

Eumaeus and Odysseus—Covert Recognition and Self-Revelation?

HANNA M. ROISMAN

For Mordechai Gichon

When Odysseus first returns to Ithaca, he reveals his identity explicitly only to Telemachus. All the other members of the household see him only as a ragged beggar. Telemachus is probably granted this formal recognition not only out of paternal sentiment, or because Athena commanded it (16. 167–71), but because he is the safest confidant in the household. His youth, naiveté, and filial relation to Odysseus all favor his trustworthiness, and besides that he needs Odysseus to protect his life and property. Moreover, were Telemachus to violate Odysseus' confidence and reveal his identity to the suitors, Odysseus could readily deny it. Telemachus is the only character Odysseus meets at the beginning who cannot confirm his identity because he was a baby when his father left and has no memory of him.¹

Yet despite Odysseus' insistence on withholding his identity, the leitmotiv of covert self-revelation runs through the epic. To get the help he will need in reestablishing his place in his home, Odysseus must obtain the support of key figures who are potentially less reliable than his son. He needs Eumaeus as a loyal servant in a distant farmstead with a footing in the palace. He needs Eurycleia as an ally in the house.² Since they are slaves, however, their loyalty cannot be taken for granted. As Eumaeus attests, the gods take half a man's *arete* the day he enters servitude (17. 322–23).

¹ In fact, Odysseus appears to his son in a way that should have caused Telemachus to question his self-disclosure. If Telemachus had ever asked about his father's appearance, he could have been told, as the text informs us, that Odysseus is red- or fair-haired (13. 399, 431). Yet he appears to his son bald, with a thick black beard and dark complexion (16. 175–76, 13. 399, 18. 353–55).

² For the view that Odysseus reveals himself first to those whose assistance he needs in overcoming the suitors and, therefore, not to Penelope, see also Σ^N *Od.* 13 init. (= II 789–90 Dindorf), which starts with a citation from Aristotle (presumably from the *Homeric Problems*, see N. J. Richardson, "Recognition scenes in the *Odyssey*," *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 4 [1983] 225–26): ἔστι φάναι, φησὶν Ἀριστοτέλης, ὅτι τοῖς μὲν ἔδει ὡς ἂν μετέχειν μέλλουσι τοῦ κινδύνου εἰπεῖν. ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἦν ἄνευ τούτων ἐπιθέσθαι τοῖς μνηστήρσι (fr. 176 R). See also W. J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford 1930) 75, for Odysseus' need of Eumaeus.

Slaves were notorious for changing allegiance. Thus with these characters Odysseus is cautious and circumspect. He reveals himself covertly.

This paper will focus on Eumaeus' covert recognition and his master's covert self-disclosures. Let me begin by pointing out that for all Odysseus' insistence on secrecy and disguise, on several occasions the poem implies that Odysseus can be recognized. Penelope, Eurycleia, and Philoetius are all struck by the beggar's similarity to Odysseus. Penelope orders Eurycleia to wash her master's "agemate" and makes a point of noting the beggar's similarity to Odysseus: "and Odysseus must by this time have the same hands and feet as he does" (καί που Ὀδυσσεὺς / ἤδη τοιόσδ' ἐστὶ πόδας τοιόσδε τε χεῖρας 19. 358–59), she tells Eurycleia in front of the guest. Eurycleia also notes the resemblance. "Many sore-tired strangers have come here," Eurycleia says as she is about to bathe the beggar, "but I say I have never seen one as like as you are to Odysseus in form, voice, and feet" (οὐ πώ τινά φημι εἰκότα ὧδε ιδέσθαι / ὡς σὺ δέμας φωνήν τε πόδας τ' Ὀδυσῆϊ ἔοικας 19. 380–81). Even Philoetius, who probably was not particularly close to Odysseus before his departure for Troy, compares the beggar's form to that of a royal prince (ἔοικε δέμας βασιλῆϊ ἄνακτι). He tells the beggar that cold sweat covered him when he saw him, since he was immediately reminded of his long-absent master (20. 194, 204). Odysseus' awareness that his disguise can be penetrated is probably the reason why he takes so much care to appear before Penelope after sunset, when she would have a harder time making out his features (17. 570, 582).

Eurycleia and Odysseus

It is generally assumed that Odysseus does not want Eurycleia to recognize him. But Odysseus' attitude toward Eurycleia is ambivalent. On the one hand, he expressly asks for her to wash his feet—his description of the maid he wants for the task excludes everyone but Eurycleia, whom he sees sitting near Penelope. On the other hand, the text tells us that when Eurycleia rose to prepare the bath, he moved away from the hearth to avoid being seen in the firelight, and "immediately he thought in his heart that as she handled him she might become aware of the scar, and the whole story might come out" (19. 390–91).

W. J. Woodhouse attributes the contradiction to Homer's having based this encounter on different variants of the old tale. The saga material offered more than one means by which, and more than one person by whom, the hero could be recognized.³ Woodhouse suggests that there might have been a story in which the maid, who knew her master better and longer than his wife, was the one who first revealed Odysseus' identity to Penelope. Jasper Griffin suggests that the poet sang different versions on different occasions, choosing the variant on the basis of an immediate effect rather than absolute coherence.⁴ In either case, in the written version Odysseus clearly wishes Eurycleia to recognize him. Otherwise he could have rejected the bath as he rejects a soft bed. It is noteworthy that the Scholia also maintain that Odysseus reveals himself to Eurycleia as he does to Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoetius, since her help forms part of his plot in overcoming the suitors (διὰ ταῦτα δὲ καὶ τῇ Εὐρυκλείᾳ ἐκκαλύπτει αὐτὸν χρησίμῳ ἔσομένῃ πρὸς τὴν θυρῶν ἀσφάλειαν καὶ τὴν τῶν θεραπεινίδων ἡσυχίαν).⁵

He chooses Eurycleia to wash him because he knows that she is the only one who can identify him by his scar. Other than Eurycleia, none of the people Odysseus encounters was sufficiently familiar with his scar to identify him by it. The scar was above the knee, where a boar, we are told, gashed the flesh (19. 450). Yet when Odysseus prepares himself to fight Irus, he girds his rags and shows his thighs (18. 67–68) without concern that he will be identified. The suitors marvel at the size and beauty of his limbs (18. 71), but no one remarks on the scar. Either they do not know that Odysseus has such a scar, or they do not notice it. Indeed, the text emphatically points out that Eurycleia identifies Odysseus by feeling the leg and touching the scar, which suggests that it was not noticeable to the eye (19. 390, 468, 475).⁶

Odysseus wants Eurycleia to recognize him but not to reveal his identity to Penelope nor to insist on having him acknowledge her recognition. When in Penelope's presence she drops his foot into the basin and, crying out, touches his chin, he throttles the old woman and checks the possible cry of joy on her lips (19. 469–81).

³ Woodhouse (previous note) 74–76. On recognition by a future accomplice as a standard feature of Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian songs, see A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (London 1960) 103–04.

⁴ J. Griffin, *The Odyssey* (Cambridge 1987) 26–33, esp. 31.

⁵ Σ^N *Od.* 13 init. (= II 789 Dindorf).

⁶ Nor did Odysseus consider his scar ultimate proof of his identity, for in addition to showing Laertes his scar, he recounts the trees that his father had given him (24. 336–43). Woodhouse (above, note 2) 75 suggests that Penelope herself might have been altogether unaware of the adventure.

Eumaeus and Odysseus

When analyzing characters' encounters, we should carefully differentiate between the recognition of one's identity and the acknowledgment of this recognition. There is a difference between the two, and they are not necessarily simultaneous. A character can recognize the identity of another character who seeks to remain incognito and yet not make his discovery known, and vice versa, a recognized character might not wish to acknowledge another character's recognition of his identity. The tension between Eumaeus' recognition of his master and Odysseus' acknowledgment of this recognition adds depth to the encounter between the swineherd and his master, just as does the tension between Penelope's recognition of her husband and her intentionally postponed acknowledgment of this recognition in the final encounter of the royal couple.⁷ The covert recognition also effects a very complex irony of the kind we witness explicitly in Book 17, where the audience, Telemachus, and Eumaeus all know the beggar's true identity, but none of the characters knows about the other character's awareness.⁸

There is no formal recognition (i.e., recognition and acknowledgment) between Odysseus and Eumaeus till very late in their encounter in Book 21, just before the bow contest, when Odysseus reveals his identity formally to both the swineherd and the neatherd. Yet throughout their encounter, which starts in Book 14, the two men operate with inner rapport and psychological sympathy. The text subtly confirms that inner rapport between master and slave, which is a vital factor in the upcoming recognition. When Odysseus sits down, frightened by Eumaeus' dogs, and his stick falls from his hand, the text notes: . . . σκῆπτρον δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε χειρός ("and the staff fell out of his hand" 14. 31). The language and metrical structure of the statement are picked up when Eumaeus, hearing the barking of the dogs, hurries out to the yard and drops the hide from his hand: . . . σκῦτος δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε χειρός ("and the hide fell out of his hand" 14. 34). The counterpointing of

⁷ See H. M. Roisman, "Penelope's Indignation," *TAPA* 117 (1987) 59-68.

⁸ Cf. also *mutatis mutandis* the irony effected after Eurycleia recognizes her master, but Penelope remains unaware of this recognition (20. 129-43). The encounter between Eumaeus and Odysseus is commonly taken by scholars as effecting irony, bathos, and humor. E.g., B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Wiesbaden 1974) *passim*. Since no recognition is assumed to have happened, the irony in question is a simple one based on the audience's knowledge of the beggar's identity and the slave's slowness in gathering what is happening. The covert recognition of Odysseus by Eumaeus does not preclude the presence of irony but it is of a different kind. The irony effected is not only between the poet/text and the audience at the expense of one of the two characters, but mostly between each of the characters at the expense of each other and the audience. Such an irony, which is more subtle, will become fully developed especially in the frequent slave asides in Roman comedy.

the statements suggests the accord between the two characters who meet after a long separation.⁹

Cedric Whitman stated that Odysseus starts his self-revelation with the lower ranks but not with Eumaeus.¹⁰ Yet we cannot understand Eumaeus' behavior and his response to Odysseus' arrival, or Odysseus' thoughts and motivations during his stay in Eumaeus' hut, unless we take into account Eumaeus' covert recognition of Odysseus, which might initially be subconscious but gradually becomes conscious, even if not formally acknowledged.¹¹

The theme of recognition is introduced when Odysseus approaches Eumaeus' hut in Book 14 and Eumaeus' dogs are about to attack him. The text says in 14. 30–31: αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς / ἔζετο κερδοσύνη. The use of the noun κερδοσύνη ("resourcefulness, ingenuity, shrewdness, wiliness") hints at the motif of recognition, for the only other occurrence of the noun in Homer is in Helen's tale about her recognition of Odysseus when he entered Troy, also disguised as a beggar. Helen says she was the only one who recognized and questioned him, but in his κερδοσύνη he sought to avoid her (4. 251). The noun seems to occur in association with the penetrability of Odysseus' disguise. Moreover, the base κερδ- also occurs in connection with Odysseus' unmasking. We find it in every scene in which Odysseus is recognized through his disguise. When upon his arrival at Ithaca he tries to hide his identity from the disguised Athena, the text marks his attempt as using πολυκερδέα (13. 255). When he reveals himself to his wife, Penelope accuses him of κακὰ κέρδεα (23. 217). Alcinoos tells him not to hide his identity with νοήμασι κερδαλείοισιν and proceeds to inquire who he really is (8. 548 ff.). When Eurycleia tells Penelope that she recognized Odysseus in the bath, she adds: "in his great shrewdness (πολυκερδείησι) he would not permit me to speak" (23. 77).

Eumaeus, who spent three days with Odysseus in his hut, had more opportunity than the other characters to recognize him. Like Eurycleia, Eumaeus knew Odysseus intimately. He was raised in Odysseus' family together with Odysseus' younger sister Ctimene, and he refers to Odysseus

⁹ One is reminded of a similar rapport between Odysseus and Penelope, in the incident in which Penelope thinks to herself that Odysseus' clothes are dirty but says nothing of it, while Odysseus expresses her thought (23. 115–16).

¹⁰ C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, MA 1958) 302. For the importance of the swineherd and his close association with kingship in Irish and Welsh traditions, see A. and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage* (London 1961) 178–79.

¹¹ By subconscious recognition I mean a recognition which at first is not plain and clear to Eumaeus but motivates him to act in a certain way. For the Homeric ways of dealing with characters' levels of awareness, especially that of Penelope, see J. Russo, "Interview and Aftermath: Dream, Fantasy, and Intuition in *Odyssey* 19 and 20," *AJP* 103 (1982) 4–18. While in the case of Penelope, who is on the whole a passive persona in the epic, the subconscious comes out through her fears, hopes, and dreams, in the case of the swineherd we note it in the sequence of his interactions with Odysseus which logic cannot explain.

as ἡθεῖον, which denotes an older brother (or a close friend).¹² His recognition of his disguised master is thus plausible, and Odysseus has reason to expect it.

Nevertheless, the recognition is not straightforward or decisive at the very beginning. Moments when Eumaeus recognizes his master alternate with moments when he does not.

Odysseus is characteristically cautious about trusting Eumaeus or anyone else, including his wife. Although Agamemnon, Anticleia, and Athena all reassure him of Penelope's fidelity (11. 181–83, 444–46; 13. 336 ff., 378–81), he remains wary and reveals his true identity to her only after he kills the suitors. With regard to Eumaeus, he has even more cause for circumspection. Eumaeus could potentially inform the suitors of his arrival and so endanger him. Athena, it is true, vouched for Eumaeus' being well disposed toward Odysseus and his family (13. 404–06). Athena's recommendation, however, does not mean that Odysseus can trust the slave without question—certainly not if he did not trust Penelope, or even the gods.¹³ After all, Teiresias has left unresolved the question whether Odysseus would attack the suitors by stealth or openly.

From the very beginning of their meeting, the text presents all sorts of hints that Eumaeus recognizes his master. Eumaeus' first address to Odysseus is introduced with the information: ὁ δὲ προσέειπε ἄνακτα. The listener is uncertain for a long moment whether these words are mere information provided by the poet or whether they suggest that Eumaeus addressed Odysseus knowing him to be his master.¹⁴ After all, the listener learns from Athena that the disguise she provides for the hero will fool Penelope, Telemachus, and the suitors, but nothing is said of Eumaeus in this connection, even though the goddess mentions him right after her famous prediction (13. 402–05).¹⁵

Unlike all the characters who were close to Odysseus prior to his departure for Troy, Eumaeus does not make any statement when he sees his guest in regard to the guest's resemblance to Odysseus. And yet he was closer to his master than any of the other slaves. Could it be that he is the only one who does not notice the beggar's resemblance to the long-absent master? Or should we look for a different reason for his silence?

¹² Cf. Stanford *ad* 14. 147.

¹³ For Odysseus' habit of distrust see Griffin (above, note 4) 83–84.

¹⁴ For a similar uncertainty see 14. 192–95. Up to the late protasis, one may think that Odysseus, by suggesting that he and Eumaeus should be left alone while others work, will reveal himself.

¹⁵ The emphasis in the text's comment in 16. 457–59, that Athena renewed Odysseus' disguise so that the swineherd would not know him by appearance and reveal the secret to Penelope, is in my view on the divulging of the secret. Exactly as Athena prevented Eurycleia from drawing Penelope's attention to the identity of the beggar, so she does it in this case. It says nothing of the covert recognition of Eumaeus or Eurycleia. The lack of disguise might have been understood by Eumaeus to mean that a formal revelation is forthcoming, and that there was no need of secrecy anymore. This would be an unwelcome sequence at the moment.

In his first words to Odysseus, Eumaeus addresses the supposed beggar with all the deference and respect one would show toward a superior (14. 56–61):

Ξεῖν', οὐ μοι θέμις ἔσθ', οὐδ' εἰ κακίων σέθεν ἔλθοι,
 ξείνον ἀτιμῆσαι· πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσιν ἅπαντες
 ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε· δόσις δ' ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε
 γίγνεται ἡμετέρῃ· ἢ γὰρ δμῶων δίκη ἐστὶν
 αἰεὶ δειδιότων, ὅτ' ἐπικρατέωσιν ἄνακτες
 οἱ νέοι. 60

Stranger, it is not right for me, even if one meaner than you would have come, to slander a stranger. All strangers and beggars are under Zeus, and the gift though small is dear from us, for that is the way of us who are servants, ever filled with fear when ruled by masters who are new/young.

So long as Eumaeus proclaims his adherence to Zeus' laws, he might be addressing anyone who came to his door. As soon as he adds, incongruently, that it is the way of servants to fear "young" or "new" masters, he is on different ground entirely. If we read νέοι as "young," as Stanford does, the reference is to Telemachus and is based on the proverbial harshness of young masters. Indeed, there was no harsh punishment of which the women slaves thought Telemachus incapable (18. 338–42). In this reading, Eumaeus would be trying to tell the man he recognizes as Odysseus that he has been a faithful servant also to his son. If we read νέοι as "new," the reference is to Odysseus himself and implies that the newcomer is his new master, which would be appropriate only if Eumaeus recognizes the guest as his master. In either reading, Eumaeus, in this welcome speech, hurries to ensure the hearer that he has been a good servant and has taken good care of Odysseus' house.

Eumaeus also emphasizes the fact that he considers himself part of Odysseus' household. By stressing his adherence to the laws of hospitality (which he again mentions in 14. 388–89 and 402–06), he is saying that he is keeping the traditions of Odysseus' household. Both Penelope and Telemachus obey those laws, tacitly allowing the beggar into their home and providing him with the necessities of life (16. 44–45; cf. 1. 119 ff.). Eumaeus points out his adherence explicitly. Moreover, in so doing, he uses the first person plural of the possessive adjective: ἡμετέρῃ (14. 59), as if to affirm his place in Odysseus' home even more strongly.

Eumaeus also goes out of his way to relate to the visitor the misfortunes of Odysseus' household, without being asked or in any way encouraged. If he did not suspect that the beggar was Odysseus, the information would be entirely gratuitous. Nowhere in the *Odyssey* does a host disclose the misfortunes or blessings of his house before asking the stranger to identify himself, unless of course the situation calls for such a

confession. This would be the case of Telemachus' apology to Mentos/Athena for the suitors' conduct, which caused Telemachus to seat her apart from them (1. 132–34, 158–68).¹⁶

Intermingled in his long and informative greeting, Eumaeus enumerates the rewards he expects from Odysseus upon his return: possessions of his own, a bit of land, and a wife sought by many suitors (14. 62–66). Those are the rewards, Eumaeus says, that a master gives a slave who has made his house prosper, and they are in fact the rewards that Odysseus promises Eumaeus and Philoetius at his formal self-revelation (21. 214–16). Like the greeting that preceded it, this codicil makes most sense if we assume that Eumaeus knows, or at least guesses, the identity of the person he is addressing.

Eumaeus' awareness at this stage seems less than certain and not entirely conscious. Eumaeus seems to be responding instinctively to the familiarity the stranger conveys. Being uncertain, and no less κερδαλέος than his master, he does not show his awareness directly, but rather puts his best face forward and angles for reward, in case what he suspects proves true.

He refrains from insisting on an open revelation but proceeds as though the beggar were his master. In giving Odysseus a detailed account of the suitors' exploitation of the hospitality of his household, he provides his beloved master with important information. Then he takes particular care to repeat his deep affection for his master. If the guest were actually an unknown beggar, this emphasis would have been extremely unwise. Beggars used to roam from one palace to another begging for food. A roaming beggar on his way to the city could easily tell the story to the suitors, who were unlikely to judge Eumaeus' care for Odysseus kindly and who may have vented their wrath on him. One should remember their rage at Telemachus when he dared to criticize their conduct openly at the assembly. In taking such a risk, Eumaeus is attempting to tell Odysseus that he knows who he is, but by an innuendo rather than explicitly.

Throughout most of his stay in Eumaeus' hut, Odysseus keeps careful watch of the extent to which Eumaeus has guessed his identity or suspects it and how he will react. To achieve his aim, Odysseus simultaneously hints at his identity and denies it.

He had already played this game with the Phaeacians, as we are told in Book 8, drawing attention to his identity first by crying, pulling his tunic over his head, and sighing aloud when Demodocus sang of the quarrel between him and Achilles (8. 73–75). He did so again by asking the bard to sing about the wooden horse which Odysseus led up into the citadel. In that

¹⁶ The only similar instance is Menelaos' tale about Agamemnon to Telemachus and Peisistratus (4. 78–112), but there again Menelaos had recognized Telemachus and did not need to ask his identity (4. 141–50), or suspected the youngster to be Orestes and found it more politic to voice his version of the past events. See F. Ahl, "Homer, Vergil, and Complex Narrative Structures in Latin Epic: An Essay," *JCS* 14 (1989) 8–10. For additional anomalies in the conventions of *xenia* in the scene, see Fenik (above, note 8) 30–31.

request he explicitly introduced his own name (8. 494) and again wept aloud, so that Alcinoos finally asked him for his name and lineage.

To clarify my statement let me digress. The text does not reveal this to us explicitly or directly, but by a succession of events and acts on the part of the hero, which I will analyze here but briefly.¹⁷ One of the main questions that arises in the Phaeacian episode is why Odysseus is crying. After all, he is the man in the epic whose ability to conceal emotions is proverbial. There is no clear reason for his groaning and moaning in the episode. We do not know much about the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles, but if anything, the text is clear that ultimately it was advantageous for the Achaeans, as we can judge from Agamemnon's rejoicing when the best of Achaeans were quarreling (8. 77–78).¹⁸ Nor is it clear why he cries when being told the story about the Trojan horse, a story he himself asked for.¹⁹ The text compares his tears to those of a woman who cries over the body of her husband slain fighting for Troy, as the victors drive her away to a life of slavery. Such a simile in which the "doer" is compared to the victim of the situation he effected is unparalleled in the epic. Recent Homeric scholarship agrees that at times similes give a deeper and more significant, understated meaning to a situation.²⁰ This simile, portraying the unemotional hero par excellence crying for the fate he imposed on the woman, borders on the improbable or unbelievable, especially on the part of the hero who is not moved by his father's misery when depicted movingly by Eumaeus and who succeeds in keeping a straight face in front of his wife, who melts in tears when he talks about her lost husband. Furthermore, while Odysseus' crying and self-pity during his stay with Calypso, with no hope of returning home, are well within the theme

¹⁷ In spite of the common belief that the Homeric narrative is explicit and straightforward rather than implicit, we will do well to remind ourselves of Demetrius' words about a special part of "formidable speaking" (δεινότης). Demetrius gives an example from Plato, who along with Homer is a source for many illustrations of the formidable style among rhetoricians. In the *Phaedo* Aristippus and Cleombrotus are not explicitly criticized for feasting in Aegina when Socrates was lying for many days imprisoned in Athens. Instead, Plato makes Phaedo ask who was with Socrates. He enumerates the men one by one. Next, he is asked whether Aristippus and Cleombrotus were present. The answer is "No, they were in Aegina." Demetrius summarizes: "The passage is all the more forcible because its point is conveyed by the fact itself and not by the speaker" (*On Style* 5. 288). On the oral theory and implicit and subtlety in expression, cf. also M. Lynn-George, *Epos, Word, Narrative and the Iliad* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ 1988) 55–81, esp. 58, 66, 78–81. For Homer's technique leaning on the implicit and the subtle, especially in the second half of the *Odyssey*, see P. W. Harsh, "Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX," *AJP* 71 (1950) 1–21, esp. 2. For inferences about characters' motivations from their acts rather than from explicit statement in the text, see J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1983) 62–64.

¹⁸ See the discussion by G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 23–25, 63–65.

¹⁹ For additional oddities in Odysseus' reaction to the song about the Trojan horse, see G. B. Walsh, *The Varieties of Enchantment* (Chapel Hill 1988) vii, 3–6, 20–21, who seeks a psychological explanation and sees Odysseus as a close paradigm of the Homeric audience.

²⁰ Harsh (above, note 17) 2; M. W. Edwards, *Homer, Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore 1987) 106.

of an imprisoned hero, there is nothing in the entire Phaeacian episode that calls for a description of Odysseus as an emotional and empathic character. He already knows he is going to have a *pompe* home, and there is no need for this sentimentality, nor is it stressed anywhere else in the episode.²¹ One should also note the careful strategy of Odysseus' crying. During the first song, he cries only during Demodocus' singing, stopping at intervals, thus connecting explicitly the song with his tears. Even if this can be seen again as a superb command of one's feelings as far as characterization is concerned, it still calls for an explanation of the tears, a clarification for which the Phaeacians remarkably refrain from asking. When asking for the song about himself partaking in the Trojan horse adventure, Odysseus must have known that he would be unable to control his tears again. It is noteworthy that Odysseus' reaction to the songs is marked as unusual by Alcinoo, who fails to understand why Odysseus cries over the fate of both the Achaeans and the Trojans. This is an important point; since during the games Odysseus identified himself as one of the Achaeans who fought at Troy (8. 216–28), his crying over the fate of the Trojans is unclear even to the host. The exhibition of emotionalism can hardly be seen as a goal of a hero who suffered as much as he did. His demand for the song can be understood, however, if he wishes to attain a goal which he failed to reach during the first song, namely, to be asked his identity, upon which a formal revelation followed.²²

In the Eumaeus episode Odysseus similarly draws attention to his true identity but without revealing himself openly. We may see this first in Odysseus' response to Eumaeus' complaint that his master will never return. Odysseus answers Eumaeus on oath and insists that deceitful tales are hateful to him (14. 151–64). On the surface, he tells Eumaeus a deceitful tale—that Odysseus will return—implying that he has not yet come back. His statement that Odysseus *νεῖται* (14. 152, is in the very process of return) is in the present tense, not the future, indicating that Odysseus is the beggar, and making good his fervent oath.²³ Still, Odysseus refuses to reveal himself explicitly and even steers Eumaeus away from any identification.

²¹ On the contrary, Odysseus' straightforward and logical treatment of Euryalus' insult, when he repeatedly claims to be sore at heart, stands against it (8. 178–79, 205).

²² Note the lack of attention of the banqueters to his covering of his head and tears during the first song. Alcinoo notices the guest's uneasiness but at first does not ask for its reason; rather, he changes the activity of the banqueters (8. 90–96). During the third song Odysseus' tears are once again ignored by the banqueters, but Alcinoo stops the song and asks Odysseus' identity and the reason for his crying (8. 531–35).

²³ Stanford (*ad loc.*) does not prove his claim that *νεῖται* regularly has a quasi-future sense. The tense emerges from the semantics of the verb. Here Odysseus does not use a clear future statement.

Eumaeus wavers momentarily and suggests that they leave the subject of his master and turn their thoughts to other matters (14. 168–70). Yet in the next verse he returns to that subject. He tells the beggar that along with Penelope, Laertes, and Telemachus, he wishes Odysseus would return. Thus the text shows us that inwardly and subconsciously something compels Eumaeus to dwell on the subject of Odysseus, even when rationally he wishes to drop it. Eumaeus now completes his account of the suitors' misconduct and informs his hearer of their scheme to kill Telemachus. Eumaeus' return to the subject of Odysseus gives the beggar a second chance to reveal himself. The warning of the threat to Telemachus' life, and with it to the demise of Odysseus' line (14. 179–84), can be considered a serious bait to Odysseus to reveal himself and help his son.

The beggar's response that he heard that Odysseus is about to return, either "openly or in secret" (14. 321–30), tells the swineherd that he is not going to reveal himself and that he prefers an incognito approach. At the same time, Odysseus once again covertly hints at his true identity. In telling Eumaeus of his escape from the Thesprotians' ship, he alters the formulaic phrase οἱ/μοι φρονέοντι δοάσσατο κέρδιον εἶναι το σφιν ἐφαίνετο κέρδιον εἶναι (14. 355), thereby hinting at who he is.

Before I show how, it is necessary to digress to note the attributes that this formula generally possesses in the *Odyssey*.

1. With three exceptions, once in reference to a favor Peisistratus grants Telemachus (15. 204), once with reference to Phemius' decision to plead before Odysseus (22. 338), and once in the case of the Thesprotians, the formula refers to Odysseus (5. 474, 6. 145, 10. 153, 18. 93, 24. 239).

2. The formula always concludes a character's inner deliberation of two alternatives, which are either mentioned in the text or can be deduced from it. Odysseus ponders whether to stay at the riverbed or to climb the slope and find a resting place in the thick brushwood. He wavers between coming forward naked and clasping Nausicaa's knees or addressing her from a distance. In Aeaea, he ponders whether to go himself and search for the source of smoke he sees or to send his comrades. Should he kill Irus or just beat him up? And finally, should he reveal himself to his father with hugs and kisses or should he provoke him? Phemius ponders whether to flee to Zeus' altar or to clasp Odysseus' knees. Peisistratus debates whether to obey Nestor's order to return Telemachus to Pylos or to allow Telemachus to embark on his ship for Ithaca (15. 195–201).

3. The κέρδιον choice is the clever, shrewd choice that benefits the character involved. By shrewdly risking being attacked by a wild beast on the slope, Odysseus avoided freezing to death down in the riverbed. The text tells us this by describing the double olive bush, a partially cultured bush that can grow only in a civilized area where wild beasts are unlikely to live. By not clasping Nausicaa's knees, Odysseus avoided enraging the young maiden. Odysseus' decision in Aeaea to send his comrades to investigate the source of the smoke enabled him to avoid endangering himself (10. 203 ff.).

In his choice to deal Irus a light blow rather than kill him on the spot, Odysseus avoided drawing the suitors' attention to his might (18. 94). (For Odysseus' calculations and advantage in his treatment of Laertes, see below). Peisistratus earned Telemachus' friendship. Phemius, by touching Odysseus' knees, forced him to hear his plea.

4. Κέρδιον decisions in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* never benefit an anonymous group.²⁴

5. Κέρδιον decisions are generally marked by a divergence from the natural or expected course of events. Odysseus' resolution to climb up the slope and rest in the thick brushwood seems the riskier one, for whereas he has some knowledge of the riverbed, which he sees and can examine, he has no information about the upper wood. Odysseus' decision not to clasp Nausicaa's knees but to address her in an ingratiating way from a distance is a divergence from the socially accepted way of assuring a positive answer to one's wish. Phemius' decision to clasp Odysseus' knees instead of running and sitting on Zeus' altar for safety seems the riskier one, since just a moment earlier Odysseus killed Leiodes while he was clasping his knees and begging to be spared. Social convention would have required that Peisistratos obey his father's order to bring Telemachus back to Pylos. In all of these cases, however, the κέρδιον decisions prove to be the correct ones.

In short, the resolutions called κέρδιον deviate from the common practice; they are the result of deliberation within a certain situation and are the suitable and correct response to the situation. The term κέρδιον thus not only indicates that the decision is the more advantageous one but also points to the shrewdness and resourcefulness of the character, whose judgment of the situation at hand proves to be right.

Odysseus' version of the term in the Thesprotians' incident diverges in several important respects from the standard formula. (1) The base κερδ- does not refer to Odysseus. This makes the application of the word one of the rarer applications in the *Odyssey*.²⁵ Moreover, it refers not to an individual but to a group. (2) The Thesprotians stand to gain no personal advantage from their κέρδιον decision, which will in fact cost them a valuable slave. (3) Although the formula points to an unpredicted or unusual, yet successful, course of action, the Thesprotians' decision to abandon the search for Odysseus is most natural in their eagerness to continue their voyage. (4) The Thesprotians' decision to stop looking for Odysseus in the bushes involves no shrewdness or guile. Indeed, in his use of the verb φαίνω with no indication for the use of φρήν, Odysseus

²⁴ For *Iliad* 19. 63, one should note that Hector is mentioned specifically and carries most significance in the sentence. For this instance and for Antenor's words in *Iliad* 7. 352, see my "Kerdion in the *Iliad*, Skill and Trickiness," forthcoming in *TAPA*.

²⁵ Out of 38 occurrences, in 5 cases it is used for known individual characters outside of Odysseus' family, 22 times for Odysseus, 7 times for Telemachus, and 4 times for Penelope.

explicitly omits the standard acknowledgment of the role of the mind in deciding what is κέρδιον.²⁶

This awkward use of κέρδιον is significant especially in the attribution of the base κερδ- to unknown characters. In a clear majority of its occurrences the base is used in reference to Odysseus and his family, or to known figures. This deviation can be seen as Odysseus' way of drawing attention to himself and hinting to his κερδαλέος slave that the "beggar" is not what he seems to be, but going no further in his revelation.²⁷

Eumaeus' answer that he does not believe that Odysseus will return so soon and his refraining from further probing lets his listener know that he understands the hint and will act accordingly. Eumaeus explains his conduct by telling of a bad experience he had with an Aetolian who claimed he had seen Odysseus in Idomeneus' house and said that Odysseus would be back by harvest time (14. 361–89). Eumaeus is not clear as to why this episode should discourage him from questioning the beggar further. After all, Penelope was lied to often and did not refrain from inquiring further. But the tale serves to emphasize his acquiescence to his master's wishes. In so indicating, Eumaeus seems to be acceding to the general disapproval of forced identification which runs through the epic. The poem indicates that no formal recognition (acknowledgment) should be offered to Odysseus unless the master starts it formally. Whoever offers such a revelation risks his life. Argus, who recognizes his master and is about to show it, dies before he can strip Odysseus' disguise; Eurycleia almost loses her life (19. 479–81). It can be inferred, however, from the text that Eumaeus makes a distinct connection between the person he addresses and his master, introducing a subtle criticism of the way he is being treated by using the base θεलग-.

Throughout the poem the base is used almost exclusively in connection with Odysseus in a variety of contexts. Calypso tries to charm him with words (1. 56–57), Circe is unable to bewitch him with her herbs as she does other men (10. 212–13, 290–91, 317–18), the Sirens try to charm him with their voice and song (12. 39–40, 43–44), Telemachus claims that his father is but a *daimon* who tries to bewitch him (16. 194–95), Odysseus promises Telemachus that Athena and Zeus will steal the suitors' minds during their attack upon them (16. 297–98), Eumaeus tells Penelope that the stranger

²⁶ The base κερδ- is usually used with the derivatives of φρην-. Telemachus' slip in 2. 320 (ὑμῖν εἰσατο κέρδιον εἶναι) is also an intentional divergence from the common use, pointing to the misuse of language on the part of the growing youth, who tries in his great excitement to apply the language of grown-ups but fails. Similarly in 16. 311 Telemachus uses κέρδος in the singular. This is the only place in the *Odyssey* where it is not used in the plural.

²⁷ When raising an argument on the basis of common or uncommon usage of a phrase, we will do well to remember that what we, the readers/audience, view as formula is a means of natural communication of the characters as far as the epic diction is concerned. What we judge as bizarre or customary usage on the basis of meticulous examination and analysis of various occurrences of a phrase must have sounded the same to the characters on the basis of their usage of the language within the epic diction.

stole his heart by his stories (17. 513–14, 520–21), and Odysseus rejoices that Penelope charmed the souls of the suitors by setting the bow contest and requesting gifts (18. 281–82).

The basic meaning of the base is the utter emotive helplessness of the person upon whom *θελγ-* is being used, followed by the incapability of rational judgment which results in hurting one's own interests. The notion of helplessness becomes clear when one thinks of Hermes' wand, which can make one sleep or wake up. No will or human power can withstand its effect (5. 46–47, 4. 2–3; cf. *Iliad* 24. 342–43; cf. also the derivative *θελκτήρια*). Telemachus feels he cannot fight his inner wish to believe his father has returned, even though there is no logical or critical proof that the newly arrived stranger is his father.²⁸ Whoever happens to listen to the Sirens gives up all former plans and stays to listen to them forever. The secret of the charm is in the content and the arrangement of the words.

Of more significance is the contextual setting of the base. *Θελγ-* is associated with lies, deceits, or purposes that are not in the interest of the person upon whom *θελγ-* is being used. Thus in the only usage of the base not in reference to our hero, it describes the way Aegisthus succeeded in "persuading" the virtuous Clytaemnestra to betray her husband; he "charmed her with words" (*θέλγεσκ' ἐπέεσσιν*); her subsequent deed is described as *ἔργον ἀεικές*, "a shameful deed" (3. 264–65). Calypso is using *θελγ-* to make Odysseus stay with her against his will. Circe wants to turn him into an animal. Telemachus is afraid of an impostor. Zeus and Athena are about to spread havoc among the suitors so they will be killed. And Penelope, according to Odysseus, promises the suitors what they wish to hear but in fact has different plans.

In his address Eumaeus tells the beggar in a straightforward manner, *μήτε τί μοι ψεύδεσσι χαρίζο μήτε τι θέλγε* ("do not try to please me nor charm me with lying words" 14. 387). The narrative's use of a base connected closely to the persona of Odysseus and his whereabouts is significant and points to the swineherd's growing confidence as to the identity of his guest, confidence that might fade again. But for now, Eumaeus tells his master he has recognized him and no more lies need to be invented to charm his ear. Thus in a subtle way, Eumaeus criticizes Odysseus' treatment of him, hinting that it would be in Odysseus' interest to reveal his identity to him, but yet fulfills his master's desire to keep his secret.²⁹

²⁸ For Telemachus' ardent wish to see his father's return see 1. 113–18.

²⁹ For the Odyssean technique of describing emotions by inference from the characters' words rather than stating them explicitly, see Harsh (above, note 17) 10. For Eumaeus' careful but indicative use of words see also his prayer in 14. 424, where he does not merely pray for Odysseus' return, but would like to see him return to Odysseus' own house (*ὄνδε δόμονδε*) that is to say, to have him regain the authority and power he once had.

Despite his conceding to Odysseus' wishes for anonymity, Eumaeus becomes increasingly sure of the beggar's identity—and increasingly explicit in the symbolics he uses to express that awareness. When Odysseus first arrived, Eumaeus offered him a meal of a young pig, apologizing that this is the only meat slaves have to give because the suitors eat the fatted hogs (14. 81–82). For their second meal, however, Eumaeus orders the *best fat hog* slain for the stranger (14. 414–17), as is fitting for the master of the house. White-tusked boars were served only on special festive occasions and to the suitors. Furthermore, Eumaeus gives him the best long chine of the meat. The text asserts that this sign of respect *κύδαινε δὲ θυμὸν ἄνακτος* (“exalted the heart of his master” 14. 438). Although Odysseus overtly takes the good portion as exceeding his lowly status—*Αἴθ' οὕτως, Εὐμαίε, φίλος Διὶ πατρὶ γένοιο / ὡς ἐμοί, ὅττι με τοῖον ἔοντ' ἀγαθοῖσι γεραίρεις* (“Eumaeus, may you be as dear to father Zeus as you honor me now in spite of my condition” 14. 440–41)—the implication is that he appreciates Eumaeus' treatment.³⁰ The usual explanation for this improbability in Eumaeus' behavior along with others is to see them as plain irony or pathos. In such a case we have to make several assumptions. We were told from the start that it is the young sucklings that are the common food of slaves, presumably because they have not yet entered the inventory (14. 73–84). A white-tusked boar is taken into account in the inventory, and we were told that the number of hogs was far less than the number of female swine because of the suitors' consumption (14. 16–20). The slaughtering of a white-tusked boar with no particular reason except to entertain a personal guest not only gives the guest for no clear reason the status of the suitors, but diminishes the number of highly valued hogs in the sties and should be viewed as Eumaeus' misuse of his position as supervisor of his master's herds. In short, we must see the swineherd as committing a wanton felony and Odysseus' genuine joyfulness over such a waste remains a mystery.³¹

The next significant exchange occurs when the beggar, feeling cold in the swineherd's hut, tells Eumaeus a fantastic story about how “Odysseus” succeeded in getting a cloak for him while they were lying in ambush below the Trojan walls. His tale is preceded by the following thought (14. 459–61):

τοῖς δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς μετέειπε, συμβάτω πειρητίζων,
εἷ πῶς οἱ ἐκδὺς χλαῖναν πόροι, ἢ τιν' ἑταίρων
ἄλλον ἐποτρύνειεν, ἐπεὶ ἐο κήδετο λίην.

³⁰ Cf. a similar serving of a chine of a white-tusked boar to Odysseus in Phaeacia just before he formally comes forward and reveals his identity to Alcinoos (8. 474–75), having already clearly indicated his participation in the Trojan war (8. 216–20).

³¹ Yet the text is explicit about Odysseus' keen interest in the way Eumaeus watches over the flocks and Eumaeus' awareness that Odysseus would be interested in knowing how his herdsmen tend the flocks (14. 526–27, 17. 246).

Odysseus spoke among them making trial of the swineherd, to see whether he would take off his cloak and give it to him, or tell one of his comrades to do it, since he cared for him so greatly.

Odysseus' speculation that Eumaeus would provide him with a cloak "since he cared for him so greatly" has no basis unless Odysseus realizes that Eumaeus has guessed his true identity and will treat him as the Odysseus he has claimed to love.³² As a mere *xenos*, a beggar would have no grounds for expecting such special treatment. Eumaeus had not revealed any special affection for the "beggar" and only a short time earlier had told Odysseus that the only reason he was treating him so kindly was that he pitied him and feared Zeus (14. 388–89). Since Eumaeus did not reveal any special affection for the beggar per se, but talked repeatedly and at length about his love for his master, Odysseus' expectation is based on his awareness that Eumaeus intimates his true identity. Odysseus' roundabout request for Eumaeus' cloak is a way both of hinting yet again at his identity and of testing the slave's awareness of it and allegiance to him.

Eumaeus answers (14. 508–09):

Ἦ γέρον, αἴνιος μὲν τοι ἀμύμων, ὃν κατέλεξας,
οὐδέ τι πω παρὰ μοῖραν ἔπος νηκερδὲς ἔειπες·

Old man, the story you told is blameless,
nor have you uttered an unmannerly or unprofitable word.

The base κερδ-, as already claimed, is used in the text mainly for the royal family or people closely attached to it. Eumaeus' use of the word would not have been proper reference to a strange vagabond and tells Odysseus in a manner well disguised from the other attendants, and in a structure of a powerful litotes, that he, Odysseus, displayed his characteristic κέρδεα in this tale.³³ It is noteworthy that this is the sole use of the word in the epic. When Eumaeus lends Odysseus the extra cloak, he tells the beggar that he expects it back in the morning. In a veiled way, he is telling Odysseus that he recognized him, will oblige him, and yet in the morning will continue to pretend he is a beggar (14. 510–17).³⁴

³² A subconscious recognition implicit in the tunic scene was suggested by S. Mumaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1987) 108, who accepts the notion that the loan of the cloak can be a covert expression of recognition and sees the loan as a part of the social institution of hospitality, which, in turn, serves as a substitute or alternative for a recognition of identity (91–117). Mumaghan believes, however, that Odysseus reveals himself to Eumaeus and is recognized by him only in Book 21, see 13 n. 19, 20–21, 38–39, 74, 107, 151–52.

³³ For a summary of the uses of the base κερδ- in the *Odyssey*, especially in the noun form, see Roisman (above, note 7) 66–67.

³⁴ I find unconvincing Mumaghan's assertion (above, note 32) 167, that Eumaeus is *moved* (my emphasis) by the account of how Odysseus cleverly arranged the loan of a cloak to the beggar. Nor does the text support any sentimentality here. The message is simply that Eumaeus understood the hint in the story and is going to arrange for a cloak for the beggar/Odysseus.

Having established Eumaeus' affection, Odysseus enlists him in his struggle against the suitors. The first thing the following evening, Odysseus again tests his faithful slave (15. 304–06):

τοῖς δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς μετέειπε, σὺ βώτεω πειρητιζῶν,
ἢ μιν ἔτ' ἐνδοκέως φιλέοι μείναι τε κελεύοι
αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ σταθμῷ, ἢ ὀτρύνειε πόλινδε.

Odysseus spoke among them making trial of the swineherd,
to see whether he would show him kind affection and invite him
to stay on his farm, or would urge him to go to the city.

In making this trial of Eumaeus, Odysseus is testing whether the swineherd φιλέοι him, despite the latter's declaration to the beggar in 14. 388: οὐδὲ φιλήσω. Here Odysseus wants to know whether Eumaeus will be loyal to him as the master of the house when it comes to fighting the suitors, not merely whether Eumaeus is benevolent as such.³⁵

Odysseus continues by telling Eumaeus his plans and draws from the loyal slave the counsel and information he needs to launch a successful repossession of his property. Odysseus begins the process in 15. 309–24 by asking Eumaeus to get him a ἡγεμῶν ἐσθλός to lead him to the city. Behind the request are the assumptions that Eumaeus will both carry out his bidding and correctly interpret his wishes, as would a slave faithful to his master (16. 272, 17. 185–96). Even though Odysseus here asks merely for “the best guide,” he later tells Telemachus that the swineherd will lead him (16. 272), indicating that he is now sure of Eumaeus' recognition.

Odysseus' increasing certainty of Eumaeus' presumptive loyalty to him, as his master, is also indicated in this incident where he informs Eumaeus that he intends to see Penelope and offer the suitors his services in tending the fire and pouring wine. Odysseus is here prompting Eumaeus for information and advice, as one would a person close to one. In giving the advice, warning him of the danger of the plan, since the suitors do not employ beggars for those tasks, Eumaeus contrives to prove his fidelity to his master. Toward the end of this incident Eumaeus passes the test Odysseus had made by suggesting that Odysseus stay with him and await Telemachus, who will give him a cloak and send him wherever he wishes.

Nonetheless, Odysseus remains careful not to make any remark or reveal any information that might lead to a formal recognition. Rather, he continues his play of teasing self-revelation against explicit denial, which Eumaeus, as always, goes along with. After being satisfied that Eumaeus has passed the test, Odysseus asks him about his (Odysseus') parents, an odd question for a passing beggar and one that strongly hints at his identity (15. 346–50). Yet shortly after that, when, pretending ignorance, he asks

³⁵ For the significance of a positive sentiment in the compound social value of loyalty, see H. Roisman, *Loyalty in Early Greek Epic and Tragedy*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 155 (Königstein/Ts. 1984).

Eumaeus about the slave's past, he avoids referring explicitly to Laertes as Eumaeus' master and instead refers to the master in an anonymous ὄδε ἀνήρ (15. 388 τοῦδ' ἀνδρός).

Eumaeus, true to form, does not try to force Odysseus to be more explicit. In line 429 he answers Odysseus' ambiguous reference to his owner with his own τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, waiting 60 verses, till 483, to state explicitly that Laertes had bought him.³⁶ Eumaeus offers Odysseus repeated assurances of his goodwill and fidelity. In response to Odysseus' question about his life, Eumaeus tells the story of the Phoenician slave woman who had kidnapped him as a child and was struck dead, presumably for her betrayal (15. 410–84). In this apt and highly moral tale Eumaeus seems to be trying to let Odysseus know that he, unlike the treacherous Phoenician maid, has no intention of betraying his master.

In return, as Odysseus becomes increasingly sure of Eumaeus' loyalty, his hints as to his true identity become increasingly strong and overt. Before leaving for the city, and before formally revealing his identity to Telemachus, the beggar boasts that if he were Odysseus he would fight the suitors. Even before Telemachus tells him about the suitors' mischief, the beggar proclaims in self-dramatizing indignation that if only he were as young as Odysseus' son, or Odysseus himself, he would prove himself the suitors' bane. He would rather be slain, he exclaims, than see his home despoiled so shamefully (16. 99–111). Here, as in his stay with the Phaeacians and his request for a cloak, he conspicuously introduces his own name. Moreover, this passage is highly emotional, and the entire tone of the beggar's outburst makes it difficult to avoid suspicion of his very personal interest in the affair.

In response to Odysseus' increasing overtones, Eumaeus becomes somewhat more assertive in his call for a more explicit affirmation from his evasive master. In 16. 137–45 Eumaeus suggests to Telemachus that Laertes should be notified of his safe return from Pylos, since the old man stopped eating and drinking after his (Telemachus') departure for Pylos. The previous evening he had told the beggar/Odysseus of the old man's misery. Now, by giving Telemachus this advice in his father's presence, he seems to be calling for Odysseus to support his suggestion, thereby admitting his concern for his old father and thus his true identity. Since nowhere in the epic does the beggar refrain from speaking when he has something to say, Eumaeus can reasonably expect him to speak on his father's behalf.

Odysseus, however, does not give Eumaeus the proof he wants. He refrains from interfering and so revealing beyond any doubt who he is. Nevertheless, from this point on, Eumaeus' actions all indicate that his doubts have been satisfied and he knows the beggar's true identity. When Odysseus, leaving for the city, asks Eumaeus for a ῥόπαλον, a shepherd's

³⁶ I doubt whether one should see lines 388 or 429 as interpolations. The lines are meant to be ambiguous. But see Stanford *ad loc.*

staff, to lean on, Eumaeus provides him with a σκῆπτρον (17. 195–99), which of course marks Odysseus' noble stance and identity.³⁷ Only Athena, besides Eumaeus, knowing well the identity of her hero, provides Odysseus with a σκῆπτρον. Eumaeus' dogs, on the other hand, who do not know the long-absent master, cause Odysseus to drop his σκῆπτρον (13. 436–37, 14. 30–31). Then, although Telemachus ordered Eumaeus not to allow the beggar to beg at his palace (16. 85–89),³⁸ Eumaeus leads Odysseus straight there (17. 260–71), inferring that this is his master's wish. Eumaeus also contrives to act as a good scout by providing his master with vital information. When they meet the abusive Melanthius, for example, the swineherd makes sure that his master knows that this shepherd had purposefully destroyed Odysseus' herds (17. 246). A similar offer of help is found when Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus. She offers to name all the treacherous maids when the time comes (19. 495–98).

By the time they reach the palace, their bond, based on Eumaeus' knowing who the beggar is and Odysseus' knowing that he knows, is solid and confirmed. In the palace, Odysseus tells Antinoos a different story about his arrival in Ithaca than the one he told Eumaeus, even though the swineherd is present in the hall and participates in the conversation. He had told Eumaeus he arrived in Ithaca from the Thesprotians (14. 315–16; cf. 16. 65–66). He now tells the suitors he came from Cyprus (17. 442), a more conventional place of arrival than the Thesprotians. Here Odysseus uses a more convenient story knowing he can rely on his faithful slave not to give him away.

In all of these exchanges, Odysseus hints at his true identity and expects Eumaeus to confirm his comprehension, but then goes no further. He neither reveals himself explicitly nor confirms Eumaeus' guess explicitly. Eumaeus remains cautious.

When meeting Penelope after bringing Odysseus to the palace, Eumaeus uses ambivalent diction in referring to his master. Penelope asks him to bring the stranger to her so she will inquire about her husband. Eumaeus says (17. 513–21):

Εἰ γάρ τοι, βασιλεία, σιωπήσειαν Ἀχαιοί·
οἱ ὅ γε μυθεῖται, θέλγοιτό κέ τοι φίλον ἦτορ . . .
ὡς ἐμὲ κείνος ἔθελγε παρήμενος ἐν μεγάροισι.

The use of the term Ἀχαιοί in Eumaeus' words is significant. It is commonly taken to refer to the suitors. But is this understanding correct?

³⁷ See 2. 36–37, 79–80, 3. 411–12, 11. 90–91, 568–69, and finally 18. 103, where Odysseus' planting a σκῆπτρον in the hands of half-conscious Irus marks the sarcasm of the scene. Odysseus consistently refers to the staff Eumaeus gave him as a ῥόπαλον, 17. 236. For a ῥόπαλον as shepherd's staff, see *Iliad* 11. 558–61. Cf. M. N. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1974) 124–25.

³⁸ That it was possible for Odysseus to go and beg in other houses is confirmed by the abusive Melanthius, who says that there are feasts not only in Odysseus' house (20. 182).

The term is used to identify the suitors only 19 times out of 133 occurrences. Mostly in narrative passages, where the term is used as a general qualifier of the Greek men feasting at Odysseus' house, their courting is not emphasized. In speeches it occurs in the addresses of a suitor to his companions and renders the speech an elevated and respectable tone.³⁹ Otherwise it is used as a signifier for ethnic and geographic purposes, or in reference to Ithacans who participate in the assembly. In fact, in many cases the text makes clear that the term Ἀχαιοί includes other Ithacans than the suitors, and the latter are mentioned separately (e.g., 2. 87–88, 111–12, 115, 265–66, 3. 216–17, 220, 4. 343–44, 16. 76–77). The most common use of the term by far (62 times) is to denote the Greek heroes who fought at Troy.

When Eumaeus wishes the “Achaean” to be silent, he is certainly not referring to the suitors. They are not noisy at the moment; when they are making a loud havoc it is mentioned expressly in the text (e.g., 1. 365–71, 18. 399–400). Eumaeus' subsequent explanatory sentence, “for the things he is telling could indeed charm the heart,” makes clear that it is not the suitors he is talking about but the beggar/Odysseus, whom Penelope wishes to invite to appear before her. The suitors do not have to be silent in such a case. Ἀχαιοί here is a collective term for all the Greek heroes who fought in Troy. The term emphatically sets the beggar apart from the more lowly vagabonds and beggars like Irus and places him among the glorious heroes. After all, none of the passersby who previously reached Ithaca claimed they participated in the war or met Odysseus at Troy. All of them claimed to meet or hear about the hero. In the immediate situation Eumaeus' bold wish that the returning Trojan heroes keep silent can be seen as an innocent remark, but for the queen it is a pregnant message. The emphasis is rather on the verb σιωπῶ, used nowhere else in the text. After all, Penelope is just over an excruciating worry concerning her son, who left Ithaca without telling her, in search of other returning Greeks hoping to gain some new information about his father. The subject of stories retold by the heroes who once fought at Troy haunts the queen. In this context Eumaeus' remark is characteristic of a slave close to his queen, who knows what she is experiencing and is allowed to express it openly. Yet in the larger context of Eumaeus' encounter with his master, this remark is carefully structured.

The beggar's telling Eumaeus that he fought in Troy did not contradict the common knowledge that there are no more “Achaean” who survived the war and the sea but have not reached their home (1. 11–12, 285–86) because Odysseus placed the continuation of his wanderings after having reached his home in Crete and says he set out on more adventures voluntarily (14. 118, 199–256). Eumaeus' reference to the beggar as one of the “Achaean” not

³⁹ 2. 90, 105–06, 2. 203–04, 18. 285–86, 20. 270–71, 24. 140–41; for a similar attempt at deference and respect (ironical?) in Odysseus' and Telemachus' words, see 17. 415, 18. 61–62, 21. 427–28.

only sets him among the heroes who fought in Troy but marks his identity. Only Odysseus from all those who fought in Troy and survived has not returned safely home, and his whereabouts is unknown (4. 182, 496–98, 551–55). If this most subtle hint may be questioned as to its intentional purpose, and may indeed be no more than a slip of the tongue on the part of the swineherd, whose reaction to the homecoming of his master borders belief and disbelief, his next remark makes it clear that he recognized his master's persona. Again and repeatedly he uses the base *θελγ-*, which unequivocally in the epic identifies Odysseus. Thus he not only reveals his awareness of the identity of the beggar but also calls for Penelope's attention and warns her that while conversing with this former hero she should beware because his words will probably baffle her, and the encounter might not be entirely beneficial to her. In short, she should be suspicious of anything he tells her.

If we assume a covert recognition on Eumaeus' part, one last question arises as to what to make of the statement that Eumaeus prayed for Odysseus' return, repeated in 20. 238–39 and 21. 203–04:

Ἦς δ' αὐτῶς Εὐμαιὸς ἐπέυξατο πᾶσι θεοῖσι
νοστήσαι Ὀδυσῆα πολύφρονα ὄνδε δόμονδε.

So Eumaeus also prayed to all the gods
that they would grant that the thoughtful Odysseus might return to his home.

On the surface at least, those prayers seem to be a clear assertion that Eumaeus is longing for Odysseus' return.⁴⁰ These are not silent prayers, but stated aloud. They are made, it should be noted, in the presence of Philoetius, who, in response to Odysseus' question, clearly exclaims his wish for Odysseus' return (20. 236–37):

Αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο, ξεῖνε, ἔπος τελέσειε Κρονίων·
γνοίης χ' οἷή ἐμῆ δύναμις καὶ χεῖρες ἔπονται.

How I wish, stranger, that the son of Kronos would fulfil your word;
then you would see what kind of strength my hands have.

Eumaeus' response matches Philoetius'. Its purpose is to keep the secret that he and his master have between them. Any other response would give away Odysseus' identity prematurely. The text subtly implies the difference between the statements of the two slaves. Whereas Philoetius, who does not yet know of his master's return, proclaims his ardent wish in a direct exclamative statement, Eumaeus' prayer is conveyed in the less enthusiastic manner of indirect speech, which is generally not favored in the epic.⁴¹ The claim that he prayed to "all the gods," without a specific address, also

⁴⁰ This is in fact their purpose in Book 14 (423–24) during Odysseus' first evening in Eumaeus' hut, when Eumaeus keeps trying on the one hand to assure Odysseus of his affection for him, and on the other hand to follow his master's wish of anonymity.

⁴¹ For the *Odyssey's* preference for direct speech, see Griffin (above, note 4) 59.

emphasizes the moderation of the statement. The temperateness of Eumaeus' tone here hints that the prayer is necessary and meant for Philoetius, not for Odysseus, whom he has already and repeatedly told of his care and loyalty.

In Book 24, Amphinomedon tells in the underworld that Eumaeus was privy to the beggar's true identity (24. 150–62). Aristarchus queried the passage on the grounds that Amphinomedon did not know about the meeting of Odysseus and Eumaeus before Odysseus arrived at his palace. Stanford answered that any intelligent suitor might have gathered as much from the alliance between Odysseus and the slave in the palace (*ad* 150 ff.). One may note too that the suitor made no similar suggestion about Philoetius, who helped Odysseus no less than Eumaeus in his fight against the suitors.

Odysseus and Laertes

Odysseus reveals himself to Laertes because within the social context of the Homeric epic it is only with Laertes' approval that he can resume his inherited political position as head of Arcisius' *oikos* and as a king of Ithaca.⁴² The problem is that when Odysseus sees his father, he realizes how old and grief-stricken he has become (24. 234–35) and has reason to doubt whether he remembers him. Indeed, nothing in Laertes' behavior indicates that the old man recognizes Odysseus. Although Odysseus is no longer in his beggar's disguise, Laertes addresses him as "stranger" (24. 281). Odysseus realizes that the direct and dramatic self-revelation that was effective with the young Telemachus is out of place with the aged and apparently somewhat senile Laertes. Pondering whether to come up and kiss his father or to withhold his identity for a while, Odysseus chooses the latter and decides to try his father.

The text says: ὧδε δέ οἱ φρονέοντι δοάσσατο κέρδιον εἶναι, / πρῶτον κερτομίους ἐπέεσσιν πειρηθῆναι (24. 239–40). These verses contain two apparent anomalies. One is Odysseus' decision to provoke his father with "biting words." Agathe Thornton, in my view, is correct in rejecting the understanding of κερτομίους ἐπέεσσιν as "teasing" or "bantering words," which do not exclude friendliness, pointing out that in other occurrences this adjective indicated distance and alienation (9. 474, 20. 177, 263).⁴³ A. Heubeck, more recently, has shown that the use of κερτομ- in the Homeric epic suggests means of provoking a reaction.⁴⁴ Indeed,

⁴² Cf. Whitman (above, note 10) 296, 305. For the emphasis put in the episode on Laertes' inheritance, see also C. Moulton, "The End of the *Odyssey*," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 164. For what it most probably meant to be a king in and of Ithaca see D. Wender, *The Last Scenes of the Odyssey*, Mnemosyne Suppl. 52 (Leiden 1978) 45, 54.

⁴³ A. Thornton, *People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey* (Dunedin 1970) 116.

⁴⁴ A. Heubeck, "Zwei Homerische κέρτα (ω 205 ff.—B 53 ff.)," *Ziva Antika* 31 (1981) 78–79; see also J. T. Hooker, "A Residual Problem in *Iliad* 24," *CQ* 36 (1986) 32–37, esp. 35; P. V. Jones, "*Iliad* 24. 649. Another Solution," *CQ* 39 (1989) 247–50.

Odysseus chooses to provoke his father. He taunts Laertes with looking uncared-for, squalid, and ill-clad and adds insult by asking whose slave he is. Further on, Odysseus says that he is looking for a man by the name of Odysseus, son of Laertes, whom he once entertained in his house. It is not the insertion of his own name that is uncharacteristic. Similar insertions are found in both former incidents in which he tries to hint at his own identity. He does it during the banquet in Phaeacia and while trying to give some advice to Telemachus in Eumaeus' hut, before his self-revelation to his son. Yet here it is different. Not only does he mention the name of a lost son to a bereaved father, but he exacerbates the poor old man's misery by saying that he is looking for Odysseus, that is, he expects Odysseus to be there, and thus pinpoints the absence of the beloved and longed-for son.⁴⁵

The second difficulty lies in the use of the κέρδιον formula, which on the surface marks even further the lack of propriety within the relationship of a father and a son. Yet, as noted above, the formula points in the *Odyssey* to a breach of the expected and natural course of events and is generally associated with guile, which proves right and successful, and to the hero's advantage in the circumstances. The formula tells that Odysseus' conduct, however unusual and cruel it may seem, serves his goals. The deviation stems from Odysseus' ability emotionally to withstand the misery of his father, his well-known ability to conceal his feelings.

Given Laertes' condition, Odysseus could not reveal himself immediately as he had to Telemachus. To do so might prove too great a shock.⁴⁶ Nor could he rely on Laertes' remembering him or guessing who he was, as did Eumaeus. By using "biting words" and mentioning his own name to the distraught old man, Odysseus attempts to rouse him out of his stupor and so pave the way for his formal self-revelation. Thornton suggests that Odysseus wishes to make Laertes angry and arouse his feelings. Her point can be extended by suggesting that he wishes to make his father intellectually active.⁴⁷ Even after Odysseus reveals himself to his father, he needs to give two proofs of his identity, showing the old man his

⁴⁵ Scholars are usually uneasy about the "inconsiderate" treatment of Laertes by Odysseus; see for example D. L. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford 1955) 112, who refers to the scene as an "aimless and heartless guessing-game."

⁴⁶ The Scholia also say that Odysseus addresses Laertes with a deceptive speech "lest the old man should die of sudden joy, as the dog also died" (ἵνα μὴ αἰφνιδίῳ χαρᾷ ἀποψύξει ὁ γέρον, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ κύων ἀπώλετο, Σ^Q 24. 240). For a response to Fenik's characterization of this explanation as "amusingly fatuous" (above, note 8) 47 n. 58, see Richardson (above, note 2) 228–29.

⁴⁷ Thornton's proposal (above, note 43) 118–19, that the importance of Laertes' "recovery" lies within the place of the kin in the Homeric world seems to me too broad. There is no indication that Odysseus is overtly concerned about Laertes or other family members. Instead, when Telemachus forbade Eumaeus to go and tell the old man, who had stopped eating and drinking since his grandson had left for Pylos, of his safe return, Odysseus does nothing to support Eumaeus. For the opposed view that Laertes' highly emotional reaction takes Odysseus by surprise, see Moulton (above, note 42) 163–64.

scar and recounting the trees that his father had given him when he was a boy, noting their name and exact number (24. 336–41). To everyone else Odysseus had given only one proof.⁴⁸ Odysseus' rather brutal approach spurs the old man to accept his revelation, while in concealing his feelings, an ability that sets him off from all the other characters in the two epics, he provides further proof to the old man of who he is.⁴⁹ No impostor is likely to assume such an extraordinary method of further annoying an old man.

In summary, Odysseus covertly revealed his identity to the key members of the household who had the means of recognizing him: Euryycleia and Eumaeus. To those who did not have the means, both Telemachus and Laertes, he revealed his identity overtly.⁵⁰

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⁴⁸ Laertes' bluntness of intellect born out of his grief for his son is marvellously picked up in the case of the old man of Onchestus in the *Hymn to Hermes*. See S. C. Shelmerdine, "Odyssean Allusions in the Fourth Homeric Hymn," *TAPA* 116 (1986) 59–60; J. S. Clay, "Hermes' *Dais* by the Alpheus," *Μῆτις* 3 (1988) 230–31.

⁴⁹ For the possible nonphysical clue that can prompt recognition, see P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos: Intertextual Readings in the Odyssey and the Iliad* (Ithaca 1987) 90–94; for Odysseus' ability to withstand emotional stress, see Griffin (above, note 4) 96–97.

⁵⁰ As must be clear by now, I have not included Penelope in my discussion. Harsh (above, note 17) has claimed that Penelope recognizes Odysseus even though he does not deliberately reveal himself and that she keeps her recognition a secret. Cf. Russo (above, note 11); A. Amory, "The Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope," in *Essays on the Odyssey*, ed. by Ch. H. Taylor, Jr. (Bloomington, IN 1963) 100–21; Whitman (above, note 10) 303; S. Mumaghan (above, note 32) 47–52, have noted a possible subconscious recognition of Odysseus by Penelope. It is plausible that the Trojan tales had a model of a recognition between the returning husband and his faithful wife and not with other members of the household. Agamemnon's elaborate compliments to Penelope in Book 11 can support such a possibility.

I wish to thank Frederick M. Ahl and Kevin Clinton for many helpful discussions and constructive remarks. No one but the author should be held responsible for the views expressed in this paper.