη, τί μοι ὧδ᾽ ἐπέχεις κεκοτηότι θυμῷ;*
> *ἦ ὅτι δὴ ῥυπόω, κακὰ δὲ χροΐ εἵματα εἷμαι,*
> *πτωχεύω δ᾽ ἀνὰ δῆμον;*
>
> I wonder, why do you hold such an angry grudge against me?
> Is it because I am dirty, and wear foul clothing upon me,
> and go about as a public beggar?

As I have noted, the majority of questions posed in the *Odyssey* elicit a response which is prompt and informative. Is this proportion comparable with everyday talk in Western cultures? This is difficult to document; and we can rely only on impressions we ourselves gather from the conversations we hear or overhear, which on some occasions, with particular speakers and in particular contexts, are quite orderly, but on other occasions are quite untidy. When we turn

[17] A counter-question, a question asked in response to a question, falls into a different category from the question as protest. Whether intended defensively or aggressively, it enables the speaker of the second pair part to sidestep or defer his or her obligation to give an answer to the original question. For further discussion of the counter-question in Homer, see Chapter 5.

[18] Protest-questions are frequently marked by the standard phrase *ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων;* (What sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier?) See 1. 64, 5. 22, 19. 492. For further discussion of the protest in Homer, see Chapter 6.

to Homer we must make allowance for the special circumstances of the storyworld. In the *Odyssey* Homer has created a world in which competitiveness, physical disguise, mind-games, hardship, and fear all play a part. In such circumstances suspicion, defensiveness, and anxiety will inevitably affect the way in which speakers (notably, Odysseus and his wife) respond to each other. So it is not surprising that we do not always find the 'artful dialogue' of literature, as described by Goffman, with well-phrased and informative replies generated by each speaker. We find in some cases instead a variety of 'responses', each one appropriate to the present moment in the tale. Many (particularly protest-questions) are of a standardized nature. Indeed, we can find echoes of all types of responses in comparable circumstances in our own world. I propose, therefore, that in Homer, if we make allowances for the circumstances in which Homer's characters (in particular, Odysseus and Penelope) find themselves, the structure of that unit of talk which we call the adjacency pair is, as Goffman would predict, more formalized than it is in everyday speech. It is a stylization of everyday talk.[19]

THE INCLUSION OF EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

When Athene in the guise of Mentor meets Telemachos, she asks him whether he is the son of Odysseus (1. 206–7). She then explains (208–11) why she asks such a question:

αἰνῶς μὲν κεφαλήν τε καὶ ὄμματα καλὰ ἔοικας
κείνῳ, ἐπεὶ θαμὰ τοῖον ἐμισγόμεθ' ἀλλήλοισι,
πρίν γε τὸν ἐς Τροίην ἀναβήμεναι, ἔνθα περ ἄλλοι
Ἀργείων οἱ ἄριστοι ἔβαν κοίλῃς ἐπὶ νηυσίν·[20]

[19] My assessment is based on the exemplary nature of the bulk of replies and the observable formalization of even non-responses such as the protest-question or counter-question. We observe a similar phenomenon in Plato's dialogues: for example, the series of exemplary adjacency pairs in *Prt.* 309a1–310a5 is more like dialogue in literature (in this respect) than the exchanges of everyday talk. The discourse is stylized.

[20] For commentary on 'suggestive questions', which feign ignorance, as at 1. 59–62 and 207, see I. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14 and 27.

Indeed, you are strangely like about the head, the fine eyes,
as I remember; we used to meet so often together
before he went away to Troy, where others beside him
and the greatest of the Argives went in their hollow vessels.

Likewise, when Odysseus resists Kirke's attempt to drug him and threatens her with drawn sword (10. 321–2), she asks him for his personal details: she asks him who he is, where he comes from, where his city is, and where his parents are (325). Then she explains why she has put the question (326–9):

θαῦμά μ' ἔχει ὡς οὔ τι πιὼν τάδε φάρμακ' ἐθέλχθης.
οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδέ τις ἄλλος ἀνὴρ τάδε φάρμακ' ἀνέτλη,
ὅς κε πίῃ καὶ πρῶτον ἀμείψεται ἕρκος ὀδόντων.
σοὶ δέ τις ἐν στήθεσσιν ἀκήλητος νόος ἐστίν.

The wonder is on me that you drank my drugs and have not been
enchanted, for no other man beside could have stood up
under my drugs, once he drank and they passed the barrier
of his teeth. There is a mind in you no magic will work on.

When Odysseus encounters the soul of Elpenor in the Underworld, he asks how he came there (11. 57); then he explains why he asked the question (58):

ἔφθης πεζὸς ἰὼν ἢ ἐγὼ σὺν νηῒ μελαίνῃ.

You have come faster than I could in my black ship.

The composition of a Homeric question, as we observe, in many cases includes one or two clauses—or several sentences—which justify the asking. We ourselves, in formulating questions, often include explanatory material of this same kind:

'Do you want to come and have a coffee? I want to ask your advice.'
'Where did you put yesterday's newspaper? There was an article there that I wanted to save.'
How old are you now? You have grown so much since I saw you last![21]

It would be difficult to measure the frequency with which we include such information in our everyday questions. In the case of the epics,

[21] The strategy of offering reasons is a politeness strategy familiar to us in everyday talk: for discussion, see P. Brown and S. Levinson, 'Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena', in E. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness* (Cambridge:

however, we can. Homer appears to have used this kind of material, whereby the speaker explains the narrative circumstances which have given rise to his or her question, in approximately two thirds of questions in the *Odyssey*, whether these questions are expressed directly or indirectly.[22] This, I suggest (despite the difficulties in assessing the frequency of explanatory segments in our own discourse), is at a higher rate than the proportions we observe in everyday conversational forms today.[23] And it certainly occurs more frequently in Homer than in Plato's earlier dialogues.[24] The concern of the poet to establish motivation at every point of his narrative reflects his wider anxiety about the credibility of his tale.[25] I identify this desire of actors within the tale to explain their verbal behaviour as one of the regularities associated with the representation of discourse in oral epic. The explanatory mode contributes to the predictable structure—the rhythm—of question-asking in the epic tradition that we associate with Homer, where the apparent urgency of the question is counterbalanced by the discursive nature of its justification.[26]

Cambridge University Press, 1978), 56–289; revised as *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 128–9. The inclusion of material of this explanatory kind is similar to what Paul Drew calls 'reporting', that element of speech we regularly use when we refuse an invitation: see P. Drew, 'Speakers' Reportings in Invitation Sequences', in Atkinson and Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action*, 129–51, esp. at 146; and see Chapter 2.

[22] Of the 176 questions or question-strings in the *Odyssey*, 124 are accompanied by explanatory material of some kind presented within the speech segment.

[23] For comparison's sake, I examined passages of talk recorded in D. Tannen, *Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk amongst Friends* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984). In the many chunks of talk recorded in this volume from 2 hours 40 minutes of conversation at a Thanksgiving dinner, I noted only two questions which included explanatory material.

[24] See, e.g., Plato, *Grg.* 447a1–449c3. Here, amid a number of adjacency pairs, we find only one question which incorporates explanatory material: at 447b9–c4.

[25] For excellent discussion of this point see R. Scodel, *Credible Impossibilities: Conventions and Strategies of Verisimilitude in Homer and Greek Tragedy* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1999), 33–57, esp. at 33.

[26] In cases where such explanatory material in included regularly in 'spoken' questions in literature or in rhetorical contexts, its presence may contribute to the persuasive rhythm of that discourse. For discussion that reflects on English-speakers and on Homer, see E. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 129–55.

Why does the poet entrust this explanatory material to the actor, when he could have included it in his preface to the speech? By organizing the presentation of his story in this way, the poet appears to remain aloof from events in the storyworld. He allows the tale to carry itself, without his distracting intervention. As we know from Aristotle (*Po.* 1460a) and from discussions in our own world, this technique makes for a more successful story, since the audience becomes directly involved with the characters and engaged by the action.[27] And the introduction of explanatory material allows the audience to focus for just a few moments longer on the question which is hanging in the air. Thus it assumes a greater significance against its narrative background.

There is a remarkable exception to this rule. When Arete asks Odysseus his name and the story of how he acquired the clothes he was wearing (7. 237–9), it is the poet as narrator who explains to his audience why she has posed the question (233–5):

> *τοῖσιν δ' Ἀρήτη λευκώλενος ἄρχετο μύθων·*
> *ἔγνω γὰρ φᾶρός τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματ' ἰδοῦσα*
> *καλά, τά ῥ' αὐτὴ τεῦξε σὺν ἀμφιπόλοισι γυναιξί·*

> Now its was white-armed Arete who began their discourse,
> for she recognized the mantle and the tunic when she saw them,
> splendid clothes which she herself had made, with her serving women.

In this particular case Homer has departed from his usual pattern of assigning explanatory talk to the actor. He himself, in the narrator's voice, explains to us, out of the hearing of Odysseus, that Arete has recognized the garments he wears. It is important on this occasion that it *not* be Arete who justifies her question: if she had explained to Odysseus why she asked about the clothing, she would have lost her strategic advantage in her quest to discover the truth of the matter.

[27] See Introduction; and see D. Tannen, 'The Oral/Literate Continuum in Discourse', in D. Tannen (ed.), *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy, Advances in Discourse Processes* 9 (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1982), 1–16, at 8–9. For discussion in the Homeric context, see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 123–8.

The fact that Odysseus does not know what Arete knows is the source of her power over him at this moment.[28]

REPETITIVE RHYTHMS IN DOUBLE AND ALTERNATE QUESTIONS AND QUESTION-STRINGS

There are two marked differences between Homeric question-and-answer structures and our own. First, the form in which questions and their answers are presented in Homer is as unlike real conversation as is, for a different reason, the stichomythia of tragedy. As we quickly discover when we read the epics, individual speeches are relatively long. As far as interrogatives are concerned, when one of Homer's actors is quizzing another he or she will ask questions in a cluster rather than one by one. If the latter were the case and each short contribution were to be preceded by a full-line introduction or if each question was expanded into a question and answer adjacency pair, the outcome, in storytelling terms, would be an unbearable slowing of the pace of telling.[29] Amongst the 176 questions and question-strings that I have identified in the *Odyssey* I find seventy-four instances of a single question, such as the question put by Odysseus to Eumaios at 14. 115–16:[30]

> *ὦ φίλε, τίς γάρ σε πρίατο κτεάτεσσιν ἑοῖσιν,*
> *ὧδε μάλ' ἀφνειὸς καὶ καρτερὸς ὡς ἀγορεύεις;*

> Dear friend, who is the man who bought you with his possessions
> And is so rich and powerful as you tell me?

[28] For another example of this practice uncommon in Homer, whereby the poet expresses the explanatory material which underpins a question *in the narrator's voice*, see Athene/Mentor's question to Odysseus at 22. 231–2 and its explanatory material at 237–40. On the reasons for Arete's questions, see F. Ahl and H. Roisman, *The* Odyssey *Re-Formed* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 60; and, on Arete's loaded question, see de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, at 183, where de Jong gives an excellent account of the dramatic impact of Arete's unexpected question; what de Jong does not explore is the reason why the poet, exceptionally, should choose to explain *in his own voice* why Arete asks what she asks. For discussion of Arete's question, as a control-question, see Chapters 4 and 5.

[29] For further discussion, see below.

[30] For further single questions, see, e.g., 8. 352–3, 10. 501, 11. 57, 13. 168–9, 15. 431–3. These questions are regularly presented at the end of a longer speech.

The remainder—102 in total—are clusters of questions posed in pairs, as alternates, or in strings. Homer has a clear preference for questions in clusters. As I shall demonstrate, this practical compromise addresses the difficulties that sustained but brief exchanges of words between two speakers would otherwise cause.

Second, there is a question-type familiar to English-speakers today which I do not see represented in the Homeric epic in the same proportion as I observe in our own everyday talk. I refer to tag-questions, used in English (and other European languages) to check that one's addressee can confirm a positive or negative statement. So we may say: 'You like her a lot, don't you?' Or: 'He doesn't like you, does he?' These kinds of question are common in everyday English. And they always invite some minimal confirmation. In Homer's *Odyssey*, on the other hand, they are rare. I identify fewer than ten.[31] It may be, indeed, that these two points, on the grouping of questions and on tag-questions, are related. Tag-questions are a mark of conversation that is tennis-like in the frequency of its exchanges. Their absence from Homer may be a consequence of the poet's preference (on practical grounds) for longer speech units and for questions presented in clusters.

Let us examine each category of multiple question, in order to gain some understanding of Homeric practice.

Double Questions

When Athene/Mentor has urged Telemachos to go up to Nestor to ask about his father, Telemachos demurs with anxious questions (3. 22):

> *Μέντορ, πῶς τ' ἄρ' ἴω, πῶς τ' ἂρ προσπτύξομαι αὐτόν;*
> Mentor, how shall I go up to him, how close with him?

When the Old Man of the Sea has succumbed at last to Menelaos and his men, he asks the questions that indicate that he has conceded defeat (4. 462–3):

[31] See, e.g., 1. 298–300, 6. 57–9, 16. 424–5. We find these forms more commonly in the small exchanges of Plato: for example, *Smp.* 172a5; *Prt.* 309a6–7.

τίς νύ τοι, Ἀτρέος υἱέ, θεῶν συμφράσσατο βουλάς,
ὄφρα μ' ἕλοις ἀέκοντα λοχησάμενος; τέο σε χρή;

Which of the gods now, son of Atreus, has been advising you
to capture me from ambush against my will. What do you want?

When Melantho has rebuked Odysseus for lingering in the palace, when as a beggar he should have been outdoors, he replies (19. 71–3):

δαιμονίη, τί μοι ὧδ' ἐπέχεις κεκοτηότι θυμῷ;
ἦ ὅτι δὴ ῥυπόω, κακὰ δὲ χροΐ εἵματα εἷμαι,
πτωχεύω δ' ἀνὰ δῆμον;

I wonder, why do you hold such an angry grudge against me?
Is it because I am dirty, and wear foul clothing upon me,
and go about as a public beggar?

We see verbal repetition in the first two examples, as in the *πῶς ... πῶς* of 3. 22 (and cf. 5. 465: *τί πάθω; τί νύ μοι μήκιστα γένηται;* what will happen now, and what in the long outcome will befall me?) and, in 4. 462–3, syntactic repetition (cf. also 6. 276–7). In each case a pair of what we recognize in English as *wh-* words structure the question. The third example quoted above offers a structural pattern, which reveals pragmatic intent of another kind. The first question (19. 71) is used to open up a general topic; the second (19. 72–3) focuses on precise issues within that topic. Although this last example reveals no internal repetition, it conforms to a rhythmic pattern of topic and expansion which we discern also in our own everyday talk.[32]

Alternate Questions

Alternate questions reveal a tighter pattern of structural repetition, since the second (and, possibly, a third) arm of this kind of question parallels the first in, usually, some syntactic element. I have noted

[32] Cf. 'Well that's good uh how is yer arthritis? Yuh still taking shots?': cited in H. Sacks, 'On the Preferences for Agreement and Contiguity in Conversation', in G. Butt and J. R. E. Lee (eds.), *Talk and Social Organization* (Clevedon and Philadelphia, Pa.: Multilingual Matters, 1987), 54–69, at 60. For further examples in Homer's *Odyssey,* see 10. 64, 11. 210–14, 473–6. And for comparable examples in Plato, see, e.g., *Prt.* 309b3–4, 309c1–3.

thirty-one instances of this form (from all instances of multiple questions) This is illustrated most concisely in Helen's question to Menelaos at 4. 140:

> *ψεύσομαι, ἦ ἔτυμον ἐρέω;*
>
> Shall I be wrong, or am I speaking the truth?[33]

We see also alternate questions in indirect form (15. 167–8):

> *φράζεο δή, Μενέλαε διοτρεφές, ὄρχαμε λαῶν,*
> *ἢ νῶϊν τόδ' ἔφηνε θεὸς τέρας ἦε σοι αὐτῷ.*
>
> Menelaos, illustrious, leader of the people, tell us
> whether the god showed this sign for you, or was it for us two?[34]

Question-Strings

Strings of questions expand the patterns of repetition which I have noted above. All but one of Telemachos' questions at 1. 170–7 are questions which we describe in English as *wh*-, or information-, questions:[35]

> *τίς πόθεν εἷς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;*
> *ὁπποίης τ' ἐπὶ νηὸς ἀφίκεο· πῶς δέ σε ναῦται*
> *ἤγαγον εἰς Ἰθάκην; τίνες ἔμμεναι εὐχετόωντο;*
> *οὐ μὲν γάρ τί σε πεζὸν ὀΐομαι ἐνθάδ' ἱκέσθαι.*
> *καί μοι τοῦτ' ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὄφρ' ἐῢ εἰδῶ,*
> *ἠὲ νέον μεθέπεις, ἦ καὶ πατρώϊός ἐσσι*
> *ξεῖνος, ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ ἴσαν ἀνέρες ἡμέτερον δῶ*
> *ἄλλοι, ἐπεὶ καὶ κεῖνος ἐπίστροφος ἦν ἀνθρώπων.*
>
> What man are you, and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?
> What kind of ship did you come here on? And how did the sailors
> bring you to Ithaka? What men do they claim that they are?
> For I do not think that you could have traveled on foot to this country.

[33] This question is, in fact, part of a longer string: see my discussion of string-questions, below. For a similarly neat pair of alternatives, see 20. 166–7.

[34] For the pattern of (indirect) alternate questions in which two *actions* are considered, see 19. 525–31.

[35] On the categorization of questions in general, see Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartnik, *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* at 806–26; on *wh*-questions and information-questions, see 817.

And tell me this too, tell me truly, so that I may know it.
Are you here for the first time, or are you a friend of my father's
from abroad? Since many other men too used to come and visit
our house, in the days when he used to go about among people.

These questions, or questions very similar in form and intent, will become familiar to the audience as the narrative proceeds. Each repetition of the cluster marks a new stage in either Telemachos' or Odysseus' journey towards his goal.[36] Note a similar pattern of interrogative repetition (based on τίς) in Athene/Mentes' questions to Telemachos about the 'festivities' in the palace on Ithaka, at 1. 225–6:[37]

> τίς δαίς, τίς δαὶ ὅμιλος ὅδ' ἔπλετο; τίπτε δέ σε χρεώ;
> εἰλαπίνη ἠὲ γάμος; ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔρανος τάδε γ' ἐστίν.
>
> What feast is this, what gathering? How does it concern you?
> A festival, or a wedding? Surely, no communal dinner.

Such long strings of questions (three or more) are not typical of everyday talk, whether in the world in which Homer lived or our own. None of us, in a Western culture today, would impose so heavily on the short-term memory of our listeners; nor would we insist on holding the floor for so long unless we intended our questions as a form of aggression (or as a mark of enthusiasm).[38] Our preference

[36] For other such sets see 1. 405–9, 3. 71–4, 7. 238–9, 8. 550–6 (here indirect and much expanded), 10. 325, 15. 264, 16. 57–9, 19. 105. Although the most common question string in Homer comprises three questions, it is occasionally the case (e.g., at 1. 170–2, 405–9, 4. 642–7) that more than three are asked. On the ascending order of the set of introductory questions quoted above, see de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, 26. De Jong refers to the questions at 1. 170 as the 'international standard question', those at 171–3 as the 'local, i.e. Ithacan, standard question' and the question at 174–6 as the 'unique, personal question'.

[37] A. M. Devine and L. D. Stephens, *The Prosody of Greek Speech* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), at 454–5, draw our attention to the fact that the acute accent on the interrogative τίς always remains unchanged, rather than becoming a grave within a phrase. This indicates, they propose, that the question word in Greek is raised in tone (and this is naturally the case with πόθεν, πόθι, ὁπποίης, and πῶς, the other question words, apart from τίς and τίνες, used at 1. 170–2).

[38] On the limits of short-term memory (for seven to nine pieces of information), see G. Miller, 'The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information', *Psychological Review*, 63 (1956), 81–97; on issues in connection with 'holding the floor', see H. Sacks, E. Schegloff, and G. Jefferson, 'A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking in

would be to ask questions in smaller clusters and to await a response before proceeding. By contrast, the occasional long strings of questions (and their answers) that we observe in Homer's epics indicate that the singer is adjusting conversational practice in epic to the different circumstances of epic performance. To avoid frequent changes of speaker and the need to announce each transition, the traditional singer prefers to present questions in a cluster. This strategy has a further advantage for the singer who composes as he performs: by generating his questions *as a series* he can turn structural, verbal, and even aural patterning to his own advantage, in ways that I have identified above. The poet would establish with his first question a particular pattern of intonation; he would then use this, in combination with structural and verbal cues, to draw from memory subsequent questions in the series.[39]

By contrast, a strategy which we have observed in several strings (for example, at 1. 225–6, above) and which is familiar to us from our own experience of everyday talk is that, first, a *wh-* interrogative may open up a topic and, second, alternate questions will focus on the real issue in the speaker's mind. I have noted a similar strategy in Homer above ('Double Questions'). We ourselves use this pattern frequently:

How will you get here? Will you walk or come by bike?

Conversation', *Language*, 50 (1974), 696–735. For an example in a Western culture of single questions being used (in circumstances where Homer would bring the questions together into a single speaking turn), see Tannen, *Conversational Style*, 54–5. I thank Susan Ford for her observation that a barrage of questions may be used as an aggressive tactic. There is a splendid example of this phenomenon in N. Hornby, *Fever Pitch* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), 131–2 (a partly autobiographical novel: events in the real world have become the source for events in the storyworld).

[39] I am not suggesting that there is a single pattern of question intonation in Greek, even in question-word questions. There is not: see A. Cruttenden, *Intonation*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 51 ('[T]here is no such thing as "question intonation", although some tones may be more common on questions than others.'); and see also Devine and Stephens, *Prosody of Greek Speech*, at 453. What I am suggesting is that the poet adheres to the intonation pattern he has adopted for his first question in generating the questions that follow. The resulting intonation pattern, across the series of questions, may be similar to list intonation. I am grateful to Belinda Collins for discussion and advice on this topic. For discussion of the 'phonological loop', which has the capacity to store acoustic and speech-based information (such as intonation) for up to two seconds, see A. Baddeley, *Human Memory: Theory and Practice* (Hove and London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990), 71–2.

I suggest that we use alternate questions in certain contexts to indicate both our intelligent engagement with the circumstances (we demonstrate that we are considering the possibilities) and a desire to prompt a response.[40] Thus, when old Aigyptios asks why an assembly has been summoned on Ithaka after so long, he poses two *wh*- questions, at 2. 28–9:

> *νῦν δὲ τίς ὧδ' ἤγειρε; τίνα χρειὼ τόσον ἵκει*
> *ἠὲ νέων ἀνδρῶν, ἢ οἳ προγενέστεροί εἰσιν;*
>
> Now who has gathered us, in this way? What need has befallen
> which of the younger men, or one of us who are older?

He then expands on his second question to pose, at 30–2, alternative explanations:

> *ἠέ τιν' ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἔκλυεν ἐρχομένοιο,*
> *ἥν χ' ἡμῖν σάφα εἴποι, ὅτε πρότερός γε πύθοιτο;*
> *ἦέ τι δήμιον ἄλλο πιφαύσκεται ἠδ' ἀγορεύει;*
>
> Has he been hearing some message about the return of the army
> which, having heard it first, he could now explain to us?
> Or has he some other public matter to set forth and argue?

Odysseus structures his questions in a similar fashion when he speaks with his mother Antikleia in the Underworld. He asks her how she died (11. 171). Then, sympathetically, he refers to the possibilities: was it a long illness or a quick and painless death (172–3)? He mentions next his father and son (174), and in alternative questions asks whether his inheritance is safe or in the hands of another man (175–6). He then mentions his wife (177) and, again, offers alternative outcomes: is she still watching over Telemachos or has she married again (178–9)?[41]

[40] For a comparable—but relatively rare—example from Plato, see *Euthphr.* 3e7–8: *Ἔστιν δὲ δὴ σοί, ὦ Εὐθύφρων, τίς ἡ δίκη; φεύγεις αὐτὴν ἢ διώκεις;* (What is your case, Euthyphro? Are you defending or prosecuting?).

[41] See A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 87–8: here Hoekstra notes that the parallels in construction between 171–3, 174–6, and 177–9 are 'clear and deliberate'. I argue that the origin of such parallels lies, for the most part, in the poet's compositional strategy: the rhythm that he sets up in the first question unit helps him generate

I note eighteen instances of this pattern of *wh-* question and alternative expansion. I propose that we find in Homer a stylization of what we might assume to be the everyday talk of his own world. Within these eighteen instances we might isolate a sub-group of questions, which Kakridis calls 'mistaken questions'.[42] Aigyptios' questions at 2. 28–32 and Odysseus' questions at 11. 171–3, both of which we have seen above, are identified as being of this kind.[43] Kakridis regards such questions as a poetic motif: their only purpose is to 'form a negative background from which the positive assertion will emerge'.[44] He argues that such a motif derives from popular poetry of the poet's own period; and that it was kept alive in popular oral tradition until our own time. I argue that this question-pattern (general question followed by alternative questions) derives directly from everyday talk. Kakridis' so-called 'mistaken questions' are a stylization of everyday talk, which serve as he proposed: to highlight the correct answer as we hear it.

We have observed certain patterns in these three modes of presentation. These are of two kinds. The first is a pragmatic pattern of a structural kind which is echoed in our own talk: a question is asked which establishes a topic and it is followed by further questions which are more specific in their focus or by alternative resolutions posed also in interrogative form. As I have observed above, the frequency of this pattern (particularly the poet's preference for alternatives) suggests that we may be dealing with a special standardization of real-world conversational patterns. The second is a range of internal patterns of repetition, whether verbal (in the repetition of words or other material), syntactic (in the repetition

Odysseus' subsequent questions. For other examples of this pattern of interrogative followed by alternative resolutions posed as questions, see 1. 405–7 (interrogatives) and 408–9 (alternatives); 3. 71 (interrogatives) and 72–4 (alternatives); 9. 252 (interrogatives) and 253–5 (alternatives); 9. 403–4 (interrogative) and 405–6 (alternatives); 13. 200 (interrogative) and 201–2 (alternatives). The measured—even leisurely—progress of question-talk in the epic world belies any claim of urgency on the part of the speaker.

[42] See J. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches*, reprint edn. (New York and London: Garland, 1987), 106–20. I thank Ruth Scodel for drawing Kakridis' comments to my attention.

[43] See also 2. 28–32, 11. 398–403, 16. 95–8, 24. 106–13.

[44] Kakridis, *Homeric Researches*, 111.

of interrogative patterns), or intonational (in the repetition of tone across a series of questions). These small-scale patterns, and the rhythms that they establish, are not without purpose. Repetition is a highly efficient modus operandi for the production of discourse, whether we are engaged in the casual conversation of every day or the special speech of oral epic.[45] As we draw on short-term memory and make further use of the patterns which we have established, we are reducing the mental effort required for the generation of speech. As Tannen argues, our speech may have the appearance of spontaneity; but in reality much of it is prepatterned or formulaic.

THE GENERATION OF ANSWERS: RHYTHM, REPETITION, AND MEMORY

If we consider the adjacency pair in terms of the mental effort which is invested in production, we notice that certain economies operate. We shall examine here the economy of repetition, whereby the second speaker takes the words and phrases of the question posed and reuses them in his or her answer; and in Chapter 4 I shall consider the economy of structure, with reference to the nature of the adjacency pair and our preference for contiguity.

When a so-called *wh*- question, or information-question, is asked, the respondent repeats as much of the question as is relevant; or substitutes a new piece of information for the question word. For example:

Q. How is Robert? A. Robert (*or* he) is well.

We observe the same phenomenon in Homer. At 8. 335–7, a passage we considered above, Apollo asks Hermes whether he would wish to be in Ares' position:

Ἑρμεία, Διὸς υἱέ, διάκτορε, δῶτορ ἐάων,
ἦ ῥά κεν ἐν δεσμοῖς ἐθέλοις κρατεροῖσι πιεσθεὶς
εὕδειν ἐν λέκτροισι παρὰ χρυσέῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ;

[45] See D. Tannen, 'Repetition in Conversation as Spontaneous Formulaicity', *Text*, 7 (1987), 215–43, at 223; and see Chapter 1. For discussion of repetition in the composition of answers, see below.

> Hermes, son of Zeus, guide and giver of good things, tell me,
> would you, caught tight in these strong fastenings, be willing
> to sleep in bed by the side of Aphrodite the golden?

And Hermes replies, at 339–42, with expansion for comic effect:

> *αἲ γὰρ τοῦτο γένοιτο, ἄναξ ἑκατηβόλ' Ἄπολλον.*
> *δεσμοὶ μὲν τρὶς τόσσοι ἀπείρονες ἀμφὶς ἔχοιεν,*
> *ὑμεῖς εἰσορόῳτε θεοὶ πᾶσαί τε θέαιναι,*
> *αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν εὕδοιμι παρὰ χρυσέῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ.*[46]

> Lord who strike from afar, Apollo, I wish it could only
> be, and there could be thrice this number of endless fastenings,
> and all you gods could be looking on and all the goddesses,
> and still I would sleep by the side of Aphrodite the golden.

Even the responses to a string of questions, such as the series which Telemachos puts to Athene/Mentes at 1. 170–7, may be relatively easily achieved (with prior rehearsal), since each of the answers (179–99) refers back to and to some extent repeats the content of the question. So, in response to 1.170:

> *τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;*
>
> What man are you, and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?

Athene/Mentes replies at 180–1:

> *Μέντης Ἀγχιάλοιο δαΐφρονος εὔχομαι εἶναι*
> *υἱός, ἀτὰρ Ταφίοισι φιληρέτμοισιν ἀνάσσω*

> I announce myself as Mentes, son of Anchialos,
> the wise, and my lordship is over the oar-loving Taphians.

Telemachos asks about Mentes' relationship with Odysseus at 175–6:

> *ἠὲ νέον μεθέπεις, ἦ καὶ πατρώϊός ἐσσι*
> *ξεῖνος,*

> Are you here for the first time, or are you a friend of my father's
> from abroad?

[46] Hainsworth catches the tone of the question and the response very neatly when he speaks of the 'salacious flippancy of the younger gods': see A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 369.

And Mentes replies in the same terms at 187–8:

> *ξεῖνοι δ' ἀλλήλων πατρώϊοι εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι*
> *ἐξ ἀρχῆς . . .*
>
> Your father and I claim to be guest-friends by heredity
> from far back.

If we consider again the questions which Odysseus asks his mother in the Underworld at 11. 170–9, we note that Antikleia's response in each case picks up one or more elements of her son's question. Odysseus has asked how she herself had died (171–3):

> *τίς νύ σε κὴρ ἐδάμασσε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο;*
> *ἦ δολιχὴ νοῦσος, ἦ Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα*
> *οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν ἐποιχομένη κατέπεφνεν;*
>
> What doom of death that lays men low has been your undoing?
> Was it a long sickness, or did Artemis of the arrows
> come upon you with her painless shafts, and destroy you?

She replies that hers was neither a quick nor a slow death (198–200):

> *οὔτ' ἐμέ γ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐΰσκοπος ἰοχέαιρα*
> *οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν ἐποιχομένη κατέπεφνεν,*
> *οὔτε τις οὖν μοι νοῦσος ἐπήλυθεν . . .*
>
> nor in my palace did the lady of the arrows, well-aiming,
> come upon me with her painless shafts, and destroy me,
> nor was I visited with sickness . . .

But it was her longing for Odysseus which took her life's spirit from her (202–3). Odysseus asks whether his inheritance is still in the hands of his father and his son, or whether someone else holds it (175–6):

> *ἦ ἔτι πὰρ κείνοισιν ἐμὸν γέρας, ἦέ τις ἤδη*
> *ἀνδρῶν ἄλλος ἔχει . . .*

Antikleia answers that no one yet holds his fine inheritance (184):

> *σὸν δ' οὔ πώ τις ἔχει καλὸν γέρας . . .*

And Odysseus asks whether Penelope continues to stay by her son (178):

> *ἠὲ μένει παρὰ παιδὶ . . .*

Antikleia answers that she does (μένει, 181).

I have drawn attention above to Tannen's comments on repetition in connection with the production of questions in everyday English and have related them to the patterns we observe in strings of Homeric questions. In the generation of answers, too, we naturally rely on prepatterned material which has been laid down in the question, to facilitate the task. Homer, as we have observed from the examples above, does the same. Without doubt, this is an appropriate strategy, in cognitive terms, if the poet is, in Lord's words, to 'meet the needs of rapid composition'.[47]

*

Let us list the conclusions we have reached to this point about Homer's habits in posing questions and offering answers in the epic world:

1. A significant proportion of questions and answers (70 per cent of the total) follow in an exemplary way the principle of the adjacency pair as proposed by Schegloff and Sacks. When a question is asked, the addressee for the most part responds promptly and appropriately. On the other hand, 30 per cent of questions do not meet with informative answers. Many questions are rhetorical; some are countered by formalized counter-questions. This proportion, in the context of this particular story, is—to a degree—more representative of talk in literature than talk in the everyday world.
2. Explanatory material is integrated into questions both in Homer's epics and in conversation in Western cultures today. Yet such material appears in Homer more frequently than in Plato's dialogues or in our own everyday talk. This practice ensures that the poet clarifies motivation. It also allows him to transmit evaluative material internally (through the words of his actors) rather than externally (in his own voice). Thus he gives the audience the sense of a first-hand experience of unfolding events; he involves the audience in the action.
3. Homer prefers to ask questions in multiples rather than singly. The sustained strings he produces are not a common conversational mode either in Plato or in Western cultures today. But like

[47] A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 22.

us Homer uses double questions (especially pairs of questions in which a topic is first identified and then expanded) and alternate questions. The frequency with which he uses such structures, however, suggests stylization of everyday conversational patterns. I have noted other patterns as well. These are patterns of repetition, which establish a rhythm, be it verbal, syntactic, or intonational. These patterns and these rhythms without doubt underpin the poet's ability to generate speech readily in the context of performance. We, too, in casual conversation, draw on words and phrases and intonation patterns that we have stored in short-term memory. And our purpose is the same: to maintain the continuity of our speech with some economy of mental effort.

4. As far as the generation of answers is concerned, whether in Homer or in everyday talk in Western cultures, most second pair parts refer back to the question asked and use material from that question. Thus the composition of answers, as answers, is simpler for us all than was the composition of the original question.

We note therefore a significant proportion of exemplary adjacency pairs in Homer (almost comparable with Plato's literary habit), a ritualized use of explanatory material, a complex but predictable range of options for the presentation of multiple questions and a further range of rational and predictable options for the generation of answers. We can find analogies for all these regularities in everyday discourse in English-speaking Western cultures. We have data that suggest that the everyday discourse of the ancient world included these same patterns; and they indicate that these patterns occurred with greater frequency in the discourse of Homer. I propose, therefore, that these epic strategies are formalized versions of the everyday conversational habits of the poet of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, of other practitioners of this tradition, and of all the members of their audiences. Rhythmical and structural patterns *based on everyday talk* have been developed by the tradition to facilitate and sustain poetic composition in an oral context.[48] From the poet's point of

[48] My findings, as I have reported them here, are in line with—and elaborate on—Lord's succinct response to his own question concerning the means by which the oral poet was able to compose in performance: '[H]is tradition comes to the rescue' (Lord, *Singer of Tales*, 22).

view these practices in their origins were a response to the demands of the moment. For the audience of the poems, on the other hand, the special stylization of question forms—along with their predictable rhythm—evokes a world of small ceremonies; it suggests a conversational etiquette that is altogether pleasing in its regularity and its careful formality.

4

Hysteron Proteron in Questions and Answers

It is now more than eighty years—we go back to a time that precedes the work of Milman Parry—since Samuel Bassett's article on *hysteron proteron* in Homer brought to readers' notice a 'remarkable' device, an idiosyncrasy of the poet's style.[1] The term, generally speaking, refers to the poet's preference for spelling out within his song a twofold instruction, proposal, or question and in a subsequent passage reversing the original order of presentation. Bassett examined the occurrence of *hysteron proteron* in one particular context, which he identified in the spoken discourse of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: questions and answers.

On the basis of his observations of response patterns in Homer, Bassett had concluded that when more than two questions are asked within the same speaking turn in the Homeric text, there are three possible arrangements of answers: the order of questions may be retained, varied, or reversed.[2] The first arrangement, according to Bassett, is the 'most natural'.[3] He cites as an example the replies which

[1] See S. Bassett, '*ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΩΣ* (Cicero, *Att.* 1, 16, 1)', *HSCP*, 31 (1920), 39–62, at 47. Although Bassett's later discussion of *hysteron proteron*, in his collected lectures (S. Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938), at 120–6), was published after Parry's demonstration of the oral character of the poems, there is little significant change in Bassett's argument.

[2] Bassett, '*ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΩΣ*', at 40.

[3] Ibid. Bassett does not explain why he believes this to be the case: I assume that for him the practice that we adopt in our presentation of written texts—in which the order of answers given should correspond to the order of questions asked—seems 'natural', because in a literate culture it has an underlying logic that may be

Athene/Mentes makes, at *Od.* 1. 180–94, to Telemachos' questioning. At 1. 170–7, Telemachos had asked the following questions: (1) who are you? (170); (2) where is your city? (170); (3) in what ship did you come? (171); (4) how did you happen to be sailing near Ithaca? (171–2); (5) who are your crew? (172); (6) are you a guest-friend of my father? (175–7). Athena/Mentes replies in almost the exact order of the six questions asked: (1) Mentes (180–1); (2) I rule the Taphians (181); (3) my own (182); (4) I am on a trading voyage to Temesa (183–4); (5) (this has already been answered); (6) I am (187–94).[4] Bassett notes, however, that it is more often the case that answers are ordered differently from the questions to which they respond.[5] The mixed order of response, the second possible order of arrangement, is illustrated in Telemachos' responses at *Od.* 1. 413–19 to Eurymachos' questions at 1. 405–11;[6] and Telemachos' answers at *Od.* 3. 79–95 to Nestor's questions at 3. 71–4.[7] Examples of this pattern of response are slightly more numerous in Homer than the former category. Examples of the third possibility, that of reversal, are more numerous again.

appreciated on the page. And cf. W. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 7 ('[*hysteron proteron*] results in an order that is not one of prosaic logic').

[4] For further examples of this pattern, in which the order of answers corresponds to the order of the questions, see *Od.* 1. 60–2 and 65–75, 9. 252–5 and 259–71, 11. 397–403 and 405–15, 16. 57–8 and 61–7, 461–3 and 465–75. From the *Iliad* see, e.g., 1. 202–5 and 207–14, 6. 376–80 and 382–9, 10. 424–5 and 427–35. To give some coherence to the discussion in the text of this chapter, and for the purpose of consistency with Chapter 3, I have used examples from the *Odyssey* alone. As I demonstrate in the footnotes to this chapter, however, Homer's expression of question and answer patterns in both epics reveals the same range of options.

[5] From the fifty-four examples of multiple questions (in direct discourse) which I identified in the *Odyssey*, I calculate that approximately half (twenty-five) are answered directly (rather than being countered, or ignored, or otherwise avoided). Of these six question-strings are answered in the order of asking; seven in a mixed order; and the remainder (twelve) in the reverse order.

[6] Eurymachos asks about the stranger: where he comes from, from what country (406–7); who his parents are and where his fatherland is (407); whether he has brought a message from Odysseus (408), or whether he has come on his own business (409). Telemachos answers: I have no faith in messages or prophecies (414–16); this stranger is a friend of my father (417); he comes from Taphos (417); he says he is called Mentes, son of Anchialos (418–19); he is lord of the Taphians, lovers of the oar (419).

[7] For other examples, see *Od.* 16. 95–8 and 113–29, 24. 297–301 and 303–8; *Il.* 10. 406–11 and 413–22.

The pattern of reversal, as identified by Bassett, is in evidence when a series of questions is asked by any one character, and his or her respondent replies to those questions *in reverse order.* Bassett uses the term *hysteron proteron*, as did Cicero, to describe this phenomenon.[8] Let us consider an example of reverse ordering of this kind from Homer's *Odyssey.* We begin with a sustained series of questions asked by Odysseus of his mother Antikleia, now in the Underworld (11. 170–9):

> *ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον·*
> *τίς νύ σε κὴρ ἐδάμασσε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο;*
> *ἢ δολιχὴ νοῦσος, ἦ Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα*
> *οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν ἐποιχομένη κατέπεφνεν;*
> *εἰπὲ δέ μοι πατρός τε καὶ υἱέος, ὃν κατέλειπον,*
> *ἢ ἔτι πὰρ κείνοισιν ἐμὸν γέρας, ἦέ τις ἤδη*
> *ἀνδρῶν ἄλλος ἔχει, ἐμὲ δ' οὐκέτι φασὶ νέεσθαι.*
> *εἰπὲ δέ μοι μνηστῆς ἀλόχου βουλήν τε νόον τε,*
> *ἠὲ μένει παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσει*
> *ἦ ἤδη μιν ἔγημεν Ἀχαιῶν ὅς τις ἄριστος.*

Odysseus has asked his mother: (1) how did you die? (171); (2) was it a long illness or a quick death? (172–3); (3) are my father and son still alive and in possession of my inheritance? (174–6); (4) what about my wife: is she looking after my son and my interests and has she married again? (177–9). Antikleia responds in reverse order: (1) about his wife (181–3); (2) about Telemachos and the property (184–7); (3) about Odysseus' father (187–96); (4) the nature of her own death (197–201); and (5) the cause of her death (202–3).[9]

[8] For Bassett's discussion of Cicero's use of the term, see Bassett, '*ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΩΣ*', at 39, 47–8. His account of the phenomenon at times ventures beyond question and answer sequences to other types of *hysteron proteron*, for example, event sequences (at 49–50). But his principal focus, and mine, is on the pattern of question and answer.

[9] This passage is discussed also by Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought*, 6–8, who regards it (at 8) as unusual. I agree that its sustained nature is unusual (for discussion of double questions, alternate questions, and longer question strings in Homer, see Chapter 3); but the use of the reverse mode of response is not unusual in Homer. For further examples, see *Od.* 4. 486–90 and 495, 642–7 and 649–56, 7. 237–9 and 241–97, 9. 403–6 and 408, 11. 155–62 and 164–9, 210–14 and 216–22, 15. 167–8 and 172–8, 509–11 and 513–24, 16. 222–3 and 226–32; *Il.* 2. 761–2 and 763–70, 5. 757–63 and 765–6, 11. 816–21 and 823–36, 21. 150–1 and 153–60. Such reverse ordering occurs also in reported speech: see *Od.* 11. 494–503 and 505–37.

To explain the poet's preference for one or another of these patterns of response, Bassett proposes four possible motives: variety; poetic economy; the point of view of the second speaker; and continuity.[10] The first motive, *variety*, is self-explanatory: the poet, according to Bassett, attempts to vary his presentation of answer-strings. Bassett deals with this motive briskly and does not refer to it again.[11] The remaining three categories demand more attention. Bassett explains *poetic economy* by reference to *Od.* 7. 237–97. Here Homer tells of the interrogation of Odysseus by Arete (237–9):

> *Ξεῖνε, τὸ μέν σε πρῶτον ἐγὼν εἰρήσομαι αὐτή·*
> *τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; τίς τοι τάδε εἵματ' ἔδωκεν;*
> *οὐ δὴ φῂς ἐπὶ πόντον ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἱκέσθαι;*
>
> Stranger and friend, I myself first have a question to ask you.
> What man are you, and whence? And who was it gave you this clothing?
> Did you not say that you came here ranging over the water?

At 244–97 Odysseus responds in reverse order to the second and third of Arete's questions (Who gave you these clothes? Didn't you say that you came here in your wanderings over the sea?); he does not engage at all with the first (in which Arete has asked his identity). Poetic economy, that is, describes the decisions of the poet in his planning of the story. Homer has curtailed Odysseus' reply in order to delay the moment of revelation until later in the episode (9. 16–20).[12] As for the third factor, *point of view of the second speaker*, Bassett uses as his example Noëmon's reverse pattern of reply to these questions asked by Antinoös (*Od.* 4. 642–7): (1) when did Telemachos leave Ithaka? (642); (2) who formed his crew? (642–3); (3) did he take his own serfs and hirelings? (643–4); (4) did he use force in taking your ship, or did you lend it willingly? (646–7). Noëmon replies first to the last question (4): I lent it willingly. What else

[10] Bassett, '*ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΩΣ*', at 41–3.

[11] Having explained 'variety' as a counterbalance to repetition, Bassett makes no further reference to this motive. Nor shall I pursue it, since Homer as an oral poet does not appear to be as concerned with variety as we might be when we compose a work in writing.

[12] For further discussion of this passage, see below; for discussion of the structure of Arete's question, see Chapter 3.

could I do? (649–51). Bassett reads Noëmon's immediate response to Antinoös' last question as an attempt to cover himself in case he is accused of having aided Telemachos in his quarrel with the suitors. Thus Noëmon's answer reflects, according to Bassett, what is uppermost in his mind.[13] Through *continuity*, the final—and most important—category, Bassett implies a carefully articulated storytelling style. The poet of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, he explains, was 'averse to *lacunae* of all kinds';[14] hence his practice of carrying on thought in a continuous stream, even from one speaker to the next. The principle of continuity, as Bassett saw it, was a constructive principle which was designed to assist the narrator in holding the attention of his listener '*with a minimum of effort* on the part of the latter' (my italics).[15] Bassett noted that both Aristarchus and Eustathius had observed this characteristic feature of Homeric style;[16] and their views and Bassett's have continued currency in scholarship, most notably in the recent commentaries on both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[17]

[13] Bassett, '*ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΩΣ*', at 42 and 53. I shall make a case which is slightly different: see below.

[14] Ibid., at 42. Bassett relates the notion of a 'principle of continuity' to the notion of 'threaded speech', *λέξις εἰρομένη*, in which the thread of narrative is never snapped: see ibid., at 45; and see also Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer*, at 124.

[15] Bassett, '*ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΩΣ*', at 45.

[16] Ibid., at 47–8, on Aristarchus; at 51–2, on Eustathius. It is clear that Eustathius' commentary has influenced Bassett's thinking. Eustathius proposes a reason for the poet's use of this device: to keep the continuity of thought (*διὰ τὸ συνεχὲς τοῦ λόγου*, Eustathius, on *Il.* 2. 763, at 339, 24). For these ancient scholars, Homer's practice of *hysteron proteron* was noteworthy: Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer*, at 120, records that Aristarchus refers to the practice at least twenty-five times.

[17] See, for example, L. Pocock, 'Note on the End of the Poem', in *Odyssean Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 121–4, at 121 ('[I]t is his frequently occurring idiosyncrasy to look *back* down the vista of memorization and mention *first* that which came *last*, or nearest to his point of view'); M. Edwards, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. v (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), at 45–6 (where Edwards relates *hysteron proteron* to ring-composition, which is also thought to function as an ordering device); for commentary on *hysteron proteron*, see West, in A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth (eds.), *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), at 233–4 ('a common feature of Homeric conversations'); and Hainsworth, ibid., 335 ('in the usual Homeric way'); and Hoekstra, in A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), at 207 ('a traditional feature of epic verse-making').

I am not persuaded, however, that this phenomenon, wherein a series of questions is answered in reverse order, is peculiar to Homer or to his epic tradition. I shall argue that this pattern may be observed just as frequently in our everyday conversation, and that the motivation for such a practice may be attributed to the interaction of two particular preferences, to which we all respond in conversational action. My evidence for this claim is to be found in the work of Schegloff and Sacks, in their discussion of the adjacency pair.[18] Each such pair, as we have observed above, comprises two speaking turns, that of the initial speaker and that of the respondent. In most conversational contexts, the second turn follows the first immediately, for the first turn is designed in such a way that it will initiate a prompt response from the second speaker.[19] In the adjacency pairing of question and answer Sacks notes that there are general organizational principles which govern the positioning of the question and the answer within their respective turns, when either or both turns include other material.[20] The question will generally be found at the end of its turn; and the answer (if it contains an expression of agreement) will generally be found at the beginning of *its* turn.[21] This orderliness is not achieved without a certain amount of collaboration on the part of the speakers, who, with social relationships in mind, design their talk in accordance with certain loose rules, or preferences, which all parties have internalized.[22] This behaviour is a reflection of the co-operative nature of conversation.[23]

[18] See E. Schegloff and H. Sacks, 'Opening Up Closings', *Semiotica*, 8 (1973), 289–327, at 295–9; and see Introduction and Chapter 3. For insights relevant to this chapter, see H. Sacks, 'On the Preferences for Agreement and Contiguity in Sequences in Conversation', in G. Button and J. R. E. Lee (eds.), *Talk and Social Organisation* (Clevedon and Philadelphia, Pa.: Multilingual Matters, 1987), 54–69, at 55–6.

[19] Sacks, 'On the Preferences for Agreement and Contiguity', 55–6.

[20] Ibid., at 57–8.

[21] This is the case when the second speaker agrees with the first. A negative answer may be delayed. On our preference for agreement, see ibid., 57–9; and see below.

[22] Ibid., at 58. The term 'preference' does not refer to the personal or psychological desires of the speakers, but rather to 'an institutionalized ranking of alternatives': see J. Atkinson and J. Heritage, 'Preference Organisation', in Atkinson and Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 53–6, at 53.

[23] On the co-operative principle, see H. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), *Speech Acts: Syntax and Semantics*, vol. iii (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 41–58, at 48.

Amongst these preferences are the preference for *agreement* and the preference for *contiguity*. Such preferences are not stylistic whims; rather, they are founded on sound principles. I propose that our preference for *contiguity* has its roots in our mutual desire for co-operative talk *with economy of effort*. When we wish to ask a question, we place it near the end of our speaking turn, a position which makes it more likely that the listener will attend to it and address it when his or her turn comes to speak. In general, he or she will respond promptly. As far as the processes of memory are concerned, there has been no need for the addressee to do more than encode the question at a superficial level. This is a manifestation of the so-called 'recency effect'.[24] This practice, therefore, eases the burden on the second speaker, by making possible a direct and immediate link between our question and his or her answer. And it is to our own advantage, as well, because, as I have noted, we will receive a reply immediately. We may observe examples of this practice in Homer. At *Od.* 1. 179–212 Mentes/Athene's question is introduced at 206–7, as the last element of her long speaking turn:[25]

> *ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον,*
> *εἰ δὴ ἐξ αὐτοῖο τόσος πάϊς εἰς 'Οδυσῆος.*

> But come now tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
> Are you, big as you are, the very child of Odysseus?

[24] I thank Judy Slee for introducing me to this concept and the paired concept of the primacy effect as a means of explaining this practice of placing a question at the end of a speaking turn. Alan Baddeley ('But what the hell is it for?', in M. Gruneberg, P. Morris, and R. Sykes, *Practical Aspects of Memory: Current Research and Issues*, 2 vols. (Chichester and New York: John Wiley, 1988), vol. i, pp. 3–18, at 10–11), describes the recency effect in its simplest form: '[i]f the subject is presented with a string of unrelated words, followed immediately by the request to recall as many as possible in any order, there is a marked tendency for the last few items to be very well recalled: the so-called recency effect. If the recall is delayed by some intervening task, then the recency effect disappears, suggesting it might be based on the functioning of some short-term storage system.' This is why the speaker introduces any question he or she may have late in his first pair part, so that it will not be forgotten; and this is why the speaker of the second pair part takes up the question promptly, so that s/he will not forget it before s/he answers it. This habit is particularly relevant to the discussion of *hysteron proteron*.

[25] Athene/Mentes puts her question at 206–7 then offers her reasons for asking the question (208–12).

And at 15. 341–50, the beggar's question to Eumaios about his (Odysseus') parents comes at the end of his speaking turn (at 347–50):[26]

> *εἴπ' ἄγε μοι περὶ μητρὸς Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο*
> *πατρός θ', ὅν κατέλειπεν ἰὼν ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῷ,*
> *ἤ που ἔτι ζώουσιν ὑπ' αὐγὰς ἠελίοιο,*
> *ἦ ἤδη τεθνᾶσι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι.*

> ... come then tell me about the mother of godlike Odysseus,
> and his father, whom when he went he left on the doorsill
> of old age. Are they still alive in the beams of sunlight,
> or are they dead by now and gone to the house of Hades?

As for the preference for *agreement* in the adjacency pair, Sacks observes that when speakers formulate questions, they frame them in such a way that the second speaker is put into a position where he or she will, in general, concur with what has been said, even though s/he may have reservations about the issue.[27] Sacks offers the following example of such an exchange:

A: And it—apparently left her quite permanently damaged (I suppose).
B: Apparently. Uh he is still hopeful.

Here speaker B agrees with A ('Apparently'), then modifies his or her reply.[28] What is relevant to my discussion of Homeric practice is that, if the respondent is in agreement, his words of agreement will appear at the beginning of the second turn; if the speaker is going to disagree, he or she will, in the interests of continuing goodwill, hold off any expression of disagreement for a great part of the speaking turn. Note how Telemachos handles Theoklymenos' request for hospitality at 15. 509–11:

[26] Single questions are not common in Homer. When genuine, non-rhetorical, questions are asked, it is more likely that they will be asked in clusters (as at *Od.* 1. 170–7): see discussion in Chapter 3.

[27] One common formulation which is used in English to achieve these ends is the positive statement and negative tag ('You're coming, aren't you?') to indicate the expectation of a positive response; the reverse structure (negative statement and positive tag) conveys negative expectation.

[28] We may note in our everyday exchanges a similar pattern in 'agreements' which run 'Yes—but...', or, notably, in today's world 'Yes—no'.

πῇ γὰρ ἐγώ, φίλε τέκνον, ἴω; τεῦ δώμαθ' ἵκωμαι
ἀνδρῶν οἳ κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν;
ἦ ἰθὺς σῆς μητρὸς ἴω καὶ σοῖο δόμοιο;

Where shall I go then, dear child? Of the men who are lords here
in rocky Ithaka, who is there whose house I can visit?
Or shall I go straight to the house where you live, and to your mother?

Telemachos does not actually refuse hospitality; but he is politely discouraging. He hedges. First he says that he would certainly ask Theoklymenos to stay—if things were otherwise (513–14). Then he explains to his new friend that because he himself will be absent and because the suitors in the house have created an unpleasant environment (514–17), *σοὶ αὐτῷ χεῖρον* (it would be worse for you, 514–15).

This brings us back to a special case of the adjacency pair of question and answer. This is the case which Bassett observed in Homer: when the first speaking turn contains *two* separate questions, demanding *two* distinct answers. Sacks observes that in these cases it is a general rule that 'the order of the answers is the reverse order of the questions'.[29] Sacks offers an example at this point:

A: Well that's good uh how is yer arthritis? Yuh still taking shots?
B: Yeah: well it's awright I mean it's uh, it hurts once 'n a while but it's okay.

Note that the initial 'yeah' can refer only to the second question. The rest of the response refers to the first. The positioning of 'yeah' is a manifestation of the preference for *contiguity* which I outlined above.[30] If it is at all possible, second speakers will respond to this internalized preference by addressing the second question promptly, postponing the first. In dealing with the questions in this order they economize on the effort of remembering, just as I described above. They are obliged to store in memory *only* the first question, to which they will return when they have dealt with the second.[31] It may be

[29] Sacks, 'On the Preferences for Agreement and Contiguity', at 60.

[30] It also provides evidence of the principle of agreement, in the terms proposed above.

[31] We note an overlap here between Bassett's principle of *continuity* (which is limited in its function, however, to the Homeric epic) and Sacks' preference for *contiguity* (which he observes in general conversational action). Both approaches to

argued that this simply reflects the force of habit. I propose, however, that such habits are formed only when there are cognitive advantages, whether for us in conversation or for Homer as he mimicked the patterns of everyday talk.[32] By way of example, we might look at the questions posed to Odysseus by Telemachos, at 16. 222–4 and the answers offered by Odysseus at 226–31, in reverse order:

> *ποίῃ γὰρ νῦν δεῦρο, πάτερ φίλε, νηΐ σε ναῦται*
> *ἤγαγον εἰς Ἰθάκην; τίνες ἔμμεναι εὐχετόωντο;*
> *οὐ μὲν γάρ τί σε πεζὸν ὀΐομαι ἐνθάδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι*
>
> What kind of ship was it, father dear, in which the sailors
> brought you to Ithaka? What men do they claim that they are?
> For I do not think you could have traveled on foot to this country.
> (222–4)
>
> *τοιγὰρ ἐγώ τοι, τέκνον, ἀληθείην καταλέξω.*
> *Φαίηκές μ᾽ ἄγαγον ναυσίκλυτοι, οἵ τε καὶ ἄλλους*
> *ἀνθρώπους πέμπουσιν, ὅτις σφέας εἰσαφίκηται·*
> *καί μ᾽ εὕδοντ᾽ ἐν νηΐ θοῇ ἐπὶ πόντον ἄγοντες*
> *κάτθεσαν εἰς Ἰθάκην, ἔπορον δέ μοι ἀγλαὰ δῶρα,*
> *χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τε ἅλις ἐσθῆτά θ᾽ ὑφαντήν.*
>
> So, my child, I will tell you all the truth. The Phaiakians
> famed for seafaring brought me here, and they carry other
> people as well, whoever may come into their country.
> They brought me sleeping in their fast ship over the open
> sea and set me down in Ithaka, and gave me glorious
> gifts, abundant bronze and gold and woven apparel. (226–31)

the phenomenon of inversion are concerned with the juxtaposition of ideas. My development of Sacks' proposal, which takes into account the recency phenomenon, described above, allows us to see the practical value of the device as it occurs in oral discourse of all kinds. By contrast, if a speaker decides to answer both questions in the order of asking, then s/he is obliged to store *both* questions securely in memory. For discussion of the efficient recall of the first question (cf. the primacy effect), see, for example, A. Baddeley, *Your Memory: A User's Guide* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1982), 158–9. Here Baddeley proposes that the storage of the first item to be recalled may reflect a longer-term aspect of memory. Judy Slee suggests to me that efficient retention of the first item may be a matter of rehearsal. The important point to remember is that early material in a list appears to be more securely encoded than later material; for this reason it is possible to defer addressing these first items.

[32] On the crucial importance to the poet of habit, see Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought*, 29.

It is possible that the answer to the second of the two questions is so long and detailed that the first question is forgotten, by both parties.[33] Homer has cunningly played on this possibility at 7. 237–97, the questions asked of Odysseus by Arete, quoted above, and Odysseus' response. In framing Odysseus' reply the poet has chosen a natural strategy for response—the reverse pattern. His hero's failure to respond to the first question that Arete put to him, although he has responded to the other two, *appears* to be an oversight. But this is, of course, a tease. Although Homer's audience has observed this kind of forgetfulness in everyday life, they *know* Odysseus and they understand his silence on this point as a strategic decision.[34] And so—later—does Alkinoös (8. 548–9).[35] The poet's decision to keep back this information serves three purposes: he uses it to create suspense through his narrative, for Odysseus' failure to respond to this question at this point allows the poet to postpone the moment of revelation; he uses it as a confirmation of Odysseus' wily character; and he uses it to create a bond between himself and his audience. By communicating with his 'knowing' listeners in this subtle way, without actually commenting in the narrator's voice on what is happening, the poet is deepening their involvement with the tale—and with himself, the singer.

When more than one question is asked, the speaker often formulates the string in the expectation that the last question asked will be the first addressed. Antinoös, talking to Noëmon, leaves us in no doubt that the last matter which he raises, at 4. 645–7, is that

[33] For example, we occasionally hear people in television and radio interviews saying to the interviewer, 'And what was your first question again?'

[34] Bassett's principle of *poetic economy* is not sufficient to account for the playfulness of the poet and his goal of consistency in characterization, as he exploits everyday devices for narrative ends. If the audience did not know Odysseus' nature it could be difficult to read his failure to answer Arete's first question. But, assuming that the audience had not already formed an opinion about Odysseus, his conversation with Nausikaa in *Od.* 6 is sufficient to make them aware of the hero's devious mind. Odysseus' unwillingness to yield up his identity demonstrates his caution in the new situation in which he finds himself in the Phaiakian court. He will not betray himself until he feels that he is amongst people whom he can trust.

[35] By this time Alkinoös has observed Odysseus' tears as he heard Demodokos' Trojan tales: he goes on to reveal his suspicion that Odysseus has a close connection with the Trojan expedition (8. 581–6).

which is uppermost in his mind. This is the question that demands an answer. But another factor comes into play at this point. As I noted above, the person who asks questions of another is as a general rule working in accord with preferences for *agreement* as well as contiguity. We saw this point illustrated in the previous everyday example, above. And notice how Antinoös frames his question, as a set of alternatives, with positive expectation built into the *second* question of the pair:

καί μοι τοῦτ᾽ ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὄφρ᾽ ἐῢ εἰδῶ,
ἤ σε βίῃ ἀέκοντος ἀπηύρα νῆα μέλαιναν,
ἦε ἑκών οἱ δῶκας, ἐπεὶ προσπτύξατο μύθῳ.

And tell me this and tell me truly, so I can be certain,
did he take your black ship from you by force, when you were unwilling,
or did you willingly give it him, when he spoke to you for it?

We observe that Antinoös, by arranging his alternatives as he has, suggests to Noëmon not only the order in which he should present his reply, but what he expects to hear. It is Antinoös, therefore, who has directed Noëmon to address this question first. And Noëmon does so (649–51):

αὐτὸς ἑκών οἱ δῶκα· τί κεν ῥέξειε καὶ ἄλλος,
ὁππότ᾽ ἀνὴρ τοιοῦτος, ἔχων μελεδήματα θυμῷ,
αἰτίζῃ;

I gave it to him of my free will. What else could one do
when a man like this, with so many cares to trouble his spirit,
asked for it?

It is more the case, therefore, that the suitor wants to know Noëmon's role in providing a ship for Telemachos than that Noëmon, as Bassett has suggested, wants to clear his name.[36]

We should note, however, that a preference is not a rigid rule. In certain circumstances other needs may outrank institutionalized preferences for contiguity and agreement, and another ordering of answers will seem more appropriate to the conversational action. For example, the respondent may decide that the first question happens

[36] For Bassett's views, see above.

to be the important question in the string and should be dealt with first. We observe this outcome at 1. 180–94, where Athene/Mentes responds—a certain light-hearted glibness is reflected in her prompt and orderly reply—to Telemachos' questions in the order of asking. She considers it important that she establish her false identity with the young man at the outset. What Bassett would identify as *point of view of the second speaker* has overridden the default preference system.[37] This default system, as we have observed, allows the arrangement of the questions and the way in which they are couched to indicate to the second speaker the expected order—and nature—of his or her response. For the most part, the second speaker, in the spirit of co-operativeness which underlies most conversational exchanges, will follow the standard preferences of contiguity and agreement.[38] Thus Peisistratos indicates his preference to Menelaos (and Helen) at 15. 167–8:

> *φράζεο δή, Μενέλαε διοτρεφές, ὄρχαμε λαῶν,*
> *ἢ νῶϊν τόδ' ἔφηνε θεὸς τέρας ἦε σοὶ αὐτῷ;*
>
> Menelaos, illustrious, leader of the people, tell us
> whether the god showed this sign for you, or was it for us two?

Theoklymenos does the same in his words to Telemachos at 15. 509–11, quoted above. Each one places his preferred option at the end of his series of questions, inviting the second speaker to respond favourably—as well as promptly.[39]

*

If we were to isolate every example of what has been identified as *hysteron proteron* in Homer, we would find several categories of expression which may be structured in this way: questions and

[37] Thus, the *point of view of the second speaker* is not a prime factor in generating the reversed order of *hysteron proteron*, as Bassett proposed. It is just as likely that this motive will generate answers in another order.

[38] Cf. also the questions at Plato, *Prt.* 309b3–4 and the response at 5; and at *Phdr.* 227a1–3 (*Ὦ φίλε Φαῖδρε, ποῖ δὴ καὶ πόθεν;—Παρὰ Λυσίου, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦ Κεφάλου, πορεύομαι δὲ πρὸς περίπατον ἔξω τείχους*... Where are you going, my dear Phaedrus, and where have you been?—I have been with Lysias, the son of Cephalus, Socrates, and I am going for a walk outside the walls...).

[39] For discussion of Telemachos' response to Theoklymenos' questions, see above.

answers, orders and instructions and narrative events and sequences.[40] Certain fixed formulaic expressions have also been identified as examples of *hysteron proteron*.[41] I have found it useful to discuss the first of these categories—questions and answers, in which two parties are involved—in terms of the social organization of talk and its cognitive underpinnings. The outcome of this is a demonstration that, with respect to patterns of question and answer, the poet follows an order that we often observe in conversational exchanges: the second question asked is the first question addressed.[42] If we set this conclusion alongside the conclusions which I drew from my study of questions and answers in Chapter 3, we must concede that Homeric discourse is closer to everyday talk than many, including Cicero in the ancient world, Eustathius in the twelfth century AD, and, in our own time, Bassett and Thalmann, may have thought.[43]

My conclusions, therefore, are two: first, that this familiar practice, of answering questions in an order which reverses the sequence of asking, is motivated by cognitive factors (to make effective use of the resources of memory at our disposal) and social factors (co-operativeness above all); and, second, since *hysteron*

[40] For examples of orders and instructions, see, e.g., *Od.* 6. 209–10 and 211–50; and for events and sequences in narrative, see, e.g. *Od.* 15. 75–7 and 92–132; *Il.* 15. 124, 17. 588–9.

[41] As instances of fixed formulas we might consider, e.g., *τράφεν ἠδ᾽ ἐγένοντο* (*Od.* 4. 723, 10. 417, 14. 201; *Il.* 1. 251). Other phrases which may fall into this category are *γαμέοντί τε γεινομένῳ τε* (*Od.* 4. 208); *θρέψασα τεκοῦσά τε* (*Od.* 12. 134); *ἀμφιέσασα . . . καὶ λούσασα* (*Od.* 5. 264); *ἐρύσατο καί μ᾽ ἐλέησεν* (*Od.* 14. 279); *ὑπόκριναι καὶ ἄκουσον* (*Od.* 19. 535); and the noun phrases *ῥῆγός τε λίνον τε* (*Od.* 13. 73); *φᾶρος . . . ἠδὲ χιτῶνα* (*Od.* 3. 467); and *ῥάκος . . . ἠδὲ χιτῶνα* (*Od.* 13. 434). These phrases have been identified as examples of *hysteron proteron* for a reason similar to the reason underlying orders and instructions: the command/event item which is uppermost in the mind of the speaker is given first, even though the command/event item mentioned second may have to be carried out or used first).

[42] In the case of longer question-strings of, say, three or more questions (longer than we would naturally use in everyday talk) the poet, in responding, whether the order is top-down *or* in reverse, is displaying his extraordinary skills of memory.

[43] It is possible, however, that amongst the other categories (such as formulaic phrases which are structured as *hysteron proteron*) there are to be found features that are unique to oral traditional epic.

proteron is observable not only in the conversations in which we all take part but also in Homeric discourse, that poets in this particular epic tradition have recognized this feature of oral discourse and, in mimicking it, have exploited its almost rhythmical regularity in their composition of oral song.

5

Verbal Behaviour in its Social Context: Three Question Strategies in the *Odyssey*

I return once more to the adjacency pair of question and answer in Homer's character-text. In the preceding two chapters I identified regularities of structure in both first and second pair parts in Homer's question and answer sequences; and I looked beyond these regularities, in order to establish the cognitive and interactional circumstances which promote them. In this chapter I shall examine these same adjacency pairs in their conversational contexts: my intention now is to consider a selection of questions in terms of their functions. I shall be studying them as instances of verbal behaviour, as social acts which may reflect, reinforce, or, indeed, revise the social relationship of the speakers.

Although it was an easy task to categorize forms of questions,[1] it is not as easy to categorize their functions. As we have observed from Schegloff and Sacks' discussion of adjacency pairs, when one person asks another a question, he or she generally does so in anticipation of a response: information of some kind is being sought.[2] But, as Esther Goody has recognized, the question itself is always framed within a particular social context and with a particular interactive strategy in mind. Goody, an anthropologist working among the Gonja, in North Ghana, has observed that questions, or modes of questioning, are used in different ways, and to different ends, by speakers, depending on the circumstances. Goody notes that there is a repertoire of

[1] See Chapter 3.

[2] See E. Schegloff and H. Sacks, 'Opening up Closings', *Semiotica*, 8 (1973), 289–327, at 295–9.

interrogative strategies available to a speaker; she argues that it is the relative status of speaker and addressee that places constraints on how this repertoire is used.[3] Her paper, in which she plots in ring-form the different modes of questioning that she observed amongst the Gonja, is not so much an ethnographic discussion as a sociolinguistic study. Her interest is in the capacity of language to shape interaction.[4] Goody has plotted questions in Gonja around a circle to indicate their relationship to each other and to the four main performative modes of questioning: pure information-seeking questions versus rhetorical questions and deference-questions versus control-questions.[5] Questions in our own Western cultures may, of course, be plotted around this ring, as Goody demonstrates by placing certain Western functions (the question as riddle and the question as examination) at appropriate intervals on this same diagram.[6] The merit of such a conceptualization of interrogative modes is that it acknowledges that questions operate within the social sphere even as they function as tools in the search for information: for example, a question may seek information *and* show support *or* operate as a challenge *or* as a mark of deference.[7] What is essential to Goody's diagrammatic representation—and what is important to my discussion—is the observation that the question mode has the capacity to reflect on the social relationship of the speaker and addressee—and *vice versa*.[8] As she observes, under some circumstances the existing relationship determines the meaning of the

[3] E. Goody, 'Introduction', in Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1–16, at 5.

[4] Goody, 'Introduction', at 2.

[5] See E. Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', in Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, 17–43, at 27.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Questions may, however, operate in one dimension only, be their functions referential or affective: the information-question which one asks of a stranger in the street may be as socially neutral as a question can be (e.g., 'Can you tell me where the bus-station is?'). On the other hand, the rhetorical question (e.g., 'How can you do this to me?') does not seek information at all. It operates only in the social sphere.

[8] As Goody observes, 'Introduction', 5: 'my paper is partly about the nature of questions as a syntactic form, and partly about the ways in which social roles constrain the imputation of meaning to behaviour'.

speech act; under others the selected conversational strategy may signal a new view of, or a change in, the relationship.[9]

There is no doubt that if we are to read the interactions of actors in the Homeric epics, we must already have an understanding of how people in our own culture, and in others, interact through speech: thus we will have some hypotheses, at least, that we may apply to exchanges in the Homeric world. In this preface to discussion I have drawn attention to the principles which guide the interpretation of the question and answer sequence in two contemporary cultures: our own middle-class anglophone world and, in parallel, that of the Gonja. I shall refer to these in my discussion of certain transactions in Homer's *Odyssey*, in which the exchange of talk between two actors will be the focus for my study of social strategy and verbal behaviour and a valuable source of information on actors' perceptions of their relationships with those around them. From the range of possible question strategies identified by Goody I have selected two for closer study: the deference-question and the control-question (both of which we recognize in the first pair part). I have selected also a question form which we recognize as exceptional, since we encounter it in the second pair part of the question and answer adjacency pair. This is the counter-question, a form not noted by Goody. My aim is to relate the form and function of each type of transaction to its context and to demonstrate how we might analyse each sample as social, and linguistic, acts. It may well be that we will fully understand an exchange only if we read it in the context of a particular social relationship; in other cases, we may deduce the social relationship of the speakers only by paying close attention to the verbal strategies that they have chosen.

THE DEFERENCE-QUESTION

Goody contrasts two modes of questioning amongst the Gonja. She examines the question as a mode of control (as in the questions

[9] See Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', at 29. On the importance of social context and its constraints, see J. Mey, *Pragmatics: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), at 252–6, 286–8.

addressed by a teacher to his or her students, or by the parent as family head or disciplinarian): I shall discuss this mode below. And she examines the deferential question, in which mode it is possible for someone of inferior status to ask a question of a superior.[10] Goody notes that amongst the Gonja it is wrong for a subordinate to tell his or her superior what s/he should do. Instead, the subordinate poses what is ostensibly an information-question ('Are you going to greet So-and-So today?'). A question of this kind *implies* ignorance on the part of the speaker. This is significant, as Goody observes, because in many societies, including the Gonja, the possession of knowledge represents power. To admit ignorance is to disclaim power. By asking a question the speaker defers to the addressee's knowledge and his or her right to make decisions. This strategy allows the superior to appear to take the initiative. Neither party need acknowledge that this has not actually been the case. Such questioning is institutionalized also in Western society, and is used, as it is amongst the Gonja, in situations where subordinates wish to propose, as tactfully as possible, a particular course of action to their superiors.

We shall consider two examples of the deference-question (and their responses) in the *Odyssey*, both of which have aroused some discussion. The first of these we hear in Eumaios' hut. At 16. 130–4 Telemachos has instructed Eumaios to go into town to tell Penelope that he has returned safely from Pylos; he explains the need for secrecy by reference to the suitors' plot against his life. Eumaios then asks a question, phrased indirectly (137–45):[11]

> *ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον,*
> *ἢ καὶ Λαέρτῃ αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ἄγγελος ἔλθω*
> *δυσμόρῳ, ὃς τῆος μὲν Ὀδυσσῆος μέγ' ἀχεύων*
> *ἔργα τ' ἐποπτεύεσκε μετὰ δμώων τ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ*

[10] Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', at 32–5.

[11] The question is indirectly phrased, but the intention is clear, because Telemachos answers him. For discussion of the recognizability of first pair parts and adjacency sequences, see Chapter 3; and see E. Schegloff, 'On Questions and Ambiguities in Conversation', in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 28–52, at 31 and 49–50. In this chapter all Homeric references are to the *Odyssey* unless otherwise indicated.

πῖνε καὶ ἦσθ', ὅτε θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἀνώγοι·
αὐτὰρ νῦν, ἐξ οὗ σύ γε οἴχεο νηῒ Πύλονδε,
οὔ πώ μίν φασιν φαγέμεν καὶ πιέμεν αὔτως,
οὐδ' ἐπὶ ἔργα ἰδεῖν, ἀλλὰ στοναχῇ τε γόῳ τε
ἧσται ὀδυρόμενος, φθινύθει δ' ἀμφ' ὀστεόφι χρώς.

But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
Shall I on the same errand go with the news to wretched
Laertes, who while he so greatly grieved for Odysseus
yet would look after his farm and with the thralls in his household
would eat and drink, whenever the spirit was urgent with him;
but now, since you went away in the ship to Pylos,
they say he has not eaten in this way, nor drunk anything,
nor looked to his farm, but always in lamentation and mourning
sits grieving, and the flesh on his bones is wasting from him.

Eumaios asks whether he should, after having seen Penelope, visit Laertes also, to pass on to him the news about Telemachos. The question itself (138–9) is followed immediately by a considerable quantity of material, in which Eumaios justifies the question he has asked. Supplementary material of this kind, as we have noted in Chapter 3, is a feature of the questions which we ask everyday, in our own culture. It also appears to be used with some regularity in Homer.[12] And it draws attention to the question, giving it greater significance in the narrative. Eumaios tells Telemachos (and the audience) that he has included his question about Laertes since he is aware that the old man has effectively lost interest in living after hearing about Telemachos' expedition to Pylos.

The swineherd, in asking this question, appears to be seeking information about his master's intentions. But our familiarity with the use of deferential questions in our own culture suggests that he is also attempting to remind the young man of his responsibilities towards his father's father and urging him to make contact with Laertes. Clearly, although Telemachos uses the kinship term, *ἄττα* (father), when addressing Eumaios at 16. 57 and 130, and Eumaios, the subordinate, addresses the young man as *φίλον τέκος* (dear child,

[12] Homer appears to use this explanatory mode quite often in direct and indirect forms (in approximately two thirds of all questions asked, as I assess it): see Chapter 3 for discussion.

16. 25), their intimacy has its limits,[13] hence his deference in making a proposal to Telemachos in his capacity as head of the household.

Despite Eumaios' efforts to guide Telemachos to what he considers to be an appropriate course of action, Telemachos resists, in a manner which has caused some comment amongst scholars.[14] It is relevant also to my discussion. His response to Eumaios' question is a statement at 147 (*μιν ἐάσομεν*, we shall let him be) couched in apologetic terms (*ἄλγιον*, though it hurts the more, and *ἀχνύμενοί περ*, for all our sorrows). After Penelope has received the news, Telemachos says, Eumaios is to return to his hut as soon as possible. But Telemachos asks, finally (and apparently as an afterthought), that Eumaios include in his message to Penelope an instruction that she send a messenger to Laertes with news of his grandson's return. Ahl and Roisman propose that the more likely reason for the indirect transmission of news is that 'it filters out any other information Eumaios might have to impart—in particular the presence of the mysterious stranger now in Eumaios' hut'.[15] I propose that Telemachos' response (rather like his response to Penelope at 1. 346–7, a question which has an undertone of a surprisingly sharp reproof) reflects his youthful inability as yet to wield authority sympathetically and effectively. As an assertion of his independence Telemachos rejects Eumaios' well-intentioned proposal—albeit gently. But, moments later, he perceives its merits. So he proposes a means of his own devising for sending a message to Laertes.[16] Eumaios' thoughtful and appropriate deference-question, therefore, has, to a point,

[13] For discussion of the use of fictive kin-terms as address-terms indicating an emotional bond, see P. Brown and S. Levinson, 'Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena', in Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness*, 56–289; revised as *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), at 107–12, esp. 108–9.

[14] See, e.g., F. Ahl and H. Roisman, *The* Odyssey *Re-formed* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 133 and 194; G. Dimock, *The Unity of the* Odyssey (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 209.

[15] Ahl and Roisman, Odyssey *Re-formed*, at 194. This is perhaps possible. But why should Telemachos, who does not yet know the identity of the beggar, be concerned at this point to prevent others from knowing what he himself does not yet know? Dimock, *Unity of the* Odyssey, at 209, has a more plausible proposal: Telemachos wants the swineherd at his side. He has, he thinks, no other supporter against the suitors. This explanation can co-exist with the suggestion that I propose.

[16] It is his role as decision-maker (no matter how that decision has been reached) which earns him the epithet *πεπνύμενος* at 146.

succeeded. Telemachos has made a decision about sending a message to his grandfather, as Eumaios had hoped. But he has not responded as the swineherd, and the audience, might have expected. Homer shows us here, as at 1. 346–7, the wilfulness of youth: when a young man prefers to assert himself rather than to fall in with the reasonable suggestions of those more experienced in the world than he is.[17]

At 24. 403–5 we encounter a double question which fulfils the same two functions as the question asked by Eumaios, above. In this case the speaker is Dolios, Penelope's own servant, who was given to her by her father (4. 735–6), and who keeps an orchard on her behalf (737).[18] He, on coming upon Odysseus dining with Laertes (24. 383–96), greets him warmly (400–2). His words of welcome are followed immediately by a question which reveals his concern for his mistress (403–5):

> *καί μοι τοῦτ' ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὄφρ' ἐῢ εἰδῶ,*
> *ἢ ἤδη σάφα οἶδε περίφρων Πηνελόπεια*
> *νοστήσαντά σε δεῦρ', ἦ ἄγγελον ὀτρύνωμεν.*

> And tell me this and tell me truly, so that I may know it.
> Does circumspect Penelope know all the truth of this
> and that you have come back, or shall we send her a messenger?

The question in this case is posed in two parts, each with a different function. The first question, 'Does Penelope know?', is a question seeking information; its answer, if a negative, would provide the basis for the second question which Dolios poses, a deference-question. Dolios *implies* that it is for Odysseus to decide on the course of action to be taken with regard to his wife.[19] Here again, as at 16. 137–45, the

[17] Note that later in the same episode Odysseus will tell Telemachos that Laertes, his own father, is not to hear yet of his return (16. 300–4). In planning the episode, therefore, the poet appears to have allowed the restricted status that applies to information about Odysseus to extend, at least temporarily, to information about his son.

[18] For Heubeck's discussion, see J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano, and A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 385. There is no doubt that the Dolios of 4. 735–7 is identical in Homer's mind with the Dolios of Book 24.

[19] I assume that the first person plural form here refers to Dolios and his sons. Dolios implies, by making his question (about the messenger) his final element, that this is the important question. On contiguity in questions and answers, see Chapter 4. Odysseus, however, has anticipated Dolios' concerns.

difference in status between a subordinate and his master is revealed in his selection of speech mode.[20] Heubeck concludes that Dolios' question demonstrates his loyalty and devotion.[21] I agree, since the asking of the question so promptly suggests that Penelope's welfare is uppermost in Dolios' mind. I add, however, that it reflects also his position in the social hierarchy relative to that of Odysseus; and it reveals the corresponding discretion of the subordinate.

THE CONTROL-QUESTION

The control-question is used amongst the Gonja to test, to challenge, to control, and, above all, to assign responsibility for something said or done.[22] According to the social mores of the Gonja, questions of this type may be asked only by those higher in the social hierarchy than the addressee; the speakers in most cases already know the answer to the question they are about to ask. But they nevertheless ask the question and *require* an answer. The person addressed is thus at a disadvantage, since s/he is being asked questions to which, in many cases, s/he would rather not respond, as s/he is aware that a 'right' answer must be produced. Goody observes such questions in the hearing of court cases, where elders and chiefs question both plaintiff and defendant; in the classroom, where teachers quiz their students; and in the home, where parents test or evaluate their children. These situations are familiar to us also, in Western society. In each of the cases cited, the person who poses the questions—the representative of the law, the teacher, or the parent—is in the dominant position; the addressee is, therefore, obliged to act defensively.[23] Goody observes, too, that in such situations there is

[20] Odysseus' reply, at 407, sounds more abrupt than intended: see Heubeck's comment, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii, at 404.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', at 31.

[23] Ibid., at 42, points to the example of Socrates, as represented in Plato's early dialogues. His method is 'a model of ostensibly pure information questioning which is in fact control-oriented' (42). We can sympathize with the discomfort of his addressees under his questioning; and we can understand that his method may

a corresponding inhibition of, or even prohibition of, questions in the reverse direction, from status subordinates to superiors.[24] That is, it is unlikely that the addressee will be of sufficient status to respond with a counter-question.[25] Control-questions, however, may also be asked in a less adversarial context. Parents use questions of this kind to encourage children to engage in talk, by recounting the experiences of their day.[26] Although the child is unaware that the question is used for purposes other than the search for information (and therefore may not feel himself or herself to be at a disadvantage), the intention behind the question is manipulative, as is the intention behind the kind of control-question used in the classroom or the lawcourt.[27]

What do we find in Homer? We find control-questions of the kinds which I have identified. The speaker's agenda is either to confirm information and to evaluate it or to make the addressee perform and to evaluate that performance. He or she may be more or less adversarial, or more or less sympathetic, in his or her dealings with the addressee. Nevertheless, the questions which s/he asks are control-questions; and the exercise itself is an exercise in power.

At 1. 169–77 Athene, as Mentes, has been asked by Telemachos, his host, to identify herself (his question is a question seeking information). She does so (179–205), but concludes her reply with a question of her own. She asks Telemachos, in reassuring tones, whether he is the son of Odysseus (206–7):

have aroused considerable hostility. N. Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 43–7, offers a close study of discourse in 'unequal encounters' (44). His selected example is an encounter between a doctor and a group of medical students, in which the doctor has the right to give orders and ask questions, whereas students have only the obligation to comply and answer (46). The students are 'put on the spot', and the doctors evaluate their responses (45). Fairclough notes that the conventions of the discourse-type generate the constraints on the students. On the other hand, the doctor chooses the discourse-type: hence his power.

[24] Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', at 32.

[25] Cf. Menelaos' counter-question to Proteus' question, discussed below.

[26] The parent often already knows what the child will say; but it is the exercise of articulating an answer that is considered to be important. Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', at 33–4, regards this kind of question as a pseudo-deference question, masking a control question. I have elected to recognize these questions for what they are: control-questions.

[27] Concurrent with the parent's interest in the events of the day is his or her desire to evaluate the child's 'progress' in making conversation.

ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον,
εἰ δὴ ἐξ αὐτοῖο τόσος πάϊς εἰς Ὀδυσῆος.

But come now tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
Are you, big as you are, the very child of Odysseus?

Clearly, as a goddess, she has no need for the information he will give at 214–20, just as she has no need for the information he will give to her further questions at 224–6:

ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον,
τίς δαίς, τίς δαὶ ὅμιλος ὅδ' ἔπλετο; τίπτε δέ σε χρεώ;
εἰλαπίνη ἠὲ γάμος;

But come now, tell me this and give me an accurate answer.
What feast is this, what gathering? How does it concern you?
A festival, or a wedding?

What is the point of these questions? First, of course, since Athene has assumed the character of Mentes, her questions regarding Telemachos' identity and the guests in the house are necessary to her disguise. There are, however, other factors at work. We, as the audience, note an undertone of playfulness, which we observe in almost all questions that any god addresses to a mortal about his or her identity, recent experiences, or state of mind.[28] We detect this in this case, because we are aware that the speaker is a god and we know (cf. 1. 88–92) that she already knows Telemachos' situation. The question on Athene's lips, therefore, is a control-question. When she asks her question, even though she is disguised as Mentes, she offers Telemachos the opportunity to talk and to give an account of himself. At this moment we are reminded of the discourse-style of teachers or parents in our own society. Telemachos, who does not know what we know, treats the question as a genuine request for information from an older man and a friend of his father. Since he is addressed by a senior *in loco parentis*, he cannot avoid responding.[29]

[28] Telemachos, however, is treated more gently than men who are older and more experienced. Cf. Eidothea's words to Menelaos (4. 371–2, and see below); or Athene's to Odysseus (20. 33–5).

[29] Homer confirms this relationship with the words he puts on Telemachos' lips at 1. 308: *ὥς τε πατὴρ ᾧ παιδί*, what any father would say to his son.

So he replies appropriately, if with some embarrassment. And, like a teacher, Athene evaluates what he says; she assesses his grasp of the situation in which he finds himself, his state of mind, and his manner towards her. She is impressed by what she observes of Telemachos, immature and inexperienced as he is. On the basis of her assessment she will offer the young man her advice and assistance.

We observe this teasing tone unambiguously at 4. 371–2, where Eidothea, daughter of Proteus, addresses Menelaos, who with his men has been delayed for twenty days at Pharos, off Egypt, by a lack of wind. His supplies are running low. His men have gone to try to catch fish. He is wandering alone, in his distress. The sea-nymph's words are both playful and challenging:

> *νήπιός εἰς, ὦ ξεῖνε, λίην τόσον ἠδὲ χαλίφρων,*
> *ἦε ἑκὼν μεθιεῖς καὶ τέρπεαι ἄλγεα πάσχων;*
>
> Are you so simple then, O stranger, and flimsy-minded,
> or are you willingly giving up, and enjoying your hardships?

Eidothea has not assumed a disguise. She is not trying to deceive Menelaos, who, in fact, recognizes her as a goddess (376). She accuses Menelaos, provocatively, of either incompetence or of succumbing too readily to ill-fortune. She can adopt this rallying tone as she speaks with a man of mature years and considerable experience of life; we see similar instances of this mode in exchanges between gods and mortals elsewhere in the *Odyssey* (20. 33–5) as well as in the *Iliad*.[30] Even when the god is in disguise, the rallying tone is observable (cf. 4. 804, 'Iphthime' to Penelope; 10. 281–4, Hermes to Odysseus).[31]

At 7. 237–9 Arete asks Odysseus a series of questions:

> *Ξεῖνε, τὸ μέν σε πρῶτον ἐγὼν εἰρήσομαι αὐτή·*
> *τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; τίς τοι τάδε εἵματ' ἔδωκεν;*
> *οὐ δὴ φῄς ἐπὶ πόντον ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἱκέσθαι;*

[30] Note West's comment on the goddess's 'insulting sarcasm': A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 217. For examples of such rallying questions in the *Iliad*, see *Il.* 5. 800–13, 15. 244–5.

[31] For further comment, see B. Louden, *The* Odyssey: *Structure, Narration, and Meaning* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999), 5.

Stranger and friend, I myself first have a question to ask you.
What man are you, and whence? And who was it gave you this clothing?
Did you not say that you came here ranging over the water?

Amongst the usual questions which a host might ask of his guest concerning his identity and his origin is this extraordinary question, 'Who was it who gave you this clothing?'. Arete has a right to ask her guest about his identity, since the ceremonies which welcome him to the household have now taken place. Her further question, however, through which she indicates that she recognizes his garments, is intended to be unsettling.[32] Arete at this point would not know the answer to this question in all its detail, but it is clear that she guesses what has happened. For the garments which Odysseus is now wearing were produced in her own household. Her question, therefore, is a control-question: she knows enough to force a reply, along prescribed lines.[33] Odysseus himself cannot gauge how much she knows. This is the source of her power over him at this moment.

There are four further occasions in the *Odyssey* in which control-questions are asked. All are posed by Odysseus, who happens to be, at the time of asking, disguised as a beggar. This is extraordinary, since we expect, from our knowledge of our own world, that a person who asks a control-question will be of dominant status and that his or her addressee will respond to that status. In the cases under discussion, Odysseus' disguise masks his intentions. And yet, by suggesting to his addressees (Eumaios and Telemachos) that he was once a man of substance, a man of the world, Odysseus establishes a plausible context for his choice of verbal strategy.[34] Since he appears to be someone who has seen better days, his probing questions are

[32] For discussion of what it is that makes her question unsettling—her omission of explanatory material—see Chapter 3.

[33] Odysseus' reply, therefore, will be accurate enough, although marked by certain evasions (the omission of his name, of specific detail concerning his relationship with Kalypso, and the obscuring of Nausikaa's role in bringing him to her parents' house). For similar discussion, see Ahl and Roisman, Odyssey *Re-Formed*, at 60–2; for discussion of Odysseus' response, see Chapter 4.

[34] He tells Eumaios that he has been a man of some wealth and experience: see his lying tale at 14. 192–359, esp. at 199–206; he indicates vaguely to Telemachos that he is a man of higher status than he might appear, at 16. 91–111. On Odysseus' lies, see C. Trahman, 'Odysseus' Lies (*Odyssey*, Books 13–19)', *Phoenix*, 6 (1952), 31–43; A. Haft, 'Odysseus, Idomeneus and Meriones: The Cretan Lies of *Odyssey* 13–19', *CJ*, 79 (1983–4), 289–306.

judged to be not only relevant but appropriate. In each case the addressee believes that the questions the beggar asks represent a genuine inquiry. At no time does either man suspect that the question, posed so innocently, is, in fact, a test of loyalty and capacity for action.[35] Without explicit comment the storyteller shares with his audience his amusement at the complex situation which he has constructed, in which the person who asks the questions is apparently a beggar seeking information, when in reality he is the wily Odysseus, the master of the house, asking specific questions for his own undisclosed ends. What holds our attention in these four scenes is the way that Odysseus is able to project himself as an individual to such an extent that even in beggar's rags he can ask such questions and receive such satisfactory replies. Thus, at 14. 115–16, Odysseus asks Eumaios about his master who bought him:

> *ὦ φίλε, τίς γάρ σε πρίατο κτεάτεσσιν ἑοῖσιν,*
> *ὧδε μάλ' ἀφνειὸς καὶ καρτερὸς ὡς ἀγορεύεις;*
>
> Dear friend, who is the man who bought you with his possessions
> and is so rich and powerful as you tell me?

Through this gentle inquiry (note his reassuring form of address, *ὦ φίλε*, dear friend) Odysseus puts the swineherd into a position where he must reveal his feelings about Odysseus. A short time later in the narrative, when Telemachos returns to Ithaka, the beggar, at 16. 95–8, asks him about his relationship with the suitors and his relationship with the community:

> *εἰπέ μοι ἠὲ ἑκὼν ὑποδάμνασαι, ἦ σέ γε λαοὶ*
> *ἐχθαίρουσ' ἀνὰ δῆμον, ἐπισπόμενοι θεοῦ ὀμφῇ*
> *ἦ τι κασιγνήτοις ἐπιμέμφεαι, οἷσί περ ἀνὴρ*
> *μαρναμένοισι πέποιθε, καὶ εἰ μέγα νεῖκος ὄρηται.*
>
> Tell me, are you willingly oppressed by them? Do the people
> hate you throughout this place, swayed by some impulse given
> from the gods? Do you find your brothers wanting? A man trusts
> help from these in the fighting when a great quarrel arises.

[35] Odysseus' questions to each are similar in tone to the sympathetic questions Athene asks of Telemachos. Indeed, the situation in each case (with Eumaios and Telemachos) is the same. The disguised Odysseus is the elder and much more experienced in the ways of the world.

His question is initially framed as the sympathetic question of a disinterested observer of life—someone who knows how the world works. Note his use of the phrase *σέθεν τοιούτου ἐόντος* (when you are such a one as you are, 94), which conveys his sympathy and understanding. This, however, is a question designed to sound out Telemachos and to evaluate his worth. The young man responds, giving an honest and realistic assessment of his position. The frankness of his reply (113–34) is persuasive. As a consequence, this will be the moment when Athene steps in and reveals Odysseus to his son (155–89). And it will be the beginning of their joint action against the suitors.

A third and fourth control-question, at 15. 346–50 and 381–8, again address information that Odysseus already knows. The beggar, in conversation with Eumaios (15. 346–50), asks about Odysseus' mother and father:

> *νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ἰσχανάᾳς μεῖναί τέ με κεῖνον ἄνωγας,*
> *εἴπ' ἄγε μοι περὶ μητρὸς Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο*
> *πατρός θ', ὃν κατέλειπεν ἰὼν ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῷ,*
> *ἤ που ἔτι ζώουσιν ὑπ' αὐγὰς ἠελίοιο,*
> *ἦ ἤδη τεθνᾶσι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι.*
>
> But now, since you keep such a man as I am, and bid me stay here,
> come then, tell me about the mother of godlike Odysseus,
> and his father, whom when he went he left on the doorsill
> of old age. Are they still alive in the beams of the sunlight,
> or are they dead by now and gone to the house of Hades?

Odysseus here suggests that he is asking questions as a way of passing time (346). But it is difficult to believe that such an idle motive drives Odysseus' enquiries. The hero already knows of his mother's death and his father's retirement to his farm. His conversation with his mother in the Underworld gave him this information, as well as news of his wife and his son (11. 181–203). Furthermore, Eumaios has already unwittingly given numerous proofs of his loyalty to his master; it could hardly be that Odysseus feels the need to test him further. The question, therefore, is not an information-question; nor can it be designed to evaluate Eumaios' worth.[36] We could make the

[36] Hoekstra observes that these questions might have been omitted: see A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), at 254. He suggests, however, that Odysseus may ask them

same claims in connection with Odysseus' inquiry about Eumaios' childhood experiences and his arrival in the household of Laertes at 381–8.[37] Odysseus was living at home when this happened. He knows Eumaios' tale. And, as I have noted above, there is no further need for him to investigate his loyalty. I suggest that these two questions are included to reflect Odysseus' temperament, or, more accurately, to *realize* it. For these are questions which the hero asks simply for the pleasure of the exercise. He delights in the game of deceit and manipulation that he is playing; and he wants to prolong it for one or two further rounds. This is a power-game, in which Eumaios is the unwitting victim. Here we see that same Odysseus who will later in the epic resist his first impulse to embrace his father and announce his return, instead deceiving him with false claims (24. 244–79) and a false identity (303–14). It is only his father's extreme reaction to Odysseus' reports that forces his son to make himself known to the unhappy old man. The questions that Odysseus asks Eumaios at 15. 346–50 and 381–8, therefore, are included to show us Odysseus as a risk-taker who is prepared to assert himself and exercise his powers whenever the opportunity arises.[38] It is not that he needs to ask these questions to advance his cause on Ithaka; he needs to ask them because he cannot resist seizing the opportunity. Deceit, opportunism, and risk-taking are natural impulses in our hero.

THE COUNTER-QUESTION

The nature of the question and answer adjacency pair requires that a question receives a prompt response. If the second speaker does not comply with this expectation, there must be, as we shall discover,

because like all Greeks he is naturally curious. I am not persuaded that inquisitiveness, or even the pretence of it, motivates these questions in truth. Homer has chosen to keep our attention (for the most part) on Odysseus and his manipulation of the swineherd in the prolonged intimacy of this conversation. His motives in posing these questions, therefore, must be specifically Odyssean.

[37] Note again the sympathy with which he addresses Eumaios, at 381–2.

[38] Cf. one of Odysseus' tales about himself: in the Kyklops-tale he insisted on baiting the Kyklops even at the risk of his own and his crew's lives (9. 491–542).

particular reasons for his or her decision not to co-operate. One strategy which results in the deferment of a response or the derailment of the sequence of question and answer is the counter-question. Counter-questions are the questions asked when a second speaker turns the question of the first pair part back to the original speaker. He or she for some reason has chosen not to co-operate in the exchange of talk. Why might s/he behave in this way? The second speaker may intend his counter-question either as a stalling device or as a device to block the question ('Won't you stop asking me about my identity?'). The interactional effect of the exchange is that the first speaker is made aware that the second speaker wishes him or her to review his or her question; and that s/he is resisting the obligation to respond. When the counter-question is used merely as a stalling device, the second pair part will, of course, proceed. When such a question is used to derail a question and answer sequence, the first pair part will go unanswered. It is possible that the counter-question may be issued as a challenge ('Why should you ask me that?'). In this case the first pair part goes unanswered and the first speaker is required to respond to that challenge. Underlying all these exchanges between speakers is an acute awareness of social ranking. The people who can respond to a question with a counter-question are those who can safely (in terms of social hierarchy) withhold a response. These people will be ranked at the same level or almost the same level as the first speaker; it is not socially appropriate for people of much lower rank to ask such questions, since to stall or to withhold a response from a superior is generally regarded as unacceptable behaviour.

We have eight examples of counter-questions in the *Odyssey.* Let us consider these, as we did deference-questions and control-questions, for what they can tell us about social ranking, intention, and communication. I begin with a series of examples in which the speaker uses a counter-question to indicate his or her reluctance to respond (for a variety of reasons), even though he or she will, in most cases, eventually complete the second pair part to the listener's satisfaction. In many cases, the second speaker is simply stalling; in some, however, she will succeed in throwing the sequence off course. We find counter-questions fulfilling both these functions in the encounter between Proteus and Menelaos. Menelaos has been briefed on Proteus' nature and powers by Eidothea (4. 363–424) and has

triumphed in the great physical struggle with the Old Man of the Sea. In the talk that follows Menelaos is in a position to assert himself. At 4. 462–3 Proteus, having exhausted his powers of physical change, resigns himself to being quizzed by Menelaos. He asks:

> *τίς νύ τοι, Ἀτρέος υἱέ, θεῶν συμφράσσατο βουλάς,*
> *ὄφρα μ' ἕλοις ἀέκοντα λοχησάμενος; τέο σε χρή;*

> Which of the gods now, son of Atreus, has been advising you
> to capture me from ambush against my will. What do you want?

Menelaos does not respond with the information sought. Rather, he counters Proteus' questions with a statement and a question of his own (465):

> *οἶσθα, γέρον, τί με ταῦτα παρατροπέων ἀγορεύεις;*

> You know, Old Man. Why try to put me off with your answer?

He asserts that Proteus has asked an unnecessary question and he accuses him of *παρατροπέων*, trying to mislead him: that is, of pretending that he doesn't know the answer, when, as a god, he does.[39] With these words Menelaos considers the subject closed. He does not respond to Proteus' question, because, he feels, there is no need to do so. He has brought the conversational exchange to a halt.

A moment later, when Menelaos has asked Proteus, at 4. 486–90, whether all the Achaians had returned safely from Troy, Proteus replies, 'Why do you ask me that?' (492, *τί με ταῦτα διείρεαι;*). His question implies that this is a tale which he would rather not tell; and his following words at 492–4 act as an evaluative résumé of what is to come. He makes it clear that this will be a tale of sorrows. We see traces here of Proteus' original reluctance to co-operate with Menelaos. On this occasion, however, he cannot withhold a response, since Menelaos has defeated him in their contest of strength and cunning. But he reminds Menelaos of his unwillingness by postponing, just for a moment, his reply.[40]

[39] For further discussions of questions such as that asked by Proteus, see above, on the control-question.

[40] Contrast Proteus' response with the reply that Odysseus gives in his conversation with Agamemnon in the Underworld. Agamemnon has asked him for information about his son, Orestes (11. 457–61). Odysseus, however, does not merely stall, as

I have saved until last the most interesting example in this category of counter-question. The scene is the hall of the palace on Ithaka. It is late at night. Odysseus is sitting alone, thinking through his plan to kill the suitors (19. 1–2). Penelope comes down from her chamber (53–4). A chair is set out for her and, after she has heard Melantho scold Odysseus/the beggar for lingering in the palace (66–9), she asks him to join her by the fire. As she says to Euronyme, at 99, she wishes to question him. At 105 she puts to him the usual questions:

> *τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;*
>
> What man are you and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?

The beggar, after a lengthy preamble and a great show of deference, politely refuses to respond (115–18), claiming that to answer for himself at this moment would renew his grief.[41] Penelope appears to accept this and responds to the beggar sympathetically, with a candid account of her own trials since the departure of her husband for Troy. After this narrative, however, she returns, at 162–3, to the question she had raised earlier. And on this occasion Odysseus counters her question with one of his own (165–6):

> *ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος,*
> *οὐκέτ᾽ ἀπολλήξεις τὸν ἐμὸν γόνον ἐξερέουσα;*
>
> O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
> you will not stop asking me about my origin?

He introduces his response with respect, but we might detect in the question itself (marked by *οὐ*) a certain amusement, with a touch of exasperation:[42] Odysseus is enjoying the challenge of talking with his wife. And yet it is not now in Odysseus' power, as beggar, to refuse to

did Proteus; his counter-question at 11. 463 (*τί με ταῦτα διείρεαι;*) here marks the derailment of the sequence and ends the conversation. He leaves open the possibility that Orestes is indeed dead, as Heubeck observes: see Heubeck and Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii, at p. 105.

[41] See Russo's comment, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii, at pp. 79–80 (on 107–14).

[42] Through the use of *οὐ* Odysseus indicates positive expectation (akin to the tag-question of English, for example), suggesting that he is in a position to convey his opinion on what Penelope has just said. For further discussion of Penelope and Odysseus' conflicting expectations of their conversation at this point, see Chapter 10.

reply. Penelope, his host, is of superior status; he *must* respond. But note that he postpones the tale for some moments, with repetitions of entrance talk (167, 171) and an evaluative résumé in which he announces that this will be a tale of sorrow (167–70).[43] Odysseus is, as Rutherford notes, 'as cool and fluent as ever'.[44]

This passage merits closer attention. Odysseus, in his efforts to defer the moment when he reveals himself to his wife, parries Penelope's questions. In this contest, however, he is not her social equal. He is speaking from the position of an inferior, a lowly guest who has a debt of gratitude to his host. His counter-question at 165–6, therefore, is a remarkable act. It is the question of someone who has near equality of status with his addressee. It sounds to the audience like the blunt question that Odysseus (for the moment allowing his disguise to slip) might ask of a peer. Penelope recognizes this, perhaps unconsciously, to the extent that she will be moved (at 253–4 and 317–22) to offer the kind of hospitality one gives a guest of equal status: a bath, a comfortable bed, and a meal on the next day with the senior male in the household, her son.[45] Furthermore, she takes the beggar into her confidence and asks his advice about her future, as one might do of a *ξένος* (509–53). Murnaghan argues that the beggar has touched Penelope with his reminiscences and his predictions, and she responds by making him her friend and guest. I propose that Penelope's intuitive response to this man is first awakened by his extraordinarily confident, Odysseus-like, manner of speaking and is sustained by the conclusions she draws on hearing his words.[46]

[43] Odysseus' reply, indeed, serves as a further stalling device in his conversation with his wife. Although he responds, he preserves his disguise. For the terminology of story-structure in the Homeric context, see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), ch. 6.

[44] See R. Rutherford, *Homer:* Odyssey*: Books XIX and XX* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 156.

[45] The beggar's verbal behaviour is, in Nagy's terms, a *sêma* (a sign), by which she can recognize someone *like* Odysseus (but not Odysseus himself): see G. Nagy, 'Sêma and Nóēsis: Some Illustrations', *Arethusa*, 16 (1983), 35–55.

[46] Cf. S. Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the* Odyssey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 110, who notes that open recognition between the two is precluded (because Odysseus will not tell Penelope who he is and she will not believe that Odysseus will ever return). For a contrasting view, see D. Stewart, *The Disguised*

We have considered the counter-question as a strategy for deferment and derailment. Let us consider it now as a challenge. We shall study three examples. At 4. 793–4, Penelope, although distressed about her son's departure for Pylos, has at last been able to fall asleep. Athene, taking pity on her, has sent an image in the likeness of Penelope's sister Iphthime to reassure her (804–7):

> *Εὕδεις, Πηνελόπεια, φίλον τετιημένη ἦτορ;*
> *οὐ μέν σ' οὐδὲ ἐῶσι θεοὶ ῥεῖα ζώοντες*
> *κλαίειν οὐδ' ἀκάχησθαι, ἐπεί ῥ' ἔτι νόστιμός ἐστι*
> *σὸς πάϊς· οὐ μὲν γάρ τι θεοῖς ἀλιτήμενός ἐστι.*

> Penelope, are you sleeping so sorrowful in the inward
> heart? But the gods who live at their ease do not suffer you
> to weep and to be troubled, since your son will have his homecoming
> even yet, since he has done no wrong in the gods' sight.

Iphthime's question, at 804, implies that she is surprised to find Penelope asleep, despite her sorrows.[47] This is the kind of teasing question which we notice in the encounters of gods and mortals; it is a question to which a reply is unnecessary, as far as the god is concerned, since the gods know all.[48] But, for the most part, mortals are not aware that they are in the presence of a god. They therefore attempt to respond informatively and appropriately.[49] It is remarkable, therefore, that Penelope does not feel obliged to respond to the question—nor to the reassurances which Iphthime offers. Instead, she quizzes the messenger, as she might quiz a sister, asking a counter-question (810–11):

> *τίπτε, κασιγνήτη, δεῦρ' ἤλυθες; οὔ τι πάρος γε*
> *πωλέαι, ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὸν ἀπόπροθι δώματα ναίεις·*

Guest: Rank, Role, and Identity in the Odyssey (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1976), 100–45, at 112, who argues that Penelope has recognized Odysseus at this point. And, for a middle view, with which I am in sympathy, see J. Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', in *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 129–61, at 150–1 and 155 (on Penelope as 'creature of intuitions which she cannot explain even to herself').

[47] Cf. *Il.* 2. 23, 23. 69.

[48] See above, on control-questions.

[49] Cf. Telemachos' replies to Mentes, at 1. 214–20, 231–51.

> Why have you come here, sister, now, when you were not used to
> come before, since the home where you live is far away from us . . .

And at 812–13 she throws Iphthime's question back to her as a mild reproach:

> *καὶ με κέλεαι παύσασθαι ὀϊζύος ἠδ᾽ ὀδυνάων*
> *πολλέων* . . .
>
> and now you tell me to give over from the grieving and sorrows
> that are many upon me . . .

In a segment of explanatory talk she proceeds to spell out her twin anxieties: the long absence of her husband and the sudden departure of her son, along with the news of the plot against his life. Penelope tells her dream-messenger that there is good reason for her sorrow. She is not ready yet to be reassured. What is the motive for this mild—but heartfelt—challenge? Is Penelope's initial question an indication that she suspects the authenticity of the dream-image? Or is it simply the kind of question which might even be read as a rebuke by a sister who, as Penelope makes clear, does not appear to understand the causes of her grief? Homer chooses not to reveal Penelope's motives. This opacity, indeed, appears to be an essential element in her characterization.[50] Nevertheless, her long reply to the dream-messenger conveys to the audience, without the apparent intervention of the poet, her current state of mind. The narrative function of her words, at least, is clear: through them we learn that she is worn away with grief. The challenge which Penelope has issued, is, however, blandly ignored by Iphthime, who, at 825–9, reiterates in stronger terms her words of reassurance.

A stronger challenge is expressed in Odysseus' counter-question to Melantho at 19. 71–3. The attendant has just scolded the beggar for

[50] See N. Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), who makes this point throughout (see, e.g., 17, 25, 29, and 128). Hainsworth observes, in another context, that Homer gives us 'no more clues to the inner life of his characters than an observer would have' (J.B. Hainsworth, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. iii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 92). This is true only to a limited extent. For the poet has the power to show us what we would not otherwise see (e.g., *Od.* 10. 374). But, in the case of Penelope, the poet consistently exercises a tantalizing restraint (see also discussion of Penelope's conversation with Odysseus in *Od.* 19, above).

lingering indoors, in the palace, when (she implies) his proper place is outside. She asks, at 66–7:

> *ξεῖν', ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐνθάδ' ἀνιήσεις διὰ νύκτα*
> *δινεύων κατὰ οἶκον, ὀπιπεύσεις δὲ γυναῖκας;*
>
> Stranger, do you mean to stay here all night and bother us
> by poking all over the house and spying upon the women?

She has intended this question as a rhetorical question, one which implies a command: don't hang around here; you're just a nuisance. But the beggar—with a touch of impudence—accepts the question as a genuine question and responds. His vocative, *δαιμονίη* (What has got into you, woman?)[51] precedes a counter-question of protest in which he asks her reasons for wishing to be rid of him (71–3):

> *δαιμονίη, τί μοι ὧδ' ἐπέχεις κεκοτηότι θυμῷ;*
> *ἦ ὅτι δὴ ῥυπόω, κακὰ δὲ χροῒ εἵματα εἶμαι,*
> *πτωχεύω δ' ἀνὰ δῆμον;*
>
> I wonder, why do you hold such an angry grudge against me?
> Is it because I am dirty, and wear foul clothing upon me,
> and go about as a public beggar?

He points out that his present condition belies his former state as a prosperous man who once administered a large household and who treated beggars well.[52] He concludes with a threat (81–8), to which Melantho does not respond; for at this point Penelope intervenes. The social realities underlying this exchange are important: in his beggar's garments, as a beggar, it would have been appropriate for Odysseus to pay heed to the housekeeper's words and obey them without question.[53] But in the palace on Ithaka he is ever aware,

[51] Rutherford, *Homer*: Odyssey *Books XIX and XX*, at 141; and see R. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, 2nd edn. (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), s.v. *δαιμόνιος*.

[52] Odysseus, although in disguise, tells the truth about himself in the hearing of his wife. As Russo, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii, at p. 79, observes, the audience enjoys the irony of this scene (*we* know what Melantho and Penelope do not know), which effectively illustrates Odysseus' propensity for risk-taking at critical moments.

[53] Melantho should have been disconcerted initially by Odysseus' bold response to her question, if only because it was so inappropriate on the lips of a beggar. Nevertheless, his brief autobiography might bring her to accept his counter-question.

despite his rags, of his true identity, as master of the household. Thus he asserts himself, but only as far as he is able in his present circumstances: a counter-question introducing a protest shapes his reply.[54]

The final example of this second set of counter-questions occurs in the interaction between Odysseus and Kirke. With Hermes' assistance Odysseus has been able to render the goddess' magic ineffective (10. 316–19). He has secured a promise that he will not be treated as were his companions who were turned into pigs (337–44). On this condition he has shared her bed. He is then bathed and dressed and a meal is set before him. But Odysseus is unable to eat (373–4). Kirke does not seem to be able to understand his lack of appetite. She appears at this moment to be genuinely concerned (378–81):[55]

> Τίφθ' οὕτως, 'Οδυσεῦ, κατ' ἄρ ἕζεαι ἶσος ἀναύδῳ,
> θυμὸν ἔδων, βρώμης δ' οὐχ ἅπτεαι οὐδὲ ποτῆτος;
> ἦ τινά που δόλον ἄλλον ὀΐεαι· οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ
> δειδίμεν· ἤδη γάρ τοι ἀπώμοσα καρτερὸν ὅρκον.
>
> Why, Odysseus, do you sit so, like a man who has lost his
> voice, eating your heart out, but touch neither food nor drink. Is it
> that you suspect me of more treachery? But you have nothing
> to fear, since I have already sworn my strong oath to you.

Odysseus will respond with a counter-question, echoing her words to him. He is in a position to do so, in the light of his earlier victory over Kirke's magic. Although not the equal of the goddess, he has shown that he is a force to be reckoned with.[56] He presents what in other circumstances might have been a statement ('no man in his right mind would have . . .') as a rhetorical question (383–5):

> ὦ Κίρκη, τίς γάρ κεν ἀνήρ, ὃς ἐναίσιμος εἴη,
> πρὶν τλαίη πάσσασθαι ἐδητύος ἠδὲ ποτῆτος,
> πρὶν λύσασθ' ἑτάρους καὶ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι;

[54] For further discussion of protests, see Chapter 6.

[55] On this point, see Heubeck's comment, in Heubeck and Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii, at p. 64. As he observes, Kirke must know the facts. Why, in that case, does she ask the question? I propose that she does so because, as a goddess, she cannot understand the bonds of loyalty that exist between mortals.

[56] At 321–4 Odysseus proved stronger than Kirke. Note also Kirke's own assessment of him (326–9) and her reference to the prophecy which she had heard on several occasions, that he would come (330–2).

> Oh Circe, how could any man right in his mind ever
> endure to taste of the food and drink that are set before him,
> until with his eyes he saw his companions set free?

The question, however, forces Kirke, as questions do, to confront the issue and to consider the problem. Her response to the challenge is prompt. Without a word she frees his companions and restores them to human form.[57]

*

Drawing on studies of question and answer adjacency pairs and working with an account of the use of questions in a West African society from a sociological perspective, I have identified three types of question in our own culture (two of which are discussed by Goody in her account of Gonja talk) which reflect the ways in which the forms of talk at our disposal reflect or realize the social relationships between ourselves and others. In a subtle fashion each of these forms acknowledges the significance of the power-relations between any two individuals.[58] Deference-questions have the appearance of information-questions. People lower in the social hierarchy will ask such questions because they are reluctant to be seen to be making proposals to their superiors. Control-questions, on the other hand, are a strategy reserved for those higher in status. Their questions also appear to be information-questions. But they are used to define the basis on which the speaker wishes to interact with his or her addressee.[59] Finally, we return to the counter-question. This is a form which is, remarkably, used as a response; it is a means of

[57] For a fourth example of the question as a challenge, observe the by-play between Zeus and Athene in 24. 472–86. Athene, at 473–6, has asked what is to happen next, now that the slaughter of the suitors has become public knowledge and a band of people has gathered to attack Odysseus and his followers. Zeus responds, at 478–86, with a question (478) that allows him to defer his answer and a mock-challenge (479–80) that turns Athene's question back to her. In this latter question he playfully allows it to appear for a moment that he bows to Athene's judgment. But Zeus is teasing Athene. He tells her in his subsequent talk how the hostilities should be resolved: in oaths of faith and friendship (481–6). That is, in plotting the next steps, he immediately reclaims from Athene all the power that he appeared to have granted her.

[58] These forms preserve the stability of such relationships—or, perhaps more accurately—they enable us to avoid appearing to challenge them.

[59] For this formulation, see Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', at 37.

resisting the power of the person who posed the question of the first pair part. Only speakers of similar or near-similar status can issue such challenges and with impunity defer or withhold a response. This small selection of question-types, therefore, illustrates for us the important links between verbal and social interaction; it illuminates the ways in which our knowledge of the world and of social relationships within that world shapes our talk and our interpretation of the talk of others. We know, intuitively, who can say what to whom and how we may express what we want to communicate to our conversational partners.

We can observe the same principles at work in Homer. My discussion of these three question-types from the *Odyssey* has enabled us to explore the complex relationship of verbal strategies and social interaction that Homer has created in his text. It offers further evidence that Homer's re-creation of speech in the epics is modelled on (indeed, it echoes, in a certain stylized fashion) everyday talk.

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PART II

DISCOURSE AND GENDER

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6

Linguistic Choices in Homer: Rebukes and Protests

It is recognized in our own world today even at a folk-linguistic level that there are observable differences in the speech of men and women. Although we are intuitively aware of these distinctions we have little understanding of how they have arisen and what they tell us about how men and women present themselves in talk. For a more precise understanding of men's and women's use of language we must turn to a body of research in sociolinguistics. Two crucial observations have emerged from these studies. The first concerns men's and women's views on the purpose of talk; and the second—related—observation concerns discourse style. Let us begin with the purpose of talk. As we observed in Chapter 5, all utterances are intended as an exchange of information even as they serve a social function. But it has become clear that men and women put different values on the information that is exchanged and on the social functions that the exchange is serving.[1] Men put a high value on public talk that is referential in nature; they set a greater value on information itself than on establishing good relations with those around them. Women, by contrast, value intimate, affectively orientated talk; for them information is less important as the goal of talk than is the establishment and maintenance of good relations.[2]

[1] J. Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 3, 37; J. Coates, 'The Organization of Men's Talk', in S. Johnson and U. Meinhof (eds.), *Language and Masculinity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 107–29, at 124.

[2] Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 3, 37; Coates, 'The Organization of Men's Talk', 124.

The second observation is that men and women in many cultures make 'differential use' of the linguistic resources that are available to them.[3] Jennifer Coates argues that English-speaking, middle-class males are socialized into a competitive style of discourse.[4] In public and professional life—that is, in status-enhancing contexts where talk is valued—men are more likely than women to take advantage of the talking-time available.[5] They are, in general, more competitive; they aim to assert their own status; and they have less concern for the so-called psycho-social needs of others.[6] As a result, over time, it has been the discourse patterns of male speakers, the dominant group, that have become the established norm in these circumstances. Women, by contrast, learn to adopt a more co-operative style of speech. Women's talk has been developed for the private sphere; it is focused not on dominance but on interaction.[7] Women are, in general, more concerned with making connections with others, with involving others and with being involved themselves.[8] They are aware of and concerned for the psycho-social needs of others. Their strategies, therefore, emphasize solidarity rather than status.[9]

In a middle-class English-speaking world, the discourse patterns I am speaking of manifest themselves in a variety of ways. In subsequent chapters I shall consider in turn three discourse strategies that are associated with competitive discourse in today's world: information-questions; directives; and interruptions. In this chapter I follow up a hypothesis proposed by Senta Troemel-Ploetz

[3] See J. Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', in S. Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 13–30, at 13.

[4] Ibid.; and see Introduction.

[5] See Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 40–1.

[6] See P. Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite: Some Evidence from a Mayan Community', in S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker, and N. Furman (eds.), *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 111–36, at 113.

[7] Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', 22–3; Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 38 ('Women tend to regard talk as a means of maintaining and developing relationships').

[8] Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 7.

[9] For discussion of recent approaches to the linguistics of gender, including the dominance approach, see D. Cameron, 'Rethinking Language and Gender Studies: Some Issues for the 1990's', in Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender*, 31–44. For further discussion in the context of interruption, see Chapter 9.

concerning gender-preferences for speech acts, or speech genres. Troemel-Ploetz proposes that men and women learn in their early years who may use speech acts that perform dominance (she has proposed speech acts such as commands, criticism, challenges, and reproaches) and who is required to use speech acts that we associate with lower status: that is, who is more likely to apologize, request permission, ask for favours, agree, or accommodate.[10] Men, according to Troemel-Ploetz, are more likely to use the former; women are more likely to use the latter. There is, she argues, in our own conversational world an asymmetrical distribution of certain speech genres across male and female speakers which reflects and corroborates our social reality.[11] Testing this hypothesis against the Homeric epics, I shall consider two complementary speech genres, one of which I associate with a dominant discourse style and the other with the discourse style of a speaker of lower status.

The Homeric speech acts I have selected as preliminary tests of speech act distribution by gender are the rebuke and the protest.[12] I shall ask whether we find that rebukes are largely the preserve of men, as has been suggested by Troemel-Ploetz; and whether protests are associated with somewhat diminished power and are characteristic of women's speech; and in those cases where men utter protests and women utter rebukes,[13] I shall ask what the context is and what the force is of this particular speech act at this particular moment. In short I shall be testing assumptions about who can say what to whom, how men may address women and how women may address men—and in what circumstances they may speak as they do.

I suggest that there is some merit in comparing the speech preferences attributed to Homer's heroes and heroines, and in considering them both in their Homeric contexts and alongside the

[10] S. Troemel-Ploetz, 'Selling the Apolitical', in J. Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 446–58, at 447.

[11] Ibid.

[12] It is necessary for my study that I select speech genres that are available to both men and women. For this reason I am not including speech genres such as the lament, which, in cultural terms, is identified with women only.

[13] I consider, for reasons indicated in my discussion below, that a protest is a defensive speech act (cf. Troemel-Ploetz's 'defence': see 'Selling the Apolitical', 447).

talk of men and women around us in our own world.[14] Although we are constrained to some extent by the size and nature of the sample, this is a project that can enrich our understanding of the scope and flexibility of this particular oral tradition; it will help us in our interpretation of the Homeric texts; and it will test a number of sociolinguistic assumptions about male and female relationships in the context of another (albeit idealized) culture.

Rebukes are readily identified in Homer. First, the poet often tags them; and, second, they exhibit a common structure.[15] The formulation of the rebuke that I proposed in Chapter 1 is as follows:

(1) address/emotional reaction/words of reproach;
(2) an account of the problem (in which the speaker alludes to the undesirable behaviour at issue);
(3) a generalization about appropriate action/a view of the undesirable action from a broader perspective; and
(4) a proposal for amends: new action on the part of the addressee.[16]

A noteworthy element of the rebuke, in the context of this discussion, is the fourth element: a proposal for amends. This is almost always expressed through an imperative: the speaker orders his addressee to perform an action that will remedy the situation.

Rebukes in Homer are directed at the actions of the addressee. Protests, on the other hand, are in the epics more often responses to words rather than deeds. A protest is a dissenting or a disapproving reaction to a statement or to a proposal for action by another

[14] I have chosen this particular comparative exercise not because I expect that it will demonstrate definitively that men's and women's behaviour in conversational English in today's world replicates that of the Homeric world, but simply as a useful starting point for an investigation into the discursive practices of men and women in the world that Homer described—and (as I argue) in the world that produced oral epic song in the tradition we associate with Homer. Indeed, this is not a diachronic study of discourse habits; I am at this point testing for differences in the world that Homer represents.

[15] For discussion, see Chapter 1.

[16] For notes on the underlying format of the rebuke, for a sampling of rebukes in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, for comment on the stylization of rebukes in epic, as a complete and often elaborate rendering of the format set out above, by contrast with abbreviated or abrupt versions which we hear in everyday talk today, see Chapter 1.

speaker. To this point a protest is not dissimilar to a rebuke. But, although it may be vigorous, this is a *reactive* verbal form, which recognizes the dominance of the addressee—Zeus, for example.[17] Even as speakers register their—often strong—opposition to an action proposed, their protests acknowledge that the addressee may still go on to do as intended; their words will not cause him or her to change his or her mind. Introductory expressions may foreshadow a protest; but many protests, unlike rebukes, are not signalled.[18] I propose the following formulation for a protest:

(1) reaction of dismay or indignation/questioning the accuracy or wisdom of what has been said;
(2) correcting the misapprehension/elaboration of consequences (highlighting of flaws in proposal); and
(3) proposal for action (not necessarily on the part of the addressee)

As I noted above, Troemel-Ploetz included reproaches or, as I refer to them, rebukes, amongst those speech acts which are a characteristic element in the competitive discourse style of men in our own world.[19] If we tally all examples of rebukes uttered in direct speech in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we discover that the great majority of these are attributed to men. This is not at all surprising in itself, as the *Iliad* concerns itself almost entirely with the deeds of men: with war and warfare, contests and displays of prowess, and triumph and death on the battlefield. The *Odyssey*, on the other hand, depicts a palace society that has begun to fall apart; in this disintegrating world the storyteller finds small but significant roles for women. For this reason there is in the *Odyssey* a nearer-to-equal male to female distribution of rebukes.

[17] On Olympos Zeus has at times struggled to maintain his power, but throughout the story of the *Iliad*, with the exception of the deception of Zeus in *Iliad* 14, he is the dominant figure: see, e.g., 1. 528–30, 586–94, 4. 1–19, 15. 12–33.

[18] So Athene's protest at *Il.* 22. 178–81 is not specially marked; on the other hand, Hekabe's, at *Il.* 24. 201–16, is (*κώκυσεν δὲ γυνὴ*, his wife cried out aloud, 200).

[19] I am using the term 'rebuke' for the sake of consistency with the study on which I reported in Chapter 1. There I was interested in the format of the rebuke; in this chapter my attention is on the distribution of the speech genre across Homer's speech community.

REBUKES AND PROTESTS IN THE *ILIAD*

Iliadic Rebukes

The thirty-five rebukes that I find in the *Iliad* almost all reflect the power, status, or age relations of speaker and addressee. Six rebukes only are uttered by female speakers (five of whom are divine).[20] All other speakers are male. Homer shows us Odysseus at *Il.* 2. 200–6 rebuking a common soldier, striking him with his staff—an expressive token of dominance—to reinforce his rebuke.[21] At 12. 409–12 Sarpedon rebukes the Lykians:

> *ὦ Λύκιοι, τί τ' ἄρ' ὧδε μεθίετε θούριδος ἀλκῆς;*
> *ἀργαλέον δέ μοί ἐστι καὶ ἰφθίμῳ περ ἐόντι*
> *μούνῳ ῥηξαμένῳ θέσθαι παρὰ νηυσὶ κέλευθον·*
> *ἀλλ' ἐφομαρτεῖτε· πλεόνων δέ τε ἔργον ἄμεινον.*

> Lykians, why do you thus let go of your furious valour?
> It is a hard thing for me, strong as I am, to break down
> the wall, single-handed, and open a path to the vessels.
> Come on with me then. This work is better if many do it.

The superior status of the speaker is again clear. In this latter case (12. 409–12) Sarpedon is the leader of his contingent; he is in a position to press his men to assist him.

Homer's heroes are also ready to rebuke their peers; in such cases, factors such as age or superiority in a particular skill are usually implicit.[22] Diomedes, at 4. 412–18, rebukes Sthenelos, his charioteer. At 10. 159–61 Nestor, the elder, rebukes Diomedes, his junior:

> *ἔγρεο, Τυδέος υἱέ· τί πάννυχον ὕπνον ἀωτεῖς;*
> *οὐκ ἀΐεις ὡς Τρῶες ἐπὶ θρωσμῷ πεδίοιο*
> *ἥαται ἄγχι νεῶν, ὀλίγος δ' ἔτι χῶρος ἐρύκει;*

[20] These six rebukes by females are at 2. 173–81 (Athene to Odysseus); 6. 407–39 (Andromache to Hektor); 15. 128–41 (Athene to Ares); 17. 556–9 (Athene to Menelaos); 21. 394–9 (Athene to Ares); 21. 472–7 (Artemis to Apollo). For a full listing of rebukes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* see Table 4.

[21] For commentary on the kind of body language expressed here, see M. Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 220–1.

[22] What are the indicators of social status? For discussion, see H. van Wees, *Status Warriors: War, Violence and Society in Homer and History* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1992), 64–77 (on honour and deference).

Table 4. A listing of rebukes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Passage	Rebuke
Iliad	
2. 173–81	Athene to Odysseus
2. 190–7	Odysseus to a king
2. 200–6	Odysseus to soldier
2. 225–42	Thersites to Agamemnon
2. 246–64	Odysseus to Thersites
3. 39–57	Hektor to Paris
3. 438–46	Paris to Helen
4. 242–9	Agamemnon to Argives
4. 338–48	Agamemnon to Menestheus
4. 370–400	Agamemnon to Diomedes
4. 412–18	Diomedes to Sthenelos
5. 472–92	Sarpedon to Hektor
5. 889–98	Zeus to Ares
6. 326–31	Hektor to Paris
6. 407–39	Andromache to Hektor
7. 109–19	Agamemnon to Menelaos
8. 201–7	Hera to Poseidon
10. 159–61	Nestor to Diomedes
12. 409–12	Sarpedon to Lykians
15. 14–33	Zeus to Hera
15. 128–41	Athene to Ares
16. 422–5	Sarpedon to Lykians
17. 142–68	Glaukos to Hektor
17. 556–9	Athene to Menelaos
19. 342–8	Zeus to Athene
21. 229–32	Skamandros to Apollo
21. 394–9	Athene to Ares
21. 472–7	Artemis to Ares
22. 498	'a parent' to 'Astyanax'
23. 69–92	Patroklos to Achilleus
23. 492–8	Achilleus to Aias and Idomeneus
24. 239–46	Priam to sons
24. 683–8	Hermes to Priam
Odyssey	
1. 346–59	Telemachos to Penelope
1. 368–80	Telemachos to suitors
4. 31–6	Menelaos to Eteoneus
6. 25–40	Athene to Nausikaa
6. 199–210	Nausikaa to handmaidens
7. 159–66	Echeneos to Alkinoös
10. 472–4	Odysseus' men to Odysseus
13. 330–51	Athene to Odysseus
15. 10–42	Athene to Telemachos
16. 202–12	Odysseus to Telemachos
17. 46–56	Telemachos to Penelope
18. 215–25	Penelope to Telemachos
18. 327–36	Melantho to Odysseus
19. 66–9	Melantho to Odysseus
19. 91–5	Penelope to Melantho
20. 304–19	Telemachos to Ktesippos
21. 85–95	Antinoös to Eumaios and Philoitios
21. 288–310	Antinoös to Odysseus (in disguise)
21. 312–19	Penelope to Antinoös
21. 344–53	Telemachos to Penelope
22. 27–30	suitors to Odysseus
22. 226–35	Athene to Odysseus
23. 11–24	Penelope to Eurykleia
23. 97–103	Telemachos to Penelope
23. 166–72	Odysseus to Penelope

Son of Tydeus, wake up! Why do you doze in slumber
nightlong? Do you not hear how the Trojans at the break of the flat land
are sitting close to our ships, and the narrow ground holds them from us?

And at 7. 109–19 Agamemnon rebukes Menelaos, his less powerful brother. It is possible that the sting is taken out of this rebuke by Agamemnon's gesture: he takes his brother's hand (δεξιτερῆς ἕλε

χειρὸς, 108), a gesture which is intended to reinforce his message.[23] In those cases where status distinctions might appear to have been ignored, Homer is careful to explain why the speaker has spoken as he has.[24] This is the case when Patroklos, who stands so much in awe of his companion, remonstrates with Achilleus at 23. 69–92.[25] Patroklos, on this occasion a ghost, can speak as he does because the circumstances are exceptional.[26] Besides, his rebuke is extraordinarily gentle (69–70), and the directives which follow the first urgent *θάπτε με* (71, bury me) are either softened (see, for example, 82: *ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω καὶ ἐφήσομαι, αἴ κε πίθηαι*, there is one more thing I will say, and ask of you, if you will obey me) or expressed in optative form as a wish (*ἀμφικαλύπτοι*, let it hold, 91).[27]

Rebukes on Olympos

Let us turn now to Olympos. First of all, gods, as superior beings, are in a position to rebuke mortals. It is remarkable that gods and goddesses equally may chastise mortals, but they do so very rarely (for example, Athene rebukes Menelaos, 17. 556–9; Hermes, very mildly, rebukes Priam, 24. 683–8).[28] Second, we observe that the gods, when they interact, are conscious of their status relative to each other and reveal this awareness in their decisions about what they can say and to whom they say it. For example, Zeus, lord of Olympos, rebukes Ares, his son, at 5. 889–98; and at 15. 14–33 he rebukes Hera, his wife and sister:

[23] See Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 226. Agamemnon's deliberate action of taking his brother's hand expresses more than just a bid for his attention (ibid., 227). It suggests *either* affection (Agamemnon's brotherly concern) *or* dominance (emphasizing his status and the force of his rebuke).

[24] For a very clear example of this, see *Od.* 7. 159–66, the rebuke addressed by Echeneos to Alkinoös. For discussion, see below.

[25] Patroklos, although the elder, is inferior in birth and skills to Achilleus, to whom he otherwise defers (11. 652–4).

[26] Patroklos' ghost chides Achilleus with forgetfulness; he asks that his burial rites be no longer delayed. This is an urgent request.

[27] For futher discussion of directives and the contrast of bald imperatives and mitigated forms, see Chapter 8.

[28] So mild is Hermes' rebuke that the proposal for amends is left unspoken (but assumed).

ἦ μάλα δὴ κακότεχνος, ἀμήχανε, σὸς δόλος, Ἥρη,
Ἕκτορα δῖον ἔπαυσε μάχης, ἐφόβησε δὲ λαούς·
οὐ μὰν οἶδ' εἰ αὖτε κακορραφίης ἀλεγεινῆς
πρώτη ἐπαύρηαι καί σε πληγῇσιν ἱμάσσω. (14–17)

τῶν σ' αὖτις μνήσω, ἵν' ἀπολλήξῃς ἀπατάων,
ὄφρα ἴδῃ ἤν τοι χραίσμῃ φιλότης τε καὶ εὐνή,
ἣν ἐμίγης ἐλθοῦσα θεῶν ἄπο καί μ' ἀπάτησας.[29] (31–3)

Hopeless one, it was your evil design, your treachery, Hera,
That stayed brilliant Hektor from battle, terrified his people.
I do not know, perhaps for this contrivance of evil
And pain you will win first reward when I lash you with whip strokes. (14–17)

I will remind you of all this, so you will give up
your deceptions, see if your lovemaking will help you,
that way you lay with me apart from the gods, and deceived me. (31–3)

In each of these latter cases Zeus's scowl (*ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν*, 5. 888 and 15. 13) confirms the anger that underlies his words.[30] Zeus and Poseidon, too, confirm their keen awareness of status in their exchanges of words, through Iris as intermediary, which follow Zeus's reawakening from his sleep at 15. 4 (15. 180–3, 208–10). Remarkably, however, at another point of the action, Artemis scolds her brother Apollo (21. 472–7):

φεύγεις δή, ἑκάεργε, Ποσειδάωνι δὲ νίκην
πᾶσαν ἐπέτρεψας, μέλεον δέ οἱ εὖχος ἔδωκας·

[29] D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der* Ilias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 150–1, observes the underpinnings of ring-composition in this speech (15. 14–44). I argue, on the contrary, that in this speech we can observe the structure of a familiar speech genre.

[30] See M. Edwards, 'Homeric Speech Introductions', *HSCP*, 74 (1970), 1–36, at 24, on the 'unusually strong qualification' at 15. 13: *δεῖνα δ' ὑπόδρα ἴδων* makes it clear that Zeus is furious. On the 'meaning' of a lowered brow, see Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 49 (a dominant expression); and 135 (on frowning as an indicator of negative feelings). Lowered brows in Western cultures signify dominance (as opposed to smiling and raised brows, which indicate warmth and liking). And see also J. Holoka, '"Looking Darkly" (*ΥΠΟΔΡΑ ΙΔΩΝ*): Reflections on Status and Decorum in Homer', *TAPA*, 113 (1983), 1–16, who notes (at 4) that dark looks 'signal irritation and resentment and are meant to stop short an offender against social decorum'. The dark look is used generally of a superior to an inferior. Lowered brows in the Homeric world (on Achilleus or Odysseus (2. 245)) are an exclusively male behaviour. Zeus, Holoka notes, is the only god in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* who looks darkly (9).

> *νηπύτιε, τί νυ τόξον ἔχεις ἀνεμώλιον αὔτως;*
> *μή σευ νῦν ἔτι πατρὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἀκούσω*
> *εὐχομένου, ὡς τὸ πρὶν ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν,*
> *ἄντα Ποσειδάωνος ἐναντίβιον πολεμίζειν.*
>
> You run from him, striker from afar. You have yielded Poseidon
> the victory entire. He can brag, where nothing has happened.
> Fool, then why do you wear that bow, which is wind and nothing.
> Let me not hear you in the halls of my father boasting
> ever again, as you did before among the immortals,
> that you could match your strength in combat against Poseidon.

Here we observe a female, albeit a goddess, speaking out against a male—with considerable force, as Homer tells us: *νείκεσε*... *ὀνείδειον* ... *μῦθον* (scolded him ... and spoke a word of revilement, 470–1). Since Artemis is Apollo's sister we can accept that she is comparable in status by birth and on those grounds may have a right to find fault with her brother. But what about gender? It may surprise us that in this patriarchal world a woman would round on a man quite so energetically. But Esther Goody points out that in close-kin relationships in some societies familiarity cushions the effects of status-imbalance to some extent.[31] But does it also cushion gender-imbalance? As Goody suggests, this may happen to some extent. I propose that the answer may also lie in the circumstances themselves. At this point of the narrative we are in the midst of the extraordinary battle of the gods; a 'wearisome burden of hatred' (385–6) has descended on them; many of the normal constraints that we recognize in human society have been broken down. Ares has already had a fierce exchange with Athene (394–9). Poseidon had just previously invited Apollo to a tussle (436–40); but Apollo has kept his head. Out of respect for his uncle's status and despite Poseidon's pro-Achaian stance, he has declined. It is this dignified restraint on Apollo's part that arouses Artemis' anger. She becomes exasperated with her brother. And it is both her sense that, as a sister, she can speak out to Apollo and the temporary breakdown of social order

[31] E. Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', in *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 17–43, at 38.

amongst the Olympians that have enabled her, to the audience's amusement, to voice her displeasure.[32]

Olympian Protests

When our minds turn to outspoken goddesses, Artemis is not the first goddess whom we think of. It is Hera and Athene who are conspicuous amongst all the gods for their readiness to voice their opinions, especially and remarkably against Zeus, king of gods and men. But whenever they are offended by his proposals for action, they never go so far as to rebuke him. Instead, they *protest*.[33] On Olympos it is women who react—vainly—against men; status aligns itself with gender. Homer uses rhetorical questions such as *ποῖον τὸν μύθον ἔειπες* (what sort of thing have you spoken? 16. 440) to mark a protest.[34] For example, when Zeus calls Hera and Athene back just as they were bound for earth to assist the Achaians in battle, and threatens them with dire punishment, Athene retreats into sullenness (8. 459–60); but Hera protests, angrily defending their behaviour (462–3):

> *αἰνότατε Κρονίδη, ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες.*
> *εὖ νυ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ὅ τοι σθένος οὐκ ἀλαπαδνόν·*
>
> Majesty, son of Kronos, what sort of thing have you spoken?
> We know well already your strength, how it is no small thing.

She announces that she and Athene will obey Zeus. But, even so, because of their great sympathy for the Achaians, she finds a way to modify Zeus's restriction on their movements, with a small compromise that will not, however, interfere with Zeus's current intentions (464–8):

[32] N. Richardson, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. vi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 94, remarks on the 'petty level' of Artemis' intervention. It is the combination of pettiness, vigour, and surprise (a woman rounding on a man) that causes our amusement.

[33] See Table 5 for a listing of protests in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

[34] Cf. similar phrases in use also amongst mortals, in cases where status is at issue: at 4. 350 and 14. 83 (in both cases Odysseus addresses Agamemnon).

Table 5. A listing of protests in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Passage	Protest
Iliad	
1. 106–20	Agamemnon to Kalchas
1. 122–9	Achilleus to Agamemnon
1. 131–40	Agamemnon to Achilleus
1. 149–71	Achilleus to Agamemnon
1. 540–3	Hera to Zeus
1. 552–9	Hera to Zeus
3. 399–412	Helen to Aphrodite
4. 25–9	Hera to Zeus
4. 350–5	Odysseus to Agamemnon
4. 404–10	Sthenelos to Agamemnon
5. 757–63	Hera to Zeus
5. 872–87	Ares to Zeus
7. 455–63	Zeus to Poseidon
8. 209–11	Poseidon to Hera
8. 462–8	Hera to Zeus
9. 32–49	Diomedes to Agamemnon
9. 434–605	Phoinix to Achilleus
10. 164–7	Diomedes to Nestor
12. 231–50	Hektor to Poulydamas
14. 83–102	Odysseus to Agamemnon
14. 330–40	Hera to Zeus
15. 185–99	Poseidon to Iris
16. 21–45	Patroklos to Achilleus
16. 49–100	Achilleus to Patroklos
16. 440–57	Hera to Zeus
17. 170–82	Hektor to Glaukos
18. 285–309	Hektor to Poulydamas
18. 361–7	Hera to Zeus
22. 178–81	Athene to Zeus
23. 426–8	Menelaos to Antilochos
23. 439–41	Menelaos to Antilochos
23. 543–54	Antilochos to Achilleus
23. 570–85	Menelaos to Antilochos
24. 33–54	Apollo to gods
24. 56–63	Hera to Apollo
24. 201–16	Hekabe to Priam
Odyssey	
1. 48–62	Athene to Zeus
1. 64–79	Zeus to Athene
2. 85–128	Antinoös to Telemachos
2. 243–56	Leokritos to Mentor
2. 363–70	Eurykleia to Telemachos
3. 230–8	Athene to Telemachos
5. 22–7	Zeus to Athene
5. 118–44	Kalypso to Hermes
8. 166–85	Odysseus to Euryalos
10. 337–44	Odysseus to Circe
11. 210–14	Odysseus to Antikleia
12. 116–17	Circe to Odysseus
12. 279–93	Eurylochos to Odysseus
13. 312–28	Odysseus to Athene
14. 391–400	Odysseus to Eumaios
15. 326–39	Eumaios to Odysseus
16. 69–89	Telemachos to Eumaios
17. 381–91	Eumaios to Antinoös
17. 406–8	Antinoös to Telemachos
17. 454–7	Odysseus to Antinoös
18. 389–93	Eurymachos to Odysseus
19. 71–88	Odysseus to Melantho
19. 165–71	Odysseus to Penelope
19. 482–90	Odysseus to Eurykleia
19. 492–8	Eurykleia to Odysseus
21. 168–74	Antinoös to Leodes
23. 70–9	Eurykleia to Penelope
23. 174–80	Penelope to Odysseus
23. 183–204	Odysseus to Penelope

ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπης Δαναῶν ὀλοφυρόμεθ᾽ αἰχμητάων,
οἵ κεν δὴ κακὸν οἶτον ἀναπλήσαντες ὄλωνται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἤτοι πολέμου μὲν ἀφεξόμεθ᾽, εἰ σὺ κελεύεις·
βουλὴν δ᾽ Ἀργείοις ὑποθησόμεθ᾽, ἥ τις ὀνήσει,
ὡς μὴ πάντες ὄλωνται ὀδυσσαμένοιο τεοῖο.[35]

[35] See Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, 120–1, for perceptive discussion of Zeus's parodic response to his wife (8. 470–83).

> Yet even so we are sorrowful for the Danaan spearmen
> who must fill out an unhappy destiny, and perish.
> Still, we shall keep out of the fighting, as you command us;
> yet we will put good counsel in the Argives, if it may help them;
> so that not all of them will die because of your anger.

A rebuke in Homer, as we have noted, generally includes a negative comment on the addressee's behaviour along with a proposal for action (that is, a directive is issued by the speaker to the addressee). Since, as we shall observe in Chapter 8, directives are freely used by women, it must be that women, on account of the disparity of status, shrink from expressing a combination of two of the key elements of a rebuke (criticism *and* directive). Although Hera and Athene at several points of the narrative utter protests against Zeus's decrees or against his criticism of their behaviour, and although they announce some compromise action on their own part (or, on one occasion, 16. 444–57, Hera delicately suggests a course of action to Zeus), they do not go so far as to propose a change of behaviour to the king of gods and men.[36] The dominance of Zeus is acknowledged in the speech forms of these otherwise assertive women.[37] Indeed, one quarter of all thirty-six protests uttered in the *Iliad* are

[36] For other protests see, e.g., 1. 552–9 (Hera to Zeus); 4. 25–9 (Hera to Zeus); 7. 455–63 (Zeus to Poseidon—between male gods of near-equal status); 8. 201–7 (Hera to Poseidon); 8. 462–8 (Hera to Zeus); 16. 440–57 (Hera to Zeus); 18. 361–7 (Hera to Zeus); 22. 178–81 (Athene to Zeus); 24. 56–63 (Hera to Apollo, in Zeus's presence). Note also 14. 330–40 (a compromise proposed, at 337–40). Here Hera has taken on the unlikely role of dutiful, but modest, wife. Hence her use of a characteristic protest—to our amusement—at Zeus's proposal that they make love on the peaks of Ida.

[37] Even a protest on the lips of Hera can shock her addressees. At 8. 201–7 she addresses Poseidon in her indignation that Zeus should be giving Hektor victory (for the moment). Her first words sound like a rebuke: 'For shame . . . In your breast / the heart takes no sorrow for the Achaians who are dying' (201–2). But her speech will develop as a protest: in place of the 'proposal for amends' that we expect to hear in a rebuke, Hera offers a cautious statement containing a future less vivid condition ('For if all of us . . . only were willing / to hurl back the Trojans and hold off Zeus of the broad brows, / he would be desperate, there where he sits by himself on Ida' (205–7). Hera has conceived a thought so outrageous that she cannot express it as a command (which is what we expect in the rebuke-format). Poseidon, however, reacts almost as though she had. He protests (209–11) at her words (calling her ἀπτοεπές, reckless of word, 209): he says that this is not something that the rest of the gods should do. Zeus is far mightier than they.

addressed to Zeus; and eight of these are addressed to him by Hera or Athene.

Back Amongst Mortal Men—and Women

Returning to the world of mortals, we observe that Hekabe feels the same constraint before Priam as Hera does before Zeus. When Priam announces that a messenger has arrived from Zeus telling him that he must go to the ships of Achilleus with gifts, to seek the ransom of his son, he asks her advice. This request is significant in itself; a man appears to be consulting a woman. But it is Hekabe's reply that I wish to examine. She brushes aside her husband's request for advice and assumes (as we all do) that he will obey Zeus's instructions (as he does). Her response is therefore addressed to the implications of the message from Zeus that Priam has revealed. She protests. In the same way that Hera would voice her protests to Zeus Hekabe uses a rhetorical question (24. 201–2):[38]

> *ὤ μοι, πῇ δή τοι φρένες οἴχονθ', ᾗς τὸ πάρος περ*
> *ἔκλε' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ξείνους ἠδ' οἷσιν ἀνάσσεις;*
>
> Ah me, where has that wisdom gone for which you were famous
> in time before, among outlanders and those you rule over?

Hekabe questions the wisdom of the scheme (24. 203–8); and she proposes a compromise (208–16).[39] This is a speech of considerable force. Its energy is apparent in the sequence of rhetorical questions with which she introduces it and, no less, in her fiery wish, which emerges so sharply from the themes of lament that surround it. She says of Achilleus (212–13):

> *τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἧπαρ ἔχοιμι*
> *ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα·*
>
> I wish I could set teeth
> in the middle of his liver and eat it.

[38] Cf. 4. 25, 16. 440. And, indeed, the scholiast T notes on 201 *γυναικεία ἡ ἀναφώνησις* (spoken just like a woman).

[39] For 24. 203–8, cf. 4. 26–8, 16. 441–2; for 24. 208–16, cf. 16. 444–57: Hera speaks to Zeus in every case.

Hekabe's protest is not the only protest expressed by a mortal. But hers is the only protest uttered by a woman to a man, her husband.[40] The other speeches of this kind are protests between heroes, such as Odysseus to Agamemnon, at 4. 350–5 and 14. 83–102.[41] Protests amongst mortals, like protests on Olympos, are distributed by status: heroes of lesser status protest against the claims of those more powerful (for example, six of the twenty protests amongst mortals are addressed to Agamemnon). The protest of Patroklos to Achilleus (16. 21–45) is therefore unsurprising.[42] But what of the protest addressed by Achilleus to Patroklos (16. 49–59)? Patroklos has protested (a rhetorical question is a standard inclusion) against Achilleus' intransigeance (29–35). And he proposes a compromise, that he at least should be allowed to go into battle (38–9). It is his surprising assumption (36–7) that Achilleus has been warned against entering the fighting that Achilleus challenges in his counter-protest.[43] We do not expect that Achilleus would have to defend himself against his beloved companion. But he does. For Patroklos has touched a vulnerable spot in Achilleus—his affection for the leading Achaians, who have been wounded. He has put Achilleus, momentarily, on the

[40] Richard Martin also notes the unusual nature of Hekabe's protest: see R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 86–8, at 87, where he describes this speech as 'anomalous' (in that a woman answers back to a man using a 'muthos'). I note, however, that a protest is not as strong as a rebuke.

[41] At 14. 83–102 Odysseus very tactfully protests against his leader's decision to abandon Troy: for comment, see R. Janko, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. iv (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 159–60. Odysseus reflects on Agamemnon's leadership, but not on his honour and integrity. A rebuke would be a sterner—and a more challenging—form of address. Note, however, that at 4. 349 and 14. 82 Odysseus looks darkly: in each case an indication of his severe displeasure at what has been said. For discussion, see Holoka, 'Looking Darkly', 10–12. Odysseus' face betrays what his words do not. On 'leakage' of emotional expression especially through the face, see Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 78 and 81.

[42] Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, 275, identifies 29–35 as 'Vorwürfe' (blame, or reproaches). I, however, read the speech as a protest: Patroklos knows that he cannot shake Achilleus in his resolve (29–35).

[43] Indeed, the scholiast T agrees: *εὔλογος ἡ ἀγανάκτησις* (his irritation is reasonable) he says of Achilleus' response.

defensive.[44] Achilleus' tone, as he replies, protesting in his turn, blends affection with indignation (49–51):[45]

> *ὤ μοι, διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες, οἷον ἔειπες·*
> *οὔτε θεοπροπίης ἐμπάζομαι, ἥν τινα οἶδα,*
> *οὔτε τί μοι πὰρ Ζηνὸς ἐπέφραδε πότνια μήτηρ·*
>
> Ah, Patroklos, illustrious, what is this you are saying?
> I have not any prophecy in mind that I know of;
> there is no word from Zeus my honoured mother has told me...

It is in this world of mortals, however, that we find the sole example in the *Iliad* of a woman who adopts a speech act pattern which we normally associate with dominance, and rebukes her husband.[46] Her rebuke may seem all the more remarkable when we consider that amongst the gods Hera is not prepared to rebuke *her* husband. I am referring to the celebrated words of Andromache

[44] Even though Achilleus is the dominant partner it is possible for Patroklos to put him on the defensive. This happens also in the case of Hektor, the leader of the Trojans. Three times in the *Iliad* (12. 231–50, 17. 170–82, and 18. 285–309) Hektor protests at the words of companions in the Trojan alliance. His need to defend himself and his unwillingness to accept the advice of others reflect poorly on his leadership. For discussion of these three scenes in the context of Hektor's scowl on each occasion, see Holoka, 'Looking Darkly', at 6–8, where Holoka notes Hektor's 'wounded sensibilities' (7) and his loss of 'his usual eminence within the heroic society' (8).

[45] Achilleus' address-term for his friend counters any sense of indignation that we might otherwise read into this introductory expression. But we soon sense his rising anger (52–9), which he masters (60), as he talks about the quarrel.

[46] I have not included Helen's words to Paris (3. 428–36) in this count. I read Helen's words as a sarcastic, jeering speech of welcome (*ἤλυθες*, as Kirk observes, usually introduces a friendly speech in Homer: see G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 327). Thus, in *form* this is not a speech of rebuke. It is a particularly sour statement of welcome, an instantiation of a speech genre which a wife might use when her husband returns home safely from battle. It is Helen's sour tone that Paris hears. He responds to her words with *μή με ... θυμὸν ἔνιπτε* (censure my heart no more, 3. 438), *as though* to a rebuke. P. Brown, 'Gender, Politeness, and Confrontation in Tenejapa', in D. Tannen (ed.), *Gender and Conversational Interaction* (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 144–62, at 145 and 159, makes an observation on the language habits of Tenejapa women that may help us understand Helen's stance: Brown notes that, even when Tenejapa women are not being polite, characteristic female strategies of indirectness and politeness are manifested in their speech. Thus it is with Helen. She has no patience with Paris: she expresses her scorn by means of a wifely speech act with a sarcastic undertone. Her indirectness adds force to her words.

to Hektor, at 6. 407–39. Andromache's speech has been read as a speech of entreaty (after all, Andromache desperately desires her husband to stay within the walls) and even a lament; but in structure the format of her speech is identical with that of other rebukes in Homer.[47]

δαιμόνιε, φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος, οὐδ' ἐλεαίρεις
παῖδά τε νηπίαχον καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον, ἣ τάχα χήρη
σεῦ ἔσομαι· τάχα γάρ σε κατακτανέουσιν Ἀχαιοὶ
πάντες ἐφορμηθέντες· (407–10)

ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἐλέαιρε καὶ αὐτοῦ μίμν' ἐπὶ πύργῳ
μὴ παῖδ' ὀρφανικὸν θήῃς χήρην τε γυναῖκα·
λαὸν δὲ στῆσον παρ' ἐρινεόν, ἔνθα μάλιστα
ἀμβατός ἐστι πόλις καὶ ἐπίδρομον ἔπλετο τεῖχος. (431–4)

Dearest,
your own great strength will be your death, and you have no pity
on your little son, nor on me, ill-starred, who must soon be your widow;
for presently the Achaians, gathering together,
will set upon you and kill you... (407–10)

Take pity on me then,[48] stay here on the rampart,
that you may not leave your child an orphan, your wife a widow,
but draw your people up by the fig tree, there where the city
is openest to attack, and where the wall may be mounted. (431–4)

[47] On the speech of Andromache as entreaty, see G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. ii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 208: '[s]he begs him not to risk his life'. On the speech as a lament: see J. M. Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 188–98; S. Murnaghan, 'The Poetics of Loss in Greek Epic', in M. Bessinger, J. Tylus, and S. Wofford (eds.), *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: The Poetics of Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 203–20, at 212 (on Andromache's 'proleptic grief'). Certainly Andromache has contemplated with distress the possibility of Hektor's death. This is at the back of her mind. But we should ask ourselves what she is trying to do at this moment. It is clear that she is trying to persuade Hektor to change his strategy. She cannot achieve this through a lament, a speech format that simply accepts the *status quo.* A better strategy is the proactive rebuke. On the speech as a reproach see also M. Arthur, 'The Divided World of *Iliad* VI', in H. Foley (ed.), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York and London: Gordon and Breach, 1981), 19–44, at 33.

[48] Lattimore's translation at this point is misleading (Please take pity...). Andromache is no more saying 'please' than is Apollo when he rebukes Hektor at 16. 721–5.

She begins with an affectionate address (407);[49] she states the behaviour (the problem) which is at issue (407–10); she puts Hektor's behaviour into a broader perspective, through her story of Achilleus' capture of her home (410–30); and, finally, she tells him what he ought to do; and her words (431–9), typically of rebukes, include a sequence of imperative forms (take pity on me, stay here on the rampart, 431; draw your people up by the fig tree, 433).

What is the significance of Andromache's realization of this particular speech act at this particular moment in the narrative? Andromache has been pushed into an extreme position by her husband's behaviour, which seems to her, as she says (407), to be foolhardy—and worse. If Hektor pursues the course of action that he appears to be intent on pursuing, he will destroy himself and thereby leave her and their baby son destitute.[50] In an attempt to keep Hektor from certain death and to preserve their family unit she undertakes the boldest act she can.[51] The only mode of action available to her is speech. The speech act she chooses is one that appears to be foreign to her and, as we have seen in the *Iliad*, foreign to mortal women: the rebuke. On this one occasion she attempts to sway Hektor, sweetly, movingly, but ineffectually. Andromache emphasizes her own and their son's dependence on her husband, drawing on themes characteristic of women's speech: the loss of close kin and the vulnerability of new brides, young mothers, and infants.[52] These are conventionally moving—and usually persuasive. In reply Hektor speaks gently to her and admits to having the same concerns (441–65). But, ultimately, he will tell her that all this strategic talk is none of her business (490–2); war is his concern (492–3), not hers.

[49] On δαιμόνιος as an expression of tender concern, see R. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, 2nd edn. (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963): cf. scholiast bT, who notes that Andromache's address-term reveals her heartfelt concern (θυμόν τε καὶ εὔνοιαν). See also Chapter 8.

[50] Andromache will be more specific about the future for a child in these circumstances later in the narrative, at 22. 484–506.

[51] On the restraining role of women in the epic, see J. Kakridis, 'The Rôle of the Woman in the *Iliad*', in *Homer Revisited* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1971), 68–75, at 70–3. As Kakridis (71) observes: 'it is the main poetic function of women in the *Iliad* to exercise consciously this restraining power over men . . . because he [the poet] wants to hold men up as the protagonists of his epic'.

[52] Lohmann expresses this nicely (*Die Komposition der Reden*, at 97): 'der Blick geht über den intimen Kreis der Redenden hinaus (Vater, Bruder, und Mutter), um sich dann um so fester wieder auf den Gegenüber zu richten . . .'.

Thus Andromache's rebuke is, unusually in the epics, cast aside. Hektor tells his wife that she has adopted a speech act inappropriate to a woman.

REBUKES AND PROTESTS IN THE *ODYSSEY*

Odyssean Rebukes

In the *Iliad*, the asymmetries of birth, status, and gender are clearly and consistently acknowledged in the distribution of the rebuke. Only when the situation is extreme does a speaker who would not otherwise use this form choose to follow the rebuke-format. What happens in the twenty-five rebukes uttered in the *Odyssey*? We shall see that status-lines are not so clearly drawn in the household now in turmoil on Ithaka. But status and birth continue to carry weight elsewhere. In Sparta, for example, Menelaos in irritation (*μέγ' ὀχθήσας*, 4. 30) rebukes Eteoneus, his henchman, for a lapse in hospitality (31–6):

> *οὐ μὲν νήπιος ἦσθα, Βοηθοΐδη Ἐτεωνεῦ,*
> *τὸ πρίν· ἀτὰρ μὲν νῦν γε πάϊς ὣς νήπια βάζεις.*
> *ἦ μὲν δὴ νῶϊ ξεινήϊα πολλὰ φαγόντε*
> *ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων δεῦρ' ἱκόμεθ', αἴ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς*
> *ἐξοπίσω περ παύσῃ ὀϊζύος. ἀλλὰ λῦ' ἵππους*
> *ξείνων, ἐς δ' αὐτοὺς προτέρω ἄγε θοινηθῆναι.*[53]

> Eteoneus, son of Boëthoös, you were never
> a fool before, but now you are babbling nonsense, as a child
> would do. Surely we two have eaten much hospitality
> from other men before we came back here. May Zeus only
> make an end of such misery hereafter. Unharness
> the strangers' horses then, and bring the men here to be feasted.

[53] At issue here are the laws of hospitality: Menelaos' rebuke of Eteoneus is all the more urgent, because they too expect to be treated well when they arrive as guests at the homes of others. For comment, see C. Ulf, *Die homerische Gesellschaft: Materialien zur analytischen Beschreibung und historischen Lokalisierung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), 186.

And in Eumaios' hut, away from the turmoil of the palace, Odysseus (on revealing himself as Telemachos' father) rebukes his son for not accepting his word (16. 202–12). In those circumstances in which a person of lesser status utters a rebuke against a superior, Homer is careful to explain his reasons. Thus he tells us why amongst the Phaiakians the hero Echeneos can rebuke Alkinoös, his king (7. 159–66), when everyone present has been stricken to silence as Odysseus supplicates Arete. Echeneos is old (155), older, in fact, than all other Phaiakians (156); he is extremely wise and speaks sensibly (157). His rebuke is not hostile; it is well-intentioned (158). And this is what he says (159–63):

Ἀλκίνο᾽, οὐ μέν τοι τόδε κάλλιον οὐδὲ ἔοικε,
ξεῖνον μὲν χαμαὶ ἧσθαι ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάρῃ ἐν κονίῃσιν·
οἵδε δὲ σὸν μῦθον ποτιδέγμενοι ἰσχανόωνται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε δὴ ξεῖνον μὲν ἐπὶ θρόνου ἀργυροήλου
εἷσον ἀναστήσας . . .

Alkinoös, this is not the better way, nor is it fitting
that the stranger should sit on the ground beside the hearth, in the ashes.
These others are holding back because they await your order.
But come, raise the stranger up and seat him on a silver-studded
chair . . .

For a second example, observe that when Odysseus' men rebuke their leader, after a year of indulgence in Kirke's house, we accept that they are absolutely right to remind him of his purpose. They appeal to Odysseus' own powerful desire to return (10. 472–4):

Δαιμόνι᾽, ἤδη νῦν μιμνήσκεο πατρίδος αἴης,
εἴ τοι θέσφατόν ἐστι σαωθῆναι καὶ ἱκέσθαι
οἶκον ἐϋκτίμενον καὶ σὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

What ails you now? Think about our own country,[54]
if truly it is ordained that you shall survive and come back
to your strong-founded house and to the land of your fathers.

Indeed, Odysseus acknowledges the appropriateness of their intervention by agreeing instantly that they should move on (475).

[54] I have modified Lattimore's translation here.

Gods too may rebuke mortals, as they occasionally do in the *Iliad*. It is Athene who is the most active of the gods in the *Odyssey*. In her desire to keep Odysseus' homeward journey on track she rebukes Telemachos at 15. 10–42; she rebukes Odysseus twice (13. 330–51 and 22. 226–35);[55] and she rebukes Nausikaa (6. 25–40). Here are her introductory words to Nausikaa, as she speaks in disguise as a friend (25–8):

> *Ναυσικάα, τί νύ σ' ὧδε μεθήμονα γείνατο μήτηρ;*
> *εἵματα μέν τοι κεῖται ἀκηδέα σιγαλόεντα,*
> *σοὶ δὲ γάμος σχεδόν ἐστιν, ἵνα χρὴ καλὰ μὲν αὐτὴν*
> *ἕννυσθαι, τὰ δὲ τοῖσι παρασχεῖν οἵ κε σ' ἄγωνται.*
>
> Nausikaa, how could your mother have a child so careless?
> The shining clothes are lying away uncared for, while your
> marriage is not far off, when you should be in your glory
> for clothes to wear, and provide too for those who attend you.

Odyssean Protests

In the *Odyssey*, by contrast with the *Iliad*, we do not often see the gods speaking amongst themselves. But when they do, the Iliadic code of behaviour is observed. Just as goddesses in the *Iliad* do not rebuke Zeus but register protests about his behaviour, so in the *Odyssey* Athene does not, on the face of it, rebuke her father for having, apparently, forgotten about Odysseus; rather, her criticism is indirect, implicit in her insistent question-string (1. 45–62).[56] It is a protest. Here are her closing words (59–62):

[55] We observe the power of body language to modify the force of a rebuke: note the vivid contrast between the affection conveyed by Athene's facial expression (*μείδησεν*, she smiled) and gestures (*χειρί τέ μιν κατέρεξε*, and stroked him with her hand) at 13. 287–8 and Homer's information about the sharpness of her words at 22. 225 (*νείκεσσεν ... χολωτοῖσιν ἐπέεσσιν*, and she scolded ... in words full of anger). As Donald Lateiner notes, in connection with 13. 287–8, Athene's touching expresses both 'concern and reassuring, but parental, superiority': see D. Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile: Nonverbal Behavior in Homeric Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 83; and see above, on the ambiguity of touch.

[56] De Jong describes Athene's final three questions as an 'indirect reproach': see I. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14.

οὐδέ νυ σοί περ
ἐντρέπεται φίλον ἦτορ, Ὀλύμπιε. οὔ νύ τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς
Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ χαρίζετο ἱερὰ ῥέζων
Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ; τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσαο, Ζεῦ;

But you, Olympian.
the heart in you is heedless of him. Did not Odysseus
do you grace by the ships of the Argives, making sacrifice
in wide Troy? Why, Zeus, are you now so harsh with him?

What is interesting in the *Odyssey* is that Zeus feels obliged to defend himself before Athene. At 1. 64–79 he utters a counter-protest, remonstrating against her implied accusations; he is on the defensive in the *Odyssey* in the same way that Achilleus, in the *Iliad*, was obliged to defend himself before Patroklos.[57] As for protests amongst mortals, Antinoös protests against what Telemachos has said (at 2. 85–128 and 17. 406–8); Leokritos protests to Mentor (2. 243–56); Antinoös protests to Leodes (21. 168–74): in each case the speaker has been offended by, or is dismayed by, the words he has heard.[58] As for women, Eurykleia is associated with more protests than other actors: she protests to Telemachos (2. 363–70) when he asks for supplies to be assembled for his expedition to seek information about his father; she protests to Odysseus (19. 492–8) when he threatens to kill her should she betray the secret of his disguise; and she protests to Penelope (23. 70–9) when she claims, yet again, that Odysseus has lost his life far away and will never return to Ithaka. Each of these protests reflects status: the less dominant speaker, the nurse, protests against the words of her addressee without expectation of changing his or her behaviour.

Women's Rebukes

The *Odyssey* is unlike the *Iliad* in another respect also: it allows us to see mortal women interacting with others of lesser status in their

[57] Zeus makes it clear that Odysseus' welfare had slipped his mind; but he is ready to make amends.

[58] In all but the last case here we observe a suitor defending himself against a member of the household of Ithaka: either the host (Telemachos) or Odysseus' representative in the household (Mentor). Arrogant as the suitors are, they are for the moment in the wrong, as both Telemachos and Mentor have demonstrated.

households. We see seven rebukes by women uttered in these circumstances.[59] We see Nausikaa, the young princess, rebuking her handmaidens (6. 199–210); and we see Penelope rebuking the old nurse Eurykleia, at 23. 11–24. Penelope begins thus (11–13):

> *μαῖα φίλη, μάργην σε θεοὶ θέσαν, οἵ τε δύνανται*
> *ἄφρονα ποιῆσαι καὶ ἐπίφρονά περ μάλ' ἐόντα,*
> *καί τε χαλιφρονέοντα σαοφροσύνης ἐπέβησαν.*
>
> Dear nurse, the gods have driven you crazy. They are both able
> to change a very sensible person into a senseless
> one, and to set the light-wit on the way of discretion.

And we see Melantho, one of Penelope's maids, harshly rebuking Odysseus, at that time in disguise as a beggar in the palace (first, at 18. 327–36[60] and, again, at 19. 66–9):

> *ξεῖν' ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐνθάδ' ἀνιήσεις διὰ νύκτα*
> *δινεύων κατὰ οἶκον, ὀπιπεύσεις δὲ γυναῖκας;*
> *ἀλλ' ἔξελθε θύραζε, τάλαν, καὶ δαιτὸς ὄνησο·*
> *ἢ τάχα καὶ δαλῷ βεβλημένος εἶσθα θύραζε.*
>
> Stranger, do you mean to stay here all night and bother us
> by poking all over the house and spying upon the women?
> Take yourself out the door, you wretch, and be well satisfied
> with your feast, or you may be forced to get out, with a torch
> thrown at you.

Odysseus' reply to Melantho (19. 70) is accompanied, as it is at 18. 337, with a scowl. It is not surprising that Odysseus finds this latter rebuke and the directives within it very difficult to accept. Melantho has spoken inappropriately. We appreciate the magnitude of the insult, as he might perceive it, when we realize that it is one of Odysseus' own serving women in his own house who is assuming the dominant position in this conversation. He protests in return

[59] Of the twenty-five rebukes which I identify in the *Odyssey*, four are uttered by Athene, four by Penelope, two by Melantho, and one by Nausikaa. That is, over one third of the rebukes are uttered by female figures.

[60] When Odysseus addresses the maids in the palace on Ithaka he has forgotten his present status. He gives an instruction as though he were an equal in the palace, forgetting his beggar's disguise (18. 313–16): hence the scornful laughter of the maids (320) and Melantho's rebuke (327–36). The audience knows, however, that Melantho oversteps the mark at this point.

(71–88)—for, as he has been reminded, he does not have the power to administer a rebuke, disguised as he is.[61] And he warns the girl to beware her mistress (*μή πώς τοι . . . κοτεσσαμένη χαλεπήνῃ*, who may grow angry with you and hate you, 83). Or, he says, Odysseus may come back (84). But his protest to Melantho is overheard by Penelope, who, on cue, scolds her maid on his behalf (91–5). Here are her introductory words (91–2):

> *πάντως, θαρσαλέη, κύον ἀδεές, οὔ τί με λήθεις*
> *ἔρδουσα μέγα ἔργον, ὃ σῇ κεφαλῇ ἀναμάξεις·*

> Always I know well what monstrous thing you are doing,
> you bold and shameless bitch; you will wipe it off on your own head.

Homer allows us to observe (but does not himself comment on) the unconscious goodwill that Penelope feels for Odysseus.[62]

Later, in the course of the contest of the bow, Penelope rebukes Antinoös for his poor treatment of a fellow guest (21. 312–19):

> *Ἀντίνο', οὐ μὲν καλὸν ἀτέμβειν οὐδὲ δίκαιον*
> *ξείνους Τηλεμάχου, ὅς κεν τάδε δώμαθ' ἵκηται.*
> *ἔλπεαι, αἴ χ' ὁ ξεῖνος Ὀδυσσῆος μέγα τόξον*
> *ἐντανύσῃ χερσίν τε βίηφί τε ἧφι πιθήσας,*
> *οἴκαδέ μ' ἄξεσθαι καὶ ἑὴν θήσεσθαι ἄκοιτιν;*
> *οὐδ' αὐτός που τοῦτο γ' ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔολπε·*
> *μηδέ τις ὑμείων τοῦ γ' εἵνεκα θυμὸν ἀχεύων*
> *ἐνθάδε δαινύσθω, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ ἔοικε.*

[61] His protest is clear in his first line (19. 71): *δαιμονίη, τί μοι ὧδ' ἐπέχεις κεκοτηότι θυμῷ;* (I wonder, why do you hold such an angry grudge against me?). The best Odysseus can do at this moment is issue a warning to Melantho (83–4). For commentary on Odysseus' incongruous scowl, an expression mostly used by superiors when chastising inferiors, see Holoka, 'Looking Darkly', at 5 (n. 11). For further discussion of this protest, see Chapter 5.

[62] On her 'heightened state of sympathetic rapport', see Russo, in J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano, and A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 78; on Penelope and Odysseus' 'emotional alliance', see J. Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', in *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 129–61, at 151. For discussion of Penelope's intervention, see B. Fenik, *Studies in the* Odyssey (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), 175–80. Fenik notes (178) that it is conventional in the *Odyssey* for someone to intervene on the beggar's behalf when he is attacked. In *Od.* 19 it is Penelope who does so.

> Antinoös, it is neither fair nor just to browbeat
> any guest of Telemachos who comes to visit him.
> Do you imagine that if this stranger, in the confidence
> of hands and strength, should string the great bow of Odysseus,
> that he would take me home with him and make me his wife? No,
> he himself has no such thought in the heart within him.
> Let none of you be sorrowful at heart in his feasting
> here, for such a reason. There is no likelihood of it.

The speech is devious in its false reassurances. But what we should note here is that Penelope, despite her role as the long-standing mistress in the palace in the absence of its master and as the much-sought-after prize in the contest, has taken an unusual step in rebuking a (male) guest. Homer has demonstrated to us that she has been driven to this: her suitors have so abused her hospitality that, in her mind, they no longer warrant being treated as honoured guests under the protection of Zeus but as intruders, who can be chastised.

Penelope can find it in herself to rebuke one of her guests; but in the whole of the *Odyssey* she only once chides her own son. At 18. 215–25 she rebukes him for his behaviour towards the stranger-guest, for his lapse in observing his duty to his guests, and for having allowed the beggar to suffer humiliation at the hands of the suitors. We should note that she does not include instructions for amends (the fourth part of the rebuke-format). Telemachos accepts her anger and her criticism.

In our own world we assume that a mother has the right to rebuke her adolescent son. But what is remarkable in the world of the *Odyssey* is that Telemachos scolds his mother far more often than she rebukes him. He does so on four occasions. At 1. 346–59 he asserts Phemios' right to sing the latest songs and tells her to go back to her room to spin and weave; he is, he says, the head of the household.[63] Here is the speech in outline:

[63] As Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile*, 250, notes, this is an assertion of Telemachos' authority over his mother. The unexpected sharpness of Telemachos' rebuke is brought home to us by his mother's reaction: she is amazed (θαμβήσασα, 360): for commentary, see S. Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the* Odyssey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 155–7, esp. at 156. For further discussion of this scene, see Chapter 9, below.

μῆτερ ἐμή, τί τ' ἄρα φθονέεις ἐρίηρον ἀοιδὸν
τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται; (346–7)

τούτῳ δ' οὐ νέμεσις Δαναῶν κακὸν οἶτον ἀείδειν. (350)

σοὶ δ' ἐπιτολμάτω κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀκούειν. (353)

ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κομίζε,
ἱστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε
ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι· μῦθος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει
πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ. (356–9)

Why, my mother, do you begrudge this excellent singer
his pleasing himself as the thought drives him? (346–7)

There is nothing wrong in his singing the sad return of the Danaans. (350)

So let your heart and let your spirit be hardened to listen. (353)

Go therefore back in the house, and take up your own work,
the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaidens
ply their work also; but men must see to discussion,
all men, but I most of all. For mine is the power in this household. (356–9)

At 17. 46–56 he ignores his mother's question about his travels and tells her not to make a fuss of him on his return to Ithaka. At 21. 344–53 he tells her that he has the right to make decisions about who can string Odysseus' bow; she should go back to her room and spin and weave; he is the head of the household. At 23. 97–103 he rebukes his mother for not responding more warmly to Odysseus; he accuses her of obstinacy and hard-heartedness.

I admit to being surprised each time I read Telemachos' words. Our first instinct as readers today is that in an ideal world a son will feel respect for his mother; and that he will register this respect in his speech. But in our own society we know that adolescents on occasion choose to ignore the status of their mothers as mothers and address them with disrespect.[64] The key to their behaviour in our own world is gender. I suggest that the same is true in Homer's world.

[64] This may be another example of how, as Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', 38, suggests, familiarity in close-kin relationships obscures status distinctions. For discussion, see above. But this does not explain why sons appear to speak harshly to their mothers when they will not do so to their fathers. Gender must be a relevant factor. For further discussion of the behaviour of children to their parents, see Chapter 8. As Lateiner notes, in the Homeric context (*Sardonic Smile*, 74): 'Telemakhos "grows up" from a babied, lethargic adolescent . . . to an abrasive teenager rebuking the noxious "guests" and his own mother'; see also 244, 276 (and n. 61).

In a striking study, Candace West observes that in certain social relationships in Western society today gender has primacy over status.[65] Indeed, she claims that gender can amount to a 'master' status, even where other power relations are involved.[66] And this is what underpins these four instances in the *Odyssey*. Penelope's status as queen in the palace is diminished in her son's eyes by her gender. As Telemachos, with Athene's support, recognizes his increasing responsibility in the household and exercises his increasing power, he begins to assert himself. At the same time, his regard for his mother fades.

Odysseus and Penelope

The stretch of narrative which runs from the beginning of Book 23 keeps us in suspense, as Odysseus attempts to persuade Penelope that he is who he claims to be and as Penelope, slowly, comes to terms with this information and with a reality that she had thought she might never see.[67] But she refuses to accept the stranger's word. Finally, Odysseus too rebukes Penelope. He is out of patience (23. 166–70):

> δαιμονίη, περὶ σοί γε γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων
> κῆρ ἀτέραμνον ἔθηκαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες·
> οὐ μέν κ' ἄλλη γ' ὧδε γυνὴ τετληότι θυμῷ
> ἀνδρὸς ἀφεσταίη, ὅς οἱ κακὰ πολλὰ μογήσας
> ἔλθοι ἐεικοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

> You are so strange. The gods, who have their homes on Olympos,
> have made your heart more stubborn than for the rest of womankind.
> No other woman, with spirit as stubborn as yours, would keep back
> as you are doing from her husband who, after much suffering,
> came at last in the twentieth year back to his own country.

[65] C. West, 'When the Doctor is a "Lady": Power, Status and Gender in Physician–Patient Encounters', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender*, 396–412, at 408–9; see also Troemel-Ploetz, 'Selling the Apolitical', 454, 456.

[66] West, 'When the Doctor is a "Lady"', at 409.

[67] There are other discussions, from other perspectives, of this scene: see especially Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the* Odyssey, 139–43; Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', 156–9; and Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile*, 271–9.

As we have observed, a rebuke will usually be completed with an instruction to the addressee. Here, however, Odysseus turns from Penelope—as though there is nothing more to be said—and gives his instruction to the old nurse, Eurykleia; and again—but now indirectly—he expresses his frustration with his wife (171–2):

> *ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε μοι, μαῖα, στόρεσον λέχος, ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὸς*
> *λέξομαι· ἦ γὰρ τῇ γε σιδήρεον ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ.*
>
> Come then, nurse, make me up a bed, so that I can use it
> here; for this woman has a heart of iron within her.

Penelope's response is the response of so many female figures in the Homeric texts. It is a protest of self-defence, against Odysseus' accusation of stubbornness (174–6):[68]

> *δαιμόνι᾽, οὔτ᾽ ἄρ τι μεγαλίζομαι οὔτ᾽ ἀθερίζω*
> *οὔτε λίην ἄγαμαι, μάλα δ᾽ εὖ οἶδ᾽ οἷος ἔησθα*
> *ἐξ Ἰθάκης ἐπὶ νηὸς ἰὼν δολιχηρέτμοιο.*
>
> You are so strange. I am not being proud, nor indifferent,
> nor puzzled beyond need, but I know very well what you looked like
> when you went in the ship with the sweeping oars, from Ithaka.

Note Penelope's term of address (174): she deliberately echoes her husband (166).[69] And she also mirrors the last segment of his speech (although their intentions are different): just as Odysseus' rebuke, at 166–72, concluded with a command to Eurykleia, so does Penelope's protest. Her speech of self-defence resolves itself into a refinement of the instruction that her husband had given the nurse (177–80):[70]

> *ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε οἱ στόρεσον πυκινὸν λέχος, Εὐρύκλεια,*
> *ἐκτὸς ἐϋσταθέος θαλάμου, τὸν ῥ᾽ αὐτὸς ἐποίει·*

[68] Her protest is similar to that of Eurykleia, who opposes Telemachos' departure for the Greek mainland (2. 363–70). For commentary in a similar vein on the echo of Odysseus' words in his wife's response, see M. Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the* Odyssey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), at 165–6; and cf. also H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der* Odyssee (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972), 69.

[69] For discussion of this use of catch-words, see de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, at p. xii.

[70] On the 'shared fluency' of Penelope and Odysseus, see Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile*, 265.

> ἔνθα οἱ ἐκθεῖσαι πυκινὸν λέχος ἐμβάλετ᾽ εὐνήν,
> κώεα καὶ χλαίνας καὶ ῥήγεα σιγαλόεντα.
>
> Come then, Eurykleia, and make up a firm bed for him
> outside the well-fashioned chamber: that very bed that he himself
> built. Put the firm bed here outside for him, and cover it
> over with fleeces and blankets, and with shining coverlets.

The bed that will be made up for Odysseus outside the chamber is to be the bed he himself constructed. This seemingly mundane instruction becomes the turning point in the narrative. For there is a sign within it that is intended for Odysseus alone. And Odysseus, on hearing Penelope's words, loses his renowned self-control (183–204).[71] Thus Penelope will recognize her husband: through his knowledge of the bed's construction, his pride in his cunning workmanship, and his anger at its having been undone. In response to his anger she begs for his understanding (209–30). And they will be reunited, with tears of joy. So the interplay of dominant speech forms, Odysseus' rebuke and his assertive speech of anger, with defensive forms, Penelope's protest and her apology, shapes the climax of the epic.

*

Rebukes and protests have been a useful test of asymmetry in Homeric society. It is the kind of asymmetry that Troemel-Ploetz has identified in today's world. Rebukes appear to be spoken in acknowledgment of social hierarchies that are similar in many respects to the hierarchies that we observe around us: men or gods of higher status address rebukes to men or gods of lower status; women of higher status to women of lower status; older people to their juniors; men to women; and gods to mortals. If we take the two epics together, rebukes are for the most part—but not exclusively—uttered by men; they enact dominance. The rebuke form is attributed to mortal women (or goddesses) in Homer *only* when the circumstances allow (when female—or even male—addressees of lower status are addressed) or when they warrant it (at times of extreme urgency, or when the normal social hierarchy has been

[71] We conclude from this scene that the bed represents for Odysseus his marriage with Penelope: a fine creation, solidly constructed, on a base of cunning.

disrupted). The most vigorous speech form normally—but by no means exclusively—used by women is the protest, a reactive mode which makes no claim for power over the addressee. Indeed it concedes power.

The relationships that Homer depicts—amongst gods and amongst mortals—are immediately recognizable to us. I suggest they have always been recognizable to his audiences.[72] After all, singer and audience alike must be able to draw on their experiences of relationships in their own everyday lives in order to compose—or comprehend—epic song. Goody's argument, from her ethnographic perspective, is that status and social roles constrain the ways in which we speak to others; and that social hierarchies are based on gender and birth.[73] In the light of more recent sociolinguistic work, however, it is clear that utterances are acts which not only *reflect* status and power, as Goody proposes; they also *construct* differences of status and power—in particular hierarchy of gender—amongst speakers.[74] This is why speech assumes the significance it does in the real world; and it explains how Homer operates as a poet: the words which he attributes to his actors reflect and realize their status *vis-à-vis* others in their world.

[72] Kakridis, 'The Rôle of the Woman in the *Iliad*', 74: the interactions we observe in Homer offer, in Kakridis' words, a 'true picture of what happened in real life'.

[73] Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', 38–9.

[74] See, for example, Troemel-Ploetz, 'Selling the Apolitical', at 449 and (on the hierarchy of gender) 454.

7

Competitive and Co-operative Strategies I: Information-Questions

Jennifer Coates has argued that English-speaking middle-class males from their early years learn a competitive style of discourse: it is adversarial in style, information-focused, and favours strategies that foreground status differences between speaker and addressee.[1] This is 'display talk'. Coates has identified three characteristic modes in discourse of this dominant kind: *information-questions*, which are ostensibly designed to seek information but which are used also to establish power and status; *directives*, by which a speaker tries to get the addressee to act in a particular way; and *interruption*, a strategy for gaining the floor and controlling the topic of discussion.[2]

In women's discourse, on the other hand, each of the three modes that I identified above is rendered in a different fashion—and to different ends. The reason for this, Coates argues, lies in the fact that women's talk, as we have noted, has been developed for the private sphere.[3] Women learn a co-operative conversational style. In their

[1] J. Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', in S. Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 13–30, at 16–21.

[2] Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', 16–21. See also J. Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 7 and 67, where Holmes notes that challenging utterances, bald disagreements, and 'disruptive interruptions' are examples of strategies which typify male talk in public contexts; S. Troemel-Ploetz, '"Let me put it this way, John": Conversational Strategies of Women in Leadership Positions', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22 (1994), 199–209, at 199–200.

[3] Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', 22–3; Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 38 ('Women tend to regard talk as a means of maintaining and developing relationships').

concern for the psycho-social needs of those around them they use strategies that emphasize solidarity rather than status: they try to find experiences and topics that can be shared. Women's questions are not posed as a challenge to their addressee(s) but as an invitation to others to participate or to check that what has been said is acceptable to all those present. When women wish to issue instructions or direct the behaviour of others they typically use forms which minimize status differences. Interruption, on the other hand (or, to identify the phenomenon more precisely, simultaneous speech) is common in all female discourse. Yet it is rarely a sign of conversational malfunction. Rather, according to Coates, simultaneous speech (when an addressee 'interrupts' to finish a sentence but not to take the floor) is a sign of active listenership and of collaborative talk amongst women.[4]

In this and the next two chapters I shall study so-called information-questions, directives, and interruptions in Homer with the following series of questions in mind. Are information-questions, which we associate with power, used only by Homer's men or do women use them also? How does the desire for politeness affect the expression of a directive? Are directives the preserve of men or do we find that women use them too? If the latter is the case, do women soften their directives, as it is claimed they so often do in a middle-class English-speaking world? Do men also soften their directives at times? Do we find evidence of interruptions and simultaneous speech in Homer? Who interrupts? And whom does he or she interrupt? In short, I shall be asking whether—or not—Homer reveals consistent gender differences in his representation of these three speech strategies, which, it is claimed, distinguish men and women in Western society today.

Let us return to the principle that was stated in Chapter 6. There we noted that most utterances have not one but two functions: not only do they play a role in the exchange of information but they also operate in a social dimension. Information-questions are a case in point. Information-questions seek factual answers; but in many cases they also have a social function.[5] As we observed above, questions of

[4] Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', 23.

[5] See E. Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', in Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 17–43. I wish to refine Coates' description of an information-question: an information-question is not unfailingly coercive (e.g., 'Have you got the time?' 'Has the 10.40 train arrived?').

this kind may serve as strategies for the exercise of power: they are in varying degrees a linguistic strategy for asserting control over others.[6] Women's questions, on the other hand, are not thought to be coercive, at least when women are speaking in an all-female group in a private sphere. Coates argues that they are more likely to function as invitations to participation.[7]

INFORMATION-QUESTIONS IN THE *ILIAD*

What do we find in Homer? Who asks information-questions: men or women? And how are they intended? Are they coercive? Are they intended, as Coates suggests, as exercises of power?[8] In this chapter I examine information-questions in the *Iliad*.[9] We find that the bulk of information-questions in the epic are uttered in all-male public contexts, or contexts in which the speakers feel themselves to be 'on show'. These questions reflect the patterns of competitive discourse described above. This is precisely what we would expect of Homer's heroes. In all these questions referential function is balanced against social function, or the 'stance' of the speaker;[10] and we might describe the speaker's stance as more or less coercive.

[6] See Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions'; Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', 21–2; and Chapter 5, where, following Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', I used the term 'control-question' to describe the kind of information-question that *requires* an answer. Despite the substantial overlap of the terms control-question and information-question, I prefer to maintain the distinction between the two categories for the purposes of this discussion. Control-questions are deliberately coercive; their social functions are quite marked.

[7] See Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', 22.

[8] Questions in which the function is purely referential are rare, if not non-existent, in the *Iliad*. The majority of questions have a social function as well; many are of a rhetorical nature: e.g., 2. 225–33 (Thersites to Agamemnon); 9. 434–8 (Phoinix to Achilleus); 24. 239–40 (Priam to his sons).

[9] Since I examined in Chapter 5 a range of coercive information-questions from the *Odyssey* under the heading 'control-questions', I shall in this chapter extend my discussion of the broader category, information-questions, to the *Iliad*.

[10] On the notion of 'stance', see E. Ochs, 'Indexing Gender', in A. Duranti and C. Goodwin (eds.), *Rethinking Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 335–58.

Amongst Men

Let us begin with questions asked in the *Iliad*, such as those of Nestor and Odysseus, who address figures in the darkness outside their huts. These are questions which seek information and which at the same time are intended to indicate to the addressee that the speaker has seized the initiative in the encounter. Nestor at 10. 82–5 speaks out to Agamemnon who has come upon him in the darkness of night:

> *τίς δ' οὗτος κατὰ νῆας ἀνὰ στρατὸν ἔρχεαι οἶος*
> *νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, ὅτε θ' εὕδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι,*
> *ἠέ τιν' οὐρήων διζήμενος, ἤ τιν' ἑταίρων;*
> *φθέγγεο, μηδ' ἀκέων ἐπ' ἔμ' ἔρχεο· τίπτε δέ σε χρεώ;*

> Who are you, who walk alone through the ships and the army
> and through the darkness of night when other mortals are sleeping?
> Are you looking for one of your mules, or looking for some companion?
> Speak, do not come upon me in silence. What would you of me?

Odysseus in his turn calls upon Nestor to give an account of himself (10. 141–2):

> *τίφθ' οὕτω κατὰ νῆας ἀνὰ στρατὸν οἶοι ἀλᾶσθε*
> *νύκτα δι' ἀμβροσίην, ὅ τι δὴ χρειὼ τόσον ἵκει;*

> Why do you wander thus up and down the ships and the army
> alone, through the immortal night? What need is upon you?[11]

The common mode of questioning throughout the epic is one that requires the addressee to give an account of himself. Although the requirement for information is an essential element, we detect also a coercive function. This is even more obvious in the questions which Odysseus puts to the Trojan undercover agent Dolon at 10. 385–9, 406–11. Dolon had been taken captive by the two Achaians in the

[11] Hainsworth comments (without elaboration) on the realistic conversational tone of this passage: see J.B. Hainsworth, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. iii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 168–9. We should note also, in the same episode, Menelaos' questions to his brother (10. 61–3). Menelaos is seeking information; this is the primary function of what he asks. But he is also showing a willingness to comply with his more powerful brother. This co-operative stance is *not* typical of men in the *Iliad*, as Homer depicts them; but it reflects on the complex character of Menelaos.

darkness (355–81). So, when Odysseus put his questions (which, though prefaced by what appears to be a reassuring remark (383), imply that Dolon is a spy), Dolon has little choice but to answer. Here are Odysseus' questions at 10. 385–9:[12]

πῇ δὴ οὕτως ἐπὶ νῆας ἀπὸ στρατοῦ ἔρχεαι οἶος
νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, ὅτε θ' εὕδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι;
ἤ τινα συλήσων νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων;
ἦ σ' Ἕκτωρ προέηκε διασκοπιᾶσθαι ἕκαστα
νῆας ἔπι γλαφυράς; ἦ σ' αὐτὸν θυμὸς ἀνῆκε;

Where is it that you walk alone to the ships from the army
through the darkness of the night when other mortals are sleeping?
Is it to strip some one of the perished corpses, or is it
that Hektor sent you out to spy with care upon each thing
beside our hollow ships? Or did your own spirit drive you?

When Idomeneus encounters Meriones returning to his shelter to pick up a replacement spear, he asks (13. 250–3):

τίπτ' ἦλθες πόλεμόν τε λιπὼν καὶ δηϊοτῆτα;
ἠέ τι βέβληαι, βέλεος δέ σε τείρει ἀκωκή,
ἦέ τευ ἀγγελίης μετ' ἔμ' ἤλυθες; οὐδέ τοι αὐτὸς
ἧσθαι ἐνὶ κλισίῃσι λιλαίομαι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθαι.

Why have you come back and left the battle and fighting?
Have you been hit somewhere? Does pain of a spear's head afflict you?
Have you come back with someone's message for me? For my part
my desire is to fight, not sit away in the shelters.

Idomeneus seeks information; but behind his questions there is neither concern nor sympathy for Meriones; we hear reproach.[13]

[12] For perceptive comment on the passage, see Hainsworth, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. iii, at p. 192.

[13] I disagree here with Janko, who remarks that Idomeneus 'generously' offers reasons why Meriones is not fighting (R. Janko, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. iv (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 79). I suggest rather that Idomeneus identifies the only reasons that he can think of why a hero might be out of the fighting. His comment, at 252–3, that he himself would rather be in the thick of battle, indicates his stance on this matter. The question at the back of his mind is: is Meriones pulling his weight? Meriones' prompt explanation (255–8) indicates that he has sensed the implied criticism. D. Lohmann (*Die Komposition der Reden in der* Ilias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 133, n. 66), likewise, sees criticism and irritation in this exchange.

Idomeneus is asserting his heroic status. These questions, like those I have discussed above, are coercive; they establish the dominance of the speaker and they require the addressee to defend himself. The bulk of information-questions of the *Iliad* in all-mortal, all-male contexts, fall into this competitive mode. They are to a degree referential; but, like men's questions more generally, their social function is to establish the dominance of the speaker.[14]

Mothers to Sons; Gods to Mortals

By contrast, when Thetis comes from the depths of the sea in response to her son's call to her she asks (1. 362):

> τέκνον, τί κλαίεις; τί δέ σε φρένας ἵκετο πένθος;
>
> Why then,
> child, do you lament? What sorrow has come to your heart now?

Her question, to all appearances, is an information-question. But, as Achilleus remarks at 1. 365 (οἶσθα, you know), Thetis already knows the answer. Is Thetis teasing her son, as one man might tease another or as a god might tease a mortal?[15] I think not. This is a question strategy that we, in the Western world, associate with women, especially when they are talking to someone in distress. We have a case here of a mother speaking with her son after his catastrophic quarrel with the leader of the expedition. I suggest that her tone is sympathetic. Thetis, like any mother, wants her son to unburden himself: she wants him to tell her his story in his own words. She will sympathize, as her response to his account of his quarrel with Agamemnon makes clear (1. 414–18). It is the tenderness of her address-term and of her response that confirms the sympathy of her original question:[16]

[14] If we consider rhetorical questions, for example, of which there are abundant examples in the Homeric epics, we note in many (but not all) the same challenging tone that we detect in the information-questions which I have examined to this point. Of the ten questions or question-strings that I count in *Iliad* 1, for example (see Table 3, above), four are asked by mortal men. All of these are rhetorical, intended as assertive acts that will put the addressee at a disadvantage.

[15] On the playfulness of gods in their questions to mortals, see Chapter 5.

[16] As the bT says on 1. 362, φυσικῶς φθέγγεται (she speaks naturally).

ὤ μοι τέκνον ἐμόν, τί νύ σ' ἔτρεφον αἰνὰ τεκοῦσα;
αἴθ' ὄφελες παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀδάκρυτος καὶ ἀπήμων
ἧσθαι, ἐπεί νύ τοι αἶσα μίνυνθά περ, οὔ τι μάλα δήν·
νῦν δ' ἅμα τ' ὠκύμορος καὶ ὀϊζυρὸς περὶ πάντων
ἔπλεο· τῶ σε κακῇ αἴσῃ τέκον ἐν μεγάροισι.

Ah me,
my child. Your birth was bitterness. Why did I raise you?
If only you could sit by your ships untroubled, not weeping,
since indeed your lifetime is to be short, of no length.
Now it has befallen that your life must be brief and bitter
beyond all men's. To a bad destiny I bore you in my chambers.

Thetis sees herself as a mother, as one who shares Achilleus' sorrows: his life is to be short, and she grieves for him.[17] She tries to connect with her son by means of this shared sorrow. This is the kind of conversational material on which women build relationships. It enables empathy. Here we see how Thetis uses her question and her response to comfort her son.[18] A small-scale mortal-to-mortal parallel to this is Hekabe's question to Hektor on his return to Troy (6. 254):

τέκνον, τίπτε λιπὼν πόλεμον θρασὺν εἰλήλουθας;

Why then,
child, have you come here and left behind the bold battle?

[17] Seth Schein (*The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's* Iliad (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 92) makes the point well when he comments: '[w]hat would be moving enough were she a human mother lamenting her son's inevitable death is still more affecting owing to the infallibility of her divine knowledge'.

[18] When Thetis again asks Achilleus, now at 18. 73–7, why he laments, she *appears* not to know what has happened. This ignorance is feigned, to allow Achilleus to tell her in his own words what has happened (for a different view, see M. Edwards, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. v (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 152–3). In asking the questions she asks, Thetis might appear cruel to her son, in obliging him to tell her about Patroklos' death (73–4) and in her comment that this is precisely what he asked for (74–5). But notice her non-verbal behaviour (on which also see comments by Edwards, ibid.): her gestures undercut the confronting nature of her questions—she cries out loud in sympathy and distress; in a gesture of sweet intimacy she takes his head in her arms (71); and on hearing him speak she weeps (94), marking her empathy. For commentary on touch and bodily contact, see M. Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 214–32. For an amusing example of the question being used in an all-Olympian conversation, see 21. 509–10 (Zeus to Artemis).

Hekabe is asking for information *not* about the war (and yet she, unlike Thetis, genuinely does not know the relevant details) but about Hektor; in her anxiety about his physical condition and in welcoming her son back to the city she is striving for connection above all.[19] In inviting him to speak she is, as his mother, anticipating a moment of togetherness, when he will share his experiences with her.[20]

By contrast, when Apollo addresses such questions to a mortal such as Hektor, the question is used in a different way (15. 244–5):

> *Ἕκτορ, υἱὲ Πριάμοιο, τίη δὲ σὺ νόσφιν ἀπ᾽ ἄλλων*
> *ἧσ᾽ ὀλιγηπελέων· ἦ πού τί σε κῆδος ἱκάνει·*
>
> Hektor, son of Priam, why do you sit in such weakness
> here apart from the others? Did some disaster befall you?

The god asks the question not because, like Hekabe, he doesn't know the answer. He does.[21] He asks because he wants to hear Hektor's view of what happened. In this respect the question is coercive: underpinning it is the god's awareness of his divine status and his desire to make his addressee speak. The addressee has no choice but

[19] This is indicated by her clinging to his hand (253). For discussion see D. Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile: Nonverbal Behavior in Homeric Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 57: Lateiner observes that the gesture may indicate either gendered power or dependence.

[20] We see the same desire for connection amongst women speakers (and in this case a mother) in the *Odyssey*. When Antikleia asks Odysseus to explain how he came to Hades and whether he had visited Ithaka on his way (11. 155–62), she is expressing her amazement that her son should have reached the Underworld, a region that is difficult of access for the living (156). Antikleia asks for details. Since Odysseus gives her detailed information (164–9) we may assume that he has read her question as referential. And, indeed, there is a reason for Antikleia's urgency when she asks whether Odysseus had yet seen his wife (161–2). She wishes to know whether Odysseus knows what is happening on Ithaka and whether Penelope's suffering is at an end. So to that extent her questions are indeed referential. But I suggest that Antikleia's questions, the questions of a mother, are also affective: she, like Hekabe or Thetis, simply wants to hear her son talk about the things he has done.

[21] See Janko, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. iv, at p. 252; and B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the* Iliad (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1968), 76, who identifies Apollo's tone, as he asks these questions (244–5), as 'teasing' and 'playful', a tone which he drops at 254–61, when he urges Hektor into the fight. It is the sudden shift in tone—according to Fenik—from playful to grave (a transition which is unusual in the *Iliad*) that causes me to question whether Apollo's tone is at all playful. The god's relationship with Hektor is, to my mind, businesslike and serious, quite unlike the teasing relationship between Athene and Odysseus described in the *Odyssey*.

to answer the question: indeed, Hektor in this case knows that he is speaking to a god (247–8). But, to judge from Apollo's response to Hektor's reply (that Aias had brought him down), the god is reassuring (254–61). In Apollo's exchange with Hektor, therefore, we see the god's inclination to assert his status and yet, simultaneously, his ready sympathy for his Trojan protégé.

Our final example of gods' questions to mortals concerns Hermes' questions to Priam. When Priam is making his way through the darkness to Achilleus' shelter in order to propose ransom for his son, he is met by Hermes, in disguise as a henchman of Achilleus. Hermes puts a number of questions to the old man; and at 24. 362–3 he asks where he is going:

> *πῇ, πάτερ, ὧδ' ἵππους τε καὶ ἡμιόνους ἰθύνεις*
> *νύκτα δι' ἀμβροσίην, ὅτε θ' εὕδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι·*
>
> Where, my father, are you thus guiding your mules and horses
> through the immortal night while other mortals are sleeping?

He goes on to ask whether he is not afraid of the Achaians (364–5); and how he would defend the treasures he is conveying (366–9). Hermes himself has no need of the information contained in the answers to these questions. We assume that he knows all (cf. 334–8). But his disguise *requires* that he ask questions of this kind. So the function of the questions appears to be purely referential. But I suggest that there is an affective dimension to the questions which makes a greater impression on Priam. Note that Hermes stands close to the old man (360) and takes his hand (361). These forms of non-verbal behaviour, which suggest reassurance, comfort, and intimacy, preface the questions.[22] The words themselves are intended not as a challenge but as an expression of concern (What are you doing, old man, wandering in the dark with a cartload of valuables?). And it is clear that Priam reads the questions in this way, as he makes no effort to respond to them.[23] Hermes does not press for answers to his first

[22] See Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 179 ('[s]pecial phases of an encounter are usually initiated by spatial moves'); and on touch see 217–30 (on touch as a positive, affiliative move, see 219–20).

[23] I differ here from Richardson, who suggests that Priam doesn't respond because of surprise and curiosity: N. Richardson, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. vi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 313. I suggest that he does not reply because he has not read the questions as referential questions.

questions. Indeed, he goes on to ask more: at 380–5 he asks whether they are taking the treasure to another place for safe keeping; or whether they are fleeing the city after the death of Hektor. Again the questions are not answered; but Priam asks a question of his own (387):

> *τίς δὲ σύ ἐσσι, φέριστε, τέων δ' ἔξ ἐσσι τοκήων;*
>
> But who are you, O best of men, and who are your parents?

Even here we may detect both referential and affective functions. Priam is responding to the kindness of the god's manner and his words. He wants the young man to give his name. But is he trying to assert himself? I think not. Rather, through his questions he is trying to build a relationship with the young man.

Achilleus and Patroklos

Can we compare the questions that Achilleus puts to his companion Patroklos at 16. 7–19 with those of Nestor or Odysseus or Idomeneus that we considered above? Patroklos has returned to Achilleus in tears after having spoken with Nestor and having seen the extent of the Achaians' injuries. Achilleus is at his shelter. Patroklos stands beside him and weeps. This is one-on-one conversation. It is not a time for display talk of the heroic kind that we discussed above, when Nestor, Odysseus, or Idomeneus addressed their fellow-heroes. At this moment Achilleus is struck with pity for his companion (16. 5) and asks him gently (7–10):

> *τίπτε δεδάκρυσαι, Πατρόκλεες, ἠΰτε κούρη*
> *νηπίη, ἥ θ' ἅμα μητρὶ θέουσ' ἀνελέσθαι ἀνώγει,*
> *εἱανοῦ ἁπτομένη, καί τ' ἐσσυμένην κατερύκει,*
> *δακρυόεσσα δέ μιν ποτιδέρκεται, ὄφρ' ἀνέληται·*
>
> Why then
> are you crying like some poor little girl, Patroklos,
> who runs after her mother and begs to be picked up and carried,
> and clings to her dress, and holds her back when she tries to hurry,
> and gazes tearfully into her face, until she is picked up?

In question form he offers Patroklos some possible reasons for his tears (16. 12, 13, 17–18), but we know that he has guessed at what is

causing his friend such sorrow.[24] Even so, after Patroklos has spelt out the woes of the Achaians and proposes that he at least might go into battle, Achilleus is 'deeply troubled' (*μέγ' ὀχθήσας*, 48). The referential function of Achilleus' questions has been to this point subordinated to the affective: for, on the one hand, he is not unaware that things are going badly for the Achaians; but, on the other, he is moved by Patroklos' distress. He wants to express his connection with someone who is dear to him; he wants to be able to share his grief. This explains the simile Achilleus himself uses to describe Patroklos' approach: Patroklos, as we have seen, is like a small girl who desires to be picked up by her mother (7–10). Achilleus in his turn plays the mother to Patroklos' child.[25] He is at this point sympathetic. But moments later he will revert to his familiar controlling self. Here is the first of his instructions, at 89–90:

> *μὴ σύ γ' ἄνευθεν ἐμεῖο λιλαίεσθαι πολεμίζειν*
> *Τρωσὶ φιλοπτολέμοισιν·*
>
> you must not set your mind on fighting the Trojans, whose delight is in battle, without me.

Priam and Helen

We observe an unusual degree of sympathy, too, in the conversation between Priam and Helen in *Iliad* 3. When Helen goes onto the wall the old king invites her to come and sit next to him (162). Priam then questions her about the distinguished Achaians on the battlefield (3. 166–7 (Agamemnon), 192–4 (Odysseus), 226–7 (Aias)). The function of his questions is only minimally referential.[26] Rather he asks these questions because he wants to encourage Helen to talk; he wants to establish a bond with her. By asking her to tell

[24] The third option that he offers (that the Achaians are in trouble, 16. 17–18) is the correct one. Homer's habit, as we noted in Chapter 4, is to put the correct option last in such a series of questions.

[25] As Schein (*The Mortal Hero*, 107) notes, the similes spoken by Achilleus at 9. 323–7 and 16. 7–10 reflect his 'sensitivity to parent–child relationships', a sensitivity perhaps attributable to the physical distance between himself and his parents.

[26] M. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the* Iliad (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987), 191–3, comments on the logical absurdity of the scene (in the tenth year of the war) but remarks on Priam's kindness and graciousness in asking Helen about the Achaian heroes. I suggest that Priam is feigning ignorance in order to make Helen feel at ease.

him about what he claims not to know he is attributing to her some degree of authority. He is giving her status within his circle of friends on the wall. As he draws her into conversation with the other old men who are sitting with him, she responds with gentle nostalgia. This is a charming scene, in which Helen is brought on stage by the poet to show herself prior to the duel between Menelaos and Paris, and the old king works to establish a bond with her.

*

How might we summarize our findings in the *Iliad*? For the most part the behaviour of Homer's heroes in their manifold use of questions in the public sphere reflects a competitive, coercive, or status-aware, mode of discourse, in which questions are a verbal strategy in the exercise of power. There are some interesting exceptions to this pattern of usage, particularly when women, or older men, are participants in the exchange. Priam's questions to Helen, within a more intimate context, are intended in a kindly way. He is of an age where dominance and concern for status have faded. As an old man, he has moved beyond the competitive generation. So it is not surprising that his questions to her do not conform to the pattern of dominance. And the disguised Hermes' questions to Priam are likewise not in the competitive mode: Hermes has consideration for Priam's age and physical frailty. Achilleus' gentle address to Patroklos is also to be read as intimate talk. The intention behind his questions is more affective than referential—more empathetic than dominant. As for the situation amongst Homer's women, there is in this small sample of talk an indication that when women ask information-questions they are asking them as they do in our own world, for affective rather than referential purposes.[27] Thetis'

[27] There is in the *Odyssey* an exception: note the questions which are asked of Odysseus by Arete at 7. 237–9. Her first questions about Odysseus' name and origins are predictable referential questions, usually addressed by the host to a guest. Her next question (about his clothing) introduces a novel element. She asks this question with a partial answer in mind, since she has recognized the clothing (234–5) and she knows that Nausikaa has recently been at the water's edge, with the household washing. A conclusion must already have shaped itself in her mind. This question is therefore a test. Arete has the upper hand. And Odysseus is compelled to answer his host. This is a surprising moment in the narrative. We are surprised that the question is asked; but we are surprised also that it is asked by a woman, who demands an answer from her guest. In his answer Odysseus gives enough of the truth to satisfy

questions to Achilleus and Hekabe's questions to Hektor are typical of the questions that mothers put to their sons: their function is primarily affective.[28]

Arete about her daughter's behaviour, but he does not give up what is most precious at that point—he withholds information about his identity. For discussion see also Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

[28] For the moment I disregard Thetis' status as goddess in her questions to Achilleus. Her status as mother overshadows the immortal–mortal distinction.

8

Competitive and Co-operative Strategies II: Directives

This chapter takes up again the relationship between competitive and co-operative discourse patterns and gender. Our focus is now on directives, those speech acts by which a speaker tries to make an addressee do as he or she proposes. We can observe in our own world a range of speech acts designed to achieve these ends, from harsh commands to indirect requests. It has been suggested that the blunter forms are preferred by men; and that the less direct forms are preferred by women. According to Jennifer Coates, when men wish to issue instructions or in some way to manage the behaviour of others they prefer the directness of imperatives to achieve their ends.[1] Direct commands are an expression of power. Women, by contrast, set greater store on the creation and maintenance of good relations with those around them. For these reasons they typically use forms which minimize status differences.[2] They prefer to avoid the directness of explicit imperatives and choose mitigated forms to express their requests of others. In this chapter I shall survey the relationship in our own world between directives and politeness, taking into account gender, age, status, and power. This will serve

[1] J. Coates, 'Language, Gender, and Career', in S. Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1995), 13–30, at 16–21. For further discussion see Introduction and Chapter 6.

[2] See J. Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 3, 37; J. Coates, *Women, Men and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Longman, 1993), ch. 6 ('Gender Differences in Communicative Competence'); 'The Organization of Men's Talk', in S. Johnson and U. Meinhof (eds.), *Language and Masculinity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 107–29, at 124.

as a useful backdrop to the study of the use of directives in Homer. I shall consider variations in the expression of directives in the epics and note their use by men and women, both upwards and downwards on the social scale. I shall be asking whether directives are the preserve of men or whether women use them too. If the latter is the case, do women soften their directives, as it is claimed they so often do in a middle-class English-speaking world? Do men also soften their directives at times? If so, in what contexts? How do men and women frame their directives to the opposite sex? Finally, does age matter? Are young people more polite to their elders than to their age-peers? In short, does Homer reveal consistent gender differences, age differences, or differences in rank in his representation of this speech strategy, which, it is claimed, distinguishes men and women in Western society today?

DIRECTIVES AND POLITENESS

The expression of a directive may be a blunt imperative form: 'Do it now!' Or the directive may be mitigated: 'Would you do it now, please?' Susan Ervin-Tripp identifies six forms of directives, ordered approximately, as she notes, according to the obviousness of the directive: *need statements* ('I need a lift'); *imperatives* ('Give me a lift'); *embedded imperatives* ('Could you give me a lift?'); *permission directives* ('May I have a lift?'); *question directives* ('Are you going my way?'); and *hints* ('My boyfriend has the car this evening').[3] When the speaker wishes there to be no doubt that he or she wants something done, a clear directive will be selected. An imperative form is unambiguous. When the speaker wishes to allow the

[3] S. Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?" The Structure of Some American English Directives', *Language in Society*, 5 (1976), 25–66, at 29; and see 29–51 for discussion of each of the above categories. On the shared information required to interpret hints, see 43–5. For a brief account of directives in English and in Ancient Greek, see P. Probert and E. Dickey, 'Giving Directions in Euripides' *Hecuba*', *Omnibus*, 49 (2005), 3–4. Their account of directives in Euripides parallels my own observations of this cluster of discourse-forms in Homer. I thank Philomen Probert for sending me a handout for a seminar she gave in 2002: 'Imperatives: Paradigms and Politeness'.

addressee some degree of 'interactional leeway',[4] he or she will choose from a range of less direct forms. In that indirect forms make it easier for an addressee to refuse to comply with a directive, they are thought to be more polite.[5]

Penelope Brown distinguishes two forms of politeness: positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness aims to be proactively supportive of the addressee and his or her feelings. The kind of politeness that concerns us in this discussion, however, is so-called negative politeness.[6] This form of politeness is avoidance-based. When a speaker issues a directive he or she is making an imposition on the person addressed. Some speakers more than others are aware of the addressee's feelings, which Brown, following Goffman, refers to as 'face', and will try to take them into account.[7] Strategies of negative politeness are designed to indicate that a speaker respects the addressee's negative face (that is, his or her desire not to be imposed on). Such strategies, being less direct, are characterized by self-effacement and apologies ('I'm sorry to bother you...'); respectful address-forms and deference ('Excuse me, sir...');[8] hedges on the force of the speech act (use of 'maybe', 'perhaps',

[4] For the use of the term, see P. Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite: Some Evidence from a Mayan Community', in S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker, and N. Furman (eds.), *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 111–36, at 114.

[5] The addressee can treat the intended directive as an information-question and avoid the social consequences of an outright refusal.

[6] See Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite', at 114–16. For Brown and Levinson's important earlier discussion of this issue, see P. Brown and S. Levinson, 'Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena', in E. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 56–289; revised as *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). For studies of politeness in non-Western cultural settings (in which key concepts may differ), see R. Watts, S. Ide, and K. Ehlich (eds.), *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory and Practice* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1992), chs. 10–13.

[7] E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959); 'On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction', in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 5–45.

[8] Respectful, or affectionate, address-forms counter the bluntness of an imperative: 'Mind your head, sir.' 'Tidy your room before we go, darling.'

'possibly');[9] justifications;[10] questioning rather than asserting ('Could you do this for me?'); and speaking obliquely and even dropping hints rather than making an outright demand. The intention of all these strategies is to avoid the appearance of coercion; to allow the addressee the option of refusal.[11] A speaker therefore selects an appropriate degree of politeness for a directive according to the rank and age of the addressee, their relationship, and the difficulty of the task in question. Since social relationships tend on the whole to be relatively stable, certain stable levels of politeness reflect particular relationships. An accepted form for those of similar rank and similar age is the imperative, even across gender boundaries: women to men and men to women.[12] But one tends to be more polite to people who are socially superior and to people one doesn't know, or who are socially distant.[13] On the other hand, powerful individuals may feel that they can ignore the psycho-social needs of their addressees: they may use bald commands or need-statements when speaking to people of lower status.[14] This kind of behaviour, however, is more common amongst men. Women in these positions are in many cases likely to choose strategies which show more respect for their addressees' psycho-social needs.[15]

As I have noted, particular politeness strategies tend to be tied to particular relationships. So when there is a shift in the level of politeness at some point in an interaction there are three possible *contextual* explanations: the speaker's respect for the addressee has changed; there is an increase in social distance (particularly between

[9] See Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 74–5.

[10] See S. Ervin-Tripp, M. O'Connor, and J. Rosenberg, 'Language and Power in the Family', in C. Kramarae, M. Schulz, and W. O'Barr (eds.), *Language and Power* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1984), 116–35, at 118.

[11] Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite', 116.

[12] See examples in Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 30–3. Ervin-Tripp notes (32) that in our world 'please' is available to mark rank and age differences in settings where an imperative is used as a directive (at the table, for example).

[13] See Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite', 115.

[14] Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 4–6, 194–5. So a doctor might address a nurse or a technician with a series of instructions couched as need statements or commands: see Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 29–30. Need-statements also occur in families; they assume the solicitude of the addressee. Such forms are the earliest directives of children (ibid. 29).

[15] For discussion, see below.

familiars); or there has been a variation in face-threatening material in the discourse.[16] Deviations from the expected—when relationship and strategy do not 'match up'—may be ironical or sarcastic, in order to tease, confuse, humiliate, or insult the addressee.[17]

DIRECTIVES IN SAME-SEX AND IN MIXED-SEX TALK

Marjorie Goodwin has conducted a number of studies of the use of directives in same-sex talk. She has observed that girls and boys (her subjects were no more than fourteen years of age) use different forms of directives. Boys (interacting with boys) use 'aggravated' directives, which explicitly establish status differences between participants; girls (interacting with girls) typically use directives which minimize status differences.[18] Instead of bald commands girls generally prefer persuasive talk; the directives they utter may be supported by reasons which justify the imperative form; or they may be mitigated by the modals 'would' and 'could' (and the use of 'please').[19] In some cases

[16] Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite', 117.

[17] Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 61; Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 10–11. For an Iliadic example, see below.

[18] See M. Goodwin, 'Directive-Response Speech Sequences in Girls' Activities and Boys' Task Activities', in McConnell-Ginet, Borker, and Furman (eds.), *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, 157–73, at 159, for the terms 'aggravated' and 'mitigated'; and see 158–9 for examples of boys' directives ('Gimme the pliers'; 'Go down there now') and 165–7 for girls' strategies (Let's ask her...'; 'Let's use those first'; 'We could go around...'; 'Maybe we can slice them'). Goodwin does not imply that girls do not use abrupt forms (or that boys never use mitigated forms). In her observations of girls at play she concludes that girls use *both* co-operative *and* competitive forms (such as directives): see M. Goodwin, 'Cooperation and Competition across Girls' Play Activities', in J. Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 121–46, at 122. As Goodwin, 'Directive-Response Speech Sequences', at 172, notes, the fact that girls do occasionally use aggravated forms allows us to see that they are not operating within the confines of a restricted code but have developed 'systematic procedures through which a particular type of social organization can be created'. That is, they use the style they use by choice.

[19] Goodwin, 'Cooperation and Competition', 123, 142. Their use of polite talk also ensures that they are heard by their addressees. On this finding, that polite directives are almost never ignored (although they may not be successful), see Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, and Rosenberg, 'Language and Power in the Family', 116.

they will use collaborative forms such as 'let's'. The hortatory form 'let's' signals a proposal rather than a command and includes the speaker in the subject. For this latter reason it is not included in the list of directives above. Although the 'let's' form shows no special deference towards the addressee (as does a request) it does not ignore his or her psycho-social needs (as might a command).

Goodwin's observations are confirmed in other studies of male and female discourse in other cultures. As Farida Abu-Haidar observes in her study of Lebanese boys, for example, the boys used directives 'as explicit commands' rather than 'as hints or suggestions'.[20] She notes also that these boys managed to control the conversation 'by directing the topic to themselves and their immediate needs', rather than to the requirements of the situation at hand.[21] She observes that girls of the same age manage to produce language which is both 'supportive and co-operative'.[22] Holmes likewise proposes that women in conversation appear to focus more than do men on the needs of others; as a consequence they regulate their talk with these needs in mind.[23] As Brown suggests, women are more sensitive at every moment to the potential 'face-threateningness' of what they say and they modify their speech accordingly.[24] With this observation we return to the notion raised above that in a number of societies men and women in some

[20] F. Abu-Haidar, 'Dominance and Communicative Incompetence: The Speech Habits of a Group of 8–11 Year-Old Boys in a Lebanese Rural Community', in Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 181–93, at 182; see also Goodwin, 'Directive-Response Speech Sequences', at 159.

[21] Ibid. at 159.

[22] Abu-Haidar, 'Dominance and Communicative Incompetence', at 192.

[23] Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 38. See S. Troemel-Ploetz, ' "Let me put it this way, John": Conversational Strategies of Women in Leadership Positions', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22 (1994), 199–209, at 200–5, for an example of how a woman 'camouflages' a dominant speech act, such as reminding another person that he is in debt to her, or making a request that may seem like a command.

[24] Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite', 131, is speaking of women in a Mayan community, the people of Tenejapa. She concludes (132) that the women of Tenejapa, in their use of strategies of negative politeness, are like English women: Tenejapan women speak, she says (130), 'as if the social power of addressee and social distance between interlocutors are higher overall than they are for men'. In my own Western middle-class world I observe that context is critical. When I am working on a joint project with my husband I will often use imperatives; but if I am asking him to do something for me alone I use mitigated forms.

circumstances make differential use of the linguistic resources available to them and that different degrees of concern for the psycho-social needs of others are at the heart of men's (competitive) and women's (co-operative) discourse styles.

STATUS, POWER, AND DIRECTIVES

In societies in which there are power and status differences between men and women—in societies in which men hold positions that are prestigious and publicly visible and in which they make decisions that affect the community as a whole, as opposed to decision-making in the domestic sphere—we observe that men's speech will emphasize the power asymmetries of the situation. Women in these contexts are likely to be more deferential, using more negative politeness than men.[25] But in Western societies, where women are beginning to move into positions formerly dominated by men, we see interesting contrasts in discourse styles in the public domain. Coates suggests that women in the professions—that is, women of higher status than many of their addressees—have in many cases resisted adapting to the discourse patterns of males at that level.[26] These women, in their professional roles, continue to employ a more co-operative speech style, marked by a greater degree of negative politeness. Candace West's study of directive-response sequences between doctor and patient makes this point.[27] West found that men and women doctors used directives in different ways: male doctors tended to use imperative forms or need statements, telling patients what they had to do. Female doctors used a range of mitigated forms, and particularly proposals for joint action, using 'let's'. The effect of these strategies is that women doctors minimize status differences

[25] Brown, 'How and Why are Women More Polite', 133–4.

[26] Coates, 'Language, Gender and Career', 24: Coates bases her claim on a small number of studies, one of which is the important study by West, discussed below.

[27] C. West, 'Not Just "Doctor's Orders": Directive-Response Sequences in Patients' Visits to Women and Men Physicians', *Discourse and Society*, 1 (1990), 85–112.

between themselves and their patients and, in doing so, ensure a greater degree of compliance.[28]

DIRECTIVES IN THE *ILIAD*

Do these same distinctions between more and less direct and more or less polite discourse amongst men and women hold good in the world of the *Iliad*? Let us begin at the beginning. The first phrase within the *Iliad* is a directive: the poet addresses his Muse and asks her to sing (*ἄειδε*, 1. 1). He addresses his Muse with a simple but powerful address-form (*θεά*) and a bald imperative.[29] The poet here balances his concern for the psycho-social needs of the Muse (through his use of an appropriately respectful address-form) with his own need for clarity in his request (hence his direct expression). This use of the simple directive, as we shall see, is echoed by mortals within both poems in their addresses to their gods.

Having invoked his Muse, the poet begins his tale: Chryses proposes to the commander of the Achaian forces that he accept ransom for Chryseis. Chryses' proposal is expressed by an aorist optative (*λύσαιτε*, may you give me back, 1. 20) rather than an imperative. This mitigated form, a wish for the future, would be approximately equivalent to an embedded form in the catalogue of directives which I set out above. The priest wants Agamemnon to make a concession: to accept the ransom offer for the return of his daughter. But he is reluctant to phrase it as an imperative, which could be read as coercive and which might offend Agamemnon, lord

[28] Evidence from this study shows that such an approach has better outcomes for patients than more traditional approaches which emphasize the asymmetry of the doctor–patient relationship: see especially West, 'Not Just "Doctor's Orders"', 108–9. I introduce this discussion here in order to establish a backdrop for our observations of Penelope in particular, as she assumes some of the power in the household after Odysseus' departure. How does the queen address those around her in the absence of her husband?

[29] The poet does this also in the *Odyssey* (*ἔννεπε*, tell, *Od.*1. 1; *εἰπέ*, tell, 1. 10). For further discussion of the poet's invocations of his Muse, see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 161–4.

of men. Against this initial tactful evasion Agamemnon's imperatives at 26 (μή σε . . . ἐγὼ . . . κιχείω, never let me find you) and 32 (ἴθι, μή μ' ἐρέθιζε, go now, do not make me angry) are harsh and abrasive.[30] In fact, the language of the poem, set as it is on the battlefield, is henceforth characterized by its directives. I shall consider them under three headings, which indicate their diminishing directness: imperatives; mitigated forms; and oblique directives.

Imperatives

A principal form of communication in the *Iliad* is the command. This is not surprising, given the setting of the story, the urgency of the events it describes, and the hierarchical structure of the fighting forces involved.[31] Commands on the battlefield are represented generally by a verb in the imperative mood.[32] Bare imperative forms are used by higher ranks in addressing lower ranks in many walks of life, but particularly so in the military forces; and they are used also when comrades are of similar rank and age and are known to each other.[33] Most commands are accompanied by an address-term. Many of these terms of address are preposed, in order to attract the addressee's attention: so at 4. 257 Agamemnon addresses Idomeneus (Ἰδομενεῦ . . .). But often address-terms do more: Achilleus addresses Lykaon at 21. 99 as νήπιε, poor fool. This single introductory

[30] Homer advises us of this at 1. 25 (ἀλλὰ κακῶς ἀφίει, κρατερὸν δ' ἐπὶ μῦθον ἔτελλε, but harshly he drove him away with a strong order upon him). The address-term γέρον (26) may be a term of respect, as at 1. 286 (Agamemnon to Nestor); but Homer's commentary at line 25 indicates that it is not used with respect in this context.

[31] For discussion of directives in the context of 'public speech' or 'muthos', see R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), chs. 1 and 2 (esp. at 59–65).

[32] The infinitive is also an option: see, e.g., *Il.* 2. 8–10, at 10 (ἀγορευέμεν). For discussion of the uses of the infinitive as imperative, see D. B. Monro, *A Grammar of the Homeric Dialect*, 2nd edn. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1986), 206–7. Pulleyn (S. Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 151–4) discusses (briefly and inconclusively) the force of the imperative and the absence of second person imperatival infinitives in prayers.

[33] Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 33, 35–6; and see above. Such forms are not of themselves impolite: an address form will, if necessary, mitigate their force: on this see also Probert and Dickey, 'Giving Directions', at 3.

address-form tells Lykaon what is to come. Address-terms may also indicate the speaker's respect for the face of the addressee (*ὄρσο, πέπον Καπανηϊάδη, καταβήσεο δίφρου*, come dear friend, son of Kapaneus, step down from the chariot, 5. 109). The warmth of the address-term to some extent mitigates the baldness of the imperative.

The second person imperative and its infinitive equivalent are common amongst the Achaian and Trojan warriors: Agamemnon at 3. 82 tells the Argives to hold their weapons (*ἴσχεσθ'*) and not to throw (*μὴ βάλλετε*); Hektor, at 3. 86, tells the men of both sides to listen (*κέκλυτέ*); on another occasion he commands the Trojans to make for the ships (*νηυσὶν ἐπισσεύεσθαι*, 15. 347); at 17. 185 he rallies his men (*ἀνέρες ἔστε*, be men); and Nestor does the same at 15. 661–3:

> *ὦ φίλοι, ἀνέρες ἔστε, καὶ αἰδῶ θέσθ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ*
> *ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, ἐπὶ δὲ μνήσασθε ἕκαστος*
> *παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων καὶ κτήσιος ἠδὲ τοκήων . . .*
>
> Dear friends, be men; let shame be in your hearts and discipline
> in the sight of other men, and each one of you remember
> his children and his wife, his property and his parents . . .

Heroes issue directives to each other in this form both on and beside the battlefield: Agamemnon encourages Idomeneus at 4. 264 (*ἀλλ' ὄρσευ πόλεμόνδ'*, rise up then to battle);[34] Lykaon proposes that Aineias not give up his reins and his horses (*σὺ μὲν αὐτὸς ἔχ' ἡνία καὶ τεὼ ἵππω*, 5. 230); and Hektor addresses Poulydamas at 13. 751 (*σὺ μὲν αὐτοῦ ἐρύκακε*, do you rather call back to their place). It is not surprising that enemies, too, address each other through imperatives: there is no question of considering the face-needs of the opposition. Hektor resists Aias' taunts at 7. 235–6:

> *μή τί μευ ἠΰτε παιδὸς ἀφαυροῦ πειρήτιζε,*
> *ἠὲ γυναικός, ἣ οὐκ οἶδεν πολεμήϊα ἔργα.*
>
> do not be testing me as if I were some ineffectual
> boy, or a woman, who knows nothing of the works of warfare.

[34] Agamemnon is quite aware of the force of his commands. Note that he says to the Aiantes (at 4. 286) *σφῶϊ μέν . . . οὔ τι κελεύω*, to you two I give no orders. As Martin observes, Agamemnon's capacity to issue what Martin refers to as 'muthos commands' diminishes as the story moves on: see Martin, *The Language of Heroes*, 62.

And Patroklos as he dies forecasts the future for Hektor (*σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσιν*, and put away in your heart . . . , 16. 851). It is interesting, too, to observe that Lykaon, who has encountered Achilleus for a second time, uses a bald imperative to ask the hero for mercy (*σὺ δέ μ' αἴδεο καί μ' ἐλέησον*, respect my position, have mercy upon me, 21. 74; *μή με κτεῖν'*, do not kill me, 95). His request is a matter of urgency. Clarity and succinctness are critical factors at this moment. Achilleus, of course, refuses (21. 99) directly:

> *νήπιε, μή μοι ἄποινα πιφαύσκεο μηδ' ἀγόρευε.*
>
> Poor fool, no longer speak to me of ransom, nor argue it.

Hektor, too, asks for mercy (*μή* . . . *ἔα* . . . *δέδεξο* . . . *δόμεναι*, do not let . . . take . . . give, 22. 339–42) through imperative forms; and Achilleus, again, refuses (*μή με, κύον, γούνων γουνάζεο μηδὲ τοκήων*, no more entreating me, you dog, by knees or parents, 22. 345). What is happening here? As we shall see, Lykaon's and Hektor's imperatives are more like entreaties, like the prayers of mortals to gods, which we shall consider below. They aim to be direct and unambiguous.[35] And they receive in these cases direct and unambiguous replies: from Achilleus it is in each case an unsympathetic address-form and a firm negative, setting a pattern which does not augur well for Priam's later request to ransom Hektor.

Commands are not restricted to the battlefield: bare imperatives in men's utterances may be found also in debate and discussion, in conversation, and in prayers. In most cases the speaker's respect for the face of his (or her) addressee is indicated through a careful form of address. Men and women equally are recipients of imperatives. Nestor gives instructions to Agamemnon (*Ἀτρεΐδη, σὺ δὲ παῦε τεὸν μένος*, give up your anger, 1. 282); Priam makes a request of Helen (*εἴπ' ἄγε μοι καὶ τόνδε, φίλον τέκος*, tell me of this one also, dear child, 3. 192); Hektor addresses his mother (*μή μοι οἶνον ἄειρε μελίφρονα, πότνια μῆτερ*, my honoured mother, lift not to me the

[35] And these imperatives are accompanied by a particular cluster of gestures, whether actual (21. 64–72) or betokened (22. 338) that we recognize as gestures of supplication. As Victoria Pedrick points out, the main purpose of supplication in the *Iliad* is to get one's request heard (V. Pedrick, 'Supplication in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*', *TAPA*, 112 (1982), 125–40, at 129). For discussion of these gestures as communication, see Introduction, above.

kindly sweet wine, 6. 264).[36] Cutting the possible brusqueness of these last two imperatives is an affectionate address-term in the first (φίλον τέκος) and a respectful term in the second (πότνια μῆτερ).[37] Imperatives may be energetic, as are Priam's to his sons (ἔρρετε, get out, 24. 239; γνώσεσθε, be aware, 242; σπεύσατε, make haste, 253). The old man's directness is enhanced by the address-form he chooses: λωβητῆρες ἐλεγχέες, you failures, you disgraces (239). On the other hand, directives may be delivered in a reassuring fashion, as are the commands of Hermes in disguise as an Achaian hero to Priam (ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ ... , but come, tell me this thing, ... 24. 380). By the time he issues this directive Hermes has already conveyed his goodwill through non-verbal means, by taking the old man's hand (361), through his sympathetic concern and his comforting words (370–1), and through his respectful terms of address (362 and 379).

Finally, there are prayers. The Achaians pray to Zeus (Ζεῦ πάτερ ... δὸς νίκην Αἴαντι ... , Father Zeus, ... grant that Aias win ... , 7. 202–3); Achilleus includes imperatives in his prayer to Zeus, which is prefaced (16. 233–5) by an elaborate address (ἐπικρήηνον, bring to pass, 16. 238; πρόες, send, 241);[38] Priam prays to Zeus (Ζεῦ πάτερ ... δός ... πέμψον, Father Zeus, ... grant ... send, 24. 309–10). In each case we observe, as we did in the case of the poet addressing his Muse, or the defeated supplicating the victor, that no mortal uses a polite, mitigated form or an oblique form in a prayer, despite the vast differences in status between himself and his addressee.

[36] For further discussion of the distinctive ways in which sons and daughters address their parents, see below.

[37] It is unusual in the epics to find φίλον τέκος or τέκνον φίλε on the lips of a male speaker: we will observe that the phrase is used almost consistently by women speakers (especially in the *Odyssey*), and goddesses. Perhaps it is Priam's age that allows him to use this affectionate phrase that characterizes the relationship of mother (or a person in the position of a mother, such as Helen, addressing Telemachos, *Od.* 15. 125) and child, or nurse and the child in her care. For a comparison with the use of φίλος as an address-term in Aristophanes, see A. Willi, *The Languages of Aristophanes: Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 186–7.

[38] On the format of a prayer, see Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, ch. 8, esp. at 132, for its three parts (invocation; *argumentum*; request); and L. Muellner, *The Meaning of Homeric EYXOMAI through its Formulas* (Innsbruck: Institut der Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1976), 26–31.

The all-important criterion which underpins mortals' preference for imperatives in these contexts is, obviously, clarity. The speaker does not wish to allow any 'interactional leeway'. There must be no mistaking his intention.

Women too use imperatives. Amongst mortals Hekabe addresses directives to Hektor (*ἀλλὰ μέν'*, but stay..., 6. 258). She has taken his hand (253) and has caught his attention using *τέκνον* (child, 254) as an address-term. She wants her son to listen to her (as he once may have listened); she, after all, is his mother. And she further softens her directive with a prolonged statement about the virtues of drinking a glass of wine before returning to battle (258–62). Homer's quick sketch of Hekabe, whom we meet here for the first time, is delightful. He captures neatly the attentive bustle of any mother when she welcomes her son back home from the wider world and tries to detain him by her side. Mortal women may also, like men, address gods in prayer: Theano, in the only instance in the *Iliad*, addresses Athene at 6. 305–10.[39]

Amongst the gods imperatives are used as they are amongst mortals: Thetis addresses Zeus (*σύ πέρ μιν τεῖσον*, now give honour to him, 1. 508); Zeus issues directives to Thetis (*σὺ μὲν νῦν αὖτις ἀπόστιχε*, go back again now, 1. 522); Zeus addresses Hera (*μὴ ... ἐπιέλπεο*, do not go on hoping, 1. 545; *μή τι σὺ ταῦτα ἕκαστα διείρεο μηδὲ μετάλλα*, do not always question each detail nor probe me, 550; *δαιμονίη ... ἀκέουσα κάθησο, ἐμῷ δ' ἐπιπείθεο μύθῳ*, Dear lady, ... sit down in silence, and do as I tell you, 561, 565);[40] Hera, after a careful preface, issues directives to Aphrodite (*δὸς νῦν μοι φιλότητα καὶ ἵμερον*, give me loveliness and desirability, 14. 198); Aphrodite responds to Hera (*τοῦτον ἱμάντα τεῷ ἐγκάτθεο κόλπῳ*, hide this zone away in the fold of your bosom, 14. 219); and Iris passes on Zeus's directive to Thetis (*ὄρσο, Θέτι*, rise, Thetis, 24. 88).

Although a single imperative—or even two such forms—appears to be a standard mode of expression for both men and women,

[39] For discussion of the participation of women in prayer, see Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 168–71, at 169.

[40] Note Zeus's sternly reproving address-term to his wife, *δαιμονίη*, which colours his words: on the meanings of the term, see R. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, 2nd edn. (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), s.v. See also Chapter 6.

longer strings are rare. A sustained string of directives is emphatic. Consider, for example, the force of Helen's refusal to Aphrodite to return with her to Paris in his apartment, with its four imperative forms (3. 406–9):

> *ἧσο παρ' αὐτὸν ἰοῦσα, θεῶν δ' ἀπόεικε κελεύθου,*
> *μηδ' ἔτι σοῖσι πόδεσσιν ὑποστρέψειας Ὄλυμπον,*
> *ἀλλ' αἰεὶ περὶ κεῖνον ὀΐζυε καί ἑ φύλασσε,*
> *εἰς ὅ κέ σ' ἢ ἄλοχον ποιήσεται, ἢ ὅ γε δούλην.*
>
> Go yourself and sit beside him, abandon the gods' way,
> turn your feet back never again to the path of Olympos
> but stay with him forever, and suffer for him, and look after him
> until he makes you his wedded wife, or makes you his slave girl.

Helen's passion (and the bluntness of her refusal) is such that Aphrodite becomes angry (413) and chastises her with a strong negative address-term, a sharp command, and a threat (3. 414):

> *μή μ' ἔρεθε, σχετλίη, μὴ χωσαμένη σε μεθείω . . .*
>
> Wretched girl, do not tease me lest in anger I forsake you . . .

Clearly, a mortal should not be issuing directives of the 'do-it-yourself' kind to a goddess. On the other hand, Andromache's three imperatives (*ἐλέαιρε . . . μίμν'*, take pity . . . stay, 6. 431; *στῆσον*, draw . . . up, 433) give some force to her recommendations to Hektor to stay within the city and to defend the Trojans from inside the walls.[41] As she speaks she stands close, clings to his hand, and weeps.

[41] For discussion of the speech act which leads into these directives (Andromache's rebuke), see above, Chapter 6. Note Andromache's address-term at 407 (*δαιμόνιε*): in this context an affectionate, intimate, remonstrance (Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, s.v.). In the language of Aristophanes, by contrast with that of Homer, *δαιμόνιε* was not used by women: it implied, in his world, superiority of the speaker: see Willi, *Languages of Aristophanes*, 187–8. Having attempted to play upon Hektor's pity for herself and her son, Andromache now frames her argument as a tactical proposal in the hope that by talking military talk she might catch his attention and win his agreement. W. Schadewaldt analyses Andromache's motivations neatly when he describes it as 'der letzte folgerichtige Schritt ihres angstgetriebenen Herzens': see *Von Homers Welt und Werk: Aufsätze und Auslegungen zur Homerischen Frage* (Stuttgart: Koehler, 1959), 219.

Her body language is expressive.[42] But we should note that Hektor does not appear to be either startled or offended by his wife's forthright speech. Rather, he reads her directives as we should, in their context, as a sign of her distress, and he responds to this directly but gently (*ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει*, all these things are in my mind also, 441).[43] When he comes to addressing her proposals he is quietly firm, as he reasons with her. Even apart from the shame he would feel (*μάλ' αἰνῶς αἰδέομαι*, I would feel deep shame, 441–2), what she suggests he simply cannot do (*οὐδέ με θυμὸς ἄνωγεν*, and the spirit will not let me, 444).

What we find in the *Iliad*, therefore, is that the imperative form may be used in a variety of contexts, as in our own world. Its goal is in every case *directness*: an imperative, by contrast with a mitigated or oblique form, offers a clear instruction. The imperative serves a continuum of functions that range from urgent advice (for example, Andromache's words to Hektor) or entreaty (as in supplication, or in prayers, when the speaker wishes his request to be unambiguous) to harsh injunction (Agamemnon to Chryseis, Achilleus to Hektor).[44] Apart from strings of imperatives, which carry their own force by virtue of insistence, the force of a command is derived from its context: that combination of circumstance and the relative status and respective mood of speaker and addressee. An imperative form of itself does not signal the higher status, greater power, or familiarity of the speaker (mortals' prayers confirm this point), just as it does not in the middle-class English-speaking world. But the address-term selected by the speaker will make it clear whether he or she is

[42] See M. Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 168–77 (on proximity); 226–8 (on touch). Argyle would suggest that her desire for proximity indicates intimacy and her touching Hektor indicates warmth. Her tears (clearly) indicate her emotional state.

[43] On Hektor's understanding of his wife's motives, see Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*, 220. I suggest, with Kirk, that here Hektor is referring both to Andromache's predicament and to the tactical proposals she has made: see G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. ii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 217. His address-term, *γύναι*, is courteous, affectionate, and respectful: Hektor honours his wife; but he will not take her advice.

[44] This is not in itself, generally speaking, a new observation: see K. McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students: A Concise Grammar of Classical Attic with Special Reference to Aspect in the Verb* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1974), 148; 'Aspects of the Imperative in Ancient Greek', *Antichthon*, 20 (1986), 41–58.

addressing a close friend or a stranger, or someone of higher or lower status, and what his or her intentions are. And, for the poem's audience, any information that the narrator provides about non-verbal communication between speaker and addressee will act as an important cue. Thus, as listeners or readers, we can distinguish the tone of Andromache's or Hekabe's commands to Hektor from that of a hero to his comrades in the thick of battle or that of Zeus to his disobedient wife.

Mitigated Forms

As we have observed above, a mitigated directive takes into account the feelings of the addressee; it allows what has been described above as 'interactional leeway'. The speaker has chosen this form of expression to reassure the addressee that he or she cares about the addressee's face and that the addressee will not be acting under compulsion.

It is not easy to be accurate and consistent in identifying mitigated forms of directives, since a mitigated directive, with its more complicated form of expression, could in some circumstances be read also as a polite question to which the answer might be 'yes' or 'no' (for example: 'Could you paint the room yourself?'). If we follow Ervin-Tripp's description of imbedded imperatives, however, we can interpret an optative sentence in Homer as a *command* (rather than a question) if two criteria are fulfilled: that the subject of the clause is also an addressee ('Could you do this?') and that the predicate describes an action that is physically possible at the time of utterance ('Could you swim out and pick up the ball?').[45]

In order to study Homer's use of mitigated directives in character-speech I have selected some useful comparative data, where imperatives and optatives are used to express similar instructions in different contexts. The difference in context appears to account for a different expression of the directive (or a different expression of the directive guides our reading of the context). For example, when old Nestor rises to speak in the course of the great quarrel between

[45] See Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 33.

Achilleus and Agamemnon, he introduces his words to the heroes (1. 259):

> ἀλλὰ πίθεσθ᾽· ἄμφω δὲ νεωτέρω ἐστὸν ἐμεῖο·
>
> Yet be persuaded. Both of you are younger than I am.

Here Nestor is confident of the weight of his experience with the younger men; he uses the imperative to remind the two heroes of that fact. And his speech continues in this emphatic mode: πίθεσθε, obey (274); μήτε ... ἀποαίρεο, do not take away, 275; ἔα, let her be, 276; μήτε ... ἔθελ᾽, don't consider, 277; παῦε, give up, 282.[46] Contrast Nestor's choice of mood with that of Helenos at 7. 48, who addresses Hektor much more carefully (Helenos is, after all, recommending single combat and, as we shall learn later, Hektor does not always respond well to others' advice):[47]

> ἦ ῥά νύ μοί τι πίθοιο, κασίγνητος δέ τοί εἰμι·
>
> would you now be persuaded by me, for I am your brother?

When Thetis puts her request to Zeus, at 1. 503–10, she uses imperatives to complete her supplication: κρήηνον, grant, 504; τίμησόν, give honour, 505; τεῖσον, do him honour, 508. But when she wants new armour for her son she appeals to Hephaistos in a way that reminds us of the periphrases of women in our own world. She tells the story of Patroklos' death in such a way that she is able to present Achilleus in a better light[48] and introduces her appeal delicately, as a suppliant, expressing face-saving reluctance to impose through her tentative phrase αἴ κ᾽ ἐθέλῃσθα (18. 457–8):

> τοὔνεκα νῦν τὰ σὰ γούναθ᾽ ἱκάνομαι, αἴ κ᾽ ἐθέλῃσθα
> υἱεῖ ἐμῷ ὠκυμόρῳ δόμεν ἀσπίδα καὶ τρυφάλειαν ...
>
> Therefore now I come to your knees; so might you be willing
> to give me for my short-lived son a shield and a helmet...

[46] Only Nestor's last request is softened (1. 282).

[47] Note Helenos' carefully selected address-terms at 7. 47. For advice to Hektor that meets with less success, see, e.g., 18. 284–309 (Hektor to Poulydamas). We should note that the more testing the operation that is being recommended the more indirect a speaker's directives tend to be: see Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 34.

[48] For discussion see R. Scodel, *Credible Impossibilities: Conventions and Strategies of Verisimilitude in Homer and Greek Tragedy* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1999), 63.

Why might Thetis choose such different forms in each context? Her motives are complex. Behind her request to each one is the knowledge that he is in her debt.[49] To Zeus she alludes delicately to what he owes her (1. 503–4); to Hephaistos she makes no reference at all to her kindness to him in the past. Thetis minimizes the fact that Zeus and Hephaistos are beholden to her; she is unwilling to emphasize her negotiating advantage. Her aim is to save both Zeus's and Hephaistos' face and thus to make it easier for them to agree to her request. So she chooses a strategy that is more feminine; she aims for closeness and empathy rather than distance and power.[50] In speaking with Zeus, Thetis, as a divinity of lower status, has couched her request to the king of gods and men as a prayer (*ἐέλδωρ*, 504), which traditionally uses the imperatives of entreaty. This is an important request and she aims for clarity. But in speaking with Hephaistos, Thetis, through a less direct form, acknowledges the god's special negative psycho-social needs.[51] Hence the mitigation of her directive.

When Hera wishes to seduce Zeus and lull him to sleep she has to approach Aphrodite, in order to effect the seduction, and Sleep, to bring about slumber. Since these two gods have powers to which Hera does not have access, she approaches both with a great deal of politeness. As we have noted, higher-cost requests often display more elaborated forms: whether deference, flattery, or allusions to solidarity.[52] Hera politely gives Aphrodite the opportunity to refuse

[49] See 1. 396–406, 18. 394–405; and see also Pindar, *Isthmian* 8; and L. Slatkin, *The Power of Thetis: Allusion and Interpretation in the* Iliad (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 53–84.

[50] On this see Troemel-Ploetz, '"Let me put it this way, John"', 200, 203–5, on camouflaging dominant speech acts as a face-saving gesture. And cf. the scholiast A on 18. 457: *μετρίως πάνυ, ὡς χάριν αἰτουμένη καὶ οὐκ ὀφειλομένην ἀπαιτοῦσα* (she speaks in a quiet way, as though asking for a favour and not calling in a debt).

[51] Hephaistos seems to be particularly needy in this respect: the other gods appear to hold him in relatively low regard (cf. 1. 599–600).

[52] Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, and Rosenberg, 'Language and Power in the Family', 120–1. Hera really wants this *zone*. She must do whatever it takes to obtain it. Goody, 'Towards a Theory of Questions', 37, suggests that people of superior status use a deferential mode in order to 'allow the subordinate to approach close enough to interact effectively'. Hence Hera's falsely affectionate address (*φίλον τέκος*) to Zeus's daughter.

her assistance to the as yet unspecified directive, on grounds of her support for the opposite side in this great war (14. 190–1):[53]

> *ἦ ῥά νύ μοί τι πίθοιο, φίλον τέκος, ὅττι κεν εἴπω,*
> *ἦέ κεν ἀρνήσαιο, κοτεσσαμένη τό γε θυμῷ*
> *οὕνεκ' ἐγὼ Δαναοῖσι, σὺ δὲ Τρώεσσιν ἀρήγεις;*

> Would you do something for me, dear child, if I were to ask you?
> Or would you refuse it? Are you forever angered against me
> because I defend the Danaans, while you help the Trojans?

Hera will not issue her directive until later, at 198, when Aphrodite has assured her of her respect (to a daughter of Kronos, sister of Zeus) and her willingness to assist (194–6). Only then does Hera express herself directly: *δὸς νῦν μοι*, give me, 198.[54]

Priam uses a mix of forms as he rages at his sons at 24. 253–64 and instructs them (again!) to harness his wagon. He begins impatiently with an imperative and a harsh address-form which tells us how to read the following words: *σπεύσατέ μοι, κακὰ τέκνα, κατηφόνες*, make haste, wicked children, my disgraces, 253. His invective closes, however, with an *οὐκ ἂν δή* construction (263), normally a polite imbedded directive used when there is respect on the part of the speaker for the addressee or some social distance between speaker and addressee. But there is no social distance here; a father is speaking to his sons. In the light of the address-terms he has chosen and his sons' reaction to his words (*ὑποδείσαντες ὁμοκλὴν*, 265), we must therefore read his directive at 263 as an ironic 'suggestion'—that is, an elaborately contemptuous command:[55]

> *οὐκ ἂν δή μοι ἄμαξαν ἐφοπλίσσαιτε τάχιστα . . .*

> well then,
> will you not get my wagon ready and be quick about it, . . .

[53] See R. Janko, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. iv (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 179 ('"[d]ear child" is a common affectionate address to a younger person'); and note also the scholiast's comment (bT on 14. 190): *ὑποθετικῶς διαλέγεται καὶ θυγατέρα αὐτὴν καλεῖ διὰ τὴν χρείαν* (she speaks hypothetically and calls her 'daughter' in her moment of need).

[54] Likewise Hera speaks cautiously to Sleep, addressing him elaborately and prefacing her directive with a prayer-like reference to precedent (233–5).

[55] Priam uses this otherwise courteous form to his sons, whom he has declared to be worthless; note that he follows it immediately with an imperative (*ταῦτά τε πάντ' ἐπιθεῖτε*, put all these things on it, 264). See N. Richardson, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*,

At times in the character-speech of the *Iliad* we notice examples of the 'let's' form of the verb, the first person plural hortatory form. This form has the merit of avoiding the directness of a command while stressing the participatory nature of both decision-making and the ensuing activity. The speaker is included in rather than excluded from these activities. For this reason Ervin-Tripp does not include the form in her listing of directives: it gives the semblance of a proposal rather than of a command. But it functions like a directive to the extent that the speaker is trying to make the addressee do as he or she proposes. Let us observe how it is used in the *Iliad*. Agamemnon speaks inclusively to Nestor when the situation looks bad for the Achaians (φραζώμεθ', let us take thought together, 14. 61; πειθώμεθα, let us be won over, 74; ἕλκωμεν ... ἐρύσσομεν, let us take ... and haul down, 76; ὁρμίσσομεν, and moor, 77). Diomedes joins in the same conversation and is equally inclusive (ἴομεν, let us go, 128; ἐχώμεθα, we must hold, 129). Poseidon, in disguise, addresses the Argives in this mode (πειθώμεθα πάντες, let us all be won over, 370). Women occasionally use the let's-form as well: κλαίωμεν, let us weep, 24. 208). This form in our own world is identified with the more co-operative talk that we ourselves identify with women. But we rarely see it used in the small sample of women's speech available to us in the *Iliad*;[56] it appears that in the Homeric world this co-operative form is used by men, at least when times are tough—when, for the purposes of survival, one must work with, rather than compete with, one's colleagues.

Oblique Directives and Hints

Some directives are phrased neither as commands nor as questions but as unspecific statements or wishes. On most occasions the setting

vol. vi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 301: the *context*, not the directive itself, shows this to be an abrasive form rather than a mild request. The similarity of this form to the form of words used in a very different manner by Nausikaa at *Od*. 6. 57 makes this very point. For further commentary on the use of such a 'polite' form, see Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 64; and see below.

[56] Since we very rarely see women working together in Homer in the way that we see men participating in warfare it is impossible to draw any conclusions about women's use of this form.

makes it clear what is expected. Why might the speaker choose an oblique expression? In many cases the desired act is obvious and there is no doubt who is to do it.[57] In family groups and amongst friends hints or oblique directives draw on shared goals and shared knowledge and enhance the solidarity of the group. But it may also be the case that the task in question is special or that the speaker is reluctant for some unspecified reason to be more specific.[58] In the world of the *Iliad* there is an interesting cluster of oblique directives in Book 24, all of which focus on the delicate operation of persuading Achilleus to accept ransom gifts for Hektor and to return his body to his father. The first step in the sequence of events which will lead to this outcome is taken on Olympos. An approach is to be made to Achilleus through his mother. As a necessary preliminary to this, Zeus asks that Thetis be summoned to him, in an inversion of the networking chain depicted in *Iliad* 1. Notice the indirect nature of this directive (24. 74–6):

> *ἀλλ' εἴ τις καλέσειε θεῶν Θέτιν ἆσσον ἐμεῖο,*
> *ὄφρα τί οἱ εἴπω πυκινὸν ἔπος, ὥς κεν Ἀχιλλεὺς*
> *δώρων ἐκ Πριάμοιο λάχῃ ἀπό θ' Ἕκτορα λύσῃ.*

> but it would be better
> if one of the gods would summon Thetis here to my presence
> so that I can say a close word to her, and see that Achilleus
> is given gifts by Priam and gives back the body of Hektor.

Zeus appears to be tentative; he expresses no more than a wish. Richardson identifies this form as a polite request: Zeus does not specify which god should do this.[59] Second, note Zeus's words to Thetis, when he gives her the instruction that she is to pass on to Achilleus. He tells her to tell her son that the gods are angry, and Zeus

[57] e.g., a woman says to her taller partner, 'I can't reach this.' For further examples, see Ervin-Tripp, '"Is Sybil There?"', 42–3.

[58] Ibid. 42–4.

[59] Richardson, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. vi, at p. 284. Why should Zeus not specify who is to undertake this task? Perhaps it is because of the difficulty of the task: Zeus knows that Thetis will be reluctant to see him, knowing what will be asked of her. Therefore the messenger god may not be well received. Zeus's delicacy at this moment foreshadows the necessary delicacy to come, when Thetis takes his instructions to her son. Or it may be that there is no need for Zeus to be specific: it is obvious that Iris, the female messenger-god, will carry his words to Thetis.

most angry of all, because Achilleus did not return Hektor and continues to hold him (113–15). Then he appears to propose that Thetis tell her son to ransom Hektor. This is what he says (116):

> *αἴ κέν πως ἐμέ τε δείσῃ ἀπό θ' Ἕκτορα λύσῃ.*
>
> Perhaps in fear of me he will give back Hektor.

Zeus skirts the issue. He *suggests* action rather than *ordering* it. He softens his words with the hedging expression *πως*.[60] But there is also an ominous note of warning here, as Richardson observes.[61] It is remarkable that when Thetis has sought out Achilleus and passes on this message, she edits Zeus's words (116) for her son: *ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ λῦσον, νεκροῖο δὲ δέξαι ἄποινα*, Come then, give him up and accept ransom for the body, 137. She modifies those words of Zeus that may sound like a threat (*αἴ κέν πως ἐμέ τε δείσῃ*) so that the message from the king of gods and men resembles a gently persuasive request (through the force of *ἄγε δή*) rather than a bald command.[62]

Finally, at the climax of the episode, when Priam comes into Achilleus' shelter and catches his knees and kisses his hands in gestures of supplication, the old man too, the last link in the chain, expresses the ransom-bid in an indirect fashion. In proposing the return of his son in exchange for ransom he avoids both imperative and optative forms (24. 501–2):

> *τοῦ νῦν εἵνεχ' ἱκάνω νῆας Ἀχαιῶν*
> *λυσόμενος παρὰ σεῖο, φέρω δ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα.*
>
> For whose sake I come now to the ships of the Achaians
> to win him back from you, and I bring you gifts beyond number.

He puts no pressure on Achilleus at all to accept the ransom he offers and to give up the body. In this long speech (486–506) Priam is reluctant to be more explicit; he is reluctant to express his desire for

[60] His expression has been identified by Leaf as 'studied courtesy': see W. Leaf, *The Iliad*, 2nd edn. (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1960), 546. Leaf reads *αἴ κεν πως* as 'in the hope that': again a form of a wish.

[61] See Richardson, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. vi, at p. 288.

[62] In her motherly way (with an affectionate address-term and a sympathetic preface) she softens Zeus's words in order to save her son's face, and to persuade him to act in his own interests. See above, for discussion of women's preference for camouflaging or mitigating dominant speech acts.

ransom through any form that resembles a directive. More like a woman, he shows concern for Achilleus' psycho-social needs. For this reason his message is oblique. Priam uses directives only as part of his appeal for pity, in which he focuses on the similarity between himself and Peleus, in an attempt to distract Achilleus from the association of Hektor with Patroklos—and vengeance (503–4):[63]

> *ἀλλ' αἰδεῖο θεούς, Ἀχιλεῦ, αὐτόν τ' ἐλέησον,*
> *μνησάμενος σοῦ πατρός·*
>
> Honour then the gods, Achilleus, and take pity upon me
> remembering your father ...

Later, when Priam's desire to see Hektor cannot be contained (and when Achilleus has signalled (517–51) that he may be well-disposed to the old man's request), he risks explicit directives (553–6):

> *μή πώ μ' ἐς θρόνον ἵζε, διοτρεφές, ὄφρα κεν Ἕκτωρ*
> *κεῖται ἐνὶ κλισίῃσιν ἀκηδής, ἀλλὰ τάχιστα*
> *λῦσον, ἵν' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδω· σὺ δὲ δέξαι ἄποινα*
> *πολλά, τά τοι φέρομεν·*
>
> Do not, beloved of Zeus, make me sit on a chair while Hektor
> lies yet forlorn among the shelters; rather with all speed
> give him back, so that my eyes may behold him, and accept the ransom
> we bring you, which is great.

At this point, however, we understand why even Zeus had been circumspect in his approach to Achilleus. The hero's response to the old man is unexpectedly sharp and resentful. His fierce pride will not allow him to be pushed around by his suppliant. Achilleus answers Priam brusquely (*ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν*, 559): his frown expresses his extreme displeasure.[64] And he utters a directive of his own (*μηκέτι νῦν μ' ἐρέθιζε, γέρον*, no longer stir me up, old sir, 560; *μή μοι ... θυμὸν ὀρίνῃς*, you must not make my spirit move, 568). Thus Homer resolves the sequence of oblique forms (Zeus to Iris, Zeus to Thetis, Priam to Achilleus) with a pair of abrupt directives from Achilleus

[63] Cf. the discussion of Chryses, above, who also expresses his request with care.

[64] Cf. G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 68. On the communicative force of Achilleus' frown, see Argyle, *Bodily Communication*, at 49 and 135; and see Chapter 7, above, for discussion of the scowl in Homer.

himself. The hero's lack of ambiguity at this point reminds us vividly of his pride and its contribution to this tragedy.[65]

DIRECTIVES IN THE *ODYSSEY*

Imperatives

Imperative forms appear frequently in the character-speech of the *Odyssey*, as Telemachos, Odysseus, and Penelope deal with the challenges they encounter in their respective worlds. Telemachos addresses directives to 'Mentes', a stranger-guest, in the context of palace society (*ἐπίμεινον*, stay, 1. 309);[66] to his age-mate Pisistratos (*φράζεο*, look at, 4. 71); and to his host Menelaos (*μὴ δή με πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἔρυκε*, do not keep me here with you for a long time, 4. 594).[67] Athene (speaking as 'Mentes') issues a string of commands to Telemachos: *ξυνίει* ... *ἐμπάζεο*, pay attention ... do, 1. 271; *πέφραδε*, publish, 273; *ἄνωχθι*, tell, 274; *ἴτω*, let her go, 276; *ἔρχεο*, go out, 281; *ἐλθὲ*, go, *εἴρεο*, question, 284; *χεῦαι*, pile up, *ἐπὶ* ... *κτερεΐξαι*, make sacrifices, 291; *δοῦναι*, give, 292; *φράζεσθαι*, consider, 294; *μελέτω* ... *ἐμπάζεο* ..., let this be on your mind ... and take heed, 305. Odysseus, although a castaway, addresses a directive to Alkinoös, his host (*ὑμεῖς δ' ὀτρύνεσθαι*, but make speed, 7. 222);[68] and Alkinoös addresses a directive to Odysseus, his guest (*μηδὲ σὺ κεῦθε*, do not keep hiding, 8. 548). Echeneos, a counsellor, addresses his king, Alkinoös (*εἷσον*, seat, *κέλευσον*, tell, 7. 163). And on Ithaka

[65] Cf. Lynn-George's account of this scene, a 'struggle of language': M. Lynn-George, *Epos: Word, Narrative, and the* Iliad (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 248–9, at 248.

[66] The imperative follows a warm address form (1. 307–8): Telemachos' imperative form that follows (at 309) is therefore the kind of imperative that would be used within the family: the imperative of intimates.

[67] This last command sounds abrupt, but we should note that it marks Telemachos' sense of urgency; and, besides, Telemachos follows it with a mitigating compliment (4. 595–8) and with a justification (598–9).

[68] In the world that Homer describes this use of the imperative in what amounts to a speech of entreaty is clearly an acceptable mode; note that the Phaiakians approve his words, *ἐπεὶ κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπεν* (for what he said was fair and orderly, 227).

Antinoös, a suitor, addresses Odysseus in his beggar's guise (*πῖνέ τε, μηδ' ἐρίδαινε*, drink, nor quarrel, 21. 310); Odysseus addresses directives to Eumaios, his companion in arms (*βαλέειν . . . ἐκδῆσαι . . . ἐρύσαι πελάσαι τε*, put . . . fasten . . . drag, and raise, 22. 174–6). Nestor addresses his sons (3. 475–6):

> *Παῖδες ἐμοί, ἄγε, Τηλεμάχῳ καλλίτριχας ἵππους*
> *ζεύξαθ' ὑφ' ἅρματ' ἄγοντες, ἵνα πρήσσῃσιν ὁδοῖο.*
>
> Come now, my children, harness the bright-maned horses under
> the yoke for Telemachos so that he can get on with his journey.

We can see that imperatives are used between intimates, companions, and guest-friends, and in asymmetrical relationships: the suitor to the beggar; the aged counsellor to the king; the castaway to the king.

Men address women through directives. Telemachos thus addresses Penelope, his mother (*τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε*, take up your work, 1. 356 and 21. 350; *κέλευε*, bid, 1. 357; *μῆτερ ἐμή, μή μοι γόον ὄρνυθι*, mother, do not stir up a scene of sorrow, 17. 46); and Eurykleia, his nurse (*ἄφυσσον*, draw, 2. 349; *ἄγε δή μοι ἔρυξον*, come, detain . . . , 19. 16). The consistent directness of Telemachos' words to his mother is remarkable.[69] I would have expected some mitigating element in Telemachos' directives. Holmes, however, is able to throw some light on this. She notes first that children in middle-class American families use less polite imperatives to their mothers and more mitigated directives to their fathers.[70] It has been suggested that these differences reflect the fact that mothers are perceived as less powerful than fathers and, therefore, as less deserving of respect and negative politeness.[71] Holmes suggests, perhaps too charitably, that since imperatives are normal between intimates it may be the case that children use them in speaking to their mothers because they feel closer to them.[72] I suggest that Penelope's silence, by way of response to Telemachos' words (1. 360–1; 17. 57; 21. 354–5), indicates that in the world of the *Odyssey* the former explanation is more likely than

[69] See also Chapter 6.

[70] See Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 159, for discussion. And see also Ervin-Tripp, O'Connnor, and Rosenberg, 'Language and Power in the Family'.

[71] Ibid. 120–3, 131–5.

[72] Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 159.

the latter. Finally, Telemachos addresses the goddess Athene in prayer (κλῦθί μοι, hear me, 2. 262) in the same direct fashion that we noted in the *Iliad* and in the poet's own address to his Muse (*Od.* 1. 1, 10). As for Odysseus, he entreats Nausikaa (ἐλέαιρε, have pity, 6. 175; δεῖξον, δός, show, give . . . , 178); he entreats Arete (ὀτρύνετε, urge, 7. 151); he entreats Athene (ὕφηνον, weave, στῆθι, stand, 13. 386–7);[73] in disguise, he gives his wife Penelope earnest and heartfelt advice, countering the possible abruptness of his emphatic imperative with a courteous address-term (ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη . . . μηκέτι νῦν ἀνάβαλλε, O respected wife, do not put off now, 19. 583–4); and, as the restored Odysseus, he has no reservation about choosing such forms, again modified by the address-term he uses: ὦ γύναι . . . ἧσθαι, μηδέ τινα προτιόσσεο μηδ' ἐρέεινε, Dear wife, . . . sit still, looking at no one, and do not ask any questions (23. 350, 365). Alkinoös likewise cuts the brusqueness of the imperative with the courtesy of his address: γύναι, φέρε, wife, bring, 8. 424.

Women address directives to other women, particularly of lower rank: Nausikaa addresses her maidens (στῆτέ μοι, stand fast, 6. 199; δότ', give, 209; λούσατε, bathe, 210). Penelope addresses the nurse Eurykleia (ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν . . . νίψον, come then . . . wash, 19. 357–8). But the nurse (a long-standing member of the family) issues instructions to Penelope (με κατάκτανε, kill me, 4. 743); and, much later, an even more excited directive to her mistress (ἔγρεο, Πηνελόπεια, wake, Penelope, 23. 5). Note that her imperative reflects the urgency of the situation and is softened by an affectionate address-form (νύμφα φίλη at 4. 743; φίλον τέκος at 23. 5).

Women also address directives to men. In these exchanges Homer makes some interesting points about the relationships he depicts. Penelope, the mistress of the house, issues a directive to the bard Phemios as she interrupts his song (ἄειδε . . . ἀποπαύε' ἀοιδῆς, sing . . . leave off singing, 1. 339–40).[74] As mistress of the household she is in a position to speak in this way; but she does so through her tears (δακρύσασα, 336). Her words are as much an entreaty as a command. Later in the narrative (at 16. 409–11) Penelope takes confidence from her desperation and addresses embedded directives to the suitors

[73] As does Penelope also: see 4. 762–6.

[74] For discussion of Penelope's interruption of Phemios, see Chapter 9.

(*ἀλλά σε παύσασθαι κέλομαι καὶ ἀνωγέμεν ἄλλους*, I tell you to stop it, and ask the others to do so likewise, 16. 433).[75] But she uses bald directives to Odysseus the beggar (*ἄγε μοι τὸν ὄνειρον ὑπόκριναι καὶ ἄκουσον*, come, listen to a dream of mine and interpret it, 19. 535). These imperatives reflect not the difference in status between the queen and the beggar, but the opposite of that. Whereas the embedded directives addressed to the suitors mark the distance that she wants to put between the queen and the young men, Penelope's explicit imperatives to Odysseus indicate the sympathy between herself and her unknown guest. Penelope's talk (19. 509–53), as they sit together by the fire, has the candid tone *either* of one of those once-only confessional conversations between strangers *or*, perhaps without Penelope being entirely conscious of it, it is the conversation of genuine intimates.[76] She addresses this beggar as a *ξεῖνος*, a guest-friend (509); she tells him of her feelings; she asks him for advice.

Nausikaa, the daughter of Alkinoös, also issues directives to Odysseus the castaway (*ὄρσεο δὴ νῦν, ξεῖνε*, rise up now, stranger, 6. 255; *ἔρδειν*, do, 258; *ἔρχεσθαι*, go; 261, *ξυνίει*, understand, 289; *μεῖναι*, wait, 295; *ἴμεν*, go, *ἐρέεσθαι*, enquire, 298; *διελθέμεν*, go on, 304; *χεῖρας βάλλειν*, embrace, 310–11). But in this different context her directives carry a different implication. Note her charming composure, as she mimics adult behaviour, addressing the tall handsome stranger for whom she finds herself responsible with a courteous address-term and giving him firm instructions. She fancies him (276–7); but she knows (255–303) that it is proper to maintain some social distance at this early stage. Thus she speaks to him as would a princess to an unknown castaway, lower on the social scale.[77] Elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, Eurykleia issues directives to Telemachos, still (in her mind, at least) her charge (*μέν' αὖθ'*, stay here, 2. 369). Finally, Melantho, Penelope's maid, harshly addresses (*ἐνένιπε*, scolded 19. 65) Odysseus, the beggar (*ἔξελθε . . . ὄνησο*, take yourself

[75] The embedded directive indicates that she feels she must be less assertive—more cautious—with the suitors.

[76] On confessional talk, see R. Wardhaugh, *How Conversation Works* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 126–7.

[77] And she will use this form again at 8. 461, when she farewells him: *Χαῖρε, ξεῖν'*, Goodbye, stranger.

out . . . be satisfied, 68). To an internal audience these are the sharp words of a bossy maid, an insider, to a beggar who has no status in the household. But to the external audience, who know that Odysseus is behind the disguise, Melantho's rough words are outrageous: this is no way to speak to her master.[78]

Mitigated Directives

Mitigated forms, softened in a variety of ways, are used by men, especially when a difficult task is being proposed, or when the speaker feels somewhat in awe of his addressees. So Telemachos addresses the elderly Nestor, asking for information about his father: he begins cautiously (*αἴ κ' ἐθέλῃσθα . . . ἐνισπεῖν*, in case you might wish to tell, 3. 92–3) and only later in his speech does he feel able to use imperative forms (*μηδέ . . . μειλίσσεο . . . κατάλεξον*, do not soften . . . tell . . . , 96–7). And he addresses Menelaos with the same care: *εἴ . . . ἐνίσποις*, if you could tell me, 4. 317; *αἴ κ' ἐθέλῃσθα . . . ἐνισπεῖν*, in case you might wish to tell me, 322–3. Telemachos, speaking to his companion Pisistratos, at 15. 195–201, proposes the almost unthinkable: that Pisistratos condone a breach of hospitality. He obviously has to broach his request carefully (*πῶς κέν . . . τελέσειας*, would you bring to pass, 15. 195), in what Hoekstra describes as a 'tactful and elaborate' fashion.[79] Not only does he use a much mitigated form but he also modifies his request with reminders of their friendship (196–7), their similarity of age (197), and the bond they have formed on the basis of their travels to Pylos and Sparta (198).[80] Given that Pisistratos and Telemachos have so much in common we might have expected that Telemachos could make his request using a bald imperative. But, because of the

[78] Melantho's commands are built into her rebukes of her master: for further comment, see Chapter 6.

[79] See Hoekstra's comments in A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 243. Hoekstra identifies the use of *πῶς* with an optative as a courteous exhortation.

[80] After so much preparation Telemachos eventually renders his wishes with imperative forms, expressing at last the urgency of his request: (*μή με παρὲξ ἄγε νῆα, διοτρεφές, ἀλλὰ λίπ' αὐτοῦ*, do not take me, illustrious, past my ship, but leave me there, 199). Even with his age-mate he uses a very respectful address-form.

extraordinary service he asks, he mitigates his directive, acknowledging to his friend that this is a request he might otherwise wish to refuse. In my final example, Odysseus politely questions the unknown girl whom he meets on the path to the city of the Phaiakians (7. 22–3):

> *Ὦ τέκος, οὐκ ἄν μοι δόμον ἀνέρος ἡγήσαιο*
> *Ἀλκινόου, . . .*
>
> My child, would you not show me the way to the house of a certain man, Alkinoös, . . .

He does not reveal at his point that he knows that she is Athene in disguise; but he will slip this small piece of information into his conversation with the goddess when they meet on Ithaka (13. 322–3). The address-term and the gentle elaboration of his request—his politeness—is the courtesy due to a goddess. Later, as beggar, Odysseus uses an embedded imperative to his wife (*οὐκέτ' ἀπολλήξεις τὸν ἐμὸν γόνον ἐξερέουσα;* you will not stop asking me about my origins? 19. 166). At this moment, I suggest, his question directive, unmitigated by an optative form, suggests exasperation.[81] This is the second time in the course of this meeting that Penelope has asked him about his identity (19. 104–5, 162–3). Odysseus' vexation is signalled by the formality of his address, which now puts a social distance between himself and the queen, *ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω 'Οδυσῆος* (O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes, 165)[82] even as his question directive, with so little to mitigate it, suggests both urgency and a closer relationship. The lack of match between the beggar's address-form and his directive alerts us to the ironies of the moment. Although the 'stranger' presents himself as a beggar, we feel his Odyssean irritation—and his amusement—at being pressed on this sensitive question.[83]

[81] Odysseus' command, phrased as a question in the future, is either rudely confrontational or desperately urgent (on this point see Probert and Dickey, 'Giving Directions', at 3). In this context it is confrontational.

[82] Previously he had addressed her quite simply as *γύναι* (107).

[83] It could be that he is *feigning* indignation: his wife's insatiable curiosity about him and her reluctance to observe his instruction of 115–16 may in fact be pleasing to him. For further discussion of this scene, from Penelope's viewpoint, see Chapter 10.

Mitigated directives are used by women as well: Nausikaa issues a very tentative directive to her father, the motivation for which is a matter of some delicacy (6. 57):[84]

> *Πάππα φίλ', οὐκ ἂν δή μοι ἐφοπλίσσειας ἀπήνην . . .*
>
> Daddy dear, will you not have them harness me the wagon . . .

Nausikaa is thinking of marriage, but in her girlish way she is reluctant to put her thoughts into words for her father. Her familiar, even wheedling, form of address, *πάππα*, as Hainsworth points out, 'defines the tone' of Nausikaa's words.[85] Nausikaa's elaborately mitigated form to her father stands in contrast with Telemachos' directives to his mother. As has been noted above, sons and daughters may show more respect to their fathers, who are more powerful (that is, who can achieve more for them) and perhaps more distant, than to their mothers.[86]

Oblique Directives and Hints

We expect that in an epic which takes Odysseus as its hero there will be a certain amount of indirect expression. Especially when the hero is disguised as a beggar he takes delight in speaking obliquely. Thus, when Odysseus tells Eumaios his cloak-tale, he phrases his bid for a cloak as a broad hint: he tells a story which he concludes with pointed exit-talk (14. 504–5):

> *δοίη κέν τις χλαῖναν ἐνὶ σταθμοῖσι συφορβῶν,*
> *ἀμφότερον, φιλότητι καὶ αἰδοῖ φωτὸς ἑῆος.*
>
> Some one of the swineherds in this house would give me a mantle,
> both for love and out of respect for a strong warrior.

[84] I read this as a (much mitigated) command: it fulfils Ervin-Tripp's criteria set out above.

[85] Like *τέττα* (*Il.* 4. 412), *μαῖ'* (*Od.* 2. 349), and *ἄττα* (*Od.* 16. 31), *πάππα* is a familiar term suitable for a wheedling child: see Hainsworth in A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 297, who also notes here that, were it not for the address-term, Nausikaa's tone would be concealed by the formulas of the epic diction.

[86] On this see above. It may also be that when speakers feel some embarrassment about their request they express themselves less assertively and less directly.

Odysseus' preference for indirectness is matched by his wife. The suitors will respond with alacrity when Penelope, daughter of Ikarios and potential bride, instructs them—albeit indirectly—to bring her appropriate gifts (18. 275–80):

> *μνηστήρων οὐχ ἥδε δίκη τὸ πάροιθε τέτυκτο,*
> *οἵ τ' ἀγαθήν τε γυναῖκα καὶ ἀφνειοῖο θύγατρα*
> *μνηστεύειν ἐθέλωσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐρίσωσιν·*
> *αὐτοὶ τοί γ' ἀπάγουσι βόας καὶ ἴφια μῆλα,*
> *κούρης δαῖτα φίλοισι, καὶ ἀγλαὰ δῶρα διδοῦσιν·*
> *ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀλλότριον βίοτον νήποινον ἔδουσιν.*

> the behavior of these suitors is not as it was in time past
> when suitors desired to pay their court to a noble woman
> and daughter of a rich man, and rival each other. Such men
> themselves bring in their own cattle and fat sheep, to feast
> the family of the bride, and offer glorious presents.
> They do not eat up another's livelihood, without payment.

Note that Penelope does not frame her request as a request: it is framed as a statement of what suitors ought to do. Is her indirectness an outcome of womanly modesty on her part? Is it that she does not want to acknowledge that she is interacting with her suitors? Or is it that she speaks indirectly in order to conceal her true intentions, which have nothing to do with marriage? The suitors understand her request, if not her ultimate intentions. In their eyes Penelope is worth the cost. They bring her gifts at once (18. 284–303). Odysseus, however, recognizes her oblique request and its point (281–3); and he is happy (*γήθησεν δέ*, 281).

Later in the narrative, when Odysseus has been brought to the palace and Penelope wishes him to be honoured as a guest, he rejects the thought of having his feet washed by the young women of the palace, as Penelope has instructed (19. 317), but would entrust the task to an old servant. Although ostensibly a beggar, he readily takes on the role of guest that Penelope offers him and expresses himself quite firmly about what he does not want (343–5):

> *οὐδέ τί μοι ποδάνιπτρα ποδῶν ἐπιήρανα θυμῷ*
> *γίγνεται· οὐδὲ γυνὴ ποδὸς ἅψεται ἡμετέροιο*
> *τάων αἵ τοι δῶμα κάτα δρήστειραι ἔασιν . . .*

> Nor is there any desire in my heart for foot basins, to wash
> my feet, not shall any woman lay hold of my feet, not one
> of those such as do your work for you in your palace...

But when he expresses his needs, he does so in an indirect fashion, letting slip a regal note even so (346–8):[87]

> *εἰ μή τις γρηῦς ἐστι παλαιή, κεδνὰ ἰδυῖα,*
> *ἥ τις δὴ τέτληκε τόσα φρεσὶν ὅσσα τ' ἐγώ περ·*
> *τῇ δ' οὐκ ἂν φθονέοιμι ποδῶν ἅψασθαι ἐμεῖο.*

> not unless there is some aged and virtuous woman
> whose heart has had to endure as many troubles as mine has.
> If such a one were to touch my feet, I should not be angry.

What Odysseus means at this point is 'Tell Eurykleia to wash my feet.' And Penelope does as has been suggested: see 19. 357–8. Why, however, his circumlocution? I suggest that here we have an intersection of Odyssean impulses. First, since Odysseus is, by virtue of his disguise, an outsider, he must give the impression that he is not sure whether his request can be fulfilled. This is a case of assumed vagueness about the attendants in the palace. He gives the appearance of politeness. Second, since Odysseus by nature is a risk-taker, we see the beggar putting himself into a position where his identity might be revealed. And so, in effect, he asks for the person who is best qualified to betray him.[88]

*

In the *Iliad* we find that women (in, admittedly, an unbalanced sample) use directives as readily as men, although, for both men and women, substitutions are possible. Imperatives are used when the speakers wish there to be no ambiguity about what they ask (in prayer, for example; or in Achilleus' quick retort to Priam); when

[87] Russo makes this point: see J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano, and A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 95.

[88] I offer an explanation that runs against that of I. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 475 ('his request for an old servant is in no way intended to result in a reunion with Eurykleia') and that of R. Scodel, 'Homeric Signs and Flashbulb Memory', in I. Worthington and J. M. Foley, *Epea and Grammata: Oral and Written Communication in Ancient Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 99–116, at 109 ('probably expecting that Eurynome would be selected').

there is some urgency (the heroes on the battlefield address each other); when the speaker is impassioned (Agamemnon to Chryses; Helen to Aphrodite); when there is equality of rank and/or age (Agamemnon to Idomeneus); when the speaker is of higher rank than the addressee (Agamemnon to the Argives); or when the speaker wishes to claim superiority of some kind over his or her listeners (Nestor to Achilleus and Agamemnon). It is the address-terms that speakers use to accompany the directive that allow the internal audience and the external audience to judge the tone of the discourse. It is clear, too, that both men and women are sensitive to the advantages of mitigated forms at times, with the face-needs of their addressees in mind (Chryses to Agamemnon; Helenos to Hektor; Thetis to Hephaistos; Priam to Achilleus). But the consistent preference for mitigated forms and let's-forms that has been noted amongst women in our own world is *not* detectable in the limited sample of women's talk available to us in the world of the *Iliad*. Finally, I note that the readiness of women in Homer's world to use bald directives contrasts with their sparing use, which I documented in Chapter 6, of the dominant speech act, the rebuke.

My findings for the *Odyssey* correspond to my findings for the *Iliad*. The address-terms that introduce the directive convey emotional tone. Women use directives as readily as men. Imperatives are used when speakers wish there to be no ambiguity about their requests. Both men and women understand the advantages of mitigated forms on occasion, with the psycho-social needs of their addressees in mind. But the consistent preference for mitigated forms and let's-forms that has been noted amongst women in our own world is *not* detectable in the limited sample of women's talk available to us in the world of the *Odyssey*.

But the *Odyssey*, unlike the *Iliad*, includes young people in its cast of characters: Nausikaa, Telemachos and Pisistratos. I draw attention again to their verbal behaviour: when speaking to age-mates (as Telemachos does to Pisistratos) and when speaking to those of lower rank (Nausikaa to her handmaidens; Telemachos to his nurse) they use bald directives.[89] There is, however, on the

[89] And cf. also Nausikaa's confident imperatives to the castaway who has emerged from the sea (she, after all, is making provision for him). Her directives indicate her pleasure in being in charge.

evidence of the *Odyssey*, a charming preference for elaborated forms by younger people when they are trying to make older males, including their fathers, or men of higher rank, do something for them. In these contexts both Telemachos and Nausikaa make efforts to avoid issuing bald imperatives. They choose mitigated forms, using optatives instead of directives and, in Telemachos' case, introducing imperative forms with a careful preface. On the other hand, we have observed the remarkable trio of Telemachos' bald directives to his mother, paralleled in children's talk to their mothers today. It is here alone, in the directives addressed by young people to their elders, that we find interesting reflections on gender and status, in that the choice amongst the range of directive expressions is governed by the gender of the addressee as well as the context (what is at issue in each circumstance). Although I recognize the uneven ratios of the samples of men's and women's speech in the epics, I argue that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* indicate no other gender distinctions in the use of directives apart from this. The distinctions to which Holmes draws our attention in our English-speaking world—whereby mitigated directives are indicative of a co-operative style preferred by women and bare imperatives are typical of the competitive style preferred by men—are not observable in the world which Homer represents. There is in general in the Homeric world a very high tolerance of imperative forms, whether voiced by men or by women.[90]

[90] This is a finding confirmed by Probert and Dickey in their study of Euripides' *Hecuba*, 'Giving Directions', at 4. Although polite forms are recognized and used it is remarkable that request and instructions are so often expressed through the imperative mood: 'time after time requests—even risky requests—are couched in the imperative' (4). Imperatives in the *Hecuba* are uttered both by men (Odysseus) and by women (Polyxena). There appears to be no gender-preference for directives of this kind. The consistency between my own findings and those of Probert and Dickey suggests to me that we are hearing the language of everyday Greek speakers, separated perhaps in time by 300 years.

9

Competitive and Co-operative Strategies III: Interruptions

The principle of turn-taking is a sociolinguistic universal. For cognitive and practical reasons it is easier for us to follow a conversation or a formal meeting if participants take it in turns to speak. And it is easier for the speaker too, if he or she is not obliged to speak over another voice. But adherence to turn-taking 'rules' and toleration of interruption vary amongst communities and amongst cultures: each group formulates its own rules for turn-taking.[1] In public or institutional gatherings, the rules are, in general, undisputed. Meetings, for example, are in most cultures underpinned by conventions which regulate the distribution of talk amongst all interested parties. A chairperson begins proceedings, controls the order of speaking turns, and brings the talk to an end. Participants speak one at a time at the invitation of the chair. In informal conversations, on the other hand, though there is no chairperson, there is nevertheless an etiquette which we all—on the face of it—acknowledge. The unspoken rule in Western societies appears to be that only one person speaks at any time and that, at the moment of speaker-change, the first 'starter' after that momentary pause is the person who takes the floor. In the economy of turn-taking in conversations the standard procedure is that 'the starter gets the turn'.[2] In such

[1] Tolerance of interruption is said to be greater in some cultures (Korea or China, for example); it varies also within communities (in some families, for example, interruption is 'policed' more stringently than others). I thank Kyoung-Hee Moon and Peter Londey for their observations on this point.

[2] The classic discussion of turn-taking is H. Sacks, E. Schegloff, and G. Jefferson, 'A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation', *Language*, 50 (1974), 696–735. D. Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile: Non-Verbal Behavior in Homeric Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 291, briefly discusses this rhythmical aspect of social synchronization as 'chronemics'.

informal contexts problems arise when several people wish to contribute to the current topic of conversation. In their eagerness to be heard, participants may violate the rule by breaking in on the person speaking and attempting to take the floor.

I have presented above a conventional account of turn-taking rules and how they might be infringed. But we should be aware that not every conversation, as distinct from a formal meeting, is conducted on a one-at-a-time basis. Nor is it the case that every interruption is an attempt to disrupt a speaker's turn. If we were to study transcripts of everyday conversations, we would observe that there is a certain amount of so-called back-channelling from other participants,[3] some simultaneous speech (especially amongst women), a considerable amount of accidental speaker overlap, as well as instances of intentional interruption.[4] In this chapter I examine intentional interruption only, a phenomenon which occurs quite frequently, it seems, in our own talk but rarely in Homeric epic. In middle-class Western cultures there are contexts in which interruption is tolerated and contexts in which it is not; and there are different kinds of intentional interruption serving different ends: disruptive interruption, interruption-as-overlap, and sympathetic interruption. The aim of the present study is to evaluate the functions of interruption in the world which Homer describes in the light of what we can discover about the same phenomenon in our own.

HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE A UNIT OF SPEECH AS INTERRUPTIVE?

Interruption represents a disregard for the turn-taking model described above. Candace West and Don Zimmerman define

[3] Examples of back-channelling (or minimal response) are the speaker's muttered 'hmm' or 'oh!'.

[4] See J. Coates, 'Gossip Revisited: Language in All-Female Groups', in J. Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 226–53, at 238–44 (on simultaneous speech).

interruption as a 'deep incursion into the turn-space of a current speaker'.[5] This, however, may be too open a definition: for not all interruptions are recognized by participants as infringements. Jack Bilmes defines interruption more tightly. He argues that it is only when the person interrupted reacts to what he or she perceives as an interruption or when the person interrupting apologizes for doing so (or attempts in some way to repair his or her 'error'), that we may be confident that a true violation of speaking rights has occurred.[6] On the other hand, if there is no attempt to take the floor or if there is no reaction from the original speaker, it is difficult to argue that there has been a true interruption. Overlapping speech falls into the category of an interruption which, in many cases, is not perceived by either speaker as a violation. For example, after a pause in conversation two people may begin to speak but one will break off when he or she observes that another person is speaking. Or a second participant may interpose a comment in a conversation, assuming that the original speaker had finished speaking. If the first speaker continues to speak, apparently intent on completing his or her turn, the second speaker will generally break off, making it clear that the

[5] See C. West and D. Zimmerman, 'Women's Place in Everyday Talk: Reflections on Parent–Child Interaction', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader*, 165–75, at 168.

[6] See J. Bilmes, 'Being Interrupted', *Language in Society*, 26 (1997), 507–31, at 527. Bilmes argues that if *neither* party perceives that an interruption has occurred, then, in his view, an interruption has not occurred. Interruption, he notes, is a phenomenon *created* and *displayed* by participants. A tense moment in a radio interview illustrates his point. In this case, the day before the 2004 federal elections in Australia (8 October 2004), several local candidates for the Senate were being interviewed by a radio journalist on ABC radio in Canberra. As one of the candidates (a woman) was speaking, a second candidate (a man) broke in twice, contradicting her claims. After his second disruption she reclaimed the floor and said to him, 'Don't be rude and interrupt, Gary. You'll get your turn later.' Thus she made it clear that his comments, his heckling, amounted to an interruption; that she considered this a violation of her speaking rights; and that the principle of turn-taking would ensure that he would have an opportunity to speak—in due course. Ms Tucker chastized Senator Humphries and was able to silence him so that she could finish her turn; but he had succeeded in breaking the flow of her argument *and* in distracting listeners from what she was saying. The radio audience remembered the interruption more clearly than the talk which it disrupted. This was made clear in later listener-feedback, which took up the topic of interruption (and Ms Tucker's response) rather than policy issues.

floor is not being contested.[7] There is also the kind of interruption that could more truly be classified as simultaneous speech or, in Tannen's phrase, 'co-operative overlap'.[8] In this kind of talk, a listener may supply a word or complete a speaker's sentence, often along with the speaker. In such cases the goal of the interrupting speaker is not to take the floor, but to demonstrate that he or, in most cases, she is following what is being said. The second speaker is not interrupting but, more accurately, participating actively *along with* the first speaker.[9] This kind of supportive, empathetic, talk might even be considered, in some contexts, to be a form of politeness.[10] In summary, therefore, we should not automatically identify every intrusion into another person's speaking turn as a conversational infringement. Interruptions are not uniformly impolite; they may in certain contexts be positive interventions.

WHAT ARE THE GROUNDS FOR INTERRUPTION?

The most obvious explanation for disruptive interruption (as distinct from accidental or co-operative overlap) is that the interrupter cannot wait to speak. In the case of an emergency, interruption is justifiable. But, in other circumstances, we must ask why a person might believe that he or she can break into another's speech. West and Zimmerman offer some further analysis under three headings.[11] They suggest that, first, interruptions are *displays* of dominance or

[7] For examples of these two kinds of overlap, see Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 'A Simplest Systematics', 706–7; on the repair mechanisms that accompany them, see 723–4.

[8] D. Tannen, *Gender and Discourse* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 53.

[9] See Coates, 'Gossip Revisited', 244.

[10] J. Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness* (London and New York, Longman, 1995), 25. For a comprehensive study of politeness strategies in language and their relation to 'face', see P. Brown and S. Levinson, 'Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena', in E. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 56–289; revised as *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[11] See West and Zimmerman, 'Women's Place in Everyday Talk', at 172.

control by the speaker over the person interrupted; second, they are an *actual* control device which disorganizes the speaker's construction of a topic; and, third, interruptions may be indicators of *sensitive issues* within the talk, which the interrupter does not wish to pursue. All these motives will be relevant to my discussion of Homeric interruptions. The first and second motives throw light on interruption as an impolite discourse strategy; the third—in the Homeric context at least—allows us to view interruption as sympathetic: that is, as a politeness strategy.

INTERRUPTION AND GENDER

There has been much discussion amongst sociolinguists about the different ways in which men and women use interruption as a discourse strategy. Disruptive interruption is said to be a competitive discourse strategy associated with men's talk. It has been shown that men are quite prepared to break in on other speakers—on both men and women—in their competition for the floor.[12] It appears that men interrupt women disruptively far more often than women interrupt men; and it is significant that women, generally speaking, allow this to happen.[13] Moreover, the tendency for men to interrupt women persists even when the woman in

[12] For discussion and further references, see Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 51–5. This is the kind of interruption I alluded to above in the example drawn from a radio interview: when the interrupter—a male—is bent on violating the turn-taking principle.

[13] West and Zimmerman, 'Women's Place in Everyday Talk', 168–9, note that 96 per cent of the interruptions in mixed-group conversation were by males to females; and that females 'showed a greater tendency toward silence, particularly subsequent to interruption by males'. Their tentative conclusion is that the women whom they were studying allowed males, without complaint, to 'abridge' their speaking turns. For a more conservative view of men's interruptions, see Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 51–5, with references. Nevertheless, Holmes notes at 52: 'men disruptively interrupt others more than women do, and . . . , more specifically, men interrupt women more than women interrupt men'. And she cites (at 53) a study amongst students in New Zealand, which shows that 77 per cent of interruptions are initiated by men, and 23 per cent by women.

question has higher status.[14] Thus gender might appear to amount to a 'master' status.[15] Women, by contrast, are less competitive. As we have seen, they interrupt men less frequently than men interrupt women; and they rarely interrupt other women *disruptively.* Coates claims, for example, that in her corpus of women's conversations with women, there were very few interruptions ('only a minority') intended to secure the floor for the interrupter.[16] But, as we have observed, women often interrupt other women with *supportive* intent. The practice of simultaneous talk, or co-operative overlap, which I have described above, is a characteristic of all-female talk in the middle-class English-speaking world.[17]

It is tempting to read interruptions of women by men as control-devices, as displays of dominance. But this may be too hasty a diagnosis. Interruptive behaviour may be explicable in terms of socialization and difference rather than dominance. Janet Holmes, for example, argues that males and females are trying to conduct their conversations together according to different rules of interaction.[18] That is, their expectations of how a conversation should be conducted and how the participants should behave are, in some respects at least, at odds. Holmes proposes that what is perceived as rude and impolite by women, who have been socialized to prefer a more co-operative mode of communication, may be acceptable as normal in male interaction, which is more competitive.[19]

[14] C. West, 'When the Doctor is a "Lady": Power, Status and Gender in Physician–Patient Encounters', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader,* 396–412: male doctors interrupted their patients far more often than the reverse and they used interruptions as a device for exercising control over the interaction; but patients interrupted their female doctors as much as or more than these female doctors interrupted them. And cf. also two studies in Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness,* 53. First, a British study of women in high-status positions showed that their male subordinates interrupted them and took the floor more than the reverse (although higher status did at least mitigate the effect of gender differences). Men succeeded in gaining the floor 85 per cent of the time; women 52 per cent.

[15] West, 'When the Doctor is a "Lady" ', 409.

[16] See Coates, 'Gossip Revisited', 238.

[17] Ibid. 238. Co-operative overlap is not identified with male talk. When does overlap become interruption in the negative sense? See Tannen, *Gender and Discourse,* 34–6.

[18] Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness,* 53.

[19] Ibid. This is supported and taken somewhat further by A. Freed and A. Greenwood, 'Women, Men, and Type of Talk: What Makes the Difference?', *Language in Society,* 25 (1996), 1–26, at 21–2. They argue that in our gender-differentiated

SELF-INTERRUPTION

There is a further category of interruption. This is self-interruption: when a speaker, perhaps a storyteller, breaks off his or her talk, and simply falls silent. Or he or she may take up another topic. This happens in exceptional circumstances, and is usually triggered by a change in the composition of the audience: another person has joined the conversation circle, or an addressee has been called away. When interruptions occur in the case of storytellings, the story will almost always be resumed. Storyteller and audience both expect that a story will reach the point that was promised at the outset. Narratives, as Linde observes, 'strongly require completion'.[20] Because this kind of interruption does not cut across another person's talk it may not appear, at first glance, to be relevant to a discussion of interruption in the context of turn-taking. But, as I shall demonstrate in connection with Homer's narrative, it is.

REPRESENTING INTERRUPTION

Interruption differs from the other categories of verbal behaviour that I have studied in this volume. Although it is a speech event, it is not marked by any particular spoken form. Only occasionally do people say 'May I break in for a moment?' or words to that effect. For this reason one cannot study interruption as a form of words; one may examine only the event itself, taking into account the participants, their reactions, and the circumstances.

society some differences in the speech of women and men may result from distinct socialization practices for girls and boys, and from specific gender-assigned activities. But, although women may engage in co-operative talk in a wider range of settings than men, co-operative talk is by no means absent from men's natural speech. See also D. Cameron, 'Rethinking Language and Gender Studies: Some Issues for the 1990s', in S. Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1995), 31–44.

[20] C. Linde, 'The Organization of Discourse', in T. Shopen and J. Williams (eds.) *Style and Variables in English* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1981), 84–114, at 103–4.

Interruption rarely appears as an event in an everyday story, unless it is the point of the tale. Since it is used infrequently in literary contexts, I conclude that writers find it unhelpful to include this authentic feature of everyday practice in their construction of meaningful talk. On those occasions on which we do observe interruptive behaviour it may be included as a reflection of the circumstances (indicating the urgency of the moment) or of the character of the speaker (his impatience or her anxiety, for example).[21]

INTERRUPTION IN THE *ILIAD*

What happens in the world of Homer? There is, generally speaking, a ritualizing formality about much Homeric speech which is quite unlike the crossfire of everyday talk in our own world or, one assumes, in the world of the oral traditional poet. There are in the epics no instances of minimal response, and no representations of overlap, whether accidental or collaborative. As Kirk notes, Homer normally lets his characters complete their thoughts, uninterrupted.[22] The result is that they sound almost always as though they are attending a meeting—no matter what the context is. They appear to be more than usually aware that there are guidelines for turn-taking in conversation and that it is a matter of politeness to allow speakers to complete what they are saying. Agamemnon makes this point very clearly at 19. 79–82, in his preface to his apology to Achilleus:

> *ἑσταότος μὲν καλὸν ἀκούειν, οὐδὲ ἔοικεν*
> *ὑββάλλειν· χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἐπισταμένῳ περ ἐόντι.*
> *ἀνδρῶν δ' ἐν πολλῷ ὁμάδῳ πῶς κέν τις ἀκούσαι*
> *ἢ εἴποι; βλάβεται δὲ λιγύς περ ἐὼν ἀγορητής.*

[21] For examples of interruption in texts from the Greek world, see, for example, Euripides, *Medea* 680 (Medea interrupts Aigeus); *Hecuba* 1260 and 1272 (Hekabe interrupts Polymestor). I found (perhaps not surprisingly) no examples of interruption in Plato's early dialogues. In our own tradition of literature, Jane Austen uses interruption very sparingly: for rare examples, see *Sense and Sensibility* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995) 160, 202.

[22] G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 82 (on 1. 292). This is, however, not surprising, since rendering—and comprehending—such complex discourse would be a difficult task.

> it is well to listen to the speaker, it is not becoming
> to break in on him. This will be hard for him, though he be able.
> How among the great murmur of people shall anyone listen
> or speak either? A man, though he speak very clearly, is baffled.

This passage is a much-cited reflection; but its significance has not been fully explored. Before we consider the content of Agamemnon's querulous proem we should explore the circumstances that have given rise to it.

John Atkinson has made a study of practised public speakers today, such as politicians, and the devices they use to elicit a warm response from their listeners. He notes that audiences do not normally express approval at random throughout a speech; rather, they wait for a cue from the speaker.[23] Atkinson observes that there is a limited number of structural cues that signal that an appropriate moment for applause is approaching: these are namings, lists, and contrasts.[24] The members of the audience recognize any one of these as a possible 'completion point' and they will respond appropriately, beginning their contribution just before or immediately after the speaker has finished speaking.[25] By such rhetorical means practised speakers are able to persuade a group of people to produce an identical response, be it getting to their feet, clapping, or cheering, more or less simultaneously, for a specific length of time.[26] Atkinson suggests that the alternation of contributions by speaker and audience is akin to the turn-taking system that has been identified in conversation.[27]

When Agamemnon begins to speak at 19. 79 he is about to reply to the words of Achilleus, who appears to have an easy understanding of how to construct discourse that will generate an affiliative response of

[23] J. Atkinson, 'Refusing Invited Applause: Preliminary Observations from a Case-Study of Charismatic Oratory', in T. van Dijk (ed.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, vol. iii, *Discourse and Dialogue* (London: Academic Press, 1985), 161–81, at 163–4.

[24] J. Atkinson, 'Public Speaking and Audience Responses: Some Techniques for Inviting Applause', in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 370–409, at 379–402. Certain prosodic phenomena may also serve as cues.

[25] Atkinson, 'Refusing Invited Applause', 164.

[26] Ibid. 165–6. The timing of the activity is remarkably regular: eight (plus or minus one) seconds.

[27] Ibid. 165.

the kind I have described above.[28] Achilleus speaks before all the Achaians (*τοῖσι*, 19. 55); but he addresses himself specifically at first to Agamemnon (*Ἀτρεΐδη*, 56). He announces the end of his anger (67–8); he invites the Achaians to join him in challenging the Trojans, to see whether they will be prepared to stay by the Achaian ships (68–71); and, in conclusion, he comments drily on the Trojans' poor chances in the face of his battle fury (71–3). That is, Achilleus, at 68–73, draws a contrast between the outlook for Trojans *before* and *after* his return to the fighting. This is a clear cue, as Atkinson would see it, for the expressions of support to which the Achaians duly give voice: it is immediately greeted with approbation (*ἐχάρησαν ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοὶ*, the Achaians rejoiced, 74). The verb *χαίρω* suggests murmurs, possibly shouts, and certainly exclamations of approval.[29] For the moment, therefore, the speaking turn is with the Achaians.

This brings us back to Agamemnon's evident frustration at 19. 79–82. The king has begun to speak in the midst of this excited buzz (he describes himself as speaking *ἐν πολλῷ ὁμάδῳ*, 81). He is disadvantaged at this point because he speaks from his seat (*ἐξ ἕδρης*, 77), rather than standing.[30] That is, he does not have the commanding presence that might speedily reduce the joy of his men to respectful silence. Since he cannot command silence by his presence, he has to resort to verbal means, *asking* for silence. It is embarrassing to Agamemnon that Achilleus' apparent readiness to give up his anger and return to the fighting has been greeted with such open joy; it is more embarrassing that he, the commander-in-chief, has to request the attention of his men. Hence the 'nervous peevishness' of his words and the disjointed character of the introductory section of his speech.[31]

[28] In our world an affiliative response would be applause; in Homer's world, as noted above, it appears to be a cluster of unspecified reactions of joy.

[29] Behaviour of this kind is what we would expect in a competitive world: see H. van Wees, *Status Warriors: War, Violence and Society in Homer and History* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1992), *passim* (but see esp. 249–51 on competitive assertion of power; and 263–5). I thank Jim Black for encouraging me to think about the implications of *χαίρω*.

[30] Perhaps because he is wounded, as the scholiast bT suggests (on 19. 77); not, as W. Leaf, *The* Iliad, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1960), vol. ii, p. 324, proposes, because he is 'too nervous'.

[31] Leaf, *The* Iliad, vol. ii, p. 324.

What is it exactly that Agamemnon finds fault with? The king criticises his men for interrupting him (ὑββάλλειν, 80), and he claims that their noise makes it difficult for him to address them, and for others to hear, over their din (80–2).[32] In doing so he touches on the practical basis for the rules formulated by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson: our 'rules' for conversation are designed so that every speaker has a chance to be heard. But, on the basis of Atkinson's observations of public speaking, and of what we know about Agamemnon's characteristic insensitivity to others' concerns (especially when they are in competition with his own), I propose that Agamemnon has misread the moment, yet again.[33] To be precise, in turn-taking terms, Agamemnon on this occasion has tried to speak during that period when the crowd was making its invited response to Achilleus' news. He has failed to grant the troops those necessary seconds to express their excitement and to allow it to subside before he begins his speaking turn. It is not that, as Agamemnon claims, the crowd is interrupting him. Rather, he is—impolitely—interrupting the crowd.

As I noted above in connection with interruptions in our own world, we cannot always be sure as observers that a speaker has *not* finished speaking, or that another has interrupted, unless that disruption is a subject for comment. This is also the case within the world Homer describes: unless one of his cast of characters or unless Homer himself (as narrator) identifies an interruption as such, we cannot be sure of its status. Thus Agamemnon's own comment (at 19. 79–82) draws our attention to his interruptive behaviour.

As for narratorial comment on interruption, there is only one instance of it in the *Iliad*: when Achilleus interrupts Agamemnon,

[32] For this sense of ὑββάλλειν, see the scholiast bT on 19. 80 (ὑποκρούεσθαι θορύβῳ τὸν λέγοντα, to interrupt the speaker with a din/with applause).

[33] Most notably he misreads the moment when Chryses comes to offer ransom for the return of his daughter and he responds with a harsh rejection (1. 9–32); and this is followed quickly by his tactless demand (1. 118–20) for a replacement for Chryseis, whom he has agreed, reluctantly, to return to her father. As Edwards observes, it would have been better had this request come from someone else: M. Edwards, *Homer: The Poet of the* Iliad (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 179. And at 4. 338–48, Agamemnon rebukes Odysseus and Menestheus sharply. Odysseus takes exception to his words (349–55) and Agamemnon only then recognizes his error (356–63). These instances represent failures of judgment on Agamemnon's part.

his leader, in the course of their great quarrel of *Iliad* 1.[34] Agamemnon is commenting (to Nestor) on Achilleus' abusive language (286–91). He remarks acidly (290–1):

> *εἰ δέ μιν αἰχμητὴν ἔθεσαν θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες,*
> *τοὔνεκά οἱ προθέουσιν ὀνείδεα μυθήσασθαι*
>
> And if the everlasting gods have made him a spearman,
> yet they have not given him the right to speak abusively.

Achilleus at this point interrupts, overriding the normal turn-taking etiquette of conversation—and to some extent justifying Agamemnon's criticism (293–4):

> *ἦ γάρ κεν δειλός τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καλεοίμην,*
> *εἰ δὴ σοὶ πᾶν ἔργον ὑπείξομαι ὅττι κεν εἴπῃς·*
>
> So I must be called of no account and a coward
> if I must carry out every order you may happen to give me.

How can we tell that this is an interruption? Homer makes it clear that it is (through the phrase *ὑποβλήδην ἠμείβετο*, he answered him, interrupting (292)).[35] Achilleus' exceptional behaviour is designed to mark (for the internal and the external audience) the degree of provocation which he feels, his sense of injustice, his resentment of Agamemnon, and his desire to put his case.[36] It also marks his desire to disrupt the king's speaking turn. Achilleus is trying to dominate the quarrel, to force Agamemnon into submission. This instance of interruption reflects, even as it realizes, the competitive culture in which the heroes operate.[37]

Both these instances are examples of interruption in a public, more formal, context, in which the 'rules' for turn-taking are more

[34] See N. Fisher, *Hubris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1992), 151–6, 178–82, for an account of the quarrel, especially 151–2 for commentary on the passions aroused in *Iliad* 1.

[35] This is the only instance of *ὑποβλήδην* in the epics; we have encountered above *ὑποβάλλω*, used by Agamemnon, at 19. 80.

[36] Leaf, *The* Iliad, vol. i, p. 25 observes also (on 1. 292) that at this point Achilleus does not begin his speech with the usual words of address. But I find that very few of the speeches in this quarrel begin with the routines of ceremonial address that we observe in later exchanges in the epic.

[37] On this see above and see van Wees, *Status Warriors.*

carefully observed and breaches of those rules are noted. What happens in private settings? Let us examine two interesting moments. The first occurs at 9. 223, in the course of the visit of the embassy to Achilleus, a vain effort to persuade the hero to return to the fighting. The setting is private, but, by its very nature, formal. Achilleus and his guests have finished eating. This seems to Aias to be the moment when they should begin to talk business. So he gives the nod to the leader of the expedition, Phoinix (*νεῦσ' Αἴας Φοίνικι*, 223).[38] In doing so, Aias tells him that it is time to speak. But Odysseus also sees the nod.[39] Making a quick decision he smoothly moves in to propose a toast to Achilleus (224–5) and to speak of Agamemnon's offer for amends. Odysseus seizes the floor. This is no accidental overlap. The hero knows what he is doing when he takes Phoinix's turn. Phoinix, to his mind, would not put the Achaian case as well as he, Odysseus, could. So he cuts off the old man before he can begin. By this device Homer, with extraordinary economy, displays Odysseus' characteristic opportunism, and he brings Odysseus and Achilleus face to face. Agamemnon's offer will be rejected; and Achilleus will be further alienated from the Achaian cause.

It is possible that we have a second instance of interruption, now in intimate circumstances, in a private conversation between Thetis and her son. Mark Edwards, following Dieter Lohmann, argues that Achilleus cuts across his mother as she speaks in pain about his future.[40] Thetis has come from the sea to console her son and, having heard him announce his desire to engage with Hektor in battle (18. 88–93) and forecast that she would not see him return to his home again (89–90), she begins to lament his approaching death (95–6):

[38] I thank Patrick O'Sullivan for reminding me of this moment.

[39] The scholiast bT suggests a different reading: that Aias' nod to Phoinix is consultative. Aias is asking if it is time to speak. Odysseus, who has been thinking over what he is to say, has not been paying attention (*τὸν καιρὸν οὐχ ὁρᾷ*). When he observes the nod he begins to speak. According to the scholiast Odysseus is not forestalling Phoinix; he is simply doing what he is best at doing. Such an explanation relies on uncharacteristic behaviour in Odysseus: his being distracted. An interpretation that recognizes the hero's alertness and promptness is the more appealing.

[40] See M. Edwards, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. v (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 159–60, who draws on D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der* Ilias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), 145.

ὠκύμορος δή μοι, τέκος, ἔσσεαι, οἷ᾽ ἀγορεύεις·
αὐτίκα γάρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ᾽ Ἕκτορα πότμος ἑτοῖμος.

Then I must lose you soon, my child, by what you are saying,
since it is decreed your death must come after Hektor's.

This is as much as she is able to say at this point, because Achilleus latches onto her *αὐτίκα* of 96 and begins a much longer speech of his own (98–126).[41] Here are his first words (98–9):

αὐτίκα τεθναίην, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔμελλον ἑταίρῳ
κτεινομένῳ ἐπαμῦναι·

I must die soon, then; since I was not to stand by my companion
when he was killed.

Edwards argues that if we are to judge from her other speeches on similar themes, we might have expected to hear more from Thetis.[42] Indeed, her speech here is unusually brief. But Thetis does not protest as her son sweeps on, restating his resolve to engage with Hektor in battle and to accept his own death thereafter (114–16). This is indeed a moment of remarkable sympathy between mother and son, when Thetis expresses her reluctant conclusion about Achilleus' immediate future and Achilleus responds with an assenting echo of her words.[43] I suggest, however, that we cannot be

[41] On 'latching' (a 'turn exchange with no perceptible intervening pause'), see Tannen, *Gender and Discourse*, 64; and see also West and Zimmerman, 'Women's Place in Everyday Talk', 167, for a relevant example: Earl: How's everything look. Bud: Oh looks pretty good.

[42] Edwards, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. v, at 159, argues that Achilleus interrupts Thetis, seizing on the very word which she had used—*αὐτίκα*—to begin his own statement on his impending death. As Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden*, observes (145), the way in which Achilleus makes a catchword of *αὐτίκα* reminds us of the same technique in the stichomythia of Attic tragedy. And, indeed, Achilleus *is* picking up *αὐτίκα* and using it, if not in an identical sense at least in the same position in the verse, to confirm what his mother says, that his death is imminent. Taplin catches the moment well when he speaks of the 'passionate urgency sounded by [Achilleus'] seizure of his mother's *αὐτίκα* (see O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of the* Iliad (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 198). Taplin makes no explicit reference to interruption; but he recognizes latching, in Tannen's sense (see above).

[43] For discussion of ways in which speakers collaborate, as Achilleus collaborates with Thetis to show agreement, see E. Schegloff, 'On Some Questions and Ambiguities in Conversation', in Atkinson and Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*, 28–52, at 40–3.

sure that this is an instance of interruption: neither the narrator nor Thetis or Achilleus identify Achilleus' move as such. I am therefore reluctant to include this in my tally.[44]

INTERRUPTION IN THE *ODYSSEY*

The *Odyssey* offers us a greater number of instances of interruption. A near-complete catalogue of such events from a narratological point of view which takes enchantment as its focus has been put together by Robert Rabel.[45] My focus, however, will again be on the sociolinguistic rather than the narratological aspects of the phenomenon.

It is remarkable that all the Odyssean interruptions concern storytellers, stories, and their audiences. Some of the stories embedded within the *Odyssey* are interrupted by one of the characters (Penelope interrupts Phemios, 1. 337–44; Alkinoös interrupts Demodokos, 8. 94–103 and 8. 536–7).[46] And there are other instances, when the narrative is interrupted by the storyteller himself (Homer interrupts the narrative, 7. 155–232;[47] Odysseus interrupts his own narrative, 11. 330–2; 12. 450–3). As we shall see, these interruptions are instances of dominating behaviour; but the power that is being exercised is exercised in different ways and for a variety of ends.

[44] I set this example aside with some regret, for this could be a significant moment, in the light of some of the recent work on language and gender that I cited above (e.g. West, 'When the Doctor is a "Lady"'). Here Achilleus is interrupting a woman whose status should be such that he feels respect for her: his mother happens also to be a god. And yet, as West (ibid.) and Holmes (*Men, Women and Politeness*, 51–5) have separately demonstrated, in our own world status does not preclude a man, even a young man, from interrupting a woman.

[45] R. Rabel, 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*', *Colby Quarterly* 38 (2002), 77–93.

[46] These are stories which are not resumed, since it is a *performer* who is the teller. That is, he is asked to sing, unlike a storyteller in a conversational circle, who volunteers his tale. As Parry observes, 'There is no question of the end of the song: when one has had enough of singing no more is served': see M. Parry, 'Ćor Huso: A Study of Southslavic Song', in *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 437–64, at 456.

[47] For discussion and further examples, see Rabel, 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*', 82–5; and see B. Fenik, *Studies in the* Odyssey (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), 61–104, esp. 104. Fenik is not concerned with the verbal interruptions that interest me but with the poet's own suspension of his narrative thread in the interests of suspense.

Tellers of stories resent being interrupted. They will make every effort to bring to completion a story they have begun. Listeners likewise crave resolution. In our own world audiences will, even after a lengthy interruption, prompt a storyteller to return to his tale. With these comparisons in mind let us look at four Odyssean interruptions in greater detail.

The first occurs in the tale which Demodokos tells about the quarrel of Achilleus and Odysseus (8. 72–82). This is a report of the song; we do not hear the words themselves. Homer tells us that, as Demodokos' song continued, Odysseus was overcome with grief (83–6). He would cover his head with his cloak, because he was ashamed (αἴδετο, 86) of weeping in front of the Phaiakians.[48] When the singer ceased his song for a moment, interrupting himself, the hero would seize the opportunity to recover, wiping away his tears and pausing for a drink (87–9).[49] But, when the singer resumed, Odysseus would begin to weep again (γοάασκεν, 92; δάκρυα λείβων, 93). Alkinoös alone observed this (93–5) and at once (αἶψα, 96) proposed to the Phaiakians that they engage in another activity altogether, games (97–103). They fell in with his proposal (104). Demodokos' song is thereby interrupted; and it is not resumed. But since we do not hear his words we are not witnessing an

[48] Why does Odysseus conceal his tears? Men in Homer's world feel no embarrassment about weeping in public: see H. van Wees, 'A Brief History of Tears: Gender Differentiation in Archaic Greece', in L. Foxhall and J. Salmon (eds.), *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 10–53. De Jong, amongst others, suggests plausibly that Odysseus conceals his tears so that he might not spoil the enjoyment of the Phaiakians who find great pleasure in the song: see I. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 198; and J. B. Hainsworth, in A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 352 (on 8. 86).

[49] We should note that Demodokos' incomplete song is interrupted at least once *by the singer himself* before Alkinoös shuts it down: the singer himself takes breaks from singing (87), giving Odysseus the opportunity to recover momentarily from the distress the singer's vivid recreation causes. This is another, admittedly minor, example of interruption as a narrative technique which can, even accidentally (as in this instance), overcome, or break, the spell of poetry: for discussion of this point, of Demodokos' song about the quarrel and Alkinoös' interruption of it, see Rabel, 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*', 78–80. This example of self-interruption indicates that Demodokos too (*contra* Rabel, 79) exercises some kind of command over his audience: at least he can interrupt himself, *suo arbitrio*, even though he is also interrupted by others.

actual interruption; we are not so acutely aware of the singer being cut short.

The games take place; Odysseus is bathed and returns to the feasting. He sees Demodokos and asks him to sing the song of the wooden horse (8. 492–5). The singer tells the tale of the wooden horse and the sack of Troy, again as reported speech, recalling in particular the achievements of Odysseus (499–520).[50] As Demodokos sings (Homer tells us) Odysseus weeps again (531–4). It is at this point that Alkinoös again brings Demodokos' song to a halt (8. 536–8):

> *Κέκλυτε, Φαιήκων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες,*
> *Δημόδοκος δ' ἤδη σχεθέτω φόρμιγγα λίγειαν·*
> *οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι χαριζόμενος τάδ' ἀείδει.*
>
> Hear me, you leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel.
> Let Demodokos now give over his loud lyre playing
> since it cannot be that he pleases all alike with this song.

Alkinoös the host has observed for a second time the unhappiness of his guest. The latter's needs, as he points out (539–45), take precedence over the pleasure of song: hence his interruption. Note his words at 542–3:

> *ἀλλ' ἄγ' ὁ μὲν σχεθέτω, ἵν' ὁμῶς τερπώμεθα πάντες*
> *ξεινοδόκοι καὶ ξεῖνος, ἐπεὶ πολὺ κάλλιον οὕτως.*
>
> But let him hold now, so that all of us, guest receivers
> and guest alike, may enjoy ourselves. This is the better way.

We have here an interesting competition between two sets of needs: those of the audience (who desire the joys of song) and those of the stranger-guest (for his comfort). The guest's comfort on this occasion is of higher priority. These examples concerning Demodokos and his song are in interesting counterpoise with the examples we have studied from the *Iliad*. There interruption was held to be an impolite discourse strategy, a display of dominance or of

[50] Demodokos would appear to have finished his song at this point (519–20): see de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, 216. What Alkinoös is interrupting, therefore, is the performance: he does not want the singer to move into a new episode or to be invited again to sing.

actual disruptiveness, in an all-male competitive world. In the *Odyssey*, however, interruption is presented in other guises, and in a variety of contexts. It has the potential, in certain circumstances, to be an act of positive politeness, a thoughtful, empathetic response: in the Phaiakian palace, for example, when a storytelling and the memories it stirs bring pain to an honoured guest.

The third instance of interruption brings us to Penelope, who breaks in on Phemios as he sings of the *νόστον ... λυγρόν*, the bitter homecoming of the Achaians (1. 326–7). Penelope, having overheard the singer from her upper room, as an accidental audience, is pained by this song because its content comes right close to her heart. The suitors, on the other hand, untouched by the pain of loss, are gripped by the story's themes of adventure (325–6). They, the intended audience, enjoy the song and would want to hear it to its end. Penelope's appearance, therefore, to ask that the singer choose another song, is a surprising intervention (340–4):[51]

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

> but leave off singing this sad
> song, which always afflicts the dear heart deep inside me,
> since the unforgettable sorrow comes to me, beyond others,
> so dear a head do I long for whenever I am reminded
> of my husband, whose fame goes wide through Hellas and midmost Argos.

Penelope is not a host like Alkinoös, who interrupts a song *for the sake of* a guest. Penelope is a host who has alienated herself from her guests.[52] Thus it is possible for her to call a halt to their

[51] Indeed, Penelope's interruption is the very reverse of Alkinoös' interventions on Odysseus' behalf, discussed above.

[52] Her psychological distance from them is indicated by her encompassing veil (334): cf. West in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i, at 118 (on 1. 334). West observes that the phrase *ἄντα παρειάων σχομένη λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα* indicates the queen's aversion to familiarity and her discouragement of any notion that they are her guests.

entertainment.[53] Distraught by the memories which Phemios' song awakens and driven by her wretchedness, she interrupts *for her own sake.* Homer evaluates the exceptional nature of Penelope's interruption, as it may appear to others, through the words of her son.

Telemachos' reaction reflects his newly developed assertiveness afer his counselling session with Athene/Mentes (1. 158–318). He is indignant at his mother's disruption of a song that has been so well received by the suitors; he indicates how unwelcome her request is by rebuking her (346–59). He makes it clear that in his view she is in no position to make it (346–50):

> *μῆτερ ἐμή, τί τ' ἄρα φθονέεις ἐρίηρον ἀοιδὸν*
> *τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται; οὔ νύ τ' ἀοιδοὶ*
> *αἴτιοι, ἀλλά ποθι Ζεὺς αἴτιος, ὅς τε δίδωσιν*
> *ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστῇσιν ὅπως ἐθέλῃσιν ἑκάστῳ.*
> *τούτῳ δ' οὐ νέμεσις Δαναῶν κακὸν οἶτον ἀείδειν.*

> Why, my mother, do you begrudge this excellent singer
> his pleasing himself as the thought drives him? It is not the singers
> who are to blame, it must be Zeus is to blame, who gives out
> to men who eat bread, to each and all, the way he wills it.
> There is nothing wrong in his singing the sad return of the Danaans.

In Telemachos' eyes Penelope has no right to break in on a song which the suitors, the 'guests' in the palace, are likely to enjoy:[54] this new song, he says, is interesting to its audience (351–2). They react well to it; therefore let it continue. And he points out that Penelope has no right to intervene; *her* concerns, as a woman, should be with her weaving and her spinning (356–9).[55]

[53] Rabel, 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*', 78 suggests that Penelope's interruption of Phemios is 'a proleptic show of power'. It is certainly possible, as we know from our own world, that interruption may be intended as a display of dominance. In this case, Penelope is without the physical and mental resources at this moment to make a show of power; but we sense that that moment will come.

[54] And he is right, as it might appear, in terms of what is done in this society. As far as possible one consults the interests of one's guests (as Alkinoös has done for Odysseus).

[55] For commentary on Telemachos' assertion of authority over Penelope at this point, see Chapter 6, and see also M. Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the* Odyssey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 152. West in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i, at p. 120 is prepared to view these lines (356–9), as Aristarchus does, as an interpolation. On the other hand, I enjoy their psychological realism and suggest that Homer's

What Telemachos, in his inexperience of life, has failed to take into account before he chastises his mother is her loneliness and distress. It had been the combination of these factors which drove Penelope to leave her quarters and to behave in this unique fashion.[56] The young man has failed to understand the emotional lives of others, even of those close to him. It is useful at this point to contrast his reaction to his mother's distress, in Book 1, with the kindly empathy of Alkinoös with the stranger in his hall, in Book 8, who weeps as Demodokos sings. This is an acute insight on Homer's part into the psychology, and the limited intuition, of youth.

But was Penelope successful in her aim to put a halt to the song? Homer does not stress the effectiveness of her interruption. He is more interested in Telemachos' response than in Phemios'. But it appears (365–6) that once Penelope has intervened Phemios stops singing; he does not reclaim the floor for himself. And he does not perform again until Telemachos offers him the opportunity some time later (421–2).

Are there implications for the relationship of gender and power in this instance of interruption? One instance of a woman who interrupts is not enough to allow us to make generalizations about women's observance of the rules of turn-taking or the strategies by which they gain access to the floor. Nevertheless, there are two points to be made, both of which touch on gender issues. First, we have noted that when Penelope breaks in on Phemios, she does so from behind her veil, distancing herself psychologically from the suitors. By concealing her face in this way she appears to have qualms about what she is doing—a woman disrupting a man's speaking turn in a public context. And this may indeed be the case, since she is instantly rebuked by her son. It is not her appearing in public that distresses him (because she will appear before the suitors later in the *Odyssey* without incurring his disapproval),[57] nor her interruption *per se*, but that she has disrupted the enjoyment of their guests, who

sympathy for his young characters, Telemachos and Nausikaa, has led him to introduce moments of youthful awkwardness (such as this scene, or Nausikaa's innocent betrayal of her inmost thoughts at 6. 276–9) which we should not discount.

[56] That is, this is the only occurrence in the epics of a woman interrupting a man.

[57] Cf. 18. 158–280: Penelope's face is here too veiled (209–10); again she appears to feel some embarrassment at appearing before the suitors.

should be their prime concern. The issue is hospitality. This is a reverse image, a mirror image, of the Alkinoös and Odysseus scenes, where the guest's distress led to the song being abandoned on the instructions of the host.

The fourth case is Odysseus' own interruption of the tale he is telling (11. 330–2). On this occasion it is not a member of the audience who interrupts the singer. When Odysseus, the singer, breaks into his own song, he does so quite abruptly (*ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥρη εὕδειν*, it is time now for my sleep, 11. 330–1), with a number of ends in view. To be sure, he hopes that the Phaiakians, in their appreciation of his storytelling powers, will honour their promise of an escort to his homeland (7. 317–24); and he is eager to have gifts to take with him.[58] But there is another goal, one that is particularly relevant to this present discussion of turn-taking and interruption, and that is his ambition to increase the desire of his audience for the completion of the story. Notice that Odysseus breaks off at an unexpected point in the tale, just as Homer himself interrupts his song at various unexpected points in the epic.[59] The fact that Odysseus can interrupt his own tale is, Rabel suggests, an indication of his command over his audience.[60] Certainly, Odysseus is flexing his storytelling muscle. He is also sharing a joke with his external audience: this interruption is a deliberate tease. What Rabel does not observe is how deviously Odysseus sets about achieving his aim. He gives the impression, in his self-interruption, that he wishes to *give up* the floor; but his aim is, in fact, that he be *offered* the floor once again. His self-interruption is tantamount to a further bid for a lengthy speaking turn. He is not satisfied with mere appreciation; he is not satisfied with the possibility of being *allowed* to continue; he

[58] For Odysseus' other goals see de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, 283–5. Odysseus is ensuring that he will receive an escort home, food, gifts, and compliments; the interruption, as de Jong observes, also serves the narrator's purposes, since it lends extra emphasis to the meetings with the Trojan War veterans, who appear in the next episode of Odysseus' tale.

[59] For discussion see Rabel, 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*', 87.

[60] Ibid. 79. As I note above, I disagree with Rabel's claim that Odysseus' command over his audience is indicated by his *exclusive* ability to stop when and where he pleases in his tale. Demodokos too, as we have observed, has this same power—in this respect he is a doublet for Odysseus.

wants to make his audience *invite* him to continue.[61] Thus Homer draws our attention, again, to the extraordinary self-confidence of his hero, who is always prepared to test his powers, and to his disingenuousness. This is a characteristically Odyssean move, consistent with his behaviour on other occasions, when the hero appears to be doing one thing even as, in reality, he is negotiating another.[62] We observe a pleasing consistency between the Odysseus of *Iliad* 9 and the Odysseus of the *Odyssey*: each Odysseus knows how to gain access to the floor when he wants it—and how to keep it.

Odysseus' abrupt conclusion of his tale at 12. 450–3 is an interesting variant on 11. 330–2. Again Odysseus demonstrates his command over his audience, a command which is unlike that of Demodokos and Phemios, who are very much at the disposal of their listeners. Note that Odysseus chooses his point of interruption as he makes a claim that no professional bard would make (12. 452–3):

> ἐχθρὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν
> αὖτις ἀριζήλως εἰρημένα μυθολογεύειν.

> It is hateful to me
> to tell a story over again, when it has been well told.

For this reason, he declares, he has finished his narration.

*

In this idealized world that Homer describes interruption is relatively rare. Homer's conversational world differs markedly from our own in this respect. Such interruptions as there are are tied to extraordinary circumstances (extraordinary anger or extraordinary distress) and to extraordinary characters (Achilleus, Agamemnon, Penelope, and Odysseus). Since many of the interruptions we have observed are story-based, marking a critical moment in the narrative, it is clear that Homer does not wish to dilute their force by excessive use. Only in the Odyssean mid-story interruption of 11. 330–2 do

[61] And he succeeds: Alkinoös will invite him to do so at 370–6.

[62] For example, Odysseus claims to have news of Odysseus (he tells Eumaios that his master is about to return (14. 149–64)), when in reality he, Odysseus, is already back on Ithaka and is gauging the loyalty of his swineherd.

we observe interruption being used self-indulgently (and even here Odysseus has several motives driving his action) and with a smile. Here is Odysseus behaving as he always does: even when he is winning the hearts and minds of the Phaiakians, even when he knows that his story is succeeding, he wants to go one better.

I propose that interruption in the *Iliad* is a representation of competitive behaviour. It is an impolite discourse strategy practised against those who are seen as inferiors by status in a competitive world, but not (in the light of our limited evidence which *excludes* the Achilleus–Thetis exchange from consideration) by gender. In the *Iliad* disruptive interruption is understood as it often is in our own world by males, as a means of seizing the floor. This is power play. Achilleus in *Iliad* 1 seizes the floor in fury. As a mark of his disrespect for Agamemnon he disrupts his speaking turn. Agamemnon in *Iliad* 19 takes the floor as his right. In his self-centredness he interrupts the Achaians' joyful reaction even as, ironically, he lectures the troops on the need to respect others' contributions. In the *Odyssey*, however, Homer offers us three different perspectives on interruption. Breaking in on someone else's talk may be viewed, in context, as a sympathetic move (when one interrupts to spare pain to a third party, as does Alkinoös), as a devious move (when Odysseus interrupts himself), and as a desperate move (when Penelope, despite her reluctance as a woman to appear before the suitors, bids Phemios to change his song). All these interruptions reflect dominance in some degree. But demonstration of power is not always at the heart of the matter. In Homer's world a woman can be driven by her unhappiness to act in an unconventional fashion.

In our own world there is evidence that interruption serves as a strategy of dominance and that men interrupt women far more than women interrupt men. But in Homer's world the evidence is not conclusive: taken together the examples that we have studied make the point that context is critical. Despite the evidence of the *Iliad*, which shows interruption as a strategy of dominance, the evidence of the *Odyssey* indicates that there can be there no single reading of interruption in Homer's world.

10

Storytelling and Gender

When one of our fellow-participants in a conversation begins to tell a story, other members of the group fall silent; we yield the floor to the storyteller.[1] We do this because we have all learned, from early childhood, to recognize the signs that a story is about to begin. Whether we are aware of it or not, we respond to the signals that herald a story (in the first instance, some so-called entrance talk and a résumé or abstract), which are designed to catch our attention before the story proper begins.[2] We recognize stories because they differ significantly in their structure from the talk that surrounds them. We also respect stories. They are not interruptible.[3] This is because they are judged important, both to the teller and to the audience. We tell stories for many reasons, but their primary roles are to help us impose a structure on our own experiences, and to give us a format for sharing our experience with others. What is interesting from a sociolinguistic point of view is that the stories we tell

[1] On the responses of participants in a conversation when a story is introduced, see, e.g., J. Coates, *Women Talk: Conversation between Women Friends* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 95–6. On the kinds of sympathetic responses that are uttered by listeners as a story is told, see below.

[2] For discussion of the series of moves which make up a story and the function of each one, see W. Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), ch. 9, at 362–70; on entrance talk and exit talk, see L. Polanyi, 'Literary Complexity in Everyday Storytelling', in D. Tannen (ed.), *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex 1982), 155–70. On this sequence in the context of Homer, see E. Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17–22 and ch. 6.

[3] This is the general rule. There are, however, occasions, as we noted in Chapter 9, on which interruption is necessary or pardonable.

define us: they place us in a particular social and cultural world.[4] Our stories reflect cultural differences between ourselves and others, both within and across societies.[5] One class of differences relates to the gender of the storyteller. In the Western world today we can recognize differences between the stories that men tell and those that women tell: differences in theme and content, in presentation, and in the relationship which the storyteller develops with his or her audience. As Jennifer Coates observes, when men and women tell stories they are 'performing' gender. When a man wants to project masculinity he will choose particular story-themes and tell his stories in a way he considers appropriate to his gender group; women, likewise, may use their stories to construct and maintain their 'femininity'. We will find, too, that some men and some women will choose at times not to conform to stereotype; thus not all men's or women's stories will conform to the typical.[6]

If we look to the ancient world will we find there too features which distinguish the stories of men from women in the ancient world? Does Homer reveal consistent gender differences in his representation of storytelling by men and by women?[7] The questions which underpin this exercise are both sociolinguistic and poetic.

[4] J. Coates, *Men Talk: Stories in the Making of Masculinities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 5, 7, and 22. This volume, the first in-depth study of storytelling in all-male conversations, compares the storytelling practices of men and women.

[5] Coates, *Men Talk*, 38.

[6] Ibid. 38. See also S. Johnson, 'Theorizing Language and Masculinity: A Feminist Perspective', in S. Johnson and U. Meinhof (eds.), *Language and Masculinity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 8–26, at 21–4. We can all think of individual exceptions, particularly of women whose stories are more like those of men. But the fact that these women's stories are memorable as 'exceptional' is a confirmation of our expectations that women's stories are different in important ways from those of men.

[7] I have selected this task not because I expect that the results thrown up by a study of storytelling in the Homeric corpus will replicate the results of studies of storytelling in today's English-speaking world, but because it appears to be another useful starting point in an investigation of discourse and gender. A related topic has been discussed by Lilian Doherty, *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), who tells us (23) that her approach to the narratives of men and women in the *Odyssey* is 'chiefly based on textual analysis'. Although I agree with many of her conclusions, I suggest that she has been limited by her approach to the question. Because she does not take into account what happens in everyday conversation, she occasionally misjudges the intentions of the poet. For further discussion, see below.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S STORYTELLING IN THE WESTERN WORLD TODAY

In our own middle-class Western cultures women tell more stories than men. In the corpus of everyday talk built up by Jennifer Coates, for example, every all-female conversation contains narrative, whereas some all-male conversations contain none.[8] For women the production of narrative—that is, storytelling—is at the heart of what they do when they talk.[9] As for narrative content, it is clear that women have different ideas from men about what counts as tellable. Themes typical of men's stories are contest, conflict, the demonstration of skill, achievement, and heroism; and the topics of their tales are typically drinking, travel, technology, fighting, and sport.[10] Their stories—often first person narratives—will concern winning an argument, making a good move on the sports field, or surviving an ordeal. Many of these stories could be described as boastful. Indeed, even when things go wrong in the storyworld, the storyteller will frame his account as a boast (how he survived against all odds). In short, the focus of men's stories in all-male contexts is, in general, on achievement. These tales are not designed to reveal feelings or even to lead into talk in which feelings might be compared and discussed;[11] in fact, there is a careful avoidance of personal revelation. By contrast, the subject-matter of women's stories in all-female groups is the ordinary and the everyday. Their stories more often take as their subjects the routines, rhythms, and rituals of everyday

[8] Coates, *Men Talk*, 115. This does not imply that women talk more than men in all contexts. They do not: see J. Holmes, 'Women's Talk: The Question of Sociolinguistic Universals', in J. Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 461–83; and see further below.

The women who contributed to Coates' corpus of sixty-eight women's stories are from a white, upper-working to upper-middle-class background; their ages range from twelve to mid-fifties (*Women Talk*, 17–18). The men whose stories she studied (sixty-eight stories) are from across upper, middle and working classes, ranging in age from fifteen to, at least, late middle age (*Men Talk*, 7–13).

[9] B. Johnstone, *Stories, Community and Place: Narratives from Middle America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 8. For women, talking is action; it is the kind of thing that women 'do' together: see Coates, *Women Talk*, 44–5.

[10] Ibid. 44.

[11] Ibid. 73; indeed, men's stories about relationships or family life are rare (112).

life.[12] Many are stories of self-disclosure, in which a woman shows herself to have been inadequate or vulnerable, afraid or embarrassed.[13] Indeed, it is difficult to find women's achievement stories.[14] Women generally do not emerges as 'heroes' in their own tales—or, if they do, their triumphs will for the most part be restricted to the domestic environment.[15] These distinctions are observable also in other cultures. For a useful comparison I draw attention to storytelling in contemporary Greece: Alexandra Georgakopoulou observes that men's stories are predominantly contest-stories; she describes women's tales as 'troubles-telling'.[16]

There are differences too in the worlds in which the tales of men and women are set. The majority of stories told by men are set in the outside world.[17] For men the home is the least favoured setting. Their stories, generally speaking, portray a world which is peopled by men; women are peripheral.[18] Men are generally the protagonists in their own tales; their stories are 'self-orientated'. By contrast, most stories told by women are set in the home. The domestic settings of women's

[12] Ibid. 49–55, 99. This is so, even in today's world, in which so many women work outside the home.

[13] Ibid. 35, 120. Embarrassment or fear are common topics (20 per cent of Coates' corpus of sixty-eight women's stories take these topics as their subject, in comparison with 2 per cent of her corpus of sixty-eight men's stories). Why are women prepared to reveal their weaknesses? Coates suggests (120) that self-disclosure is likely to evoke self-disclosure in one's (female) listeners. The speaker finds support and empathy amongst her listeners, who will tell similar tales. For examples of women's narratives, see Coates, *Women Talk*, ch. 5. Coates suggests (*Men Talk*, 37) that such stories would fail if they were told before an all-male audience. They lack themes central to men's stories: heroism, contest, and demonstration of skill.

[14] According to Coates (*Men Talk*, 116) 46 per cent of her corpus of sixty-eight stories told by men focused on individual achievement; only 6 per cent of women's stories were about personal success.

[15] Coates, *Women Talk*, 99. It is worth noting that context is critical. A professional woman is not likely to tell stories of self-disclosure to her male and female work colleagues, although she may readily do so to her friends.

[16] See A. Georgakopoulou, *Narrative Performances: A Study of Modern Greek Storytelling* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1997), 50–4 and 182–6.

[17] Coates, *Men Talk*, 117.

[18] Ibid. 45: of the sixty-eight stories in Coates' corpus of men's stories 94 per cent have male protagonists and 72 per cent depict an all-male world. See also Georgakopoulou, *Narrative Performances*, at 176–7. She notes (at 176): '[t]his is a common finding in studies of gendered patterns in narrative construction: the characters and protagonists of the narrative worlds are as a rule men, in particular when the storyteller is a man.'

stories are linked to the themes of the tales they choose to tell and the priority that they choose to give to homelife and relationships, to friends and family. Men are a significant presence in women's stories.[19] Women view themselves as being linked to men in the real world; and they assert these links in their stories. A majority of stories told by women will be, like those of men, first person stories; but, unlike male narrators, women do not necessarily present themselves as the focus of the story. Women's stories are 'other-orientated'; they underplay the protagonists' personal roles and they emphasize social and mutual dependence.[20] Women in the Greek context, too, are looking for feedback and reassurance; but Georgakopoulou also notes that women's self-effacement, in certain cases when the strategy is 'over-performed', may actually serve the narrator's desire to put herself in the foreground.[21] Finally, there are significant differences in the temporal settings of men's and women's stories. Whereas women's stories refer to incidents from that very day or from the recent past, many men's stories refer to events long past.[22] Coates argues that this male pre-occupation with the distant past is connected to a man's desire to present himself as an achiever, as the sort of person who engages in contests and wins.[23] He therefore draws on a repertoire of tales that he has built up over his lifetime. This preference for the past has certain consequences. As Coates notes, when a story is set in the remote past, emotional closeness between storyteller and audience is difficult to achieve. When, by contrast, a story draws on the events of the day, when the storyteller and her audience share, as it were, a still-fresh experience, there is far greater scope for emotional rapport.[24] It seems that empathy of this kind, so important to women, is less important to male speakers.[25]

Storytellers know, almost instinctively, that details of time and place ground a story in truth. Through such details a story gains authenticity.[26] Careful attention to detail is an important feature of

[19] As Coates (*Men Talk*, 121) notes, 86 per cent of the narratives in her corpus of all-female conversation involve men and women.

[20] Johnstone, *Stories, Community and Place*, 66.

[21] Georgakopoulou, *Narrative Performances*, 184 and 193.

[22] Coates, *Men Talk*, 117. [23] Ibid. 118. [24] Ibid. [25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid. 45 and 110. See also D. Tannen, *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 138–40.

men's storytelling, as is their readiness to focus in their stories on things: on tools, implements, and objects. So we observe a preference amongst men for technical vocabulary, which by its presence confirms the authority of the speaker and truth of the tale. But this concentration on objects and accuracy of detail comes at the expense of the human dimension. In men's stories characters often remain nameless; characterization is generally thin; and, remarkably, there is little or no representation of direct speech. Their actors are not allowed to speak for themselves.[27] When women tell stories they name their characters; they flesh them out (motives are important in their stories); and they are more likely to re-enact their own and others' speech, even at length.[28]

One crucial factor in storytelling is the audience. Indeed, it would be more accurate to say that what is crucial is storytellers' awareness of their audience. Good storytellers tailor their stories to the preferences of their listeners.[29] When men tell stories in all-male groups, their stories are as I have described them above: rich in fact and detail, comparatively deficient in information about emotional response and reflective commentary. Women in all-women groups place more emphasis on obtaining their listeners' sympathy and understanding for the social and, indeed, personal aspects of the events they narrate. But when men speak in mixed groups, that is, when they tell stories in groups that include men and women, they are sensitive to the different composition of their audience. Coates notes, first, that the topics and themes of their stories remain the same; even in mixed groups men tell tales of achievement.[30] But she notes also that in mixed groups men may set out, as women do, to elicit the sympathy of their listeners; and, when they tell first person stories, they may orientate their tales to female expectations by including details of emotional responses.[31] The presence of women has another significant effect on men's storytelling: women encourage men to talk at length.[32] It has been observed that male speakers

[27] Johnstone, *Stories, Community and Place*, 68 and 75. [28] Ibid.

[29] This aspect of storytelling is termed recipient-design. For the first use of the term, see H. Sacks, *Lectures on Conversation*, ed. G. Jefferson, 2 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), vol. ii, p. 44; Coates, *Men Talk*, 143.

[30] See ibid. 147, 155, 171–2. [31] Ibid. 143–9, at 149.

[32] Women also are prepared to talk at length, but *only* in all-women groups (for examples of long stories in all-women conversations, see Coates, *Women Talk*, 33–6). They are reluctant to take the floor for long periods in mixed talk.

feel no embarrassment about holding the floor for long periods in all-male groups.[33] The fact that they are ready to dominate the floor in mixed groups also, by telling much longer stories than women do, is evidence of men's higher social status and greater power *vis-à-vis* women; and testimony to the fact that women collude in preserving the *status quo*.[34]

If we were to examine, under test conditions, a collection of stories told by men and by women, it would be possible in most cases to identify the gender of the narrator, on the basis of the content and presentation of the tale. Although I readily concede that not all stories reveal equally sharp gender differences, it is nevertheless observable that men and women create different worlds in and through their stories. The worlds they create are different psychologically, socially, and culturally, reflecting the different worlds in which they live their everyday lives.[35]

These few pages have presented a summary of observable gender differences in storytelling in today's English-speaking world. What is the position in the world of Homer? If we compare the stories which men tell with the few stories that Homer has allocated to women characters in his epics, will we observe similar contrasts?[36]

I should at the outset record two significant differences between storytelling in Homer and storytelling in our own world. First, Homer does not allow participants in the conversations he recreates to offer the supportive, sympathetic, or appreciative remarks or the laughter that we observe in transcripts of everyday talk today. Women in today's world appear to use this kind of feedback more frequently than men, both in mixed groups and in all-female

[33] Coates, *Men Talk*, 143, 147. It is recognized that men consistently talk more than women in public settings: see J. Holmes, 'Women's Talk in Public Contexts', *Discourse and Society*, 3 (1992), 131–50. To glance at the literate world for a moment, this disparity holds even in the electronic medium of email: see S. Herring, D. Johnson, T. DiBenedetto, 'Participation in Electronic Discourse in a Feminist Field', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender*, 197–220.

[34] For comparative evidence on mixed-group interactions from Greece, see Georgakopoulou, *Narrative Performances*, at 44: 'men proved to be more in control of storytelling initiation and delivery than women'.

[35] Johnstone, *Stories, Community and Place*, 67–8; see also Coates, *Men Talk*, 107, 137–8 and n. 32 (for details of a trial conducted in New Zealand by Coates, in which subjects were asked to sort unidentified transcripts of stories by gender).

[36] For a listing of stories told in each epic, see Table 6.

Table 6. Storytellings in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

Iliad		*Odyssey*	
1. 260–73	Nestor to Agamemnon and Achilleus	1. 179–99	Athene/'Mentes' to Telemachos
1. 366–92	Achilleus to Thetis	2. 87–110	Antinoös to assembly on Ithaka
1. 396–406	Achilleus to Thetis		
1. 590–4	Hephaistos to Hera	3. 103–98	Nestor to Telemachos, Peisistratos, and 'Mentor'
2. 301–30	Odysseus to Achaians		
3. 205–24	Antenor to Trojan elders and Helen	3. 254–312	Nestor to Telemachos, Peisistratos, and 'Mentor'
4. 372–400	Agamemnon to Diomedes	4. 239–64	Helen to Menelaos, Telemachos, and Peisistratos
6. 145–211	Glaukos to Diomedes	4. 267–89	Menelaos to Helen, Telemachos, and Peisistratos
6. 413–30	Andromache to Hektor		
		4. 347–592	Menelaos to Telemachos
7. 132–57	Nestor to the Achaians	7. 241–97	Odysseus to Arete
9. 444–94	Phoinix to Achilleus	9. 12–11.330	Odysseus to Phaiakians
9. 524–99	Phoinix to Achilleus	11. 385–12. 450	Odysseus to Phaiakians (includes Antikleia's report, 11. 197–203)
11. 670–762	Nestor to Patroklos		
11. 765–90	Nestor to Patroklos		
15. 18–30	Zeus to Hera	13. 255–86	Odysseus to Athene
18. 394–405	Hephaistos to Charis	14. 192–359	Odysseus to Eumaios
18. 429–56	Thetis to Hephaistos	14. 462–502	Odysseus to Eumaios
19. 95–133	Agamemnon to the Achaians	15. 403–84	Eumaios to Odysseus
		16. 113–29	Telemachos to Odysseus
20. 187–94	Achilleus to Aineias	17. 108–49	Telemachos to Penelope
20. 213–43	Aineias to Achilleus	18. 256–71	Penelope to suitors
21. 75–91	Lykaon to Achilleus	19. 137–56	Penelope to Odysseus
21. 441–57	Poseidon to Apollo	19. 167–202, 221–48, 269–307	Odysseus to Penelope
23. 629–43	Nestor to Achilleus		
24. 59–63	Hera to Apollo		
24. 396–404	Hermes to Priam	23. 184–202	Odysseus to Penelope
24. 602–17	Achilleus to Priam	24. 36–97	Agamemnon to Achilleus
		24. 123–90	Amphimedon to Agamemnon
		24. 265–79, 303–14	Odysseus to Laertes

groups.[37] Such feedback is intended as a signal of support for the speaker and to indicate active attention on the listener's part. The stories Homer's characters tell, by contrast, are received in silence. This, I suggest, is a 'literary' solution to a practical problem: it is difficult for an oral storyteller to enact the varied interruptions which accompany any storytelling.[38] For this reason Homer ignores them.

A second feature of storytelling as we know it which Homer fails to represent in his storyworld is collaborative storytelling. This is the kind of storytelling which we hear today when both the storyteller and other members of his or her audience have shared experience of an event. In those cases two or three voices will contribute to the tale. This is a common feature of women's storytelling; it is not so common in men's conversations.[39] It usually occurs when speakers know each other well and have shared experiences and shared knowledge. Collaborative storytelling becomes a means of expressing solidarity. In Homer's world, by contrast, Patroklos does not contribute to Nestor's story when he is telling about his visit to Phthia to enlist Achilleus and Patroklos to his cause; Thetis does not supply details to Achilleus when he tells her the story of Zeus, Briareos, and herself. In Homer the appointed storyteller alone has the floor.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S STORYTELLING IN THE *ILIAD*

The great majority of the stories which are told in the *Iliad* are told by men.[40] Of these almost all are stories intended to persuade the

[37] For discussion of these forms of back-channelling, see J. Coates, 'Gossip Revisited: Language in All-Female Groups', in Coates (ed.), *Language and Gender*, 226–53, at 237–8.

[38] For brief discussion of back-channelling and the difficulty of rendering incidental remarks in oral epic, see Chapter 9.

[39] For discussion, see Coates, *Men Talk*, 59 and 132. According to Coates (132), women are as likely to tell a story in collaboration as to tell it on their own; only 25 per cent of men's tales in her corpus are collaboratively produced. On co-telling see also C. Monzoni, 'The Use of Interjections in Italian Conversation: The Participation of the Audience in Narratives', in U. Quastoff and T. Becker (eds.), *Narrative Interaction* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), 197–220.

[40] I count approximately twenty-six stories in the *Iliad*. (Others may arrive at a different total: does one count undeveloped story fragments in autobiographical lists,

listener to adopt a particular course of action—whether a warrior is being urged to show his heroism in battle or a god is being urged to help out one of his or her fellow-gods.[41] When a speaker is attempting persuasion he or she will choose an appropriate paradigmatic tale. This story has a specific job to do. Quite often the speaker will choose a tale from his repertoire of first person tales.[42] His message will be, '*I* did this; there was a good result; *you* should do it too.'[43] Apart from first person stories, three of the stories told in the *Iliad* are, remarkably, second person stories;[44] the remaining stories are third person stories.[45] In line with observations of the storytelling world of men today, all the tales told by men, with a single exception, have a male protagonist.

Nestor and Zeus: First Person Stories from the Past

Amongst the stories which conform to our twenty-first-century expectations of storytelling in all-male groups are the four stories

for example? I have not.) Of these all but three are told by men (the exceptions are the stories of Andromache (6. 414–28); of Thetis (18. 429–61); and of Hera (24. 58–63)).

[41] For discussion see N. Austin, 'The Function of Digressions in the *Iliad*', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 7 (1966), 295–312.

[42] Of the twenty-six stories I have identified sixteen are first person stories (fourteen of the twenty-three stories told by men and two of the three stories told by women). Coates, *Men Talk*, 121, indicates that in her corpus 72 per cent of women's stories and 68 per cent of men's stories are first person stories. The Iliadic rates (60.8 per cent for men's stories and 66.6 per cent for a very small sample of women's stories) are slightly below Coates' figures.

[43] This is a form of boasting also: in the Homeric world (and in ours) a strategy in the struggle for prestige. On this topic see H. van Wees, *Status Warriors: War, Violence and Society in Homer and History* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1992), 68–9 and 98.

[44] Second person stories are not a common form in our own world (although we hear parents telling such stories to their children). The second person stories of the *Iliad* are Achilleus' story to Thetis, 1. 396–406; Nestor's story to Patroklos, at 11. 765–90 (this latter tale also contains first and third person elements; but it is the second person element which is most emphatic); Poseidon's to Apollo, 21. 441–57. Zeus's story to Hera, 15. 18–30, and Achilleus' to Aineias, 20. 188–94, are in some aspects second person stories; but in that the speaker is the protagonist they are equally first person stories.

[45] For example, Agamemnon's account of Tydeus' visit to Mycenae with Polyneikes, 4. 372–400; the tale of Bellerophon, told by Glaukos, 6. 152–211; the Meleagros tale told by Phoinix, 9. 524–99; and Agamemnon's apologetic tale at 19. 95–133. I do not discuss these tales, but note that they reveal the same preoccupations and the same presentation as the stories from the *Iliad* that I discuss in this chapter.

told by Nestor about his own exploits: when he fought against the beast men (1. 260–73); when he fought Ereuthalion (7. 132–57, alluded to also at 4. 318–19); his exploits against the people of Elis (11. 670–762); and his performance in the Funeral Games for Amaryngkeus (23. 629–43).[46] These stories are paradigms of men's storytelling for an audience of men. We must remember that Nestor has special storytelling privileges. Because of his age he is treated with more respect; he feels free to speak more often and for longer than others.[47] Each story that he tells is addressed to one or more of the Achaians and is intended to confirm the heroic values that he has adhered to for so long. So it is not surprising that these stories are set in a world of men; women play no part in the heroic world he evokes. Nestor's tales take us back to a distant past, when opponents were more impressive than at present, when contests were tougher, and when he was in his prime.[48] Their subjects are war and competition. Their themes are contest, struggle, demonstration of skills, single-handed achievement, and heroism. Each tale has a thread of boastfulness: Nestor was the youngest of all those heroes present, but he performed with distinction (7. 152–4, 11. 682–4); he came from far away, but his fame had clearly spread (1. 269–70); he entered every contest and he won all but one (23. 632–42). What Nestor is doing here is recreating himself as he would like others to see him: as a man of action and achievement. His tales are rich in the kind of detail that Coates observes in men's stories today. There is the fixing of time and place, at, for example, 7. 132–5, 11. 711–12 (in fact, Bryan Hainsworth notes the 'unusual clarity' of these details here);[49] and 23. 629–31:

[46] For discussion of these tales in terms of content and in terms of their relationship to the *Iliad*-story, see M. Alden, *Homer Beside Himself: Para-Narratives in the* Iliad (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 74–111; and E. Minchin, 'Homer on Autobiographical Memory: The Case of Nestor', in R. Rabel (ed.), *Approaches to Homer: Ancient and Modern* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2005), 55–72.

[47] On older males' privileged access to the floor, see Coates, *Men Talk*, 162. Telemachos, young as he is, indicates that he recognizes this privilege—and its negative side: see *Od.* 15. 195–201.

[48] The beast men, 1. 266–8, 271–2; Ereuthalion, 7. 150–1; the chariot-race with the sons of Aktor, 23. 638–42.

[49] On the clarity of the geographical and chronological details of this tale, see J.B. Hainsworth, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. iii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 297.

εἴθ᾽ ὣς ἡβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη
ὡς ὁπότε κρείοντ᾽ Ἀμαρυγκέα θάπτον Ἐπειοὶ
Βουπρασίῳ, παῖδες δὲ θέσαν βασιλῆος ἄεθλα.

I wish I were young again and the strength still unshaken within me
as once, when great Amaryngkeus was buried by the Epeians
at Bouprasion, and his sons gave games for a king's funeral.[50]

There are details of individual contests and struggles (23. 634–40); details of techniques and weapons (7. 136–41, 142–6, 23. 641–2). Unlike Coates' sample of male storytellers, however, Nestor on two occasions names names, relentlessly. But this naming is, in fact, the point of these particular tales.[51] The old man is reminding his listeners in the present of the great men of the past, whose deeds—and names—have survived; and he ensures that his own lustre is enhanced by reminding his audience of the company he once kept.

Nestor's autobiographical tales are tales of action. There is minimal characterization, no direct speech, and little personal revelation beyond Nestor's sheer pleasure and pride in his memories of his youth. But the old man's delight in his achievements is ever-present. Consider the tale he tells Patroklos. Nestor's message, that there is great excitement and great fulfilment in the life of the warrior, is not expressed directly. Rather, it is through the evaluative material that he embeds in his story (the spoil, 11. 677–81; his father's pleasure in his triumph, 683–4; Nestor's joining battle despite the hiding of his horses, 717–21; Nestor's being the first to kill a man, 737–9; and the honour shown to Nestor, 761) that Nestor conveys the thrill of a good performance in the field—and this message is surely and fatally conveyed to his young visitor.

It is Nestor's follow-up story to Patroklos (11. 765–90), which is not drawn from his repertoire of 'tales of my youth', that convinces Patroklos finally to return to the fighting. Nestor recalls the time when he and Odysseus went to Phthia to invite Achilleus and Patroklos

[50] We must imagine Nestor holding the prize that Achilleus has awarded him (23. 624) even as he tells his story.

[51] In his first speech to the Achaians, Nestor names a number of the great heroes of the past (1. 262–5); in his last, all his opponents at the Funeral Games for Amaryngkeus are identified (23. 634–40). On the other hand, he names very few participants in the long battle narrative that he tells Patroklos. The only hero who is important in that tale is the young Nestor.

to join the force against Troy (769–70). It is an event that Patroklos himself can remember. The young men agreed and made ready to join the host. Their fathers made their farewells. Peleus said farewell to Achilleus, advising him to be 'always best in battle and pre-eminent beyond all others' (783–4); this message is presented as indirect speech. Menoitios, on the other hand, gave his instructions to Patroklos (786–9) thus:

> *τέκνον ἐμόν, γενεῇ μὲν ὑπέρτερός ἐστιν Ἀχιλλεύς,*
> *πρεσβύτερος δὲ σύ ἐσσι· βίῃ δ' ὅ γε πολλὸν ἀμείνων.*
> *ἀλλ' εὖ οἱ φάσθαι πυκινὸν ἔπος ἠδ' ὑποθέσθαι*
> *καί οἱ σημαίνειν· ὁ δὲ πείσεται εἰς ἀγαθόν περ.*
>
> My child, by right of blood Achilleus is higher than you are,
> but you are the elder. Yet in strength he is far the greater.
> You must speak solid words to him, and give him good counsel,
> and point his way. If he listens to you it will be for his own good.

Note that these words are rendered as direct speech. This is one of the few occasions in the *Iliad* that direct speech is used in a story told by one of the characters.[52] Indeed, since the majority of the stories told in the *Iliad* are told by men, Homer's restrained use of direct speech in these stories may be intended to reflect the speech style of men. Direct speech, as we know, has special evaluative force, by virtue of its avowed authenticity, and this is especially the case when it is contrasted with indirect speech, as in Nestor's tale.[53] Menoitios' words to his son leap out from their context. They strike us, Homer's audience, as significant. They struck Patroklos, as he listened to the old man, in the same way. He hears again the very words that his father had spoken nearly ten years before. As Homer notes, at 11. 804, Nestor's second person tale 'stirs the feeling' in the breast of Patroklos: it

[52] For other examples see 2. 323–9 (in the story told by Odysseus before the Achaians to steady Agamemnon): the words directly quoted are the words of Kalchas, foretelling success, in the tenth year, for the Achaians; and 6. 164–5 (in the tale told by Glaukos about his forebears): these are the words of Anteia, wife of Proitos, to whom Bellerophon would not make love. She tells her husband, untruthfully, that Bellerophon had wanted to lie with her.

[53] On this point see I. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the* Iliad (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1987), 114–18; Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 124–5.

empowers him. He will return to Achilleus with the request that will lead to his death.

Zeus's tale to Hera, at 15. 18–30, is a particularly assertive example. It is delivered with a scowl and reinforces a strong rebuke.[54] The tale is set on Olympos. Zeus, in his anger after he has discovered Hera's deception (14. 292–360), reminds his wife of how he once punished her. He gives details of the instruments of punishment: he describes the anvils by which Hera was suspended and left hanging among the clouds and the bright sky (18–21). The tale is, from Zeus's perspective, an action tale. And he is the protagonist: *I* slung two anvils and *I* drove (19) . . . If *I* caught one *I* would seize him (22–4). . . . From Hera's perspective, it is a tale of powerlessness. This story tells us what can happen to an Olympian wife who steps out of line. It evokes a world in which brute force holds sway. In this story Zeus is clearly performing masculinity.

A Woman in the Audience

In *Iliad* 1 Achilleus reminds Thetis of how she once assisted Zeus in a struggle against the other gods. This is a second person story (1. 396–406):

> *πολλάκι γάρ σεο πατρὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἄκουσα*
> *εὐχομένης, ὅτ' ἔφησθα κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι*
> *οἴη ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι,*
> *ὁππότε μιν ξυνδῆσαι Ὀλύμπιοι ἤθελον ἄλλοι,*
> *Ἥρη τ' ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη·*
> *ἀλλὰ σὺ τόν γ' ἐλθοῦσα, θεά, ὑπελύσαο δεσμῶν,*
> *ὦχ' ἑκατόγχειρον καλέσασ' ἐς μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον,*
> *ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες*
> *Αἰγαίων'— ὁ γὰρ αὖτε βίην οὗ πατρὸς ἀμείνων —*
> *ὅς ῥα παρὰ Κρονίωνι καθέζετο κύδεϊ γαίων·*
> *τὸν καὶ ὑπέδεισαν μάκαρες θεοὶ οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔδησαν.*

[54] On the scowl, see Chapter 6, and see also see J. Holoka, '"Looking Darkly" (*ΥΠΟΔΡΑ ΙΔΩΝ*): Reflections on Status and Decorum in Homer', *TAPA*, 113 (1983), 1–16, at 16: a scowl prefaces a speech by a superior to a subordinate and charges the speech with 'minatory fervency'.

> Since it is many times in my father's halls I have heard you
> making claims, when you said you only among the immortals
> beat aside shameful destruction from Kronos' son the dark-misted,
> that time when all the other Olympians sought to bind him,
> Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athene. Then you,
> goddess, went and set him free from his shackles, summoning
> in speed the creature of the hundred hands to tall Olympos,
> that creature the gods name Briareus, but all men
> Aigaios' son, but he is far greater in strength than his father.
> He rejoicing in the glory of it sat down by Kronion,
> and the rest of the blessed gods were frightened and gave up binding him.

I have noted above that women are usually peripheral in men's tales. But observe how astutely Achilleus presents this tale. Here he has made his mother the protagonist; he casts Thetis as a woman of action. *She* sent for Briareos (401–5); and *she* unbound Zeus (401). *She* is the hero.[55] This, for a woman, is an empowering tale.[56] And it works: Thetis goes to Zeus and puts Achilleus' request.[57] Although she decides, tactfully, that she will not remind Zeus of this episode,[58] her consciousness of the debt he owes her will give her the courage to ask a favour on behalf of her son.

In *Iliad* 3 the Trojan elders are seated on the wall. They are joined by Helen. Priam tries to engage Helen in conversation. As she lingers on the wall before the duel between Paris and Menelaos he puts to her a series of questions about the Achaian heroes. This is a delightful scene. And it is unusual because here alone in the *Iliad* (3. 146–244) we have a stretch of talk which almost amounts to conversation for its own sake. At one point Priam asks Helen about a hero whose appearance strikes him as ram-like (192–8). Helen names Odysseus,

[55] Briareos, meanwhile, sat by and frightened off the gods who were attempting to bind Zeus (405–6).

[56] Just as Nestor empowers Patroklos (see above), so Achilleus empowers Thetis. Note that on another occasion too (see below) Achilleus demonstrates his concern for his addressee in his choice of tale.

[57] For discussion of Thetis' helplessness *vis-à-vis* Achilleus and her power *vis-à-vis* the gods, see L. Slatkin, *The Power of Thetis: Allusion and Interpretation in the* Iliad (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[58] Thetis does not allude to this story during her meeting with Zeus: it is a matter of delicacy. She has decided that this is a story that Zeus would rather forget. See also Chapter 8.

and in her reply refers to the hero's cunning and his knowledge of all 'crafty counsel' (202). It is Antenor now who joins the conversation (204). He builds on what has just been said, both by Priam about Odysseus' appearance and by Helen about his strategic skills (205–24). He tells an anecdote which celebrates Odysseus' skill in persuasive talk.[59] Antenor has clearly chosen his tale with Helen in mind (its cast of characters includes Menelaos). And it is the kind of story which will engage a woman's interest. The point of the tale is a reflection on misleading appearances and hidden talents. The tale, quite uncharacteristic of men's stories in all-male contexts, gives details of appearance and manner (216–20, 221–3); and it develops character (216–23):

> *ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ πολύμητις ἀναΐξειεν Ὀδυσσεύς,*
> *στάσκεν, ὑπαὶ δὲ ἴδεσκε κατὰ χθονὸς ὄμματα πήξας,*
> *σκῆπτρον δ' οὔτ' ὀπίσω οὔτε προπρηνὲς ἐνώμα,*
> *ἀλλ' ἀστεμφὲς ἔχεσκεν, ἀΐδρεϊ φωτὶ ἐοικώς·*
> *φαίης κε ζάκοτόν τέ τιν' ἔμμεναι ἄφρονά τ' αὔτως.*
> *ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ὄπα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος εἵη*
> *καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότα χειμερίῃσιν,*
> *οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆΐ γ' ἐρίσσειε βροτὸς ἄλλος·*

> But when that other drove to his feet, resourceful Odysseus,
> he would just stand and stare down, eyes fixed on the ground beneath him,
> nor would he gesture with the staff backward and forward, but hold it
> clutched hard in front of him, like any man who knows nothing.
> Yes, you would call him a sullen man, and a fool likewise.
> But when he let the great voice go from his chest, and the words came
> drifting down like the winter snows, then no other mortal
> man beside could stand up against Odysseus.

It also describes the reactions of the spectators (220), and these guide the reactions of Antenor's own audience at 224: 'Then we wondered less beholding Odysseus' outward appearance'.

[59] Kirk argues that Antenor's story complements Priam's, but not Helen's, remarks: G. Kirk, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 294. But since one aspect of Odysseus' skill in counsel is his ability to speak persuasively, Antenor's speech *is* an illustration of Helen's remark as well.

Achilleus, Priam, and Niobe: A Female Protagonist

In *Iliad* 24, Achilleus tells a story to Priam. He is trying to persuade the old man to resume the routines of daily life. Notice that Achilleus has again chosen a story in which a woman is protagonist. He has made this singular choice, I suggest, out of consideration for his audience. Priam, an old man exhausted by grief, will certainly not be rallied by tales of heroic fortitude. Achilleus perceives that a gentler approach is needed: hence his choice of the Niobe-tale, in which a woman provides the model for behaviour (24. 602–17).[60] Although set in a timeless mythical past, this is very much a woman's tale: it is a story set in a woman's domestic world, and it takes as its subject familiar maternal behaviour. This is a story about a mother who boasts about her children and, unwisely, compares them with the children of Leto (603–9).[61] Niobe is grief-stricken when Apollo and Artemis, in anger at her *hubris*, kill all twelve of her children. But, after their burial on the tenth day, she consents to take some food, a first step in the resumption of life.[62] The tale is successful: Priam identifies with its female protagonist, and with the story of her pride in her offspring, her error, her grief, and her practical recognition of her needs. He too eats.

Women's Narratives: Family Matters

Finally, we have two tales told by women, in each case to a man. The first of these tales is the story told by Thetis (18. 429–56), which she builds into her request to Hephaistos for new armour for her son. In her tale she is at the outset the protagonist, as wife of Peleus and mother of Achilleus (432–43); and she portrays herself in her

[60] As J. Griffin, 'Homeric Words and Speakers', *JHS*, 106 (1986), 36–57, at 56, suggests, Achilleus is capable of great humanity. This is manifest in his language more generally, as Griffin has demonstrated; and, as I show above, it is conveyed also in Homer's account of the hero's storytelling practice.

[61] Pride in offspring is a theme we recognize in women's tales today. Women may not boast about their own deeds, but boasting about their children's performance is a story staple.

[62] For discussion, see N. Richardson, *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*, vol. vi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 340–2.

domestic role. But Thetis' story becomes a story about Achilleus (444–56). This is not unusual in women's storytelling. As Coates has noted, women are not necessarily the focus of their own stories.[63] This tale has a strong emotional force, which it derives from Thetis' theme of family connections. Her references to her ageing husband (434–5), to her fine young son (438), whom she will never see in his homeland again (440–1), and to her inability to help him (443) weave into the narrative a mood of frustration and sorrow, which she hopes will move Hephaistos.[64] Thetis' story, her tears (428), Hephaistos' sympathy for her, and his memory of the debt he owes her (394–405) win his compliance.

The second tale is the narrative built into the long, gentle rebuke which Andromache addresses to her husband (6. 413–30).[65] Her story is carefully chosen and carefully presented for persuasive impact, but it will not move Hektor to change his strategy. In order to engage her husband's attention, Andromache has selected a narrative of heroic action. Although her story concerns herself and her dependence on Hektor, Andromache has not cast herself as the leading actor. She has stepped aside to allow a man, Achilleus, to be (ominously) the focus of the story (414–16):

> *ἤτοι γὰρ πατέρ' ἁμὸν ἀπέκτανε δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,*
> *ἐκ δὲ πόλιν πέρσεν Κιλίκων εὖ ναιετάουσαν,*
> *Θήβην ὑψίπυλον·*

> It was brilliant Achilleus who slew my father, Eëtion,
> when he stormed the strong-founded citadel of the Kilikians,
> Thebe of the towering gates.

Her tale is a brief account of Achilleus' attack on her home, in Thebe. It is a story from the recent past; the pain is still fresh. Achilleus, the protagonist, has captured Thebe (415); he has killed her father and her brothers (414, 421–3); and he has taken her mother captive (425–6). The framework, therefore, is that of an action tale: this much is heroic

[63] Coates, *Men Talk*, 110; and see above.

[64] Homer has signalled this mood in his introductory words 'letting the tears fall', 428. Body language here adds evaluative force to Thetis' words.

[65] This speech (6. 407–39) has been identified by Foley as a lament (J. M. Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 188–98); but see Chapter 6 on the qualities and circumstances that define Andromache's speech act as a rebuke.

fare. But Andromache at each point evaluates the narrative action from her own perspective as a woman.[66] Her father was a great man. This is recognized by Achilleus (416–20). Her brothers were caught off-guard; they were not able to defend themselves (421–4). Her mother was released by Achilleus, who accepted ransom for her; but she was struck down by malevolent chance once she had returned to her father's home (425–8). At each of these three narrative moments Andromache underlines the unhappy circumstances of her loss and, indirectly, the grief it brings. This story is not about warfare, as are Nestor's tales, but about its social consequences. This is a woman's view of war, the destroyer of families. In Andromache's tale there is none of the detail that we see in Nestor's narratives from the distant past: details of locations and details of weapons and fatal strokes. Instead, we have characterization of the protagonist, Achilleus[67] and we have a strong emotional subtext, in which Andromache emphasizes her dependence on her husband and urges a sympathetic response in Hektor. All this is summed up in her exit talk, as Andromache moves from the storyworld back to the real world (429–30):

> *Ἕκτορ, ἀτὰρ σύ μοί ἐσσι πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ*
> *ἠδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης·*
>
> Hektor, thus you are father to me, and my honoured mother,
> you are my brother, and you it is who are my young husband.

Through these words we are reminded that this is not storytelling in a public context like so many of the stories told by Nestor.[68] Rather,

[66] Richardson, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. vi, at p. 357, observes that throughout all of Helen's speeches there is a preoccupation with family relationships, and that kinship words (even rare terms) recur. He has made the point to me (personal communication) that Andromache and Penelope (in the *Odyssey*) are equally preoccupied with family connections and family rituals, as we see in Andromache's speech here and at 22. 477–514 and 24. 725–45. This is naturally so, since these women spend most of their time within the household. But, as noted above, it is significant that for women today, too, even those who work outside the home, family continues to matter. On this last point see also Coates, *Men Talk*, 117.

[67] Note that it is Andromache who offers us this sketch of Achilleus from the time before his quarrel with Agamemnon and his unforgiving anger.

[68] There is a third tale in the *Iliad* which is told by a woman: the story told by Hera at 24. 59–63. This is brief and quite sharp in tone. Intended as a retort to Apollo's plea on behalf of Hektor, it is a woman's story in terms of content (Hera undertakes to marry off Thetis to a mortal—and thus protect Hera's own interests). This story too deals with

this story, like Thetis' to Hephaistos in *Iliad* 18, emerges from the context of more intimate talk, as women's stories are wont to do.[69]

It is natural, given the focus of the epic, that so many of the stories told within it are themselves focused on war or contest, and on the kinds of skills that men need in those arenas. In Nestor's tales we see exemplary autobiographical narratives told by men for men, set in a world in which men are heroes and women are peripheral. In general, the tales told by men for men are self-orientated and boastful; they are deficient in characterization but rich in technical detail and information about time and place. These stories, for the most part, are not aiming at emotional rapport. But when such rapport is necessary to the success of the tale, the storyteller—whether Nestor, Antenor, or Achilleus—knows how to make provision for it in his telling. In Andromache's tale, by contrast, we see a woman who is striving to seize the attention of her husband in the midst of war. In her tale she caters to his preference for stories of heroic action, while striving to win his sympathy for her own situation. Heroic behaviour is her theme. But Andromache shows little interest in the technical details of warfare. Rather, her tale, like that of any woman, asserts the importance of family relationships and is richer in third person characterization than all others in the *Iliad*. Overall, therefore, we find that the distinguishing features observed by Coates and her colleagues in men's and women's stories today are to be found also in Homer's *Iliad*.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S STORYTELLING IN THE *ODYSSEY*

Whereas storytellers within the *Iliad* tell tales with persuasion as their goal, storytellers in the *Odyssey* openly admit that their tales are told

family matters and family ceremonies: the raising of Thetis; her proposed marriage to Peleus; and the wedding, which Apollo himself attended. The tale, set in the past, is too brief for characterization. But note that all actors and interested parties are named.

[69] Only a small number of men's stories emerge in more intimate talk: Achilleus' story of Agamemnon's wrong (1. 366–92); his Niobe story (24. 602–17); Hephaistos' story about Thetis (18. 394–405).

to entertain their audience and, in many cases, to win praise, prestige, or even sustenance for the teller.[70] The story-content of the *Odyssey* is greater than that of the *Iliad*, principally because of Odysseus' long narration to the Phaiakians. But examples of women's storytelling are again rare: of the twenty-four narratives within the *Odyssey* only four are told by women.[71] These are the story told by Helen at 4. 239–64; the report of Antikleia at 11. 197–203; and the stories told by Penelope at 18. 256–71 and 19. 137–56. Of the nineteen tales told by men, thirteen are first person narratives. Of these thirteen narratives eight are told by Odysseus. Included in these are his five false tales. It is with the Odyssean stories that I begin.

Odysseus' Tales (1)

The stories of the *Odyssey* are overshadowed by one great narrative: the story of Odysseus' journey from Troy to Scheria told in three segments: 7. 241–97; 9. 12–11. 330; and 11. 380–12. 450. Odysseus tells this tale before a mixed audience, which comprises the king, his guests, and his wife, Arete.[72] As Nausikaa has told Odysseus (7. 75–7), Arete will be the key to his safe return to his homeland, should she be well-disposed to him.[73] His story is a narrative of adventure and misadventure, of contests of wits, and trials of strength and endurance. It is an incomparable traveller's tale of action and exploit. And it is, despite its cast of vivid cameo roles, a 'self-orientated' tale.

[70] For discussion see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 205–6.

[71] I have not included in this count the stories told by Demodokos at 8. 72–82, 266–366 and 499–520. These tales are represented as *oratio obliqua*—although, as de Jong observes, in the second of these tales the voices of Demodokos and the narrator appear to merge: see I. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 195.

[72] On the handpicked audience for Odysseus' tale (and other observations on the technique of the Ich-Erzählung and on the contrast of the Ich- with the Er-Erzählung of 23. 310–41), see W. Suerbaum, 'Die Ich-Erzählungen des Odysseus', *Poetica*, 2 (1968), 150–77, at 169.

[73] On Odysseus' desire to please Arete (by the inclusion of the account of the 'heroines'), see Doherty, *Siren Songs*, 21–2, 67–8; 'The Snares of the *Odyssey*: A Feminist Narratological Reading', in S. Harrison (ed.), *Texts, Ideas, and the Classics: Scholarship, Theory, and Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 117–33, at 129.

Odysseus, the storyteller, plays the leading part. Alone of all his men it is he who triumphs, escaping the wrath of Poseidon with nothing more than his life. It is, in short, a boastful tale, carefully crafted to win for its teller what he desires most, a safe return to his homeland and gifts of esteem from his audience.

The story begins in the past. It is not the remote past of Nestor's Iliadic narratives. This is a past that connects with the present by the fact that, at the moment of telling, the hero's story has not yet reached its end. Odysseus has not reached his goal. Because it is a work in progress, therefore, the tale he tells has a power to engage that we do not find in the Nestor-narratives. So, when Odysseus announces (at 11. 330–2), that he will break off his tale, he is pressed to continue.[74] It is Arete who catches the listeners' mood of wonderment, as she speaks first, praising Odysseus and his telling (336–7):

> *Φαίηκες, πῶς ὔμμιν ἀνὴρ ὅδε φαίνεται εἶναι*
> *εἶδός τε μέγεθός τε ἰδὲ φρένας ἔνδον ἐΐσας;*

> Phaiakians, what do you think now of this man before you
> for beauty and stature, and for the mind well balanced within him?

She does not want to see him leave yet; she proposes that the Phaiakians give him generous gifts. Echeneos supports her commendation (344–6). Finally, Alkinoös formally invites the hero to continue with his tale (363–76). And so Odysseus resumes his telling. Here we observe the kind of behaviour that Coates observes in mixed-group conversations today. The women in the group actively encourage the men in their storytelling. Because women make it clear that they enjoy the stories men tell, men are prepared to take the storytelling floor for longer periods. This is Arete's role at this point.[75]

There is something very polished about Odysseus' telling. He works as Homer himself works, using detailed narrative, similes,

[74] It is tempting to think that Odysseus at this point is teasing his audience. By breaking off abruptly at this point, in mid-episode, he tantalizes his listeners. For comments on Odysseus' self-interruption, see R. Rabel, 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*', *Colby Quarterly*, 38 (2002), 77–93, at 85–9; and see Chapter 9.

[75] For another view see Doherty, *Siren Songs*, 68–9, 77–8. My reading supports G. Rose, 'The Unfriendly Phaeacians', *TAPA*, 100 (1969), 387–406, at 404–5, who argues that Arete has been impressed by the whole of Odysseus' narrative.

elaborate descriptions, direct speech, and conversational exchanges to slow the tale and to quicken suspense in his audience.[76] No other storyteller in Homer uses all these devices; and no other storyteller uses them so extensively. Furthermore, because Odysseus is confident that his audience is willing, and because he has the time to develop his tale, he has scope to develop character, through speech, action, and his own evaluative commentary.[77] In this, too, his stories are unlike those of Nestor, in which characters are stereotypical. Thus we see something of the character of the Kyklops, who appears as both terrifying (9. 256–7, 287–95) and in some aspects endearing (218–23, 307–9, 444–55). Kirke, likewise, is no mere stereotype: she is mysterious (10. 210–23) and she is frankly sexy (333–5). And Odysseus' stories, unlike those of Nestor, describe a world populated by both men and women. But the women whom Odysseus encounters are not of his kind; they are not, with the exception of Antikleia in the Underworld (11. 84–224), family. Integral to the story, these other women represent danger and delay, and challenges to be overcome: Kirke, of course; Kalypso (7. 244–50); the wife of Antiphates, the Laistrygonian (10. 112–13); and the Sirens (12. 39–46).

Finally, like male storytellers today, Odysseus shows a concern for details of time and place: we are given precise measures of time (nine days, 9. 82; six days, 10. 80; a year, 10. 467; six days, 12. 397; nine days, 12. 447) and of place (for example, the description of the island of the Kyklops, 9. 116–41; or of the dwelling of the Skylla

[76] For example, note the presentation of the Cyclops episode: here we find considerable narrative detail (for example, at 9. 231–51, the narrative which fills the time between the moment that the Cyclops returns to his cave and the moment when he sees Odysseus and his men); description of items (the wine, 196–211; the boulder at the door, 240–3); similes (289, 314, 384–6, 391–3); direct speech (for example, 347–52, 355–9, 364–7, 369–70). Only Menelaos in his long narrative (4. 347–586) rivals Odysseus in his use of direct speech. But he uses description more sparingly (4. 354–9, 400–6), and offers only one simile (4. 535). On this point see also A. Heubeck, in A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.

[77] For an important discussion of the subjective style of Odysseus, as revealed in his use of language, in his story to the Phaiakians, see I. de Jong, 'The Subjective Style of Odysseus', *CQ*, 42 (1992), 1–11. As de Jong observes (at 10), Odysseus has been involved in the events he narrates; his involvement 'precludes a neutral style of presentation'.

(12. 59–85).[78] With pleasure in his own ingenuity he shares descriptions of tools, implements, and technical operations: whether the preparations for the blinding of the Kyklops (9. 319–30, 375–94);[79] or his protection of his companions against the Sirens' song (12. 173–80):

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κηροῖο μέγαν τροχὸν ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ
τυτθὰ διατμήξας χερσὶ στιβαρῇσι πίεζον.
αἶψα δ' ἰαίνετο κηρός, ἐπεὶ κέλετο μεγάλη ἲς
Ἠελίου τ' αὐγὴ Ὑπεριονίδαο ἄνακτος·
ἑξείης δ' ἑτάροισιν ἐπ' οὔατα πᾶσιν ἄλειψα.
οἱ δ' ἐν νηΐ μ' ἔδησαν ὁμοῦ χεῖράς τε πόδας τε
ὀρθὸν ἐν ἱστοπέδῃ, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ πείρατ' ἀνῆπτον·
αὐτοὶ δ' ἑζόμενοι πολιὴν ἅλα τύπτον ἐρετμοῖς.

Then I, taking a great wheel of wax, with the sharp bronze
cut a little piece off, and rubbed it together in my heavy
hands, and soon the wax grew softer, under the powerful
stress of the sun, and the heat and light of Hyperion's lordling.
One after another I stopped the ears of all my companions,
and they then bound me hand and foot in the fast ship, standing
upright against the mast with the ropes' ends lashed around it,
and sitting then to row they dashed their oars in the gray sea.

There is one tale which Odysseus tells in the *Odyssey*, however, which, for the sake of the larger story, must appear completely unrehearsed.[80] Odysseus tells this tale to his wife, when they are at last alone together. It is a story she knows: the story of how he constructed his marriage bed (23. 184–204). He tells this tale in shock and anger, when he hears Penelope give instructions that indicate that the bed has been loosened from its base. The story he tells is a man's tale: it is a first person tale (for example, *I* made it, 189;

[78] The times and the places may be inventions; but their inclusion lends authenticity to the story. Note that Telemachos' first person report of his travels, to Penelope, is equally detailed (17. 108–49).

[79] The technical nature of this operation is emphasized by the technical nature of the two similes: 384–6, 391–3.

[80] On Odysseus' surprise and anger and on the spontaneous nature of this tale, see Chapter 6; and S. Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the* Odyssey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 140–1; J. Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', in *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 129–61, at 157.

I finished it, 192; *I* cut away the foliage, 195; *I* lashed it, 201). It is a tale which demonstrates Odysseus' skill; and it demonstrates his cunning, of which he is inordinately proud (the construction of his chamber around the bole of the tree, 190–4).[81] To us the story is a technical narrative presented in technical language. To Penelope the story is a source of joy. She recognizes her husband in his self-assertive pride and his outrage. It will be the simple truth of his tale and her glimpse of an undisguised 'true' Odysseus that will persuade Penelope that her husband has returned.

Odysseus' Tales (2): The False Tales

Odysseus' false tales are each well-developed narratives (13. 256–86, 14. 193–359, 462–502, 17. 419–44, 19. 167–202, 221–48, 269–99, 24. 265–79, 303–14).[82] He tells the first of his stories to Athene while still clad in his Phaiakian finery; the next three in his beggar's guise; and his final tale, to Laertes, in his everyday, Odyssean, garb. Each tale is designed to establish a false identity for himself and, with a characteristic Odyssean touch, to present himself as someone who has made contact with the real Odysseus at some point of his travels.[83] The care with which these tales of false identity are presented, with conscientious inclusion of details of identity, of time and place, and of motive, and with information that evokes sympathy and understanding in his listeners, reveals an artful mind.[84] Odysseus can make his

[81] On the boast which underpins the tale of the bed, see Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition*, 140: 'a permanent achievement which cannot be challenged by any rival'.

[82] For recent literature on these tales, see F. Ahl and H. Roisman, *The* Odyssey *Re-Formed* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), ch. 8; Doherty, *Siren Songs*, 148–58; de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, 326–8.

[83] That is, Odysseus risks betraying himself simply by bringing the figure of Odysseus to the attention of his listeners.

[84] On identity, note that in the first false tale, at 13. 256–86, Odysseus places himself in Crete; he explains why he has left Crete, having killed the son of Idomeneus, whom he names; he meets Phoinikians; he asks them to take him to Pylos, or Elis. He gives details and accounts of motivations. In his second tale, told to Eumaios (14. 193–359), he again gives details of birth, the reasons for travelling; he includes the siege of Troy, and shapes a homeward journey as long (of course) as the homeward voyage of Odysseus. Here are copious details of time and place. On the Cretan tales see also C. Trahman, 'Odysseus' Lies (*Odyssey*, Books 13–19)', *Phoenix*, 6 (1952), 31–43; A. Haft, 'Odysseus, Idomeneus and Meriones: The Cretan Lies of

stories appeal to men and women alike. He has learnt all there is to know about recipient-design.

These false tales all are set in a world of men, whether they be men on the battlefield, rulers and princes encountered in foreign lands, sailors, adventurers, or pirates. These are first person tales, in which the storyteller, Odysseus, is the protagonist, taking the role of a military man, the son of a slave woman, a rich man fallen on hard times, a prince, or a man of substance. On three occasions he casts himself as a man from Crete. For the most part these are tales of single-handed action (*I* struck him with the bronze-headed spear, 13. 267–8; *I* appointed nine ships, 14. 248; *I* provided abundant victims, 250–1; *I* went with him on his ship, 14. 298; *I* took him back to my house, 19. 194) and of achievement (I gathered together *much substance* from the men of Egypt, 14. 285–6; I lay down in his clothes, *happily*, 14. 501–2; and he showed me *all the possessions* gathered in by Odysseus, 19. 293; I gave him *seven talents* of well-wrought gold, 24. 274). But there are two points of special interest. The first is that the tales told to a male listener, for example, Eumaios (14. 192–359) and to a female listener, Penelope (19. 167–202, 221–48, 269–99), are quite different in subject-matter and presentation.[85] The tale to Eumaios is a story of hardship and action on the high sea and on land: Odysseus is proving himself to be a man.[86] The story told to Penelope is set in a world familiar to her: palace-society. It is a story which hinges on hospitality and the rituals of the home and the winning of generous gifts. Second, we notice that, although both tales are first person tales, the beggar casts himself differently in each one. In the tale for Eumaios he presents himself as the active protagonist. In the tale for Penelope he steps back to allow Odysseus (himself!) to take the limelight (at, for example, 19. 185–202). And he adjusts his

Odyssey 13–19', *CJ*, 79 (1983–4), 289–306. The cloak-story, at 14. 462–502, is an exception to this rule. This story is a generic Odyssean story. It could have taken place at any point of the Trojan campaign. The lack of precise information about setting allows us to see the story for what it is: a persuasive *ad hoc* invention. The beggar needs a cloak.

[85] This is not because the poet (or Odysseus) is reluctant to repeat himself, because he does. Note that the tale told to Laertes (24. 265–79, 303–14) reassuringly echoes in some respects the tale Odysseus has told Penelope in *Od.* 19.

[86] For a detailed account of the presentation of this tale, see Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*, 209–13.

presentation to a woman's preferences. Third, note that Odysseus responds to the gender of his addressee in a particular detail of presentation.[87] When Odysseus refers to Crete in his story to Eumaios he assumes that Eumaios too will know about the island (14. 199–200). This is the kind of shared geographical knowledge that men in the world of Homer can assume in each other. In his tale to Penelope the beggar feels that he must give more information.[88] He assumes that she, as a palace-bound woman, will have no knowledge of this island. So she is regaled with data of a geographical, economic, political, and social kind (19. 172–80):

> Κρήτη τις γαῖ' ἔστι, μέσῳ ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ,
> καλὴ καὶ πίειρα, περίρρυτος· ἐν δ' ἄνθρωποι
> πολλοί, ἀπειρέσιοι, καὶ ἐννήκοντα πόληες·
> ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα μεμιγμένη· ἐν μὲν Ἀχαιοί,
> ἐν δ' Ἐτεόκρητες μεγαλήτορες, ἐν δὲ Κύδωνες,
> Δωριέες τε τριχάϊκες δῖοί τε Πελασγοί·
> τῇσι δ' ἐνὶ Κνωσός, μεγάλη πόλις, ἔνθα τε Μίνως
> ἐννέωρος βασίλευε Διὸς μεγάλου ὀαριστής,
> πατρὸς ἐμοῖο πατήρ, μεγαθύμου Δευκαλίωνος.

> There is a land called Crete in the middle of the wine-blue water,
> a handsome country and fertile, seagirt, and there are many
> people in it, innumerable; there are ninety cities.
> Language with language mix there together. There are Achaians,
> there are great-hearted Eteokretans, there are Kydonians,
> and Dorians in three divisions, and noble Pelasgians;
> and there is Knossos, the great city, the place where Minos
> was king for nine-year periods, and conversed with great Zeus.
> He was father of my father, great-hearted Deukalion.

The dual identity of Odysseus/the beggar is manipulated in an amusing fashion in the cloak-tale of 14. 462–502. Here the beggar as protagonist tells how he left the Achaian camp on a reconnoitring exercise at some point during the Trojan campaign without his cloak. It was snowing; he was bitterly cold. At this point we believe

[87] On this point see Russo in J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano, and A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. iii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 83.

[88] At the same time Odysseus uses this information to establish the authenticity of his tale.

that the story will be a tale of miscalculation and failure. But in the beggar's case the tale will end well. It is Odysseus the wily who solves the problem. He now becomes the protagonist in the tale. Odysseus asks for a volunteer to run back to the ships with a message. Thoas puts aside his mantle and hurries back. Thus the 'beggar' in the story triumphs: he obtains a cloak for the night. Note that the beggar calls this a boastful tale (463): it is a tale in which he boasts of Odysseus' quick wits, in reality, his own. But the story is cast as the hero's struggle for survival (as a consequence of his incompetence) and his success against the odds.[89]

Although each of these tales is false it contains some truth. It is this blend of truth and falsehood which so unsettles his listeners, Eumaios and Penelope. As Homer remarks, even what is false begins to sound like the truth, when Odysseus speaks (*ἴσκε ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα*, he knew how to say many false things that were like true sayings, 19. 203). So Eumaios, at 14. 361–89, responds to the beggar's tale by trying to deny the truth of it; he tries to resist his persuasive lies. And, later, Penelope weeps (19. 204–9) and is all but persuaded (215–19) by the careful detail of the tale the beggar has told her (167–202). His careful portrait of the protagonist of his story, Odysseus, as an opportunistic and acquisitive hero and a man of cunning, rings true, as does his ability to shape his narrative to the experiences and aspirations of his listener, whether it be Eumaios or Penelope. On the one hand, Odysseus' tale of abduction by Thesprotian sailors (14. 334–47) responds to Eumaios' experiences as a small child when he is abducted by Phoinikian sailors (15. 415–84); and, on the other, his report of the admiration amongst the women of Crete for the finely woven clothing that she had woven for her husband years before appeals directly to Penelope as mistress-weaver (19. 232–5).

Penelope's Narratives

It is remarkable that we hear so little at first from Penelope, since she is to become an important character in the last sections of the

[89] On the narrator's incompetence, see Ahl and Roisman, *The* Odyssey *Re-Formed*, 180.

narrative. That she is given so few opportunities to tell her own story, or to tell any story at all, is significant. As a woman, of course, she is not given the same opportunities for self-presentation in the epic as a man.[90] Her stories, we must assume, are reserved for all-women's groups, in her own apartments.[91] Besides, Homer wants Penelope to remain something of a mystery for us. He describes the queen at first in terms of absence and failure. Her failure in her one strategic action, the trick of weaving the shroud (a story told three times in the course of the epic), indicates that she has been trapped; her constant laments for her husband show us her despair. That she spends so much of her time in her own quarters confirms this: her failure to appear in her own household and amongst the suitors suggests weakness. As a consequence it comes as a surprise to us that she rises to the occasion later in the tale.[92]

The queen tells two stories only in the whole of the *Odyssey*. One concerns her plans for remarriage. This story she tells at 18. 256–71 to the suitors. The other is the only sustained narrative that she tells (19. 129–61). It is her version of the web-story which Antinoös told earlier in the narrative.[93] This is a story, one feels, that she has been longing to tell to a dispassionate listener for some years now. And the beggar whom Eumaios has brought into the palace appears to be just such a person. She tells him that she and the house are overburdened with suitors. These men are trying to hasten her marriage. She has in the past resisted marriage through the only practical defence a women has, her skill in weaving. She tells the beggar how she set up her loom and addressed the suitors with

[90] Note that even on the evening of their reunion Penelope's account of the twenty years that she has spent apart from Odysseus is reduced to four lines of text (23. 302–5), whereas Odysseus' adventures in the wider world are allocated thirty-two lines (310–41).

[91] J. Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 68: women are happier when talking in less formal, more personal, contexts as opposed to public contexts.

[92] She rises to the occasion only when Odysseus is back in the house: it is their teamwork that will confound the suitors. On Penelope's cunning see, in particular, Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', 160–1.

[93] Antinoös, one of her suitors, tells this tale at 2. 87–110, using the same chunk of direct speech: 2. 96–102 = 19. 141–7 (cf. also 24. 131–7). The narrator has Penelope tell the story on this occasion for Odysseus' benefit, so that Odysseus may know of his wife's cunning.

false words (141–7) claiming that she had to weave a shroud for her father-in-law Laertes. She uses direct speech: this is an important announcement, in the storyworld (to the suitors) and in the story-realm (to the beggar). But although Penelope had devised a worthy plan, weaving by day and unpicking by night, she was betrayed, as we know, by her maids.[94] Note that Penelope's language at this point is not technical, even though she is describing her own craft. She tells us what we need to know and no more.[95] Her story, although a first person account, is not a triumphant narrative of achievement or of survival against the odds, such as we might hear from Odysseus, or Nestor. On the surface, it is a story of a scheme (*δόλους*, 137; *μῆτιν*, 158) aborted, and at its close Penelope evokes her sense of failure and frustration within the domestic sphere.[96] And yet there is more to the story, and to Penelope, than meets the eye. She may claim, as a woman would, that the story she tells is a tale of failure. But observe how Penelope, unlike other women narrators, places great emphasis in this tale on the passing of time (151–3): this is important to her story and to her characterization of herself as someone who by her wits could keep the suitors at bay. As she tells her story she is careful to let the beggar know that she is a woman of initiative, who can devise a ruse and sustain her deception, even though, in the longer term, she does not succeed. Thus Penelope schemes, even as she talks of a failed scheme. Behaviour of this kind, apparent self-effacement with the intention of subtle self-foregrounding, is not unknown in our own world. Georgakopoulou observes it, for example, in her female modern Greek speakers.[97]

[94] Note that at this point of the tale Penelope's version differs in presentation from that of Antinoös. She gives a more vivid account of the act of discovery (cf. 2. 106–9 with 19. 151–5). And, albeit in a phrase, she characterizes her maids, 'those careless hussies', 154. On Penelope's scheme see L. Slatkin, 'Composition by Theme and the Mêtis of the *Odyssey*', in S. Schein (ed.), *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretive Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 223–37, at 234–5.

[95] Unlike Odysseus, who is prepared to tell his story with much more technical detail (cf. the story of the blinding of the Cyclops, discussed above).

[96] Cf. the story of Antikleia (11. 197–203), on the reason for her death. Both stories take as their subjects failure and loss. Note that this story, like others told by women, shifts the focus from herself (although she is the protagonist) to her son (second person address is important here); and it emphasizes feelings rather than action.

[97] See Georgakopoulou, *Narrative Performances*, at 193; and see above.

There is an interesting sequel to this tale, which leads us to reflect on the different reasons why men and women tell stories and what men and women expect from the stories of others. When Penelope has completed her story, as she returns herself and her listener to the present, she puts a question to Odysseus (19. 162–3):

> *ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς μοι εἰπὲ τεὸν γένος, ὁππόθεν ἐσσί.*
> *οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ δρυός ἐσσι παλαιφάτου οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης.*
>
> But even so, tell me who you are, and the place where you come from.
> You were not born from any fabulous oak, or a boulder.

Having offered her unhappy story to the beggar she hopes that in return he will offer her a tale of personal misfortune from which she can draw consolation and with which she can empathize. This is the way that women like to talk. Their conversations are characterized by reciprocal storytelling, in which a subsequent story will 'mirror' the preceding tale.[98] It is through such talk that relationships are developed and maintained.[99] Penelope, having identified in the beggar someone like-minded, hopes that he will respond in similar vein. But note Odysseus' indignation at her questions (165–6):

> *ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω 'Οδυσῆος,*
> *οὐκέτ' ἀπολλήξεις τὸν ἐμὸν γόνον ἐξερέουσα;*
>
> O respected wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
> you will not stop asking me about my origin?

He protests at her insistence. Here is an interesting gender-based clash of expectation. Whereas Penelope is asking for Odysseus' history as an affiliative move, he interprets her questions as confrontational and coercive—as indeed point-blank questions often are.[100]

[98] See Coates, *Women Talk*, 32–6 and 56. One of Coates' informants describes her own and her friends' talk thus (at 56): 'we establish common themes and take it in turns to tell stories arising from these themes . . . which result in a sense of shared understanding'. For Coates' use of the term 'mirroring', see *Women Talk*, 62; *Men Talk*, 120. Note a further example of 'mirroring' in Menelaos and Helen's companion stories, below.

[99] See Holmes, *Women, Men and Politeness*, 38, on talk as a means of developing and maintaining a relationship.

[100] On the way in which men, in particular, use point-blank question directives to establish dominance in a relationship, see Chapter 8, and see J. Coates, 'Language,

Because he is not yet ready to confide his personal details he deflects the question brusquely.

The Exchange of Stories in Conversation

When Peisistratos and Telemachos call in to Sparta to make enquiries about Odysseus, they have three conversations with Helen and Menelaos. The first takes place on their arrival at the palace (4. 1–295). Within this conversation are two tales, one told by Helen and one by Menelaos. These stories have attracted a great deal of negative comment, reflecting on Helen's treachery and/or Menelaos' stupidity. I suggest that we read this episode with fresh eyes, considering the tales as a story-sequence in a conversational setting that is familiar to us all.

When Helen has added the drug heartsease to the wine which hosts and guests will drink, she leads the way in talk.[101] This is not the same Helen whom we saw in the *Iliad*. The pain she felt in Troy, as the wife of Paris, is now resolved. She is less fractious, more serene.[102] She entertains her guests with a story relevant to an earlier topic of conversation amongst them (4. 138–82): Odysseus. Acknowledging the presence of his son in her audience she tells a story about Odysseus—and herself (4. 239–64). The event she describes occurred during the siege of Troy, when Odysseus entered Troy in disguise on a fact-gathering mission. The story is of interest because it is not immediately clear who the protagonist is. Is it a tale which celebrates the nature of Odysseus, who conducted this single-handed expedition, who crept into the city (249), told Helen what the Achaians were intending (256), and struck down many Trojans before he returned (257–8)? Or is the protagonist Helen, who knew Odysseus,

Gender and Career', in S. Mills (ed.), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 13–30, at 16.

[101] On the 'unique precaution' of the drug, see R. Scodel, *Credible Impossibilities: Conventions and Strategies of Verisimilitude in Homer and Greek Tragedy* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1999), 74: it is intended to mark the significance of the stories that are to follow.

[102] On the deeply unhappy, self-abusing Helen of the *Iliad*, see M. Graver, 'Dog-Helen and Homeric Insult', *Classical Antiquity*, 14 (1995), 41–61.

even in disguise (*I* alone recognized him, 250), who questioned him (251), bathed him (252), conspired with him (253–5), and who reacted differently from all Trojan women, in that she did not mourn the dead whom Odysseus left behind (259–64)?[103] This, I suggest, is not a typical example of women's storytelling, in which the female protagonist gives up her place to the male actor in her story. Rather, we have an interesting departure from the norm: Helen, strong-willed and self-absorbed, has chosen a story about Odysseus which represents the hero's admirably suspicious and wily nature but which establishes *herself* as a match for the hero. The tale she tells allows her to insert herself into the action, to parade her own special powers, and to present herself as a confidante of Odysseus.[104] Helen has never been able, nor is she able now, to give up the central role in the stories she tells.

As soon as she finishes, Menelaos acknowledges her contribution and offers a story of his own (267–89), a companion tale to the one he has just heard. This is the story of how *Odysseus* was a match for Helen. As we have observed above, in our Western tradition the telling of a second story on the same theme is almost always intended as a collaborative gesture, a means of displaying mutual understanding and connectedness.[105] This is how the narrator intends us to read

[103] Cf. S. Goldhill, 'The Poet Hero: Language and Representation in the *Odyssey*', in *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1–68, at 62.

[104] Helen makes two points about herself: first, she asserts her changed loyalties by claiming that by this time she had repented of her desertion of her husband and her flight with Paris; and that she was now working for the Achaians—with none other than Odysseus: cf. L. Doherty, 'Sirens, Muses, and Female Narrators in the *Odyssey*', in B. Cohen (ed.), *The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer's* Odyssey (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 81–92, at 86. Second, she emphasizes her special powers of perception: she alone is able to see beyond Odysseus' disguise. Her point is that she is, in undercover work, his equal.

[105] Coates, *Men Talk*, 103–5. In Coates' corpus of men's talk stories in sequence occur in about 35 per cent of cases, compared with a 62 per cent rate for women (*Men Talk*, 116). Such story sequences indicate that men as well as women use language to show mutual understanding and connectedness. This observation leads me to question Doherty's claim that Helen's tale is 'undercut' by Menelaos' narrative—and that this is a general conversational pattern (*Siren Songs*, 22–3). And see also A. Georgakopoulou, 'Same Old Story? On the Interaction Dynamics of Shared Narratives', in U. Quasthoff and T. Becker (eds.), *Narrative Interaction* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), 223–41, at 239: shared stories are not always devices

Menelaos' tale. Contrary to what has been written in recent years about Menelaos' contribution to the conversation, I propose that Homer is showing us this couple, now reunited, 'doing' a version of togetherness.[106]

The story Menelaos tells is the story of Helen, the wooden horse, and the struggle of Odysseus to prevent the Achaians within from betraying themselves. Notice in the passage below (4. 266–74) Menelaos' commendation of Helen's tale (266) and his prolonged introductory remarks (267–70), which precede the developing story:

> *ναὶ δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα, γύναι, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.*
> *ἤδη μὲν πολέων ἐδάην βουλήν τε νόον τε*
> *ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων, πολλὴν δ' ἐπελήλυθα γαῖαν·*
> *ἀλλ' οὔ πω τοιοῦτον ἐγὼν ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν*
> *οἷον 'Οδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονος ἔσκε φίλον κῆρ.*
> *οἷον καὶ τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ*
> *ἵππῳ ἔνι ξεστῷ, ἵν' ἐνήμεθα πάντες ἄριστοι*
> *'Αργείων Τρώεσσι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέροντες.*
> *ἦλθες ἔπειτα σὺ κεῖσε·*

for the affirmation of solidarity. They may also be devices for contestation, argumentation, and negotiation. Following Coates, however, we must recognize that when a man in today's world completes a story sequence with a tale of his own it may well be a supportive act. We must allow for this possibility in our reading of Homer.

[106] For readings that conclude that Menelaos is critical of Helen through his story and its presentation, see, for example, de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey, 102; West, in A. Heubeck, S. West and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, vol. i (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 208–9; Winkler, 'Penelope's Cunning and Homer's', 140; Goldhill, 'The Poet Hero', 63; Doherty, *Siren Songs*, 22–3, 57–61, 132; 'Sirens, Muses, and Female Narrators', 86. I do not believe that Menelaos is criticizing Helen, or rebuking her, or undercutting her, or implying that she has lied. First of all, he congratulates Helen on her story (266); and second, he has chosen an everyday conversational strategy that generally indicates supportiveness: that is, he tells a story which complements that of Helen. If Menelaos were being critical of his wife, then his compliment at 266 is meaningless and his strategy in telling the story he tells is malicious. Menelaos has several weaknesses of character, but malice is not one of them. He is well-regarded by all the Achaian heroes, who treat him with affection as well as respect. See also N. Worman, 'The Voice Which is Not One: Helen's Verbal Disguises', in A. Lardinois and L. McClure (eds.), *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001) at 30–4, who judges that Menelaos' desire to throw Helen's story into question has been exaggerated by recent readers of the scene. And see Scodel, *Credible Impossibilities*, 76. Scodel makes the important point that the stories 'function less at the mimetic level and more thematically than most Homeric narrative: they are fables'.

> Yes, my wife, all this that you said is fair and orderly.
> In my time I have studied the wit and counsel of many
> men who were heroes, and I have been over much of the world, yet
> nowhere have I seen with my own eyes anyone like him,
> nor known an inward heart like the heart of enduring Odysseus.
> Here is the way that strong man acted and the way he endured
> action, inside the wooden horse, where we who were greatest
> of the Argives all were sitting and bringing death and destruction
> to the Trojans. Then you came there, Helen.

At first it seems that the story is a story entirely about Odysseus; but Menelaos mirrors Helen's story by drawing her into the action a little later, using emphatic second person narration (274). The story is set in a context that borders the battlefield and the home. The men inside the horse are conducting a military expedition. But the horse is by the city gates—and within the reach of Helen, who had guessed, or divined, that the horse may have concealed some of the Achaians. She tries to surprise them into betraying themselves by calling out their names in the voices of their wives. She almost succeeds. Menelaos now takes us inside the horse and describes a tense scene as Odysseus hauls his comrades back into their places and claps his hands over the mouth of one, to enforce silence (282–9). Thus we have a story that is directed to all members of the audience: to the young men, who will enjoy the story of quick thinking and courage in a dangerous situation; to Telemachos especially, because Odysseus is its hero; and to Helen, both because the story acknowledges and corresponds to her own and because this story too celebrates her mysteriously seductive powers.[107]

*

What have we discovered about gender differences in storytelling in the Homeric epics? First of all, in this world of epic action it is men who tell by far the most stories; and these stories are for the most part

[107] This is the only interpretation that I can offer of this scene that is consistent with the good-humoured (and possibly drug-induced) serenity of the telling. I can only conclude that Menelaos has left the past in the past and now (when all has turned out well) bears Helen no ill-will for her behaviour as Paris' wife. On Helen's changing loyalties see J. Kakridis, *Homer Revisited* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1971), 40–9, at 45 (on 'inconsistent Helen') and 49 (on the 'admirable balance' of the two stories).

tales of adventure and triumph or survival against all odds in a hostile environment. Second, the world in which men's stories are set is a man's world; women are peripheral. This is all as we would expect, given the themes and preoccupations of epic. But notice also that, third, men tell stories that are longer, often far longer. Status, age, and gender entitle men to speak at length. In this they may be encouraged by the women in their audience. Fourth, details of time and place and technical language are built into their tales. Fifth, men are good storytellers: they understand how to shape stories for different audiences, depending on the needs of their listeners. And they know how to use stories as an expression of solidarity, in doing friendship and togetherness.

Women, uncharacteristically, tell far fewer stories in the epics.[108] The stories they tell, however, are true to life in terms of what we know of most women's stories today: they are very rarely stories of achievement. Their stories also happen to be appropriate to the world which they inhabit: stories of failure, loss, and unhappiness. Women's stories are set in the home or in the context of family and friends. If women are the protagonists in their tales they rarely cast themselves as the heroes; there is nothing boastful about their stories. Helen is an exception. Her story stands in strong contrast to Antikleia's tale of failure and loss or even to Penelope's discreet self-promotion. Indeed, it is the presentation of their stories that reveals the extraordinary—and complex—characters of Helen and Penelope: Helen as a daughter of Zeus and Penelope as a worthy partner for Odysseus.[109] Women's tales, as we have noted, do not expand in the leisurely fashion of men's stories. As storytellers they are not preoccupied with contextualizing details of time and place; nor is their language a technical language. They are instead interested

[108] Coates suggests (see above) that in conversational contexts women tell more stories than do men; but this is the case only in all-women groups. But the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* represent talk in the public sphere more often than in the private. Since women even in our own world talk less in public it is not surprising that women in stories set in the world of Homer also (where the action takes place on the battlefield, or in the public rooms of the palace) did not speak out. Cf. Doherty, *Siren Songs*, 176–7.

[109] As Murnaghan says, Penelope 'threatens to usurp [Odysseus'] poem': on Penelope as an exception to the stereotype of Homeric women see Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition*, 124–5.

in character and in intimate aspects of human action and reaction. Finally, women, unlike men, do not appear to look for the kind of praise and admiration from their listeners that would prolong their telling. What they hope to hear from their listeners, to judge from Penelope's invitation to Odysseus, is a mirror-story, which shows that the point of their own tale has been taken and that there is mutual understanding in the story-circle.

Why have poets working in this tradition chosen to present men's and women's stories differently? It can only be because they have observed men and women telling stories in the world around them and have noticed that men and women have some different criteria for 'tellability' and some different habits of presentation. In their desire for authenticity, therefore, poets have recreated in the epics the different thematic choices that men and women would make, along with gender-preferred habits of presentation on the model of social interaction in the real world in which they lived their lives.[110] It is clear that men's stories for men in the everyday world have set the model for epic, with its ethos of action and achievement. The kinds of stories that women tell, on the other hand, have a role in epic only insofar as they act as a foil: their stories throw the physicality of the hero into relief against the more passive role that they themselves have been assigned, in the home and with the family.

[110] It is worth emphasizing here that many of the criteria for men's and women's storytelling are the same (such as the requirement that the story have a point; or the need for structure). It is only in a limited number of aspects (some aspects of content and of presentation) that the criteria differ.

Conclusion

What can we say now about the models for and composition of character-text in the Homeric epics? On the basis of the ten individual studies in this volume, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions about how a poet in an oral culture may have formulated and generated the substantial stretches of speech that we encounter in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.*

MEMORY AND DISCOURSE

My discussion in the early chapters of Part I examines the structure of two speech acts familiar to us from the epics. Here I demonstrate that these Homeric speech acts, rebukes, and refusals of invitations, appear to be composed according to script. That is, the expression of a rebuke in Homer always follows a particular sequence; a refusal of an invitation likewise is regularly expressed as a fixed set of moves. I have used the term 'format' to describe these verbal scripts. The evidence of such formats points to an efficient system of memory-storage, which allows the poet to express a rebuke, or decline an invitation, without composing these forms afresh each time he wishes to use them. Furthermore, we observe structural links between the formats of those Homeric speech acts and the formats of the same speech acts in our own English-speaking cultures today. The implication of this is not that a tradition of Homeric speech acts has survived into our own world. Rather it is, first, that people across many cultures, even quite diverse communities, address certain verbal challenges in exactly the same way. Second, and more importantly, if what we recognize as the language of our own everyday world finds a parallel in Homer's character-text we can argue that Homer and the poets of his tradition may have based their representations of certain speech acts on the discourse of the world around them.

The evidence of the speech acts analysed here is in itself strong but, in that I have examined two speech acts only, limited. I have therefore

turned, in later chapters of Part I, to another form of discourse in Homer. An analysis of the forms of the many questions posed in the epics (and the presentation of answers to these questions) gives further support for the claim that we can hear echoes of the everyday talk of Homer's own time in the speech forms that we find in his poems. I have documented a number of observable regularities in Homer's questions (and their answers)—a high proportion of exemplary question and answer adjacency pairs, the almost regular use of explanatory material, a strong preference for question-strings, and, in the second pair part, a preference also for responding first to the last of the questions posed. Certainly, from the frequency with which Homer makes these same choices we must conclude that he has stylized his presentation of questions and answers for the purposes of composition in performance. This is an aspect of his 'special' speech, which has been developed over generations to facilitate composition even as it gives pleasure to the audience through its regularities. On the other hand, we can find parallels for each of these discourse patterns in everyday talk in English-speaking cultures; and we have data that suggest that similar discourse habits were familiar in Classical Athens. Our evidence again points to a reflection of the speech habits of every day, shaped as they are by social factors, such as co-operativeness, as well as cognitive factors: in particular, our concern to reduce the burden on short-term memory. To emphasize the connection between these two clusters of forces, the social and the cognitive, and to effect a transition to Part II, I have studied in Chapter 5 the asking of questions as social interaction. Here I examine how the differing goals of speakers are revealed in the questions they ask. We observe, in this small study, how social relationships shape our talk and how our knowledge of social hierarchies and power-relations guides our interpretation of the talk of others. This then leads us to the question of gender.

DISCOURSE AND GENDER

Women's speech in Homer has not been as thoroughly studied as it has in other Ancient Greek literary genres. Part II of this volume

studies a number of features of conversational discourse, both men's and women's, to determine if there are differences between the talk of men and women in the oral tradition represented by Homer; and, if this is the case, to speculate about the models for those different representations. I am asking whether there were differences in the speech of men and women in Homer's own world; whether Homer himself observed these differences; and whether he represented them in the discourse of the men and women to whom he gives speaking roles in his tale. A study of the speech preferences and speech strategies of men and women has naturally thrown light on their needs, their desires, and their interactions with others. A by-product of this study, therefore, has been a number of new readings of critical scenes in the epics.[1]

Working from the principle that gender-based differences are more likely to be apparent in language use rather than in elements of language structure, my strategy in Part II has been to examine men's and women's speech from a number of perspectives suggested to me by my reading of current sociolinguistic literature. This has led me to examine men's and women's distinctive preferences for certain classes of speech act; men's preferences, in public talk, for certain so-called dominant conversational strategies—information-questions, directives, and interruptions; and, to turn to larger units of talk, men's and women's different styles of storytelling and the different stories they tell, especially in all-male and all-female groups. It has been argued in contemporary sociolinguistic literature that men's and women's talk may be distinguished in respect of each of these three broad groups of features. I have examined the epics in these same terms and have presented my conclusions on each one. Now it is time to draw them together.

From the selection which I have made, of rebukes and protests, we see that, with a few significant exceptions, Homer is consistent in attributing rebukes to his male speakers and protests to his female speakers. Through these two speech acts, at least, the poet depicts the asymmetry that we often observe in our own society. If we look now to competitive speech strategies, such as information-questions,

[1] I do not claim thoroughgoing originality here. I also offer a number of readings that support the interpretations of scholars before me.

which are said to characterize men's speaking styles in the public domain in our own world, we find that it is possible to distinguish the questions asked by men from those asked by women. Male speakers in the *Iliad* use information-questions for exactly the same coercive ends that are observed in men's speaking styles in the public domain today: this is a competitive, status-aware mode of discourse. Women ask information-questions; but the information they seek is not as important to them as is the connection that is established between them and their addressees. Women ask their questions for affective rather than competitive purposes.

Whereas men's preference for information-questions in Homer is consistent with what we observe today, we do not find the same distinct asymmetry in the second of these three strategies of dominance, the use of directives. Rather, Homer shows his women using as many bald directives as his men, whether they address gods or fellow-mortals. The directive is the form selected by speakers, both men and women, when there is some urgency in their request or when they wish there to be no ambiguity about what they are asking. Whereas in our own world women are said to be more likely to use mitigated forms when making a request or issuing a directive, in order to respect their addressees' psycho-social needs, in Homer's world (and also, it seems, in the tragedies of Classical Athens) they prefer the directness of directives. How then, in Homer's world, are power-relationships indicated when directives are being issued? Dominance or politeness—whether scorn, respect, or affection—are indicated through the range of available address-terms and through non-verbal behaviour, but not through the avoidance of or use of a bare imperative. What emerges from our study of directives, however, is that there is a preference for elaborated requests in young people who are obliged to ask an older male—as opposed to an older woman—to do something for them. This appears to be the only circumstance in which we regularly find mitigated forms. Age-relationships *within* gender-relationships appear to be critical.

The third of this cluster of conversational strategies is interruption, which, in our own world, may be either a disruptive or a sympathetic strategy. Interruption is portrayed rarely in Homer and is linked with exceptional circumstances and exceptional characters. In Homer's *Iliad* interruption is a form of competitive behaviour, along with

rebukes and information-questions. It is used by males as a means of seizing the floor. In the *Odyssey*, however, interruption is shown in a different, and more complex, light. It may be used as a sympathetic move, as a devious move, or it may mark a moment of desperation. In this last circumstance it is used, remarkably, by a woman. But the speaker, Penelope, does not want to seize the floor; she simply wants to block out, for her own sake, the song that the singer has chosen to sing. For Penelope, in her home on Ithaka, interruption is not competitive. Homer has shown us both the disruptive and the sympathetic aspects of interruption, conscientiously reserving disruptive manifestations for the competitive world of men in the *Iliad* and allowing us to observe its sympathetic and, at least, its less overtly competitive aspects in the *Odyssey.*

Finally we consider larger units of talk, stories. We observe that in the epics, as in our own world, it is men who tell more stories than women; their stories are tales of adventure and triumph or of survival against the odds in a harsh and hostile world. Their stories are long. Status and gender entitle men to speak at much greater length than do women. The stories that men tell are set outdoors, in a man's world; women are peripheral. By contrast women's stories in the epics—stories appropriate to their circumstances, of loss, failure, and unhappiness—are set, as are stories told by women in our own world, in the home, in the context of family and friends. The stories of men include details of time and place; their language is technical. Women, by contrast, are interested in character and motivation. And they do not seek the praise that men seek for their tales of achievement; rather, women look for sympathy and understanding. This may take the form of a mirror-story, a story told by someone else in the story-circle which shows that the point of the original story has been taken. In respect of storytelling too, the poet has differentiated his male voices from those of his women.

There is, however, an exception to the 'rule', just as there are exceptions in our own world. Helen's story of achievement in the *Odyssey*, of how she was a match for Odysseus, stands in vivid contrast with the stories of other women of the epics—Andromache's in particular. But this, I argue, is not inconsistency on Homer's part. He represents Helen as he does in recognition of her unusual place in the epic world—and to mark her out as an exceptional woman.

HOMER'S MODELS

What might Homer's—and his peers'—models have been? The obvious model, for its economy, in cognitive terms, is the speech of the people around him. This is what other poets of his tradition have heard and used in their lifetimes; it is what he has heard throughout his life and it is what he uses in everyday talk. And so, as he sings, he composes on the basis of what he knows. As he prepares for performance the poet does not have to learn this material: it is already stored in memory. The weight of evidence, in the presence in the poems of familiar speech forms and familiar speech preferences and familiar speech strategies, suggests that this is the case. And, to turn, finally, to the audience and to our needs, if we are to comprehend what we hear and if we are to be persuaded by it, it must be recognizable to us. So for this reason, too, the poet reproduces the voices of every day in the questions and responses, the instructions, interruptions, stories, refusals of invitations, and rebukes and protests that he attributes to his characters. All these units of speech are expressed through familiar, although stylized, formats that exhibit a pleasing regularity; and the voice of each speaker is authentic, as far as we can judge, in respect to his or her age, status, and gender.[2] As Aristotle says, *ἐστι μιμητὴς ὁ ποιητής*.[3]

[2] We recognize, however, that all these utterances, though familiar in usage, structure, and form are expressed in a language that is at times peculiar to epic alone.

[3] Aristotle, *Po.* 1460b (the poet is an imitator).

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