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Heroic Proxemics: Social Space and Distance in the *Odyssey*

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Introduction. Body–language, communication by gesture and posture, offers another language, besides words, that we know and understand as long as we do not think about it. In addition to verbal and nonverbal or kinesic channels of communication, there is a third, also nonverbal but vocal system comprised of paralinguistic modifiers such as intonation, volume, pitch, pause, and pace. These three modes constitute the "triple structure of communication."[1] The subject of nonverbal behavior,[2] intended and unintended messages emitted by the body, mostly developed by psychologists, socio–linguists, social anthropologists, semioticians, and journalists, deserves closer attention from students of the imaginative literature of the past and art historians. Distant and fragmented messages from antiquity—literary, sculpted, and painted texts—provide our only data for reconstructing face–to–face interaction through the three channels of human communication.

The analytic study of quasi–linguistic and non–linguistic, voluntary and involuntary nonverbal behavior is a recent phenomenon. Every human is, however, an expert in interpretation, sub–consciously alert to these formal and informal micro–momentary or extended cues. The body is a multi–channeled transmitter and text. Nonverbal behaviors can reinforce or contradict explicit words. Words, in fact, convey only 10% of expressed emotion in encounters, while tone carries 35% and facial expression, gesture, and posture present the majority, 55%. Narrative, oral and written, in all cultures employs this resource for emphasizing, amplifying, italicizing, ironizing, and undermining words and deeds. Only recently has the concept of a "literary anthropology" of

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[1]Poyatos (1983) 346 for the triple system and *passim* for nonverbal communication in imaginative literature. Dissertations have been written to describe the pinching of secretaries' buttocks in commercial offices: Goffman (1956) 74 n.19. Videotapes now allow frame–by–frame descriptions of American bourgeois greeting rituals at suburban children's birthday parties: Kendon (1973). Most recently, see Bremmer & Roodenburg (1991) for a variety of historical applications including Bremmer 15–35 on "Walking, sitting, and standing in ancient Greek culture."

[2]Ekman (1981) 270 can find no better phrase than nonverbal behavior, a "terrible term." He excludes here vocal, nonverbal behavior and proxemics from his field of study, nonverbal deception, wrongly in my opinion, and perhaps only for the purposes of his then current research.

nonverbal behavior emerged, the investigation of gestures, postures, verboids, and other sounds to convey status, dominance, affect, emotion, and thought.[3] The symbolic, nonverbal acts of an individual, a group, and a culture demand close study. Comparatively, across social strata and cultures, one can inventory ethological universals (e.g. species–constant smiles and frowns) and culturally arbitrary semiotics, i. e. "ethnogests" such as head nods, and the variable body codes of genders, age–groups, and classes.[4]

The field of body–talk moreover comprises two lesser known but also significant categories of nonverbal behavior: chronemics and proxemics, the human uses of time and position to structure communicative events. Formal rank and informal sentiment are easily and necessarily conveyed by relative distance and turn–taking protocols, by relative elevation and by (temporal) pause and pace in act and speech.[5]

Proxemics examines "social and personal space and man's perception of it" in different cultures. In English, as many as 20% of the words in a concise dictionary refer to space and spatial relationships; in life, closeness to and distance from others convey many impressions (Hall 1969: 1, 93). Physical proximity has social causes and psychological consequences. Ethology has revealed that every animal species has a sense of territoriality, territory claimed and defended against intruders. The *Iliad* and, even more, the *Odyssey* play with this "instinct," its perversions, transgressions, and re–establishment.[6] Humans depend on close–range receptors, particularly smell and touch (taste is least important in social relations). Those who are in states of fear, anger, or

[3]We leave aside the interesting question of whether, or rather, how far the semiotic code of Homer inhabits his text only and not real social practice. Nods and hugs surely reflect Bronze Age and Iron age repertoires, but Odysseus' many smiles, e.g., both imitate real people and code his unique self–possession and the ironies of the last phase of the plot's oral development; cf. Levine (1984) 1. Perhaps the text alone owns *some* puzzling nonverbal behavior, such as the suitors' hysterical laughing–fit (coding divine blindness) or Penelope's goose–slaughter vision (coding intuition or emotional ambivalence).

[4]Ekman and Friesen (1972) 356 discuss "arbitrariness" for hand gestures with ref. to their earlier publications, esp. the taxonomic classic of 1969.

[5]Hosts speak first to guests, as Telemakhos to Mentes, Nestor's son and Menelaos to Telemakhos, Eumaios to Odysseus disguised as a vagrant, and Penelope to the wayfarer (chronemics: 1.122–4, 3.43, 4.60, 14.37, 19.103; cf. 19.415). Indeed, inexperienced Telemakhos breaches turn–taking decorum by speaking at table to his side–kick before his Spartan host addresses him, even though he employs respectful paralinguistic whispers at the intimate distance (4.71–7). The experienced host, Menelaos, however, graciously picks up the conversational ball.

[6]Hellwig (1964) examines problems in narratology, such as "Verknüpfung gleichzeitigen Vorgänge," rather than the portrayal of the social uses of space and time (proxemics and chronemics, in current jargon) by characters in the epics.

sexual excitement transmit specific odors which others interpret out of awareness (Hall 1969: 45–50). Every culture has olfactory boundaries as well as touch boundaries, beyond which we register trespass. Somatic characteristics that produce responses include thermal, dermal, and chemical stimuli.

Human progress in controlling the immediate environment has been in part a result of highly developed "distance receptors," sight and hearing. These sweep up information from a large range. The sensory world (touch, smell) and gestures and postures of the Greeks, ancient and modern, differ from those who dwell on the rim of the North Atlantic. Sometimes these differences are patent: Priam in mourning rolls in the dust, Hecuba bares her breasts to her son in supplication. We don't. Most examples of the nonverbal behavior that literature records, however, are common or comprehensible, or seem so.[7]

The phrase "personal space" provides current jargon for one aspect of territoriality, a facet of animal ethology. Everyone manages a personal "body–buffer zone," a characteristic and regular distance that each of us employs when approaching another woman, man, child, animal, or object, and that we maintain when approached, stepping back if necessary. The human "ego," the social persona, extends beyond mere skin to an invisible and usually inviolable "body–envelope," the parameters of which vary by culture and class.

There are few *neutral* gestures, postures, positions, or social distances in everyday life and none in literature, least of all Homer. Every movement or alteration of the thousand or so catalogued postures communicates, in or out of awareness, crudely or subtly, respect or disrespect for the interactant. Social distance and body position, especially in the vertical plane (e.g., standing tall, hovering over, crouching, and groveling) emphatically signal status and/or disposition.

The human meanings and uses of space have been helpfully categorized by the anthropologist Edward Hall into four chief distances: these distances between communicating individuals, moving from greater to lesser, are qualified as "public, social, personal, and intimate."[8] The *Odyssey* presents us with the self–exiled Laertes, off one (far) end of this social–distance scale,

[7]Nonverbal behaviors, esp. "emblems" and "speech regulators," can easily be misunderstood. Those familiar with living Greeks may think of the negative vertical headnods and the palm–hiding goodbye wave; cf. Morris et al. (1979) 161–68, 241–46. Hall (1969) Ch. 8, "The Language of Space," applies proxemics to a few paragraphs of Butler, Twain, and other writers, showing the relevance of literature to his psychological subject, but not examining the consequences of his subject for the study of literature.

[8]See the useful charts of proxemic perception–distances extending from 0 to 30 feet in Hall (1969) 196–97. The four proxemic zones, starting from the distant and measured in feet, are: identifiable to 10, 10 to 4, 4 to 1.5, and 1.5 to 0.

totally out of touch and even earshot of the goings–on in town. Then we locate the stigmatized, marginal and *publicly* distanced beggar; the presumptuously self–invited and self–important suitors infringing on *social* distance; the *personal* closeness of mother and son or mistress and maids; and, fourthly, the ultimate *intimate* distance with body contact of revealed Odysseus and traumatized Telemakhos hugging closely and weeping in waves, or eventually of Penelope and Odysseus at the olive–stump bedpost (16.213–16, 23.205–8, 295–6). They have at last relinquished the precious body–envelopes that insulate them from all those who would penetrate them or swallow them up.

These spatial relationships neatly recapitulate Hall's discrimination of four meaningful proxemic levels in human nonverbal communication. In his typically "externalized" manner, Homer conveys (what we call) psychological motivation and situation by describing physical position and distance, posture, and body–tonus.[9]

Proxemics, however, comprises more than calibrating and categorizing distances. The human use of space includes, even if we limit the study to two–way exchanges, *distance* and its actual and potential modifications (far–near), *posture* (stiff–relaxed) and *elevation* of the body (standing–seated–abased), *precedence* (serial order), and *orientation* (frontal–oblique–dorsal).[10]

This essay sketches this one aspect of nonverbal behavior,[11] literary proxemics, in one work of literature. I consider how the poets of the *Odyssey* tradition present three heroes manipulating and experiencing space, consciously and unconsciously. I do not exhaustively describe the variety of ways to maintain, limit, and occupy others' territory or body–buffer zones, nor do I analyze all the proxemic activity of any one scene completely. Perhaps

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[9]Hall (1969) 113–29. Nubile nymphet Nausikaa cajoles her daddy by coming right up to him in the "intimate distance" (μάλ' ἄγχι, 6.56 *hapax*). Hellwig (1964) contributes surprisingly little to proxemic analysis; the study concerns itself more with characters' conscious discussion and consequences of space and time.

[10]Odysseus annihilates the social or personal *distance* between himself and his mother's shade, his son, his wife, and his father, but only when he chooses to identify himself as their intimate. His proxemic predominance reinforces other heroic qualities. The slack posture of drunken Polyphemos, the collapse of Iros, and the springing upright of Telemakhos in order to prepare the ax–heads illustrate *posture and elevation.* The shades' queue in their quest for blood and the suitors' line–up for the contest show Homeric acceptance of the concept of *serial order.* For shift in bodily or head *orientation*, recall Aias' shade stalking away from Odysseus or Eurykleia's turning her gaze toward Penelope in a vain effort to catch her mistress' eye.

[11]Also known as comportment, metacommunication, symbolic speech, somatic semiosis, kinesics, and body–language. Both dynamic and static nonverbal behaviors are included. Gould (1973), Pedrick (1982), Holoka (1983), Lateiner (1989), and Lateiner (1992) offer focused studies. Lateiner (1994?) attemps a broader survey of nonverbal behavior in Greek and Roman epic.

Homerists can be induced to behold a "hidden dimension" of Homer's art, one that can be found throughout the text.

The *Odyssey* deploys space and the control of delimited territory as a semiotic code that shapes its plot. Every reader marks the excluded hero's[12] disguised approach and entry into his own perimeter, yard and marital space. His false outerness (physical appearance, object–adapters, assumed role, "perches") enables him to achieve physical innerness, but step–by–step, slowly, by stages, first enduring and overcoming self–appointed gate–keepers like goatherd Melanthios and the officially sanctioned parasite, Iros. He searches for appropriate entrée and an appropriate location and social niche to occupy.

The reader should grasp firmly an important distinction: nonverbal behavior of literary characters can be "in awareness" or "out of awareness" *for them*. When Nausikaa stands her ground as salty, naked Odysseus comes nigh, he explicitly considers at what speed to approach her, how close, at which posture elevation, with what words and with which tone of voice, and whether to touch her nubile young knees in supplication, a ritualized "in awareness" gesture (6.141–7, esp. 141–3):

> στῆ δ' ἄντα σχομένη· ὁ δὲ μερμήριξεν 'Οδυσσεύς,
> ἢ γούνων λίσσοιτο λαβὼν εὐώπιδα κούρην,
> ἦ αὔτως ἐπέεσιν ἀποσταδὰ μειλιχίοισι
> λίσσοιτ'...
>
> "She *held her ground* standing *face to face* with him; Odysseus pondered
> Whether to supplicate the lovely–faced girl by *clasping* her knees
> Or keeping *off at a distance* to beseech her with reassuring words..."

He is "priming himself" and consciously calculating his communicative strategy.

On the other hand, visible trembling, an exhibition of fear, seizes Iros *unawares*. The established bum of Ithaka has found to his (conscious) dismay that he has to support his abusive, surly words and ugly tone (choppy rhythm: 18.10) by fighting the new freeloader (18.4, 8–9, 26–31, 33, 41). The bully is dragged forward, closer to his opponent, into the informal ring of men (an impermanent nonverbal, proxemic structure). His nonverbal leakage of emotion and of proxemic aversion provides another source of malicious joy to the playboy princelets. Later the post–match physical paralysis of Iros leads to

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[12]And the lousy dog's long, sad exile, for that matter, as here Argos' wag dogs the wanderer's tale (17.302).

the suitor's renewed laughter and kledonic toasts of Odysseus (100, 102–3, 111).

Nonverbal behavior overrides any contrary verbal message for the observer and is generally more reliable.[13] Iros' pre–fight blustering words are easily decoded by his unaware body–talk or leakage. In this pair of examples, the first case, Odysseus' needy plea, involves "in awareness" proxemic nonverbal behavior; the second, Iros' collapse of courage, exhibits "out of awareness" psycho–physical symptoms and proxemic nonverbal behavior (depressed elevation, motionlessness, non–resistance to being dragged out of play and propped up outside). Status is constantly being renegotiated in Homer and the vulnerable body always provides legal tender. Its position, orientation, and elevation relative to other bodies communicate attitude and intention.

Nonverbal behavior such as proxemics can also be intended or unintended: for examples of intentional body language, recall Menelaos' paternal stroking of Telemakhos' arm, Melanthios' kick of the vagabond, or Odysseus' aggressive stance facing Iros. For unintended acts, recall Odysseus' sole sardonic smile or the Kyklops' sharp bellow of pain. Proxemic examples of both types include all space–contracting or –expanding greeting and parting protocols, treaty–making movements, standing, sitting, and supplicating (e.g., *Il.* 1.245–6, 19.77; *Od.* 22.310, 342, 365).

Unintended behaviors again divide into controllable and non–controllable: the puny companions' life–preserving scuttling off to dark corners in fear at the Kyklops' cave or Odysseus' incessant but stoppable tossing in his blanket the night before the slaughter can be compared to Odysseus' uncontrollable shudder at Kalypso's revelations about his itinerary or Polyphemos' slack–jawed, drunken, stuporous sprawl. Borderline cases would include the Kyklops' later incessant groaning, a paralinguistic alternant.[14]

Among all these distinctions in nonverbal behavior, conscious and voluntary gestures and postures provide the most frequent types of nonverbal behavior in the Homeric poems.[15] For instance, secular and sacred ceremonies with spatial rituals, such as Khryses and Akhilleus moving apart to pray,

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[13]See Ekman (1981) 270 on the superior reliability of nonverbal channels from the observer's point of view.

[14]See Youssouf (1976) 815 on acceptable social forms; Poyatos (1986) 478, 493 on non–controllable expressive systems.

[15]Vergil and modern fiction writers, in contrast, devote more attention to involuntary self–revelation. See Lateiner (1992). Also in modern fiction, gesture and gesticulation are often idiolects, unique neurotic symptoms such as the pre–Freudian Herman Melville's psychologizing of Ahab in *Moby Dick* or Herman Wouk's Captain Queeg in *The Caine Mutiny* (to limit the field to other sea yarns).

appear everywhere in Homer, as indeed in all ancient literature. They provide a norm and a context for stressed individuals in crisis. Such reported nonverbal behavior frequently is socially functional, integrating public and private concerns and pressures (e.g. secular feasts and divine supplications). At other times the sentiments and behavior of a group are *embodied* in an expressive individual and his movements, for example Antinoos' duplicitous smile and unwanted touch represent the mocking sentiments of all the suitors (2.302 and 323). Nevertheless, Homer frequently allocates one gesture to one person or group, others to others. For instance, only the suitors bite their lips, while only the Laertids Odysseus and Telemakhos ever abort the self–revelatory "dead giveaway" of tears.[16] For proxemics, the attention and detail Homer gives to the way Telemakhos, Odysseus and Penelope approach and handle friends and enemies border on the clinical.

Three Case Studies: Proxemic "Movers and Shakers". Consider, as suggestive examples, three distinctive cases of the human use of space, three disenfranchised persons: tender Telemakhos, still mocked and disparaged because of his unproven youth and labile "face," a proto–*basileus* without proxemic privilege; Odysseus, stigmatized and ostracized for his status as social–outcast, a wandering beggar on the margin of the community; and seemingly passive Penelope, disadvantaged by her sex and confronted in her very home by a horde of invasive princelets.

Telemakhos, Penelope, and Odysseus face segregation by age, gender, and rank, yet they discover how to break down or erect socially sanctioned barriers to further their power and personal interests. Odysseus' approaches to the boisterous suitors, the immobilized queen, and the long unused and spatially separated bow violate the parochial rules. He approximates the rank of *basileus* by appropriating their exclusive, dominated spatial domain. The *basileis* lose the prize not only by inferior warrior skills but also by inferior nonverbal (including proxemic) manipulative skills.

Seating positions of host, invited and welcome "guests," and unexpected *xenoi* signal tacitly negotiated relative status. Abroad, Telemakhos meets courtesy and the treatment due a noble's son. At home, Telemakhos has an ironic position: a seat of honor in the great hall amidst his dishonor. The

[16]With Argos, Penelope, and the suitors: 17.305, 19.211; 17.490–1. See Lateiner (1986) 108–12 for a tyro's checklist of Homeric nonverbal behavior; Lateiner (1989) for lip and tooth behaviors; Lateiner (1992) for the vocabulary and descriptions of aphonia and emotional paralysis.

megaron functions as an arena in which kinship and factional ties are nonverbally expressed, announced, shifted, and manipulated.[17]

1. Telemakhos the Deferential Adolescent

At *Odyssey* 3.22–4 young Telemakhos and his mature friend Mentor disembark at Pylos. In the distance they descry a lively Bronze Age party. Telemakhos has manifested teen–aged anxieties and timidity already in books 1 and 2. Now he appears paralyzed at the thought of greeting and meeting impressive grown–ups. So he says:

> Μέντορ, πῶς τ' ἄρ' ἴω, πῶς τ' ἂρ προσπτύξομαι αὐτόν;
> οὐδέ τί πω μύθοισι πεπείρημαι πυκινοῖσιν·
> αἰδὼς δ' αὖ νέον ἄνδρα γεραίτερον ἐξερέεσθαι.
>
> "Mentor, how should I *approach* them? How should I *greet* him?
> Never yet have I had experience with carefully chosen *words*;
> I'm embarrassed as a *young* man to *start* interrogating an *older* man."

Adolescent Telemakhos at first claims here not yet to know nonverbal, "distant approach" protocols for friendly encounters, "social" distance salutation procedures, rules of verbal turn–taking, age–based—here, adult—etiquette, including even the right words. The initiation and termination of social encounters with strangers have not much concerned him in his enforced, extended childhood. No Dad ever showed him how properly to find his place among the local competition[18] or to obtain ξενίη.

The Homeric hero at home controls his own space. Nestor, Menelaos, and anomalous Alkinoos admit and entertain visitors to the house in the *Odyssey*'s first quarter. Akhilleus in his hut–home away from home in *Iliad* 9 and 24 welcomes, receives, feeds, and directs his Akhaian and Trojan visitors. The power of the male house–master is conveyed verbally by greetings, invitations to enter, approach, bathe, eat, speak, sleep, etc., and nonverbally by glowering

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[17]The late night departure of the *basileis* and the nightly closing of the house's doors exemplify temporal segregation, a modification of (permanent) spatial separation (18.427–8). The locking up of the servant–women in the *Odyssey* provides another example of this phenomenon (21.235–9).

[18]His recent breakdown into expressive (nonverbal) tears in the Ithakan assembly belied his brave face, his social front and public persona as the scion of the leading local *basileus* (2.80–3). Emotional arousal often produces both leakage of true feeling and clues that a deception is being practiced; cf. Ekman (1981) 271. Lateiner (1994?) offers a fuller description of youthful Telemakhos' nonverbal behavior.

looks, sudden movements, tears, awkward silences (zero–grade act, chronemics), frightening and threatening tones of voice.[19]

Greeting and parting procedures, in fact, offer the most frequent and best standards of nonverbal respect and disrespect throughout the concatenated narratives of the first half of the *Odyssey*. Telemakhos on his travels encounters heroic politeness in space–management at the palaces of Nestor and Menelaos. His repeated approaches and welcomes, ratified by proxemic nearness to the head men at table, mark his nonverbal honor and precedence. Homer thus establishes early a Telemakhian paradigm, as we may call it, of "honor at entrance." The stylized proxemic and other nonverbal rituals of greeting and parting permit the presentation of many gradations of emotional response and diplomatic expressions.[20]

As in early modern Poland, Homeric visits to provincial gentry were sufficient inducement for elaborate welcomes, feasts, and hunts. "Servants would sit on the roof...watching the road...Crossing thresholds...gave occasion to more fussing...hugging and kissing...The entire household would [entertain...] the guest...for many weeks. It was easy to come for a visit, but very difficult to leave. The host would protest and try to delay...sometimes...taking the wheels off [the visitor's] carriage."[21] Telemakhos at Nestor's and Menelaos' establishments provides this precious opportunity to relieve deadly boredom in a world of few brazen distractions. Palace life appears highly ritualized on public and private occasions. Telemakhos' hesitation to return home by way of an expected stop at Nestor's is perfectly understandable. His evasive ploy is, naturally, cultural.

Nonchalant suitors disbelieve in Telemakhos' journey—his escape. In book 2, Leokritos the suitor doubts such a distancing ploy will ever happen. Rather he will "sit a long while" in his gilded cage and soon after they treat his intentions towards them as a joke (2.255–6, 323–6). He steals away from *de facto* jailers. His visits to friendly strangers parallel Odysseus'; like his father

[19]Lady Penelope arrogates several male proxemic prerogatives of invitation and *xenie, faute de mari*. Kalypso and Kirke assume privilege by divine right (goddesses). Even the now humble swineherd Eumaios knows and executes with precision the elaborate rituals of guest–welcome out of town in the hills on the hog–farm (14.33 ff.).

[20]Penelope plans a signal proxemic honor in her mansion for the vagrant who once befriended her long lost husband: a seat next to her princely son at the next day's banquet (19.321; cf. 97 where he sits close by in her regal presence). In both cases, commensal and conversational seating (reduced elevation and distance from the host) signifies enhanced status. On "Bodily symbols of greeting and parting" from anthropological perspective, see Firth (1973) 299–327 with 308 on proxemics in particular.

[21]Bogucka (1991) 193, an evocative paragraph in a useful essay on Polish pomp and the use of ritualized gesture for expressing emotion.

he faces detention and temptation, since Helen's ephemeral anodyne is parallel in place– and time–deadening effect and disengaging result to Kirke's potion, and to Lotus delight and Siren song. Menelaos cannot offer eternal life to his guest, but he promises perpetual feasting, dazzling entertainment, and a year of distraction. Helen is old enough to be Telemakhos's mother (cf. 4.143–5, 235–6; 15.125–9; she is Penelope's cousin), but parallels Kirke and Kalypso in their theme of the overpowering, self–serving, sexual sorceress. Both males tarry in place too long as a result of pleasures and pressures that alone they cannot evade or deny (Apthorp 1980: 12–13, 21).

The travel narratives reveal much about Telemakhos' growing expertise in social relations as he visits Pylos and Sparta. Both Nestor and Menelaos praise his father despite telling him little about Odysseus' whereabouts, and they reluctantly send the youth on his way. Nonverbal components draw a clear contrast between the elder generation's two festivities. At Pylos, the hosts rise quickly and easily to greet and considerately seat the strangers at the head of their large, informal feast for 4,500 "guests," their loyal warrior clans (3.34–41). Social proprieties and hospitality–rules are effortlessly observed. Appropriate conduct like this, *aidos*, sensitivity to others' situations, is generally a hallmark of Telemakhos' guest–behaviors also (3.14, 24; 15.64–6, 87–91, 155–9).

At wealthier and powerful Sparta, however, three gaffes spoil the wedding festivities and hint at the discontented accommodation of self–serving Helen and resigned, distressed Menelaos. The King is "celebrating" both the legitimate marriage of his bastard but honored son Megapenthes, "Big Sorrow," and the immanent departure for marriage of his legitimate daughter, Hermione (4.12).[22]

Henchperson Eteoneos, however, breaches "honor at entrance" proxemic duty when he gauchely leaves the guests standing at the door. The ghastly breach of decorum is nearly unique in this poem of hospitality and indicative of a house divided,[23] as is the all too apparent absence of the Lord's wife from the wedding (4.120–1: zero–degree proxemics). The nonverbal behavior of leaving the guests to dawdle indicates the disruption of normal patterns of greeting, set up not only by Telemakhos but also by Nestor. Menelaos feels the

[22]Schmiel (1972) 463–72, Dimock (1989) 46. Schmiel specifies halting the noble guest at the door; also Telamakhos' awkward comparison of Spartan splendor to Zeus' own palace, and Menelaos' *faux pas* that makes Telamakhos weep and plugs the conversational flow.

[23]4.20–4; yet cf. 1.106–14 and 17.328–9, 342, where the point seems to be the suitors' disinterest in sharing the *tasks* of authority.

insult given his visitor (μέγ' ὀχθήσας) and chastises the nonverbal impropriety (νήπιος, 4.30–1).

Telemakhos changes more surely than anyone else in Greek literature. The *Bildungsroman* turns him from a νεὸς παῖς, a listener, to a ἥβη, a doer (cf. 4.665, 668). The adolescent's earlier vain efforts to jockey for position in Ithaka produce fiasco before the 108 usurpers. His nonverbal behavior and rhetoric are all abortive. On his travels he gains self–assurance from courteous reception. Treated as an adult, he becomes one. When the narrative abandons him in Sparta (book 4), he is requesting leave from Menelaos and portable gifts—not horses but κειμήλιον (compact, "bankable" wealth, 4.594–610)—a formulation which draws sad Menelaos' smile and intimate–distance arm–stroking for the boy's true–to–blood Odyssean capital–seeking.

When the narrative returns to him, about a month later (book 15), Telemakhos, not Pisistratos, dominates decision–making with a wake–up kick at his intimate (bed–mate) peer. He imperatively urges obtuse Menelaos to allow him exit (15.44–7, 88, 64–6: ἤδη νῦν μ' ἀποπέμπετε.../ ἤδη γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐέλδεται οἴκαδ' ἱκέσθαι). He has the wit and temerity to ask for different *xenia*, he packs up the guest–gifts, and nearly drives over his dallying host. In a poem that emphasizes manners, Telemakhos' manners change radically, shifting from those of a stymied child to those of a determined hero. So even the formal minuet pattern of heroic arrival and departure allows him to grow and attain adult stature. In the first quarter, he has difficulty leaving home, in the third quarter he easily foils those trying to exclude him from return, in the fourth quarter at home he proves his heroic strength as well as determination (Shewan 1926/7: 31–4; Scott 1917/18: 424; Clarke 1963: 139–43; Rose 1971: 514).

Telemakhos needs ratification of his theoretically elevated status as master of the battered, imploding house. He envisions the bow–contest as a means to that placement (21.113–17)[24] at a time when his life itself is no longer secure and Goddess herself has taunted him with his mother's unreliability (15.19–20; cf. 13.308, 336; 16.303–4). Millennia of commentators, as well as recently Marylin Katz (1991: 55–58), wish to explain distrust of Penelope as a result of the forceful villainess Clytemnestra pattern, but rational Penelope has village rumor to fear (19.527), her own interests to guard, the intelligence to calculate them, and father and brothers of another lineage to protect and back them up (cf. 15.16–17). Telemakhos cannot know which scenario his mother will

[24]It apparently also offers him a mode of desexualizing and objectifying his mother. Only here is the (Athenian) option of "mother under a mature son's tutelage" mentioned.

follow; exasperation with her frames his intemperate utterances (e.g., 1.346–61, 21.344–55, 23.96–103).

The house should protect the heir, but in this case the insults and "practical jokes" of the *basileis* (3.207: ἀτάσθαλα μηχανόωνται; cf. 17.588, 20.170, etc.) regularly humiliate him by verbal contradiction and nonverbal displacement to the sidelines. Eventually he is chivvied out of his own house and encouraged to leave the premises for awhile by his matron–goddess (book 4) "for his own protection." Later yet he emphasizes his family's exclusive right to the household, whatever the status of the current spouse: οὔ τοι δήμιός ἐστιν / οἶκος ὅδ', ἀλλ' Ὀδυσῆος, ἐμοὶ δ' ἐκτήσατο κεῖνος (20.264–5).

Telemakhos has a house (*oikos*) but not yet a household (*oikia*) with curtilage and collectivity of human and animal life. His mother, under master's orders, now protects it, while a serving–woman will do so after she is gone, but before a wife is in place. Finally, his wedded wife will have the responsibility (11.178, 15.25–6; cf. 23.355). Helen, referring to the future, prayed–for event of marriage, offers him a robe for the bride–to–be (15.126–7), but—gridlock again—Telemakhos cannot woo his rightful wife until his patrimony is secured, and he cannot secure his tenuous patrimony until his mother steps aside.

Telemakhos uneasily co–exists with the *basileis* in the male domain. He is neither warrior nor house–master. His mother's authority and prestige cast a long shadow on his capacity as adult male. By apparently ordering her out when she asserts authority, he attempts to demonstrate his sex–role plan for her and to establish his own (male) space. She is an ally, probably, against the suitors, but an "enemy" of his own independent status in his marginal phase between child and man (age) and between unimportant boy and *aristos* male (gender). That is to say, in his world, the orders that he lays on his mother are given more for the suitors to overhear than for his mother to hear.

In proxemic terms, ordering his mother to leave the house claims the space for him as master of the house. His uneasy relation to the suitors appears proxemically by his being a part of, and yet apart from, the commensal males, their songs, dances, games, their unmannerly hubbub, and their established routes to public status (competition in games and gifts, exhortations, taunting the beggar, the order of food–service, etc.).

2. Odysseus the Misfit Beggar

The Telemakhian standard of proxemic politesse is repeatedly shattered whenever his father arrives and gains reception in his reported travels. Recall the too cool or too hot welcomes in the lands of Kyklops, the Laistrygonians, Kirke, and the Sirens, the attitudinal flip–flop of Aiolos, and the continuing uncertainty in Phaiakia. Kyklops as host, one admits, is given significant provocation not to follow proxemic protocols towards visitors who, unasked, help themselves to his "house" and stores. Kyklops' efforts to prevent Odysseus' egress, to display power by closing the cave's entrance, create a feeling of spatial helplessness, lack of control, even childhood claustrophobia.

Later, and parallel in many nonverbal respects (posturing and clowning, not least), the homesteading suitors first deny *entry* to the beggar, later intend to deny *exit* after he kills the first of them. Then only, they find out that they, the putative jailers, not he, are themselves jailed and confined. Inversions of power coded as inversions of space–control articulate much of the *Odyssey*.[25] Odysseus as the beggar, in carefully constructed sequence, passes through Hall's four proxemic or social distances: *public* (non–acquainted) beggar, *social* guest of Eumaios, *personal* friend of Penelope, and, revealed at last as Odysseus, her husband and *intimate* bedmate.

Nearly universal proxemic protocols and rituals of beggaring are on display in Ithaka (books 13–21). Odysseus with his "imputed defects"[26] originally keeps his proper "public" distance at the threshold (17.261, 339–40, 466; 18.17, 110) even when eating (17.466–7). He comes in with cajoling words and a parallel gesture, the defenceless, extended open hand suitable for charity. He navigates hungrily around the circle of entitled companions of the table at the pseudo–"personal" distance of a beggar's reach (17.365–7, 450; cf. the beggar boy of *Il.* 22.492–7). He keeps his elevation low, even speaking from a sitting position (17.466).

Once, he "de–bases" himself, lowers his elevation precipitously, in fact falls to an undignified crouch in order to avoid being hit rather than defend himself—as a hero expectably would (18.395).[27] Generally, the newcomer

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[25]9.240–4, 313–14, 416–19; 17.375–8, 460–1, 22.27–8. Newbold (1981) discusses space in late epic; for Apuleius' deployment of space to enhance the *Metamorphoses*, see Seelinger (1986). Rose (1969) describes Homeric hospitality and its Phaiakian exceptions—no one but the lucky Skherians and the unlucky suitors are described as ὑπερφίαλοι, "recklessly disregarding others' rights" (6.274, Nausikaa's observation!); Gutglueck (1988).

[26]He requests a "scanty portion" from the princes (17.362; cf. 15.312 with Stanford's note, 17.12); he rubs or leans his shoulder on the doorpost (17.221, 340), part of a poor man's status–free fidgeting, really a lack of interest in maintaining posture, i.e. heroic dignity. See Goffman's (1963) brilliant micro–analysis of social stigmata.

[27]He humbly requests a reward for good news (14.152–4: εὐαγγέλιον). He accepts offers and handouts of food, clothing, even weapons and travel (16.78–81; 17.354–8; 19.309–11). Such generosity puts a hero and even a beggar in debt to heroic and banausic benefactors who have a surplus to control (see Donlan [1982] 8–9). The announcement of the archery prize is

knows the beggar's requirement of unbashful—if limited—assertiveness (cf. 14.512, 17.347, 578), but he violates proper beggar's proxemics (distance maintenance) when he contracts the suitors' "personal" space and persistently importunes the ironically punctilious suitor Antinoos (17.446–7). The tramp of stigmatized status has penetrated the noble's privileged "spatial envelope" and stretched unacceptably the time–taking permission between classes (a "chronemic" indication). The dissonance in Odysseus' self–presentation in daily life angers the narrative's suitor but provides an amusing irony to the audience, faced with a double text: a beggar and a king.

Odysseus forages for a beggar's banquet in the *megaron*. He encounters both the suitors' gestures of pseudo–hospitality and nonverbal rejections caused by his invasion of their proxemic privileges. Note particularly Antinoos' pitch of a footstool, Eurymakhos' repetition of this violent, nonverbal abuse, and Ktesippos' nasty third toss, an ox–hoof. These responses themselves are carefully graded by Homer, successively less successful yet more outrageous: the first hits Odysseus but shakes him not, the second misses Odysseus but hits a by–standing, innocent waiter, the vain third hits nothing but a wall.[28]

The literally liminal door–sill of the *megaron* serves as Odysseus' base of operations, as he sets about re–establishing his territorial, proxemic rights to the house. He takes a marginal position on the οὐδός, threshold of the *megaron*, from book 17.339 to 22, intermittently inserting himself into the endless party despite condescending and fierce protest about the invasion of a space reserved for acknowledged aristocrats by themselves.[29] He progressively gains a toehold in the great hall's feast as parasite and lamplighter (18.317–44), another foothold later near the hot–spot (hearth) of Penelope, and penultimately, a precarious placement in the meant–to–be–exclusive contest of the bow.[30]

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different (21.338–42). The prestation system of owed debts is partly adumbrated by Eumaios and Penelope (14.124–32, 19.309–11).

[28]17.462–5, 18.396, 20.296–302. In another paper I examine examples of the frequent appearance of progressive triadic action in the *Odyssey*. Woodhouse (1930) 79 lists "triplicities"; Shelmerdine (1969) 124 sketches a similar, subtle phenomenon, Homer's varying a motif by presenting different stages of a type–scene (such as feasting) at different points in the text.

[29]Eumaios leaves no doubt that their behavior is unjust, indecent, unseemly, irreverent, and wasteful (14.80–95); cf. the beggar's view as "outside observer": 16.105–11.

[30]19.506, 20.258, 21.289. Russo developed the basis for a proxemic analysis in an elegant, unpublished 1985 abstract, partly summarized in his 1992 commentary, 3–4 *ad* 18.33 (but not found in the prior Italian edition). Russo posits zones of marginal, moderate, accepted, and privileged importance, a kind of affective equivalent to Hall's four zones.

Thresholds mark moments of danger, passages through uncertainty to a new status, stylized liminal space and stop–time in biological and regularized communal rites of passage, dramatized and ironized scenes of danger often in the *Odyssey*. Athene/Mentes at the manor *oudos*, Odysseus before seeking the suppliant's privileges on Skheria, Kyklops' massive entryway, Odysseus' farewell to Arete, and his arrival at Kirke's palace offer examples of *oudos* events (1.104, 7.135, 9.240–4, 13.63, 10.310).

The most significant threshold of all is that of his own house. As beggar he does not at first cross the entry–point but stays outside. Then he sits (lowered elevation) on it, holding the *social* margin, realized by the physical edge, a line of separation. The threshold provides a "home base" of safety, a ritualized zone of security for the weak. Later Odysseus sits just inside the ambiguous threshold, next to it, inching his way through literal liminality, transition from outsider to master. Finally, as avenging lord, he looses his arrows from atop it, symbol of the master's gate–keeping power and proxemic marker for the eccentric social player. It is capacious enough for two beggars where the wide doors meet. Odysseus now reaggregates himself to the community, asserting his membership in a spectacularly lethal manner.[31]

Odysseus transits the doorsill pass, finds reincorporation in the world into which he once had been born. The spatial passage from outside to within symbolizes the change in, and enhancement of, his social status, much as van Gennep argues for all life–crisis, *rite de passage* ceremonies. Instead of ritualized and stable shared traditions, however, Odysseus faces an anomalous, unique, life–threatening situation: his father self–exiled from Ithaka town; his wife wooed as if a widow and self–isolated upstairs in her tower apartment; his son threatened with physical expulsion, disinheritance, and assassination; his own very existence on earth and his zero–grade role in Ithaka and in his family treated as problematical, even by his wife, son, and father (19.315; 15.268, 1.166, 215–18; 24.289: note the formulaic ἐμὸν παῖδ', εἴ ποτ' ἔην γε). The threshold of the main door—a traditional focus of sanctity and ritual—thus can signify for the hero exclusion *and* control, depending on context.[32]

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[31]See 18.10, 32; 17.339, cf. 18.17; 17.413, 466 and 18.110; 17.339–40, 20.258–60, 22.1–2, 72, 76. Also 18.17, 385; 22.203. Segal (1967) 337–40; he also refers to the rituals of the restorative baths (330–1) and purifications such as exorcism through fire (336). Russo (1992) 48–9 *ad* 18.33, based on van Gennep (1908/1960), for which see esp. 19–22, 25.

[32]Conversely, elusive Penelope's outrageously eccentric invitation to the beggar to sit by her privately and to chat offers access to privileged space which will be eternally denied to the suitors. The cross–gender dyadic intimacy at the sacred hearth foreshadows the sexual union and climax of book 23.

At the palace in Ithaka, gestures of respect, positions of deference, and the repertoire of movements that express social niceties hold the same meaning as elsewhere and before, but they are more honored in the breach. The audience's knowledge of the beggar's exalted true identity ironically intensifies one's reaction to the display and disgrace of distance protocols and table–etiquette. "The man of many moves" occupies only the ambivalent doorsill (he's not in nor out), in order to feign respect for the suitors' alleged priority, superiority, and prerogatives in his own house (17.339). He sits on the sill, looking for an entry, but abjectly begs food—after divine nudging from Athene—from his own larder (17.362, 365–6, 466; 18.110). He expects, as a man without status, to be served comestibles last, and to compete last, if at all, with his "betters."

He has "many moves" to make vis–à–vis those in his marginal zone (receptive Argos, challenger Iros, the unperceptive Suitors), a space open to the public.[33] In the middle zones of social and personal space, inside the house where his intrusion usurps the beggar's doorsill and the servants' functions of lighting the braziers (18.311–44), he troubles the Suitors and needs Telemakhos' intervention (18.405–9). Antinoos angrily reacts to his persistent approaches with proxemic instructions (17.446–7):

> τίς δαίμων τόδε πῆμα προσήγαγε, δαιτὸς ἀνίην;
> στῆθ' οὕτως ἐς μέσσον, ἐμῆς ἀπάνευθε τραπέζης,
>
> "Which nasty devil *brought* in to us this mischief, a party kill–joy?
> Stand *off, in the middle, far away from* my dining–place."

He is getting "too close for comfort." Melantho represents the fractious housemaids at their worst; she challenges his enhanced proxemic status (17.478, 566–7; 18.329–30, 336; 19.66–69). Odysseus eludes the suitors' attempts to evict him first from the beggar's recognized perch at the door and later from the lee of the privileged table near Amphinomos (18.395). Soon after, in *Od.* 19, his invitation to private audience with the Queen is renewed (cf. 17.584). With her he sits close and becomes her confidant and co–plotter in her privileged, "personal" space, a position that the suitors crave but never enjoy (19.97, 209, 506; 505–99; 17.509, 529, 544; cf. her modesty at 18.184). With a fine irony, the beggar sitting next to the queen says that Odysseus is ἄγχι μάλ', οὐδ' ἔτι τῆλε φίλων...(19.301). Odysseus has continually gained in

[33]Once beggar Odysseus leaves the sill, *he* never returns to it until, after the apocalypse, from there he slaughters the suitors (18.33, 22.2).

authority as shown by his spatial behavior, a progression from nearly status–less outsider to trusted insider.

This inner space next to Penelope at the sacred hearth is a proxemic achievement. Even for a person of high status and limited accessibility, this degree of contiguity to the queen is barely conceivable.[34] Contrast the barely sanctioned touchings of his body by Eurykleia the servant. She washes the poor guest, feels his thigh, and recognizes his hunting scar, symbol of male initiation and emblem of his unique identity. Both her humble station before a guest–stranger and a physical intimacy with her recognized lord that began when she laid him as a baby on his grandfather's knee and gave suck to the infant, a tight bond of physical intimacy (19.401, 482–3), allow her now to grab his beard as a suppliant. He instinctively grabs her throat, both emblematically as a threat, and practically, to choke off any further revelation (19.393, 468, 473, 480, 505).

Odysseus on Ithaka is liminal on several symbolic levels. First, proxemically, he physically occupies the threshold after winning his first victory against Iros (18.17, 110, 20.258). Second, socially, as vagrant and beggar, he is not honored guest, acknowledged enemy, or a person with any noteworthy identity at all. Third, as an archer he stands poised in the narrow passage between power and helplessness, between home and abroad, and between life and death.

But nothing and no one on Ithaka can remain fixed, objective, or neutral; the social order is poorly balanced at the point of revolution, social and political. At first arrival, Odysseus had been willing merely to share scraps with Iros on this peripheral threshold, the furthest point from the locus of palace power. But, after the bowshot, when he leaps to the threshold, the "firing line" for all the bowmen (21.124, 149; 22.2), the doorway's meaning is inverted. Now Odysseus has become gate–keeper, guardian of exit and entry for the house, like the once disgraced, now deceased, loyal servant, Argos. Self–control, the vagrant's skill *par excellence*, is now converted back to "heroic" heroism: controlling life and death for others. Henceforth he

[34]Cf. Gould (1973) 96–100 on the protected nature of the Greek hearth and the females of the *oikos*. Henley, Hamilton, and Thorne (1985[2]) 168–85 discuss gender–specific aspects of nonverbal behavior such as touch indicating dominance, aggressive looking (leering, ogling, "come–on's"), dialogue initiation and turn–taking, gender–displays (such as voice pitch, posture, or clothing) that make sexual identity visible or salient, personal space, and "appeasement" ploys: nonverbal behaviors of reassurance such as smiling, head–nodding, and body–tension in posture. Nonverbal gender dimorphism and its asymmetrical obligations and rights in ancient literature and life, indicative cultural cues closely related to power and dominance, deserve a separate study.

determines fate for the mass of suitors who exhibit unheroic crowding and huddling behaviors.

Odysseus' penetration of the house's deeper recesses is slow and deferred, a series of sexual metaphors for coitus that climaxes when Odysseus ejaculates his arrow, then his name, in the murderous multiple orgasm of blood and death.[35] The great house itself participates in the post–massacre deceit—"resounding aloud to the thud of [dancing] footsteps" (23.146). The family has excised the uncontrolled din. The dwelling–space of Odysseus can now be purged of pollution and restored to its proper and purified heroic and orderly spaces.

3. Penelope the Polytropic Communicator

Penelope seems to have a ground–floor sitting–room ("Queen's *megaron*") from which she can overhear, if not see, the suitors in the main social space, the *megaron* (17.492–3, 20.387–9). From here a reserved staircase leads to the bedchamber above (ὑπερῷον: 1.362=23.1, also 19.600–2, 21.356; 4.717–18), and *thalamoi* (not always a bedroom), depots, pantries, and storerooms, perhaps below or further inside—lockable, private chambers (cf. 2.337, as commonly in Mycenean palace remains).

There is some gender segregated space, but Penelope can enter and leave the main rooms at will, mixing with the men in a way unknown to respectable women in classical Athens, but she always has women chaperones. She controls her seclusion except when her *dolos* was disclosed and she was quasi–judicially discovered *in flagrante* (2.94–110).

"Gendered spaces" correlate with status differences as does age–based segregation. Knowledge and power are shared out in secret and separated meetings of the *basileis*. They leave the palace, meet in seclusion, and return inside afterwards (4.659–74, 16.342–408). Spatial segregation is a mechanism of power. Penelope "keeps her distance" by retreating to the women's quarters or standing at the door to the men's area. Tactics of the habitat facilitate her determined singleness. She stays out by manipulating the system of spatial barriers, and just so Odysseus gets in. Social processes employ spatial segregation for the benefit of the advantaged classes. Those disadvantaged by status, gender, or age, or by a mix of such factors—those who challenge the

[35] The ultimate seal of reunion and approval is the marital coitus in the hidden, rooted bed, a nonverbal ritual or convention (θεσμός, as Homer expresses it: *hapax* 23.296) at the ultimate degree of proxemic intimacy, mutual interpenetration and envelopment.

status quo—require spatial know–how in order to survive.[36] Gendered spaces instrumentally segregate and symbolically separate the empowered from the "weaker" sex.

Territoriality, animal establishment and maintenance of keeping others out or in, generally occurs "out of awareness" by means of unobtrusive "body language," facial expression, and paralinguistic phenomena (growls, tone, and voice volume; spraints, animal excrement, also mark "possession"). The *suitors* of Penelope are much preoccupied with maintaining group affiliation and cohesion in order to make it possible for one of them to gain possession of the palace, a prerequisite for establishing individual dominance and the submission of the rest. Telemakhos, Penelope, and (implicitly and nonverbally) the beggar Odysseus question their place in the palace, their pecking order, and their self–determined exclusive rights to plunder the stores of the family and to occupy the widow's bed. The suitors repeatedly need to make their privileges explicit as they jockey for position. They try to shut out (proxemic exclusivity) all other comers, even and also especially the pathetic beggar. Their closed–market strategy italicizes the precarious nature of their dubious and downright illegitimate claims to occupy another man's palace and to leer close up at Penelope, another man's wife.

Some of Penelope's flirtatious behaviors suggest the "approach and flight" proxemic pattern. This nonverbal and conveniently ambivalent set of sexual messages is associated with coy adolescent "dating and mating" behaviors in many societies. The deniable patterns of "flirting" often define the proxemic parameters of approved nubile "feminine" roles. Her conscious, subconscious, and unconscious behaviors excite the "horny" males and make her "pretty" to them (18.207–13). That is, her gestures, postures, and proxemics disarm their usual caution and misdirect attention from discovering the necessary solution to the wooing impasse.

To the extent that opaque Penelope may intend to simulate interest and to stimulate their lust in order to produce boodle, her nonverbal behavior is deceptive, and her clothing, jewelry, posture, etc., function as deceptors. "All is fair in *their* love and *her* war" (Poyatos 1986: 502; Eibl–Eibesfeldt 1972: 302–3; Murnaghan 1986: 109, 113; Pedrick 1988: 94–5). The narrator does not penetrate her motives or responses but expresses Odysseus' glee and delight in her duping of the dopey suitors (18.281–3). Collusive appreciation of

[36]Cf. Oxford High Table, children's schools, men's lavatories, jail cells, the women's balconies of Orthodox Jewish synagogues, the inability of Muslim women to enter a mosque or of Catholic women to become Pope. See Spain (1992) 5, 15.

nonverbal finesse provides one facet of his concept of *homophrosyne*—grief to a couple's enemies.[37]

Trying to separate oneself from the dominant group defines the behavior of the relatively impotent (in Heroic terms) Penelope, and also Laertes and (to a less successful extent) Leodes. All three disapprove of the suitors and want to distance themselves from their high-handed behavior (11.187–96, 18.302, 21.145; add Theoklymenos, and, briefly, Amphinomos: 20.364–72, 18.153–7). Young Telemakhos can command his mother Penelope to withdraw to her women's quarters because of the asymmetrical, lesser freedoms of Homeric women. But her circumscribed realm of proxemic freedom more clearly elucidates her sentiments. She, at times of her own choosing, may advance towards the men or disaffiliate herself and retreat to protected areas of the house, isolated rooms of her own. She continually asserts control of her space—and successfully. Penelope is proxemically symbolized by the hidden recess, the raised retreat, up and away from the hurly–burly below.[38]

Penelope projects herself frequently as defeated, downtrodden, essentially resourceless, but her apparent and advertised lack of independence, power, and prestige contrasts starkly with her successful manipulation of relationships with her family and household, as well as with visitors, the vagrant, and the irritable, invasive suitors. Like her modern Greek counterpart, the wife and mother protects the house, its stores, its scion, and its honor by a segregating screen of evasions, gender ruses, and unfulfilled promises. She weaves the shroud of Laertes and later unravels it in her helpfully secluded "personal space." She sweetly persuades the noble thugs that grumbling Telemakhos is too young yet to be *territorial* and thereby to pose a threat to them (4.663–8; 18.216–18, 269–71; 19.160–1; 21.105: Telemakhos plays along with the charade). This proxemic factor explains her promotion of his (otherwise puzzling) enforced, over–extended adolescence. She demands more gifts from the suitors who depart home, then deliver them happily; she invites the recently grubby stranger to a private parley. She initiates the bride–contest of the bow in her courtyard, and, astonishingly, the prize herself speaks up for the vagrant's turn to try. This verbal assertiveness, however, appears only when

[37]See 6.180–5 and Russo (1992) 66–67, *ad* 18.281–3 dismissing the Analysts' supposed epistemological crux concerning Odysseus' knowledge of Penelope's motive, e.g. Fenik (1974) 120.

[38]1.362, 17.505, 18.206, 21.8. Proxemic degree zero—isolation—paradoxically represents every society's highest and lowest positions (royalty and solitary confinement). All societies design involuntary dissocation from the community, jailing, as the lot of the outlaw. In the *Odyssey*, Melanthios serves a brief term as an imprisoned miscreant (22.200–1, cf. 22.126–30).

push comes to shove and no alternative exists. Here alone does Penelope throw her *verbal* weight around in a direct confrontation.[39]

The only space left for the disguised Odysseus to enjoy with his wife is the zero grade, a re–establishment of "intimate distance." This follows his unintended certification of his identity by his outburst and his knowledge of the arrangement of intimate space and private furniture in the King's bedroom. In the only room we name for a piece of furniture stands a fixed bed that cannot be moved out, ἔκτος, but is ἔμπεδον and ἐντός (23.178, 203, 190), a μέγα σῆμα of his rightful place and space (23.188, 202, 294–9). The suitors had each prayed to share Penelope's bed, the object and common metaphor for the intimate proxemic zone in which lengthy touching and love–making occur (18.213, 258; 23.300).[40]

By the double–cross deception, she forces Odysseus to show his true self, surprised, hurt, and angry over furniture rearrangements and space re–allocation in their bedroom. Then Penelope surrenders and collapses her closely guarded space in a proxemic and gestural "submission display" (23.207–8):

> δακρύσασα δ' ἔπειτ' ἰθὺς δράμεν, ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας
> δειρῇ βάλλ' Ὀδυσῆϊ, κάρη δ' ἔκυσ' ἠδὲ προσηύδα·
>
> "Shedding tears she then *ran straight across to him*, her arms
> she put *around his neck*. She *kissed his head* and said to him:"

"Deliberate misdirection" through "come hither" misleading smiles, beggars' deferential postures, and reassuring distances contribute to the Laertid household's controlled "public personalities." These proxemic strategies

[39]The hobo's turn in the contest nonverbally discredits all the suitors and mocks their heroic pretensions. They lose face well before they die, as their expostulations fully realize. Homer provides double–indemnity, social and biological (21.148–74, 184–7, 245–60, 285–8, 22.322–9).

[40]Penelope's proxemics exploit opportunities reserved to women under the gender dimorphism of heroic Greek life. In addition to the beggar's and suitors' categories of outside and inside, standing, sitting, and stooping, and crouching, Penelope has the additional vertical plane of ground floor or upstairs and hidden in her chambers. The men operate solely "downstairs," on the main floor, but Penelope can rise above them at will, at will become visible to the suitors. She moves sometimes down and nearer to allure or reassure them, but never very near to them, never into the "personal," much less the taboo "intimate" distance. At times she has considered the strain of staying in Odysseus' palace less desirable than going home to her natal family as a widow or even leaving Ithaka to marry a new, live husband (19.579, 531)—or so she tells the guest. *To krevati* of the spouses in modern Greece is still the locus of pre–nuptial rituals and post–nuptial sanctity; no one but the married couple will even sit on it.

conceal more than they reveal about the minds of the ruling family. Penelope must keep the besieging suitors out of her quarters, her bed, and her body. The physical, sexual reunion of *Odyssey* 23 has been anticipated by the subtler yet no less lucid and carefully wrought progression in *Od.* 17–19. Odysseus has progressed from distant alien to sympathizer, ally and intimate friend. Odysseus must penetrate the palace, regain control of the *megaron*'s activities, his bedroom, and mistress. He has passed through an re–initiation rite, starting as the most alien outsider and ending up as the ultimate insider in Ithaka. Their equal success is conveyed by deed, by speech, by peripheral gesture, and by proxemic manoeuvres that preserve house, home, and appurtenances.

The House of Odysseus. Odysseus' *domata* in fact finely exemplifies Homer's attention to proxemics. Buildings never talk and rarely move. Nevertheless persons exist in "personal space" and interact differently in differently defined and owned spaces such as caves, bedrooms, and assemblies. Habitations, work places, and political areas affect Thersites' behavior and Odysseus'. The princely houses of Nestor's Pylos and Menelaos' Sparta (θεῖος δόμος: 4.43, *hapax*) strike awe into those who enter them. Polyphemos appears to have absolute control of his primitive (cave–)space, gate–keeping, patrolling his lair, and enforcing savage rules. Odysseus manages to sneak out of murderous confinement, just as he sneaks into Alkinoos' δώματα, an earthly palace despite its magic guard dogs (6.300–2, 7.91–4). The house of the Laertids supplies as interesting a character as Amphinomos does or Argos, the pathetic dog. I would argue that the house signifies more, since it is the locus of half the poem, the costly prize for which all strive, and a symbol of supreme social, political, and economic (i.e., heroic) achievement in Ithaka. The Ithakan big house is the source of family identity for all Odysseus' family and of local power for all the island. Real estate (land) and architecture (buildings), human uses of space, indirectly determine how people see themselves and others. The articulated manse with its specialized rooms, private and public spaces, cobwebbed *thalamos* empty for twenty years, and the expropriated, occupied *megaron* communicate wealth, threat, and the premeditated infraction of heroically sanctioned exclusivity.

Homer represents the world and its spaces more directly than our psychological century usually admits. Space as an epic entity with variably penetrable boundaries often serves as the medium for personal expression. Nowadays Homeric directness has been evicted, Homeric perimeters have been largely annihilated. Primate territoriality, however, remains an ethological basic that is always capable of many levels of textual appreciation. Odysseus' stringent self–regulation allows an *out*cast on Ithaka to become an *in*vader. His mobile gestures and cryptic bodily surfaces aid a transition from no space and no place to the most coveted position in the island.

The "prosperous house" motif becomes somewhat dissheveled in the vocal complaints of lord, lady, heir apparent, and suitors, but its nonverbal substance appears central to the conflicts (e.g., 1.386–404, 14.90–108, 16.383–6, 20.211–16). This establishment and its environs are worth fighting for. Odysseus at Alkinoos' table states the motif of fair feasts in happy households. His relation of a fantasy of orderly banqueting prepares us for degenerate Cyclopean, Circean, and Ithacan versions (9.5–11).

Proxemics in the house contributes to the density of expression that makes the *Odyssey* so vivid. All the senses except taste are drawn into Homeric proxemic communication: touch at the intimate distance, sight, hearing and smell at the social. Spiritual and emotional distance are concretely expressed by measurable separation in space by both the action and by epic similes.[41] Symbolic and instrumental proxemic acts encapsulate compressed information about a society and the individual's space within it.

Even Eurykleia, Eumaios, and other attachments of the house, part of the οἶκος, function as voices of the loyal house. The guard dog that pricks up its head and ears, the maid who drops Odysseus' leg and turns her head to her mistress at the unexpected (nonverbal) news, and the doors to the treasure–room that bellow like a bull when Penelope opens them (17.291, 19.468–77, 21.48–9)[42] are three nonverbal "voices" of the inarticulate house.

Neglect and exclusion of Argos reveal displaced or "surrogate contempt" for his master. Dog and master are excluded from the feast and find themselves ἐν πολλῇ κόπρῳ (17.297; see Schwartz 1975: 180, 183 for the *kopros* motif). The faithful hunting dog alone, however, penetrates Odysseus' god–given disguise. The associations of home and its appurtenances give that nuclear space in the *Odyssey* special resonance.

Any discussion of the role of the Ithakan house requires clarity about its spatial organization and unfamiliar architectural terminology. Various archaeological and philological problems of ancient standing associated with Homeric architecture, the meanings of *megaron*, and the lay–out of the

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[41]Recall the sailors who gather around Odysseus as calves around their mother cow or Penelope who embraces Odysseus as shipwrecked sailors arrive at land (10.410–18, 23.233–46).

[42]In fact, another "reverse [sexual] simile" (cf. Foley 1978) has Penelope penetrate her husband's house's inmost recess (21.8–9: θαλαμόν δε...ἔσχατον; 46–50): she removes the protective belt (cf. *Il.* 14.214), inserts the key, and thrusts it in, face to face. The doors shriek and give way to her.

farmhouse rooms are not the concern here. We do not address problems of the height of the stony and/or wooden thresholds, the nature of the *orsothyre*, and the location of the men– and women–servants' sleeping quarters (up or down, right or left of the *megaron*, etc. (4.718, 17.339–41, 22.126).[43] Rather, the human values attached to these various areas and the human deployment of posture, elevation, innerness, closeness, and exclusion determine our approach.

Ragged Odysseus' arrival home is stopped short and punctuated by his admiring, detailed description of the manse, τάδε δώματα κάλ' Ὀδυσῆος (17.261–71), which no one could scorn, as they can and do scorn its rightful owner in beggar's disguise. Odysseus' *oikos* is a "second–class palace" (Wace) or a "large, rustic farmhouse" (Halverson); thus Telemakhos wonders at (σέβας μ' ἔχει: 4.72–5) Spartan Menelaos' much superior, vast and lavish establishment of gold, silver, bronze, amber, and ivory. Odysseus shows a similar, if feigned, appreciation of the distant sight, smell (κνίση), and sound from within the Ithakan party–house. He then enters to taste the food and approach near the suitors for charity (17.342–50, 414, 447). The Ithakan dwelling is not consistently a fancy palace, yet this noble pile's integrity in space and time is the dominant issue of the second half of the poem. As the *Iliad* focuses on Akhilleus' wounded honor in camp and battle, so the *Odyssey* focuses on the honor of the house (here subsuming the clan, wife, child, servants, stores, as well as the physical building). "Odysseus is the hero of the οἶκος" (Halverson 1985: 143–44).

From front to back on the ground floor (*aithousa*, *prothyron*, *aule*, *prodomos*, *oudos*, *megaron*), the big man's house becomes less public and more private. The ground floor is the scene for all social activity beyond the family and its dependents. Guests of all ranks sleep "outside" in the *aithousa* or portico of the courtyard (3.398–9, 4.296–305; cf. 18.101–3). In Ithaka, this area has an earthen surface. There is a midden for manure beyond the front gate (20.150, 17.297–9; cf. Stanford 1965: II, 435–6; Wace 1962: 492–3).

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[43]Consult, for bibliography and details, Lorimer (1950) 406–33 with plan on 408, Wace (1962) 489–97, Drerup (1969) only 3 and 128–33, and the learned William Beck, *LfGrE* s.v., δῶμα, μέγαρον: "a mixture of elements from Mycenean and geometric times." See also Fernandez–Galiano in Russo (1992) 210–17 or the summary in Jones (1988b) 11. The palace at Pylos (13th. s. BCE) or the House of the Columns at Mycenae have plans that well suit the events of the *Odyssey*. Although the first is too grand and the second too small, the exigencies of oral epic poetry can accommodate up– and down–sizing. M. O. Knox (1970) tabulates and analyzes the blurred Homeric vocabulary for house and palace, *oikos* and *domata*. She finds consistent usage, the former word *never* used for gods' residences, the latter often employed for gods and the magnificent dwellings of princely humans, i.e. palaces.

The *megaron*–room is the focus of the social structure of the Homeric house and the locus of the main conflicts in Ithaka (other than those in the *agore*). There the *basileis* eat, drink, and are merry. There too Telemakhos seems to set up the axes for the problematic bow contest. "Agglutinative grandeur"[44] makes it large enough for all the epic action.

The house is described as dishonored by the suitors' consuming its stores and livestock (16.431, 21.332, 22.36) and despoiling its women, the slaves already and the mistress before long.[45] The *oikos* is uniquely mentioned as the victim of the suitors' intolerable depradations (1.250, 1.248 =16.125, 19.133), nearly shattered like a ship in a storm (2.48–9), wounded (23.9), ravaged (1.378, 22.36), and destroyed (1.377). These are metaphors, personifications if you like, but characterizations that make the *oikos* more than a building and more even than the collective physical objects and locale of the Laertid family. The suitors have nullified Telemakhos' and Penelope's scarcest resource, private space, but Odysseus trumps their violation with his own, by means of a subtle spatial–status "joker" card, beggary. He undercuts the ground they walk on. He has the weapon of the weak, a visible, invincibly low status.

Conclusions. New coherence and color attach to the *Odyssey*'s narrative and characters, if we attend to all the information found in the poets' presentation. Individuals communicate with the position and distance of their bodies, and they do not fail to use closeness and "farness" to help express what they want to "say" or to hide. Human beings desire these bodily messages to understand each other. That is, in addition to their explicit words, reported thoughts, and non–symbolic, instrumental deeds (like chewing on raw flesh or poking out an eye with a charred olive pole), Homeric bodies by their position, distances, and orientation[46] constantly emit heroic and unheroic proxemic messages.

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[44]Wace's fine phrase (1962) 489. See now Fernandez–Galiano in Russo (1992) 210–17. 19.573, 21.100, 124. At Pylos, the palace *megaron* remains measure 42 x 37 feet, at Mycenae, 42 x 39 feet, for whatever mere "reality" is worth in the analysis of oral epic with its homeostatic tendencies.

[45]Anyone distressed by Odysseus' lack of "Christian charity" in killing every last suitor fails to appreciate the stains already inflicted. Such critics remind one of the Persians of Herodotus (1.4.2) who think the Persian Wars too great a consequence for the rape of a woman or women.

[46]Orientation usually concerns the relationship of one person's head and body to another's, but it may also denote direction of gaze towards an object, by which nonverbal behavior can communicate immediate concerns to a "third party." Homeric examples include the assemblies' focus on each speaker's possession of the "floor–giving" sceptre, the companions' attention to the sleeping Odysseus' bag with Aiolos' gift, after meaningful glances at each other, and Telemakhos' locked–on attention to Odysseus, waiting for the (nonverbal) signal (2.38, 80; 10.37, 44; 20.385–6, 21.431).

Homer relates nonverbal behavior to reinforce or to undercut the words of his characters. Odysseus on Phaiakia underlines his explicit claims by proxemics and by gestures that augment his words, in the jargon: "illustrators."[47] These speech–related, "*redundant*" proxemic behaviors appear when he remains at a distance from maiden Nausikaa in a socially unsanctioned encounter to reinforce his verbally expressed respect for the goddess–like creature (6.143–7), and when he stoops *and* embraces the knees of Queen Arete, as he verbally begs protection. Further, we note "self–priming," self–effacing postures and positions when he tries to disappear, look small, excuse himself, and sit out the Phaiakian "macho" displays or contests and finally competes only last in the games. When Odysseus requests conversation at the personal distance in the Otherworld, Aias silently walks away from him. Here the silence[48] is more expressive than any abrasive words could be, and increasing the social distance sends the message in another channel. Later, on Ithaka, denied his beggar's portion, Odysseus, with scornful words as well as with body–talk, draws away and turns his back on beetle–browed Antinoos whose footstool hits him on the back without shaking him. The zero movement signifies hidden strength (11.563–5, 17.453–64).

Much of this body–talk is "redundant" on the communicative level, a somatic repetition (or is the vocal expression the "echo"?) but *complementary and even explanatory* with respect to symbolic systems. One might even deem it requisite for Odysseus to achieve his admittedly difficult goals. In fact, "subversive" or contradictory messages in postures and proxemic adjustments produce a subtler effect than verbal raillery can. Odysseus' aggressive begging, comprising words, postures, and close proximity (414, 447, 450, 453, 466), proxemically pushes Antinoos to violence, although it superficially suggests that the vagrant is entirely at the aristocrat's untender mercy (17.413–62). Iros' cowering, his shaking flesh, and the force that the menservants apply to drag him up to his opponent betray his real sentiments. So he raises his fists in the ritualized "squaring off" gesture that usually indicates readiness to slug it out, but the enforced "personal distance" of the bout undermines his alleged

[47]Ekman and Friesen (1972) 357–8 employ this term for fist–shaking, finger–pointing, etc. Here it applies to Odysseus' knee–clasping, his dark looks, and his rapid advance to the discus competition.

[48]More than once, Telemakhos lapses into awkward but communicative silences—communicative both to other characters and to the more knowledgeable audience. Menelaos too is caught at a loss for words (4.116–20 with 137–9). Besslich (1966) and Poyatos (1981) explore the "semanticity of silence." Thus both heroes are characterized by their nonverbal, half–unconscious table–manners as well as by their diplomatic, chosen words. See 3.469, cf. 3.389; 4.51. Silence as assent: 2.240.

willingness (18.76–89). He then falls in the dust, the formulaic verse echoing the death throes of animals and better warriors' dropped elevation. He is dragged away from the laughing princelings as a proxemic sign of dishonor (18.98, cf. *Il.* 6.453, 16.469, 18.101–7), no longer πτωχῶν κοίρανος, "leader–in–chief of the beggars."

Among the rich reports of nonverbal behavior, Homer "reports" proxemics—distance, elevation, and orientation—to describe *and* to explain interpersonal relations. Proxemic data, a subset of nonverbal behavior, constitute a separate channel of textual information parallel to speech but not necessarily running in the same direction. Proxemic acts sometime support—but sometimes contradict—words. Contrast Menelaos' words and candid hand–stroking for Telemakhos to Kirke's treacherous words and ensorceled food for the sailors. Human communicative systems generally observe the principle of nonexclusivity, but, in literature as in life, in cases of contradiction, the action will speak louder than the word. Sometimes by themselves proxemic acts substitute for words, sometimes they constitute the primary message. Melanthios' nasty kick and Odysseus' post–bull's eye seizure of the doorsill exemplify this claim. Body–talk contrasting to speech, perceived as irony in the palmary case of the disguise of Odysseus, is probably as common as complementary messages. When liar Odysseus describes to Penelope his Cretan hospitality to Odysseus, he drives her to sobbing by describing himself as absent. Homer notes sardonically that the wife was (19.209) κλαιούσης ἑὸν ἄνδρα παρήμενον. For the audience, proxemics here poignantly contradicts the fable being told, and of course Penelope's grief adds to our pleasure. Here the action has a meaning that the deceived Penelope cannot know, for she supposes (we suppose) that the beggar is anyone but Odysseus. This spectrum of proxemic usage is congruent to "real life." Territorial integrity and trespass or violation provide both a theme of the *Odyssey*'s narrative and a metaphor and symbol for exclusion, welcome, penetration, and possession. Further studies will isolate the Homeric vocabulary of heroic proxemics, its relative frequency in various books of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Homeric Hymns*, and varying usage by different genders, age–groups, and social classes.

Homer occasionally describes the different proxemic tendencies of crowds as well as of the individual heroes. "Bunching up" activity reduces heroic stature in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The suitors, for example, cluster around their more active peers, and they form a ring for the mock–heroic beggar–boxers (17.65, 18.41). Their voluntary behavior echoes the saucy serving women's, lowest on the social scale (17.34, 22.497–8), just as later, in battle, their huddling together alive is echoed by the guilt–ridden movements of the wicked maids (22.270, 446–7). The suitors' scattering exhibits a common group–fear reflex. The eventual penning–in of both groups, their killings and lined–up executions, and their bodies' getting piled together and stacked like fish together in a heap (no respect for these dead!) suggest their equation as law–breakers, incompetents, and less than human adversaries (22.299; 136–8, 460; 381–3, 470–2; 389, 450). Related group behaviors are found in the sprawled postures of the enfeebled henchmen of Agamemnon and Kyklops (11.419, 9.371–4, cf. 22.17), and the swarming of the dead souls around Odysseus and Minos (11.42, 570, 632). The anxious Trojans in the *Iliad* crowd around a figure of presumed salvation or authority, or they throng together in small compass (e.g., 16.641, 21.607, 22.12, 24.662).

Undifferentiated groups of people queue up for minor privileges already in the heroic age: dead queens for blood and suitors for their try at the bow (11.233, 21.141). This egalitarian method for deciding a turn–taking hierarchy (chronemics) conveys a lack of invidious distinction, inherent prestige, or acknowledged proxemic priority.

Hellenic bodily expressions—including proxemics—sometimes resemble and sometimes differ from modern European, feudal Japanese, or American versions ("ethnogests"). The entire body (face, head, trunk, and limbs) is pregnant with psychological and social meanings. These are especially often coded in highly traditional and stratified societies. The *Odyssey* exhibits nonverbal behavior in every scene and on every page. Homer shows rather than tells the audience what people want or dislike and how they feel. Novelistic psychological analysis is rendered superfluous by reading the face's expressions and the body's position and movements as a text.

While audiences have always been aware of characteristic, often formulaic, Homeric facets of nonverbal behavior, such as nods, beetling brows and rituals of supplication such as bended knees, the pervasive contribution of somatic and spatial semiotics—proxemics—to heroic characterization and plot has invited attention. The regular notice of social space suggests not the Analyst Wilamowitz' notorious "patchwork poetry," (an 1884 quotation appears in Katz 1991: 96), but a controlled and consistent presentation of character, plot, and narrative "clues." Homer allows the audience to penetrate deception clues but blocks the stumbling suitors. They miss even the obvious clues and fumble proxemic protocols.[49]

[49]18.74, when the suitors observe Odysseus' powerful limbs, shows that they are not totally blind. 17.481–7 and 18.403–4 present the morally equivalent window of opportunity, but the suitors fail to see it.

In the Greek world, then and now, the presentation of self to others, verbally and nonverbally, creates the social personality. Consequently the study of the "Bible of the Greeks" with its themes of true and bogus messages of the voice and the body, deception and revelation, helps students to understand how Greeks and later nations have constructed, maintained, and ripped away the necessary and varied faces and gestures that *all* people must exhibit. Posture and proximity, proxemics, are equally telling.[50]

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[50]Winkler (1990) 133–37; du Boulay (1976). I thank Joseph O'Connor, Gregory Crane, James Luce, and two anonymous *TAPA* readers for helpful suggestions on earlier versions of this paper. *TAPA* Editor Sander Goldberg also encouraged many of the improvements that this paper has enjoyed. None of these colleagues can be blamed for errors of concept or detail. Some elements have been presented in lectures at the University of Maryland, Princeton University, and the 1991 APA meetings in Chicago. A comprehensive study of nonverbal behavior in epic will appear in Lateiner (1994?). Critics interested in joining the nascent international research project on nonverbal behavior in classical antiquity (CANVBE) should contact the author.

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