

## THE OBSTACLES TO TELEMACHUS' RETURN

If we divide up the action of the *Odyssey* into days,<sup>1</sup> we find that we leave Telemachus with Menelaus in Sparta on Day 6 (4. 624) and only return to him, still in Sparta, during the pre-dawn hours of Day 36 (15. 1), although at 4. 593–9 he told Menelaus he did not want to stay long. Why, then, does he spend a month there? Or does he? I shall argue that he does, and that the poet as good as tells us why he does. This position is not in itself a new one,<sup>2</sup> but it is diametrically opposed to the views recently expressed by Denys Page<sup>3</sup> and Norman Austin:<sup>4</sup> it therefore seems worth while to consider the question afresh. However, the main purpose of this article will be to argue that in accounting for Telemachus' long delay in Sparta the poet employs certain motifs and devices which reappear in his treatment of some of the obstacles to Odysseus' return.<sup>5</sup> An awareness of these parallels can, I believe, significantly deepen our understanding and appreciation of the poem.

Before proceeding, I should make two points clear about my methodology in discussing time in Homer. First, it will be impossible to deal with the subject exhaustively within the confines of this article, and I shall deliberately pass over certain matters in silence, including some opinions with which I disagree but to refute which would be of only marginal relevance to my present concerns. Thus citation of a scholar in support of an argument should not be taken as necessarily implying total agreement with the section cited, let alone with the work as a whole. Secondly, where I have made chronological calculations, this is not in the belief that the *Odyssey*-poet would have had a precise day-by-day chronological plan at the back of his mind, but rather in the belief that he would have been sufficiently conscious of the passage of time to make such calculations legitimate as an approximate guide.

One argument which has been used against the view that Telemachus stays in Sparta for a month is the contention that the period of time filled by the return of Odysseus (Books 5–14) does nothing to lengthen Telemachus' sojourn in Sparta because the Homeric poet lacks a concept of a universal time capable of embracing two simultaneous events in different places. This was argued by

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. the plan in E. Delebecque, *Télémaque et la structure de l'Odyssée* (Aix-en-Provence, 1958), facing p. 12; or in Brigitte Hellwig, *Raum und Zeit im homerischen Epos, Spudasmata 2* (Hildesheim, 1964), pp. 42–4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. Rothe, *Die Odyssee als Dichtung* (Paderborn, 1914), p. 119; A. Shewan, 'Telemachus at Sparta', *CJ* 22 (1926–7), 31–7, repr. in his *Homeric Essays* (Oxford, 1935), pp. 393–9 (subsequent page-references will be to this reprint); F. Focke, *Die Odyssee* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1943), pp. 1–12, 20, 22, 58; A. Heubeck, *Der Odyssee-Dichter und die Ilias* (Erlangen, 1954), pp. 58–63; Delebecque, op. cit., esp.

pp. 18–30; H. Eisenberger, *Studien zur Odyssee, Palingenesia 7* (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 84–7, 92.

<sup>3</sup> *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 66–7, 77–9.

<sup>4</sup> *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 2 (1969), 46–52.

<sup>5</sup> This phrase, and the title of my paper, are intended to recall the illuminating article by Charles H. Taylor, Jr., 'The Obstacles to Odysseus' Return', *Yale Review* 50 (1960–1), 569–80, repr. in his *Essays on the Odyssey: Selected Modern Criticism* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1963), pp. 87–99 (subsequent references will be to this reprint).

U. Hölscher<sup>6</sup> (who based himself on an essay by H. Fränkel<sup>7</sup>) and (with some qualifications) by Page:

You are not allowed to comment that Telemachus must have spent an unconscionable time at Sparta. What has elapsed since we left him at Sparta is not an absolute time of several weeks, for which he must be held to account, but a series of events — the Wanderings of Odysseus; and the duration of those wanderings is a quality of them only, without any wider reference whatsoever. To the Epic poet the question, 'How long is it since we last saw Telemachus?', is nonsensical: there were no events concerning Telemachus in the interval; and time, with reference to Telemachus, exists only as a measure of the duration of events in which Telemachus is engaged.<sup>8</sup>

This is echoed by Austin.<sup>9</sup> However, this argument cannot be sustained. First, as T. Krischer has pointed out in a telling *reductio ad absurdum*,<sup>10</sup> the notion that Homer's concept of time was so unsophisticated as to preclude 'the idea that the duration of two events might coincide or overlap'<sup>11</sup> goes completely against common sense: if such a notion were correct, it would follow that 'ein Feldherr zu jener Zeit unmöglich zwei Heere zu gleicher Zeit operieren lassen konnte, dass ein Verwalter unmöglich mehrere Arbeiter gleichzeitig (und getrennt voneinander) einsetzen konnte, dass niemand den Sinn gleichzeitiger Temporalsätze verstand usw.'<sup>12</sup> Secondly, Homer's actual concept of time is clearly the very reverse of this. Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* abound in synchronizations (both explicit and paratactic) of simultaneous events in different places: e.g. (explicit) *Il.* 4. 220–1, 13. 81–4, 15. 390–4, *Od.* 3. 301–3, 23. 288–90, (paratactic) *Il.* 3. 448–50, 16. 1–2, 101–2, *Od.* 6. 1–3, 17. 166–9, 20. 240–2.<sup>13</sup> However, although there is liable to be some chronological overlapping at the moment of a scene-change (as in the synchronizations just cited), and although speeches can look both backwards and forwards, the general chronological movement of the poet's own narrative is continuously forward. In both poems it is clear that when time goes forward in one place it also goes forward everywhere else by the same amount (or at any rate a similar amount: Homer of course had more important concerns than precise chronological exactitude).<sup>14</sup> Thus, for example, Hector leaves the battlefield for the city at *Il.* 6. 116–18; then follows the battlefield encounter between Glaucus and Diomedes (119–236); we then return to Hector, who has by now reached the Scaean gate (237). Similarly, at *Il.* 15. 405 Patroclus leaves the tent of Eurypylus for that of Achilles; meanwhile (note the paratactic synchronization in 405 ff.) the battle is evenly poised. The

<sup>6</sup> *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee*, *Epik, Zetemata* 56 (Munich, 1971), pp. 100–1. *Hermes Einzelschriften* 6 (Berlin, 1939),

pp. 2–3; but as has been noted by R. Friedrich, *Stilwandel im homerischen Epos* (Heidelberg, 1975), p. 175 n. 36, Hölscher's denial here of the possibility of simultaneity in Homer is inconsistent with his emphasis elsewhere in his monograph on the importance of simultaneity for the structure of the *Odyssey*.

<sup>7</sup> 'Die Zeitauffassung in der frühgriechischen Literatur', first published in 1931 but most readily available in his *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*<sup>2</sup> (Munich, 1960), pp. 1–22.

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit. (above, n. 3), p. 67, cf. p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Loc. cit. (above, n. 4), pp. 48–9.

<sup>10</sup> *Formale Konventionen der homerischen*

*Epik, Zetemata* 56 (Munich, 1971), pp. 100–1.

<sup>11</sup> Page, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>13</sup> See further W. Dörpfeld, *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* i (Munich, 1924), 172–6; S. E. Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley, 1938), pp. 33–9; Hölscher, op. cit. (above, n. 6), pp. 30–85; Hellwig, op. cit. (above, n. 1), pp. 97–107, 120–5. One should note the simultaneity implicit in paratactic transitions of the *ὥς οἱ μὲν* . . . type discussed by Hölscher on pp. 40–1 and by Hellwig, loc. cit.: cf. Delebecque, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. T. Zielinski, 'Die Behandlung gleichzeitiger Ereignisse im antiken Epos', *Philologus Suppl.* 8 (1899–1901), pp. 407–49; Bassett, op. cit., pp. 38–45; Delebecque and Hellwig, op. cit.

Trojans, however, soon break through the lines of the Achaeans, who are forced to retreat. By this time Patroclus has reached Achilles' tent (16. 1 ff. — paratactic synchronization again). It is the same in the *Odyssey*. At *Od.* 15. 300, for example, we leave Telemachus at night sailing towards Ithaca, wondering whether or not he will escape death; we then turn to Odysseus and Eumaeus, who are having their supper; after their long conversation they sleep for what little of the night remains; then comes dawn, and we immediately return to Telemachus, who has by now reached the coast of Ithaca in safety (15. 493–6). The chronology is clear: while Glaucus and Diomedes converse, Hector progresses towards Troy; while Achaeans and Trojans fight, Patroclus progresses towards Achilles' tent; while Odysseus and Eumaeus converse, Telemachus progresses towards Ithaca. While time moves forward in Place A, it also moves forward in Place B.

A final example from the *Odyssey* is worth considering in some detail, because it has particularly close parallels with Telemachus' stay in Sparta.<sup>15</sup> Telemachus leaves Ithaca on the evening of Day 2, and we follow his progress uninterrupted until the middle of Day 6, when we return to Ithaca (4. 625). Nearly four days have gone by for Telemachus; has the same (or a similar) amount of time gone by for those on Ithaca? Yes: there cannot be the slightest doubt about this: not only is the time when we leave Telemachus paratactically synchronized with the time when we return to Ithaca,<sup>16</sup> but, as we shall see, the whole Ithaca-scene (625–847) is based on the assumption that it is several days since Telemachus left. Yet this entails a difficulty for the poet: we are returning to Ithaca to watch the reactions of the suitors and Penelope when they learn that Telemachus has left the island; it would surely be unnatural if they were to take several days to notice his absence from the palace; and yet the Homeric convention of the continuous forward chronological movement of the narrative prevents the poet from putting the clock back three days and returning to the morning after Telemachus' departure, which would be the most natural time for the suitors to discover that he had left the island, as the poet himself realizes — for at *Od.* 2. 367 Eurykleia says οἱ δέ τοι αὐτίκ' ἰόντι κακὰ φράσσονται ὀπίσσω. Further, the suitors cannot be made to come to a sudden, spontaneous realization, on the fourth day after Telemachus' departure, that he is no longer present. How does the poet solve the dilemma? First, he makes a distinction between Telemachus' absence from the *palace* and his absence from the *island*: in accounting for the suitors' surprise when they are informed that he has left the island, he implies that they did indeed notice his absence from the palace, for he explains that 'they did not think he had gone to Neleian Pylos, but that he was somewhere on the island in the country, either among his flocks or with the swineherd' (4. 638–40). This explanation of the suitors' thought-processes is somewhat lacking in verisimilitude: Telemachus had openly told them of his intention to go to Pylos and Sparta (2. 212–17, 317–20), and the next day there is no sign of him: it is surprising that the thought does not cross their minds that he may well have gone where he had said he would go, the more so since, as Eumaeus later tells us (16. 27–9), his visits to the country are rare. However, this objection is substantially mitigated by the fact that the suitors

<sup>15</sup> For what follows in this paragraph I am heavily indebted to Delebecque, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–55.

<sup>16</sup> *Od.* 4. 624–5, or 620 + 625 if we believe, with many, that 621–4 are an interpolation.

were earlier shown to have underestimated their adversary: at 2. 255–6 Leocritus expresses the belief that Telemachus will never bring the journey off, and at 2. 323–36 the suitors in general treat his project as no more than a huge joke; and now that they have discovered that he *has* brought the journey off we are reminded by Antinous that this success runs completely counter to their earlier expectations (4. 663–4: note how this takes up the wording of 2. 256). Thus in the light of their false sense of security their initial reaction (or lack of reaction) to Telemachus' disappearance from the palace is not totally implausible. How, then, are they to discover that he has actually gone abroad? For this purpose the poet reintroduces Noemon: it was he who had supplied Telemachus with his ship (2. 386–7), which he now begins to miss, as he needs it to fetch a young mule from the mainland. His approach to Antinous is delightfully naïve and casual: 'Antinous, do we have any idea when Telemachus is due back from Pylos, or don't we know?' (4. 632–3): the irony is that he does not at first realize that the suitors are ignorant of Telemachus' embarkation. Replying to their questions, he remarks, almost in passing, that he saw Mentor boarding the ship as captain — 'Mentor or some god — he looked exactly like Mentor, anyway. And that's the funny thing — I saw Mentor here early yesterday morning, and yet at that time (*τότε*) he embarked for Pylos' (653–6). Note, first, the chronology. The very fact that Noemon has by now begun to miss his ship strongly suggests that several days (at least) have passed since Telemachus left, and positive proof of this is supplied by lines 655–6: Noemon saw Mentor in Ithaca 'early yesterday morning', *χθιζὸν ὑπηοῖον*; *τότε*, the time of his embarkation, must be still earlier than this. It is abundantly clear, then, that while time has been going forward by several days for Telemachus it has also been going forward by several days on Ithaca. Secondly, this chronology — which is an inevitable result of the poet's continuous preoccupation with Telemachus' journey throughout these four days — has imposed on the poet certain problems which he has sought to solve by trying to make the inherently implausible delay in the suitors' discovery of Telemachus' voyage seem as natural as is possible in the circumstances, and he has been assisted in this task by his gifts of characterization: the nonchalance of the suitors is used to account for the false interpretation which they initially put on Telemachus' absence from the palace, and the endearing and true-to-life character of the simple, generous-hearted Noemon and his natural enough preoccupation with his mules are used to account for the fact that the suitors' peace of mind is shattered at the precise moment when the poet is ready to return to them.<sup>17</sup> The full extent of the parallels with Telemachus' stay in Sparta will only emerge later in this article, but here we may note that when the poet returns to Ithaca at 4. 625 the question 'How long is it since we last saw the suitors?' is anything but meaningless to him: he is well aware that the answer must, of necessity, be 'Several days', and we can watch him struggling to overcome the difficulties which that answer entailed for him. This surely disproves Page's assertion that when the poet, after his long preoccupation with the return of Odysseus, eventually returns to Telemachus, 'the question, "How long is it since we last saw Telemachus?"', is nonsensical':<sup>18</sup> on the analogy of the Noemon episode the question must be deemed a legitimate and meaningful one, and the answer must be 'About a month'.

<sup>17</sup> For a masterly discussion of the characterization of Noemon and its purpose

see Delebecque, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–52.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

Furthermore, this answer is confirmed by specific indications in the text. Austin claims that 'in Athena's words to Telemachos in Book 15, there is no suggestion of a time lapse, and certainly no accusation of dereliction of duty or forgetfulness. Both topics surely would have served as her most forceful argument. But all she says is (15. 10): "It is no longer judicious for you (*καλά*) to be wandering far from home."<sup>19</sup> However, this claim cannot be allowed to stand. First, the text tells us that Athene went to Sparta 'to remind Telemachus of his home-coming and to urge him to return' (*νόστου ὑπομνήσουσα καὶ δτρυνέουσα νέεσθαι*, 15. 3), and the need for such reminding and such urging surely implies something approaching forgetfulness on Telemachus' part – to be precise, a loss of the requisite sense of urgency in his attitude to his return. With *νόστου ὑπομνήσουσα* in 15. 3 we may compare *Od.* 10. 472 *δαμόνι*, ἤδη νῦν μιμήσκεο πατρίδος αἴης: it is only after a whole year with Circe (10. 467–71) that Odysseus' companions remind him of the need to get back home. Moreover, Telemachus' forgetfulness has been foreshadowed in *Od.* 4. 595–8, where he tells Menelaus he enjoys his conversation so much that he could easily spend a year with him without feeling any longing for home or family: Athene's reminder of both home (15. 3, 10–42) and mother (15. 15–23, 40–2) implies that the danger of which Telemachus had expressed an awareness in Book 4 has gone a considerable way towards becoming a reality.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, Austin is able to claim that there is 'certainly no accusation of dereliction of duty' in Athene's speech of 15. 10–42 only by arbitrarily translating *καλά* in line 10 as 'judicious'. But this line – *Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι καλὰ δόμων ἄπο τῆλ' ἀλάλησαι* – surely amounts to a rebuke, and the fault for which Telemachus is rebuked is surely a moral one: he has neglected to return home speedily in spite of the precarious position of both his estate and his mother (11–26) – that is, he has neglected the responsibilities inherent in his newly-acquired adult status.<sup>21</sup> This interpretation is supported by the verbal parallels: I count fifteen other cases in Homer of a negated *καλά*/ *κάλ'*/ *καλῶς*/ *καλόν*/ *κάλλιον*;<sup>22</sup> in seven of these cases the pattern is, as here, an opening vocative + *οὐ* + *καλά*/ *καλόν* etc.; in all seven cases this clearly constitutes a rebuke or expostulation, and in six of these seven cases the fault rebuked is clearly a moral one.<sup>23</sup> There are also three other cases where, though the negated *καλά* (etc.) comes in the *middle* of a speech, it again constitutes a rebuke or criticism and the fault criticized is again a moral one.<sup>24</sup> In two other cases, though

<sup>19</sup> Loc. cit., p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Shewan, op. cit. (above, n. 2), pp. 394–5; Focke, op. cit. (above, n. 2), pp. 10, 58; Heubeck, op. cit. (above, n. 2), pp. 62–3.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Focke, op. cit., pp. 2, 10, 58; Heubeck, op. cit., pp. 62–3; Delebecque, op. cit., pp. 26–7.

<sup>22</sup> *Od.* 2. 63, 7. 159, 8. 166, 17. 381, 460, 483, 18. 287, 20. 294, 21. 312; *Il.* 6. 326, 8. 400, 13. 116, 17. 19, 21. 439–40, 24. 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Od.* 7. 159, 8. 166, 17. 483 and 21. 312 rebuke offences against the guest-friendship code; at *Od.* 17. 381 Eumaeus expostulates with Antinous about his unreasonable verbal belligerence (cf. 388–9,

394–5); and at *Il.* 6. 326 Hector rebukes Paris (325 *νείκεσεν*) for not joining in the fighting while Trojan warriors are dying for his sake (326–31). The (possible?) exception is *Il.* 17. 19.

<sup>24</sup> At *Il.* 13. 116 Poseidon rebukes the Achaeans for hanging back from the fighting and at *Od.* 2. 63 Telemachus criticizes the suitors' consumption of his estate: in the former passage we again find *οὐκέτι καλὰ*, as in *Od.* 15. 10, and in the same position in the line, and in the latter passage we find *οὐδ' ἔτι καλῶς*. The third example is *Il.* 24. 52, where Apollo criticizes the behaviour of Achilles towards the body of Hector (33–54: note the strong moral condemnation in 40–5).

there is no rebuke, οὐ . . . καλόν again has a moral significance.<sup>25</sup> Finally, in two cases οὐ . . . καλὰ has a completely different meaning but one that is clearly inapplicable at *Od.* 15. 10.<sup>26</sup> There is also an interesting verbal parallel of a different kind. In *Od.* 3. 313–16 Nestor warns Telemachus not to stay away from home for long, and this passage is repeated verbatim by Athene at 15. 10–13 except for some significant alterations in the first line. Nestor had said: καὶ σύ, φίλος, μὴ δηθὰ δόμων ἄπο τῆλ' ἀλλάλῃσο. Athene says: Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι καλὰ δόμων ἄπο τῆλ' ἀλλάλῃσαι. A comparison of the two passages suggests that by the time of Book 15 Telemachus has overstepped the mark both chronologically and morally: Athene in effect rebukes him for ignoring Nestor's sound advice, and the implication of her οὐκέτι καλὰ is that by now Telemachus has already spent a long time (Nestor's δηθὰ) in Sparta. But if he had spent no more than 36 hours there, as Austin supposes,<sup>27</sup> he did not deserve this rebuke.

Further, Austin claims that 'Telemachos himself makes no reference to a time lapse, though if he had already stayed a month we might expect him to use this as an argument for leaving'.<sup>28</sup> But at 15. 65 Telemachus says to Menelaus ἤδη νῦν μ' ἀπόπεμπε φίλῃν ἐς πατρίδα γαίαν, and in such a context this would seem to mean 'now at last, after all this time': Shewan well compares *Il.* 1. 456 and *Od.* 10. 472.<sup>29</sup> In the former passage Chryses prays to Apollo ἤδη νῦν Δαναοῖσιω ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἄμυνον when the plague has already been raging for more than nine days (1. 53–4): he explicitly looks back (451–5) to the point (453 πότ' . . . πάρος) when the plague started in response to his earlier prayer (note that 451–2 = 37–8) and explicitly compares the two prayers (453–5: note esp. 455 ἡδ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν). Shewan's second parallel is even more illuminating. The context is very similar to that of ἤδη νῦν in *Od.* 15. 65: at *Od.* 10. 472 Odysseus' companions plead δαμόνι, ἤδη νῦν μμνήσκεο πατρίδος αἵης: in both places there is a plea concerning home-coming, and in both places virtually the same formula for 'home' ends the line; further, to Telemachus' φίλῃν ἐς πατρίδα γαίαν corresponds the companions' σὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαίαν two lines later (10. 474). Now the companions' plea with its ἤδη νῦν comes, as we have seen, only after a full year with Circe; this fact on its own strongly supports the view that ἤδη νῦν at *Od.* 15.65 implies that Telemachus has spent a long time in Sparta, but this view is reinforced by the other parallels between the two passages which we have just noted.

Austin speaks of 'the chronological continuity between the scenes in Sparta in Books 4 and 15' and claims that there is 'no lapse in time' between them.<sup>30</sup> He cannot mean that there is literally no time-lapse, because when we leave Telemachus in Book 4 it is the middle of the day and when we return to him in Book 15 it is the middle of the night; he presumably means, then, that the night of 15. 1–55 is the night following the day of 4. 306–624. Let us see just what this would mean in detail:

Day 2 After sunset: Telemachus leaves Ithaca.

Day 5 Sunset: Telemachus arrives in Sparta.

<sup>25</sup> *Od.* 18. 287 and 20. 294: the insincerity in the latter passage does not affect the issue.

<sup>26</sup> *Il.* 8. 400 and *Od.* 17. 460: in both places the phrase is followed by a future verb and the meaning is 'It will not be a pretty sight [or: a pleasant matter] when

. . .', the allusion being to physical pain.

<sup>27</sup> See below, pp. 6–7.

<sup>28</sup> Loc. cit., p. 50.

<sup>29</sup> Op. cit., p. 394, though in what follows some of my details go beyond Shewan.

<sup>30</sup> Loc. cit., p. 50, cf. 48–9.

- Day 6 In Sparta: Telemachus and Menelaus converse.  
 In Ithaca: the suitors discover Telemachus' departure.  
 After sunset: their ambush-ship sets sail.
- Day 7 Before dawn: Athene appears before Telemachus.  
 After dawn: Telemachus leaves Sparta.  
 Sunset: Telemachus reaches Pherae.
- Day 8 Pherae — Pylos; Pylos — coast of Elis.
- Day 9 Dawn: Telemachus reaches Ithaca and visits Eumaeus.  
 About midday: the suitors' ambush-ship returns.

On this schedule Telemachus would have spent a total of only thirty-six hours (at the most) in Sparta by the time he was approached by Athene at *Od.* 15. 1 ff.; he would be absent from Ithaca for a total of only six days and seven nights; and the suitors' ambush would last only two and a half days and three nights. However, there are a number of passages in the text which are difficult or impossible to reconcile with such short periods or which at any rate better suit the much longer periods posited by Delebecque and others.

We have already noted some difficulties which the text of Book 15 poses for the hypothesis of a very short stay in Sparta, and we may now add that the words of Athene to Odysseus about Telemachus at 13. 423–4, *οὐ τῷ ἔχει πόνον, ἀλλὰ ἔκηλος | ἦσται ἐν Ἀτρεΐδαι δόμοις, παρὰ δ' ἄσπετα κείται*, most naturally suggest that he has been comfortably ensconced in Sparta for a very considerable period.<sup>31</sup> As is well known, *ἦμαι* is often used in Homer with connotations of inactivity;<sup>32</sup> such connotations are strongly suggested here by *οὐ τῷ . . . πόνον, ἔκηλος*, and *παρὰ δ' ἄσπετα κείται*;<sup>33</sup> and the notion of inactivity on the part of Telemachus suits a month-long stay in Sparta much better than one which was, in the words of Shewan, 'all but the shortest possible'. Further, Shewan well points out that the verb *ἦμαι* 'is the very one used by Telemachus himself, δ 596, when he says he would be delighted, if he could, to stay for a year, . . . ἡμενος' and that it is used of 'a very prolonged sojourn' at *Od.* 10. 468 (a year — and, one might add, again with *ἄσπετα* in the same line used of food) and also at *Od.* 3. 263 and *Il.* 24. 542.<sup>34</sup> One could also cite *Od.* 13. 337, where the same form of the verb is used a little earlier in the same Book of the *Odyssey* in the same metrical position and within a similar context (337 *ἦσται ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν*, 424 *ἦσται ἐν . . . δόμοις*) of Penelope's fidelity, which has lasted for more than nineteen years, and the similar *Il.* 2. 137 *ἦατ' ἐνὶ μεγάροις*, of a wait which has lasted for nine years. But there is a more radical point to be made here. From *Od.* 5. 27 to the end of Book 14 the poet is continuously occupied with the return of Odysseus; if, at a particular point within this continuum, and one well before its end, Odysseus and Athene discuss the present situation of Telemachus in some detail (13. 412–27), if Athene proposes to alter that situation in the near future (412, cf. 439–40), and if the future situation of Odysseus within this continuum is explicitly synchronized with the future situation of Telemachus (411–13), then it is hard to see how the Return of Odysseus can be regarded as

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Shewan, *op. cit.*, p. 395; Focke, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Delebecque, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> e.g. *Il.* 18. 104, *Od.* 9. 78 = 14. 256 almost = 12. 152, *Od.* 9. 162 = 557 = 10. 184 = 468 = 477 = 12. 30, *Od.* 16. 145.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *ἡμεθα . . . ἄσπετα . . .* in the frequent feasting-formula of *Od.* 9. 162 etc. (above, n. 32).

<sup>34</sup> Shewan, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

'a set of events in a separate time-space continuum' without any implications for the duration of Telemachus' stay in Sparta.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, at *Od.* 2. 373–6 Telemachus instructs Eurycleia not to tell Penelope of his journey *πρὶν γ' ὅτ' ἂν ἐνδεκάτῃ τε δωδεκάτῃ τε γένηται* (374, cf. 4. 746–9). Precisely how we are to interpret this is debatable, but it is clear enough that, even before he has encountered Menelaus' pressing hospitality, Telemachus must regard an absence of *more* than eleven days as at least a distinct possibility.<sup>36</sup> On Austin's schedule, however, he is actually away for only six days and seven nights.

Thirdly, Athene tells Telemachus at 15. 15–18 (and cf. 16. 31–5) that negotiations between Eurymachus and Penelope's family for her hand in marriage are already so far advanced that he will be lucky if he finds her still at home when he returns. Even if we assume, with most interpreters, that Athene has simply invented this story in order to instil a sense of urgency into Telemachus, such a fiction would still need to be plausible, and a total absence from Ithaca of over a month would suit the far-reaching nature of these developments better than a total absence of less than a week.<sup>37</sup>

Fourthly, when Antinous gives vent to his frustration over the failure of the suitors' ambush, he says, 'Day after day (*ἡμέματα* – plural and accusative of duration) our scouts kept watch (*ἔχον* – imperfect) on the windy peaks, one always (*αἰέν*) immediately taking over from another, and when the sun set we never (*οὐ ποτ'*) spent the night on shore, but would await the dawn (*ἐμίμνομεν* – imperfect) at sea . . .' (16. 365–8). This gives the distinct impression that the ambush lasted much longer than the mere 66 hours implied by Austin's schedule: in particular, *οὐ ποτ'* strongly suggests that there were many more nights than three.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, in *Od.* 16. 139–45 Eumaeus describes the pitiable state to which Laertes has been reduced by the news of Telemachus' departure: he no longer looks after his farm, no longer eats or drinks as well as he used to, but sits groaning and weeping in sorrow, and his flesh is wasting away (*φθινύθει δ' ἀμφ' ὅστέοφι χρώς*, 145). Now for his reduced intake of food and drink to have had the spectacular physical effect mentioned, it must have been in progress for a very considerable period. Eumaeus' report is based on hearsay evidence obtained at some unspecified time in the recent past (143 *φασὶν*). On Austin's schedule Telemachus comes upon Eumaeus at breakfast on Day 9; let us suppose – to be as charitable to Austin as possible – that Eumaeus has spoken to someone who actually saw Laertes as recently as Day 8. When did Laertes' grief commence? *ἐξ οὗ σὺ γε οἶχαιο νηῖ Πύλονδε*, according to Eumaeus (142), but of course there must have been some interval between Telemachus' departure after dark on Day 2 and the discovery of this fact by Laertes on his remote estate (1. 190 *ἀπάνευθεν ἐπ' ἀγροῦ*); let us suppose – again, to be as charitable to Austin as possible – that he learns of it during the course of Day 3. A mere five days of distress and austere diet would not suffice to produce the dramatic loss of weight described by Eumaeus. But our case becomes even stronger if – as the text would seem to

<sup>35</sup> The quotation is from Austin, loc. cit., p. 49, but the position is also that of Hölscher and Page: see above, pp. 1–2.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Shewan, op. cit., pp. 393–4; Delebecque, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Rothe, op. cit. (above, n.2), p. 119;

Shewan, op. cit., pp. 294–5; Focke, op. cit., pp. 2, 20; Delebecque, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Shewan, op. cit., p. 394; Focke, op. cit., p. 2 n. 1, p. 22; Delebecque, op. cit., pp. 28–9.



indicate — Laertes does not learn of Telemachus' departure until much later than Day 3. Considerable secrecy has surrounded Telemachus' departure (2. 373–7, 393–8). When on Day 6 Penelope learns simultaneously of his departure and the suitors' plot against his life, she suggests that a messenger be sent to tell Laertes *τάδε πάντα* immediately (4. 735–41), but Eurycleia advises against this ('Do not trouble an old man who has troubles enough already', 754, cf. 15. 353–60). The underlying assumption of both Penelope and Eurycleia is that Laertes will not yet have heard of Telemachus' departure, and this assumption is nowhere contradicted by the poet: no such contradiction need be implicit in Eumaeus' telescoping of Telemachus' departure and Eumaeus' discovery of it into what is grammatically a single moment (*ἐξ οὗ* . . . , 16. 142), for if Telemachus has spent a month in Sparta, then from the distant perspective of Day 38 (when Eumaeus makes his remarks) Day 2 (when Telemachus departs) is very close to Day 7 or 8 (when we may suppose Laertes to have learnt of his departure, since it had become common knowledge on Day 6). However, Austin's schedule, according to which Eumaeus' remarks are made on Day 9, now runs into further difficulties: if the chronology suggested by Book 4 is accepted, and Laertes learns of Telemachus' departure only after Day 6, then (a) his dramatic loss of weight would be caused by no more than 24 hours on reduced rations, which would be absurd, and (b) the *ἐξ οὗ* telescoping would, from this nearer perspective, be distinctly odd; alternatively, if the chronology suggested by Book 4 is rejected and Laertes' enlightenment is put back to Day 3, then (a) an awkward conflict with Book 4 arises, while (b) a fast of only five days (at the most) remains a difficulty.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the specific evidence of the text on the length of Telemachus' stay in Sparta confirms what Homer's general chronological principles demand: Telemachus stays there for about a month.

But, it may be asked, is there no evidence on the other side — evidence favouring a short stay?

Austin<sup>40</sup> has argued that when, in Book 4, Telemachus has obtained news of Odysseus from Menelaus, his mission is accomplished and he has no reason at all to stay there any longer, especially as he is needed back home to take control of the precarious situation there. This is quite correct if by 'no reason' one means 'no *justifiable* reason', but there *is* a reason in the sense of a 'reason why', i.e. a plausible motivation, and this reason lies in the attractions of the Spartan court and the generous — indeed pressing — hospitality of Menelaus.<sup>41</sup> It is precisely the poet's point that there is no *justifiable* reason for Telemachus to spend so long in Sparta but that he stays on none the less: that is why Athene rebukes him at the beginning of Book 15, as we have seen. That is also why Telemachus, in his report on his journey to his mother in Book 17, passes evasively over the length of his sojourn in Sparta: after describing how he heard news of Odysseus from Menelaus, he says vaguely *ταῦτα τελευτήσας νεόμην* (148). The phraseology is determined partly by the fact that the poet, because he is here summarizing part of the previous action, is in a repetitive mood (17. 148–9 = 4. 585–6),<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Shewan, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–6; Delebecque, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–8.

<sup>40</sup> *Loc. cit.* (above, n. 4).

<sup>41</sup> Something has already been said of this above, and we shall be returning to it

below. The pressing nature of Menelaus' hospitality is well documented by G. P. Rose, 'Odyssey 15. 143–82: a Narrative Inconsistency?', *TAPA* 102 (1971), 509–14.

<sup>42</sup> See *CQ* N.S. 27 (1977), 7–8.

and partly, perhaps, by the fact that the verb *τελευτάω* has already been used several times of the accomplishment of Telemachus' mission, as Shewan has pointed out<sup>43</sup> (*Od.* 1.293, 2. 275, 280; note also *τελέω* in 2. 273, 4. 663–4 (twice), 16. 346–7 (twice)). But we do not need to resort to the argument that the oral poet's phraseology here is second-hand in order to defend the conciseness of *ταῦτα τελευτήσας νεόμην*: this expression cannot be used to support the hypothesis of a short stay in Sparta (as some have tried to use it<sup>44</sup>) because there is ample reason for Telemachus to speak like this after a *long* stay. The audience is well aware of the devastating effect which his departure had on his mother's morale (4. 703–41, 787–93, 810–23), Telemachus had himself feared this (2. 357–8, 372–6), and now Penelope herself, in greeting him on his return, has hinted at the anguish his absence has caused her (17. 41–3) and reminded him that his departure was *λάβρη, ἐμεῦ ἀέκητι* (43). In these circumstances — i.e. knowing as he does that every day of his absence has added to his mother's suffering — it would have been supremely tactless, and unnecessarily damaging to himself, if he had told her, 'And I stayed on in Sparta for a month, enjoying Menelaus' hospitality' when he had no adequate justification for such a long stay. In any case, what Penelope has asked him for is news of Odysseus (17. 44, 101–6), not a comprehensive travelogue, so that when he has finished passing on this news (17. 147) he has really said all he need. Further, since Penelope has already reproached him for delaying his reporting of this news by an hour or two (17. 101–6, cf. 44–57), he would hardly want to openly admit that he had in fact unnecessarily delayed his report by a whole month.<sup>45</sup>

But, it may be objected, if the poet intends Telemachus to spend a month in Sparta, why does he make him protest when Menelaus invites him to stay on for a further eleven days or so? Why does he not instead make him gratefully accept the invitation? First, we should note that Telemachus' protest falls just short of an outright declining of the invitation: he does not actually insist on leaving immediately (contrast 15. 65–6, 88), and Eisenberger is right in saying that in 4. 594 and 599 he uses the verb *ἐρύκειω* 'so, als hänge es ganz von Menelaos ab, wann er abreisen könne';<sup>46</sup> and no definite arrangements have been made for Telemachus' departure by the time the scene shifts back to Ithaca (4. 625). However, it strikes me as special pleading to argue, as Focke<sup>47</sup> and Eisenberger<sup>48</sup> do, that in 4. 594–9 Telemachus *accepts* Menelaus' invitation. Nearer the truth is Bona's verdict<sup>49</sup> that he neither accepts nor declines it — but the words of *Od.* 4. 594–9 surely come closer to a declining than to an acceptance. Why, then, does the poet portray Telemachus as so reluctant to tarry in Sparta?

The key to the answer lies in the fact that there is another 'reason why' for Telemachus' long sojourn in Sparta, one which is logically prior to any motivation to be assigned to Telemachus, and that is that it was imposed on the poet by the structure of his story. Just as the three-day delay in the suitors' discovery of Telemachus' departure from Ithaca was an inevitable result of the poet's continuous

<sup>43</sup> Op. cit., p. 397.

<sup>44</sup> e.g. Dörpfeld, op. cit. (above, n. 13), p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> My exegesis of 17. 148 owes something to Delebecque, op. cit., p. 26, F. M. Stawell, *Homer and the Iliad* (London, 1909), pp. 171–2, and W. J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey*

(Oxford, 1930), p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> Op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 85.

<sup>47</sup> Op. cit., pp. 6–8, rejected by Page (op. cit., p. 78 n.) and G. Bona (*Studi sull'Odissea* (Turin, 1966), pp. 220–1).

<sup>48</sup> Op. cit., pp. 84–6.

<sup>49</sup> Loc. cit. (above, n. 47).

preoccupation with Telemachus' journey itself during its first few days, so the month-long delay in Telemachus' departure from Sparta is an inevitable result of the poet's continuous preoccupation with the return of Odysseus from the beginning of Book 5 to the end of Book 14. In both cases there was a danger that the delay might appear lacking in verisimilitude, but in both cases the poet has gone out of his way to reduce that danger to a minimum. In both cases skilful characterization is involved — in the former case the suitors' false sense of security and the simple Noemon, in the latter case the impressionable Telemachus (e.g. 4. 43–7, 71–5, 158–60, 595–8), the over-hospitable Menelaus (e.g. 4. 587–8, 15. 80–5), and Telemachus' reluctance to offend him (e.g. 4. 158–60, 595–8). But it is precisely because Telemachus' long delay in Sparta originated as a mere by-product of the structure of the story that the poet is unwilling to completely sacrifice Telemachus' good name in the interests of chronological plausibility. Rather, he aims to strike a balance between these two conflicting claims. On the one hand, Sparta must be made attractive enough, and Menelaus' hospitality generous and pressing enough, to render a month-long stay by Telemachus plausible; but on the other hand Telemachus' irresponsibility in staying on so long must not seem so gross that the audience's basically favourable impression of his character is seriously and permanently impaired. The emphasis on the pressing nature of Menelaus' hospitality serves both ends — i.e. it both helps to make the length of Telemachus' stay plausible and exonerates him from some of the blame for it. Similarly, the long time Menelaus invites Telemachus to stay for is designed to prepare the way for a stay which does in fact turn out to be long,<sup>50</sup> while Telemachus' protest at this invitation is designed to lessen the discredit of eventually yielding to it. This protest is not incompatible with his eventual yielding: as Stawell has put it, 'that a visitor should talk of going and still stay on is no unusual phenomenon'<sup>51</sup> — and at this stage Telemachus does not even talk explicitly of going, as we have seen, and Stawell's general principle is reinforced in the present instance by the attractions Sparta holds for Telemachus and the pressing nature of Menelaus' hospitality, both of which points emerge within this very speech of protest. It is also for the sake of Telemachus' good name that his actual yielding is placed 'off stage' (i.e. at some unspecified time after we leave him at 4. 624), where the audience are unable to witness it. What they do witness, much later, is Athene's reproof of 15. 1 ff. — but in Book 15 there is much less emphasis on Telemachus' past negligence than on his present desire to redeem himself by taking Athene's latest intervention as seriously as possible: he first wants to leave immediately, in the middle of the night (15. 44–50), he stands up manfully to Menelaus' further attempts to delay his

<sup>50</sup> It is wrong to assume, as Hellwig does (op. cit., p. 117), that because Menelaus invites Telemachus to stay for eleven or twelve days, Telemachus therefore *actually* stays for eleven or twelve days and no longer. The alternative numbers contained in the phrase give it a certain vagueness which would facilitate a later attempt by Menelaus to prolong the period — an attempt which 15. 80–5 shows would be in character. See also Focke, op. cit., pp. 4–5. One must accept in principle Hellwig's judgment (loc. cit.) that in the *Odyssey* events in the fore-

ground correspond in duration to those in the background only approximately, but the correspondence between a month and eleven days could hardly even be called approximate; and as the poet himself explicitly counts a single eighteen-day period (5. 278–9) within the Return of Odysseus, he would surely realize that the total duration of this Return (Books 5–14) — and thus of the synchronous stay of Telemachus in Sparta — must be considerably more than eighteen days.

<sup>51</sup> Op. cit. (above, n. 45), p. 121.

home-coming (87–91), and his sense of urgency leads him to evade Nestor's hospitality on the way back even at the risk of appearing rude (193–221).

Yet if the impression which the poet, with some sleight of hand, seeks to convey is that Telemachus' negligence is closer to a peccadillo than to a major crime, it does not follow that it is unimportant for the moral and aesthetic dynamics of the poem. On the contrary, though the length of Telemachus' sojourn in Sparta was forced on the poet by the chronological structure of his story, he has chosen to treat that sojourn in a way which reveals many striking and significant parallels with what may loosely be called the temptation theme in the Wanderings of Odysseus. Focke had already concluded, on the basis of his reading of the Telemachus-scenes alone, that 'der Dichter Telemachs langem Aufenthalt in Sparta eine Bedeutung gegeben hat, die über Kompositionstechnisches hinausgreift ins Ethische',<sup>52</sup> but this conclusion will take on a new dimension if we compare the tempting of Telemachus with the tempting of Odysseus, the psychological obstacles to Telemachus' return with the psychological obstacles to Odysseus' return (and that of his companions). It has, of course, become a commonplace in Odyssean criticism that the Journey of Telemachus abounds in parallels with the Wanderings of Odysseus, and I do not propose to go over again ground already well covered by others;<sup>53</sup> but the parallels surrounding the temptation theme have so far scarcely been touched on. However, the existing treatments of the other parallels provide both prolegomena and support to what I am about to argue here, which in its turn can be seen as strengthening the position of all those who regard the Journey of Telemachus as a sort of miniature Odyssey in which the son acts out, on a smaller scale, the experiences of the father.

Central to the temptation theme in the *Odyssey* is the conflict between *forgetting* home and *remembering* home.<sup>54</sup> Those of Odysseus' companions who consume the lotus *forget* all thought of returning home (9. 95 οὐκέτ' . . . ἤθελεν . . . νέεσθαι, 97 νόστου τε λαθέσθαι), but Odysseus himself resists any temptation to join them, forces them back to the ships and tells his other companions to embark quickly to counter any temptation *they* may feel to try the lotus (102 μὴ πῶς τις λωτοῖο φαγῶν νόστου λάθῃται). The purpose of Circe's magic potion is not only to turn men into pigs but to make them *completely forget* their fatherland (ἵνα πάγχυ λαθοῖατο πατρίδος αἴης, 10. 236); as with the Lotus-eaters, some of the companions succumb while Odysseus himself resists. But Odysseus stays on with Circe for a full year (10. 469), at the end of which it is his companions who have to take the initiative in resuming their journey by telling Odysseus to *remember* his fatherland (472 δαμόνι, ἥδη νῦν μνησκειο πατρίδος αἴης: note the reproachful tone implied by the opening vocative and by ἥδη νῦν = 'now, after all this time'), and this suggests that, in spite of his stout averral at 9. 31–6, he has temporarily succumbed to some extent to the attractions of Circe and of the easy life in her palace, and that thoughts of home have not

<sup>52</sup> Op. cit., p. 10, cf. pp. 8–9, 58.

<sup>53</sup> See e.g. E. Seitz, 'Die Stellung der "Telemachie"' im Aufbau der Odyssee' (Diss. Marburg, 1950), pp. 131–7; Heubeck, op. cit., pp. 56–7; H. W. Clarke, *AJP* 84 (1963), 138–45 and *The Art of the Odyssey* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), pp. 40–4; K. Rüter, *Odysseeinterpretationen, Hypomnemata* 19

(Göttingen, 1969), pp. 141–2, 238–40; N. Austin, *Archery at the Dark of the Moon* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 181–200; B. B. Powell, *Composition by Theme in the Odyssey, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* 81 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1977), pp. 50–6.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Taylor, 'Obstacles' (above, n. 5).

always been uppermost in his mind. However, once approached by his companions, he does not need much persuading, and their yearning for home now becomes his too (10. 475,<sup>55</sup> 483–6). Normally, succumbing to the Sirens' temptation means losing any chance of returning home (12. 41–4), obviously because the hypnotic power of their song (*θέλγουσιν* 40, 44) banishes all thoughts of home-coming from the listener's mind, but Odysseus, paradoxically, both succumbs (because the Sirens vanquish his will when he hears them) and evades them (because the precautions he has taken render his momentary yielding ineffectual). Successful avoidance of the hazard posed by the cattle of the Sun will depend, Circe tells Odysseus, on keeping the goal of home-coming constantly in mind — 12. 137 *εἰ . . . νόστου . . . μέδῃαι* — a proviso which Odysseus himself steadfastly observes but which his companions, to their undoing, do not (12. 348–52). Calypso, Athene tells us, is trying to charm Odysseus into *forgetting* Ithaca (1. 57 *θέλγει ὅπως Ἰθάκης ἐπιλήσεται*); initially she must have had some success, for the poet tells us at 5. 153 that 'the nymph *no longer* pleased him', which implies that she once did; but when the action of the *Odyssey* commences Odysseus has long since been possessed by a single-minded yearning for home (1. 13–15, 49, 57–9, 4. 555–60, 5. 13–17, 82–3, 151–61, 215–24).<sup>56</sup> He constantly preserves this single-minded focus while among the Phaeacians in spite of their undoubted attractions and above all the attractions of Nausicaa, both epitomized, as a temptation, in Alcinous' invitation to him to marry Nausicaa and remain with them permanently (7. 311–15); Alcinous would give him a new *οἶκον . . . καὶ κτήματα* (314), but Odysseus remains wedded to the old *κτῆσιν ἐμῇν . . . καὶ ὑπερεφές μέγα δῶμα* (225, cf. 151–2, 333, 8. 465–6, 9. 27–36). The general picture to emerge, then, is of a man with a basic commitment to return home but one whose sense of urgency about this goal slackens from time to time; however, there comes a point — on Calypso's island — when his goal becomes an all-consuming passion, and from this point on he never wavers.

Now Telemachus in Sparta follows a remarkably similar pattern. After Telemachus himself, and later Helen, Menelaus, and Peisistratus as well, have been weeping over memories of Odysseus (4. 113–16, 183–213), Helen slips a drug of *forgetfulness* into the wine, *φάρμακον . . . νηπενθές . . . , κακῶν ἐπιλήθων ἀπάντων* (220–1). In so far as he unwittingly imbibes a drug with amnesiac properties, Telemachus resembles the companions of Odysseus who fall victim to the lotus or Circe's drug; in so far as the drug is provided by an attractive and imposing woman, Telemachus resembles Odysseus himself charmed into forgetfulness by Circe (for a year), the Sirens (for a while), and Calypso (initially).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> For the authenticity of 475–9, omitted by a few manuscripts, see *Acta Classica* 17 (1974), 23–34.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. W. S. Anderson, *CJ* 54 (1958–9), 8–10, = Taylor, *Essays* (above, n. 5), pp. 83–5. Note further that once Calypso has consented to Odysseus' departure he can once again *enjoy* making love to her: 5. 227 *τερπέσθην φιλότῃ, παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες* (their last night together?) in contrast to the unwilling lover of 154–5. Thus 227 arguably reinforces the implications of *οὐκέτι* (153) about the past.

<sup>57</sup> However, I do not mean to imply

acceptance of Delebecque's tasteless view (op. cit., pp. 25–6) that Helen flirts with Telemachus, and flirts successfully: 'Instinctivement elle exerce sa coquetterie sur le fils d'Ulysse qui, dans son ravissement, oublie si naturellement l'objet de son voyage . . .' Delebecque supports his view by referring to Athene's words at *Od.* 13. 412–13 *ἔλθω Σπάρτην ἐς καλλιγύναικα | Τηλέμαχον καλέουσα*, but the epithet is a formulaic one (*Il.* 2. 683 and 9. 447 'Ελλάδα καλλιγύναικα, *Il.* 3. 75 = 258 and *varia lectio* at *Il.* 11. 770 'Αχαΐδα καλλιγύναικα, always at the end of a line), and it must therefore

Admittedly these parallels cannot be pressed too hard: when Circe turns Odysseus' companions into pigs she is acting as a witch, while Helen's drug is not magical but medicinal (4. 227–32, esp. 231–2 *ἡγρόος* . . .), not malevolent but benevolent and (*per se*) beneficent (228 *ἐσθλά*);<sup>58</sup> nor, strictly speaking, can it be viewed as a temptation to Telemachus, since he is apparently unaware of its existence; nor is it said to induce forgetfulness of νόστος but of πένθος and κακά. But while, as a tranquillizer, it is naturally assigned to the category of φάρμακα ἐσθλά (227–8) as opposed to φάρμακα λυγρά (230), and is doubtless harmless enough to Menelaus and Helen themselves, there must lurk a danger in its use — especially if repeated — by a man with a mission like Telemachus; and if it is not in itself an actual temptation to him, it nevertheless typifies the whole atmosphere of the Spartan *dolce far niente*, which does constitute such a temptation. Just as Odysseus defines his very nature in terms of suffering (5. 219–24), so his son's commitment to home must involve a willingness to suffer, as he will have to return to an Ithaca where the suitors are still wooing his mother and devouring his patrimony, with his father (as far as he knows in Book 4) still absent — a situation which Telemachus has himself described as involving ἄλγος, κακόν, πένθει λυγρῶ, ἀπρήκτους ὀδύνας (2. 41, 45, 70, 79; cf. 1. 242–4, 288, 4. 164–7). So forgetfulness of πένθος and of κακῶν ἀπάντων may after all be tantamount, for Telemachus, to forgetfulness of νόστος.<sup>59</sup> It is significant that, soon after his arrival in Sparta and before imbibing Helen's drug, Telemachus recognizes himself in the word-picture painted by Menelaus of Telemachus grieving for the absent Odysseus, translates that picture into actuality as he lets a tear fall, and is then observed and recognized by his host (4. 104–19, 148–54), just as Odysseus recognizes himself in the word-picture painted by Demodocus of his own sufferings (his quarrel with Achilles, 8. 73–83, 486–91 — note 490 ἔπαθον — and the sack of Troy, 492–521, with Odysseus αἰνότατον πόλεμον . . . τολμήσαντα, 519), weeps (83–92, 521–31 — note the emphasis on suffering in the moving simile of 523–31), and is observed by his host (93–5, 532–42), who rightly

be doubtful whether the poet had Helen in mind here (cf. Bona, *op. cit.*, p. 223), though even if he did it need not follow that the word carries the erotic overtones demanded by Delebecque's interpretation. Of course Helen must have made an impression on Telemachus, as the tone of awe in his report to his mother shows (17. 118–19: cf. Delebecque, *loc. cit.*), and it is interesting that he says goodbye to her in the same reverent words that Odysseus uses in saying goodbye to Nausicaa (15. 180–1 = 8. 465, 467: cf. Seitz, *op. cit.*, p. 132), but Delebecque's interpretation surely goes beyond the bounds of Homeric propriety, and anyway the text shows that Helen, at any rate, regards her role towards Telemachus as closer to that of a mother (or aunt?) than to that of a seductress: see 15. 125–9, esp. 125 τέκνον φίλε, while 4. 143–4 and 235–6 also emphasize the generation-gap. Delebecque's view is also rejected by F. Sartori, *Athenaeum* 38 (1960), 148 and by Austin, *loc. cit.* (above, n. 4), p. 48. However, the remarks

of earlier critics on the attractions of Helen for Telemachus keep within the limits of good taste: Stawell, *op. cit.*, p. 121: '... the splendid home where Helen was the hostess . . .'; Rothe, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Shewan, *op. cit.*, p. 396: '... the hostess charming beyond compare . . .'

<sup>58</sup> Thus C. R. Beye (*The Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Epic Tradition* (Garden City, N.Y., 1966, repr. Gloucester, Mass., 1972), p. 177) is wrong in saying that 'Helen . . . is . . . a sorceress, a witch, which she reveals as she puts a magical potion of forgetfulness into the wine'; so too Powell (*op. cit.*, pp. 17, 52–3), who calls Helen's drug 'baneful' (without qualification) and 'magic'.

<sup>59</sup> Stawell (*op. cit.*, p. 121), Rothe (*op. cit.*, p. 119) and Shewan (*op. cit.*, pp. 394, 396) all see Telemachus' troubles back home as a factor tending to lessen his enthusiasm for returning there, but none of them relate this point to his consumption of Helen's drug.

divines that he must somehow have shared in the suffering caused by the Trojan War (577-86), demands to know who he is (548-56), and is told (9. 16-36); the memorable detail of the purple cloak covering the face in an attempt to conceal the weeping further links the two scenes (4. 115-16, 153-4, 8. 83-92). The general similarity between these two scenes has often been noted,<sup>60</sup> but what I wish to stress here is the element of recognition and self-recognition through *suffering* which is common to them both. The natural corollary is that suffering is somehow as integral to the identity of the son as to that of the father, πολυτάλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς. At the ethical level, we can talk of the willingness to suffer in the pursuit of a worthy goal: for Odysseus, the sack of Troy (e.g. 8. 517-31), his return to Ithaca (e.g. 5. 219-24) and his vengeance on the suitors and their hangers-on (e.g. 17. 462-5, 20. 9-23); for Telemachus, return to Ithaca to preserve his family fortunes against the onslaughts of the suitors (as he is enjoined to do by Nestor, 3. 313-16). But Telemachus' ethical quality is still being tested (as, for that matter, is Odysseus'), and Helen's drug introduces the danger that he will lose sight of the urgency of his duty to home and family and slacken his commitment to the grim endurance which return to Ithaca can be expected to entail. Grief over the absent Odysseus should act as a reminder of this duty and a catalyst to this commitment, but it is this very grief which Helen's drug is designed to obliterate. We are told, moreover, that the drug is potent enough to anaesthetize one to the most catastrophic family disasters, including the death of a mother and father (4. 222-6); and, accordingly, when the thought 'crosses Telemachus' mind a little later that his father must be dead (292-3) his only reaction is to seek the joyful oblivion of sleep — ὕπνω ὑπο γλυκερῷ ταρπώμεθα κοιμηθέντες (295). By next day the effect of the drug has presumably worn off (since its effect was said to be ἐφημέριος, 223), but Telemachus is still acutely conscious of how easy and pleasant (τέρπομαι) it would be to spend a whole year in Sparta without feeling the pull of home or family (4. 595-8): compare this with Odysseus' actual year with Circe in forgetfulness of home and, conversely, contrast Telemachus' οὐδέ με οἴκου ἔλοι πόθος οὐδέ τοκῆων (4. 596) with Odysseus' ὥς οὐδὲν γλυκίων ἤς πατρίδος οὐδέ τοκῆων (9. 34, cf. 27-8). The way has now been prepared for Telemachus' actual forgetfulness 'off stage' and for Athene's nocturnal visitation at the end of his month in Sparta to *remind* him of his need to return home (15. 3 νόστου ὑπομνήσουσα καὶ ὀτρυνέουσα νέεσθαι), so like the companions' reminder to Odysseus at the end of his year with Circe.<sup>61</sup> But it is to Telemachus' credit that when Athene approaches him he is already in a state of mind receptive to her admonition, as is evident from his wakeful worrying about Odysseus: Τηλέμαχον δ' οὐχ ὕπνος ἔχε γλυκύς, ἀλλ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ | νύκτα δι' ἀμβροσίην μελεδήματα πατρὸς ἔγεφεν (15. 7-8) — a striking contrast to the abandonment to the pleasures of sleep which thoughts on the fate of Odysseus prompted at the end of his first day in Sparta (4. 295, quoted above). After Athene's intervention, he sticks resolutely to his intention to get back home as quickly as possible (15. 44-7, 59-66, 88, 193-201).

The factors encouraging forgetfulness of home tend to be the same for Telemachus as for Odysseus and his companions. Sparta offers Telemachus a languorous *dolce far niente*, and the same is true for Odysseus of Scheria and

<sup>60</sup> Seitz, op. cit., p. 132; C. P. Segal, *Arion* 1. 4 (Winter 1962), 27; Rüter, locc. cit. above, n. 53; Austin, *Archery* (above,

n. 53), pp. 184-5; Powell, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>61</sup> See further above, pp. 5, 12-13.

some other stopping-places. Telemachus in Sparta, says Athene, οὐ τῶ' ἔχει πόνον, ἀλλὰ ἔκηλος | ἦσται (13. 423–4), and the same words would aptly describe the life-styles of the Lotus-eaters, Aeolus and his family, Circe, Calypso, and the Phaeacians which Odysseus and/or his companions are invited to share. For Telemachus as for Odysseus and his companions, the role of food and drink is prominent here. We have already discussed Helen's *νηπενθές* drug and its correspondence with the lotus, but ordinary food and drink play a similar part. Menelaus offers supper as a cure for the pain of the past (4. 212–13) much as Circe offers food and drink over an extended period for the same purpose (10. 455–65): as Circe's offer is here presented as the whole basis for the year-long stay, the whole-line formula of 10. 468, *ἥμεθα δαυνύμενοι κρέα τ' ἄσπετα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ*, deserves more notice here than it would normally warrant, especially as it is repeated soon afterwards (at 477);<sup>62</sup> and the word *ἄσπετα* recurs when Athene explains that Telemachus is surrounded by abundant food and drink – 13. 424 *παρὰ δ' ἄσπετα κεῖται* – immediately after stating that he is having an easy time in Sparta (423–4, quoted above). This in turn recalls the clause *παρὰ δέ σφιν θνείατα μυρία κεῖται* (10. 9) used of the perpetual feasting (8–9 *αἰεὶ . . . δαίνυνται*) in which Aeolus and his family indulge and which Odysseus and his companions are invited to share (14): they remain, like Telemachus in Sparta, for a whole month (14 *μῆνα . . . πάντα*). Alcinous tells Odysseus at 8. 248 that the Phaeacians specialize in banquets, and while attending one meant for his enjoyment (8. 429 *τέρπηται*, cf. 395) Odysseus tells Alcinous that he can think of nothing finer (9. 5, 11) than a cheerful banquet complete with bard and ample food and drink (8–9 *παρὰ δὲ πλήθωσι τράπεζαι | σίτου καὶ κρειῶν, μέθυ δ' . . .*) – though a little later his sentiment *ὥς οὐδὲν γλύκιον ἤς πατρίδος* (34, cf. 28) shows that the Phaeacians' feasts are no match for the attractions of home.

In one case – the companions' treatment of the cattle of the Sun – yielding to the temptation to eat actually eliminates home-coming, as the proem reminds us (1. 5–9), though there are of course factors here which put this example into a different category from those discussed above.

One of the closest parallels between the tempting of Telemachus and the tempting of Odysseus lies in the pleasure both are inclined to take in listening to stories or songs. Helen, after slipping her *νηπενθές* drug into the wine, encourages Telemachus, Peisistratus, and Menelaus to take pleasure in her stories (4. 239 *μύθοις τέρπεσθε*), and then she and Menelaus each tell briefly of a feat of Odysseus during the Trojan War. Next day Menelaus tells at great length of his fascinating dealings with Eidothea and Proteus, including the vivid details of the seal-skin disguise and Proteus' multiple metamorphoses and the double climax of Proteus' news of Odysseus (551–60, cf. 498) and his prophecy of Menelaus' Elysian future (561–70). It is not surprising that Telemachus reacts to all this by saying he could easily spend a whole year with Menelaus without missing home or family, so much does he enjoy listening to his stories – *αἰνῶς γὰρ μύθοισιν ἔπεσσί τε σοῖσιν ἀκούων | τέρπομαι* (595–8). It is true that the immediately preceding and following context is Telemachus' insistence that he does not want to stay long in Sparta, but in 595–8 Sparta clearly presents itself to him as a pleasurable attraction vying with duty's call to return home: he is being tempted, and tempted through the appeal of story-telling. Due allowance must, of course, be

<sup>62</sup> See above, n. 55.



made for exaggeration from motives of politeness (e.g. 595 εἰς ἐναιυτόν), but the essentially wistful tone of 595–8 can hardly be missed. After the fascinating story Menelaus has just told, it would be most implausible to suppose that Telemachus' expression of pleasure in his conversation was essentially insincere:<sup>63</sup> this would be to make the poet indirectly denigrate his own story-telling skill, while, conversely, to accept it as sincere would be to align it with all those other passages where the *Odyssey*-poet, so self-conscious about the status and powers of bards,<sup>64</sup> indirectly compliments himself on his own success by portraying a listener as impressed by the story told or song sung by one of his characters (e.g. 8. 367–9, 487–91, 9. 3–4, 13. 1–2, 14. 361–2, 15. 486–7, 17. 513–21). Further, the assumption that Telemachus is sincere gains support from earlier indications of his enthusiasm for tales of the recent past. He asks Nestor a string of questions, obviously out of genuine interest, about the fate of Agamemnon (3. 243–52), and Menelaus has just given him further details of this story (4. 512–49). In Ithaca he defends the bard's right *τέρπεω ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὀρνυται* (1. 347) when he has just been singing of the home-comings of the Achaeans (326–7, 350–5), and he rebukes the suitors for spoiling the song with their noise: *νῦν μὲν δαυύμενοι τερπώμεθα, μηδὲ βοητῆς | ἔστω, ἐπεὶ τό γε καλὸν ἀκουέμεν ἐστὶν αἰοῦδῷ | τοιοῦδ' οἷος ὅδ' ἐστί, θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιος αὐδήν* (369–71). The last three words, in conjunction with the preceding *τερπώμεθα*, are echoed in Peisistratus' words to Menelaus (spoken on behalf of himself and Telemachus) *τοῦ νῶϊ θεοῦ ὥς τερπόμεθ' αὐδῇ* (4. 160)<sup>65</sup> — an echo which tends to suggest that Telemachus can be expected to listen to Menelaus' tales with the reverence and appreciation due to a bard — and the last two lines (1. 370–1) are repeated almost verbatim by Odysseus when praising Demodocus (9. 3–4): thus father and son share the same reverence for the role of teller of tales. Further, for Odysseus, as for Telemachus, the appeal of a story-teller can constitute a temptation to forget home. Odysseus reacts to Demodocus' light-hearted presentation of the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite with unmitigated pleasure: 8. 368 *τέρπετ' . . . ἀκούων*, cf. Telemachus' *ἀκούων | τέρπομαι* (4. 597–8). Whether or not we agree with N. P. Gross<sup>66</sup> that the erotic subject-matter of the song is to be specifically associated with the temptation which Nausicaa constitutes to Odysseus, there can be no doubt that the content of the song is typical of the Phaeacians' sensuous life-style, which Odysseus has implicitly been invited to share (7. 311–15). Further, as Gross has pointed out, 'Odysseus' approval of this song helps to unite him with the Phaeacians; their responses are identical and described by a single verb (*τέρπετ'*, 368);<sup>67</sup> and this unity is reinforced by the fact that this song, with its

<sup>63</sup> Austin (loc. cit. (above, n. 4), pp. 51–2) stops just short of asserting this, though he calls Telemachus' statement about not missing his family 'an unequivocal lie'.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. *Od.* 1. 346–55, 369–71, 8. 43–5, 62–4, 474–83, 487–91, 496–8, 9. 2–11, 17. 385, 518–21, 22. 344–8.

<sup>65</sup> I do not regard the omission of 158–60 in a single *κατ' ἀνδρα* 'edition' — that of Rhianus — as sufficient to condemn the lines (pace G. M. Bolling, *The External Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* (Oxford, 1925, repr. 1968), pp. 230–1). If the omission is not due to excision by Rhianus, it may

merely be an isolated slip. The hypothesis that this single recorded omission is only the tip of an iceberg is not supported by the fact that Rhianus' predecessor Zenodotus, so ready to omit lines, retained these (the scholia cite a reading of his in line 159). There is no internal evidence against them of any weight: for *νεμεσσάται* in this sense cf. *Od.* 1. 119, 2. 64, 138, 4. 195 and see G. W. Nitzsch, *Erklärende Anmerkungen zu Homer's Odyssee* i (Hanover, 1826) ad loc.

<sup>66</sup> 'Nausicaa: a Feminine Threat', *CW* 69 (1975–6), 311–17, esp. 315–16.

<sup>67</sup> Op. cit., p. 316.

accompanying music and dance, has been specially organized by Alcinoos to show off to Odysseus what he claims the Phaeacians are best at (8. 241–53). With the previous and following songs of Demodocus, on the other hand, what stands out is the contrast between the pleasure of the Phaeacian audience and the tears of Odysseus<sup>68</sup> (tears which, as we have seen, have their own parallel in the story of Telemachus); but if Odysseus weeps mainly from grief, that grief must surely be fused with relief and joy that he is at last among a people which – at any rate to a considerable extent – recognizes and appreciates his heroic identity and achievements for what they are: hence his lavish praise of Demodocus (8. 477–91, 9. 2–11) and his spontaneous request for another song involving his own exploits (8. 492–8, esp. 494).<sup>69</sup> The fame of the first song about Odysseus (8. 74 κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἵκανε) reflects the fame of Odysseus himself, of which he boasts (9. 20 καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει);<sup>70</sup> and his promise to spread Demodocus' fame far and wide if he can satisfactorily tell the story of Odysseus' exploit of the Wooden Horse (8. 492–8) is in effect a precise (albeit cryptic) *quid pro quo*, an appropriate incentive for Demodocus to spread Odysseus' fame, as in fact he proceeds to do (499–520). Thus in so far as these songs bring Odysseus face to face with his own fame, they must add to the attractions which Phaeacian society holds for him. Further, the subject-matter of these songs corresponds quite closely to that of the stories which Menelaus and Helen tell Telemachus. Demodocus, Menelaus, and Helen all tell of the Achaean heroes of the Trojan War, and all three tell of Odysseus' own involvement in this war (and Menelaus also of Odysseus' subsequent fate); both Demodocus and Menelaus tell of the Wooden Horse and of an exploit or exploits of Odysseus in connection with it. But even closer parallels with the tempting of Telemachus are provided by the temptation of the Sirens' song. This song is represented as attractive (λιγυρή 12. 44, on which see Stanford ad loc.,<sup>71</sup> λιγυρήν 183, μελίγηρυν 187, κάλλιμον 192) but dangerous because of its hypnotic power (θέλγουσιν 40, 44); the verb ἀκούειν is used nine times in Book 12 of listening to the song, and the context is always related to temptation: the appeal of the song and the pleasure it brings (49 ἀκουέμεν αἱ κ' ἐθέλησθα, 52 τερπόμενος ὅπ' ἀκούης, 187–8 ἀκούσαι, | . . . τερψάμενος), the danger of listening (41, 48, 49, 160, 198), the temptation itself (184–5 δεῦρ' ἄγ' ἰὼν . . . | νῆα κατάστησον, ἵνα νωϊτέρην ὅπ' ἀκούσης) and Odysseus' momentary yielding to it (192–4 ἐμόν κῆρ | ἤθελ' ἀκουέμεναι κ.τ.λ.). All this is strongly reminiscent of Telemachus' αἰνῶς . . . ἀκούων | τέρπομαι (4. 597–8), and one may also recall Helen's μύθοις τέρπεσθε (4. 239) and Peisistratus' τοῦ νῶϊ θεοῦ ὥς τερπόμεθ' αὐδῇ (4. 160). Moreover, the Sirens' song is explicitly represented as a threat to home-coming and reunion with one's family (12. 41–3, and cf. the deceitful νεῖται in 188), as are the stories of Menelaus (4. 594–9). A further parallel is that both the Sirens and Telemachus' Spartan hosts speak about the Trojan War. It may not be pure coincidence that the Sirens' Ἀργεῖοι Τρωῶς τε θεῶν ἰότητι μόγησαν (12. 190) is repeated by Telemachus when giving his mother his impressions of Helen (17. 119): the line occurs only in these two places in Homer. Finally, there is one other passage within the Wanderings of Odysseus where song is portrayed as dangerous. It is the deceptive beauty of Circe's song which leads Odysseus' reconnoitring companions to announce their presence to her and

<sup>68</sup> See Segal, loc. cit., pp. 27–9.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Rüter, op. cit., pp. 235–8.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Rüter, op. cit., pp. 237–8.

<sup>71</sup> W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1958–9).

(except for Eurylochus) unsuspectingly accept her invitation to enter her palace: 10. 221 ἀκούον ἀειδούσης ὅπῃ καλῇ, 226–8 ἔνδον γάρ τις . . . καλὸν ἀοιδίαι, . . . ἢ θεὸς ἢ ἐ γυνή· ἀλλὰ φθεγγώμεθα θάσσον (and cf. 254–5): note the force of the anticipatory γάρ, and the detail δάπεδον δ' ἅπαν ἀμφιμέμυκεν (227) suggests that the song somehow overwhelms them. It is only a few lines later that they are given φάρμακα λύγρ', ὥα πάγχυ λαθοῖατο πατρίδος αἰῆς (236).

That Menelaus' stories should help to keep Telemachus entertained for as long as a month should not seem surprising within the context of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus takes a whole month (10. 14 μῆνα . . . πάντα) to satisfy Aeolus' curiosity about his ten years' experiences during the Trojan War and its immediate aftermath (14–16), and Menelaus has as much as seventeen years' similar experiences to tell of (the Trojan War and his subsequent wanderings: see 4. 81–9, esp. 82) and has barely scratched their surface by the time we leave Telemachus during his second day in Sparta (4. 624). At 14. 192–8 the disguised Odysseus, in his persona of Cretan wanderer, tells Eumaeus that even if conditions for story-telling were ideal he could easily spend as much as a whole year reminiscing and still not complete the story of his experiences (which largely consist, like those of Menelaus, in the Trojan War and post-war wanderings): Odysseus' καὶ εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἅπαντα (14. 196) recalls Telemachus' καὶ . . . εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν (4. 595), and if there is hyperbole in both statements that should not blind us to their underlying point. Further, ordinary story-telling can share the power of song to charm or hypnotize (θέλγω, with magical associations),<sup>72</sup> as emerges from *Od.* 13. 2, where the Phaeacian audience is said to be 'held spellbound' by Odysseus' story (κηληθμῷ δ' ἔσχοντο), and from 17. 513–21, where Eumaeus in a striking simile compares the beggar's ability to tell stories which charm (514 θέλγοιτο, 521 ἔθελγε) with the similar powers of a bard. In the latter passage long duration is again emphasized: after three days and nights the beggar has still not finished telling of his experiences, nor has Eumaeus tired of listening to them. It is clear from Telemachus' words at 4. 595–8 that he finds Menelaus' stories no less fascinating than Eumaeus finds those of Odysseus.

If Scheria and Sparta are to pose temptations to Odysseus and Telemachus respectively, it is not surprising that each visitor should be represented as deeply impressed by the luxurious appearance of the palace where he is to be welcomed. Father and son react to similar phenomena in similar ways. The lavish use of gold, silver, and bronze impresses both (7. 81–102, 133–4, 4. 43–7, 71–5), and the resultant sheen from these metals, which is the immediate cause of Odysseus' musings (7. 82–3) and Telemachus' admiration (4. 44, 71–5), is described in the same words in both passages: ὥς τε γὰρ ἡελίου αἶγλη πέλεν ἡὲ σελήνης | δῶμα καθ' ὕπερεφές μεγαλήτορος Ἀλκινόοιο/Μενελάου κυδαλίμοιο (7. 84–5, 4. 45–6).<sup>73</sup> On arrival, both gaze in admiration at the scene before them (7. 133–4, 4. 43–4, 47, 71–5).

But the obstacles to the returns of father and son do not lie merely in the attractions of a life of ease and enjoyment in pleasant surroundings. Each must also face the active attempts of a host (or hostess) to detain him, to 'hold him back'. After Menelaus has invited him to stay on for eleven days or so, Telemachus asks him not to *hold him back* for long (4. 594 μῆ . . . με . . . ἔρυκε, cf.

<sup>72</sup> The hypnotic power of the Sirens' song (12. 40, 44 θέλγουσιν) is really only a special instance of a power possessed by song in general: in *Od.* 1. 337 the songs of a bard

are called βροτῶν θελεκτήρια.

<sup>73</sup> This parallel has been noted by (among others) Seitz (op. cit., p. 132) and Stanford (op. cit., on 7. 82 ff.).

599 ἐρύκεις), and in Book 15, after Telemachus' emphatic plea to be sent home ἤδη νῦν (65–6), Menelaus' protestations that he will not *hold him back* now that he is eager to return home (68 οὐ . . . ἐρύξω, 72–3 κακὸν ἐσθ', . . . ὅς . . . κατερύκει) are ironic in the light of the extended hospitality which he has already succeeded in pressing on him and the leisurely guided tour of the Greek mainland which he is about to offer him (80–5) — an offer which necessitates renewed insistence from Telemachus (87–91). After his difficulties in escaping from Menelaus' hospitality it is hardly surprising that Telemachus should appear almost paranoid in his fear lest Nestor should *hold him back* (κατάσχη) against his will through his desire to entertain him (15. 200–201).<sup>74</sup> Odysseus' experiences are similar. Calypso tries to *hold him back* (1. 14 and 9. 29 ἔρυκε, 1. 55 κατερύκει, 23. 334 κατέρυκε, 4. 498 and 552 κατερύκεται, cf. 4. 557–8, 5. 14–15 and 17. 143–4 ἀνάγκη | ἴσχει), and so too does Circe (9. 31–2 κατερήτηεν . . . λιλαιομένη πῶσω εἶναι<sup>75</sup>). Moreover, Telemachus counters the pressing hospitality of Menelaus by demanding his release in insistent language which is very reminiscent of that used by Odysseus in addressing Circe in similar circumstances and to the same effect: 15. 65–6 ἤδη νῦν μ' ἀπόπεμπε (imperative) . . . | ἤδη γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐέλδεται οὔκαδ' ἰκέσθαι (and see also 88), 19. 483–4 τέλεσόν (imperative) μοι ὑπόσχεσθω . . . | οὔκαδε πεμψέμεναι · θυμὸς δέ μοι ἔσσεται ἤδη; and both Telemachus and Odysseus buttress their pleas<sup>76</sup> by referring to the impatience of their companions, which each represents as a form of pressure on him counterbalancing the pressure of his host to stay on (4. 598–9, 10. 485–6).

Do the Phaeacians make similar attempts to detain Odysseus? To some extent, clearly, yes: there is Nausicaa's celebrated encouragement of 6. 273–88 (cf. 244–5),<sup>77</sup> reinforced by Alcinous' enthusiastic offer of her hand in marriage (7. 311–14) — but he hastens to add that none of the Phaeacians would dream of detaining him against his will (315–16). However, Rose sees a specific parallel between Menelaus' efforts to detain Telemachus and the way Alcinous delays Odysseus' departure on his last day in Scheria: 'each is quite ready to leave; yet each is detained by an eager but imperceptive host';<sup>78</sup> Odysseus 'finds himself . . . waiting impatiently to leave, while Alcinous continues to entertain him (13. 24–30). The poet even shows him watching the sun's progress across the sky and finally has him exclaim, πέμπετέ με (39).' One

<sup>74</sup> See further Delebecque, op. cit., p. 26; Rose, op. cit., esp. pp. 511–13.

<sup>75</sup> C. P. Segal seems to have overlooked this passage when claiming that Circe (unlike Calypso) 'never intends to replace Penelope' (TAPA 99 (1968), 424) — unless he is tacitly following Woodhouse (op. cit. (above, n. 45), pp. 49–50), who argues that 'no such proposal was ever made by her, but Odysseus for his own glorification willfully misrepresents her, by ascribing to her a desire that belonged to Kalypso alone'. Some sympathy with this view has recently been expressed by J. C. Hogan, TAPA 106 (1976), 199. Woodhouse seems to assume that 9. 29–33 is a comment by Odysseus whereas Books 10 and 12 contain the poet's own narrative of the Circe episode; but in reality Books 10 and 12 come from

Odysseus' mouth no less than Book 9, and all three have the same status as 'evidence' for what 'actually' happened. And there is no real contradiction: if Circe raises no objection when Odysseus emphatically states his desire to return home immediately (10. 483–9), that is not incompatible with earlier efforts on her part to persuade him to remain with her, efforts made while his desire to leave was less in evidence. When Odysseus now firmly insists on departing she has no option but to consent, being bound by a previous promise (10. 483–4).

<sup>76</sup> In Telemachus' case, an earlier and similar but less insistent plea.

<sup>77</sup> See Woodhouse, op. cit. (above, n. 45), pp. 57–9; Stanford, op. cit., on 6. 276–88; Gross, op. cit., pp. 313–14.

<sup>78</sup> Op. cit., p. 513. The same point was

could add that this exclamation sounds very like Telemachus' plea ἤδη νῦν μ' ἀπόπεμπε (15. 65), and it is clear enough that Odysseus in Book 13 and Telemachus in Book 15 are similarly eager to return home. But it is doubtful whether one is justified in calling Alcinous 'imperceptive' here or whether, indeed, he is here making any conscious effort at all to detain Odysseus: rather, the fact that Odysseus is waiting for the particular moment of sunset (13. 30, 33, 35) 'because (δὴ γάρ) he was eager to return home' (30) and refrains from making his plea till then strongly suggests that he realizes and accepts that his praeternaturally swift journey home must, for some mysterious but necessary reason, be accomplished at night: after all, Alcinous has told him that it will take place while he is asleep (7. 318–19).<sup>79</sup> In that case, Odysseus' impatience is due more to the exigencies of an unalterable timetable than to any deliberate and insensitive attempt by Alcinous to delay his departure. But a parallel with the situation of Telemachus remains, even if it is less close than Rose supposes.<sup>80</sup>

A final comparison remains to be drawn. We have already seen how the long duration of Telemachus' sojourn in Sparta, though attributed by the poet to a combination of the pressure applied by Menelaus and the pleasure Telemachus takes in his company, stems ultimately from the chronology which the structure of the poet's narrative has imposed on him. We can now make a very similar point about the two episodes which delay Odysseus longest, his seven years with Calypso and his one year with Circe. The story required that he return home only in the twentieth year (or thereabouts) after leaving for Troy<sup>81</sup> both to make the pressure of the suitors on Penelope plausible (so Rothe<sup>82</sup>) and to allow Telemachus, a mere baby when Odysseus left for Troy (*Od.* 4. 112, 144), time to become old enough to help his father deal with the suitors (so Woodhouse<sup>83</sup>); and in any case the round figure of twenty years may already have become fixed by tradition by the time our *Odyssey* was composed. But no matter how elaborate, variegated, and numerous the poet makes Odysseus' adventures, it will be impossible for him to spin them out so as to cover the full ten years required unless Odysseus is to spend a very long time in at least one place. Hence the seven years with Calypso ('the Concealer') and the year with Circe. But the poet needs to explain convincingly *why* his hero stayed there so long. Hence the mixture of pleasure and pressure (or even constraint) in each case, though in different proportions: with Calypso, primarily constraint (though 5. 153 οὐκέτι ἤνδανε νύμφη implies that in the early stages Odysseus took pleasure in her company), with Circe, primarily pleasure (though she did exert some pressure: 9. 31 κατερήτηνεν).<sup>84</sup> This is very like the mixture of pleasure and pressure which the poet has concocted to account for Telemachus' long delay in Sparta, and represents a similar attempt to solve a similar problem — one stemming from the inexorable demands

made (but at a more general level) by Seitz, op. cit., p. 133: '... diese Gastfreundschaft [tritt] ... in Sparta wie in Scheria dem Zur-Heimatdrängen der Gäste entgegen ...'

<sup>79</sup> Cf. R. Merkelbach, *Untersuchungen zur Odyssee, Zetemata* 2 (Munich, 1951, 2nd edn. 1969), p. 168: 'Odysseus sehnt sich nach dem Sinken der Sonne (ν 28 ff.), denn die Wunderschiffe können nur nachts fahren.'

<sup>80</sup> However, I would be reluctant to press even this limited parallel because of the dis-

tinct possibility that 13. 28–39 belong to a post-Homeric section of the poem: see e.g. Page, op. cit., pp. 32–5, esp. p. 33 with p. 49 n. 16.

<sup>81</sup> ἐεικοστῷ ἐνιαυτῷ etc.: *Od.* 2. 175, 16. 206, 17. 327, 19. 222, 484, 21. 208, 23. 102, 170.

<sup>82</sup> Op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>83</sup> Op. cit., pp. 215–17.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Woodhouse, *ibid.*, on Calypso, and Rothe, loc. cit. (above, n. 82), on both Calypso and Circe.

of the poem's chronology. Further, it is precisely because the long duration of Odysseus' sojourns with Calypso and Circe originated as a mere response to the external demands of the poem's wider chronology that the poet is careful to limit the extent of Odysseus' own culpability for the long delays, and here too there is a parallel with Telemachus. We have already seen how the poet has used various devices to limit the extent of Telemachus' culpability for his long delay in Sparta — the pressure on him from Menelaus, the fact that his actual yielding to this pressure is placed 'off stage', his keenness to redeem himself in Book 15. Similarly, Odysseus' longest delay — his seven years with Calypso — is attributed almost entirely to the constraint used by Calypso, and the pleasure he once found in her is placed 'off stage' and in explicit contrast with the present (5. 153); and although his year with Circe is essentially voluntary and is presented as a temporary yielding to temptation, the poet again goes out of his way to limit his culpability: he was under some pressure from Circe to stay (9. 31 *κατερήνεν*), but it is made clear from the outset that he never yielded to her desire to have him with her *permanently* (9. 31–3); his initial agreement (10. 466) to stay for some time (but presumably not, at this stage, as long as a year) is presented largely as an altruistic decision taken in the interests of his low-spirited companions, since Circe's invitation of 10. 455–65 is addressed primarily to the companions rather than to Odysseus himself (as I have argued elsewhere<sup>85</sup>); and, a year later, his prompt action in response to his companions' reminder shows that he still has their interests at heart (and, of course, his own long-term interests) and resembles Telemachus' prompt action in response to Athene's reminder at the beginning of Book 15: by these responses father and son each go a long way towards redeeming themselves.

However, in stressing the pedestrian economics of the chronology as one source of some much more exalted features of the poem in the realms of episode-construction, characterization, and moral themes I am not (I hope) retreating into a sterile literary Marxism. That would be (as Aristotle said in criticizing Empedocles<sup>86</sup>) to make the fatal mistake of assigning an efficient cause while ignoring the much more important formal and final cause. On the contrary, while an understanding of the pressures exerted on the *Odyssey*-poet by the chronology is valuable as revealing the limitations within which he was forced to work and the nature of the most immediate and pressing impetus behind some of the prominent features of the poem, what is of greater interest and importance is his evident determination to solve the problems posed by the chronology in a manner consistent with his higher literary goals. Not only does he strive to preserve liveliness, plausibility, and consistency in both characterization and action, but his use of the detention and temptation themes in the Calypso and Circe episodes is integrated with the recurrence of these themes elsewhere within the Wanderings of Odysseus, and it is this resulting amalgam which itself becomes the basis for a re-enactment of these same themes in the Journey of Telemachus in a way which blends harmoniously with the numerous other parallels between the wanderings of the father and the expedition of the son. These complex echoes play no small part in the rich and subtle literary symphony which is the *Odyssey*.

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<sup>85</sup> *Acta Classica* 17 (1974), 11–23.

641<sup>a</sup> 7–14.

<sup>86</sup> P.A. 640<sup>a</sup> 10–22, cf. 640<sup>b</sup> 4–15,