

First Appearances in the *Odyssey**

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To examine how Homer introduces characters in the *Odyssey*, I shall pose such questions as: How does the narrator set up each character's first appearance? How does the setting contribute to the characterization? What distinctive traits are revealed through the character's first actions, words, and emotional outbursts? How do these traits prepare for subsequent appearances of the character or relate to themes of the epic? The answers will demonstrate how frequently the main narrator¹ uses a variety of means—arrivals, dramatic encounters, descriptions of actions and settings, background information, words, actions, emotions—to reveal essential characteristics the very first time we encounter a person, thus providing a sample of the character's ἦθος that will be extended and deepened in the course of the epic. Some characters are, as we shall see, extensively portrayed upon their first appearance (e.g. Telemachos); others are depicted gradually (e.g. Amphinomos and Eurylochos). The first appearance may simply describe a character's actions and provide background information (e.g. Eurykleia), or it may include an elaborate scene involving description, speech, and interaction with others (e.g. Eumaios and Laertes). It can occasionally be difficult to decide where the introductory scene leaves off and subsequent development takes over, but as a rule of thumb, I regard first appearances to consist of the description of the setting that leads to the initial encounter with the character and the first things he or she does or says.² To

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¹I distinguish the main narrator from the narrator of the *Apologos*, for they differ in how they introduce characters (see *Appendix*). In the narratological terms employed by de Jong, the main narrator (NF₁) with his addressee (NeFe₁) is distinguished from the character Odysseus (NF₂) with his addressees (NeFe₂).

²For a brief survey of Homer's use of individual characteristics in delineating his characters, see Camps 21-29. In his chapter entitled "Pause," Richardson 36-69 discusses the introduction

establish a formal and thematic typology of introductions, I shall begin by examining in some detail the appearance of the first human in the epic, Telemachos.

I. Telemachos

Our first view of Ithaka is a masterpiece of ethical portrayal that provides a virtual compendium of introductory motifs. First is the *arrival* of an unexpected person from elsewhere, permitting us to view the scene through his or her eyes and to watch the reaction of the people to the arrival.³ When Athene arrives at the courtyard gate disguised as Mentès, the words εὔρε δ' ἄρα μνηστῆρας (106) indicate that her (and our) first view will catch the humans unawares, allowing us to witness their spontaneous behavior.⁴ We will reserve the description of the suitors for the next section. The introduction of Telemachos, however, provides a pattern for the rest of the epic.

τὴν δὲ πολὺ πρῶτος ἶδε Τηλέμαχος θεοειδής·
ἦστο γὰρ ἐν μνηστῆρσι φίλον τετιμημένος ἦτορ,
ὅσσόμενος πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, εἴ ποθεν ἔλθων 115
μνηστῆρων τῶν μὲν σκέδασιν κατὰ δώματα θείη,
τιμὴν δ' αὐτὸς ἔχοι καὶ κτήμασιν οἷσιν ἀνάσσοι.

of new characters in both epics. He rightly observes that introductory information and descriptions are carefully integrated into the scene at hand, but he overemphasizes their economy, especially for the *Odyssey*, when he maintains, "an introduction in Homer is for the nonce, not a long-range investment in a character" (40); cf. also 38, 41 and 44 (with n. 13). On the contrary, I will attempt to show that, with the important exception of most characters in the *Apologos*, Homer carefully creates introductory scenes *in order to* delineate the new characters. The pauses that provide descriptions of actions and background information in the first appearances of the suitors, Telemachos, Eurykleia, and Theoklymenos (to mention a few) serve a long-range program of characterization.

³The first to catalogue the elements in arrival scenes was Arend 28-63. Although he makes excellent observations on individual passages, he does not treat them as means for introducing new characters. For the five typical elements in arrival and visitation scenes, see Arend 28-31, 34-53; cf. also Edwards (1975) 61-69 and the observations of Richardson 52. For a fine and thorough treatment of the larger issue of the arrival of guests and their reception, see Reece.

⁴For the pattern of coming upon (e.g. εὔρε, τέτμεν, or ἐκίχανε) people engaged in some activity (often with a participle), see Arend 28 and Reece 14. Cf. the first encounters with Menelaos at 4.3: τὸν δ' εὖρον δαινύντα γάμον; Kalypso at 5.58: τὴν δ' ἔνδοθι τέτμεν ἐοῦσαν; Odysseus at 5.151: τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὔρε καθήμενον; Arete and Alkinoos at 6.51: κιχήσατο δ' ἔνδον ἐόντας; Eumaios at 14.5: τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐνὶ προδόμῳ εὔρ' ἦμενον; and Laertes at 24.226-227: τὸν . . . εὔρεν . . . λιστρεύοντα φυτόν. Cf. also the scenes in which suppliants propitiously come upon their future protectors pouring libations: Odysseus at 7.136-137: εὔρε δὲ Φαιήκων ἡγήτορας ἡδὲ μέδοντας | σπένδοντας and Theoklymenos at 15.257-258: τὸν [sc. Τηλέμαχον] δ' ἐκίχανε | σπένδοντ'.

τὰ φρονέων μνηστήρσι μεθήμενος εἶσιδ' Ἀθήνην.
 βῆ δ' ἰθὺς προθύροιο, νεμεσσήθη δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ
 ξείνον δηθὰ θύρῃσιν ἐφεστάμεν· ἐγγύθι δὲ στάς
 χεῖρ' ἔλε δεξιτερὴν καὶ ἐδέξατο χάλκεον ἔγχος. 120

By far the first to see her was godlike Telemachos,
 for he was sitting among the suitors, sad at heart,
 picturing his noble father in his mind, how he might return
 from somewhere and scatter the suitors in the palace,
 assume his rightful honor, and rule over his own possessions.
 As he was thinking this, sitting among the suitors, he saw Athene.
 He went straight to the front gate, indignant in his heart
 that a stranger had stood so long at the gate. He stood near her,
 grasped her right hand, and took her bronze spear.

Telemachos is the first (and by implication the only) one even to notice the visitor and goes straight to the door to greet her. Between his notice of her at 113 and his movement at 119, however, the poet uses an explanatory clause to provide a description of his activities. Within the elaborate ring-compositional frame (τὴν . . . ἶδε . . . ἦστο . . . ἐν μνηστήρσι . . . ἐνὶ φρεσίν, 113-115 ~ τὰ φρονέων μνηστήρσι μεθήμενος εἶσιδ' Ἀθήνην, 118),⁵ we are informed that he is dejected, that he is picturing his father, and that he is wondering if Odysseus will return to rout the suitors and regain his position and property.⁶ These details are very important. Athene comes to give Telemachos some μένος (89) to take the initiative against the suitors and to go in search of news of his father, and indeed she encounters him already thinking about him and pondering his return. The man has anticipated the god.⁷

⁵The five terms in the closing ring (118) pick up their counterparts in reverse order, making this the most elaborate ring in the *Odyssey* to introduce a new character. Jones (1988) 10 and 17 notes the ring-composition here and in the introductions of Eurykleia at 1.428-435 and Aegyptios at 2.15-24, but his generalization on 17 is too sweeping: "new characters always receive a brief description on their first appearance." We shall see that many characters (e.g., the suitors Antinoos, Eurymachos, Leokritos, and Amphinomos) first appear without any descriptions.

⁶The lines that describe his imaginings of his father are in fact a plot synopsis of the epic's second half: εἴ ποθεν ἔλθων ἰ μνηστήρων τῶν μὲν σκέδασιν κατὰ δώματα θεῖη, ἰ τιμὴν δ' αὐτὸς ἔχοι καὶ κτήμασιν οἷσιν ἀνάσσοι (115-117), indicating the degree to which the poet is programming ahead.

⁷This motif is repeated when Athene goes during the night to Sparta to remind Telemachos of his return and finds him (15.4) already awake and worried about his father. The author of the *Odyssey* locates primary motivation (and therefore responsibility) in humans. In Book 1 it is clear that Telemachos' motivation is independent of and prior to Athene's arrival, for she says to Zeus that she intends to "rouse him more" (μᾶλλον ἐποτρύνω, 89). Cf. Heubeck-West-Hainsworth 86: "Athena will reinforce a mood already present in Telemachos." This interpretation is confirmed by the repetition (and emphatic expansion) of μᾶλλον in the ring that

Homer also provides another important detail, Telemachos' emotional reaction to the situation: his indignation is aroused at seeing that a guest has been left standing at the door (119). This spontaneous reaction reveals Telemachos' ethical probity. The first gesture by a human in the epic is to shake a stranger's right hand (121) and his first words sound a keynote of the entire work (123-124):

χαῖρε ξεῖνε, παρ' ἄμμι φιλήσεται· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
δείπνου πασσάμενος μυθήσεται ὅττεό σε χρή.

Greetings, stranger. You will be welcome among us, and after
having some dinner, you will tell what you need.

Indeed, the treatment of a guest or suppliant is the touchstone of every character's ἦθος in the *Odyssey*. Telemachos has passed the first test of the epic: he has proven himself to be the mindful son of a good father, whose example he keeps before his eyes, and whose restitution he wishes for. In the space of a mere twelve lines from our first view of him, the poet endows Telemachos with all the qualities which make him deserving of ultimate vindication. As Athene builds upon those endowments, Telemachos will mature before our eyes and gain greater confidence and authority, but he will never depart from the essential ἦθος adumbrated in this first sketch. He displays the two requisites of all good characters in the epic: memory and scrupulous regard for hospitality.

From this example we can list six frequently encountered elements in first appearances:

- 1) the arrival of a character (e.g. ἦλθε, ἵξον, βῆ, στή, ἀφίκετο)
- 2) a description of the scene, persons, activities (often with background provided in relative or explanatory clauses), frequently framed by ring-composition
- 3) the establishment of contact (e.g. ἴδε, ἐνόησε, προσεφώνεε)
- 4) expression of emotion
- 5) action
- 6) speech

closes the episode (ὑπέμνησέν τέ ἐ πατρός ἢ μάλλον ἔτ' ἢ τὸ πάροιθεν, 321-322). For the classic statement of the cooperation between man and god, cf. Athene's words to Telemachos at 3.26-27: ἄλλα μὲν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ φρεσὶ σῆσι νοήσεις, ἢ ἄλλα δὲ καὶ δαίμων ὑποθήσεται, a good description of what Athene-Mentes actually does in Book 1; cf. ἐνὶ φρεσίν, 115 (Telemachos' own thoughts) and ὑποθήσομαι, 279 (Athene's suggestions).

Introductory scenes that contain all six elements are generally reserved for the most important characters (although Homer is always capable of surprises, as in the case of Argos the dog);⁸ most often the poet chooses among them or even dispenses with them altogether. Many minor characters are merely mentioned in passing;⁹ others appear more than once, but their roles are strictly limited;¹⁰ a few are described at some length when introduced, even though they do not reappear (e.g., Aigyptios, Eurymedousa, Argos, and Iros). In order to analyze the remarkable variety and subtlety of these introductions, and at the same time to draw comparisons and contrasts, I have selected salient examples and divided them into several groups and pairs.

II. The Suitors, Phemios, and Medon

In contrast to the elaborate introduction of Telemachos, the suitors are introduced gradually and with a minimum of background information. We first see them as a group when Athene encounters them, and the detailed description of their actions (1.106-112) is very revealing: they are enjoying themselves with games, all the while sitting on the hides of cattle they had themselves slaughtered,¹¹ while their henchmen are busy preparing a banquet. Before we meet any individual suitors, these seven lines clearly delineate their characteristic activities: amusing themselves with competitive games and banqueting.¹² How fitting that they should eventually die during a banquet while engaged in the contest of the bow. They end 21 books later just as they began.

⁸Characters whose first appearances contain all or most of these elements are Telemachos, Penelope, Peisistratos, Menelaos, Helen, Kalypso, Odysseus, Kirke, Eumaios, Melanthios, Argos, Iros, Philoitios, and Laertes.

⁹E.g., Antiphos, Eurynomos, Eurydike, Polykaste, Megapenthes, Hermione, Adreste, Alkippe, Phylo, Asphalion, Pontonoos, Polites, Mesaulios, Autonoe, Hippodameia, Eurydamas, Peisandros, Moulios, Eurybates, Demoptolemos, Polybos, Euryades, and Elatos.

¹⁰E.g., Halitherses, Mentor, Noëmon, Eteoneus, Diokles, Leukothea, Echeneos, Demodokos, Laodamas, Euryalos, Peiraios, Amphimedon, and Dolios.

¹¹The backgrounding relative clause οὗς ἔκτανον αὐτοί (108) contributes forcefully to the characterization of the suitors; see Arend 40, who notes that the detail “zeichnet knapp und treffend den Frevel der Freier,” and Heubeck-West-Hainsworth 89: “the brief phrase well conveys the wickedness of the suitors, who waste another’s substance; like Odysseus’ comrades (7-9), they have killed cattle to which they have no right.”

¹²Cf. 4.626 (= 17.168) δίσκουσιν τέρποντο καὶ αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες. Cf. also the delight they take in the fight between Iros and Odysseus (Antinoos calls it a *τερπωλήν*, 18.37), which they make into a contest with a prize (of food!).

Not until 1.383 is an individual suitor singled out, when Antinoos is provoked by Telemachos' rebuke. Homer does not pause to tell us anything about the two chief suitors, Antinoos and Eurymachos, except their fathers' names: everything we initially learn about them comes from their first speeches. Antinoos' four-line speech adequately reveals his character. He begins by insulting Telemachos with the epithet ὑπαγόρης,¹³ and concludes with a prayer that Telemachos may never become king (μὴ σέ γ' ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ βασιλῆα Κρονίων ἰ ποιήσειεν, 386-387), indirectly expressing his own aspirations to become king of Ithaka. This unabashed contempt reveals the ἦθος of Antinoos, who is characteristically the first to speak and provocatively threatening. It is also characteristic of him that he is more intent upon getting rid of Telemachos and obtaining the kingship than he is upon marrying Penelope. For that reason, he is the one who leads the expedition to waylay Telemachos (4.669-672) and who later tries to persuade the suitors to ambush him in the fields on his return to the city (16.371-384).

The first time Eurymachos speaks, he reveals his most malicious characteristic, false pretenses of good will. In contrast to Antinoos, who blatantly expresses his hostility and aims at kingship, Eurymachos is a double dealer who lies through his teeth in his attempt to curry the favor of his victims. His protestation is utterly disingenuous (402-404):

κτῆματα δ' αὐτὸς ἔχεις καὶ δώμασι σοῖσιν ἀνάσσεις.
μὴ γὰρ ὅ γ' ἔλθοι ἀνὴρ, ὅς τις σ' ἀέκοντα βίηφι
κτῆματ' ἀπορραΐσει, Ἰθάκης ἔτι ναιεταοῦσης.

May you keep your possessions yourself and rule over your own house.
And may no one ever come who would forcibly deprive you
of your goods against your will, so long as Ithaka has people in it.

And behind his seemingly friendly question about the guest, with its complimentary address of φέριστε (405),¹⁴ lies a sinister intent to gain information. This is the same Eurymachos who later assures Penelope that he will protect Telemachos (16.436-447) even while, Homer informs us, he is plotting his murder. He is constantly working behind the scenes and keeps the

¹³This insulting appellation is peculiar to Antinoos, who uses it of Telemachos three other times (2.85, 2.303, and 17.406). It is one of many examples of characterization in first appearances by peculiar vocabulary, especially in insults. Cf. below, nn. 18, 50, and 53.

¹⁴The address φέριστε, which also occurs at 9.269 and three times in the *Iliad*, is friendly; cf. Janko 253 ad 15.247-51.

servants Melanthios and Melantho in his thrall (17.256-257; 18.325).¹⁵ His final attempt to talk his way out of punishment when Odysseus confronts him during the slaughter (22.45-81) is consistent with his character. Homer has sketched in their initial speeches the essential personalities of the two chief suitors. From this point on, what they do may be shocking, but it will never be uncharacteristic.

In the course of the epic, five other suitors emerge as individuals: Leokritos, Amphinomos, Ktesippos, Agelaos, and Leodes.¹⁶ Their introductions differ as greatly as their personalities. Leokritos has a very limited role, but it is an important one, for he speaks the final, climactic speech in the assembly in Book 2.¹⁷ Like Antinoos and Eurymachos, he is introduced by one line merely giving his patronymic (2.242), so that it is his speech that defines his character. He opens by insulting Mentor¹⁸ and blatantly declares that even if Odysseus were to return they would kill him. He never says another word and only reappears to be killed by Telemachos (22.294). Similar to Leokritos in his unabashed viciousness is Ktesippos. Just as Leokritos' speech in the assembly surpassed in infamy those by Antinoos and Eurymachos, so Ktesippos' speech and action in Book 20 come as the climax of two earlier throwing episodes by Antinoos and Eurymachos.¹⁹ The main difference in their introductions is formal: whereas nothing was said to characterize Leokritos, Ktesippos' heinous character is clear from his introduction: ἦν δέ τις ἐν μνηστῆρσιν ἀνὴρ ἄθεμίστια εἰδώς, | Κτήσιππος (287-288). As Russo-Fernández-Galiano-

¹⁵For an excellent analysis of the contrasting characters of Antinoos and Eurymachos, see Fenik 198-205. Whereas Antinoos aims at political dominance, Eurymachos aims at sexual dominance; he is the only one mentioned by name to sleep with a servant (Melantho).

¹⁶The character of Amphimedon, who receives passing notice during the slaughter and reappears at 24.103 to relate the demise of the suitors to the souls in Hades, is not sufficiently developed for analysis.

¹⁷On the *Steigerung* of these speeches, see Fenik 149-152, who concludes, "The symmetrical ordering of its elements and the increasingly vivid depiction of the suitors' infamy are the fruits of a carefully planned composition" (152). For an overview of the assembly, see Bannert 19-24, who notes that the speeches fall into three groups of three: "Der Höhepunkt jeder der drei Gruppen ist eine Freierrede; diese bilden untereinander eine deutliche Klimax: so führen Maßlosigkeit und Verblendung der Freier zum Höhepunkt der Rede des Leokritos, die zugleich die selbstherrliche Beendigung der Versammlung bringt" (23).

¹⁸Leokritos' insult of Mentor, ἀταρτηρέ, φρένας ἤλεέ (243), is unique and another example of peculiar vocabulary used to characterize individuals.

¹⁹For a good discussion of the climactic arrangement of these three throwing-scenes, see Fenik 182-187. On 204 he notes that "the order of speakers, Antinoos, Eurymachos, Leokritos, is remarkably like the sequence of persons who throw something at the beggar: Antinoos, Eurymachos, Ktesippos; that is, the two leaders followed by an otherwise unimportant suitor." See also Russo-Fernández-Galiano-Heubeck 121 and Reece 176-178.

Heubeck 121 point out, the phrase ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς is elsewhere only used of the *Kyklops* and is clearly intended to recall *his* breaches of hospitality. *Leokritos* expresses the suitors' reliance on power, *Ktesippos* their contempt for the rules of hospitality.

Whereas *Leokritos* and *Ktesippos* exhibit the worst tendencies of the suitors, *Amphinomos* and *Leodes* represent their best side.²⁰ *Amphinomos* is actually introduced in two stages. He appears almost casually at 16.351 without any description or even a patronymic, when, in turning around, he sees that the ship lying in wait for *Telemachos* has returned and he tells the suitors not to bother informing the ambush party that *Telemachos* has escaped. Since *Homer* goes out of his way to create this diversionary episode, which he could easily have eliminated by having *Eurymachos* spot the ship, he must have created it in order to provide an initial glimpse of *Amphinomos*, and in fact there are hints of motifs typical of introductions.

First is an unexpected arrival (here not of a person but of a ship), which *Amphinomos* sees (351) and to which he reacts with a show of emotion. That emotion is the most significant detail. *Homer* says that he burst out laughing sweetly (354). Such a reaction is very surprising at this point, especially when we have just been told that the suitors are dismayed and downcast (342) and have heard how upset *Eurymachos* is at *Telemachos*' escape (346). Heubeck-Hoekstra 281 merely remark, "*Amphinomos* is the most easy-going of the suitors," but the phrase elsewhere expresses genuine (if malicious) mirth and strongly suggests that *Amphinomos* is truly pleased that the mission was unsuccessful.²¹ With this small touch *Homer* has piqued our interest and opened

²⁰For an analysis of *Amphinomos* and *Leodes* as a doublet, see Fenik 192-197. When *Agelaos* first appears (with no description) at 20.321, to calm tensions after *Telemachos*' bitter denunciation of *Ktesippos*, he too shows affinities with *Amphinomos*. The first four lines of his speech (20.322-325) repeat the opening of *Amphinomos*' similar speech (18.414-417) and, like *Amphinomos*, he diverts attention to another matter. He has generally been considered a better character than he proves to be. Stanford (1965b) liv calls him "reasonable, resourceful and brave." Surely his "reasonable" advice (μῦθον . . . ἥπιον, 326-327) to *Telemachos* is hardly acceptable (as *Telemachos*' retort shows). But during the fight, when he plays a greater role than any of the other suitors once *Antinoos*, *Eurymachos*, and *Amphinomos* are slain, his threat to *Athene* (disguised as *Mentor*) recalls *Eurymachos*' threat to *Halitherses* and his family during the debate in Book 2. *Agelaos* is one of the few anomalies in the main narrative, for his first appearance does not prepare us for the viciousness that he displays in the fight.

²¹The comment may derive from Stanford (1965b) liv, who deduces from this passage that *Amphinomos* "had a sense of humour." Levine 99 notes the anomaly in his laughter, but attributes it to self-mockery, "an appreciation of *Telemachos*' cleverness as well as a light-hearted comment on the present *aporia* of the suitors." I cannot see that he is mocking himself (rather than the ambushers) or that he shows any regard for *Telemachos*' cleverness.

the way for a much fuller examination of this unusual suitor. When he is reintroduced 37 lines later, it is in complete form, with his father's and grandfather's names, and with background provided within a typical introductory ring (ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπε, 394, 399) by means of a relative clause, stating that his words most pleased Penelope because he had a noble spirit (397-398). These qualities are immediately apparent when, in his speech (significantly introduced by ὅ σφιν ἐυφρονέων, 399),²² he persuades the suitors not to ambush Telemachos, a clear indication of why he had previously been so happy to see the unsuccessful ship. By these details, Amphinomos has been set apart from the rest of the suitors, and we are prepared for the remarkable scene in Book 18, when he alone of the suitors shows Odysseus any courtesy, and when, true to character, he again dissuades the suitors from killing Telemachos (20.245-246).²³

Leodes, the other fairly decent suitor, is the last to be introduced. He makes his appearance at a critical moment, engaged in an action that damns him: he is the first to try the bow (21.144). In a backgrounding relative clause we are informed that the suitors' recklessness offended him alone and that he was indignant with them all. Homer motivates his appearance by having Antinoos begin the sequence of trials from the wine bowl, where we are told Leodes *always* sat (146), suggesting that he could not forego the temptation of the wine, despite his disapproval of the others' behavior.²⁴ Two other traits distinguish him from the suitors: he has soft hands and skulks in the farthest corner (μυχοίτατος, 146).²⁵

In the following book he is a transitional figure, when he is the last of the suitors to die and the first of three "professionals" to request mercy. In each case, the three suppliants are condemned or vindicated by their actions the first time they appear in the epic. We have seen that when Leodes first appears, he attempts to string the bow, an action that justifies Odysseus' claim that he desired to make Penelope his wife (22.324). When Phemios first appears, the only thing told about him is that he sang among the suitors by compulsion

²²The participle ἐυφρονέων is elsewhere used only of good characters in the *Odyssey*: Halitherses (2x), Mentor, Echeneos, and Nestor. In the *Iliad* it introduces speeches of Kalchas, Nestor (4x), Odysseus, Priam, Thoas, and Poulydamas.

²³We are not prepared, however, for his inability to act on Odysseus' advice at 18.153-157 and his attack against Odysseus at 22.89-91; these decisions arise in spite of his better qualities.

²⁴Jones 198 rightly points out the irony of his father's name: "Oinops means 'Wineface, Winelike', an appropriate father for a son who lurked near the drink."

²⁵For the meaning of μυχοίτατος, see Russo-Fernández-Galiano-Heubeck 164 and cf. Ameis-Hentze-Cauer 80: "ganz im Hintergrunde."

(ἀνάγκη, 1.154), which substantiates his plea for mercy on those very grounds (cf. ἀνάγκη, 22.353). The first time Medon appears (4.677), it is to report the suitors' ambush to Penelope, a demonstration of Telemachos' claim that the herald had continually looked out for his safety. In each case the poet has provided in their first appearances specific actions and characteristics that ultimately convict or pardon them.

III. Penelope and Helen

The first appearance of Penelope provides a variation of the *arrival* motif; instead of being visited, the person herself unexpectedly appears. Two details indicate that Penelope is not at ease in her own house. The first is that she holds her veil (or shawl) in front of her face to speak to the suitors.²⁶ The second is that she not only enters accompanied by two servants, but that they take their stand on either side of her: ἀμφίπολος δ' ἄρα οἱ κεδνὴ ἐκάτερθε παρέστη (335).²⁷ Her first words are accompanied by an outburst of tears (336). So loyal is she to the memory of her missing husband that she cannot bear to hear Phemios sing because she dearly misses him any time she is reminded of him (343). Memory is a distinguishing characteristic of all the good characters in the epic.²⁸ In this vignette we have the essence of the tearful Penelope, faithful to the memory of her husband, maintaining her distance from the suitors, and,

²⁶The fact, says Stanford (1965a) 230, "probably shows that she regards them as strangers." See also Heubeck-West-Hainsworth 118 and for the meaning of κρήδεμνον, Janko 178.

²⁷Although it is customary for a women to be accompanied by two servants, the poet emphasizes their presence by repeating the fact in 335. The line ἀμφίπολος δ' ἄρα οἱ κεδνὴ ἐκάτερθε παρέστη occurs only three times in Homer; each time it applies to Penelope as she faces the suitors at key points: here at 1.335, when she first appears; at 18.211, when in the presence of Odysseus she lures them into giving gifts; and at 21.66, when she brings them the bow. The poet also stresses the fact that these servants are *faithful* (κεδνή), a quality that is most important in the epic; see below, n. 43.

²⁸Before Zeus begins the opening speech of the epic, the poet informs us in a brief ring-form (μύθων ἦρχε . . . μνήσατο ~ ἐπιμνησθεῖς . . . μετήδω, 1.28-31), that his speech has been motivated (cf. γάρ, 29) by his *remembering* the fate of Aigisthos. After prodding by Athene, Zeus assures her that he will not forget Odysseus (65). When we first see Telemachos, he is picturing his father and when Athene leaves him, she made him remember his father even more (1.321). In his first appearance, Mentor complains that no one on Ithaka remembers (μémνηται) how kind a king Odysseus was (2.233-234), words echoed by Athene (5.11-12), as she remembers (5.6) the woes of Odysseus. Eumaios, Philoitios, and Laertes also have vivid memories of Odysseus, expressed by their emotional reactions, respectively, of grieving, sweating and crying, and weeping.

apart from occasional descents to confront the suitors and interview visitors, confined to her own chamber.²⁹

The first appearance of Helen at 4.121ff. is the counterpart of Penelope's. She too comes forth from her chamber to engage in conversation with men. But there the resemblances end. While Penelope was veiled and stood by the column with her two trusted maids on either side, Helen's three handmaids bustle about providing for her comforts. Her arrival reveals a grand queen surrounded by opulent domesticity. She brings her spinning with her in a basket brought from Egypt, whose elaborate description foreshadows the extensive Egyptian material in this episode; Penelope, in contrast, does her weaving in the privacy of her chamber. When Helen speaks, she reveals two characteristics: an uncanny ability to recognize a person's true identity (141-144) and an awareness of her own guilt expressed in self-recrimination (cf. ἐμειὼ κυνώπιδος εἶνec', 145), both of which qualities are apparent in the tales she and Menelaos tell of Troy in lines 242 ff., when she alone recognized Odysseus through his disguise and subsequently tried to expose the Greek warriors hidden in the horse.³⁰ She retains the ambivalent character she had in the *Iliad*.³¹

IV. Peisistratos and Menelaos

It is a surprising aspect of the episode in Pylos that although Nestor is the person Telemachos comes to visit and is the most important character in terms of what is said, his son Peisistratos stands out, initially and in the succeeding books. When Telemachos and Athene arrive (3.5, 31) at Pylos, they propitiously encounter the people sacrificing on the shore. The spontaneous reaction of the Pylians demonstrates their hospitable nature, for as soon as they see (34) the strangers, they all come to greet them and ask them to join them. What is surprising is that Nestor is *not* the one introduced at this point (in fact, he never receives any introduction),³² but Peisistratos: πρῶτος Νεστορίδης Πεισίστρατος ἐγγύθεν ἐλθὼν | ἀμφοτέρων ἔλε χεῖρα (36-37). He it is who welcomes them with the same tact that Telemachos displayed when he first

²⁹As Jones 15 points out, "Penelope's entry establishes a common pattern—she appears veiled and accompanied by servants (328-35), she makes a complaint (336-44), is rebuked by someone (usually Telemachos) (345-59) and retires (360-64), creating a stir (365-66)."

³⁰She also demonstrates her ability to see through appearances when she interprets the omen at 15.172-178.

³¹Most recent in a long line of scholarship on Helen's complex character is Olson.

³²He simply asks Telemachos at the end of the meal who he is and what his business is (3.69-74) and proceeds to recount what he knows.

appeared in Book 1, and the verbal resemblances indicate that the poet wanted us to compare the two young men's actions.³³ But the trait that Peisistratos particularly demonstrates in giving the cup first to Athene-Mentor is his tactfulness with elders, and Athene shows her appreciation for it: *χαίρε δ' Ἀθηναίη πεπνυμένω ἄνδρὶ δικάϊω, | οὐνέκα οἱ προτέρη δῶκε χρύσειον ἄλυσσον* (52-53). This first glimpse of Peisistratos foreshadows his role in the succeeding books as a facilitator between Telemachos and elders. In the immediately preceding digression between the first announcement of their arrival in Pylos (ἱξον, 5) and its reprise (ἱξον, 31), Telemachos confesses to Athene his shyness at having to question an elder, a scene designed to reveal the insecurity of Telemachos in high society. Peisistratos provides his entrée from the very beginning by seating him beside his father (39). Later, in Menelaos' palace, when Telemachos is overcome with weeping, Peisistratos steps in to inform Menelaos of Telemachos' sense of shame at the thought of making mistakes in speaking before such a man (4.156-160). In Book 15 Peisistratos reminds Telemachos of his obligations to his host Menelaos, when he rashly proposes leaving before dawn (15.49-55), and later agrees to take the news to Nestor that Telemachos will not return to Pylos (209-214). In his regard for the gods, his warm reception of guests and strangers, and his sensitive respect for elders, Peisistratos possesses all the qualities from the start that will make him a fitting companion and intermediary for the remainder of Telemachos' sojourn in the Peloponnesos, especially as he deals with the elder, heroic generation, in isolation from which he has grown up. Peisistratos fittingly takes over from Athene-Mentor, who entrusts Telemachos to his care (3.368-369).

Book 4 also opens with a full array of elements common to introductory scenes, but Homer provides variety by including a dramatic encounter between Menelaos and Eteoneus. When the two young men arrive (4.1) at Sparta, they find (3) Menelaos in the midst of a wedding feast with many relatives. When they stand at the gate, Eteoneus, Menelaos' butler, sees (22) them. Instead of welcoming them, he goes to ask Menelaos what to do. We can surmise from Eteoneus' concern that this would normally be a time when strangers would not be entertained, but sent on to another host.³⁴ In creating this scene Homer presents us with a small drama by which to delay the meeting with Menelaos and to demonstrate his ἥθος. When Eteoneus asks whether or not to receive

³³Telemachos was the first (1.113) to see the guest, went up to him (120), and took his hand (121).

³⁴Cf. 15.513 ff., when Telemachos sends Theoklymenos to stay temporarily with Peiraios until his own house becomes fit to entertain him.

the strangers, Menelaos' outburst of anger (30) is calculated to reveal the spontaneity of his response, thereby demonstrating his unmediated generosity, which overrides all other considerations (Reece 77-78). Also important is the fact that Menelaos justifies his hospitable manners on the grounds that he too was once in need (33-35). He is the epitome of the generous host, as is demonstrated by his gifts to and regard for Telemachos (cf. 4.587-619; 15.67-153). At Pylos Telemachos found his *alter ego* in Peisistratos; in Sparta Menelaos is his father's double, a man who has traveled widely, suffered greatly, been dependent upon others, and who has learned the importance of hospitality.

V. Kalypso and Odysseus

One of the remarkable features of the epic is that its namesake hero does not appear until the fifth book. We have, however, been prepared for his first appearance since the proem and subsequent reminiscences of various divine and human characters, so that when we finally see him, his appearance is enhanced more by prolonged anticipation than by any new revelation; the effect is one of confirmation, not surprise. The poet initiates Odysseus' introduction at the beginning of Book 5 in the council of the gods, in a manner that parallels the introduction of Telemachos, but in a much more expansive fashion. When Hermes is dispatched to inform Kalypso of Zeus' plans, his lengthy journey from Olympos to Ogygia (50-58) surpasses that of Athene in Book 1 and augments the importance of the forthcoming introduction.³⁵ But after he arrives (55) and locates Kalypso (58), the poet still withholds our actual encounter with her, as he describes the paradisiacal surroundings of the cave in a way that indicates the appeal of Kalypso's charms (Austin 149-52). It is not until line 77 that Hermes finally enters the cave, and contact is made when Kalypso sees him (78). But Odysseus' appearance is further delayed, for we are told that Hermes did not find him (81) because he was out on the shore pining away. This is one of several significant absences in first appearances that permit uninhibited conversations to occur. In the opening council of the gods, Poseidon's absence facilitates the other gods' resolution to assist Odysseus.

³⁵While her journey was accomplished in two lines (βῆ . . . | στῆ , 1.102-103), Hermes' takes much longer—after all, he has much further to go. Arend notes several examples of *Steigerung* in repeated scenes, but does not mention this one. Edwards (1987) 49 aptly notes from a slightly different angle, "A god may come down to earth in two or three words; but when Hermes journeys to Calypso's island . . . his route is described in great detail (5.44-77), because of the significance of his message for the poem and its hero."

When Odysseus first meets Eumaios (14.24-28) and Laertes (24.222-225), we are told that the servants are elsewhere, permitting the encounters to be uncomplicated by bystanders.³⁶ Here we get advance notice of Odysseus, while Hermes has the opportunity to converse at length with Kalypso. The appealing portrayal of Kalypso and of her charming abode permits us to appreciate how much she desires Odysseus and how much he is willing to leave behind to face his arduous return to Ithaka.³⁷

We finally see Odysseus himself only after Hermes' departure, when Kalypso goes to him. This additional step is one more indication of the narrator's desire to delay the appearance of the epic's main character. She finds him sitting by the seashore (151) pining for his return home. Just as Athene found Telemachos already thinking of his absent father, so Kalypso finds Odysseus crying for his homeland. Odysseus' first words (173-179), in response to Kalypso's offer to help him leave, reveal how suspiciously cautious he has become through all his trials; he demands that she swear a great oath not to harm him.³⁸ It is appropriate that when both Penelope and Odysseus first appear, they are crying, pining for homecoming, and resisting the efforts of members of the opposite sex to make them marriage partners.

VI. Phaiakia (Nausikaa and Alkinoos)

Two characters are especially developed during the episode in Phaiakia, Nausikaa and Alkinoos. Our first view of Nausikaa is occasioned by the arrival of Athene, who stands by her bed. When Athene talks to her in her sleep, she concentrates on Nausikaa's two overriding concerns: being a dutiful daughter and becoming a wife. She touches on the first, when she calls her a careless daughter (6.25) and reminds her of how to gain the approval of parents (30). Twice she mentions her imminent marriage (27, 33) and remarks that the noblest of the Phaiakians are courting her (34-35).³⁹ These same concerns are

³⁶Arend 33 n. 2 and 48 merely refers to these absences as "Negierung des Typischen," but they play an important part in characterization. The absence of the *Kyklops* (9.216-217) creates additional suspense and results in Odysseus' entrapment in the cave. See Reece 131.

³⁷For a good analysis of Kalypso's character as revealed in this dramatic encounter with Hermes, see Austin 151-152.

³⁸We later discover that he learned such cautious behavior in dealing with Kalypso's double, Kirke; cf. 10.343-344 for identical words.

³⁹This information prepares for the subplot, which toys with the idea that Odysseus himself might be the husband for whom she has been waiting (cf. 244-245 and 7.311-314), as she refuses the local suitors (cf. 276-284). See Reece 110-112.

evident in her first words to her father, whose close relationship is underscored by the word μάλα in the phrase μάλ' ἄγχι στᾶσα (56), the only time the combination occurs in the epic, and by her affectionate address of Πάππα φίλ' (57), which is also unique (and another example of characterization by means of specialized vocabulary). Although she is too shy to speak of her marriage and only mentions her concern for her father and brothers, Homer is quick to add that her father saw through her.

It is important to note how every element of this introduction prepares for Odysseus' speech of supplication at 149-185. His opening compliment, comparing her to Artemis (Ἀρτέμιδί σε . . . εἶδος τε μέγεθός τε φυὴν τ' ἄγχιστα εἴσκω, 151-152) is a specification and amplification of the opening description of the sleeping Nausikaa (ἄθανάτησι φυὴν καὶ εἶδος ὁμοίη, 16; cf. also 102-109). His second compliment, expressing the joy that her parents and brothers must have in her (cf. μάλα πού σφισι θυμὸς ἰαῖεν ἐυφροσύνησιν ἰαίνεται εἵνεκα σεῖο, 155-156), is an elaboration of Athene's point about pleasing her parents (cf. χαίρουσιν δὲ πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ, 30). But Odysseus turns this second compliment into a priamel, in which the pleasures of her father, mother, and brothers in seeing her dance (a maidenly activity) are surpassed by those of the husband who will take her to his home.⁴⁰ The priamel form perfectly expresses the transition from maiden to wife which dominates Nausikaa's thoughts, and Odysseus tactfully caps her present concern to please her family with her desire for a husband. And with a sure sense, Odysseus ends his appeal with a prayer for her happy marriage (180-185). Everything we learned about Nausikaa in her dream and in her first conversation with her father has been used expertly by Odysseus to endear himself to her; in scene after scene until her parting words to Odysseus, marriage is Nausikaa's dominant concern.⁴¹

The first appearance of Arete and Alkinoos is occasioned by Nausikaa's going to see them. She encounters them (6.51) in their characteristic activities: Arete is spinning at the hearth, while Alkinoos is on his way to a meeting with the Phaiakian leaders. In his conversation with Nausikaa (68-70), two traits are apparent: a sensitivity for his daughter's hidden feelings and a spontaneous generosity in providing fitting transportation. He will exhibit these same traits in his dealing with Odysseus. His sensitivity for feelings is apparent in his treatment of Odysseus, when the latter cries at hearing Demodokos' song (8.90-

⁴⁰Cf. μακάρτατος ἔξοχον ἄλλων (158), which signals the climactic element. This priamel should be added to Race.

⁴¹Cf. 6.27, 34-35, 66, 244-245, 278-284, and 7.311-314.

103), and in his amends for Euryalos' rude behavior (236-255; 396-397). His generosity in providing a wagon for Nausikaa is paralleled by his ready granting of a ship to convey Odysseus home. Our first view of Alkinoos in his dealing with his daughter prepares us for his similar treatment of Odysseus.

Homer is much more sparing in his introduction of Arete, who is only mentioned in passing when Nausikaa goes to speak with her father. She reappears in the following scene, when she furnishes provisions for Nausikaa's outing (76-80), but she remains unnamed and is not described until 7.54-77, when Athene (disguised as a Phaiakian girl) gives a full account of her background. She thus constitutes an anomaly, for we are led to believe by Nausikaa's and Athene's instructions that she will play a bigger role in the reception of Odysseus than she actually does.⁴²

VII. The Servants (Eurykleia, Eumaios, Melanthios, Melantho, and Philoitios)

At the end of the first book, Homer introduces the first of the servants, the faithful nurse Eurykleia. Because she says nothing, what we learn of her character must be derived from her actions and from background provided by the narrator. We first see her accompanying Telemachos to bed and carrying flaming torches (τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἄμ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας φέρε κεδνὰ ἰδυῖα | Εὐρύκλει', 1.428-429). The phrase κεδνὰ ἰδυῖα before the enjambed name indicates her most important trait, loyal devotion.⁴³ In a backgrounding relative clause (τὴν ποτε . . . , 430-433), the poet explains that Laertes had paid a large amount for her and had honored her as much as his own devoted wife (κεδνῇ ἀλόχῳ, 432), being careful to add that he had never slept with her. After closing the ring (ἢ οἱ ἄμ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας φέρε, 434), Homer adds the significant detail, καὶ ἐ μάλιστα | δμῳάων φιλέεσκε καὶ ἔτρεφε τυτθὸν ἑόντα (434-435). The intimacy between Telemachos and Eurykleia is demon-

⁴²For a good summary of the issues, see Jones 60-62 and the analyses of Fenik 126-130 and 243, where he says ". . . the Phaeacian queen is advertised in advance only in order for her importance to be used and consumed in the one dramatic scene where she asks Odysseus about his clothes. After that she puts in an occasional appearance as a secondary character without determining the action in any way." Three other characters make limited appearances in the Phaiakian episode, Echeneos, Laodamas, and Euryalos, but there is nothing noteworthy about their first appearances.

⁴³The word κεδνός, much more frequent in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*, is an important attribute in an epic where household loyalty is constantly at issue. It is not by accident that when Odysseus asks Penelope to provide a servant to wash his feet who is κεδνὰ ἰδυῖα (19.346), it is Eurykleia. For the loyalty of Penelope's accompanying servants, see above, n. 27.

strated by the silent relationship of trust and the solicitude of the servant, who accompanies her young master to his own room, folds his clothing, and locks the door behind her (438-442).⁴⁴ She it will be who helps him prepare his journey and proves her trustworthiness by keeping his departure a secret from Penelope (as she will later keep Odysseus' identity secret from her). For three generations she has looked after the family, especially the males.⁴⁵

At the beginning of Book 14 one of the epic's most important characters, Eumaios, makes his first appearance with a full array of introductory elements. Once again, we watch the arrival of a character, here Odysseus (14.1-4), who finds the person situated in his abode (5). But before we find out what he is actually doing, there follows a long description of the swineherd's stading (5-20) with a backgrounding relative clause informing us that he himself had built it without Laertes' or Penelope's involvement (7-9),⁴⁶ at the end of which we are finally told that he was in the process of cutting new leather sandals (23-24). Thus we encounter him in the act of constructive work, proving that he is a hard-working, economical servant. Homer also takes care to point out that four fierce dogs remained by him, but that he had previously dispatched his four underlings to their tasks (21-28), incidentally demonstrating Eumaios' managerial capabilities and providing a meeting uncomplicated by bystanders. In a nice variation of the topic of "contact," it is those dogs who suddenly spot

⁴⁴Locking and guarding doors is an important function of Eurykleia. At 2.344-347 she guards the locked doors of the storeroom from which Telemachos draws his supplies; at 19.30 she locks the doors of the hall while Odysseus and Telemachos store the armor; and at 21.387 she locks the doors of the hall before the slaughter.

⁴⁵As Fenik 190 points out, "Eurykleia was bought by Laertes (α 430) and reared both Odysseus (τ 354) and Telemachos (α 434). Her connection is with *that* side of the family. . . . She does nothing in the entire poem that is not directly ordered by or connected with Odysseus or Telemachos." Her first appearance is formally paralleled by that of Nausikaa's θαλαμηπόλος Eurymedousa, who attends her in her θάλαμος when she returns from washing the clothes. Within the frame δαίε δέ οἱ πῦρ (7.7) and ἡ οἱ πῦρ ἀνέκατε (13), we are told of her background and informed that she nursed Nausikaa. Like Eurykleia, she says nothing as she goes about her chores, but unlike her, she never reappears. Our first view of Eurynome, Penelope's θαλαμηπόλος, is at 17.495, when she suddenly emerges from the company of Penelope's maidservants in her chamber to pray for the destruction of the suitors. For excellent analyses of the differentiated roles of Eurykleia and Eurynome, see Scott 75-79 and Fenik 188-191.

⁴⁶The description of the sties parallels the descriptions of Menelaos' grand palace, Kalypso's cave, Alkinoos' gardens, the Kyklops' cave, and Kirke's house, and like them serves as an indication of its occupant's ἦθος. Merry 227 aptly comments: "We notice the independent position of the swineherd, who had built the yard and styes without any order from Penelope or Laertes; and the elaborate preparations made for defending the place against marauders or wild beasts." At 14.449-452 we learn that Eumaios had also acquired the servant Mesaulios on his own (νόσφιν δεσποίνης καὶ Λαέρταο, 452).

Odysseus (29) and attack him.⁴⁷ The spontaneous reaction by Eumaios is very revealing of his character. Although no specific emotion is mentioned, by emphasizing his haste in dropping his work and in getting to the scene, the poet underscores his earnestness: ὦκα ποσὶ κραιπνοῖσι μετασπὼν | ἔσσυτ' ἀνὰ πρόθυρον, σκυῖτος δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε χειρός (33-34).⁴⁸ And, after shooing away the dogs, he shows himself to be honorable in his sensitivity to reproach (ἐλεγχεῖν, 38), loyal to the memory of Odysseus (40-44), and scrupulously observant of the rules of hospitality (45-51), as demonstrated by his giving Odysseus his own bed covering. Like Telemachos in *his* first appearance, Eumaios demonstrates all the ethical qualities requisite for a good character, and, after Odysseus builds up his confidence (as Athene did with Telemachos), he too will become prepared for his decisive role in restoring order to Ithaka.

Homer also provides an elaborate introduction of Melanthios, the most wicked of the servants, that contains variations on all the typical elements. First is the arrival of Odysseus and the swineherd at the spring as they make their way to the palace (17.205). Then follows a description of the place, introduced and concluded with backgrounding relative clauses introduced by ὅθεν (206) and ὅθι (211). There Melanthios encounters them (212), and the activity in which he is engaged is most telling. He is driving the best of his goats to serve as dinner for the suitors; the enjambed phrase, δειπνον μνηστήρεσσι (214), is particularly damning. Upon seeing them, his first reaction is an angry insult (215). His terms of abuse for the beggar (μολοβρόν, 219) and for the swineherd (ἀμέγαρτε συβῶτα, 219), and his description of the beggar as a scrounger of feasts (δαιτῶν ἀπολυμαντήρα, 220)⁴⁹ are specific to the suitors and their henchmen and program ahead, since they will each be repeated once in the epic: μολοβρός by Iros (18.26), ἀμέγαρτε by the suitors (21.362), and beggars as feast-scroungers by Antinoos (17.377). In addition, he follows up his insults with a kick as Odysseus passes by. Both in words and in actions he accurately prefigures the treatment Odysseus will receive in his own house at the hands of the suitors.⁵⁰

⁴⁷These dogs are usually seen as symbols of the swineherd's protective character as the loyal guardian of his master's property; see Beck 161 and Rose 216-19. But the dogs' initial wariness also reflects Eumaios' cautious skepticism, as he has grown to distrust strangers' motives.

⁴⁸Cf. 16.12-13, when he drops the cups upon Telemachos' arrival.

⁴⁹For the meaning of ἀπολυμαντήρα 'one who cleans up the discarded scraps,' see Russo-Fernández-Galiano-Heubeck 29.

⁵⁰He also accurately predicts that footstools (σφέλα) will be thrown at the beggar (229-32). The word σφέλας only recurs at 18.394, when Melanthios' boss, Eurymachos, throws one at Odysseus.

These words and actions are damning enough, but Homer has gone out of his way to provide a setting that makes the encounter even more striking. The place in which this occurs is a type of *locus amoenus*, containing a cold spring and a grove of the Nymphs, where, we are told in the framing ὄθι-clauses, that the citizens drew water (ὄθεν ὑδρεύοντο πολῖται, 206) and all travelers offered sacrifice (ὄθι πάντες ἐπιρρέζεσκον ὀδῖται, 211). The names of two of the builders, Ithakos and Neritos, reflect the names of the island itself and its mountain (cf. 13.351), and suggest that the precinct derives from ancient times. The fact that these breaches of hospitality occur on such hallowed ground intended to provide water to the townspeople and a place for travelers to sacrifice makes Melanthios' conduct all the more heinous and reflects the propensity of the suitors to insult and assault strangers in a place of abundance that does not belong to them.⁵¹

Melantho first appears in Book 18. She is apparently very pretty, for the poet calls her καλλιπάρηος (18.321), an epithet which elsewhere in the epic applies only to Helen (15.123). Her words, however, contrast with her beautiful face, for her outstanding characteristic is scolding speech, reiterated in the frame (τὸν δ' αἰσχρῶς ἐνένιπε Μελανθῶ, 321 ~ ἥ ῥ' Ὀδυσῆϊ ἐνένιπεν ὀνειδείοισ' ἐπέεσσι, 326) that encloses a backgrounding relative clause, in which her wicked character is made apparent. Penelope had raised her as her child, but the girl had no sympathy for Penelope and took up with Eurymachos (322-325). Her words also bear the stamp of her personality. She opens by calling Odysseus ξεῖνε τάλαν (327) and concludes with a threat of physical violence (334-336). The only other place the address τάλαν appears is in the duplicate scene at 19.68,⁵² which also concludes with a threat of physical harm. Melantho's beauty, disloyalty, lack of gratitude, sharp tongue, and penchant for physical abuse are laid out in her first appearance and reiterated in her second.⁵³

Philoitios also receives a full-scale introduction when he first appears in Book 20. His arrival at the palace just after Melanthios' abuse of Odysseus is

⁵¹Cf. 17.455-457, where Odysseus says that Antinoos would not even give a grain of salt from his own possessions, since he will not give anything from another's, even though plenty is at hand.

⁵²In a rare cross-reference, Homer calls attention to this scene as a doublet, for he introduces it with ἐνένιπε Μελανθῶ δεύτερον αὖτις (19.65).

⁵³In these two final qualities, she resembles her brother Melanthios. Homer also illustrates the relationship between them when Melanthios quotes her: Ξεῖν', ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐνθάδ' ἀνήσεις διὰ νύκτα (19.66) ~ Ξεῖν', ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐνθάδ' ἀνήσεις κατὰ δῶμα (20.178). See Russo-Fernández-Galiano-Heubeck 117.

calculated to throw his contrasting conduct in high relief. His journey from afar, ironically motivated by the suitors' need for extra livestock for their big banquet, is emphasized by two lines relating how ferryman had brought him to Ithaka (20.187-188). There he encounters the swineherd and Odysseus, and our first glimpse of his character comes when he inquires privately of Eumaios about the identity of the beggar, whom he senses is a king (194, 196). Without even an answer from the swineherd, Philoitios goes up to Odysseus, offers him his right hand, and addresses him with the same two lines Amphinomos had used at 18.122-123, when he showed Odysseus kindness after his fight with Iros. His recognition of man's weakness in the face of the gods' power (201-203), his spontaneous reaction of sweating and crying at the memory (205) of Odysseus and at the thought that his master too might be a wandering beggar, his gratitude for Odysseus' treatment of him as a boy, his disapproval of the suitors, and his loyalty to Telemachos in spite of the miserable situation provide an epitome of a servant's good character,⁵⁴ thus preparing us for his ready welcome of Odysseus before the slaughter.

VIII. Theoklymenos

The introduction of Theoklymenos is so remarkable for its length that it has occasioned considerable debate about the apparent incongruity between the initial build-up and his subsequently limited role.⁵⁵ Formally, it contains many of the typical features of first appearances, including the arrival of the new character (15.223), who stands near the already present person (257) and encounters him in some activity (257-258). Within an elaborate ring (θῦε . . . νῆϊ πάρα . . . σχεδόθεν δέ οἱ ἤλυθεν, 222-223 ~ ἐπῆλθε . . . πέλας ἵστατο . . . σπένδοντ' εὐχόμενόν τε θοῇ παρὰ νηϊ, 256-258) the poet provides 31 lines of genealogical background—far more than for any other introduction in the epic. Whether this information is in excess of what is strictly demanded for the plot is debatable, but what is certain is that the credentials of Theoklymenos, a descendant of the most prestigious family of μάντεις in all of Greece, are very impressive. Theoklymenos' first words to Telemachos have been subject to much criticism by Page as constituting a breach of etiquette, but in fact they

⁵⁴Jones 190 observes that Eumaios had made similar points when he first met Odysseus at 14.40ff. His introduction also recalls Telemachos' initial appearance; cf. Russo-Fernández-Galiano-Heubeck 119, who note "that Philoitios concludes his speech with a wish whose language recalls Telemachos' daydream at *i* 115-116."

⁵⁵For an excellent discussion of the issues and compelling arguments on which this brief analysis rests, see Fenik 233-244.

reveal nothing more than the words of a desperate, god-fearing suppliant.⁵⁶ I agree with those who maintain that this encounter reveals more about Telemachos than about Theoklymenos, since it is he who must make the important decision,⁵⁷ and because Theoklymenos' abilities as a *mantis* are not really at issue in this introductory scene. In his three subsequent appearances, however, when he prophesies to Telemachos (15.531-534), to Penelope (17.152-161), and to the suitors (20.351-357), he certainly lives up to his calling. His appearance thus serves the immediate function of revealing Telemachos' evolving character, but the lengthy background also looks ahead to those occasions when his inherited powers as a seer are revealed in action.

IX. Recognitions (Argos and Laertes)

One of the most remarkable first (and last) appearances in the poem is that of Argos at 17.291. The verisimilitude of his introduction is notable. Eumaios and Odysseus have just arrived within sight of the palace and are discussing their plans for entering it. Suddenly a dog lifts his head and pricks up his ears (291); the implication is that he has heard them coming and talking. A backgrounding relative clause (ὅν ῥά ποτ' . . . , 292) within a closing ring (κύων . . . κείμενος . . . | "Ἄργος, 291-292 ~ κύων κείτ' "Ἄργος, 300) holds the action as the narrator tells of the dog's past hunting prowess and contrasts it with his present unkempt condition, concluding with the poignant descriptive detail, that he was covered with parasites (300).⁵⁸ At this point, Argos recognizes Odysseus (301), and displays his reaction by wagging his tail and lowering his alert ears; his inability to get up and greet him is perfectly motivated by his extreme age, as is his death, unsentimentally reported at 326-327. What is the function of Argos' brief appearance? First of all, Argos displays the two qualities of all good characters, memory and a hospitable reception. The episode also

⁵⁶See Page 84-86, with the rebuttals of Fenik 235 and Jones 142. The treatment in Heubeck-Hoekstra 245-249 is disappointing, showing no awareness of Fenik's work.

⁵⁷Cf. Clarke 136 and Beye 168, "When Telemachos becomes [Theoklymenos'] protector he assumes all the powers, responsibilities, and privileges of true heroic manhood."

⁵⁸Russo-Fernández-Galiano-Heubeck 34 say of this passage: "Note the remarkable abruptness of this transition. The background information that Homer normally gives when introducing a new figure is here placed *within* the scene." It is hard to know what other introductions of new figures they are thinking of. Most introductions are equally abrupt (e.g., Telemachos, Penelope, Peisistratos, Helen, Amphinomos, Melanthios, Iros, Philoities), and we have shown that it is usual to supply background in relative clauses after the arrival or after initial contact is established. One of the satisfying aspects of this passage is precisely its conventionality, applied with such surprising verisimilitude to a dog.

constitutes one in a series of recognitions by loyal members of the house; since it is unprepared and must be kept a secret from a bystander, it bears a particular resemblance to the scene in Book 19 when Eurykleia recognizes *her* ἄναξ, and in which there is an even greater backgrounding digression that delays the emotional reaction and which also describes youthful hunting (in this case, Odysseus'). Argos is also an emblem of the house Odysseus is about to enter, run-down, uncared-for by the servants, and infested with parasites.⁵⁹

The last noteworthy appearance in the epic is that of Laertes in Book 24, when Odysseus goes to reveal himself to him. This scene contains all six elements we saw in the first appearances of Telemachos and Eumaios.

- 1) Odysseus' arrival (ἄσσον ἵεν, 221)
- 2) description of Laertes (πατέρ' εὔρεν . . . , 226-231) and deliberations of Odysseus, framed by ring-composition (λίστρεοντα φυτόν ~ φυτόν ἀμφελάχαινε, 227-242)
- 3) contact (παριστάμενος προσεφώνεε, 243)
- 4) expression of emotion (κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβων, 280)
- 5) speech (281-301)
- 6) action (κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν | χεύατο κακ κεφαλῆς πολίης, 316-317).

As in the scene with Eumaios, to which this episode bears a close resemblance, the poet explains why Dolios and the helpers are not present (222-225), so that upon his arrival Odysseus finds his father alone, absorbed by his farmwork: τὸν δ' οἶον πατέρ' εὔρεν ἐκτιμένη ἐν ἄλῳ | λίστρεοντα φυτόν (226-227). Like Eumaios, he has dispatched his underlings on useful tasks and is himself absorbed in productive work, but, whereas the lengthy description of Eumaios' steading served to underscore his careful management, a single epithet (ἐκτιμένη) describes Laertes' orchard. It is important, however, because the well-built orchard (an important element in the *anagnorisis* to come) contrasts with the shabby condition of Laertes, which is described in great detail (227-231) and provides external confirmation of the old man's inner misery. The last detail of this description, that he was actually increasing his suffering (πένθος ἀέξων, 231) by dressing so squalidly, so affects Odysseus that he weeps. The narrator protracts the recognition by having Odysseus debate how to proceed; only after he decides to test Laertes (235-240) is contact made (243). Upon hearing Odysseus' lying tale (244-279), Laertes

⁵⁹See Beck 162, who notes that this episode is the culmination of previous examples of dogs that reflect their masters' qualities (Alkinoos, Kirke, and Eumaios). With the exception of speech, the appearance of Argos contains all the elements common in first appearances.

weeps (280) and after Odysseus says that he has not seen Odysseus for five years, Laertes bursts into lamentation and covers himself with dirt (315-317), upon which Odysseus can no longer hold back his identity. During the testing by Odysseus, Laertes fittingly reveals the two qualities of all good characters in the epic, an acute memory and regard for hospitality. The narrator has effectively prolonged the first appearance of this last important character by inserting deliberations and speeches between the typical elements, to let us savor the process of reunion.

X. Conclusion

From this survey we can draw the following conclusions. The main narrator generally motivates the appearance of new characters by an arrival, either of the characters themselves (e.g., Penelope, Helen, Theoklymenos, Melanthios, Iros, and Philoitios) or more often by someone else who comes upon them (e.g., the suitors, Telemachos, Peisistratos, Menelaos, Kalypso, Odysseus, Nausikaa, Alkinoos, Eumaios, Argos, and Laertes), thus permitting us to see them in unguarded moments in their customary location and engaged in a telling activity and to observe how they react to the presence of others once contact is established, particularly when they are provoked to a spontaneous outburst of emotion.⁶⁰ When Homer does provide a description or background information, it is usually within a ring that suspends the action.⁶¹ The impressions gained from our first view of each character may be qualified and deepened by subsequent actions and words—Telemachos, for example, is a striking example of one who matures in front of our eyes—but they are never proven wrong.⁶²

⁶⁰Cf. Aristotle's praise of Homer's use of a brief introduction before bringing on characters who display their *ethos*: ὁ δὲ ὀλίγα φροιμισάμενος εὐθὺς εἰσάγει ἄνδρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄλλο τι ἦθος, καὶ οὐδέν' ἀήθη ἀλλ' ἔχοντα ἦθος (*Poet.* 24.60a9-11).

⁶¹E.g. Zeus (1.28-31); Telemachos (1.113-118); Eurykleia (1.428-434); Aigyptios (2.15-24); Halitherses (2.157-160); Eurymedousa (7.7-13); Echeneos (7.155-158); Aiolos (10.1-13); Theoklymenos (15.222-258); Amphinomos (16.394-399); Argos (17.291-300); Iros (18.1-8); Melantho (18.321-326); Leodes (21.144-148); Laertes (24.227-242); Eupheithes (24.422-425).

⁶²Because of this consistency of character, often emphasized by characteristic epithets, some have claimed that there is no character development in Homer. If by development radical change in a person's character is meant, then there is none. Amphinomos is given the chance to change his ways, but he cannot (18.153-157). The characters in the *Odyssey* do not change to their opposite or undergo conversions, but rather their characters are deepened and rounded as they make choices in a variety of situations calling for decisions. Telemachos, for example, becomes more himself; he does not change his ἦθος.

Appendix: The Apologos

(Kirke, the Companions, Eurylochos, Elpenor, and the Kyklops)

It is necessary to treat the *Apologos* separately because, despite some similarities, there are marked differences between Odysseus' way of introducing new characters and how the main narrator does so.⁶³ As we have seen, the epic narrator commonly provides a sample of the character's *ethos* the first time we meet him or her in a dramatic encounter, in order to lay the foundation for later appearances.⁶⁴ Since characters in the *Apologos* are so diverse and generally appear only once, Odysseus employs several different techniques to introduce them. One is the use of surprise. For example, all we are told initially about the Lotus-Eaters is that they eat flowery food (9.84). Only after the men encounter them do we discover their threat. The element of surprise is even more prominent in the episode of the Laistrygones. What we learn about them is presented point by point in linear fashion (cf. the repetition of ἔνθα at 10.84, 87, 91, 98, and 108, which underscores the linear nature of the narrative), leaving us totally unprepared for the dreadful encounter with the wife of Antiphates (112-113) and the ensuing slaughter. That Odysseus is more concerned to surprise us than to delineate the character of the Laistrygones is apparent when he says nothing in the encounter with the daughter of Antiphates (105-111) to indicate that the inhabitants were giants. Another example is Aiolos, whose situation is described at some length when he is introduced within a narrative ring (cf. ἀφικόμεθ', 10.1 ~ ἰκόμεσθα, 13), but his character is not developed sufficiently to prepare us for his abrupt rejection of Odysseus' supplication upon returning (72-75).

Another technique, particularly pronounced at the end of the *Apologos*, is anticipation, when we are simply told ahead of time what to expect, as in the case of the Sirens (cf. 12.39-54), Skylla and Charybdis (cf. 12.85-126), and the

⁶³Richardson 43 says, "Odysseus the narrator differs from the Homeric narrator in the practice of making introductions. When telling the story of his adventures to the Phaiakians, he habitually pauses for formal introductions, and, a greater deviation, he places the introduction toward the beginning of the episode, often even before we meet the characters. The example of Kirke is typical." There is some truth in Richardson's observation, but the word "habitually" overstates the case. There is no "formal introduction" of the Lotus-Eaters, the Laistrygones, Eurylochos, or of Polyphemos. As we shall see, Kirke's introduction is not typical for the *Apologos*.

⁶⁴The case of Theoklymenos is a good example. His qualifications as a seer play little or no role in the dramatic encounter when he first appears, but are essential in his three future appearances.

situation on Thrinakia (cf. 12.127-141), so that the actual appearances are thoroughly prepared. Other characters appear as wraiths in Hades, who come forward to speak (e.g. Teiresias, Antikleia, Agamemnon, Achilles, and Aias), and with the exception of Teiresias their main function is to convey information about their past.

All these groups and single characters display *ethos* by the condition of their habitats and through their words and actions, just as others do in the main narrative, but, with the exception of Kirke and the crewmen, their first appearances do not serve the same purposes that we have seen in the rest of the epic of adumbrating their character and programming ahead to future appearances.

Of all the creatures and characters in the *Apologos*, only three—Kirke, Eurylochos, and Polyphemos—are extensively developed, and of these only Kirke follows the pattern of first appearances in the main narrative. When Odysseus and his crew first arrive on Kirke's island, a backgrounding relative clause suggests her beauty, power, speech, and hints at her destructive qualities in her brother's epithet: ἔνθα δ' ἔναϊε | Κίρκη ἐνπλόκαμος, δεινὴ θεὸς αὐδήεσσα, | αὐτοκασιγνήτη ὀλοόφρονος Αἰήταο (10.135-137). After the intervening episode of killing and eating the stag (156-202), our first view of her house, seen through the eyes of the scouting party, reveals further characteristics: they find (210) it built of polished stone (indicating a civilized inhabitant), but surrounded by fawning wild animals (an omen that inspires fear in them). Our first impression of Kirke herself comes from her beautiful singing and weaving (221-223), activities that betoken non-threatening, civilized behavior. The setting thus reveals its inhabitant as possessing an incongruous combination of civilized sophistication, charm, and bestial domination. The ensuing narrative is in two stages and brings out both sides of her dual character. The companions succumb to her domination, whereas Odysseus, through the miraculous help of Hermes, subdues her harmful powers and makes use of her good qualities. Odysseus the narrator has carefully delineated her two-sided character in her first appearance.

The other clear case in the *Apologos* of a first appearance programming ahead is in the introduction of Odysseus' companions as a group. Like the suitors, whom they resemble in so many ways, they are first seen misbehaving. After sacking Ismaros they are called μέγα νήπιοι (9.44; cf. 1.8) because they disobey their commander and remain too long drinking and eating other people's stores, thereby exposing themselves to retaliation. When individuals are eventually singled out, we would expect the issues to involve three things:

(1) reckless insubordination that will incur retaliation from an aggrieved party, (2) excessive drinking, and (3) illicit eating. From the very first view of the companions, we see traits that will ultimately lead to their destruction.⁶⁵

Eurylochos is the first companion to appear as an individual and is the only one whose character is developed at any length. Contrary to the main narrator's usual practice of giving a sample the first time we see a new character, the poet introduces Eurylochos gradually in the course of the Kirke episode. He is first mentioned when Odysseus divides the crew into two parts and puts Eurylochos in command of the other half (10.203-205). At that time he is given no patronymic and merely called θεοειδής (205) and μεγάλῃτωρ (207), and there is no indication (as we learn subsequently) that from this point will begin a struggle between these two ἄρχοί for leadership of the men. The next notice is at 232, where we are told that he waited outside Kirke's house because he suspected a trick. The next thing we learn about him is that when he returns to Odysseus and the companions he is so emotionally distraught that he cannot tell them what had happened (246-248). This emotion is subsequently revealed as cowardice, when he pleads with Odysseus not to take him back to Kirke's but rather to abandon the men and get away (266-269). This cowardice turns to insubordination at 429-437, when Eurylochos tries to convince the other companions not to follow Odysseus to Kirke's house. Here he is alone (οἶος, 429) and the companions side with Odysseus. In the final showdown in Book 12 on Thrinakia, however, the numbers are reversed, when Eurylochos spearheads a complete mutiny by persuading all the companions to join him (12.278-352), while Odysseus stands alone (μοῦνον, 297). Eurylochos embodies the moral failure of the comrades, which consists of cowardly recklessness that puts mere survival above heroic endeavor (cf. Dobbs). Unlike the principal suitors, whose character traits are sketched the first time they appear, his character is only revealed after several appearances and could not have been anticipated from the initial ones. Such a gradual unfolding suggests that Odysseus is more concerned to produce suspense and surprise than to round out an already established character.

⁶⁵See the brief analysis in Heubeck-Hoekstra 10 on the deteriorating relationship between the companions and Odysseus, which concludes, "There is thus a clear line of development from the encounter with the Cicones to the destruction of the offending company in the final storm. This is the bitter fruit of the seed already sown in the first episode; what anyone with ears to hear could already have predicted at the outset has now finally come to pass." Cf. also the analysis on 16. Their insubordination is further developed when they untie the bag of winds (10.34-45).

The only other companion to appear more than once is Elpenor, who in a drunken stupor falls off the roof of Kirke's house when the companions depart (10.552-560) and reappears in Hades to request a proper burial (11.51-78). His introduction has much in common with that of Ktesippos ('Ελπήνωρ δέ τις ἔσκε, 10.552 ~ ἦν δέ τις . . . | Κτήσιππος, 20.287-288). Each one makes two brief appearances, neither is given a patronymic, and both represent extreme characteristics of the group from which they suddenly emerge. In the case of Elpenor, it is the foolish drunkenness which makes one forget (cf. ἐκλάθετο, 557) careful behavior. He specifies the action we saw in our very first view of the companions in the episode at Ismaros at 9.45: ἔνθα δὲ πολλὸν μὲν μέθυ πίνετο. Eurylochos and Elpenor exemplify the two primary characteristics of the companions, insubordination and the inability to temper appetites.

The first individual to emerge in Odysseus' account of his adventures is Polyphemos, who is treated with a fullness that indicates the importance of the episode. The narrative, however, is characterized by anticipation, retardation, and surprise. In order to show this, it is necessary to treat the episode in some detail. Upon his arrival off the coast of their land, Odysseus provides a preview of the character of the *Kyklopes* in general (9.106-115): they have no laws, no agriculture, no assemblies, and live in caves by themselves, with no concern for one another. Subsequently we learn that the *Kyklopes* have no ships (125-126), but use fire and keep sheep and goats (166-167); when his ship finally arrives in their land, we get a general description of Polyphemos' cave (183-186), which stresses its wildness and great size and gives a prospective view of the monster inhabiting it (187-192), that emphasizes his solitariness.⁶⁶ After the long digression on the wine Odysseus had brought with him from Ismaros (196-215), they finally enter the cave, but since they do not find him inside (216-217), the delay occasions a description of the cave through the eyes of the visitors, in which the impressive care that Polyphemos has lavished in organizing his flocks and cheese production indicates his concern for his animals (Jones 84).

We have been provided considerable information about the *Kyklops*; the suspense consists of how he will fulfill these expectations. When he first arrives, we note three features, already anticipated: his great strength (233-236; 240-243), his conscientious husbandry (237-239; 244-249), and his use of fire, upon lighting which he finally sees (251) the Greeks. His first words,

⁶⁶Cf. Heubeck-Hoekstra 25: "The Cyclopes' unsociability (cf. 112-15) is accentuated in Polyphemos' case: οἶος, ἀπρόπροθεν ('set apart from'), οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους πωλεῖτ', ἀπάνευθεν."

surprisingly, are not in themselves unusual, for they are the same asked by Nestor of Telemachos and his group at 3.71-74, but, unlike Nestor, he requests information before offering them hospitality.⁶⁷ In the ensuing action, it is clear that Odysseus has not mentioned one crucial attribute of the *Kyklops* that could not be intuited: that he was a cannibal. By withholding that fact, we are all the more surprised and shocked when he suddenly grabs two men and eats them (288-293).⁶⁸ Polyphemos is characterized in lavish detail, but, spread out over the course of some 280 lines, from their arrival at the land of the *Kyklopes* at 106 until Polyphemos eats the two companions at 289, the narrative is marked by leisurely addition rather than proceeding from a well defined core.

Thus, in the *Apologos* only the initial depiction of the companions at Ismaros and the first appearance of Kirke display the kind of forward-looking character delineation that is the hallmark of the main narrative. New characters are generally introduced, not for producing long-range character studies, but for creating suspense and surprise; for that reason we are often given information piecemeal (as in the case of Eurylochos) rather than provided a character blueprint beforehand. Odysseus the narrator thereby puts his audience much more in the position of an imperfectly informed witness who is continually caught off guard by ensuing events. The cannibalistic atrocities of the *Laistrygones* and of Polyphemos are as surprising to us as listeners as they were to Odysseus and his men.

⁶⁷See Heubeck-Hoekstra 28: "Polyphemus demands immediately to know who the strangers are, which does not bode well: he is obviously ignorant of the laws of hospitality."

⁶⁸The main narrator, who is always programming ahead, informs us in passing that the *Kyklops* was a cannibal, when, in introducing Aigyptios, he tells of Antiphos' fate (2.19-20).

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