# Recognizing Odysseus, reading Penelope: the *anagnōrisis* in the 23rd book of the *Odyssey*

Bruno Currie

Oriel College Oxford
E-mail: bruno.currie@oriel.ox.ac.uk

## Abstract

The article argues that Penelope recognizes Odysseus at *Odyssey* 23.32–33, not, as is usually held, at 205–06. Recognition is here analysed as a multi-componential process, in which Penelope's coming to know Odysseus' identity must be distinguished from her letting on that she knows, and in which her recognition of the man before her as her long-lost husband does not automatically entail the immediate rekindling of all the old emotions. The narrative of *Odyssey* 23.1–230 is shown to be interested in tracing Penelope's progression through the various components of recognition (knowledge, acknowledgement, emotional reconnection). The article explores the reasons why Penelope may consent to full reunion with Odysseus a good deal later than she has actually recognized him. Among these reasons, as well as the need for emotional attunement between Odysseus and Penelope, is Penelope's need to 'manage face' *vis-à-vis* Eurycleia, Telemachus and Odysseus. It is argued, further, that the narrative of the *Odyssey* characteristically requires us to read the minds of its characters, above all Penelope in book 23. A mind-reading approach to the poem is justified in principle and grounded in a detailed reading of *Odyssey* 23.1–230. The wider interpretative implications for the poetics of the poem as whole are also explored.

**Keywords:** *Odyssey*; recognition; mind-reading (reading literary minds); characterization; management of face

In memory of Jasper Griffin

*Anagnorisis*

> The Goddess knew, of course. She rolled her eyes
> As he began a quick, impromptu chat
> About himself. 'Come on now, save the lies,
> My clever friend. I know you.' That was that.
> The humans needed more. The cautious Prince
> Was coaxed into belief; the Queen was led
> To share the lead, articulating hints
> About the central fixture of their bed.
> The aged Nurse said nothing, only knelt
> Before the tub and searched his ragged hide
> With her wise fingers: through the wound she felt
> The child beneath. And all the while, outside,
> Close to the gates, lay Argus – who alone
> (Besides the deathless gods) had simply known.

Julia Griffin

## I. Introduction

The reunion of Odysseus and Penelope at *Odyssey* 23.1–230, though the acknowledged climax of the poem, is not straightforward to interpret.[1] The interpretation advocated here is unorthodox, but not unprecedented.[2] The contention is that Penelope is to be understood as recognizing Odysseus early in the scene: certainly at some point before lines 85–87, probably in lines 32–33. This differs from the *communis opinio* that Penelope recognizes Odysseus only at the end of this scene, in lines 205–06.[3] It also differs from the 'early recognition' thesis, which holds that she recognizes him, consciously or subconsciously, much earlier, usually in the 19th book.[4] This is not just a narrow point about the precise timing of the recognition or even about the interpretation of one climactic scene. The nature of recognition in the poem and in a sense the whole nature of the poem itself are at stake. The burden of the argument will rest on the detailed exegesis of the progressive stages of the reunion in book 23, but the argument also depends on positions on two bigger issues. First, on a particular understanding of how recognition works in the *Odyssey*. Second, on the requirement for the narratee to read the minds of characters in the poem. Thus the article is prefaced with some general remarks on recognition (section II) and mind-reading (section III). The analysis of *Odyssey* 23.1–230 (sections IV–VII) is followed by a corroborative analysis of Telemachus' recognition by Menelaus and Helen in book 4 (section VIII). Finally, a conclusion (section IX) sets the analysis in wider perspectives.

## II. Recognition in the *Odyssey*

Recognition, in life and in literature, is complex.[5] Homeric (or, better, Odyssean)[6] recognition has frequently been analysed as a type-scene with standard constituent parts.[7] However, for our purposes a quite different anatomy of recognition is required, along more basic conceptual lines, as follows.

(1) Recognition may be **conscious** or **unconscious**. For some scholars, Penelope's recognition of Odysseus proceeds first on an unconscious, then on a conscious level.[8] However that may be, the present discussion is concerned with recognition only as it is played out on a fully conscious level in the 23rd book.

(2) Purely conscious recognition may be played out both **inwardly** and **outwardly**. The distinction intended here is reflected in the two senses of the English verb 'recognize': 'to *perceive* someone to be the same as someone previously known' (in Penelope's case, the beggar to be Odysseus), as opposed to 'to *acknowledge* or *accept* someone as or to be something' (the beggar as her beloved husband).[9] This particular 'inward-outward' distinction is not to be confused with the

---

[1] Silk (2004) 38 'the great romantic climax of the poem'; *cf.* Lowe (2000) 142 'zenith of emotion'; Beck (2005) 92 'This climactic conversation, for many the highlight of the whole poem…'.

[2] See especially Ahl and Roisman (1996), for partial anticipations.

[3] For the *communis opinio*, see, for example, Jones (1988) 211; Silk (2004) 38; Reece (2011) 105; Saïd (2011) 215–17; Rutherford (2013) 90.

[4] For conscious early recognition (compare already Sen. *Ep.* 88.8), see Harsh (1950); Brann (2002) 274, 278; Vlahos (2011). For subconscious early recognition, see Amory (1963); Austin (1975) 205–06, 226, 231–36; Russo (1982); Winkler (1990) 150–51, 155. For criticism, see Emlyn-Jones (1998) 127–30; Louden (2011); Reece (2011); Saïd (2011) 287–88.

[5] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 152: 'Recognition is a complex process involving several phases of reaction'.

[6] Recognition scenes are restricted to the *Odyssey*: Gainsford (2003) 41.

[7] Emlyn-Jones (1998) 131–32; Gainsford (2001) 4–6, (2003); De Jong (2001a) 386–87; Kelly (2012) 8.

[8] Especially Amory (1963) 117; Russo (1982). *Cf.* above, n.4.

[9] Respectively, *OED s.v.* 'recognize' 5.a. and 2.c. (emphasis added).

'Cartesian assumption' that adherents of theory of mind (see below, section III) are taxed with making, 'that one's mind is "internal" and private, and thus opaque or invisible to others'.[10] The present distinction does not pertain to the accessibility or otherwise of others' minds in general, and does not amount to a denial of the embodiment or the extension of the mind (see further section III). The point is the trivially true one that it is possible, when one chooses, to hide one's thoughts and feelings.[11] The outward dimension to recognizing is important to our scene.[12] In many cases, including with Laertes' recognition of Odysseus (24.345–47), there is no gap between recognizing and letting on that one has recognized.[13] There is, however, with Penelope. As, in a contemporary context, a woman may be able to decide for herself to take a man as her husband, but still require that 'decision' to be played out in practice according to a particular script of her liking (say, with genuflection, production of an acceptable ring, etc.), so too can Penelope be prepared to say to herself, 'this man is my husband', but not yet be prepared to say this to his face or to acknowledge it in the presence of others. This indeed seems to be Odysseus' diagnosis of the situation, when he comments, 'for the moment,[14] because I am filthy and am attired in mean clothes on my body, she slights me and *does not yet admit that I am he*' (115–16). 'Slights me' (ἀτιμάζει με) pertains to outward acknowledgement rather than inward recognition; it implies the deliberate withholding of respect or attentions that one knows someone is entitled to. (Odysseus, however, misdiagnoses the respect in which the recognition script is deficient: see section VII.)

(3) Recognition on Aristotle's etymologizing definition of ἀναγνώρισις involves a progression from ignorance (ἄγνοια) to knowledge (γνῶσις) (*Poet.* 1452a29–31). Despite the binarity of this formulation (ignorance = 0, knowledge = 1), characters involved in literary recognitions frequently progress along a graduated scale from **disbelief** to **belief**. Different characters may progress at different speeds along the scale,[15] and the speed and manner in which they do so may be revelatory of character. 'Signs' or 'proofs' (σήματα) which are meant to trigger belief, and which may succeed in so doing with some characters, may fail to do so with others or may even entrench disbelief: the σήματα which convince Aeschylus' Electra are dismissed *a priori* by Euripides'. On the standard view of the recognition in *Odyssey* book 23, 'prudent Penelope' is supposed to require particularly stringent standards of proof, and to move from less than complete certainty to complete certainty by the end of the scene.[16] However, for Penelope (and, to a lesser extent, Laertes), it may be less about bolstering belief than about establishing the proper feelings, as the next paragraph will try to make clearer.

(4) Recognition (better: reunion) may revolve around a person's not merely **knowing** someone's identity, but more particularly their **feeling** in a certain way about the person whose identity becomes known to them.[17] The idea has something in common with Aristotle's account of virtuous action, in which 'knowing counts for little

---

[10] Quotation from Colombetti (2014) 175. *Cf.* Zahavi (2007) 38; Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 468; Herman (2011a) 8–9, (2011b) 266–67; Grethlein (2015) 260.

[11] For example, Colombetti (2014) 177.

[12] Compare Ahl and Roisman (1996) 152, *cf.* 179–81.

[13] On the reunion of Laertes and Odysseus, see Currie (2022).

[14] The sense of 115 νῦν δ' is indicated by 114 τάχα ('presently') and 116 οὔ πω ('not yet').

[15] Heitman (2005) 94–95.

[16] See especially Zerba (2009) 313–16. *Cf.* Emlyn-Jones (1998) 134; Heubeck (1992) 323–24, 332–33; De Jong (2009) 80; Foley (1999) 243; Saïd (2011) 306–07; West (2014) 291.

[17] Compare Wilson (2006) 279.

or nothing' (*Eth. Nic.* 1105b2–3) and where greater importance attaches to the agent's possession of the requisite settled ethical disposition. In fact, Aristotle's definition of (tragic) recognition in the *Poetics*, cited in the previous paragraph, seems to envisage a role for emotions over and above the change from ignorance to knowledge, for he extends the definition as follows: 'recognition is a change from ignorance to knowledge *conducing to amity or enmity*' (ἢ εἰς φιλίαν ἢ εἰς ἔχθραν, 1452a31).[18] Although the domains of believing and feeling are 'mutually porous to a significant … degree',[19] they may still proceed at different tempos. The requisite feelings should not be assumed to be automatically triggered in either Penelope or Laertes by the knowledge that the person before them is Odysseus. Penelope can feel one form of joy at the early revelation that Odysseus has returned and killed all the Suitors (lines 32–33: see section IV), another, different, form of joy (more pertinent to the 'owning' of Odysseus as her husband) at the later demonstration that their love for one another is still entire (lines 205–08, 239–40: see section VII). In this process, 'recognition' is a less helpful term than 'reunion'. The scene of reunion acts out the restoration of an emotional bond, the resumption of an interrupted relationship. By the end of the scene, the pair must have not merely recognized each other, they must have 'found' each other (compare Penelope at 108–09: 'we two shall recognize each other …').[20] Recognition here is explicitly reciprocal, although there was never a question of mutual ignorance of each other's identity. It is a question, rather, of recognizing in the person before them the husband/wife as they knew them 20 years ago. Hence, too, the force of Penelope's comment: 'I know all too well what you were like when you set sail from Ithaca' (175–76).[21] Recognition here entails (re-)engaging the emotions appropriate to the relationship.[22] This may also be relevant to the recognition with Laertes.[23] Cruel and gratuitous as it may seem, Odysseus' lie enables him prior to the revelation of his identity to evince quasi-filial concern for Laertes' well-being (24.244–55) and enables father and son to demonstrate what each means emotionally to the other (24.315–19).[24] This point overlaps with the following.

(5) Recognition takes place between **persons**: it is both of a person and by a person. Thus questions of personhood (personal identity) are implicated in recognitions.[25] For Penelope to recognize the man before her as 'Odysseus son of Laertes' is a different matter from her recognizing him as 'the man I once loved 20 years ago'.[26] Persons may change.[27] Penelope is not only faithful physically to Odysseus, she is also faithful emotionally to the man she loved back then; and this fidelity itself can, paradoxically, become an obstacle to reunion. Penelope cannot simply transfer her emotions to that man 20 years on without knowing (better:

---

[18] Belfiore (1992) 153–60 plausibly unpacks Aristotle's typically terse formulation.

[19] Cave (2016) 14.

[20] *Cf.* Belfiore (1992) 158–59, on the recognition between Orestes and Electra at Aesch. *Cho.* 16–245.

[21] Vlahos (2011) 61–63.

[22] Emlyn-Jones (1998) 133: 'After so long a separation, husband and wife take time to discover an effective means of recognition on an appropriate level; the postponement here has to do with feelings and relationships and is acutely and movingly portrayed'.

[23] See Nünlist (2015) 9–10 (on the reunion with Laertes) and 12, 14 (on the reunion with Penelope).

[24] See Currie (2022).

[25] Wilson (2006) 279.

[26] Heitman (2005) 96–97.

[27] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 156.

knowing and feeling: above, section II (4)) that he is the same person.[28] In her speech at 174–80 Penelope explicitly acknowledges that the man before her is Odysseus: 'I know full well what *you* were like when you left Ithaca' (175–76), 'the bedroom that *he himself* made' (178). The referent of both pronouns is the man before her, whom she thus identifies with Odysseus.[29] At the same time, in ordering that the bed be taken out of the bedroom and made up for him outside (177–80), she signals that the emotional intimacy that pertained to Odysseus *as he was then* is not straightforwardly applicable to Odysseus *as he is now*. Penelope has previously intimated that she is physically changed since Odysseus' departure (18.251–53 = 19.124–26). Recognition *qua* reunion will hinge on the question of whether she as well as Odysseus are the same persons emotionally.[30] Happily, it turns out that they are. Odysseus' concern whether the λέχος is still ἔμπεδον, 'steadfast, constant' (203), is answered in the affirmative, not just for λέχος as the physical 'bed', but also for λέχος as 'marriage', the emotional bond between the two of them (below, section VII).[31]

(6)  The cooperation between knowing and feeling (above, section II (4)) in recognition relates to an ambiguity in the way in which **signs (σήματα)** may function. When it is primarily a question of *knowing*, a σῆμα functions as a 'proof' of someone's identity, confirming belief (compare 21.217 ∼ 23.73; 24.229; 19.250 = 23.206 ∼ 24.346; 23.110; 23.225). When it is primarily a matter of *feeling* in the appropriate way, a σῆμα may encapsulate something unique to the relationship between two persons, and so serve to restore the emotional bond. Odysseus' scar is a fully sufficient proof of his identity, hardly inferior to modern fingerprinting or DNA testing.[32] Yet with Penelope and Laertes in books 23 and 24 it is supplemented with other σήματα. Penelope merely hears of the scar from Eurycleia, and shows no interest in seeing it for herself (there is no suggestion, however, that she distrusts it as a proof of identity).[33] With Laertes, the scar is likewise displayed, but quickly passed over. Crucial instead are, respectively, Odysseus and Penelope's bed and the trees in Laertes' orchard.[34] The emphasis here is on σήματα that are private, personal to the persons concerned (109–10, 225–27). There is an instructive contrast to be seen here with the modern Greek ballad, where the private σῆμα (the husband's knowledge of the birthmark on the wife's breasts) is the only one that conclusively proves the identity of the husband (or, rather, it humorously calls the wife's bluff by obliging her to admit to infidelity if she continues to aver that someone other than her husband could have come by this knowledge).[35] In the *Odyssey*, the private σήματα function differently; they do not deliver the decisive proof of identity that the non-private sign(s) failed to do. The σῆμα of the scar would have

---

[28] Danek (1998) 442: 'Penelope [will] gefühlsmäßig davon überzeugt werden …, daß der ihr Gegenübersitzende tatsächlich der ihr vertraute Odysseus von seinerzeit ist'. *Cf.* Brann (2002) 288–89; Amory (1963) 120.

[29] Amory (1963) 119; Ahl and Roisman (1996) 266; *cf.* West (2014) 293.

[30] Murnaghan (1994) 92: 'Penelope identifies herself with a figure … who has been permanently changed by her grief into something other than the woman she once was'.

[31] Zeitlin (1995) 125–27, 130, 137.

[32] *Pace*, for example, Heitman (2005) 94–95. It is true (presumably) that a god could replicate the scar (Beßlich (1966) 19 and n.16). But a god who was bent on deceit could equally know the 'secret' of the bed (Vlahos (2011) 65). And it is highly unlikely that Penelope, Descartes-like, is looking for a guarantee of Odysseus' identity that is proof against a *deus deceptor*; see below, section VII.

[33] Vlahos (2011) 56: 'Her failure to inquire about the scar is further indication that, to her, identity is not an issue'.

[34] See Currie (2022) 146.

[35] Hansen (2002) 209. The 'identity test' is a standard motif in the 'Homecoming Husband' folk tale (ATU 974; Hansen (2002) 209–10.

delivered even for Penelope (as for Laertes) sufficient proof of Odysseus' identity; sufficient, that is, for Penelope to know who he is, though not automatically sufficient for her to feel all that a wife should feel for her husband. Neither is the sighting of the scar passed over as insufficient proof of identity nor is knowledge of the construction of the bed greeted as sufficient proof of identity (which it is not: the transferability of knowledge of personal details is a topos in stories of imposture).[36] We have shifted from a σῆμα that conduces to recognition (in the sense of knowing who someone is) to one that conduces to reunion (in the sense of coming to feel, mutually, in the way that is appropriate to the relationship). The poem explores the role of the σῆμα as we progress from recognitions without any σῆμα (Telemachus, 16.213–14; Argus, 17.301–04) to those with a σῆμα as a proof of identity (Eurycleia, 18.392–93; Eumaeus and Philoetius, 21.221–24) to those with a σῆμα as a means of rekindling a relationship on a deep emotional level (Penelope, 23.181–230; Laertes, 24.327–48). With Penelope and Laertes, recognition is about restoring an intense emotional bond, as it was not with the loyal retainers Eurycleia, Eumaeus and Philoetius, or with the son Telemachus who had no prior emotional relationship with his father.[37]

(7)  The distinction between knowing a person's identity and feeling about them in the requisite way (section II (4)) is also played out in different senses in which the verbs **πειρᾶσθαι/πειράζειν** and **πείθειν** can be used. When it is a matter of acquiring secure knowledge, πειρᾶσθαι means **'test'** (the identity of someone).[38] When it is a matter of rekindling the appropriate emotions, πειρᾶσθαι means **'provoke'** (a particular emotional or behavioural reaction). Similarly, πείθειν with a personal object may mean to bring someone round to a particular **belief** or to bring them round to a particular **attitude** or course of **behaviour**.[39] These distinctions have the potential to help us with an apparent paradox. On the one hand, during the sequence Penelope has already both recognized that the 'beggar' is her husband (86, 181: see section V) and openly acknowledged him (175–76, 178: see section II (5)). On the other hand, at the very end of the scene she still needs 'persuading' (230 πείθεις δή μευ θυμόν) and only now decisively 'recognizes the signs' (206, 225). This paradox is resoluble if these are taken to pertain not simply to Penelope's knowing who Odysseus is, but to the rekindling of the appropriate emotions in Penelope, in response to the display of those emotions in Odysseus (section II (4)).

In summary, then, rather than a simple change on Penelope's part from ignorance to knowledge or from disbelief to belief, what we see in the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope is a progression from her ignorance/disbelief about the identity of the 'beggar' (11–24) to her knowledge/belief that the beggar is Odysseus (85–87), to her open acknowledgement of

---

[36] In the modern Greek folk tale, the wife who supposedly fears imposture reasons that a neighbour could have passed on to an impostor knowledge of the garden and other domestic arrangements. In 16th-century France, Arnaud du Tilh impersonated Martin Guerre after learning from the latter's friends and neighbours about his life and 'domestic details' (Davis (1983) 39); at his trial, his knowledge of 'events in the house of Martin Guerre' was even superior to that of the real Martin Guerre (Davis (1983) 84). In the film *Sommersby* (Jon Amiel, 1993), inspired by the Martin Guerre story, the impostor (Horace Townsend) had shared a prison cell with the person he impersonated (Jack Sommersby); in the film *There Will be Blood* (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2007), the impostor has read the journal of the person whose identity he assumes.

[37] On Telemachus' recognition of Odysseus, see Wright (2018).

[38] Compare Rutherford (1986) 158 and n.68; De Jong (2001a) 332.

[39] For πείθειν with a personal object in the latter sense, *cf.*, for example, *Il.* 9.315. When πείθειν is used with an infinitive, the infinite may be either 'declarative' (= 'to convince someone that something is the case') or 'dynamic' (= 'to persuade someone to do something'): van Emde Boas et al. (2019) 598.

that knowledge (175, 178), to, finally, her both feeling the requisite emotions and giving these their proper physical and verbal expression (207–09). How this is played out in detail in the text will be illustrated in sections IV–VII below. First, however, we must address the question of reading characters' minds in the *Odyssey*.

## III. Reading characters' minds in the *Odyssey*

Characters in the *Odyssey* frequently read each other's minds, with greater or lesser success. An explicit instance of felicitous mind-reading concerns Alcinous and Nausicaa at the beginning of book six. Here is *Od.* 6.66–67:[40]

> ὣς ἔφατ'· αἴδετο γὰρ θαλερὸν γάμον ἐξονομῆναι
> πατρὶ φίλῳ· ὁ δὲ πάντα νόει καὶ ἀμείβετο μύθῳ.

> So she spoke; for she was embarrassed to mention outright lusty marriage
> to her father; but he sensed it all, and answered as follows.

The ability to read minds (to intuit a character's mind state, where this is not revealed by what they or the narrator explicitly says about them) is a ubiquitous requirement of the characters, and consequently of the narratee, of the *Odyssey*.

Jasper Griffin was an early advocate of such mind-reading approaches to Homer:

> the *Odyssey* contains passages in which the poet explicitly tells us of the psychology which we are to see underlying the words and acts of characters, and … other passages, where this is not made explicit, come so close to them in nature that we can have no reasonable doubt that there, too, the instinctive response of the audience, to interpret the passage in the light of the psychology of human beings, is sound. We need not fear that there is an objection in principle to doing this in the Homeric poems.[41]

Objections in principle were, naturally, raised both before and after Griffin's demonstration.[42] One area of disagreement concerns the extent to which an approach associated especially with the modern novel is applicable to the *Odyssey*.[43] But principled objections to this critical approach are far from being limited to oral-derived poetry. The criticism of written literature has equally seen 'mounting reservations about the feasibility of analysing literary constructs ("characters", "authors") as if they were human beings in an interactive setting'.[44] Cognitive approaches to literature pursued under the banner of 'theory of mind' or 'mind-reading' aim to justify doing just this. Lisa Zunshine argued that '[l]iterature pervasively capitalizes on and stimulates Theory of Mind mechanisms that had evolved to deal with real people, even as on some level readers do remain aware

---

[40] See Griffin (1980) 63; Scodel (2012) 320; De Jong (2017) 37.

[41] Griffin (1980) 65; see also 50–80 especially 61–65, 78–79.

[42] Winkler (1990) 129–30; Emlyn-Jones (1998) 129; Murnaghan (1994) 80, 88–89; Saïd (2011) 285–86. Danek (1998) 494 also warns against imputing to characters implicit psychology that is not apparent in the text (contrast Griffin (1980) 60–62, 65).

[43] For comparisons of the *Odyssey* to a novel, see Griffin (1987) 58–59, *cf.* (2004) 162; *cf.* De Jong (2009) 80; Silk (2004) 35 n.10, 44 n.35; Hunter (2004) 250–52 (the *Odyssey* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*). Against, West (2012) 532; *cf.* Friedrich (1985) 76; Reece (2011) 103. On the novel and mind-reading, see Zunshine (2006) 10, 159–64 and *passim*.

[44] Feeney 2006 (1995): 449. *Cf.* Kakridis (1949) 3 'the distance which always separates a character of poetic creation from a real living person'; Kakridis (1970). See, on the 'dehumanizing' trend in literary criticism, Culpeper (2001) 7–9.

that fictive characters are not real people at all'.[45] Theory of mind has itself come under fire within the cognitive sciences (which, it should be borne in mind, are themselves a contested and evolving set of disciplines).[46] In particular, it is disputed whether mind-reading, the attribution of mental states to other people, is our most basic way of accessing others' minds.[47] It may or may not be the case that mind-reading accounts for 'our ordinary inter-actions with others' or 'most everyday situations'.[48] Yet mind-reading is undoubtedly a feature of our more complex interactions with others.[49] It is here that a divergence (or rather, complementarity) between philosophy of mind and cognitive psychology, on the one hand, and literature and literary criticism, on the other, becomes especially appar-ent.[50] It is the driving concern of the former to elucidate social cognition especially in its most elementary and basic forms, while the latter are interested in some of our most complicated social interactions.[51] While an 'epistemic gulf' may not exist 'in principle' between ourselves and other persons' minds that is bridgeable only by mental inference,[52] persons can, and in literature frequently do, choose to instate such a gulf by checking their normal expressive behaviour. There is also the obvious fact that a reader or audience trying to making sense of literary characters, as also literary characters of one another, do not have 'embodied and enactive processes of interaction' available to them.[53]

Characters' intentions are frequently opaque in the *Odyssey*.[54] In the 23rd book, Eurycleia (70–72), Telemachus (97–103) and Odysseus (111–16, 164–72) take turns in pos-iting beliefs and/or desires that would explain or predict Penelope's behaviour. We may note, especially, Telemachus' words, 'why do you …?' (98) and Odysseus', 'that's why

---

[45] Zunshine (2006) 10.

[46] Zunshine (2006) 5–6; Cave (2016) viii.

[47] Hutto (2011) 279: 'Neither the attribution of mental state concepts nor the attribution of mental state con-tents plays any part in basic ways of responding to and keeping track of others' psychological attitudes … [T]here are embodied and enactive ways of relating to others and attending to their states of mind that do not constitute acts of mindreading for the simple reason that they do not involve making mentalistic attributions'. *Cf.* Gallagher (2001) 94, (2020) 98–120; Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 481–82.

[48] Quotations from Gallagher (2001) 92 and Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 467, *cf.* 483. See also, for example, Colombetti (2014) 171–72; Gallagher (2020) 71, 98–100, 171. On the other side of the debate, note, for example, Currie (2008) 212–13.

[49] Zahavi (2007) 38: 'Under normal circumstances, we understand each other well enough through our shared engagement in this common world, and it is only if this pragmatic understanding for some reason breaks down, for instance, if the other behaves in an unexpected and puzzling way, that other options kick in and take over, be it inferential reasoning or some kind of simulation. We develop both capacities, but we only employ them in special circumstances'. Similarly, Gallagher (2001) 92, (2009) 294–95, (2020) 120, 169; Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 468, 472; Apperly (2011) 118; Colombetti (2014) 175.

[50] Zunshine (2006) 27 speaks of 'the possibility of a genuine interaction between cognitive psychology and literary studies, with both fields having much to offer to each other'. *Cf.* Cave (2016) 14–15; Herman (2007) 327; Hogan (2015).

[51] Compare Palmer (2011) 386, for mind-reading in literature as concerning 'misunderstandings and secrecy'; Cave (2016) ix, for literature as illustrating the functioning of human cognition 'at an especially complex level'. Note also (from a philosopher of mind) Gallagher (2020) 165 n.4: 'Luckily Joyce, Dostoyevsky, and other novelists put us inside the heads of their characters and we do not have to theorize … our way in there [a significant oversimplification of what mind-reading in literature involves: see below, n.161]. There is no denying that human beings are complicated psychological creatures, or that the psychological lives of Stephen Dedalus or Raskolnikov are fascinating in ways that outstrip an understanding in simple folk-psychological terms. The issue, here, is how we come to understand people in our everyday interactions with them'.

[52] Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 467.

[53] Gallagher (2020) 99: 'Embodied and enactive processes of interaction'. Another thing, however, that consum-ers of literature do have to help them make sense of literary characters, and which may to some extent obviate the need for recourse to mind-reading, is 'narrative competence', in the special sense explicated by Gallagher (2020) 164–65.

[54] Griffin (1980) 56–65, 76–80.

she …' (116), where the 'third-person observational stance' is clearly in evidence.[55] In parallel with, but also going beyond, these characters, the narratee must attribute mind states to Penelope to comprehend why she might not wish to fly into Odysseus' arms the moment she has accepted his identity.[56] In short, the mind-reading approach essayed by various scholars for both Homeric poems seems indispensable to our episode of the *Odyssey*.[57]

This is not to say that mind-reading is the only model that applies to Odysseus and Penelope's interactions in the *Odyssey*. Social cognition typically involves our interacting with others directly (without theorizing about their mental state) through such mechanisms as 'bodily resonance, affect attunement, coordination of gestures, facial and vocal expression and others'.[58] The Odyssean narrative affords us flashes of a process that we could describe as something like affect attunement.[59] At 20.87–94, Odysseus and Penelope seem to be almost telepathically attuned to one another.[60] In book 23, their paired speeches preceding reunion at 166–72 (Odysseus) and 174–80 (Penelope) suggest an increasing harmonization in their manner of conversing, even while what is actually said implies division.[61] At the point of their reunion, they are both bodily and experientially perfectly at one (207–08, 231–40).[62] However, Odysseus and Penelope's interactions in books 19–23 are characterized by concealment of identity and of feelings, entailing that any process of mutual understanding that might have been arrived at through such enactive interaction is repeatedly frustrated. This can be well observed in the *tête-à-tête* of Odysseus and Penelope in book 19. There we should note, first, the metaphorical use of the verb τήκειν, 'to melt, overflow' (five times in five consecutive verses, 19.204–08), implying a conception of embodied cognition: Penelope's mind 'melts' (19.136, 263–64) and her face 'overflows' with tears.[63] Penelope's emotions are physically expressed and are directly perceived by Odysseus (without mind-reading); and his first instinct is to reciprocate with an embodied emotional response in tune with hers. But, although he 'pitied his wife in his heart' (19.210), he 'hid his tears with guile' (19.212) and 'his eyes stood unmoving in his eye lids as if horn or iron' (19.211–12). The same thing occurs in book 23, with roles reversed. The 'mutual gaze' initiated between Odysseus and Penelope at 94–95 seems calculated to bring about increased intimacy between the couple (see further section VI).[64] But Penelope, on whom Odysseus had evidently been relying to establish eye contact and to open conversation (91), makes only an abortive attempt at the former

---

[55] On the 'third-person observational stance' adopted with mind-reading, see Gallagher (2009) 291, *cf.* 292, 294–95, (2020) 71–74; Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 466, 468, 472, 483.

[56] Compare Roisman (1987), especially 62–63, 68; Vlahos (2011) 58.

[57] For other mind-reading approaches to Homer, see Scodel (2012), (2014); De Jong (2017) 36–38, (2009); Battezzato (2019). Also pertinent is much of Beßlich (1966), for example, 93–94, on Homeric 'psychologizing'. Compare also Felson-Rubin (1987) 79 n.14; Ahl and Roisman (1996) 258 'Here again, what is not said is almost as interesting as what is said'.

[58] Fuchs and De Jaegher (2009) 466.

[59] On 'affect attunement', see also Colombetti (2014) 198–201.

[60] Rutherford (1992) 214, *cf.* (1986) 160 n.77.

[61] These two speeches are equal in length and parallel in construction: both begin δαιμονίη/δαιμόνι'; both address imperatives to Eurycleia, introduced by ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι/ἀλλ' ἄγε οἱ, concerning the making of a bed for Odysseus for the night; moreover, 'both feign a concession while hoping for submission or revelation' (Rutherford (1986) 160 n.77). On the phenomenon in social cognition in general, see Colombetti (2014) 188: 'People even tend to use the same syntax, and the same number and type of words as their conversation partners'.

[62] Not only do they share the same joyful reaction, the simile at 233–40 equates their experiences (compare 5.394–99): see, for example, Rutherford (1986) 160 n.77; especially Beck (2005) 119–21.

[63] See Russo (1992) 87, on 19.204–08, and further, on this metaphor, Cairns (2014) n.67; Currie (2022) 136. In general, for metaphors as giving 'a more vivid and immediate sense of the emotion as a holistic, embodied experience', see Cairns and Nelis (2017) 16; *cf.* Cairns (2017) 56.

[64] On the 'mutual gaze' in social cognition, see Stawarska (2006); Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) 474–75 ('fight of gazes'); in ancient Greek culture: Cairns (2005).

(94–95), and presently ends up renouncing both (106–07). It is thus no linear process of 'mutual incorporation' that we see in the interactions between Odysseus and Penelope.[65] The fact is underlined by the ring-compositional repetition by Odysseus (166–72) of Telemachus' reproach of Penelope (97–103). An inferential process of mind-reading is required to bring about the reunion sequence of 1–230. But the minds that are being read in this process are embodied minds that are also capable of being experienced (however interruptedly) in more direct (embodied and enacted) ways.[66]

The use of the expression 'to read someone's mind' itself requires some justification in the context of a poem where there is no verb 'to read'. Homer's own term for Alcinous' mind-reading of Nausicaa is νόει, 'sensed' (6.67, cited above).[67] This very general verb of cognition is elsewhere used, for instance, of the perception of body language (4.116), the exercise of pure imagination (*Il.* 15.81) and a seer's vision of the future (*Od.* 20.367). However, the English expression 'to read someone's mind' need not grate when used of the unlettered characters of the *Odyssey*. It does not relate exclusively (and perhaps not primarily) to the reading of a book, but to the penetration of a hidden meaning underlying certain perceptible signs.[68] It is true, moreover, that general objections have been made to 'mind-reading' as a term for the attribution of mental states to another person. One objection is that to 'read' another person's mind implies that their thoughts are directly accessible to us, and that the term is therefore ill-suited to the process of theorizing about another's mental states.[69] Another, opposite, objection is that the term 'mind-reading' implies the exercise of a quasi-abnormal clairvoyance.[70] Such objections seem, however, outweighed by the advantage that 'reading' someone, or their mind, provides an ordinary-language or folk-psychological expression for what is supposed to be an everyday part of social cognition (contrast 'theory of mind' or 'mentalizing'). For precisely

---

[65] 'Mutual incorporation': Fuchs and De Jaeger (2009) *passim*.

[66] *Cf.* Cave (2016) 17 'the ability to read other "minds" certainly passes through the body (gesture, eye contact or gaze direction, and of course oral utterance)'; 30 'you're not in fact reading abstractly remote "minds": what you read is bodies, together with all of the elusive, often hidden, thinking that human bodies do'; 111 'we read involuntary signs as well as intentional signals; the distinction between those is part of the inferential calculus of mind-reading'.

[67] Compare the fifth-century verb ὑπονοεῖν, for example, Ar. *Lys.* 1234 ἃ δ' οὐ λέγουσι, ταῦθ' ὑπονενοήκαμεν, 'we have surmised intentions that they have not expressed', *cf.* Lys. 37–38. It should also be noted that the image of 'reading' *one's own* mind/memory like a writing tablet is attested from the fifth century: Pind. *Ol.* 10.1–3; ps.-Aesch. *PV* 789; Soph. *fr.* 597 Radt; *cf.* Pl. *Tht.* 191c ff. This is perhaps also the place to register the fact that mind-practices may be culturally determined (Nichols and Stich (2003) 3–4).

[68] *OED s.v.* 'read' II.7.b: 'To make out the character or nature of (a person, or his or her heart, thoughts, desires, etc.) by studying and interpreting outward signs'. Cf. *OED s.v.* 'read' I.2.a: 'to make out … the meaning of significance of' (for example, dreams, omens, etc.: compare 'tea-leaf reading', 'palm reading', 'lip reading'). This is not just English idiom: note German *Gedanken lesen, Spuren lesen*, etc.

[69] Hutto (2011) 281: 'When, in ordinary parlance, we talk about reading another's mind "like a book" we typically imply that the other is somehow transparent to us (as they often are). Talk of mindreading is therefore most appropriate in precisely those cases in which we don't have to guess, speculate, or even to ask the other what they are thinking or feeling'. But when we 'read another's mind', we do not simply 'read off' their thoughts and feelings; the qualification 'like a book' describes an abnormally easy case of mind-reading (compare *OED s.v.* 'book', Phrases P2.m; *s.v.* 'open book', A.2). The *direct perception* of emotion in a person's countenance (for which see, for example, Gallagher (2009) 5 and Colombetti (2014) 176–77, both citing Wittgenstein) is not a case of 'mind-*reading*', but of what we might call 'mind*sight*' (Stawarska (2006) 18–19, 21).

[70] Budelmann (2018) 236 n.2: '"mind-reading" makes one think of a preternatural ability'; *cf.* Apperly (2011) 1; compare and contrast Nichols and Stich (2003) 2. That implication seems to be carried especially by the substantivized term 'mind-reading'. The expressions 'read someone's mind', 'so-and-so is an open / closed book', etc., are commonplace and very largely free of such implications. *Cf.*, for example, the lyrics of Billy Joel: 'There you go, slipping away into a state of grace / I know the look that comes across your face / It's so familiar to me / Here I am, trying to keep you in my line of sight / I'm never certain that you read me right / Sometimes you don't want to see' ('State of Grace', album *Storm Front*, 1989).

this reason the term was used in the criticism of the *Odyssey* long before it became a term of art in the cognitive sciences or cognitive humanities.[71]

It is time to see how these general considerations about recognition and mind-reading apply to the interpretation of the narrative of *Od.* 23.1–230. The passages to be analysed are lines 1–82 (Penelope and Eurycleia in the bedchamber, section IV); lines 85–87 (Penelope's descent to the *megaron*, section V); lines 88–95 (Penelope and Odysseus face to face in the *megaron*, section VI); and lines 181–230 (the resolution, section VII).

## IV. In the bedchamber: Penelope and Eurycleia (lines 1–82)

It will be argued in the next section (section V) that the narrative gives us an explicit indication at 85–87 that Penelope knows that the man in the hall is Odysseus; it follows that she must have come into this knowledge at some point in the preceding scene with Eurycleia (1–82). We can see the narrative as supplying an indirect indication at 32–34:

> ὣς ἔφαθ', ἡ δ' ἐχάρη καὶ ἀπὸ λέκτροιο θοροῦσα
> γρηῒ περιπλέχθη, βλεφάρων δ' ἀπὸ δάκρυον ἧκε,
> καί μιν φωνήσασ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα…

> Thus she [Eurycleia] spoke; and she [Penelope] rejoiced and jumping off the bed
> embraced the old woman and shed a tear from her eyelids
> and speaking addressed winged words to her …

Penelope's intense and initially unguarded reaction of joy at 32–33 (contrasting with her earlier annoyed reaction in 11–24, where she resented being woken from the 'sweetest slumber') can reasonably be taken to imply her acceptance that the 'beggar' is Odysseus.[72] Weeping and embracing naturally accompany recognition (for example, 21.222–25; 24.347–48, 397–98),[73] and Penelope's weeping and embracing of Eurycleia here anticipate vicariously her weeping and embracing of Odysseus at 207–08, when the reunion is complete. We may surmise that the combined authority of Eurycleia and, by report, of Telemachus has proven sufficient for Penelope to believe. An advantage of this assumption is that it gives us a Penelope who is perfectly quick on the uptake.[74] As far as the open expression of her emotions, however, she continues to play her cards close to her chest, after the initial outpouring that we see here at 32–33.

Penelope's non-verbal behaviour at 32–33, implying her belief in Odysseus' return, is at odds with what she says throughout the scene, adamantly disavowing such belief (36, 62–63, 105–07).[75] That discrepancy is an invitation to the narratee to read her mind.[76] Thus the narratee is implicated in an attempt to experience the situation

as Penelope may experience it. Eurycleia's successive revelations in this scene constitute a drip-drip of information that must be increasingly humiliating for the mistress to hear (and, one senses, correspondingly uncomfortable for the servant to divulge). It emerges that Telemachus has known of Odysseus' return for two days, having been willingly admitted into Odysseus' confidence (29–31), and that Eurycleia herself has known for one day, having been unintentionally admitted into his confidence (73–77). Penelope, in fact, is the last in the household to be in on the secret, Odysseus having embraced the whole complement of household staff who remained loyal at the end of the previous book (22.498–501).[77] Recognizing Odysseus is thus likely to become bound up for Penelope in an exercise in managing face. She can also hardly fail to be sensitive to the fact that her reunion with her husband is being sedulously scripted by others. The pressure to fall in with others' expectations, in this scene and the following, is oppressive (Eurycleia: 'wake up, so that you can see with your own eyes what you are hoping for every day', 5–6; 'he sent me to summon you', 51; 'come with me', 78; Odysseus: 'waiting to see if his wife would say anything to him', 91; Telemachus: 'why don't you speak to him?', 97–99). Penelope must be wondering how she is to take back her husband on terms that are at least partly her own.

Twice in her exchanges with Eurycleia Penelope alleges the gods as a reason not to believe that Odysseus has returned (63–64, 81–82).[78] It is not a new idea in the poem that gods in disguise might either impersonate Odysseus or punish the Suitors' transgressions; the former had been articulated already by Telemachus (16.194–95), the latter by 'one of the Suitors' (17.485–87). When Odysseus says to Eurycleia that 'the fate of the gods and their own wicked deeds' destroyed the Suitors (22.413–16), he may understand some form of 'double determination'; at any rate, he does not intend to deny the involvement of Telemachus and himself.[79] Penelope, however, echoing those words at 62–67, appears to make a god responsible to the exclusion of any human agent. We need not assume, however, that this is what she really believes.[80] The expectations weighing implicitly on Penelope throughout the episode may be expressed as a practical syllogism: (a) a loving wife should greet her long-absent husband affectionately; (b) the man in the hall is your long-absent husband; (c) you should greet the man in the hall affectionately. Penelope needs to find ways of resisting the conclusion in order to preserve some autonomy of action. Since the major premise is unassailable, the only way for Penelope to preserve such autonomy is to resist the minor premise. She is resourceful in finding ways of doing this throughout the episode. Here, the evasion is: 'the man in the hall is not my husband, he is a god in disguise'. The evasion is as effective as it is impossible to argue with rationally. But it should be recognized as a ploy not to fall in line with Eurycleia's expectations, to secure some freedom of action, rather than a sign of real, radical scepticism. Such scepticism could not logically be dispelled by knowledge of the bed, given that 'the gods know everything' (4.379 = 4.468). We may suppose that Penelope makes no response to Eurycleia's report of the scar not so much because it causes her anxiety and because she cannot quite credit it[81] as because she has no ready repudiation of it and (if we are willing to impute a certain superciliousness to her) because she wishes it to be known that she is not required to justify herself in detail to a retainer.

---

[77] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 268: '[Odysseus] disclosed his identity to everyone else in the palace before he disclosed it to her. He must therefore have trusted her least'.

[78] *Cf.* already 23.11–14.

[79] On 'double determination', see Kearns (2004) 59 n.2; Pelliccia (2011).

[80] *Pace* Winkler (1990) 151, 156; Scodel (1998) 8. *Cf.* Fredricksmeyer (1997) 494–95. On the 'theoxeny theme' in the *Odyssey*, see further below, section VII and nn.125–26.

[81] Beßlich (1966) 20.

The narrative is keenly interested in Penelope's relationship with Eurycleia. On the one hand, their intercourse is characterized by mutually affectionate addresses (μαῖα φίλη, φίλον τέκος). On the other hand, it lacks the personal intimacy and confidential relationship that Penelope enjoys with Eurynome.[82] Importantly, Eurycleia comes from the Laertes-Odysseus household (1.428–33, 19.410–14) and 'is more aligned with the males in the Ithacan family than with the woman who married into it'.[83] 'Eurynome, on the other hand, is Penelope's private maid and confidante'.[84] This is not the first time that Eurycleia has been in the know before Penelope: this was the case also with Telemachus' departure from Ithaca (4.742–49) and subsequently with his return (17.31).[85] Now it transpires that she knew about Odysseus' return and about Telemachus' collusion with Odysseus. It would not be surprising if Penelope found all this somewhat galling.[86]

When Eurycleia delivers decisive proof of Odysseus' identity (the scar, 73–75), Penelope merely responds: 'dear nurse, it is hard for you to discover[87] the plans of the gods, greatly knowledgeable though you are' (81–82). Penelope here emphasizes Eurycleia's knowledgeability; at the very end of the episode, however, the means of 'finding' Odysseus that Penelope will devise relies precisely on knowledge that Eurycleia lacks, the secret of the bed.[88] Penelope's words here, 'it is hard for you to know the plans of the gods', contain what politeness theorists might call an 'off-record implicature'.[89] There is the delicate suggestion, which one is free to notice or to ignore, that 'not even you, Eurycleia, know everything'. Penelope may not yet have lit upon the precise ruse of the bed, but she may already be starting to think of a means of 'recognition' (outward recognition: section II (2)) that will be not merely exclusive to Odysseus and herself (compare 109–10), but also exclusive *of* Eurycleia. Penelope will exploit Eurycleia's ignorance of the peculiarity of the bed by instructing her, with other maidservants, to bring the bed out of the bedroom and make it up for Odysseus (177–80). She thus manages to reassert her sense of self *vis-à-vis* both Odysseus and Eurycleia. The only servant who knows the secret of the bed is Actoris (228), a character who seems to have been conjured into existence only for this moment in the poem.[90] We are told that she accompanied Penelope from the household of her father Icarius (227–29), and the suspicion is strong that the poet has invented her *ad hoc* as an exact equivalent for Penelope of Eurycleia for Odysseus.

## V. On the way to the *megaron*: Penelope's dilemma (lines 85–87)

Penelope's descent from the bedchamber is narrated in 85–87 as follows:

ὣς φαμένη κατέβαιν' ὑπερώϊα· πολλὰ δέ οἱ κῆρ
ὥρμαιν', ἢ ἀπάνευθε φίλον πόσιν ἐξερεείνοι,
ἢ παρστᾶσα κύσειε κάρη καὶ χεῖρε λαβοῦσα.

---

[82] Fenik (1974) 190; Thalmann (1998) 79.

[83] Felson (2011) 274, after Thalmann (1998) 78; see further Bassett (1919) 2–3; Fenik (1974) 190.

[84] Fenik (1974) 190. *Cf.* Thalmann (1998) 80–81.

[85] Pedrick (1994) especially 101–02.

[86] Roisman (1987) 63.

[87] The sense of δήνεα εἴρυσθαι is obscure, but it ought to concur with the Pindaric maxim, 'it is not possible that one should search out the plans of the gods with mortal mind' (*fr.* 61.3–4 Maehler). See Mader (1987) 721.49–67, especially 63–65; LSJ *s.v.* ἐρύω (B).1.

[88] *Cf.* 23.177–80, 226–29.

[89] Brown and Levinson (1987) 211–27.

[90] Actoris is probably a person in her own right: Fenik (1974) 191 n.99. Differently, for 'Actoris' as a patronymic of Eurynome (θαλαμηπόλος, 23.293), see Bassett (1919) 1; von Kamptz (1982) 152; Thalmann (1998) 82. The imperfect tense εἴρυτο (229) does not imply that Actoris is dead and that her office of θαλαμηπόλος is now discharged by Eurynome (De Jong (2001a) 559): the past tense is fully justified by the inclusion of the dual pronoun νῶϊν (Actoris only guarded the doors of the bedroom for *both of them* before Odysseus went to Troy).

> Speaking thus she descended from the upper chamber. And her heart
> pondered much whether she should ask questions of her husband at a distance
> or, standing by him, take his head and hands and kiss them.

The form taken by Penelope's dilemma indicates that she accepts that the man in the hall is Odysseus.[91] It would be futile to attempt to construe the dilemma as 'should I try to establish with questions whether this man is my husband, or should I run up and kiss him?', an absurd pair of alternatives. The dilemma is not to be conceived as epistemological, but as practical-emotional. Penelope's quandary should be construed as concerning not what to think ('is he my husband or not?'), but how to act on and feel about the knowledge that he is her husband. She therefore here does more than 'accept the possibility' that this is Odysseus, she accepts the fact.[92] What Penelope does here is weigh contrasting wifely strategies: the first is to maintain distance physically, but to play the part of the concerned wife by breaking the ice and engaging him in conversation (ἀπάνευθε … ἐξερεείνοι); the second is to be physically effusive (παρστᾶσα κύσειε κτλ.). Both would be ways of outwardly recognizing or acknowledging (section II (2)) Odysseus.[93]

The meaning assumed here for ἐξερεείνοι (86) needs explication. Those who think that Penelope is not yet (fully) persuaded of Odysseus' identity will take this to mean something like 'interrogate him', in order to establish his identity. However, a meaning along the lines of 'engage him in conversation by asking questions', as a loving wife might be expected to do with a returning husband, is indicated by Telemachus' reproach of his mother in 97–99:[94]

> μῆτερ ἐμή, δύσμητερ, ἀπηνέα θυμὸν ἔχουσα,
> τίφθ' οὕτω πατρὸς νοσφίζεαι, οὐδὲ παρ' αὐτὸν
> ἑζομένη μύθοισιν ἀνείρεαι οὐδὲ μεταλλᾷς;

> My mother – no mother, with an unfeeling heart –
> why do you keep yourself apart from father in this way, and don't
> sit by him and question him in speech and don't inquire of him?

The questioning of Odysseus by Penelope that Telemachus envisages has nothing to do with any doubting of Odysseus' identity. For Telemachus, there can be no legitimate doubting of this, as his reference to 'father' (98) makes clear.[95] The questions envisaged by Telemachus in 99 and by Penelope in 86 might be, for instance: 'My dear, how did you manage to get home, all by yourself? And kill all the Suitors?' Or even the more recriminatory: 'Why didn't you tell me sooner?', 'Why did it take you so long?' Anything, in fact, except the stony silence that Penelope does display.

The question of the focalization of the phrase φίλον πόσιν (86), and likewise of 181 πόσιος πειρωμένη, is crucial. At 14.36 ὁ δὲ προσέειπεν ἄνακτα, 'he [sc. Eumaeus] addressed his master', ἄνακτα is clearly just the narrator's focalization: Eumaeus does not know that he is addressing his master.[96] However, the nature of the alternatives weighed in 86–87,

---

[91] So West (2014) 292; cf. Ahl and Roisman (1996) 260; Vlahos (2011) 56–57.

[92] Compare De Jong (2009 [1994]) 81.

[93] *Pace* Foley (1999) 250, Penelope's dilemma is not 'whether to recognize [Odysseus] openly or not'. Rather, 'Penelope ponders the most appropriate manner to approach and greet her beloved husband' (Vlahos (2011) 58).

[94] A similar sense for ἐξερεείνειν (of polite, interested conversation) may be inferred for *Od.* 10.14 and 4.119 = 24.238.

[95] *Pace* Zeitlin (1995) 122 and 147 n.16.

[96] De Jong (1991) 411–12; cf. De Jong (1987) 104, 108 on *Il.* 3.191, 16.278, 24.474.

especially the second option of kissing him, require that the words φίλον πόσιν belong to Penelope's own unspoken deliberations, not merely the narrator's reporting of them.[97] Likewise at 23.2, the formulation φίλον πόσιν belongs to Eurycleia's speech (implying the direct speech of Eurycleia to Penelope: 'Your own dear husband is within!'). There are two especially instructive comparanda. First, Menelaus' dilemma at 4.117–18: μερμήριξε δ' ἔπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν, | ἦέ μιν αὐτὸν πατρὸς ἐάσειε μνησθῆναι κτλ., 'he was in doubt whether to let him [Telemachus] mention his father himself …', where πατρός should be recognized as Menelaus', not the narrator's, focalization (see section VIII).[98] Second, Odysseus' dilemma at 24.235–36 μερμήριξε δ' ἔπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν, | κύσσαι καὶ περιφῦναι ἑὸν πατέρ' κτλ., 'he was in doubt whether to kiss his father', where 'his father' must be Odysseus' focalization (compare 24.319–20 φίλον πατέρ' εἰσορόωντι. | κύσσε δέ μιν περιφύς, 'as he looked upon his father; and he embraced and kissed him'). There is everything to be said for taking all of these as the characters' focalizations. That is, the words φίλος πόσις feature in Penelope's own thoughts (86), and πατήρ in Menelaus' (4.118) and Odysseus' (24.336).[99] Accordingly, we do not need to understand 86 φίλον πόσιν ἐξερεείνοι as '(she pondered whether) she should ask questions of her husband <*if that is what he was*>', which would necessitate making similar awkward supplements at 175–76 and 178.[100] It is also important to register that Penelope thinks to herself in terms of 'her dear husband' (86 φίλον πόσιν), whereas to Eurycleia she speaks only noncommittally of 'he who killed them [*sc.* the Suitors]' (84 ἠδ' ὃς ἔπεφνεν). By such means the narratee is prompted to scrutinize the divergence between what Penelope says and what she thinks.

## VI. Stand-off in the *megaron*: Penelope and Odysseus face to face (lines 88–95)

Penelope and Odysseus come face to face in the *megaron* in lines 88–99:

> ἡ δ' ἐπεὶ εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὑπέρβη λάϊνον οὐδόν,
> ἕζετ' ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆος ἐναντίον, ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῇ,
> τοίχου τοῦ ἑτέρου· ὁ δ' ἄρα πρὸς κίονα μακρὴν
> ἦστο κάτω ὁρόων, ποτιδέγμενος εἴ τί μιν εἴποι
> ἰφθίμη παράκοιτις, ἐπεὶ ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν.
> ἡ δ' ἄνεω δὴν ἧστο, τάφος δέ οἱ ἦτορ ἵκανεν·
> ὄψει δ' ἄλλοτε μέν μιν ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν,
> ἄλλοτε δ' ἀγνώσασκε κακὰ χροῒ εἵματ' ἔχοντα.

> When she entered and crossed over the stone threshold,
> then she took a seat opposite Odysseus, in the gleam of the fire,
> by the other wall. He for his part was seated against a long column
> looking downwards, waiting to see if his comely wife
> would say anything to him, when she caught sight of him with her eyes.
> But she sat for a long time in silence, and astonishment came upon her heart;
> with her gaze she at one time looked him in the face,
> at other times gave no indications of recognizing him, meanly attired as he was.

---

[97] Emlyn-Jones (1998) 142 n.37. *Cf.* De Jong (2009) 81. Differently, Danek (1998) 443.

[98] *Pace* De Jong (2001a) 551, who takes Penelope not yet to have recognized Odysseus, and Menelaus in book 4 to be 'still only guessing'.

[99] *Cf.* 17.303 οἷο ἄνακτος (of Argus: animals also have thoughts in the *Odyssey*!).

[100] De Jong (2001a) 551: 'The use of "dear husband" (86) … should be understood as "the man whom Eurycleia says is my dear husband" (*cf.* 71)'. *Cf.* De Jong (2001b) 72, translating: '<the man supposed to be> her dear husband'.

The sight of Odysseus afflicts Penelope with τάφος, 'astonishment' (93, compare 105); she is overcome, apparently, by emotion and/or the awkwardness of the moment. We should note that the sight of Odysseus has the same effect on Dolios and his sons in the following book (24.392 τεθηπότες, 394 θάμβευς), where there is no question of their being uncertain whether this is Odysseus (see 24.391), but only of how they should act on the knowledge that it is. When Penelope comes face to face with Odysseus, she thus finds herself unable to implement either of the wifely strategies premeditated during her descent to the *megaron* (85–87; above, section V). Now, eschewing the options of both physical intimacy and keeping her distance while striking up ice-breaking conversation, she defaults to distance, silence and intermittent eye contact. The divergence between her narrated deliberations in 85–87 and her narrated behaviour in 88–90, 93–95 is another, now familiar, invitation to the narratee to read her mind.[101]

The narrative gives a remarkable amount of attention to the body language of the characters (the 'mutual gaze', section III). Apparently, from time to time (94 ἄλλοτε μέν), Penelope indicated a preparedness to acknowledge intimacy with Odysseus by looking him in the face: presumably, making eye contact with him (94 ὄψει … μιν ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν). The visual intimacy thus established would presumably, if sustained, have constituted an important step towards acknowledging her relationship to him (section II (2)) and reciprocally stimulating the emotions necessary for reunion (section II (4)).[102] But at other times (95 ἄλλοτε δ'), she 'gave no indications of recognizing him' (94–95 ὄψει … ἀγνώσασκε), meanly attired as he was.[103] We do not have to suppose that Penelope struggles and fails to identify the man before her as Odysseus.[104] It is preferable to see it as a matter of Penelope's body language, how she is choosing to project her feelings. Both ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν and ἀγνώσασκε depend on ὄψει, 'with her look/gaze'. They accordingly express not so much perception or cognition as *a manner of looking or appearing*. That this is the sense of ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν is clarified by the subsequent gloss, in Penelope's own words, εἰς ὦπα ἰδέσθαι ἐναντίον, 'to look him straight in the face' (107). A parallel sense may be inferred for ὄψει … ἀγνώσασκε: 'with her gaze … she failed to recognize him' can equate to 'with her gaze … she *gave no outward sign of* recognizing him'.

We need not suppose that Penelope was prevented from actually *recognizing* Odysseus as Odysseus by the poverty of his clothes.[105] Rather, the meanness of his dress provides her with a convenient pretext for not openly *acknowledging* him (section II (2)). This would be another way of disputing the minor premise of the practical syllogism (section IV) and hence resisting its conclusion, until Penelope is ready to embrace that conclusion. With Eurycleia the pretext was: 'that man isn't my husband, but a god in disguise'. Now the unspoken pretext is: 'he doesn't look like my husband, in those clothes'. Penelope has adopted a pretence of scepticism as to the stranger's identity (36, 62–63, 107–08), a pretence penetrated by Odysseus and recognized by him as a matter more of acknowledgement than actual recognition (116; see section II (2)). Soon, after Odysseus has washed and changed, this pretence is dropped and the pretext instead becomes: 'you are indeed Odysseus; but you are not the same as the man who sailed from here 20 years ago' (175–76). Penelope is evidently no less resourceful in her evasions than her spouse, yet this is no mere game-playing: Penelope refuses recognition, in the sense of reunion, as

---

[101] See above, n.75; and, on this passage, De Jong (2009) 80–81.

[102] Compare Harsh (1950) 5 and n.7; Ahl and Roisman (1996) 261. Compare also, more generally, Cairns (2005) 125–26, 132–33.

[103] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 261: 'Sometimes she makes a point of not acknowledging him by, presumably, glancing down at his rags'.

[104] *Pace*, for example, West (2014) 68; *cf.* Goldhill (1991) 17.

[105] *Pace*, for example, van Wees (2005) 1; De Jong (2009) 81: 'she looks at his poor clothing and cannot believe that this is her husband'.

being meaningless without emotional reconnection and as being unpalatable unless she has a hand in co-scripting it, in a dignified, face-restoring way.

## VII. Penelope and Odysseus reunited: the resolution (lines 181–230)

It is usually assumed that Penelope uses the σῆμα of the bed to prove Odysseus' identity, but this is not an inevitable assumption, despite the use of πειρᾶσθαι and πείθειν (section II (7)) at the beginning and end of this scene. The narrator describes Penelope as 'probing her husband', ὣς ἄρ' ἔφη πόσιος πειρωμένη (181). Here, πειρωμένη does not have to mean 'testing', to see if he really is her husband.[106] It may mean 'probing',[107] or 'baiting';[108] that is, seeking to get a particular emotional reaction from her husband.[109] At 24.238 and 240, πειρᾶσθαι is used of Odysseus' with Laertes, and obviously has nothing to do with any testing of Laertes' identity.[110] Again, at 13.336, Athena foretells that Odysseus will 'test' his wife (σῆς ἀλόχου πειρήσεαι): not ascertaining her identity, but her feelings. This amply justifies taking 181 πόσιος πειρωμένη in the sense of 'probing' or 'provoking' his feelings.[111]

At the end of the speech in which Penelope accepts Odysseus, she says (230) πείθεις δή μευ θυμόν, ἀπηνέα περ μάλ' ἐόντα. Here πείθεις may be understood not in the sense of persuade somebody that something is the case, but persuade someone to a course of action or way of feeling (see above, section II (7)).[112] It is significant that Penelope herself is not the object of the verb of persuasion (contrast Telemachus: 16.192 οὐ γάρ πω ἐπείθετο ὃν πατέρ' εἶναι, 'for he was not yet persuaded that it was his father'), but rather her θυμός, the seat of emotion, that is 'persuaded', or better, 'prevailed on'.[113] She describes her θυμός as being (previously) ἀπηνής, 'harsh, unfeeling', picking up on Telemachus' and Odysseus' characterizations (97, 100, 103, 167, 172). It is not, notably, described as ἄπιστος, 'incredulous, suspicious', as it was early on by Eurycleia (72).[114] The crucial point is not that Penelope is slow to believe what has long been clear to everyone else, but that she is guarded and controlled with her emotions (in which respect, of course, she closely resembles Odysseus).[115]

It is possible to understand lines 213–14 in this vein:

αὐτὰρ μὴ νῦν μοι τόδε χώεο μηδὲ νεμέσσα,
οὕνεκά σ' οὐ τὸ πρῶτον, ἐπεὶ ἴδον, ὧδ' ἀγάπησα.

But don't, pray, now get angry or find fault
because I didn't kiss you like this when I first saw you.

Penelope in these lines does not excuse herself for having required an extremely high standard of proof before believing that Odysseus is Odysseus, but rather her slowness to

---

[106] *Pace* Kakridis (1971) 159 n.26.

[107] Cf. *Il.* 24.390, 433, with Macleod (1982) 122: 'subtly evoking reactions from his interlocutor'.

[108] Foley (1999) 162, 163.

[109] Heubeck (1992) 397 on *Od.* 24.315–17.

[110] See Currie (2022) 137–38, 142.

[111] This is different from 114 πειράζειν ἐμέθεν, '(let her) put me to the test', where the meaning really is that of testing Odysseus to see if he really is Odysseus (cf. 107–08 εἰ δ' ἐτεὸν δὴ | ἔστ' Ὀδυσεύς).

[112] *Cf. Il.* 6.360–61 οὐδέ με πείσεις· | ἤδη γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐπέσσυται etc.

[113] *Cf.*, for example, 23.337 ἀλλά τοῦ οὔ ποτε θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔπειθεν, of Calypso not prevailing on Odysseus to become her husband.

[114] *Cf.* 14.150 (Odysseus to Eumaeus).

[115] *Cf.*, for example, Rutherford (1986) 160 n.77: 'She is regularly ἐχέφρων …, as is Odysseus'; Beck (2005) 111, 113.

respond emotionally to Odysseus, for not having kissed him 'like this' (as she is narrated as doing in 207–08) when she first entered the *megaron* (89–90, 93–95), and as she indeed contemplated doing at 87, before entering the *megaron*.[116] The lines which immediately follow are these (215–17):

αἰεὶ γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν
ἐρρίγει, μή τίς με βροτῶν ἀπάφοιτ' ἐπέεσσιν
ἐλθών· πολλοὶ γὰρ κακὰ κέρδεα βουλεύουσιν.

For the heart in my chest was always
in apprehension lest someone among men might come and deceive me with words.
For there are many who contrive ill-gotten gains.

Penelope here justifies 'her hardness of heart', picking up the rebukes of both Telemachus (103) and Odysseus (166–67, 172). The deception that Penelope was continually wary of, as 217 indicates, was not that of impostors claiming to be Odysseus; it was, rather, of travellers claiming to have news of Odysseus, in return for which they would expect a reward (κέρδεα βουλεύουσιν). Eumaeus had already described this scenario to Odysseus, dwelling on the emotional and psychological toll it took on Penelope (14.122–30).[117] Aeschylus' Clytemnestra similarly expatiates, though disingenuously of course, on the emotional strain on a wife of continually receiving false reports of her husband in the field, which allegedly left her suicidal (Aesch. *Ag.* 858–76). In 213–17, Penelope explains not how she has come to have unreasonably high standards of proof of Odysseus' identity, but how she has come to be so emotionally unresponsive, to have so steely a heart (compare 100, 105, 167, 172).[118] That heart that was always 'in apprehension' (ἐρρίγει) of being cruelly deceived now finds itself equally incapable, she implies, of spontaneous affection. Telemachus at the start of the poem was revealed to be in a similar emotional state: '[Odysseus] has died a grim death in this way, and for us there is no warm glow (θαλπωρή)[119] if someone of mortal men says he will come; his day of homecoming is lost' (1.166–68).

Lines 218–24 introduce the Helen-*exemplum*:

οὐδέ κεν Ἀργείη Ἑλένη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα,
ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀλλοδαπῷ ἐμίγη φιλότητι καὶ εὐνῇ,
εἰ ᾔδη, ὅ μιν αὖτις ἀρήϊοι υἷες Ἀχαιῶν
ἀξέμεναι οἶκόνδε φίλην ἐς πατρίδ' ἔμελλον.

τὴν δ' ἦ τοι ῥέξαι θεὸς ὦρορεν ἔργον ἀεικές·
τὴν δ' ἄτην οὐ πρόσθεν ἑῷ ἐγκάτθετο θυμῷ
λυγρήν, ἐξ ἧς πρῶτα καὶ ἡμέας ἵκετο πένθος.

Not even Argive Helen, daughter of Zeus,
would have mingled in love and the bed with a man from other parts

---

[116] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 267.

[117] *Cf.* Bowie (2013) 184: 'Eum[aeus'] words paint a grim picture of the hospitable Penelope worn down by her insistence on always entertaining itinerant beggars, despite her reward being repeated false claims about Od[ysseus], which have left her unable to believe anything or have any hope. The climax to this comes in book 23 when, despite all the evidence, she does not immediately believe Od[ysseus] is who he says he is'. A qualification is in order: it is a matter of Penelope's heart being steeled, rather than her (not) being intellectually convinced.

[118] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 268.

[119] For the superiority of the reading θαλπωρή to ἐλπωρή, see Pulleyn (2019) 153.

if she had known that the warlike sons of the Achaeans
were going to bring her back home to her own fatherland.

But a god stirred her to do an unseemly deed;
she did not ever before lay down folly of that kind in her heart,
a pernicious one, from which grief first came to us, too.

The problem of the *tertium comparationis* in this *exemplum* has exercised scholars since antiquity.[120] It is usually taken for granted that Penelope was afraid of being seduced by a stranger in the likeness of her husband. That is already the assumption of the ancient Homeric scholar Nicias, of uncertain date, cited in the scholia to *Od.* 23.218, who proffers a mythical variant in which Helen was seduced by Paris in the likeness of Menelaus. The variant was doubtless invented to make sense of the *exemplum*.[121] Commentators from Nicias on may err in assuming that the point lies in the danger of being deceived about one's husband's identity (the 'Martin Guerre scenario', in which a wife is taken in by an impostor).[122] Penelope's self-justification may go, not along the lines of 'don't blame me for being so sceptical, so slow to believe', but rather 'don't blame me for being so steely hearted, so slow to be the effusive wife'. Penelope would then be interested in setting up a contrast between one woman (herself!) who is too slow to open her heart and to fly into the arms even of her husband and an adulteress (Helen) who was too quick to open her heart and to fly into the arms of a foreign lover, someone she knew full well was not her husband. The emphasis on 'stranger' would not then serve to point up a common feature in their situations (Helen was deceived by a stranger, Penelope does not wish the same fate to befall her), but to point up a contrast in their characters: Helen's affections were won easily by a man from foreign parts (219), whereas Penelope's affections by contrast were regained only with difficulty by her own returning husband. At issue is not a wife's misprisions of a man's identity, but the question of how prompt a wife is with her affections, towards a man whose identity is not in doubt, whether a would-be extramarital lover or her own long-absent husband.[123]

While we are at it, we may discount another form of imposture: that Penelope implicitly fears being seduced by a god in the likeness of Odysseus. Her words in 226, '[the marriage bed], which *no other mortal* has seen', indicate that she was not concerned to eliminate the possibility that the man before her may have been a *god* in disguise. The text emphasizes Penelope's difficulty in recognizing the man before her as the Odysseus she once knew, not any difficulty in distinguishing the real Odysseus from any putative divine impostor. Moreover, when gods assume a disguise to seduce human females, the latter are usually virgins or brides on their wedding night, not married women of more than twenty years' standing. It is worth noting that there was by the fifth century BC a tradition that Hermes had intercourse with Penelope and that Pan was their child;[124] but even if that tradition were older than the *Odyssey*, there could be at most only an oblique allusion to it here. The theoxeny motif (whereby a god moves incognito among men to expose and punish their transgressions) is invoked elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, including by Penelope earlier in book

---

[120] Modern discussions include Roisman (1987) 59–62; Katz (1991) 183–86; Morgan (1991); Zeitlin (1995) 143–44; Fredricksmeyer (1997); Blondell (2013) 93–95; Alden (2017) 117–18.

[121] Danek (1998) 450.

[122] *Pace* Murnaghan (1987) 141–42; Roisman (1987) 61, 65; Cave (1988) 13; Winkler (1990) 151; Heitman (2005) 92; West (2014) 291. Nor, *pace* Amory (1963) 120, is Penelope saying that 'she was afraid she might fall in love with someone else'. On Martin Guerre, see Davis (1983); for the 'deception' of the wife, Bertrande, see especially 42, 44.

[123] *Pace* Fredricksmeyer (1997) 489: 'The point of comparison is that the fidelity or infidelity of both women depends on their possession of an essential knowledge'.

[124] Pind. *fr.* 115 Turyn (the fragment is not included in Maehler's edition of Pindaric fragments); Hdt. 2.145.4, 146.1.

23, in the interests of Odysseus' family and to the detriment of the Suitors.[125] To impute to Penelope in book 23 the idea of a god in disguise punishing the Suitors' transgressions with a view to seducing her (thus simultaneously working both for and against the family's interests) would border on being inconsistent in itself and would contradict other uses of the motif in the poem.[126]

In her speech Penelope is best seen as responding, implicitly, to the reproach of Telemachus: 'no other woman with her steely heart would have kept aloof from her husband, who after toiling greatly for her sake came home in the twentieth year; but your heart is always harder than stone' (100–03). That reproach is echoed by Odysseus (166–70), seemingly without awareness of the irony that Penelope is precisely hereby revealed to be the perfect counterpart of himself (compare 13.333–36). In her defence, Penelope compares herself advantageously with another woman at the opposite end of the spectrum: one so free with her affections that she flew into the arms of a man she knew full well was not her husband. As we see in book 4, Helen was able to transfer her affections from Menelaus to Paris to Deiphobus and back to Menelaus again; Penelope implies that it is not so bad that she is the type of woman she is after all! Penelope's basic point in the comparison is complicated by two further elaborations. First, there is the assertion that Helen would not have behaved as she did had she known how it would all end (220–21). Penelope thus turns Helen's story into a moralizing cautionary tale: we should not expect bad choices to end well. Second, there is the claim that Helen was acting out of character in doing this (222–23). Penelope here takes the most charitable view of Helen (Helen, unsurprisingly, does so herself at 4.661), indicating that she does not stoop to vilification of Helen for the purpose of self-justification (fittingly in her reconciliatory speech, Penelope avoids passing judgement on others).

Next come lines 225–30:

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

> But now that you have detailed the manifest signs
> of our bed, which no other mortal man has seen,
> but only you and I and a single maidservant alone,
> Actoris, whom my father gave to me when I was still on my way here,
> who safeguards the doors of the well-built bedchamber for the two of us,
> you persuade my heart, even though it was so steely.

Penelope here reasserts her commitment to the marriage (bed), after Odysseus has, implicitly, done likewise. Her phrase 'which no other mortal man has seen' (226) picks up Odysseus' immediately preceding phrases, '*who* has moved my bed elsewhere?', '*no other living mortal among men, not even a young one,* could easily have crowbarred it out of its place', 'or whether *some other of men* has now moved it elsewhere' (184, 187–88, 203–04). Odysseus implies the possibility that Penelope had admitted another man into the bedchamber; removal of the bed from its place in the bedchamber becomes

---

[125] See *Od.* 17.484–87 (an anonymous Suitor), 23.81–82 (Penelope). Telemachus (16.194–95) raises the possibility of Odysseus being a *deus deceptor* aiming to increase his misery, but this conception is detached from the theoxeny motif (Telemachus' imagined malicious δαίμων is not also interested in killing the Suitors).

[126] On the theoxeny motif in the *Odyssey*, see further Kearns (1982); De Jong (2001a) 332.

synonymous with Penelope's taking a lover.[127] Penelope now denies that anyone else has so much as even seen the bed, apart from the one maidservant whose job it was to guard the bedroom door. Here, indirectly, both spouses in turn attest to the continuing importance to themselves of the marriage; and thus they do indeed manage to 'recognize each other' (109) (see above, section II (5)).

More crucial than that Odysseus should know the secret of the bed (thereby identifying himself as Odysseus) is that he should give the desired emotional response (anger, insecurity, jealousy).[128] If this had simply been an identity test, it would have served equally well if Odysseus had seen through it all and recounted to Penelope the secret of the bed with smug complacency.[129] Yet this reunion apparently requires that things take exactly the course that they do in the narrative (and Penelope seems to know her husband well enough to be confident that this is how they *will* go). This reunion depends not only on the mutual rekindling of the emotions appropriate to the relationship (above, section II (4)), but on Penelope scoring a kind of face-restoring victory over Odysseus that will go some way to redressing the imbalance between them, in respect of their understanding of the situation created by Odysseus' adoption of a disguise, that had obtained since the 19th book.

Odysseus' and Penelope's respective skills at mind-reading are crucial to the reunion. Odysseus seems initially confident of being able to read Penelope's mind ('she finished speaking; and much-enduring godlike Odysseus smiled', 111). He apparently flatters himself that he can grasp Penelope's unspoken agenda in a way that eludes Telemachus (113–14), rather as he previously enjoyed being able to read her intentions while the Suitors could not (18.281–83). Odysseus, moreover, has proven to be a sufficiently adept mind-reader of other females (Calypso, Nausicaa).[130] In this bout with Penelope, however, we see him repeatedly disconcerted. At lines 115–16 and 153–63, he concedes tacitly that he was wrong not to have taken Eurycleia's advice to wash and change clothes before meeting Penelope (22.480–93).[131] While he understands better than Telemachus that the recognition script needs to be made more congenial to Penelope if she is to take him back, he discovers, to his evident exasperation (164–70), that the bath and change of clothes that had worked a treat with Nausicaa (6.237–46), and that will make an impression on Laertes in turn in the reunion with him (24.365–74), leave Penelope cold. It seems necessary that Odysseus' sense of superiority suffer some diminution in this episode (like Eurycleia's: section IV). Penelope is able finally to embrace reunion not primarily because knowledge of the secret of the bed clinches Odysseus' identity (it had never really been an

---

[127] See above, section II (5). *Cf.* Zeitlin (1995) 123. Overliteral is Heitman (2005) 99: 'It is tempting to think [Odysseus] is wounded by hints of adultery … Nevertheless, the connection of a movable bed with adultery does not hold up. Penelope would not move the bed out into the hall—or anywhere else for that matter—if she wanted to share it with another man'.

[128] Amory (1963) 119: 'It has often been remarked that Penelope is convinced as much by Odysseus' emotion as by his knowledge of the bed'; Edwards (1987) 55: 'Penelope, recognizing her true husband's anger and outrage at the implied violation of his marriage bed … can be certain that he is Odysseus and not a god in disguise, who might know the secret'. Both these scholars conceive of this phase of the recognition as a matter of Penelope's *knowing* ('convinced', 'be certain'). More crucial is her *feeling* in the appropriate way (and her *knowing* that both she herself and Odysseus *feel* in this way: for the importance of this last step in social cognition, see Colombetti (2014) 181–82). *Cf.* Zeitlin (1995) 120; Brann (2002) 283: '[the Test of the Bed] has nothing much to do with his mere identity'.

[129] It has been supposed that this is an identity test in which Odysseus' emotional, and hence very human, response proves he is not a god in disguise (for example, Rutherford (1986) 160). But there are no grounds for thinking that Penelope fears a divine impostor: see above, this section.

[130] Beßlich (1966) 90: 'Besonders haben wir ihn [*sc*. Odysseus] als Kenner der weiblichen Psyche erlebt'. *Cf.* Griffin (1980) 57, 60–61, 61–62, (1987) 84–86.

[131] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 257. See Thalmann (1998) 80, for the 'curt' tone taken by Odysseus with Eurycleia at 22.491.

identity test in that sense), nor solely because his emotional outburst affirms his continuing love, but also because she has now succeeded in playing on Odysseus' emotions, as he had previously played on hers.

It seems necessary, therefore, that Odysseus be wrong-footed in this scene, though there is scope to disagree about the extent to which this is the case: the question is whether or not at any point in his speech (183–204) Odysseus grasps what Penelope is about with the trick of the bed. At 188, σῆμα must mean 'distinguishing mark', 'unique feature', the peculiar construction that would distinguish this bed from all other beds.[132] It is possible to attach the same sense to σῆμα in 202. Odysseus would then nowhere in the speech show awareness of the σῆμα of the bed as a token of recognition: something capable of identifying him either through his knowledge of its construction or through the jealous-possessive feelings it can engender in him. Alternatively, we could ascribe awareness to Odysseus by the end of his speech that Penelope is 'testing/provoking' him, and allow him to use σῆμα in 202 in the sense of a 'token of recognition'.[133] Either way, the important point is that Odysseus has been wrong-footed, as his heated reaction in 182 shows; he may or may not have recovered himself by 202, before Penelope sets things straight at 209–30.

Odysseus is a skilled mind-reader of Penelope, but it is important that she is for him neither an open book nor wholly inscrutable. Whatever momentary imperfections there may be in this couple's mind-reading of each other, these do not in any way make for an imperfect marriage. On the contrary, this relationship still remains extremely comfortably within the parameters of an ideal marital *homophrosunē*, as becomes apparent especially when we compare the relationship of Menelaus and Helen.

## VIII. A contrasting couple: Menelaus and Helen

Telemachus' sojourn with Menelaus and Helen in Sparta throws up highly comparable issues of mind-reading and recognition: not now the recognition of one spouse by another, but the recognition of Telemachus first by one spouse and then by the other. The process by which Menelaus recognizes Telemachus in book 4 resembles both that by which Penelope recognizes Odysseus in book 23 and that by which Laertes recognizes Odysseus in book 24. The narrative of book 4 obliges us to consider when exactly Menelaus recognizes Telemachus. Menelaus acknowledges his recognition of Telemachus at 4.148 – but as we know (section II (2)), there can be a gap between recognition and its acknowledgement. At 4.117–19, in a dilemma comparable to that of Penelope at 23.85–87 and of Odysseus at 24.235–38, Menelaus ponders 'whether he should let him [Telemachus] himself make mention[134] of his father or whether he should first ask questions and draw him out on each point (ἕκαστά τε πειρήσαιτο)'.[135] Here again the verb πειρᾶσθαι (see section II (7)) denotes an attempt on Menelaus' part not to 'prove' the identity of Telemachus, but to 'prompt' him to reveal himself. From 4.118 ἠέ μιν αὐτὸν πατρὸς ἐάσειε μνησθῆναι it is clear that Menelaus' own thoughts featured the question: 'Shall I let him make mention himself of his father?' (πατρός being Menelaus' focalization: section V). Menelaus knows already that he is face to face with Telemachus and must therefore have

---

[132] So Stanford (1959) 399; Beßlich (1966) 96; Heubeck (1992) 334. For this meaning in general, *cf.* Langholf (2006) 104.28–32: 'distinktives Merkmal …, das Objekte … bezeichnet, markiert, zu unterscheiden und zu identifizieren hilft'. Cf. *Il.* 23.455.

[133] *Cf.* Stanford (1959) 399; Beßlich (1966) 96 and n.21; Heubeck (1992) 335.

[134] We must translate, 'make mention of', not 'remember', as the inclusion of μιν αὐτόν makes clear: 'let him himself', or 'let him of his own accord' (*sc.* without being led on by Menelaus).

[135] Note 4.117, 119 = 24.235, 238.

recognized him earlier.[136] But how much earlier? Menelaus' long reminiscence of Odysseus, culminating in his listing of Laertes, Penelope and Telemachus (4.104–12), appears in this light to be disingenuous, not simply fortuitous, nor triggered by some purely unconscious recollection of Odysseus owing to Telemachus' great likeness to his father (4.148–54, 1.208–09), but a conscious effort to draw Telemachus out, to encourage him to reveal himself.[137] Already in 4.104–12, therefore, Menelaus has begun relatively vaguely and discreetly to do what he envisages doing in a more directed and pointed way at 4.119. We are not explicitly told that Menelaus' speech (4.78–112) is a πεῖρα or that these are κερτόμια ἔπεα ('disingenuous words'),[138] as we are with Odysseus and Laertes (24.240); yet it would appear that this is exactly what they are. Especially disingenuous is the expansive reference to Odysseus' family, culminating with Telemachus at 4.104–12, and the reference to 'your [*sc.* Telemachus' and Pisistratus'] fathers, *whoever they are*' (4.94–95). Having thus provoked an emotional response from Telemachus, Menelaus observes it closely (4.116) and contemplates his next move.[139] He ponders whether to let Telemachus reveal himself, by 'making mention himself (i.e. in his own time) of his father', in response to the indirect requests at 4.61–64, 94–95, or to draw him on by degrees into so doing.

In Menelaus' moment of indecision, Helen enters and takes a course precisely contrary to that which he was considering, announcing her conviction that this is Telemachus (4.138–46). The different approaches and different characters of the spouses could not be clearer: Menelaus works indirectly and (over?)sensitively towards Telemachus' own self-revelation, Helen simply blurts out her conviction.[140] The same contrast emerges at 15.166–81: while Menelaus is still pondering a carefully weighed reply, he is anticipated by Helen.[141] Helen emerges as impulsive and precipitate, Menelaus as considered and dilatory. By contrast, Penelope in the later books emerges as having exactly the same kind of character as Odysseus: she, too, is able to conceal her feelings, to bide her time, to play her cards close to her chest, to practise justified deception to achieve legitimate ends, with her husband as well as with her suitors!

Relevant to this issue is the discrepancy between Helen's speech at 4.238–64 and Menelaus' at 4.266–89, concerning Helen's conduct at Troy.[142] In her speech, Helen emphasizes her repentance and devotion to her home, her family and 'her husband' (in this instance, Menelaus, 4.259–64), continuing in the same vein of self-reproach initiated at 4.145.[143] Menelaus by contrast emphasizes Helen's continued opposition, right to the end, to the Greek cause, her devotion to Deiphobus, after Paris (her other 'husbands', 276). Line 289, 'until Pallas Athene led you away', implies that Helen would not have stopped imperilling the Greeks before Athene came to their rescue, thereby cuttingly repudiating Helen's claim at 261–62 ('I repented the blind folly which Aphrodite gave me, when she led me thither away from my own fatherland'), in which she had pleaded her lack of active volition in going to Troy. While Helen attempts a revisionary view of her role at Troy, Menelaus does not let her straightforwardly get away with it. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the resulting picture is of lingering and unresolved marital tension.[144] Helen and Menelaus go to bed together (304–05), but this is still revealed as a marriage

---

[136] Jones (1988) 37. Differently, De Jong (2001a) 551, *cf.* 94, 97.

[137] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 37: 'We must allow for the possibility that Menelaus spoke as he did to test a hunch about his visitor's identity'.

[138] *Cf.* Heubeck (1981) 78–79; Danek (1998) 494. For discussion of κερτομία in general, see Lloyd (2004).

[139] Differently, Ahl and Roisman (1996) 152–53.

[140] Ahl and Roisman (1996) 37, 279.

[141] Stanford (1959) 246; Griffin (1987) 85–86; Blondell (2013) 78, *cf.* 86.

[142] Kakridis (1971) 42–44; Blondell (2013) 81–85.

[143] Blondell (2013) 74.

[144] Olson (1995) 83–85.

with residual underlying issues.[145] The image of the couple who retire to bed with differences unresolved is not new to Homeric epic (compare *Il.* 1.610–11: Zeus and Hera), or to the Homeric Helen (*Il.* 3.447–48: with Paris). It is in a very different spirit that Odysseus and Penelope go to bed at 23.288–309.

## IX.  Conclusions

To see Penelope as recognizing Odysseus at 32–33, but reuniting with him only at 205–30, has numerous implications for the detailed understanding of their climactic reunion (*Od.* 23.1–230). It has obvious implications for the characterization of Penelope, and her relationships and interactions with other characters (Odysseus, Eurycleia, Telemachus). There are wider methodological implications, too. To ask, 'when does Penelope recognize Odysseus?' is to take a step towards asking whether we are entitled (or required) to read the minds of the characters in the poem, and how we are to do it.

 Not all scholars are agreed on the validity of the question 'when does Penelope recognize Odysseus?' For Sheila Murnaghan, 'the question with which modern criticism has been so much concerned, the question of when Penelope recognizes Odysseus, is never acknowledged within the poem as an issue'.[146] Yet it is sufficiently an issue for the poem to school us, by way of preparation, in the question, 'when does Menelaus recognize Telemachus?' in the fourth book (see section VIII).[147] For Adrian Kelly, arguing from an 'oralist' perspective, 'it is a misguided question to wonder when, precisely, Penelope recognizes her husband … When the pattern is concluded, the process is complete, and only then does Penelope *know* that her husband has returned'.[148] On this view, recognition is to be understood as the operation of a traditional type-scene, and it only makes sense to say that recognition is effected when the type-scene is accomplished. John Miles Foley has similarly explained 'Penelope's indeterminacy' with reference to her need to exemplify the traditional type of the 'Return Song heroine'.[149] Yet it is more than that: the 'indeterminacy' that Penelope presents (to the other characters, to us) is most crucially an invitation (to both the characters and to us) to read her mind. Any analysis of recognition in the *Odyssey* as a traditional or typical element must not lead to its reduction to just the instantiation of a traditional character-type or just the operation of a traditional type-scene; our conception of the 'recognition type-scene' must be nuanced enough to accommodate the variegated complexity of the process of recognition (in life and in this poem: see above, section II (1)–(4)).

 The mind-reading approach advocated here can seem at odds with a view of the *Odyssey* as an oral-derived work. Stephanie West has dismissed what she calls 'inappropriately subtle analyses of Penelope's characterization', referring to 'the well-established tendency of oral narrative to focus on the function of its characters without regard to their psychology'.[150] It is no doubt true that we would not necessarily expect an oral poem to require its audience to engage in elaborate mind-reading of its characters. Zunshine, though coming from a very different perspective to West, likewise assumes that 'oral' (better, for poems such as the *Iliad*, *Beowulf* and *Gilgamesh*: 'oral-derived') poetry is bound to show less

---

[145] Winkler (1990) 140: 'A charming illustration of an unlikeminded couple is Menelaos and Helen'. *Cf.* Rutherford (1985) 140; West (1988) 200; Ahl and Roisman (1996) 33, 38–39.

[146] Murnaghan (1994) 87. Note that this is not just a concern of modern criticism: see Sen. *Ep.* 88.8.

[147] On the parallels between the narratives of Telemachus in Sparta and Odysseus in Ithaca, see Rutherford (1985) 138–40.

[148] Kelly (2012) 18 n.41 (emphasis original).

[149] Foley (1999) especially 154: 'Penelope is not being coy here [*sc.* in book 19], not consciously baiting a man she suspects may be her husband; she is simply being Penelope, the Return Song heroine who cannot yet afford to behave in any other way'; *cf.* 142–43, 162.

[150] West (2012) 532.

complex structures of mind-reading than written literature.[151] The measure of complexity that is envisaged here is the number of levels of embedded intentionality with which a work operates (i.e. *x* thinks that *y* thinks that *z* thinks that, etc.). However, counts of embedded intentionality in written literature that reach or exceed the fifth level probably rely on over-generous counting.[152] Terence Cave prefers instead to see Shakespeare's *Othello* as exploiting 'a striking number of instances of three- and four-level embedments', and Virginia Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* as 'trying to capture the play of different mind-states, operating separately and simultaneously, across a group of characters present at the same scene'.[153] We should note how apt these descriptions would also be for the *Odyssey*. In book 4, Pisistratus, Telemachus, Menelaus and Helen have complexly intersecting views of what each of the others is thinking, and embedded intentionality seems to reach at least the third level (Menelaus plays along with Helen's surmise that he does not know that their guest is Telemachus, who is trying to keep his identity secret from them); the situation in the 23rd book, with the complex interplay of the intentional mind states of Eurycleia, Penelope, Telemachus and Odysseus, is very similar. In its reliance on mind-reading the *Odyssey* appears to stand comparison with written works of literature. If this makes the *Odyssey* exceptional for an oral-derived poem, that is an important consideration, and one to reflect on; it would be wrong, however, to reject a mind-reading approach to the poem simply on the grounds that it would make it exceptional for an oral(-derived) poem.

There is also a literary-historical conclusion to be drawn. Jonas Grethlein has recently argued, based on a study of the third- or fourth-century CE *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus, that ancient narratives were uninterested in 'the presentation of consciousness', in other words, in mind-reading.[154] The *Odyssey*, as read here, suggests a different story: that Greek narrative fiction from almost its attested beginnings was interested in encouraging its narratee to read the minds of its characters. There is reason to think that the *Odyssey* (often seen as anticipating the novel)[155] was pioneering in this regard. It is unclear what exactly the ancient critics meant in describing the *Odyssey*, in a pointed contrast with the *Iliad*, as 'concerned with character' (ἠθική);[156] but one interpretation (ἠθική as meaning 'exploratory of character', by means of the verbal and non-verbal cues furnished by the Odyssean narrative) would take us close to mind-reading. Certainly, the *Odyssey* seems to be interested in mind-reading to a different extent than the *Iliad*.[157] The difference arguably enters into the self-definition of the poems themselves. The Iliadic Achilles professes, to none other than Odysseus, that 'that person is hateful to [him] like the gates of Hades, who hides one thing in his heart and says another' (*Il.* 9.312–13).[158] The *Odyssey*, on the other hand, is a poem in which Odysseus can delight to see Penelope charming the Suitors 'with soothing words, while her mind had other designs' (18.281–83).

Fifth-century Attic tragedy is another, non-narrative, ancient Greek literary form that was keenly interested in mind-reading.[159] Mind-reading works differently in narrative and

[151] Zunshine (2006) 37–38 (mentioning the *Iliad*, not the *Odyssey*), 73, 159.

[152] Ryan (2010) 478–79; Cave (2016) 113.

[153] Cave (2016) 113, 114.

[154] Grethlein (2015); see especially 267, for the generalization to 'ancient narrative in general'. The same issue of the journal *Style* contains various responses to Grethlein's thesis.

[155] See above, n.43.

[156] Arist. *Poet.* 1459b15, *cf.* 1450a5–6; Ps.–Longinus, *Subl.* 9.15. For (different) interpretations of ἠθική in connection with the *Odyssey*, see Richardson (1981) 7–8; Gill (1984).

[157] Griffin (1980) 67, 76.

[158] See Griffin (1995) 111.

[159] See Budelmann and Easterling (2010); van Emde Boas (forthcoming); compare and contrast Cairns (2021) especially 10–11, 16–17.

dramatic works.[160] In the latter, the audience intuits the characters' states of mind solely from what they say; in the former, the narrator may give the narratee certain privileged insights into what characters think and feel, while still leaving a great deal unsaid.[161] All reading of literary characters' (as of real people's) minds is, of course, subjective and fallible;[162] and so, too, for that matter, is much else of what is interesting and rewarding in literary interpretation (imagery, allusion, etc.). Sheila Murnaghan has objected that '[t]here is a danger of treating [Penelope] as simply a character without a setting, indeed, not as a literary character at all but as a real person, to whom the modern reader is free to attribute whatever qualities he or she believes real people possess'.[163] Yet the attribution of mind states to Penelope by the narratee is not purely arbitrary; it is guided by the narrative (the reports of her verbal and non-verbal behaviour; the imperfect intradiegetic reading of Penelope's mind by other characters: Eurycleia, Telemachus and Odysseus), where 'guided' should be understood to mean neither fully determined by it nor left entirely to the narratee's whim.[164]

## Bibliography

Ahl, F. and Roisman, H.M. (1996) *The* Odyssey *Re-Formed* (Ithaca and London)

Alden, M. (2017) *Paranarratives in the* Odyssey: *Stories in the Frame* (Oxford)

Amory, A. (1963) 'The reunion of Odysseus and Penelope', in C.H. Taylor (ed.), *Essays on the* Odyssey: *Selected Modern Criticism* (Bloomington) 100–21

Apperly, I. (2011) *Mindreaders: The Cognitive Basis of Theory of Mind* (Hove)

Austin, N. (1975) *Archery at the Dark of the Moon: Poetic Problems in Homer's* Odyssey (Berkeley and Los Angeles)

Bassett, S.E. (1919) 'Actoris in the *Odyssey*', *CQ* 13, 1–3

Battezzato, L. (2019) *Leggere la mente degli eroi Ettore, Achille e Zeus nell'*Iliade (Pisa)

Beck, D. (2005) *Homeric Conversation* (Washington, DC)

Belfiore, E.S. (1992) *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion* (Princeton)

Beßlich, S. (1966) *Schweigen-Verschweigen-Übergehen: Die Darstellung des Unausgesprochenen in der* Odyssee (Heidelberg)

Blondell, R. (2013) *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation* (Oxford)

Bowie, A.M. (2013) *Homer* Odyssey *Books XIII and XIV* (Cambridge)

Brann, E. (2002) *Homeric Moments: Clues to Delight in Reading the* Odyssey *and the* Iliad (Philadelphia)

Brown, P. and Levinson, S.C. (1987) *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge)

Budelmann, F. (2018) 'Lyric minds', in F. Budelmann and T. Phillips (eds), *Textual Events: Performance and the Lyric in Early Greece* (Oxford) 235–56

Budelmann, F. and Easterling, P.E. (2010) 'Reading minds in Greek tragedy', *G&R* 57, 289–303

Cairns, D.L. (2005) 'Bullish looks and sidelong glances: social interaction and the eyes in ancient Greek culture', in D.L. Cairns (ed.), *Body Language in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Swansea) 123–53

—— (2014) 'ψυχή, θυμός, and metaphor in Homer and Plato', *Études platoniciennes* 11. https://journals.openedition.org/etudesplatoniciennes/566

[160] See Zunshine (2006) 23; van Emde Boas (forthcoming).

[161] *Cf.* Zunshine (2006) 22: 'Writers can exploit our constant readiness to posit a mind whenever we observe behavior as they experiment with the amount and kind of interpretation of the characters' mental states that they themselves supply and that they expect us to supply': Cave (2016) 25, 27 and 199, *s.v.* 'underspecification'.

[162] Griffin (1980) 65; Cave (2016) 27–28.

[163] Murnaghan (1994) 80, cited with approval by Saïd (2011) 286. *Cf.* above, n.44, on the 'dehumanizing' approaches to characters in literature.

[164] *Cf.* Richardson (2011) 121.

—— (2017) 'Horror, pity, and the visual in ancient Greek aesthetics', in D.L. Cairns and D. Nelis (eds), *Emotions in the Classical World: Methods, Approaches, and Directions* (Stuttgart) 53–77

—— (2021) 'The dynamics of emotion in Euripides' *Medea*', *G&R* 67, 8–26

Cairns, D.L. and Nelis, D. (2017) 'Introduction', in D.L. Cairns and D. Nelis (eds), *Emotions in the Classical World: Methods, Approaches, and Directions* (Stuttgart) 7–30

Cave, T. (1988) *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford)

—— (2016) *Thinking with Literature: Towards a Cognitive Criticism* (Oxford)

Colombetti, G. (2014) *The Feeling Body: Affective Science Meets the Enactive Mind* (Cambridge MA)

Culpeper, J. (2001) *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts* (Harlow)

Currie, G. (2008) 'Some ways to understand people', *Philosophical Explorations* 11, 211–18

Currie, B.G.F. (2021) 'La teoria de la mente y el autoconcepto de Penelope en el canto 23 de *Odisea*', in C. Fernández and G. Zecchin De Fasano (eds), *Cartografias del yo en el mundo antiguo: Estrategias de su textualizacion* (La Plata) 12–37

—— (2022) 'Emotionally reunited: Laertes and Odysseus in *Odyssey* book 24', in M.P. de Bakker, J.J.H. Klooster and B. van den Berg (eds), *Emotions and Narrative in Ancient Literature and Beyond: Studies in Honour of Irene de Jong* (Leiden and Boston) 135–52

Danek, G. (1998) *Epos und Zitat: Studien zu den Quellen der Odyssee* (Vienna)

Davis, N.Z. (1983) *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge MA. and London)

De Jong, I.J.F. (1987) *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the* Iliad (Amsterdam)

—— (1991) 'Narratology and oral poetry: the case for Homer', *Poetics Today* 12, 405–23

—— (2001a) *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge)

—— (2001b) 'The origins of figural narration in antiquity', in W. van Peer and S. Chatman (eds), *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective* (New York) 67–81

—— (2009) 'Between word and deed: hidden thoughts in the *Odyssey*', in L.E. Doherty (ed.), *Homer's* Odyssey*: Oxford Readings in Classical Studies* (Oxford) 62–90 [first published in I.J.F. de Jong and J.P. Sullivan (eds), *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature* (Leiden, 1994) 27–50]

—— (2017) 'Homer', in K. de Temmerman and E. van Emde Boas (eds), *Characterization in Ancient Greek Literature.* Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative 4 (Leiden and Boston) 27–45

Edwards, M.W. (1987) '*Topos* and transformation in Homer', in J.M. Bremer, I.J.F. de Jong and J. Kalff (eds), *Homer: Beyond Oral Poetry. Recent Trends in Homeric Interpretation* (Amsterdam) 47–60

Emlyn-Jones, C. (1998) 'The reunion of Penelope and Odysseus', in I. McAuslan and P. Walcot (eds), *Homer* (Oxford) 126–43, with Addendum, pp. 153–54 [first published: *G&R* 31 (1984), 1–18]

Feeney, D.C. (2006) 'Criticism ancient and modern', in A. Laird (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford) 440–54 [first published in D.C. Innes, H. Hine and C.B.R. Pelling (eds), *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford, 1995) 301–10]

Felson-Rubin, N. (1987) 'Penelope's perspective: character from plot', in J.M. Bremer, I.J.F. de Jong and J. Kalff (eds), *Homer: Beyond Oral Poetry. Recent Trends in Homeric Interpretation* (Amsterdam) 61–83

Felson, N. (2011) 'Eurykleia', in M. Finkelberg (ed.), *The Homeric Encyclopedia* 1 (Malden) 274

Fenik, B. (1974) *Studies in the* Odyssey (Wiesbaden)

Foley, J.M. (1999) *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park)

Fredricksmeyer, H.C. (1997) 'Penelope *polytropos*: the crux at *Odyssey* 23.218–24', *AJPh* 118, 487–97

Friedrich, R. (1985) Review of J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, *Phoenix* 39, 75–80

Fuchs, T. and De Jaegher, H. (2009) 'Enactive intersubjectivity: participatory sense-making and mutual incorporation', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 8, 465–86

Gainsford, P. (2001) 'Cognition and type-scenes: the *aoidos* at work', in F. Budelmann and P. Michelakis (eds), *Homer, Tragedy and Beyond: Essays in Honour of P.E. Easterling* (London) 3–21

—— (2003) 'Formal analysis of recognition scenes in the *Odyssey*', *JHS* 123, 41–59

Gallagher, S. (2001) 'The practice of mind: theory, simulation or primary interaction?', in E. Thompson (ed.), *Between Ourselves: Second-Person Issues in Study of Consciousness* (Thorverton) 83–108 = *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8.5–7 (2001), 83–108

—— (2009) 'Two problems of intersubjectivity', *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 16.6–7, 289–308

—— (2020) *Action and Interaction* (Oxford)

Gill, C. (1984) 'The *ēthos/pathos* distinction in rhetorical and literary criticism', *CQ* 34, 149–66

Goldhill, S.J. (1991) *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge)

Grethlein, J. (2015) 'Is narrative "the description of fictional mental functioning"? Heliodorus against Palmer, Zunshine & Co.', *Style* 49.3, 257–84

Griffin, J. (1980) *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford)

—— (1987) *Homer: The* Odyssey (Cambridge)

—— (1995) *Homer* Iliad *IX* (Oxford)

—— (2004) 'The speeches', in R.L. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge) 156–67

Hansen, W.F. (2002) *Ariadne's Thread: A Guide to International Tales Found in Classical Literature* (Ithaca)

Harsh, P.W. (1950) 'Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX', *AJPh* 71, 1–21

Heitman, R. (2005) *Taking Her Seriously: Penelope and the Plot of Homer's* Odyssey (Michigan)

Herman, D. (2007) 'Storytelling and the sciences of mind: cognitive narratology, discursive psychology, and narratives in face-to-face interaction', *Narrative* 15.3, 306–34

—— (2011a) 'Introduction', in D. Herman (ed.), *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English* (Lincoln NE) 1–40

—— (2011b) 'Post-Cartesian approaches to narrative and mind: a response to Alan Palmer's target essay on "social minds"', *Style* 45.2, 265–71

Heubeck, A. (1981) 'Zwei homerische πεῖραι', *Živa antika* 31, 73–83

—— (1992) 'Books XXIII–XXIV', in J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano and A. Heubeck, *Homer's* Odyssey*, Volume III: Books XVII–XXIV* (Oxford) 311–418

Hogan, P. C. (2015) 'What literature teaches us about emotion: Synthesizing affective science and literary study', in L. Zunshine (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies* (Oxford), 273–90

Hunter, R.L. (2004) 'Homer and Greek literature', in R.L. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge) 235–53

Hutto, D.D. (2011) 'Understanding fictional minds without theory of mind!', *Style* 45.2, 276–82

Jones, P.V. (1988) *Homer's* Odyssey*: A Companion to the English Translation of Richmond Lattimore* (Bristol)

Kakridis, J.T. (1949) *Homeric Researches* (Lund)

—— (1970) 'Dichterische Gestalten und wirkliche Menschen bei Homer', in K. Gaiser (ed.), *Das Altertum und jedes neue Gute: Für Wolfgang Schadewaldt zum 15. März* (Stuttgart) 51–64

—— (1971) *Homer Revisited* (Lund)

Katz, M.A. (1991) *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the* Odyssey (Princeton)

Kearns, E. (1982) 'The return of Odysseus: a Homeric theoxeny', *CQ* 32, 2–8

—— (2004) 'The gods in the Homeric epics', in R.L. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge) 59–73

Kelly, A. (2012) 'The audience expects: Penelope and Odysseus', in E. Minchin (ed.), *Orality, Literacy and Performance in the Ancient World* (Leiden and Boston) 3–24

Langholf, V. (2006) 'σῆμα', in B. Snell and H.J. Mette (eds) *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* 21 (Göttingen) 103–06

Lloyd, M. (2004) 'The politeness of Achilles: off-record conversation strategies in Homer and the meaning of "kertomia"', *JHS* 124, 75–89

Louden, B. (2011) 'Is there early recognition between Penelope and Odysseus? Book 19 in the larger context of the *Odyssey*', *College Literature* 38.2, 76–100

Lowe, N.J. (2000) *The Classical Plot and the Invention of Western Narrative* (Cambridge)

Macleod, C.W. (1982) *Homer:* Iliad*, Book XXIV* (Cambridge)

Mader, B. (1987) 'ἔρυμαι', in B. Snell and H.J. Mette (eds) *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* 12 (Göttingen) 720–22

Morgan, K. (1991) '*Odyssey* 23.218–24: adultery, shame, and marriage', *AJPh* 112, 1–3

Murnaghan, S. (1987) *Disguise and Recognition in the* Odyssey (Princeton)

—— (1994) 'Reading Penelope', in S.M. Oberhelman, V. Kelly, and R.J. Golsan (eds), *Essays on the Interpretation and History of a Genre* (Lubbock) 76–96

Nichols, S. and Stich, S.P. (2003) *Mindreading: An Integrated Account of Pretence, Self-Awareness, and Understanding Other Minds* (Oxford)

Nünlist, R. (2015) '"If in truth you are Odysseus" – Distrust and persuasion in the *Odyssey*', *SO* 89.1, 2–24

Olson, S.D. (1995) *Blood and Iron: Stories and Storytelling in Homer's* Odyssey (Leiden)

Palmer, A. (2011) 'Enlarged perspectives: a rejoinder to the responses', *Style* 45.2, 366–412

Pedrick, V. (1994) 'Eurycleia and Eurynome as Penelope's confidantes', in S.M. Oberhelman, V. Kelly and R.J. Golsan (eds), *Essays on the Interpretation and History of a Genre* (Lubbock) 97–116

Pelliccia, H. (2011) 'Double motivation', in M. Finkelberg (ed.), *The Homeric Encyclopedia* 1 (Malden) 218–19

Pulleyn, S. (2019) *Homer* Odyssey *1. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, Commentary and Glossary* (Oxford)

Reece, S. (2011) 'Penelope's "early recognition" of Odysseus from a neoanalytic and oral perspective', *College Literature* 38.2, 101–17

Richardson, N.J. (1981) 'The contest of Homer and Hesiod and Alcidamas' *Mouseion*', *CQ* 31, 1–10

Richardson, S. (2011) 'The case for the defense', *College Literature* 38.2, 118–21

Roisman, H.M. (1987) 'Penelope's indignation', *TAPhA* 117, 59–68

Russo, J. (1982) 'Interview and aftermath: dream, fantasy, and intuition in *Odyssey* 19 and 20', *AJPh* 103, 4–18

—— (1992) 'Books XVII–XX', in J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano and A. Heubeck, *Homer's* Odyssey*, Volume III: Books XVII–XXIV* (Oxford) 1–127

Rutherford, R.B. (1985) 'At home and abroad: aspects of the structure of the *Odyssey*', *PCPhS* 31, 133–50

—— (1986) 'The philosophy of the *Odyssey*', *JHS* 106, 145–62

—— (1992) *Homer* Odyssey *Books XIX and XX* (Cambridge)

—— (2013) *Homer* (Cambridge)

Ryan, M.-L. (2010) 'Narratology and cognitive science: a problematic relation', *Style* 44, 469–95

Saïd, S. (2011) *Homer and the* Odyssey (Oxford)

Scodel, R. (1998) 'The removal of the arms, the recognition with Laertes, and narrative tension in the Odyssey', *CPh* 93, 1–17

—— (2008) *Epic Facework: Self-Presentation and Social Interaction in Homer* (Swansea)

—— (2012) 'ἦ and Homeric theory of mind', in M. Meier-Brügger (ed.), *Homer, gedeutet durch ein großes Lexikon* (Berlin) 319–34

—— (2014) 'Narrative focus and elusive thought in Homer', in D.L. Cairns and R. Scodel (eds), *Defining Greek Narrative* (Edinburgh) 55–74

Silk, M. (2004) 'The *Odyssey* and its explorations', in R.L. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge) 31–44

Stanford, W.B. (1959) *The* Odyssey *of Homer* (2nd ed) (London)

Stawarska, B. (2006) 'Mutual gaze and social cognition', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 5, 17–30

Thalmann, W.G. (1998) *The Swineherd and the Bow: Representations of Class in the* Odyssey (Ithaca)

van Emde Boas, E. (forthcoming) 'Mindreading, character, and realism: the case of Medea', in F. Budelmann and I. Sluiter (eds), *Minds on Stage: Cognitive Approaches to Greek Tragedy* (Oxford)

van Emde Boas, E., Rijksbaron, A., Huitink, L. and Bakker, M. de (2019) *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek* (Cambridge)

Vlahos, J.B. (2011) 'Homer's *Odyssey*: Penelope and the case for early recognition', *College Literature* 38.2, 1–75

von Kamptz, H. (1982) *Homerische Personennamen: Sprachwissenschaftliche und historische Klassifikation* (Göttingen)

van Wees, H. (2005) 'Clothes, class and gender in Homer', in D.L. Cairns (ed.), *Body Language in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Swansea) 1–36

West, M.L. (2014) *The Making of the* Odyssey (Oxford)

West, S.R. (1988) 'Books I–IV', in A. Heubeck, S.R. West and J.B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, *Volume I: Introduction and Books I-VIII* (Oxford) 51–245

—— (2012) 'Some reflections on *Alpamysh*', in F. Montanari, A. Rengakos and C. Tsagalis (eds), *Homeric Contexts: Neoanalysis and the Interpretation of Oral Poetry*. Trends in Classics Supplementary Volumes 12 (Berlin and Boston) 531–41

Wilson, E. (2006), '*Quantum mutatus ab illo*: moments of change and recognition in Tasso and Milton', in M.J. Clarke, B.G.F. Currie and R.O.A.M. Lyne (eds), *Epic Interactions: Perspectives on Homer, Virgil, and the Classical Tradition Presented to Jasper Griffin by Former Pupils* (Oxford) 273–99

Winkler, J.J. (1990) 'Penelope's cunning and Homer's', in J.J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York and London) 129–61

Wright, T. (2018) 'Telemachus' recognition of Odysseus', *GRBS* 58, 1–18

Zahavi, D. (2007) 'Expression and empathy', in D.D. Hutto and M. Ratcliffe (eds), *Folk Psychology Re-assessed* (Dordrecht) 25–40

Zeitlin, F. (1995) 'Figuring fidelity in Homer's *Odyssey*', in B. Cohen (ed.), *The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer's* Odyssey (New York and Oxford) 117–52

Zerba, M. (2009) 'What Penelope knew: doubt and scepticism in the *Odyssey*', *CQ* 59, 295–316

Zunshine, L. (2006) *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus)