

CLOTHING MAKES THE MAN: A PATTERN IN THE *ODYSSEY*

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Odysseus' homecoming is not simply a physical journey, but a process of recognition that establishes the hero's social and personal relationships. By helping to delay recognition until the necessary testing of these relationships has taken place, Odysseus' lies enable him to complete the journey successfully.¹ Thus while his falsifications conceal him, they also affirm that he is Odysseus, the skillful deceiver.² Although Odysseus proves himself through lies to the other characters, for them he becomes fully known only at the moment of recognition. For the audience, the interplay between the lies and the hero's return suggests that deceit can reveal the truth, and may be essential to it.³

¹ On testing and the retardation of recognition see B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey*, Hermes Einzelschriften 30 (1974), especially chapter 1. Further J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980): "Deception is one of the poem's great subjects" (79). See also U. Hölscher, *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee, Szenenwechsel und gleichzeitige Handlungen*, Hermes Einzelschriften 6 (1939); D. J. Stewart, *The Disguised Guest: Rank, Role, and Identity in the Odyssey* (Lewisburg, Pa. 1976).

² Other characters have a similar ability to define themselves through lies: Penelope establishes her right to be Odysseus' wife by means of prevarications (including of course weaving the shroud); Telemachus earns his place as Odysseus' son by learning, first to speak in public, then to measure his words; even minor characters (such as Helen) reveal themselves in the ways they lie.

³ See P. Walcot, "Odysseus and the Art of Lying," *Ancient Society* 8 (1977) 1-19, esp. 9, quoting du Boulay on the function of lies in modern Greek peasant society: "Truth . . . has many manifestations, and a lie on one level may legitimately be accepted as a way of revealing a truth on a higher level. It is, if one may put it like this, the appearance (which may be contingently false) revealing the reality (which is essentially true)." And further C. H. Taylor, "The Obstacles to Odysseus' Return," in C. H. Taylor ed., *Essays on the Odyssey* (Bloomington 1963) 87-99, esp. 88: "... disguises [in Scheria and Ithaca] are only temporary sacrifices of [Odysseus'] identity for the present in the interest of establishing it beyond compare for the future." T. Todorov, in *The Poetics of Prose*, transl. R. Howard (Ithaca 1977), remarks that Odysseus' lying makes him "... a living incarnation of feigned speech, but also permits us to discover certain constants" (62). At 19.203, when Odysseus is lying to Penelope, the narrator notes his ability to make the false seem true; typically, the point of the story consists not so much in the facts Odysseus disguises as in what his concealment reveals about him to the audience.

In conjunction with his verbal deceptions, physical coverings mask the identity of Odysseus. He does not control these disguises; they are left to Athene, and to the many characters who attempt to clothe him as the man they want him to be. Odysseus does, however, lie about his clothing, and he also lies about himself in ways that prompt promises of clothing based on misidentification.

Odysseus' material disguises reveal the truth about him in two ways. First: "For Homeric society what a person wore represented in a real, not just a symbolic, sense what he *was*. A king without his proper raiment is not a king . . ." (Fenik, above, note 1, 61f.). Dressed as a beggar, Odysseus is a beggar. Hence mistaken identification based on his clothing confirms that Odysseus is not yet restored to his rightful position, and to this extent the clothing reflects a truth. Second, by telling tales that lead others to clothe him (or to imagine him clothed) falsely, Odysseus elicits proof that he is himself—the master of false words.⁴

After briefly pointing out the pervasive idea of identification through covering in the *Odyssey*, this paper analyzes a group of scenes in which failure to penetrate Odysseus' disguise, and acceptance of his false identity, are implied in the promise of clothing. These promises, like the lying tales, affirm that Odysseus is the man whose deceptions reveal that he is himself. Repeated scenes involving clothing and covering express in concrete terms the abstract idea that in the *Odyssey* the revelation of truth evolves from concealment.⁵

The account of Achilles' funeral provides a good example of how physical covering conveys less concrete aspects of a man's identity. In *Odyssey* 24 Agamemnon tells Achilles that when he died, the nymphs *περὶ δ' ἄμβροτα εἵματα ἔσσαν* (59), and later *καίεο δ' ἔν τ' ἐσθῆτι θεῶν* (67). The Muses sing at his funeral, and he continues to live, as Agamemnon assures him (94), through his *kleos*. The immortal clothing marks Achilles' life in death.⁶

⁴ This link is reflected in the critical language, where metaphors of cloth or clothing very frequently describe verbal dexterity; for example Fenik (above, note 1) 58, note 80: "... he is cloaked in total and somewhat ominous anonymity"; and again: "... he spins an elaborate yarn" (187).

⁵ Thus "... the formulaic expression can be made to produce unique and individual effects," Griffin (above, note 1) 53. The survey of "Homeric Originality" by J. Holoka (*CW* 66 [1973] 257–93) is invaluable for its concise presentation of the controversies over Homer's originality solved, and fanned, by Milman Parry. Today many scholars argue that it is the way traditional elements are manipulated, not the fact that they are traditional, that is important to an understanding of the oral poem. See further J. Notopoulos, "Continuity and Interconnexion in Homeric Oral Composition," *TAPA* 82 (1951) 81–101; J. B. Hainsworth, *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula* (Oxford 1968); J. A. Russo, "Homer Against His Tradition," *Arion* 7 (1968) 275–95; M. N. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley 1974).

⁶ *Odyssey* 24.59 ~ *Iliad* 16.670, where Zeus instructs Apollo to shroud Sarpedon in immortal clothing. The god's concern suggests that Sarpedon has earned a measure of

In the *Odyssey* the defining power of clothing functions in such diverse ways that, despite continuing critical emphasis on the theme of disguise, coverings in all their variety have not been viewed as a unified concept.⁷ The following summary suggests this unity.

A host honors his guest, and establishes his own rank, with textile gifts and with the offer of baths and new clothing.⁸ Indeed, covering reflects a man's status as a human being. Cast ashore naked on Scheria, Odysseus must cover himself with leaves and branches, for here at his lowest ebb he has almost no covering (or humanness) at all. Men on the verge of death, struggling for survival, assume unhuman coverings. An animal disguise helps Menelaus to escape from Egypt, where he was fettered and immobilized. He and his men hid under fresh-killed seal skins in order to capture Proteus, spirit of infinite disguises (4.435ff.). This trick is very similar to the one that enables Odysseus to escape the Cyclops.⁹ Both Proteus and the Cyclops mistake men disguised as animals for part of their flock, and thereby the mortals secure their return

immortality (and see his articulation of the heroic code at *Iliad* 12.310ff.). Clothing in the *Iliad* is not without symbolic value, but it is not part of a central theme, as in the *Odyssey*.

⁷ The significance of clothing, specifically in the scene at Alcinous' court, was brought out by W. Schadewaldt, "Kleiderdinge," *Hermes* 87 (1959) 13–26; in response U. Hölscher, "Das Schweigen der Arete," *Hermes* 88 (1960) 257–65, accepted the importance of the clothing motif, but argued against Schadewaldt for the integrity of the episode. Griffin (above, note 1) points out how, in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the poet uses "simple acts or physical objects (a head-dress, a man's clothes) to convey the emotional significance" (3; and on Odysseus' disguise, 29).

⁸ Such gifts, and references to them, are very common in the *Odyssey*. Nestor at 3.346ff. says it most clearly, and characteristically at length. The host urges Telemachus to stay, lest he seem a poor man, without coverings to offer: ὦ οὐ τι χλαῖναι καὶ ῥήγεα πόλλ' ἐνὶ οὔκῳ (349). Penelope repeats the sentiment when she first offers clothing to the beggar. She says that the stranger will not be able to recognize her wisdom (*mētēn*), εἴ κεν ἀνσταλέος κακὰ εἰμένος ἐν μεγάροισι / δαινύη, (19.326ff.). Alcinous, king of the Phaeacians (to whom dancing, warm beds, baths, and clothing are dear, 8.248ff.), lavishes clothing upon Odysseus, suggesting that each of the twelve counselors contribute a newly washed cloak and tunic (8.392f.; he bids Arete do the same, 425; cf. 13.67). Odysseus describes to Laertes the (fictive) gifts of friendship he gave to the wanderer he claims was Odysseus: twelve cloaks, as many coverlets, as many mantles and tunics . . . (24.276f.). To Penelope before the recognition, however, he points out that the guest must be willing to accept a host's offerings: as for himself, soft clothes and soft beds have been distasteful ever since he left Crete (19.337ff.). Beds, bedding, and even chair coverings have a related significance in defining host and guest; see for example 13.73ff., where on board ship the soft-living Phaeacians make up a comfortable bed for Odysseus; and 14.518ff., describing the rude bed provided by Eumaeus. Testing Odysseus, Penelope bids Eurycleia bring lavish bedding for him; but rich coverings alone do not make the king's bed (23.177ff.). See further W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer*, *Problemata* 7 (Berlin 1933); D. M. Gunn, "Thematic Composition and Homeric Authorship," *HSCP* 75 (1971) 1–31; Griffin (above, note 1) 27, with notes.

⁹ See B. B. Powell, "Narrative Pattern in the Homeric Tale of Menelaus," *TAPA* 101 (1970) 419–31.

to the living world. Transformation into an animal threatens loss of humanness, as occurs on Circe's island. When the threat is finally disarmed, the men, restored to human shape, bathe and put on cloaks and tunics (*khlainas* . . . *khitōnas*, 10.449ff.). As Odysseus cuts his swathe through the banquet hall, Telemachus proposes that, in addition to Phemius, Medon the herald deserves mercy. Medon, hidden under a chair, has concealed himself: ἀμφὶ δὲ δέρμα / ἔστο βοὸς νεόδαρτον (22.362f.). In sparing his life, Odysseus allows him to emerge from this disguise, and renews him as a human being.

Clothing also demarcates changes in the relations between characters, for example in Eumaeus' hut. When Athene disguises Odysseus as a beggar, she tells him that she will clothe him in a foul garment (*hessō*, 13.400); a few lines later the narrator repeats her promise, and describes the ragged clothing, dirty with smoke, that Odysseus will wear (429ff., esp. 434: ἀμφὶ δέ μιν ῥάκος ἄλλο κακὸν βάλεν ἡδὲ χιτῶνα). When Athene transforms him for Telemachus' eyes, the first change is of his clothing, the second of his body (16.173f., reversing the original process). Noticing the change, Telemachus mentions Odysseus' altered complexion and clothing, ἄλλα δὲ εἴματ' ἔχεις (182), and accuses some god of sporting with him: ἦ γάρ τοι νέον ἦσθα γέρον καὶ ἀεικέα ἔσσο (199). Odysseus answers that the beggar is indeed himself, and that Athene at will makes him seem a beggar or a youth, καὶ καλὰ περὶ χροῖ εἴματ' ἔχοντι (210). Odysseus points out the meaning of these changes: it is easy for the gods both to gladden a mortal man with honor, and to abase him (211f.). The disguise makes this abstraction visible.

Athene again transforms Odysseus when the swineherd returns, making him an old man, λυγρὰ δὲ εἴματα ἔσσε περὶ χροῖ (16.457). The audience may imagine Odysseus physically changing, from a handsome man clad in rich clothing to a beggar in rags, but these changes express also Telemachus' recognition of Odysseus as his father, while the swineherd, not ready for such awareness, still sees the rags.¹⁰

The following analysis concentrates on those scenes in which clothing is in the first instance requested by the disguised Odysseus, and then promised to him as a reward by Eumaeus, Telemachus, a suitor, and Penelope. In offering him clothing, each character mistakenly identifies the beggar; yet the acceptance of the falsehood establishes Odysseus' skill as a deceiver, and hence the truth of his real identity. Just as

¹⁰ Describing Laertes to Odysseus, Anticleia laments that the father lives like a poor man, οὐδέ οἱ εὖναι / δέμνια καὶ χλαῖναι καὶ ῥήγεια σιγαλόεντα, / . . . κακὰ δὲ χροῖ εἴματα εἶται (11.188ff.). When Odysseus sees Laertes, he notes that the old man is poorly clothed (. . . ἀνχμείς τε κακῶς καὶ ἀεικέα ἔσσαι, 24.250). But when Odysseus has been revealed to him, Laertes bathes, the maid anoints him, ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρα χλαῖναν καλὴν βάλεν (24.367). Athene then renews his limbs just as she did for Odysseus. Laertes too has been restored to his proper place by his son's return (see also note 21 below).

lying words expose an essential truth about the stranger, so false clothing leads to the final donning of the king's proper garb.

In Book 14 Odysseus, having eaten and drunk, asks Eumaeus to describe his master, *εἰπέ μοι, αἶ κέ ποθι γνώω τοιοῦτον ἔοντα* (118). Instead, Eumaeus anticipates the intent of the beggar's request. No one, he says, could convince Odysseus' family that he had seen the wanderer, for too many vagabonds have lied already:

ὅς δέ κ' ἀλητεῶν Ἰθάκης ἐς δῆμον ἵκηται,
ἐλθὼν ἐς δέσποιναν ἐμὴν ἀπατήλια βάζει. (126f.)

He suspects that the beggar too would lie to acquire clothing: *εἴ τίς τοι χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα δοίη* (132). Odysseus replies that while he too hates deception, he wants the clothes if his news of Odysseus' return is correct. Urging upon Eumaeus the certainty of his master's return, Odysseus requests a reward when his prediction proves true: *ἔσσαι με χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε, εἵματα καλά* (154; many manuscripts omit 14.154; I follow the OCT text).

Odysseus then tells a version of his story, including a report of Odysseus' passage through the land of the Thesprotians. There the stranger arrived as a shipwrecked beggar. The king of the Thesprotians took pity on him, *ἀμφὶ δέ με χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα ἔσσειν* (14.320). This is how those in power should treat guests. Later, however, he was stripped of his clothing and transformed into a beggar (14.341ff.); yet the gods aided him: *ἐμὲ δ' ἔκρυψαν θεοὶ αὐτοὶ / ῥῆϊ-δίῳς*; and he arrived at Eumaeus' hut (357ff.).

To Odysseus' tale Eumaeus replies that since the time he was misled by another vagabond, he is unable to believe any report about Odysseus. His hospitality, he says, is motivated by pity for the stranger, and not by his tale, that is, by his appearance and not by his words. But if the swineherd's master returns, urges Odysseus, *ἔσσας με χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα πέμψαι / Δουλίχιόνδ' ἰέναι* (396f.). If the prediction proves false, death will be a fair punishment, a lesson to other lying vagabonds.

The request for clothing is appropriate to the stranger's present status. At the same time, he shows the audience that he is Odysseus, by telling tales that both hide and reveal the truth (cf. Walcot [above, note 3] 12f.; Fenik [above, note 1] 169ff.): Odysseus, alive and on his way home, will avenge himself, and the stranger, now a beggar, will be clothed in new raiment when he arrives. In physical terms, the beggar extracts the false covering that characterizes Odysseus, when he leads Eumaeus to accept the disguise and later to respond to the demand for clothing. True and false identification of the beggar are mutually dependent, just as his lies express a truth.

Eumaeus does not bother to acknowledge again the reference to Odysseus' return. He does, however, make generous provision for the

stranger's enjoyment at dinner. Later the night grows cold, and Odysseus decides to try the swineherd:

εἰ πῶς οἱ ἐκδὺς χλαῖναν πόροι, ἢ τιν' ἐταίρων
ἄλλον ἐποτρύνειεν, ἐπεὶ ἐο κήδετο λίην. (460f.)

Because he does not know that the beggar is Odysseus, such a trial cannot really test Eumaeus' loyalty, and this is not its real purpose. It is intended to demonstrate the power of Odysseus. The story proves the stranger's ability to get what he wants by weaving words into the disguises that affirm his identity.

The beggar tells a tale, in return for which he hopes to acquire clothing. He marks his fictionalizing intent by changing the cast of characters from the Iliadic Doloneia on which his story is based: a group consisting of Odysseus, Menelaus, the stranger, and later Thoas, replaces the Iliadic pair, Diomedes and Odysseus. The night, says the beggar, was cold, like this one, and then, as now, he had no covering: *ἐνθ' ἄλλοι πάντες χλαίνας ἔχον ἢ δὲ χιτῶνας* (14.478). He turned for help to Odysseus, who characteristically devised a plan. He referred vaguely to a dream (says the stranger), and then suggested that reinforcements were needed. Thereupon Thoas leapt up, flinging off his cloak, and ran off to summon them. Wrapped up in the discarded cloak, the stranger slept snugly until dawn. The hastily improvised inclusion of Thoas, the presence of Menelaus (subtly but definitely disqualified from the Iliadic Doloneia, *Il.* 10.234ff.), flaunt the stranger's verbal opportunism, his effortless and, for the audience, unmistakably Odyssean flow of lies or half-truths.¹¹ With no attempt at subtlety, he says he wishes some kind and respectful person would give him a cloak now, but he realizes that his foul clothing makes men scorn him. Eumaeus answers that for the night he may borrow a cloak from one of the men at the farm, but they can give nothing permanently, for each has only his own. Nonetheless, when Odysseus' son returns, *αὐτός τοι χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἴματα δώσει* (14.516).

To the audience, the element of the story that is most clearly untrue is the identification of the stranger, but with this falsification, Odysseus clothes himself through his story, just as in his story Odysseus clothed the stranger through his deceitful words. Eumaeus affirms Odysseus' power, and unwittingly therefore his identity, by granting his request.¹²

¹¹ Odysseus may here be taking the opportunity to paint his old rival Diomedes out of the picture. For evidence of his dislike, see for example *Iliad* 8.97ff., where Odysseus "doesn't hear" Diomedes' plea for aid in rescuing Nestor (Odysseus' main rival in council, incidentally). Schol. H (Dindorf) calls *Odyssey* 14.495 *geloion*, because a dream was unlikely in the circumstances. But the poet is not Odysseus, to whom this detail belongs.

¹² While Odysseus failed in one sense (Nagler [above, note 5] 125), he succeeded in eliciting covering, both promised for the future by Eumaeus, and in the blanket (*khlainan*) with which Eumaeus covers the sleeping beggar (14.520).

But still the wanderer's journey is not complete, and the covering is only a loan.

When in Book 15 Odysseus suggests that he go to the palace and try to find work, Eumaeus cautions him. Those who serve the suitors are spoiled youths, *χλαίνας εὖ εἰμένοι ἢ δὲ χιτῶνας* (15.331).¹³ The beggar will encounter danger at court, for he cannot expect to fit in with such servants. It will be better for him to remain on the farm, awaiting Telemachus' arrival: *κῆνός σε χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα ἔσσει* (338). Odysseus as yet can only receive a promise of covering from a servant on behalf of his master, while Eumaeus must offer the bare minimum—the loan of the cloak, an assurance of covering and safety, but no protective weapon, and no invitation to remain permanently.

Maintaining the rudiments of order in Ithaca during his master's absence, Eumaeus is a surrogate Odysseus. His status as a slave, so similar to Odysseus' now, his offer of clothing, and the story of his own assumption of an identity through clothing, help define this role.¹⁴ At 15.352ff., in response to Odysseus' desire to hear about his parents, Eumaeus recalls how he was raised with her other children by Odysseus' mother, *ὀλίγον δέ τί μ' ἦσσαν ἐτίμα* (365). There is an implication that Eumaeus might *almost* have married Odysseus' sister, his age-mate, and thus have been his master's brother. But the queen chose another identity for him:

*αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματ' ἐκείνη
καλὰ μάλ' ἀμφιέσασα, ποσὶν δ' ὑποδήματα δοῦσα
ἀγρόνδε προΐαλλε· φίλει δέ με κηρόθι μᾶλλον.* (368ff.)

Eumaeus' explanation of his status, and his position as Odysseus' host, express the precarious state of affairs in Ithaca, where the servant acts out to a limited extent the role of his master. But the promise of new covering also anticipates the restoration of order that will occur when Odysseus emerges as himself. In the final stage of the return, Odysseus will shed the disguise that makes his substitute his host. Now in the swineherd's hut the beggar begins the process of clothing and identifying himself, by demonstrating his adept manipulations of verbal and physical disguise.

When Telemachus arrives, he does offer to give the stranger a cloak and tunic as covering: *ἔσσω μιν χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε, εἵματα καλὰ* (16.79). He adds a sword to the outfit originally requested by Odysseus and promised by Eumaeus, as well as the choice between safe-conduct

¹³ The suitors arrogantly assume the rights of guests when they doff their cloaks in Odysseus' hall (17.179 = 20.249; but cf. also Theoclymenus and Telemachus on their return, 17.86).

¹⁴ For a good discussion, see N. Austin, *Archery at the Dark of the Moon* (Berkeley 1975) 165ff.

and a job at the farm, plus room and board. This range of options suggests how his authority surpasses Eumaeus', and also the hidden progress of Odysseus' return. But Telemachus does not yet acknowledge the beggar, addressing the offer to the swineherd. He acts toward the stranger as Odysseus would if he were not that stranger.

Telemachus' assumption of this role (reminiscent of the ideal suggested by Odysseus in his tale of the Thesprotian king, especially 14.320) emphasizes the incompleteness of Odysseus' identity. Until he is recognized, others must be willing to clothe him, and in doing so they take his proper place. Yet Telemachus' arrival also does give Odysseus a new identity, or part of his old identity, as his son's father. To mark this, Athene clothes him for Telemachus' eyes in a well-washed mantle and tunic, signs of his renewed beauty (16.172ff.). In a sense he did not anticipate, Telemachus fulfills his promise to give the stranger new raiment.

Recognized as yet only by Telemachus, Odysseus proceeds to the palace, where his presence poses a threat to the suitors. Odysseus binds back his rags to expose his strong legs—the true man under the disguise—and beats Irus. Later he asserts his power over the maids. These acts frighten the suitors, and Eurymachus thereupon promises the stranger clothing and food if he wants to remain a servant (18.357ff.: εἵματα δ' ἀμφιέσαιμι ποσὶν θ' ὑποδήματα δοίην, 361). Although he is not consciously aware that the beggar is Odysseus, Eurymachus' offer reveals his wish that Odysseus be permanently subservient. His promise of elevation from beggar to servant underscores his fatal ignorance of Odysseus' real status. The offer of clothing makes manifest the suitors' insolence, but it is also ironic. In accepting the beggar as a beggar, and emphasizing this identification through the promise of servitude, the suitors establish Odysseus' ability to conceal himself, and consequently strengthen his claim to be restored to his rightful place as himself.

Twice Penelope promises Odysseus clothing. In Book 17 she hears that the stranger in the hall has been mistreated. Calling Eumaeus, she asks him to bring the guest to her, so she can find out if he has heard of Odysseus, and adds this promise:

αἶ κ' αὐτὸν γνώω νημερτέα πάντ' ἐνέποντα,
ἔσσω μιν χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε, εἵματα καλά. (17.549f.)

Penelope here also acts in the place of Odysseus, reaffirming the incompleteness of his *nostos* even as the reiterated promise of clothing confirms the truth contained in Odysseus' original request: the beggar will be clothed anew when Odysseus is revealed, as he himself explained.¹⁵

¹⁵ The question of when Penelope "really" recognizes Odysseus has intrigued many readers. See for example: P. W. Harsh, "Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX," *AJP* 71

Eumaeus repeats Penelope's offer to Odysseus, but reminds him that despite the new clothing he must still be a beggar (17.556ff.). This effort to keep the stranger in his place reflects Eumaeus' assumption of responsibility, and therefore Odysseus' continuing inability to assume his proper role. Yet in mistakenly identifying the stranger, Eumaeus also inadvertently acknowledges the presence of his master, the consummate deceiver. Acceptance of the disguise is inevitable because the stranger is Odysseus.

Penelope repeats her promise just before the contest of the bow. Odysseus' wife says she would of course not marry the beggar, but if he strings the bow, she will clothe him and send him wherever he wishes:

εἰ κέ μιν ἐντανύσῃ, δώῃ δέ οἱ εὖχος Ἀπόλλων,
 ἔσσω μιν χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε, εἵματα καλὰ,
 δώσω δ' ὅξυν ἄκοντα, κυνῶν ἀλκτῆρα καὶ ἀνδρῶν,
 καὶ ξίφος ἄμφηκες· δώσω δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶ πέδιλα,
 πέμψω δ' ὅππῃ μιν κραδίη θυμός τε κελεύει. (21.338–42)

Up to this point, each promise of covering has shared some formulaic elements; Penelope's is most detailed, and contains phrases repeated from those that anticipate it.¹⁶

She offers the cloak and tunic, a sword and spear, and safe passage. But she does not invite the beggar to stay. Marriage to the beggar (still impossible because the beggar is not yet fully Odysseus), and the beggar's need for clothing (indicative of his still-concealed identity), will resolve each other when the beggar is revealed as Penelope's husband. Penelope's promise of clothing and her marriage to the beggar are together and inseparably part of Odysseus' resumption of his full identity.

When Odysseus kills the suitors, Eurycleia offers to bring him clothing:

ἀλλ' ἄγε τοι χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματ' ἐνείκω,
 μῆδ' οὕτω ῥά κεσιν πεπνυκασμένος εὐρέας ὤμους
 ἔσταθ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι. (22.487ff.)

(1950) 1–21; A. Amory, "The Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope," in Taylor (above, note 3) 100–121; Austin (above, note 14, esp. 205ff.); J. A. Russo, "Interview and Aftermath: Dream, Fantasy, and Intuition in *Odyssey* 19 and 20," *AJP* 103 (1982) 4–18; C. Emlyn-Jones, "The Reunion of Penelope and Odysseus," *G&R* 31 (1984) 1–18. These inherent interpretive ambiguities invite the audience to discover a meaning in words (especially those of Odysseus) that is not immediately obvious. In numerous cases (Helen and Menelaus uneasily reconciled in Sparta, for example), a speaker's version of the truth may admit of multiple interpretations. For a good discussion of Homer's handling of hidden and psychological motivation, see Griffin (above, note 1) 61ff.

¹⁶ Her offer is an expansion of Telemachus' at 16.79ff. Compare especially 14.396f. ~ 14.516f. ~ 15.338f. The phrase χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα occurs at 10.542, 14.132, 14.154, 14.320, 14.396, 14.516, 15.338, 15.368, 17.550 (and note Eumaeus' repetition at 17.557), 21.339, 22.487.

First, however, Odysseus must purify his house, and then he must attain that final acceptance of himself represented by Penelope's acknowledgement. For her, Odysseus is still disguised (ἄλλοτε δ' ἀγνώσασκε κακὰ χροῖ εἶματ' ἔχοντα, 23.95), as he realizes (κακὰ δὲ χροῖ εἶματα εἶμαι, 115).

Odysseus bids the singer conceal the slaughter with his music (23.130ff.).¹⁷ He tells his men to bathe and cover themselves with clean tunics (*khitōnas*), and orders the maids likewise to put on their clothing (*heimata*). Meanwhile, Eurynome bathes and dresses Odysseus: ἀμφὶ δέ μιν φᾶρος καλὸν βάλεν ἥδ' ἐχιτῶνα.¹⁸ Simultaneously Athene restores him to his true beauty (152ff.). His *nostos* complete, Odysseus dons new clothing and his selfhood (Athene's mist of beauty) as one act. A beggar no longer, he receives from a servant the clothing promised in successively more forceful terms by Eumaeus, Telemachus, and Penelope. Only now that he is himself, newly and fitly covered as himself, can he be recognized by Penelope.

Each woman in Odysseus' life clothes him in ways appropriate to her own role and the aspect of his identity with which she is concerned. Helen describes to his son how she bathed and anointed Odysseus, recognizing him beneath his disguise as a beggar. She resembles Odysseus in her control over words, and reinforces this resemblance by identifying herself with the disguised Odysseus through a story which may or may not be true.¹⁹ When he leaves Calypso, who desired to keep him from the mortal world, she gives him the immortal clothing she promised earlier (5.167, 264; see also 7.259f., 265). This must finally be cast off and replaced with Ino's veil (5.372ff.; Calypso's clothing oppresses him, 321).²⁰ In turn the veil is discarded as soon as he touches the Phaeacians' land (5.458ff.; cf. 346ff.). There Nausicaa, hoping for a husband, gives him part of her trousseau as clothing (6.214; see also 228, and Odysseus' requests at 144, 178f.). Arete recognizes these clothes at 7.234, and herself later clothes the departing guest, suggesting

¹⁷ Here the connection between concealment and revelation of truth through words is also made clear; for the singer is enjoined to provide a joyful song, as if for a wedding, in order to disguise the murder of the suitors; and indeed this event does herald the equivalent of a wedding—the reunion of the restored Odysseus and Penelope.

¹⁸ 23.155 = 3.467 (Telemachus in Pylos, and = *Iliad* 24.558, of Patroclus' corpse). Athene sometimes offers a *pharos* (e.g. 16.173) as do the Phaeacians (6.214, Nausicaa). See also 19.138 of Penelope's weaving.

¹⁹ 4.244ff.; cf. Austin (above, note 14) 189. Helen also gives to Telemachus the richest of her robes, as a gift for his future bride (15.125ff.). She suggests that he entrust it for the moment to Penelope. The gift of clothing expresses Helen's characteristic obsession with marriage. It also hints at her condescension toward Telemachus, whom she considers a mere boy, unmarried, obedient to his mother, too young to bother seducing herself.

²⁰ On the veil see Nagler (above, note 5) 46f., with notes. See also N. Forsyth, "The Allurement Scene. A Typical Pattern in Greek Oral Epic," *CSCA* 12 (1979) 107–20.

through her treatment of him as guest, her reluctance to consider him as a son-in-law. Circe gives Odysseus new clothing when she sends him to the Underworld.²¹ Athene is the principal provider of protective disguises for the man whom she loves for his verbal deceptions (see especially 13.291ff.).

In order to test the stranger, Penelope recalled the clothing she gave her husband when he left Ithaca (19.215ff.). The stranger's vivid account of these clothes again both reveals and conceals his true self. He is the man who wore these clothes, and his account of them is accurate, but he is also the stranger in his own home, not yet recognized by his wife. He is the man who, by lying about how he saw the clothing, proves himself truly the man whom Penelope once clothed. But after the slaughter of the suitors there is no need for Penelope to give the revealed Odysseus clothing, despite her promise. Her acceptance of him as her husband alone and sufficiently affirms his return, and marks the ultimate point at which Odysseus' coverings and his identity merge.

The return of Odysseus is not a simple revelation, but a process through which deception identifies the hero by concealing him, as clothing identifies a man by covering him. When he has proved himself to be himself through his tales, Odysseus is properly clothed, and the wanderer's story can be told in order (23.310ff.). Odysseus' concealments expose his power to make the false express the true, and the truth become clear through lies. Odysseus is the man who weaves words into the false coverings that reveal him; who, like the poet, can control the ability of lying words to tell the truth.²²

²¹ Ἀμφὶ δέ με χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα ἔσσειν (10.542). This version of the formulaic phrase occurs again at 14.320 (Thesprotians). Two scenes of bathing and dressing occur in Circe's house, one after Odysseus has challenged and slept with her (10.364f.), and after his men have been restored (10.449ff.); for discussion see M. W. Edwards, "Type Scenes and Homeric Hospitality," *TAPA* 105 (1975) 51–72. Bathing and dressing often represent renewal; e.g. for Telemachus and Theoclymenus at 17.85ff.; as suggested to Penelope by Eurycleia at 4.750ff. See further R. M. Newton, "The Rebirth of Odysseus," *GRBS* 25 (1984) 5–20, esp. 14, note 27; C. P. Segal, "Transition and Ritual in Odysseus' Return," *PP* 40 (1967) 321–42. Further P. Vivante (*The Epithets in Homer* [New Haven 1982]): "The moment of dressing or arming obviously caught the poet's imagination. . . . It implies a fresh start, almost a new man or woman rising up to the occasion" (35f.).

²² A shorter version of this paper was presented at the APA meetings in December 1982. I wish to thank the editor and referees of *TAPA* for helpful criticism.